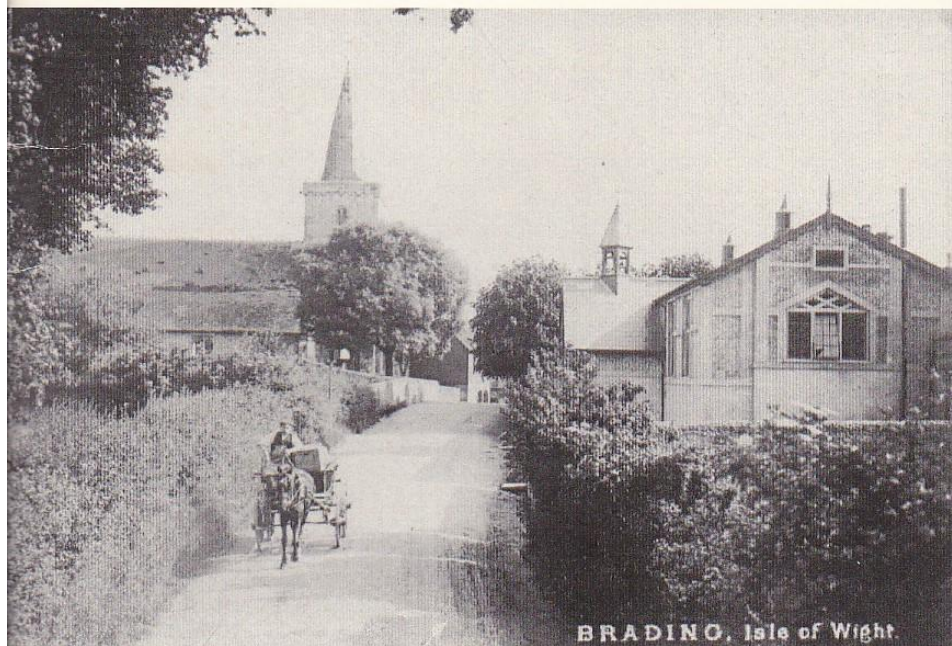


Brading Memories



BRADING, Isle of Wight.

INTRODUCTION

This Booklet contains a selection of quotes from interviews undertaken with people who lived in Brading prior to and during the 1930s. The interviews were conducted by members of Brading Youth Club and its Leader in Charge, Barbara Creed, throughout the winter of 2005. All interviews were videoed, put onto DVD and transcribed for use in this Booklet.

Oral history is a unique way of recording memories which would otherwise be lost. The memories are often quite personal to those sharing them and over time can become distorted. Despite this, the positives of oral history outweigh the negatives as we feel this publication demonstrates. We thank those interviewed for their memories of what it was like to grow up in Brading over 70 years ago and hope they enjoy seeing their recollections in print. The initials after each quote correspond to who the quote came from and at the back of the booklet you can see the full list of contributors and where possible, a photo of them. Thanks also to Pam Phillips and Sapphire Hardy, members of Brading Youth Club, for taking part in the interviews along with Barbara Creed as without their input, the project would not have been possible. The lengthy task of transcribing the interviews was undertaken by Malcolm and Barbara Creed and Pat McNamara for which we are grateful. Also thanks to Molly Pewsey for her advice and knowledge.

Jenny Smith
February 2007

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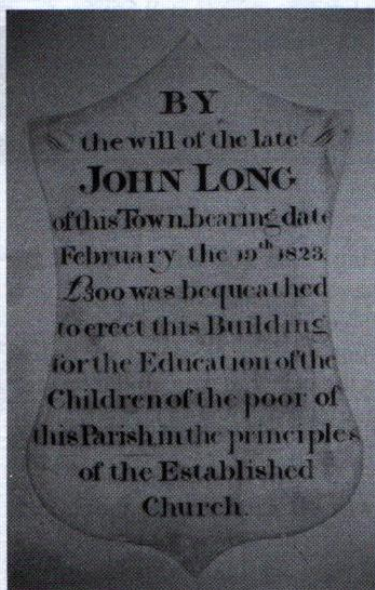
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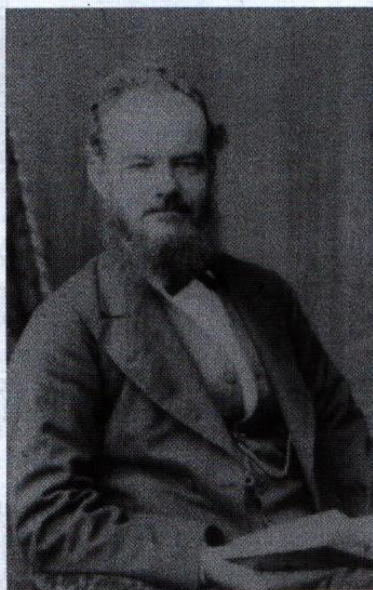
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SCHOOL DAYS

At one time in Brading, there were three schools - the Council school which was on the current site of Brading Primary, the Church school which is now used as the Youth Club and Mr Bulley's fee paying school in The Mall which opened during the 1840s and closed in 1910. Some of the teachers mentioned include a Mr Rose and a Mr Pryke (Brading Council School) and a Miss Bessey and Miss Hawkins (the Church School). Not all the teachers were qualified prior to or during the 1930s and it was not uncommon for some of the older children at the age of 13 or 14 to become 'pupil teachers'. Very often as in the case of Mr Pryke, teaching became a career for life.



The John Long Tablet



Mr. Bulley

'When I was at school I was frightened to death. Teacher Bessey wasn't qualified and she taught the infants. She kept rolling up our sleeves and slapping our arms if we didn't do things right'. (M.A)

'We used to sit in Teacher Bessey's and when the W.I. had their ham and mustard sandwiches they used to cut the crusts off which we had. They used to come in newspaper and we'd sit at our desks and eat the crusts and they were absolutely delicious'. (I.S)

'When we were seven we went into Miss Marrow's class. She couldn't control the class and it was uproar. We didn't learn anything there, she used to throw chalk and dusters at us. (M.A)

'When you got to thirteen in Miss Hawkins class she didn't teach you any more so we got our books and messed about for a year'. (I.S)

'I don't remember many lessons, probably because I was small but we used to have flat trays of sand and be given a stick and we used to make patterns and drawings in the sand. It went all over the place but nobody seemed to mind and another thing we did was we played with plasticine, not like the coloured stuff you get now, it was grey and horrid but, however, we loved using this stuff and the boards. Some of the boards were in the shape of a star'. (B.C)

Another occasion I do recall was prize giving. I am sure I didn't do anything to get a prize. I suppose I must have been a bit older then but my prize was for good attendance. We were never ill, I suppose we went every day. I can't remember my sister getting a prize. No doubt she did, she was a lot cleverer than me and she was the one who won all the prizes. However, my prize was a book, the Headmaster was giving them out and we could choose our book'. (B.C)

'I went to Brading Council School until I was 14. Mr Rose was the Headmaster and Miss Blythe was one of my teachers. When I was in the Infants, my brother took me to school. We were at school from 9.00 am to 3.30 pm with an hour for lunch. We took sandwiches because there were no school meals and when it was cold we bought hot cocoa for halfpenny a cup.

We had a coal fire in the class room and we did sums. We also did sports and drill in the playground, when we had to march up and down. The girls had cookery classes and we would go round and sell what we had made. We also had needlework classes. The boys were taken swimming'. (M.M)



The pupils, when taking cookery lessons went up the Mall to the old school building and then sold their cakes to people like Skipper Rose.

Mrs. Munns front right

'When we danced round the Maypole at Christmas our parents came to watch. On Whit Monday, Mr Pryke, a school helper, used to take all the school children to Whitecliff Bay to spend the day on the beach. We had to walk there and back. Every year, Mr Rose took us to the Roman Villa and when we got back to school we had to write about what we learned'. (M.M)

'Our teacher was Miss Hawkins and she was very clever. She taught the boys carpentry and played football with them. She taught the girls needlework and knitting. She insisted you learnt your local history before you learnt anything else. She was very friendly with Mrs Oglander and every Christmas when we did the Nativity play she would lend us her big star'. (J.C) (B.H.)

'I can remember that where the car park is there were allotments. All the boys had a patch and Mr Sears, (Mrs. Ireland's Dad) took us. There was an air raid shelter in the middle and when the sirens went we all piled down there and we used to sing. Being a Church of England School, the Reverend Hampton Weeks used to give us religious instruction once a week, although we used to have 20 minutes every day after the Register and every Saints day we went into the church for a service'. (J.C)

'As Miss Hawkins was to the Church School so Mr Rose was to the Council School. If boys were difficult they were sent to the Council School because it was thought they needed a School Master rather than a School Mistress.' (J.C)

'In the morning we would have prayers and hymns and afterwards Mr Rose would ask you questions. Get them right, you went to him afterwards and he gave you a penny. At the top of the Mall there was an old school and we went there for cookery lessons with Ruby Rowbotham. On a Friday Mr. Rose bought everything we made and gave it to the children. He used to buy cocoa, sugar, milk and tea for the older girls to make drinks. He did all that out of his own pocket. In those days, teachers seemed to take a personal interest in the children'. (J.L)

'Well we used to go in from 9.00 am till 12 noon and whoever got there early, they used to get you to ring the bell, it was rung again after lunch. We used to have little bottles of milk. This was the Church School and the other was the Council School, the one they go to now. There were three classes here: Teacher Bessey, Miss Marrows and Gubbie Hawkins. The Dentist always came in the middle room. I was terrified, you had to come in here and have your teeth looked at and see the Nit Nurse and the Doctor. The Dentist was Mr Cartwright and he used to shake. The old Nurse used to wear glasses and a round hat'. (M.I)



Teacher Bessey and children - 1930's

'At Easter time we went up the Downs with Teacher Bessey and everyone else came to get primroses to decorate the Church and we all went because she used to take a great big bag of biscuits and a bag of sweets and we all went because that's all we wanted. We used to go up on the Downs and get beech nuts and rose hips. Now if you pick these you are in dreadful trouble. We used to pick bunches and tie them on sticks and nobody said anything. At Christmas time we always had a party and they always gave you a present and a lovely present for all the kids. We had a lovely tea and they always gave The Reverent Hampton Weeks something little, he loved the Mickey Mouse they gave him. (M.I)

'At the Church School, the Headmistress was Miss Hawkins and she had a glass eye. There were three teachers: Teacher Bessey took the infants, Teacher Marrow the middle class and Miss Hawkins the top class. Teachers didn't get married in those days. The teachers taught you everything. Friday afternoons we played football at Vicarage Fields and the girls played rounders'. (K.W)

'I went to the Council School and the infants were in with the girls. The bigger girls were on one side and the bigger boys the other. Miss Kane took the infants and we had a big rocking horse. The alphabet was all around the classroom walls and we had to sing the ABC. We learnt parrot fashion and it just sunk in. When we were small we had to rest on a stretcher in school. Milk used to come in a third of a pint bottles. When you graduated from the infants, you went in with the boys. My first Headmaster was Skipper (an Island term for Headteacher) Rose who took the boys but he retired before I got to the boys class. My teacher was Mr Lots. I don't think he was as good as Skipper Rose but you put up with what you had. We had a little football team. We also used to play football against each other. Maybe the High Street would play The Mall. They'd play on top of the Downs where the ice cream van is now or else in Little Jane's Pit which was all grass then, like on the Downs it was all clear then'. (C.B)

'When I was at school and it was frosty, we'd sneak into the playground with buckets of water at night to make a slide for the morning. It was alright as long as the Headmistress didn't catch you'. (K.W)

'We went to school when we were 3 years old and in the afternoons they used to put us to bed. They were like little hammocks.' (R.S.)

'Half way through the afternoon you would hear 'drip, drip, drip, drip' (some had wet themselves). (K.O)

'We had to put our money in the clothing card bag which was hanging on the wall indoors, with a string through the top. If you got any money you put it in there up until November when the card finished. When you got 12 shillings on the card, Rev. Hampton Weeks would add 3 shillings. We had 4 cards, one for each child that went to school. Mum always made sure the money was there and she would go off to Ryde with the money which was about three pounds, and that was a lot of money to her, to get us clothes. You had to spend your clothing tokens in a special shop and they used to give you a free packet of pins, (long pins not safety pins)'. (M.I.)

'I remember Vic Wright when he was in Miss Marrow's class. One day he threw his milk money up in the air caught it in his mouth but swallowed it. He was taken to Hospital and when he came back showed us the coins and they were green'. (M.A.)

'Everyone came to school on a Monday morning and you got a penny stamp to stick on a card and when you had 12 you could go up to the post office and get a shilling saving stamp to put in the book'. (K.O)

'I was kept in school for doing something wrong. Guvvy gave me a taking away sum to do, I couldn't do it. I was no good at that, and she went off to dinner but before she went she got the answer to my sum, put it on her desk and put the inkwell on the top. So what did I do directly she had gone? I went out picked the inkwell up and looked at the answer and put it down. She hadn't gone to dinner but was watching me through the window. Back in she came, said 'Come here', rolled up my sleeve and really, really slapped me. I was so upset. I



Brading Church School, waiting for Edward VIII

YOUTH ACTIVITIES

Young people growing up in Brading during the 1930s and 1940s played traditional games like marbles and football. They would have owned dolls or tin soldiers and spent hours up on the Downs in the nicer weather. Although they generally had fond memories of their youth, the people interviewed had different memories about youth provision in the town. Some of them have no recollection of a Youth Club as such but recall groups such as the Guides and the Girls Friendly Society being run in Brading. In 1951, Brading had a Youth Club at the bottom of Bulley's Hill which was run by Miss Harris for the Isle of Wight Youth Service. The Youth Club moved into its present building when the Church School amalgamated with the Council School. John Hunter became Youth and Community Officer for the Island in 1953 and ran Brading Youth Club at its current site.

'There were no Youth Clubs. Mr Plumbly ran a gym in the church hall opposite the school and there were Cubs and Scouts for the boys and Guides for the girls. We had whips and tops, marbles and collected fag cards. Most men smoked and we'd ask them for the fag cards'. (C.B)

'I went to Guides in Sandown, near the station, and I'd walk into Brading and catch the train there and back. There was no Youth Club and we didn't go far at night. Living out of the village, a mile to walk seemed a long way'. (J.C)

'Up the Mall in the old school was the Youth club' (K.O)

'They used to have a piano at Youth Club, play table tennis and have sing songs. I went when I was 12 or 13 years old'. (R.S)

'We used to do embroidery and that. I remember Iris Buckett's sister Ida Cracknell, she embroidered a big cloth with a peacock on it'. (K.O)

'I used to go to G.F.S (the Girls Friendly Society) & Candidates. It was held at the church hall (opposite the school). Candidates were when you are little and G.F.S. when you are older. The Vicar, then Rev. Dennington, eventually sold the Hall. (M.I)

'There wasn't much for young people to do in the village. There was the Girls Friendly Society in the Church Hall. Betty and Joan went to that but they didn't go to Guides. Of course everyone went to Sunday School and we would have outings and things'. (J.C)

The Vectis Bowmans Archery Club

'The Club was originally formed as a result of the introduction of Archery at the International Youth Camp at Sandown in 1958. After the Camp, a few young people from Ryde decided to start a Junior Archery Club at **Brading Youth Club**.



? from Shanklin
Roy Langstaff

Edwin (Chick) Buckett
Keith Hoskins Mr.

Here Archery found its feet and from February 1959 the Junior Archery Club started to build up. Since August 1st 1960 the Club has taken part in several mainland tournaments. Finally finishing with the H.A.A. Junior Championship coming to Brading'. (C.B)



THE CHURCH

Brading had three churches during the period we are concerned with for this booklet: St. Mary the Virgin, the Methodist Church and the United Congregational Church in the Mall. The Church did play a big part in people's lives back in the 1930s and 1940s and those interviewed tended to have good memories of being involved with the church.

'The Church had a big influence in Brading. The Rev. Hampton-Weeks always knew when anyone was ill and always visited in the whole area. My dad was a bell ringer at Brading Church and I sang in the choir. You could get a few pennies for singing at weddings'. (K.W)

'Quite a lot of kiddies went to Yaverland Church. I was a choirboy there. Miss Black was the organist and choirmaster and in those days we'd earn a few pennies for singing'. (C.B)

'I was in the choir and Hampton-Weeks was the Vicar (he was very good). He used to take the boys to Portsmouth in the Summer, they used to go over and watch the Mud Larks. I remember that they had to throw pennies in the mud, that's outside Portsmouth Harbour and these kids used to dive in the mud and get the pennies, we loved watching'. (R.S)

We went to the Congregational Church at the Mall, I can't remember the Teacher's names but they were sisters and lived at Shanklin, they used to walk to church in the morning walk home for their lunch and they walked back again for the Sunday School which was in the afternoon. (B.C.)

'I used to go to church and our nippers were in the choir. Our Dad used to go and he didn't like it cos we used to fidget too much. Ash Wednesday we went with the school. We would march in 2s as there was always a service that day'. (M.I)

'We had to go to Church and Sunday School as Mother was very religious. Even when we lived at Truckles, we had to trudge all the way there and all the way back. We didn't want to go but were forced to'. (M.A)

WORK

Most of the people interviewed left school at the age of 14 and went straight into work. A common theme throughout the interviews is that very often the school found them their first job or a friend of the family knew of a position somewhere. For a couple of the interviewees, prior to gaining their first job they had not left Brading. Employment in Brading was largely agricultural, although many of Brading's young women at one time worked in the laundry up The Mall. After the Second World War, German women came to Brading to work in the laundry.



'I was fourteen in the October and in January old Guvvy called me in and said that Miss Woods who had the laundry had a situation for me. She gave me a bit of paper and it said there was a situation as a scullery maid at Bonchurch. I was ever so nervous because I'd never been out of Brading up to then'. (M.A)

'When I worked in the laundry we used to do all the Army clothes. The van used to go round and the soldiers had a towel, hankie, pants and shirt which were rolled up and it had to be sorted. Men worked the washing machines and I worked the colander. Washing went in wet and came out dry. Underneath were the sorters and packers. I was there most of the war. I sorted clothes out as they had to have a number put on them. I stayed there til my husband came home from the war. It was quite enjoyable, better than housework. There were shaker outs. When washing came out of the machine it was put into a great big thing and we had to shake the washing out. I still do it to my own washing'. (M.A)



Miss Woods, Founder of the Hygienic Laundry once the Salvation Army Citadel



*Hygienic Laundry Workers 1943
Joan Taylor, Irene Webb,
Margaret Nobbs and Ivy Nobbs*

'When I left school at fourteen I went to work in Alverstone Mill Tea Gardens, serving teas in the tea room. I had to walk all the way from Ivy Cottage in the Mall. I used to walk over the Downs, through Adgestone up the hill to Alverstone. If I was tired I would go from Alverstone to Sandown and catch the train to Brading. Sometimes it was nearly dark when I got home'. (M.M)

'I left school at fourteen and went to work in Sandown as an errand boy. That wasn't good enough as I wanted to play football on Saturday afternoons so I went to work in Cowes in the shipyard. Later I was called up in the Army and could have been exempt because of my job but I didn't tell them. I earned twelve shillings a week at Sandown but four pounds a week at Cowes. We worked on landing craft. If we made it at a lower price than quoted then we would share the difference'. (K.W)

'There wasn't much work in those days. Dad worked in the Cement Mill but sometimes he was stood off for a while and then go back again. It wasn't pleasant working there with all the dust. They used to blast out the limestone. There was a railway running through it with trucks pulled by machines. They were tipped out and went back empty and we used to ride in them, until we realised how dangerous it was'. (K.W)

'My earliest memories are going in the lorry to Hill Farm to collect wooden faggots (used for burning the limestone to make cement) for the Cement Works where Dad worked'. (K.W)

'As I got older I went into different things and started training dogs. I trained them for 12 years. I worked with an Accordionist and we did 40 shows on the Island. I used to have some of the children on the Downs and give them lessons. I never worked at Nunwell but used to train dogs for Mrs Oglander whose family at the time owned the Roman Villa. After that, I worked at the Roman Villa for 12 years. I helped take the schoolchildren round and served at the desk. The Villa had a red roof with 'Roman Villa' marked on it. Mr Cox who was a retired footman from Nunwell House worked there. I also helped the Curator who was an Archaeologist.

After working at the Roman Villa for 12 years I went to work at Morton Manor which has been owned for the past 50 years by the Trzebski family. That was 27 years ago and I'm still there. It is a lovely place and has been very important to me. I am the Chief Guide and I work there to pass the time. I have spent the happiest years of my life at the Manor and all the staff are lovely and very friendly.

People ask for me to take them round as I know so much of the History and I would like to continue as long as my health is alright. (M.M.)

'Farm workers used to tie up their trouser legs with pop straps, half way up their legs. I was in a barn at Smallbrook with Cyril and Buck Attrill on a rick serving sheaves to the man on the thresher. All of a sudden Buck jumped up in the air. We'd got lower down the rick and mice had run out, up his trouser leg and out of his shirt by his neck. That's why you tied your trouser legs up'. (K.W)

'When I was 5 or 6 years old and Mr Barns was the farmer, there was an outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease at Morton Farm, which was the first time it had occurred anywhere in the country. It was very sad as all the animals had to be destroyed'. (M.M)

'One day when I was 8 or 9 years old, my Father told me to catch a horse but the halter came off. A man driving a coach and 4 horses (four in hand) came along and he stopped and caught the horse for me and put the halter back on'. (M.M.)

'I used to help with haymaking and horses as a child. I would catch 3 horses in the field and put them in the stable and then groom and feed them ready for work'. (M.M)



*Cement Mills at
Eastern end of
Quay Lane. From
the air, 1928*

TRANSPORT

Brading Station was a busy junction for the Bembridge Branch Line from 1882 until 1953. The line not only served stations at St. Helen's and Bembridge but also the Cement Mill and St. Helen's Quay, an important harbour for freight such as coal until the mid 1920s. This line ran in stark contrast to the other rail route through Brading from Ryde Pier Head to Ventnor, which was a popular link between the ferry and the Island's main seaside resorts of Sandown and Shanklin. Throughout the 1930s, Brading was well served by the individual trades people and shops and its residents tended to work near to where they lived. People probably did not need to travel out of Brading that much during this period. Cars did not become widely available until the 1950s so people in Brading either walked or cycled to their destination prior to then. Buses could be caught from the High Street into Ryde and Sandown or Shanklin but were not as cheap as the train.

'When I was young there were no buses. When Morton Common flooded my Mum took me in a boat. She said she did that so she could say she had been in the boat. Doctor Barker drove a horse and trap and if you were ill you had to walk or wait and go at night. Sometimes my Dad took us to Newport to buy leather on a Saturday night. We walked to Sandown and caught the train to Newport, then when we came back we had to walk from Sandown to Morton'.
(M.M)

'For transport we had Southern Vectis, Walkdens and Blakes. No one used Southern Vectis because they were too dear. Walkdens was the best little bus. We didn't have bus stops, you could put your hand up and they'd stop anywhere. It was a penny half penny to go to Sandown but Southern Vectis charged two pence half penny. It was a penny to go from Rowborough to Brading. The bus stop was in the middle of the road at the Bull Ring. You would queue in the road but there wasn't much traffic'. (J.L)

'The little train went to Bembridge and you could see swans nesting on the Marsh. At Bembridge there was a turntable to turn the train around. We used to take the kids down there. We'd go about ten in the morning and about four in the afternoon, the train would go 'toot toot' on the whistle and collect us again to come home. We would run to catch the train and dress the kids on the way back. Mr Drake was a train driver. In the General Strike of 1926 all the drivers were on strike and Mr George Walker went down and drove the train'. (B.H.)

We used to have Gas Buses and they had a big balloon on the top, which was used instead of Petrol and you couldn't get it. (R.S.)

'Old Crabby (was referred to by some as the Crabby Line, while others said that's what they called the train) that used to go from St. Helen's to Bembridge and when he got to Bembridge he went on the turntable, turned it round and came back. We now walk on the path that used to be the railway line. The trains used to go to Newport,



*The Flooding of Morton Common
Original card posted 10th January 1937, Edward VIII stamp*

Freshwater, Ventnor, Sandown, Ashey. All round they had railways, a lot have gone now. I used to get a five shilling runabout ticket in the summer. For two weeks we would go all over the place. It was lovely when we had steam trains.' (R.S.)

'Brading Station was very busy. It was a junction and sometimes there would be three trains there at once. A train used to go to Bembridge and it was the quickest way to get to the beach'. (C.B)

'I remember old Wilkins. He lived in the house near Nancy Stay. He bought himself a bus, it was just big and blue, but the seats went round like a horseshoe. One day he took us all up to Nunwell with the School' (R.S.)

'It was bike or legs but mostly legs. There were steam trains which were always busy with visitors. The buses would stop whenever and where ever you put your hand up'. (C.B)

BRADING TRADES PEOPLE AND SHOPS

A lot of the houses in the High Street were previously shops and as a town, Brading was fairly self-sufficient. There were butchers, chemists, sweetshops, hardware shops and grocers to name a few. At one time, Brading accommodated five Master Bakers and their Bakeries in the High Street and in The Mall as well as two breweries.

The shops were largely run by Brading families such as the Wethericks and the Riddicks. Mr William Riddick, a former Mayor of Brading, died in 1910 and his son James took over his father's grocers and bakers business. Barbara Clarke's mother (Mrs. Duce) ran a drapery shop at the Bull Ring in Brading and recalls playing in the shop with her sister and creating their own shops outside.

'Coming down from the Church there was Mrs Chaffey's on one side. She sold bullseyes. Across the road there was the Wethericks and they made bread. Herbie Wetherick came to school. His mother was called Bertha. Nelson Smith used to make the bread. There was Simmonds and across the road Vera and Peter Scott, Mrs Bess Huck and Miss Hewson. Mr Carly had a shop where the Waxworks is and Mrs Carly had a mass of ginger hair. The Post Office was on the left and then Miss Simmonds a music teacher. At the Bullring there was a music teacher Miss Young and Mr Walker's shop. Pasha Buckett had a gas shop and Mr Newman sold food and paraffin'. (M.A)

'There used to be a shop on The Mall where the laundry was which sold lemonade in a glass. Then there was the grocer shop with Mr Percy Hollis. Further down was Redstones and Mr Bonn the chemist. Miss Betty Lewis had the draper shop and I used to buy purple ribbons there for my plaits. Mr Taylor had a sweet shop and I went to school with his daughter Connie. He had it for years and he used to mend boots as well. The Post Office was on the other side of the road and Mr Henry Loe had that near the chip shop.

Oscar Brading had a Butchers shop. Miss Black who lived in New Road was a pianist and her parents had a shop. Mr Riddick was a grocer and then there was Stay's. Ruby Dadswell's father had the funeral carriages. The draper's shop sold hankies.

Mrs Huck had a small shop where the tea garden archway is and she sold bread pudding and glasses of lemonade to all the young lads. On the other side from the Bugle, Mr Scott had a sweet shop and Mr Harker sold bread.

Mrs Chaffey had a sweet shop. Mr Reed had a sweet shop opposite the Church where the Wax Museum is and Miss Lewis had it earlier. I think maybe he sold tobacco as well'. (M.M)



*Redstone's shop 1910
with Audrey Findley as a
girl*

'We used to love playing shops and I think this was because my mother had the shop so she set us up one of the boxes outside and we would sell things to each other. We took it in turn to be the shopkeeper and somewhere my sister has a photograph of us in one of our shops and on that occasion we were selling books because the counter was full of books. I don't know what else we sold because that's the only one I could remember but again a happy time really, something mother used to let us do on Sundays. She would let us play in the shop, we had to be very careful, we couldn't untidy anything and if we took anything out of the drawer we had to put it back again, but what we loved to do was to get the rolls of ribbon and measure it because along the edge of the counter was the brass measuring rail.

We would act like my mother did, you see, like this measuring we didn't cut it of course, we had to wind it back up and put it on the roll, but we knew exactly how to measure ribbon and we knew not to fold it exactly, the way she did it'. (B.C)

'Bacey Read had a little shop near the church with a sign hanging up 'Get your back scratcher here'. Mrs Carley used to make custard ice cream. She'd stand it outside in a little urn and it was absolutely lovely. Mr Chaffey was on the left as you went down. Then there was Bertha Wetherick and Mr Harper was a real baker. A bit further on was Mr Simmond's shop near the Bugle. Then there was Mr Kilsby's shoe shop and the postman. Then there was Mr Newman's grocer shop and the other side was Mr Huck who kept pigs and they came up through the opening. A couple from London had a secondhand furniture shop, and old Mrs Hewson had it first as a sweetshop after them. Mr Percy Taylor was the shoe repairer. If you asked him for a thin sole it would be about a half inch thick and you couldn't lift your feet up'. (J.L)(B.H.)

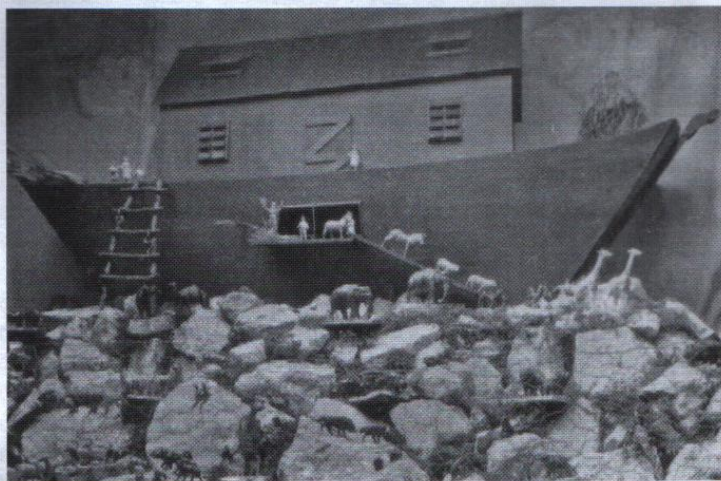
'Henry Loe had the Post Office on the left in those days. He was a watch repairer as well and if he was in the middle of repairing a watch you'd have to wait until he was finished. Oscar Brading was the butcher and Stan Jacobs used to serve and manage everything'. (B.H.)



*Old Brading P.O. with
Mr. Loe outside*

'Harry Duffett was the publican in the Wheatsheaf. He was also the coalman and had a little farm. The bar was on the right and he had a big table in the middle. He never had a till for money, he'd have to go to the big safe on the wall. He was a Canadian and a nice old chap'. (B.H)

'Across the Bull Ring was Mr Harvey who had the paper shop and sold all sorts of things. Then there was Mr Smith the chemist who came from Bembridge. Where the electrical shop is, Mr Bonn had a shop and when he died Mrs Bond put up green curtains and a little iron gate across. When I was a girl Mrs Duce had the drapers and then the Reeves bought it. Mr Wilf Stay had the blacksmiths and Harry Street was always there. There was a pet shop where the Waxworks is and where the electrical shop is Miss Harman had an arty crafty shop, then it was an antique shop. There was the Post Office and Shirley's front room was a bank. There was a gas show room in the High Street and that became Nat West. In Nancy Stay's hardware you could order anything. She sold saucepans, paraffin and in the 1930s, there was a tank outside with petrol at one shilling and three pence a gallon. Then there was Dunford's, Pete Scott's father's shop. He cut hair and sold fruit and veg. He lost a foot in the First World War. A couple from Ryde used to come to their Noah's Ark. It was huge and all the animals were in pairs. In the 1930s people used to pay to see them'. (J.C) (B.H.) (J.L.)



'Walkers was a bakers. Up on the Mall was Trotts and Reeds. We had a greengrocer called Bert Arnold. I went in to ask for some bird seed and he was as mad as hell. He said it cost me more for the bag to put it in. A.H. Arnold used to have the Coal Yard down opposite the school. Duffett just had a horse and cart and used to call out to the women: 'Want any coal?'. Mr Stay was the blacksmith, just before the school in West Street, Kath used to go in and watch as her dad used to work there. Nancy Stay was his sister. Nancy Stay and Hucks used to sell paraffin and we used to collect pickins (swill) for the pigs'. (M.I)

'There was Mr Evans and Mr Walker had the grocers shop on the Bull Ring. Mr Baccy and Mrs Reed had the drapers shop. He came from London and livened things up here. There was the butchers and Mr Kilsby sold boots and shoes where the Bugle car park is now. Opposite was Percy Buckett with the gas cookers and filaments for the gas lights. He came round with his long pole to put the gas lights on and off. There was the bakers, Mr Riddick, the Wethericks and down by Mr Kilsby was Mr Walker who sold milk, old Gran Hunt and Mr Simmonds who did milk and butter. Puddy Newman did car repairs and when he was at Annerley (on New Road) he had a penny farthing bicycle hanging on the wall. Mr Curmey didn't stay long. Nancy Stay sold petrol. There were lots of pubs'. (K.W)



Miss Black standing outside her mother's sweet shop in the High Street, 1930's

'There were 11 Pubs in Brading—The Wine Bar, Bugle, Red Lion, Wheatsheaf, Brewery, New Inn, Anglers, Proper Brewery, First & Last, Rising Sun and the Robin Hood'. (B.H.)

'You could go to Dewser Harvey's and get ten toffees for a penny and at Mrs Winter's you could get little chocolates for a farthing'. (C.B)

'Baccy Reed had a shop near the Stocks and when I was at school he'd have fireworks. He wouldn't let you have them but would put them in a shoe box and then on Firework Day, I'd go with my brother to collect them'. (K.W)

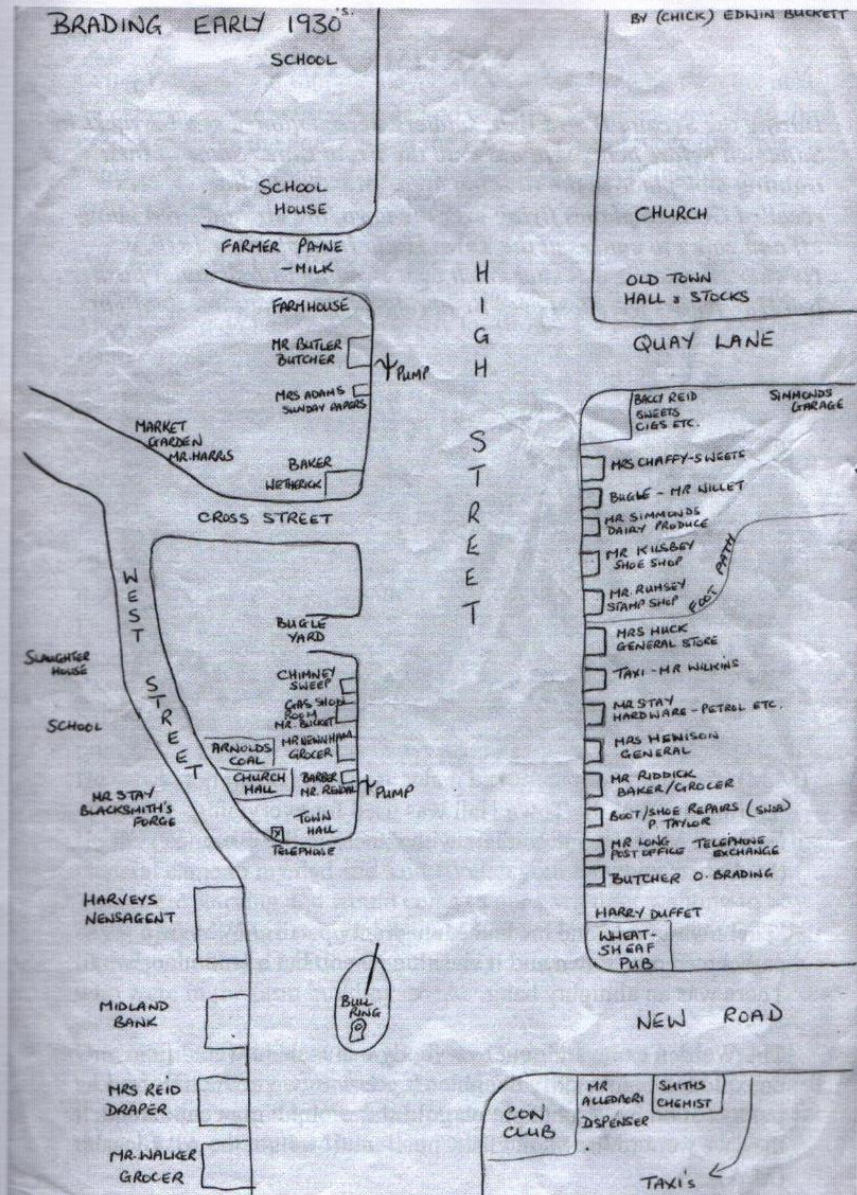
'We even had an Undertakers who also did accumulator batteries. Not many people had electricity in those days. We had gaslights and candles to go to bed'. (K.W)

'There was a blacksmith at Annerley (on New Road) called Mr. New who used to shoe all the big cart horses. In Wrax Road there is a gate and a lane that used to take them to the Blacksmiths round the back. When he retired all the business went to Mr. Stay'. (B.H.)

*Harveys became
the Post Office
when Mr. Loe
retired from
across the road*

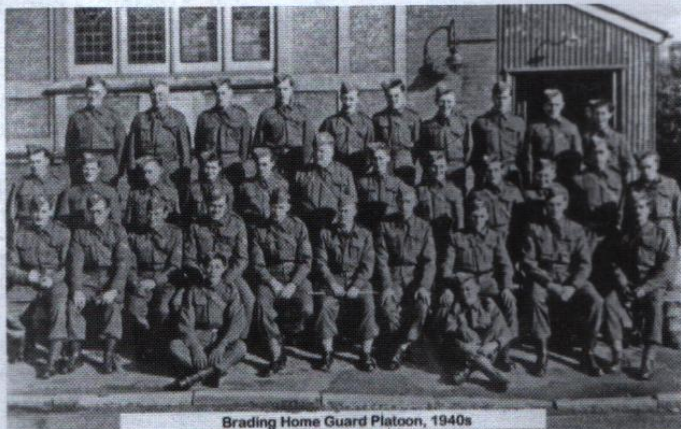


BRADING EARLY 1930's



WARTIME

During the Second World War, soldiers were stationed at a barracks in Sandown before being sent out onto the Front Line. Some of their training took place in the Brading area. Most of the interviewees recalled German planes flying over the town, the air raid siren going off and going to dances at the Town Hall. In September 1940, a Hawker Hurricane was shot down over Brading Marsh and a further two Hurricanes were lost over Bembridge during the same dogfight.



'During the War the Town Hall was used for everything. It was used as a Mess for the soldiers with dances in the evenings'.
(M.A)

'There was a raid and me and Mum went upstairs. We saw a parachute come down and it wasn't a person but a landmine. There was an almighty bang.

The Warden came and sent everybody out as there were unexploded bombs. My daughter Joyce was two at the time and I put a coat on her. Isobel put on gold shoes. I put my coat on and then we went to the Methodist Church until we got the All Clear'.
(M.A)

'After Dunkirk, the soldiers stayed six weeks in Brading then the next lot came. They practised but had no equipment to practise with so they used to stand in the doorways in the High Street and when the tanks came along they would throw potatoes at them, practising for grenades'. (M.A.)

'We were at the Bull Ring and saw some German planes come over. There was a black cross on the plane and you could see the pilot inside. They used to do hedge hopping (fly low under the radar) and machine (gun) things as they went along Brading High Street'. (I.S)

'I was working at the Laundry on The Mall and the officer used to come and ask if the girls could go to dances - they had to keep the soldiers occupied. They used to have musicians in the Army and one used to play the piano'. (M.A)

'When I was very young I heard the Zeppelins going over. I watched the soldiers of the Isle of Wight Cornwalls (their proper name was the Duke of Cornwall) march from their barracks with a band going to catch the boat to go to war. This was the First World War. In the Second World War soldiers lived in barracks in Sandown which have been pulled down. When I lived at Morton Farm, I can remember a pilot who stayed next door who used to keep his aeroplane in a field. He would tell me to keep back when he turned the propeller'. (M.M)

'In the (Second World) War there were French Canadians here and the General came to my dad and said 'Watch your daughter with them'. They were starving and would come to our back door wanting to buy cakes. I don't think many of them came back as they went to Dieppe, likewise the Royal Marine Commandos. There was the Black Watch who were in the farm buildings.

One morning, Dad went down and saw a pig dragging a side of beef around. The Army cook came out and took it back and said he'd wash it and no one would know the difference. There were two canteens for the soldiers, one in the Methodist Hall and one at Morton'. (J.L)

'There were gun emplacements in the fields and in the May when I was 8, two bombs were dropped on the other side of the railway line. It was four in the morning. We had a big cupboard and dad worried it might get blown over on top of us. All the windows were blown out and the slates blown off the roof. No one knew about it until later in the morning and Dr Hussler who was an air raid warden came out to see if we were alright. A landmine dropped opposite the Lodge and if it had been a split second earlier, Brading would have been wiped out. A German plane came down on the marsh. At the start of the war we were picking up acorns for the pigs and a German reconnaissance plane came over hedge hopping and Joan pushed me into the hedge'. (J.C)

'I remember being at school when the air raids were on. We had to go over the road to the air raid shelter. I used to be naughty and get on top of the air raid shelter and steal apples from the orchard next door. They used to have Doodle Bugs come over. I was in my house, I used to live at Broadstone. I chased down the garden one day when my dad was on leave and he said 'Rose, come here' cos that engine stopped and once the engine stopped you knew they were coming down. (R.S.)

We also had landmines in Brading, one up by Ashey. When it started we had bombs, they fell down where the laundry is, on that bit of ground, because I remember my sister Midge Sears went to call the cat in and one fell and made such a noise and you were terrified'. (M.I.)

'I went to the Church School before the War and opposite the school where the car park is it was allotments. When you got to the top class, the bigger lads had gardens there. When war came, they built two air raid shelters there. When the sirens went, my job was to get in the middle of the road and stop the traffic when the kids came out of school to go across to the shelters. There wasn't much traffic though. Don Foss was at the other end'. (K.W)

'In the 1940s, I remember frequently riding my bike back from Sandown with the guns blazing and shrapnel falling. I'd shelter under Rowborough Bridge many a time'. (C.B)

BRADING CHARACTERS

As in most towns, Brading had its fair share of characters everybody seemed to know. The story of Musher Coombes selling his wife for a gallon of beer in the Wheatsheaf Inn has been included in several books. It is thought that he was called 'Musher' because he went out early in the morning to collect mushrooms. Another character frequently mentioned in the interviews is 'Mappy' Pocock. 'Mappy' lived in Brading and was known to walk into Ryde every Sunday and go up and down the Esplanade talking to anyone who would listen.

'When we were at Rowborough, a man used to walk along backwards but I don't know his name'. (I.S)

'I knew of some of the characters in Brading. Freddy Perkins who lived in New Road used to go through the Common with his bathing costume on in the winter. I have heard of Mappy but knew his name only. I think I may have heard of Musher Coombes who was said to have sold his wife in the Wheatsheaf for a gallon of beer and she left and never came back'. (M.M)

'Old Mappy, he used to go round with this old pram and the kids used to torment him something dreadful, and they used to run away with the pram and hide it and he used to get mad, they wrote Steptoe & Son on the side'. (M.I)

'Musher Coombes – I had 2d off Pete Henry. He said 'I dare you Kath to call Mr Coombes Mr Musher'. I went up to him and said 'Hello Mr Musher' and he had to pay up'. (K.O)

'In West Street, there was Musher Coombes, Johnny Bevis, Chad Jones and Mappy. Mappy used to go around collecting pigswill with a cart which had iron wheels. At the top of West Street near where Cross Street is now, it was big market gardens run by Mr Harris and they kept pigs there. That's where Mappy took the pigswill'. (C.B)

‘Wiggy Walker used to tie up a parcel on a string and then would go and knock on a door and say ‘Mrs. So & So you’ve got a parcel’. ‘Oh, Thank you’ she would say and as she went to take it he would pull it away and run. He was also in the Town Band’. (J.L.)

‘My uncle worked with Mappy. They got him to pick gooseberries and he used to put a sheet down under the bush and whack the bush with a stick. Everything came off the bush all squashed, including the gooseberries’. (K.W.)



‘Mappy’ August 1967

HOW BRADING HAS CHANGED

Brading expanded with the building of houses in Station Road, Station Gardens, Lower Furlongs and what is known as the Kynges Town Estate. Inevitably, people from outside Brading started to move in and the close knit community that the interviewees knew from their childhood, no longer existed. Another major change was the closure of Brading's speciality shops such as the grocers, chemists and butchers with more and more people having cars from the 1950s and the opening of stores such as Tesco in the 1980s.

'There have been big changes in Brading since I was young. My friend Nelson and all the boys and some of the men sang in the church choir every Sunday and the church bells would be rung. You knew everybody then, even in Adgestone. Now I just know my neighbours to speak to but we used to go in and have a cup of tea. Now it's all people from the mainland in Brading and Adgestone. Lots of the cottages have been made bigger and it's not the same'. (M.M)

'Most of the shops have gone since the supermarkets opened, especially Tesco. There are many more houses. Where the Kynges Town Estate was built, it was all rural. Miss Violet Harris had a nursery and old Crowey kept cows there. Mr Fountain had a little farm and that was the first place they started to build. Once that started, there was an influx of people from the Midlands and London. At Station Road, until after the war when they built the council houses, there was just a big gate across with a kissing gate. Any transport would have to open the gate to get through. The last house was Mr Riddick then it was all allotments. The first council houses were built before the War in West Street for local people only. After Station Road they built Broadstone. We all had a lovely childhood here. We knew everybody and everybody knew us. It's all changed now'. (J.L) (B.H.)

'We lost lots of the shops, no Chemist, Butchers, Greengrocer, fields and trades people. The fields where the Kynges Town Estate is now were just fields, Lower Furlongs was fields, Station Gardens was allotments, the car park over from the Youth Club was allotments and had an air raid shelter'. (K.O)

'Brading was always a nice knit community where you knew everybody. We had shops for all that we required. Now there is hardly anything, just one shop. Then you could get boots, shoes and clothes in Brading'. (C.B)

'Respect for others was always taught. Nowadays it's sad that doesn't happen. There was no swearing or you'd get a clip round the ear, not necessarily from the parent but whoever was nearest you. Go home and tell your dad and you'd get another one'. (K.W)

'Life was nicer, we enjoyed it then. In our day and age we had more freedom, you could go up the Downs with your sandwiches. It's not safe to do that anymore'. (R.S)

STORIES

To end with, here are some stories which we felt we should include but do not really fit into any of the section headings. These too, we hope, give you a flavour of what it was like to have lived in Brading over 70 years ago.

'The Quarry was the rifle range and they used to put the red flag up when they were shooting. They had a little hut to keep everything in even rifles and it never got touched'. (C.B.)

'In the summertime we'd go grass sledging at Munn's Pit (Butterfly Walk) which had a hedge and bushes at the bottom. You could see the sledge track from Sandown Station. The Commandos used the pit to train in, with ropes'. (C.B.)

'Jack Pink would catch me going home for lunch and say 'Open the gate, Gal' and I'd open the gate and let the cows out, so I used to go down the little track and wait and put my hand on the back of the cows as they passed and he would be at the top waiting for me. (B.H)



*Club rifles and ammunition were impounded by the Police.
The last Chairman was C. Harris; Secretary V.R. Redstone*

'When they did some work at Nancy's old shop, they found a lot of different foreign coins under the floorboards because that would have been right on the Quay more or less'. (J.C)

'When we were on the farm, the Oglanders used to have a shoot and Mrs. Oglander expected Mum to provide a room for them all. There was a big table set out and they would come in for lunch mid day when they were shooting. The last time the General asked he said 'You hesitated, Barnes' and dad said 'Well it does make rather a lot of work for Mrs. Barnes'. He offered help but Mum did it all on her own. They used to make a mess so I suppose they didn't want that at Nunwell. The Butler used to come and heat up the mince or what ever they had. (J.C)

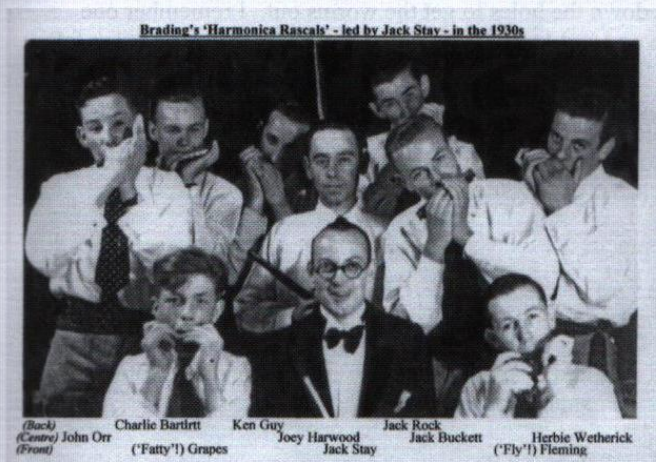
'Every afternoon after school I used to deliver milk to Morton Manor. I used to take a can of milk and a measure which I have still got. I would measure the milk out for the maid who wore a black dress. I would ring the bell and she would have a jug ready. This was when the Fardell family lived there. After the Fardells it was owned by the Russell Family'. (M.M.)

The "Mall Gang" in the Rifle Range (aka "Bulley's Pit") 1935



Left to Right: Phil Wade, Don Woodmore, Gerald Wade, Vic Hallett, Gordon Trott, Rosemary Trott, Jack Trott & Stan Harbour

'John Stay used to have a band called the Harmonical Rascals'. (K.O.)



'Our mother used to say to the nippers at weekends, go up on the Downs and get a bag of wood, and when you get back put it under the copper so I can boil the clothes, as Monday was washing day'. (M.I)

'We used to go to the slaughter house in West Street next to Mary Eastmans. We used to go down there and watch them slaughter the animals with old Stan Jacobs, who used to work at Oscar Brading's shop. He got fed up with us hanging around the door, so he chopped something off and said 'Take this to your Mother and clear out'. He used to give us a bit of liver. Then we would go to the Blacksmiths with Uncle Harry Street, he used to shoe the horses in there. He would tell us to 'clear out' as we would get burnt by the furnace. We were everywhere we shouldn't have been'. (K.O)

'I went down to the Sewer Beds once with my brother John. We went everywhere together. I had a great big woolly dress and he had a white jumper. We hadn't been there for ages, it was all flat and square. We thought we could walk on it and be alright. We fell in, and didn't we stink. Our Mother went mad and said 'How am I going to wash these clothes?' (M.I.)

'We used to go fishing. We lifted up slabs, I had a tin of mustard and used to put it down the holes to get the worms out. I remember one day Jim Harwood and I used to go down and he let the paving slab fall down on my fingers and crushed three of my fingers at the top'. (K.O)

'We used to go out in the old charabanc (coach). We went right round the Island. There used to be a Queen Mary cut out of a hedge at St. Lawrence'. (R.S)

'Dad used to tell a story of the Blacksmith's shop, about how The Old Boys all used to get in around there sitting on the forge of a winters evening, smoking their pipes just reminiscing and some of the boys in the village got some gunpowder (out of fireworks) and run across the road, set light to it and it went up with a whoosh and all the cobwebs came down and they all came out all black'. (J.C)

'Friday night was always bath night. There was no bathroom in those days. My poor mother, I don't know how she did it but she would drag the Galvanised tin bath and put it in front of the fire and we would have our weekly bath and if you were unlucky and she remembered, we had to have a dose of Syrup of Figs. My sister and I both hated it but it was considered the thing to do to keep you regular. We just had to swallow it and get on with it'. (B.C.)

WHIT MONDAY 1945

'Everyone taking part, also those watching assembled in Station Road. First all those in Fancy Dress were judged by Mr. Fowler and Mr. Barton. Then we marched to the Vicarage field where during the afternoon races, high jump, obstacle race etc. took place. There were cash prizes for 1st, 2nd and 3rd places. This was handed out to us by the man I knew as uncle Char (he lived in Quay Lane in a house opposite "The Pound"). I remember these as happy sunny days, when I went home with prize money in my pocket !!!

I hope all those who see this photo will remember it as happy days too.

Lorna Quinn (nee Downer)'





*(M.M.) Mrs Irene Munns
nee Morris*



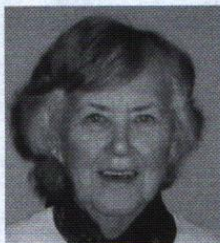
*(R.S.) Mrs Rose Shears
nee Pomfret*



*(K.O.) Mrs Kath Owen
nee Street*



*(B.H.) Mrs Betty Howell
nee Fowler*



*(J.C.) Mrs Jean Cook
nee Barnes*



*(J.L.) Mrs Joan Legg
nee Barnes*



*(V.I.) Mrs Violet Ireland
nee Sears*



*(C.B.) Mr Edwin Buckett
known as "Chick"*



(K.W.) Mr Keith White



*(I.S.) Mrs Isobel Saben
nee Nobbs*



*(B.C.) Mrs Barbara Clarke
nee Duce*



*(M.A.) Mrs Margaret Attrill
nee Nobbs*

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upkeep of Brading Station.

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