

DOP/01/020

Mr. Jack Rowledge
Born 1905
22 Caledonian Road
New Bradwell

005 Born and lived in Thompson Street until 1916. Father worked in Print, started work at 6.00 am.

014 Manoeuvres – London Scottish Regiment came – camped in Old Recreation ground at Wolverton. Got ear smacked, when marching in off main road, aged 8, he got rooted to spot and got clout because he was late for school. Saw men about in evenings in pubs.

038 To him War made little effect, just heard parents saying they'd have to tighten their belts. Mother said, well make the best of it lad, don't leave anything because later on perhaps we shan't be getting the stuff and she was right. Everybody had garden or allotment.

050 Has Standard 8 film of bucks T.A. Hussars Band going to station in 2nd World War.

059 Can't remember what he was doing when War declared – only neighbours talking over the wall. Lost nobody in the family only one relative, an uncle, went away and he came back safely.

067 Uncle told him to write to him – but the censor wiped out stuff – e.g. I had an orange the other week, I haven't had one for weeks. Brought letter home – a mass of lines. Done for safety, so enemy wouldn't get to know.

087 Uncle didn't say much about trench life, only spoke of cold and wet in winter.

110 Happiest time of life Friday evening when Dad came home. Didn't open wage packet, handed it to wife, four children 1d. each bought a farthing worth of sweets.

121 Effect of War on school. Did mock fighting in playground. Collected blackberries – happiest part of schooldays took them to school for jam. also did gleaning, most families had a few chickens. Can't remember having eggs too often – couldn't understand it probably all went into cooking, boiled eggs only once a year. In 2nd World War had small holding with two pigs killed a year, chickens etc.

160 Very happy community in Bradwell – went to Wolverton went into different atmosphere – still so today. People leaving N.B. and buying new homes in Wolverton.

180 Writer in "Daily Herald" said that if you went to a club – Wolverton without a collar they wouldn't look at you and nobody would speak to you, but in N.B. everybody would accept you. Came about with people trying to live above themselves.

190 Neighbours never the same in Wolverton. Rented a house. Nobody as neighbourly. Because they were property owners they thought themselves superior.

210 Remembers school days with caretaker as Father Christmas – J.R. recognised him, At certain times of the year (Sep. perhaps) Father Guest came round into school (Church School). You can all clear out, I'm giving you a holiday today. remembers it one year, but probably happened more often. Used prerogative to show it was a Church School. Children all scared stiff of him had a tone of voice that boomed down on you. All kiddies got round the corner to get out of his way. Children only liked to see him coming down the hill with his feet up on his bike. Doesn't think he meant to be frightening, just his manner of speech. Never knew whether he'd speak to you or give you a dirty look.

254 Biggest story re Father G was finding that Church was not consecrated for marriages – no details.

260 Went to Prim Methodists in Bradwell, then in Wolverton. Went there 'till sixteen.

287 Moved to new school. fitted in fairly well. got job as milk boy for Mr. Beasley. Took milk to all the personalities in Wolverton district – Rev. Hanett, Dr. Penny etc. – often late for school. Mr. Hipsley the head gave him a rap one or two times. so some mornings he didn't get no breakfast milk – then got another rap. Boss went with him and had a good go at him – then didn't get into trouble of late. Went with pony and flat and collected milk from Beasleys' farm at Hanslope. Went early to do Blackberrying there. Took them into class and got pat on head for that.

325 Day he was 13 went to school at 9.00 o'clock, had to see headmaster, left school and started work at the Print at 10 o'clock (1918). Rather than go another year father got job for him. He knew nothing about it, just told by father to take the job. This was parental control. Had to have the money with eight children.

345 Got up at 6.50 a.m. Never drew a penny. Another had his wages in milk butter and cheese. In 1920 after men came back from War he lost job – went back to the milk – a few more months there before going back to Print again.

360 Mr. Beasleys' farm was at Hanslope, but brother had depot in Church Street next door to Kings' the bakers. Had ponies kept beyond home in Western Road. Took milk and bakers' ponies down before 7.00 a.m. Had to carry 2 x 5 gallon cans around the streets with them from age of eleven or twelve. Milk collected night before to deliver in morning, pony and trap went off in morning, to collect rest of days supply. Milk served out with scoops into jugs, filled up and covered with lace doily to keep the dust out. Some houses wanted second delivery later in day.

420 Got job because older brother was already working there. he got paid 7 or 8 shillings a day – two hours in morning, three at night. Went to bed about 8 or 9 at night – nothing to keep you up. In evenings after school would help on allotment. Just before sunset would go home for supper, then bed.

445 Liked porridge, not much bacon, except high days and holidays. Bread and jam. In winter had a lot of boiled suet puddings, bread puddings, rice puddings bacon and onion dumplings, treacle puddings. everything made. never remembers going hungry. didn't have fish and chips. Staple diet, potatoes flour bread. Had rabbit, not much chicken – kept for eggs rather than meat, perhaps a cockerel at Christmas.

506 Father was a printer. Dad went to work at 6.00 a.m. took sandwiches, came home at 8.00 p.m. at night whilst at Bradwell. In Wolverton went in at 6.00a.m. J.R. would take breakfast in, dinner in, tea in, came home at 9.45 p.m. to have a bite of supper and would then go back at night. Would work through from Monday morning to Wednesday night, day and night and then normal hours for the rest of the week, including Saturdays to 1.00 p.m. He died a young man aged 59. Industry riddled with consumption 1914-19. Hundreds lost their lives – from paper dust and lead in composing section perforation dust. At one time, the third worst industry in the country, bakery first, then mines and lead workers. Practically everybody had their own skeleton living. You could hardly go to a dozen houses and not find somebody dying of consumption. Dad died in 1929. Didn't just work long hours in war but long beyond it. J.R. remembers in last war, went to work 8.00 a.m. in morning and came home at midnight and never saw wife or youngsters seven days a week.

593 Never worried as a child about father not being there. Happiest time was Friday night when they got pocket money. Dad a good old stick – can't remember him belting any of them. Large families caused less trouble than small ones – each had to look after the younger ones.

625 Remembers getting round piano, eldest sister playing piano and father played euphonium. Played it in Bradwell Band. Sat round piano singing hymns after Sunday Chapel. Also played in McCorquodales band – but packed up before 1914 war.

620 Annual outing in 1914, doesn't think they went anywhere. Remembers Blackpool and Yarmouth outings. When on train – barrels of beer in one coach – to get drink had to go to end coach to get beer. Remembers one man being devil with girls at work, when he was out of carriage they told his wife. (see synopsis of 1976 tape for end of story)

Side Two

000 Outing was one day of year when people had paid holiday. Never had holiday during war. Can't remember outings during war, because they could not get trains. Outings were on August 1st.

019 Remembers Blackpool outing. Younger sister had clothes tucked in. Saw elder brother and sister in sea, called her. She ran into sea, went head over heels, father ran down beach and rescued her. She was screaming. When the others came back they had a smack across the ear.

032 1915 Strike Dad didn't come out. One evening the girls walked streets. Stopped outside the houses of everybody who was working. In front room watching them. They were booing and yelling like mad. It left a black pit in my memory, seeing nastiness that existed. But the poor buggers only had about eight shillings a week, were treated terribly men had always worked harder, done the majority of the work been paid and treated better. About 60 men and 600 girls. Men produced the work and the girls finished.

065 If dad was walking around Bradwell at the time of the strike he got a dirty look. When in front room in family J.R. remembers dreading what would happen next. happened in evening

when at home. Can't remember him being accompanied home. Ill feeling rubbed up on Mum, didn't want to go to shops. Labourer men came out, not skilled men. Father came out in 1926 – not anti-Union, Labour man. J.R. didn't come out in 1926 – as he was non-productive – an apprentice – although in the union – just cleaned window, did dirty work.

103 No consequences on father following settlement of strike as far as he can remember.

124 Had no interview when first joined McCorqs' all arranged by father. On first day went into wastepaper department and sorted white trimmings from coloured. White scrap fetched bigger price. Did that for three or four months then went into machine department. Probably again because of Dad. Nobody asked J.R. what he wanted to do, he was happy doing the milk.

165 No separation socially between Print and Work people.

170 Mother did washing for people, Mon. Tues. Wed. Thurs. Fri. and Saturday did ironing on Saturday evenings J.R. delivered it. Maybe halfpenny or farthing change for him,. Mums hands twisted through arthritis. Worked mainly for shopkeepers and foreman inside. Did it for "Siggs" a shop in the Square. Foreman and J.R. collected washing on his bike. Very large pile of washing would be 4/- worth. Also kept house for eight. Mother never forced them to do anything – but all family used to go to allotment to help. Dad although no drinker would be given halfpenny pint of beer by Mum. Brother loved drink and hated gardening. Dad did paths and J.R. did rest. Brother always got to bottle before J.R. and would have biggest swigs. Thinks Dad left bottle to encourage them – had little himself.

325 At front row in circus. A large liberty horse fell against them. Mother was pregnant. Brother born with twisted feet. People paid subscription to Northampton hospital – he went once a month to people he delivered milk to, to get four hospital letters for his treatment. Did this for eight years. The subscribers were given power to allocate free hospital bed and treatment for those in need in return for their money Hospital letter " – one week free in hospital. went into Great Ormond Street for 4 years from age of 9 months. Sent out as incurable. Then went to Northampton for another four years. After load of operations can now walk.

271 Happened at John Lords Circus in field where Stacey Avenue I now, opposite the cottages. every Friday night went to get letter from Parsons, the Works Manager, Good Samaritan societies. Would have had to pay if hadn't got letters. majority gave them without unpleasantness.

305 Remembers goose grease and brown paper for bad backs. Iron on backs with hot iron. Lot of people I had ringworm. Had ringworm cups. Brass egg-cups. Poured vinegar on penny and placed that on the spot.

331 Mother Mikhell's cough sweets – 3d packet – one of best cures of day. Early 1920's onwards.

343 Remembers Empire Day at school – put flag up and stood round it, but JR didn't understand what it meant. Less done during War.

362 When doing milk had an officers charger that had been injured. Never knew what it was going to do. Would go along, a bit of paper fly in front of it and it would set off at a wild gallop in opposite direction. Couldn't stop it until it tired. Couldn't get proper horses as they were all needed for war. It always snapped. One night took it to field. Next day – dead – kicked to bits by other horses.

396 Chapel – had to live a life of religion on Sundays – not allowed to do anything else. Sunday school in morning and afternoon. Chapel in evening sit around piano and play hymns later. Couldn't shout about on Sunday.

416 Played "Tin Can Urkie" and "Tip Cap", "Snakes and Ladders". everybody did a little scrumping – throwing a ball over and going to fetch it back.

430 Doesn't think War drastically changed Wolverton – politics came but nothing nasty between political parties. Before War went round streets singing God Bless Harry Verney and Chuck Old----- in the cut. – but that was gangs of kids. He didn't take part in this.

472 As a teenager only interested in girls – not so much at 13. Met them at Chapel socials, bazaars. Walked down to canal mainly hanging around in main roads in Stony Stratford High Street. Policeman would come and push you into road if you were blocking the pavement. Never any unpleasantness.

501 Didn't go to cinemas much as a lad.

510 P.O.W. camp in 2nd World War at Haversham. They had two conscientious objectors boarding with them. worked on land with P.O.W.s lived on farms one at farm in Hanslope where got milk from.

545 Family didn't take much interest in First World War – too busy to worry in Summer, talked a little about it in long winter evenings. No worry – because they had nobody involved. Schools had maps – with flags for troop positions – showing daily advances or run backs.

610 In last War Germans spy in McCorquodales who photographed the sidings worked in drawing office – was he just interested in trains rather than spying. Showed photos to girls and girls got talking.

642 Can remember when 12 or 13 playing with girls and boys in Rec. 8.15 p.m. – father came and hit them all the way home – stuck in his memory – can't remember his father hitting them – never learned fear.