

Tape recording by Mr. Alan Stone made at The Tallet, Horsebridge Road, Broughton on January 28th 1988.

I was born at Queenwood, in 1913, in one of the cottages, one each side of the Drive going down The Avenue, yes I suppose you'd call them Keepers Cottages; where the keeper is now – I was born in the first one. *Nearest to Broughton?* I'm not talking about the Avenue; I'm talking about the other avenue. You go up Broughton Hill and you go through the Avenue and you come to a cottage on the right and one on the left, before you come out on the main road. I was born on the left hand side. *Not the ones where Sparkes lives now, the Musselwhites lived opposite, now Hill Lodge?* No, not there. The old Musselwhites, the very old ones, they were ancient.¹

My father was a farm labourer. Yes, my mother and father died in the yard cottages at Queenwood Farm, my sister lived there. But you've gone on too quick if you want to know a little bit more. I wasn't very old when we moved, I was somewhere about five years old. I was going to say where we moved to. You know the laundry, the laundry house [in Queenwood Farm], well, that wasn't a house then, it was a big laundry room, with drying areas, ironing looms and all that sort of thing. They converted it into what was supposed to be a house. You had one lot of windows that high and another lot up the top but there was no floor up there, it wasn't built to have a floor up there. Anyway we moved in there; it was a roughish old shop I can tell you. In what we called the backhouse was an enormous copper. I'm talking this belonged to the school, it was burnt down. Yes, Queenwood College, that belonged to them. It had enormous beams, round beams running through that. They used to boil the washing and clean it, shirts, towels, sheets and all that and they used to hang it over there and the heat from this boiler, this copper dried it. Then they had a long ironing room, where the girls got in there and ironed the cloths.

I was there for many years, and my father, on a Sunday afternoon he used to walk up and lean over the gate; I can remember it as well as anything. Lean over the gate and these student boys, students' fathers and mothers used to come and look at the ruins on a Sunday afternoon. Of course, he could tell them all about the college and all that. He used to finish up with more money, sixpences a time, than what he had all week. He never worked anywhere else. He remembered it being burnt down. He worked for Dalgety's, he had 12 no, 10 shillings a week and my mother had four of us in three years and ten months – that's how she got so bent.²

In those days they didn't have any overtime money. He worked on the farm for ten shillings a week; at least he did anyway. I think if he qualified for a carter he might have had 12. He was a labouring type of person, he had 10 shillings a week and he had to work all the summer on the farm for nothing and then the farmer used to come round and say, "Here's your Michaelmas money." Half a guinea! He had half a guinea a year for working all the summer, all the hours that God made, night and day, Sundays – he had half a guinea for it. 10/6d for all the summers overtime, that's all he had; you couldn't feed properly. We hardly had anything to eat at all; hardly anything. I've known my father go out in those trees and kill a blackbird and pick him and cook him in front of the fire. Oh! It was bad times, terrible.

As the war was finishing, I'll never forget this, I was a little tiny kid then, I was five then, in 1918; down the bottom of Queenwood, going in the farm, there was some

Canadians³ parked in there, they were just going off back home and they opened a tin of corned beef. Cor! I was that hungry. Of course, when you tip a tin of corned beef out, there's a lot left in there. I put my hand in and went to pull'n out and it was like a mouse trap – the more you pulled the worse off it got. I cut my hand right across there and they had to come and let me out of en.

School? Can I make a long story of it? I think myself it is marvellous. My mother had an awful habit, if you had a toothache you stopped home; if you had a cold, you stopped home; I was the only one of the family that wouldn't wear it. She said, "What you going to school for, you little bugger. You're not going up that school with that toothache, like that." My face was all out here. I said, "I bloody well am." I went down there and I said, "Look out, Sir. She's just coming up there and she'll take me out." It was Charlie Hoare, headmaster. "She's going to take me out, she's going to take me back home again. I've got the toothache, right out here." He said, "That's all right Boy." She come in and said, "Where's that little bugger? I'll wring his bloody neck." She said, she did, she said it in the classroom. "Come on" she said. "Look Missus, he said, Your boy will be all right." She said, "He can't stop here, he can't stop here with a tooth like that and a face out like that." "Missus!" he said, just like that. He got rid of her. And at that time we had a dentist come to the village and he had a room in next the Top shop, you know, the thatched house. *Where Miss Wall lived?* Yes. In there, going up them steps on the right hand side, he had a room. "Come on with me, Boy", He said, the schoolmaster said. I got hold of his hand and went off up there; he didn't say nothing about having a tooth out. We got up there. He said, he said to the dentist, "Take this tooth out of this boy, will you?" Sat in a chair, didn't give me any anaesthetic and he said, "Hold his hand, will you?" He fetched the tooth and he said; "Now you'll be all right boy. You'll be all right by tonight." A shilling it was, he paid a shilling. Charlie Hoare, he paid the shilling. I went back to school and by night, my face was quite all right.

Getting to school? Mother, Oh, Christ, she was against everything. You know that young brother, that 17 year old young one, Eric? She used to push him to school 'til he got 12 year old; push him in the bloody pram. Bloody lunatic! I put up with something up there, Sir. The school that's up there now, Council School; Charlie Hoare was the first schoolmaster there. Anyway I won't ramble on about my life, anymore of that. So I said, I said this to the schoolmaster, mind; "I don't know quite what to do quite. I said. My old mother up there says I'm 14, got to leave, earn, got to leave school, and stop here." He said, "I'll think about that, Boy." So he thought about it and he said, "Boy, the best thing you can do is not to leave school, he said, keep going to school and I'll tell you what I'll do with you, Boy. You stop here until I find you a job. I'll find you a job," he said. Of course I went on to school after I was 14, I used to walk down there, going to school there. He used to sign me in, you know and if it was something I'd already known, I didn't bother with it. If it was something I was a bit backward with, which I must admit, I was, he used to say, "You'd better stop here this morning, Boy".

Do you know, at that time, he built his own house? Did you know this? Yes, where Mrs. Lever lived, well, he built that. But it was all in a rough state, all up through there, no plants, no borders, no vegetables. He was on a good thing. He used to say, "Boy. You go on up home and see Mother; she's got a job for you." He used to call his wife, 'Mother'. I used to walk on up there and have a cup of cocoa and something to eat