

Tape recording by Mrs Annie Ruddle, nee Marsh, at Hinwood Close, Dixons Lane on February 2nd 1988.

I was born in 1902 in the Pound, where a doctor has been living, the end one [*No. 4, Roy Blake fell off the scaffolding when he was extending it.*] They would have to [extend it] - it was only two bedrooms, a living room and a scullery room or kitchen. My grandmother, Mother's mother, lived in not the next house but the house after that [2] they kept cows. My mother was one of 14, she was Kate Marsh; she was Kate Fay when [before] she was married. It was a bit awkward to say, I think she was called Kate Williams but nothing was ever said about that; so I don't know. My name was Marsh. My mother had 14 that lived, 14, 2 or 3 died when they were born, *14 in two rooms*, yes. Mrs. Brown was next door to Mother. The next house was my Grandmother and they kept pigs, they were kept on our piece of ground, we had a nice piece of green because we were the end house. As long as I can remember pigs were kept there, always two. One for the house and one for sale, to keep us going. Just over the hedge was where Ted Lansley lived [bungalow].

We lived one end and the Lansleys lived at the other end [1], that's why we always knew each other. We had the Pound and everybody collected there for games and whatever we did, on The Pound. That's where Arthur Noyce lived that did the wheels, you know, all the carpentry. They had a little sort of a shed near the road. My brother, he was a cripple, and he used to spend hours watching him, he couldn't do anything else much, well until he went away. After that Mr. and Mrs. Lansley took the Tally Ho, Ted Lansley, after Val was married they lived there, the bungalow down below. It was his father who lived at the other end of our cottages. Mr and Mrs Greenwood live there, I think Mrs. Lansley must have looked after him; it was all one house. I think I must have been away when he died or whatever happened;

I went to school at the old school, the Church School which is now The Flats. Of course, my brother went there as well. As soon as The Council School was built we all went there. I was born in 1902, that was the only school there was. I was the youngest in the family. My sister died last year, she was 92. We are a long living family, really, aren't we? My brother was only two years older than me. I don't think he went to the Dowse School. I really don't know what he developed, he became paralysed when he was four, I was only two then but I do remember him running, we were dressed in petticoats then. We had a very long scarf, at least Mother did and cut it in half and the only time I can remember seeing him walking, Grandmother Fay lived in the other house and we used to run back and forth. I had forgotten my scarf or something but I can remember seeing him now, running with my scarf to put round my neck. That's the only time I remember him walking.

Polio or something like that? Well, I wondered. Mother said, there was a heavy storm or something and we were swinging on the beech trees at the back of the houses and mother said he was swinging on them with other children and as he came in, whether he became ill straight away, we thought we were going to lose him. I think he was paralysed all over but the leg came back to his thighs but his legs were just like thin sticks. He went to Salisbury hospital for some time and he also went to a home in Chipping Norton, he was there for a time and after that he came home. He went to the Council School; he did go up to the Council School. *On crutches?* Oh no, he walked

there but he used to crawl everywhere. I don't know why, it just happens. He became friendly with another person and they went away to live together. He died aged 47.

Yes, I went away. Do you remember Cecil Robinson's auntie? Cecelia, no Cordelia, she had a sister, Mrs. Peters, he was a schoolmaster in Winchester. I had left school then I think, she asked me, "Would I like to go and be mother's help?" So I started there and I was there for about a year. I finished with the Peters, as the baby was going on. Then I went to another place in Lymington; that was a dentist but I didn't like that. He was a heavy child and our bedroom was right up two floors - all those stairs to carry the baby so I am afraid I packed that in. When I took in the Church Times and saw this advertisement for in Croydon and I went to Croydon and stayed there seven years until I was married.

Where did Alf come from? Alf was a Broughton. Granny Ruddle, her name was Stone. I think they used to live in the big house down Rookery Lane, I can't remember which house it was. They had a very big family too, that was Stone. Ruddle, I don't know anything about Alf's people really. No, wait a minute. Alf's father and a brother lived at Queenwood; that was Harry Ruddle; they had no children but they adopted a daughter. When I knew him he lived down where Mrs Hamblin lived [Moulands Cottages], in one of those houses. His father was a very nice fellow, he used to be the baker for Thomas Hinwood, at the top, the shop, you know, he used to work there. He was a lay preacher, he used to preach. He had three sisters, his sister Leticia died two years ago, but sisters go away to wherever their husbands working, don't they?

Alf, I suppose we always knew each other as far as that goes but the time we took notice of each other was the time we had the club; we had a club in the old Scout Hut. That was where we had our lovely times. It was really a nice club because everybody, Ted Lansley, everybody, we all gathered there, we learnt to dance, we had dances. There was never anything nasty about it, if you know, it was really nice. Sometimes Ruby was with us - that's Ruby Dowthwaite, she will remember that. We used to play whist every night. It was a very nice club - there was nothing nasty about it. That was in the Scout Hut at the back of the Hall, next to where Miss Mitchell lived, over down there, that hall, [the Scout Hut], before the hall was built. I remember the hall being built. There were plays. You've no doubt heard about the Briscoes, where my husband was head gardener, they were very good about making plays. It was really very very nice. It used to be lovely going there; it is good to remember that; it was really very nice. But you've got to make it so, be friendly and so.

My husband started at the Leigh's, Slocombe Leigh, that's where the Sewters live. He started there because Gussie was one of the daughters: no, I think her father and mother died and she just lived there - I am not quite sure, but there were two sisters, Vera and Gussie. They were just a little older than me, they used to make wreaths and that kind of thing. They had all that land; they had all Plough Gardens, you see, because it was the nurseries then. Yes, Alf worked for Slocombe Leigh and then he went up to Garlogs, he was working there for a time and then he went up to Hildon and stayed there until they went away and then he went down to Bossington, he became head gardener there. Dawson came after the Briscoes went away. He was American, wasn't he? Or did he marry an American? Then of course, the war came and they just went away. He was in with the Faireys for planes. The Briscoes went to Dun, Dun - I think it was Dunwood Manor, just up from Dunbridge. We did hear from them at Christmas, they came up

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Dear Jacky,

I have been going through the tapes, getting them ready to go to the Sound and Film part of the Hampshire Record Office and found I hadn't transcribed your mother's tape. I had indexed it but not completed the transcribing process.

It is a pity the laughter doesn't transcribe, but I know she enjoyed making the tape.

I hope you too will enjoy reading about her life and history.

With best wishes,

Robert Parr.