

Mrs. Madeline THOMAS'S conversation.
Recorded August 21st 1995.

What do you want to know ?

[Why did the Barton-Wrights choose Broughton ?]

My father was out in Africa all his life and when he retired he said "Where should we go?" He went to Jersey to start with; cheap income tax, drink and cigarettes practically given to you. So we went to Jersey. That was in the days before aeroplanes and it is not a very pleasant journey. As we were at school and it meant we were toing and froing he decided that was no good.

He said "Right, we will go to England." He went to the west country and didn't see anything he liked. Someone, an agent, showed him this and he liked it and bought it. No family connections here at all. He added a wing, an incorporation.

[The B-Ws are doing up a cottage, said Robert Aitken.]

Yes, that one [Woodslee], he bought that later. When we first came in 1927, summer '27, there was an old couple living in the cottage there. I can't even remember their name, they were a dear old couple. [Baldwin?] Baldwin. When they died, Mother said to my father, "It's so on top of us, let's buy it then we can control who lives there." So she did it up, put in a bathroom and loo etc. Our first tenant stole the coal, our coal. The next tenant didn't pay the rent. So my parents said "This is no good, let's sell it," and so they sold it. To Quihampton and Sharp. They sold to Joyce Bowman.

[Woodslee. Did you alter it?]

The end bit was a barn, the far end, was a sort of barn, I don't think we did anything to that. The bathroom and loo was downstairs. She did quite a lot, quite a lot needed doing. No. She didn't make it bigger. The barn was wooden, joined up to the cottage. Someone who bought it made it into stone, the Elstons, she was the person who turned it into stone, removed the wooden slats. They went from there up to the Square.

When I married in '31, I didn't really know all that was going on, except, I came for the five years of the war. Quihampton and Sharp were in there during the war, after the war Joyce bought it.

[The Old Friends Club ?]

It was well established when I came, I think, the person who started it was Miss Bompas from Quorn Cottage, she started it. We've just had our fortieth anniversary, which takes it back to 1955, so it had been going for ten years by the time I got here. I suppose it was something for the old people, meeting twice a month like we still do, toddling off to the hall, having lectures, film shows, teas etc.. I was really not here between '45 and '65 except on holiday or to see about the house when Mother died. [It had nothing to do with the canteen ?].

[The canteen at the Baptistry ?]

I ran it. I think it came under the umbrella of the British Legion, Mother was president at the time. Dear old Wardle gave us permission. More or less, Mother, I and Wardle ran it. I did all the organising. All the village organisations, like the Chapel, the Church, the W.I., the British Legion, all had a

night. It was open for all seven nights, each of the different organisations counted out the buns on its night,

Therefore I knew Ann's father very well; he was very prim and proper and I used to shock him terribly. I'd say "Give me a little bit extra." "Oh, I couldn't do that!" I was very fond of him, he was a dear. We got on very well, and old Ferguson. They used to bake cakes for me. Every cup of tea, every sandwich, every slice of cake had to be registered on a bit of paper because according to what I sold, I could get. Suddenly they decided they would let us have chocolate so I got them to bake me these rather ghastly cakes that they used to bake down at Hinwoods. I used to put chocolate on top, gosh, they which went like a bomb.

I don't think it had a name, just Broughton Canteen, presumably. Mrs.Aitken and I used to do Sundays; Evan being overseas and I didn't want to go off and do anything on a Sunday, I just did it. The British Legion would have a night, that was Mrs.Love and Miss Grimaldi would have done that. Mrs.Pearce might have been the W.I., each group found its own people.

I went down every morning. I can't remember who was treasurer now, isn't it funny; we took quite a lot of money. I went down every morning and counted up what sandwiches and so on had been sold, and how much more bread they would want, and marge and so on, and get in the stores every day.

The different organisations used to come down, I suppose it was from six to ten, can't remember that even. Four or five used to go. I, on Sundays, had Mrs.Aitken because she liked to come in; an awful nuisance with her bath chair but, on the other hand, Sunday could be rather a hairy night and she would quell any riot. "Gentlemen, gentlemen, I think we are making rather too much noise," when they started throwing the chairs around. I was quite young in those days, so I was pleased to have an older female.

Gwen and Doris Lywood used to come and cut sandwiches for me, and Ivy Brown - that was my team. We made sandwiches and boiled up tea or coffee.

After the end of the war, there was no more need. Where we were, we were busiest just before the invasion. We had all the Americans up at Hildon. After the invasion started it fizzled out. The money, I expect, went to the British Legion. The money was ploughed back into the food. We gave the Baptists some, but I don't think it was called the 'Baptist Canteen'.

Mother (Legion) and Wardle (Baptists) they were the king pinions. The Red Cross had nothing to do with it but, very probably, they had a night. You have got to get seven nights, W.I.; Baptists; Church; British Legion; not the Mothers Union, Mrs.Hobbs; Methodists, I think might; I don't think the Red Cross. How many have we got now? I can't remember, you know. I am trying to think of the people I used to deal with, the heads of the nights, as it were, and I can't even remember them. Mrs.Love and Miss Grimaldi were W.I. I think I just did it because I ran the canteen, I did Sunday and ran it, as it were. I can't remember the Home Guard doing it. The Shingletons were'nt here then; they bought the house after the war.