

## **DOP/01/022**

Mr. William James Hood (born 17.2.1905)  
47 King Edward Street  
New Bradwell

005 Born in Northampton, moved to Bradwell at 11 months old. Two brothers – oldest still lives in Wolverton. Father out of work came to Wolverton Works for job. Ex-military bandsman, father played in Bucks Volunteer Band, Northants Volunteer Band, Wolverton and Bradwell Bands. Major drummer in 16<sup>th</sup> Lancers. All three brothers have been drummers in dance bands. WJH still in choir.

026 Sitting on corner of Bridge Street (lived in Spencer Street then) when heard war had broken out. A member of “Bridge Street Corner Gang”. “Sort of style, all us boys were there”. Feelings ran high – lot of Bucks. Volunteers – all called up – some had brothers in school.

041 No members of family went to war – father volunteered, but wouldn’t allow him out of Works. He and others went with pick axe handles to guard Viaduct in case of invasion – done by old soldiers. He was in Boer War in India 8 and a half years. Not a Special Constable, but men from Works who were old soldiers, guarded it at night. Happened at beginning of war only.

061 War had no direct effect on family life. Made all own fun. Lot of dancing, swimming at canal. Barges stopped overnight at Canal House. Down below was Tommy Squires’ Blacksmith’s shop. Above top of New Inn was his wheelwrights’ shop – used to make floats (flat carts).

082 Strict schoolmaster – Mr. Brooks – no messing with him. Sent out in corridor if misbehaved. Schoolmaster would take you to his office, Touch your toes, hit across backside with two or three strokes of cane. Children would sometimes lay row of tacks across street to see if they could puncture teachers’ tyres. No football pitches like today. Played in school playground. Had teacher keen on gardening – sold produce to parents. In war had photo plot opposite West View where Co-op shop is now – cultivated potatoes for war effort – part of lessons – each given half bag of potatoes.

124 Lot of queuing up. WH queued from 6.45 a.m. sometimes at butchers, etc. and mother took turn in queue when he went to school.

128 Big Scout Troop, joined in 1916 – while camping at Bunsty Farm the airship came over, the one that was brought down. Had big troop at Wolverton – good bugle band. Can’t remember them doing anything for war effort.

142 When at school went to Knapp’s at Little Linford and collected conkers for war effort – thinks they used the oil from them. Collected blackberries too – had day off school – sold for jam making.

153 Effect of war on him? Worried by it – some boys at school lost brothers, it curbed you playing a little bit. Blackout and special constables. Played Tin eye ackie – kicking the tin

around and then clear off and others had to find person who kicked tin – in blackout was difficult.

170 One boy sat with him at school announced he'd lost his brother – name of Stokes – but brothers' name was Whitfield – one of first to die from Bradwell. Another older than him (WH) in choir – McKay – in Canadian Army – killed in war.

181 Armistice – working at Hoppy Tilleys' Toy Factory then in Church Street. Oh everybody went mad and they just come out of work so did we and rushed all round the schools and anywhere and course some boys, lots of the boys were still at school and that and they overwhelmed the schools, everybody just went mad. Held bit do's in the street – Bridge Street had one-picture in Stantonbury, Album – Just wild everybody went.

199 Rumoured for some time that Armistice would happen. Went mad – screaming through the schools and everywhere there was no holding the crowd then.

216 Toy factory – made engines, tanks, etc. in wood. Wood from Railway Works – coach painters worked there, did finishing touches. Had production line – must have been one of the first in the world. Closed down in early 20's – put out by metal toys.

251 Effect of war on town? All people who were apprenticed at Works got sack at 21 – lot went to war at say 18 – still had three years apprenticeship to finish. When over they were sacked – lot of unemployment – Works on short time. Some years before they picked up.

267 Went in Works at 14 – made a rule that nobody over 14 and a half should have trade – if over that didn't get trade especially like this in 1919 – went up to 17 later on.

282 More homely feeling at that time than now – families got together, do's in street – if somebody had new piano, dances in street, parties. Dytham family's P.S.A. – Pleasant Sunday afternoon in Assembly Hall. Big Salvation Army Band then. Men after war talked about war, where they were, who was taken P.O.W. It seemed terrible to us at that time, specially knowing such a lot of people. There was such a lot of people killed from round here you see, and wounded.

310 Father Guest came in 1908. Lot of rows, Irishman, supposed to be High Church, very low to what it has been since then. Had incense then – still do. Fell out with people. They packed up – so did the choir. In early 20's Girls and Boys' Clubs at church – held at school. Walked in one day and said, if you chaps reckon you belong to St. James' Church Club then you should be over there, you should be in the choir. Some did unison singing – then got lady organist and good choir – eventually took over organist and choirmasters' job. From 1924 began to get good choir. Charlie there for 10 years, then sacked by Rev. Guest in 1935 – never knew why. WH then took over, lady organist. WH then took over, then left after argument with organist – went back afterwards. Petered out during 2<sup>nd</sup> World War.

345 When Rev. Guest on death bed, started up again – called on chaps like WH who'd had experience. October 27<sup>th</sup> 1946 – started again – WH appointed choirmaster – but when arrived on day Charlie Scott there ready to play. Packed church for long time – carried on High Church with next vicar and people who'd started again drifted away.

360 Father Guest died approx. Nov. 1946. Caused storm when he first arrived because he was considered High Church and congregation was Low Church. Always arguing in Church Council – parishioners trying to tell him what to do but he was determined to tell them what to do and he did. Very clever chap – translated history of Norman Church at Stanton Low from Latin to English – offered £700 for film rights, but wanted more – between 1908 and 1924. He composed a Sung Eucharist, four part harmony – used to sing. Also wrote Some Chimes – own hymn, poems and tunes – some accepted by Sailor's Mission in London. Also wrote Stantonbury Tales. We used to sing these hymns, not that we liked 'em, because he used to say we'd go to sort of style. We didn't put too much energy into it.

410 Very turbulent times at first – always rowing in the vestry meetings. They didn't like incense. Choir packed up – started again in 1913.

426 Choir went on strike. Normally came out of chancel in procession and go round aisles – instead went into vestry, disrobed and cleared off home. Parents told to keep boys at home, that in end Father Guest would relent – of course he didn't that was 1912. He didn't care. They wouldn't browbeat him.

445 Those choristers who left went to churches at Haversham, Wolverton, Old Bradwell and Linford. Hardly any in congregation – only three on one occasion – all one family.

463 Always insulting somebody, especially chapel people – told that if you went to chapel you were going to hell.

470 Albert Brown was chapel man – stood in chapel steps – Welfare supervisor in works – started people. Some of choir out to work at time, trying to get back into Works – as Father Guest came down hill he shouted When you've got all your disciples in the Works, Brown he said Don't forget some of mine. Albert Brown was favouritising them.

495 Tried to get rid of him, appealed to Bishop of Oxford wrote to Railways Company who pad for bits and pieces – but Bishop said There's nothing we can do. Of course, Guest is Guest.

515 Marvellous musician – played organ. Good preacher. Wonderful pianist. Didn't like organ, said it spoiled his ouch. Boxer, swimmer, tennis player. Challenged local chap Hepworth, heavyweight boxer, to fight in Aunt Mary's field. Challenged people to tennis, if couldn't beat them would put pumps on and say Come on I'll run you to Old Bradwell and back. At peak in 1920's WH learned to play tennis on vicarage lawn – approximately 1925 – could get G. running all over the court. Not a good sportsman, didn't like to lose. Would lose temper when playing with wife. She'd say what's that Hood. Out, I'd say. Oh he used to get on to us like anything.

567 People reckoned he used to have a cold shower every morning, winter and summer. Never opened five bar gate, vaulted over it.

585 Came down with feet on bar just below handlebars. Went into where Labour Hall is now, couldn't stop. (W E) He was a great man. took bike in church. Finest preacher they've ever had. When he first came I've heard my mother say that people that went there they listened to him preaching and if he'd have been preaching for three hours they still wouldn't have been

bored. Mr. H. I mean he was aggressive, but he was a great man. Very generous, would treat boys, to keep them there, once a month to pictures and to circus when it came. When single if he knew anybody was short he'd get his housekeeper to send his dinner down to them.

632 Congregation picked up well from 1923-24 – got good choir, girls from Girl's Club went – met chaps in choir – got married, their people went. Crowded for harvest festival.

649 One night got up to preach, looked around and saw chaps who normally went to Bottom Club and he started off I see we've got some people here from the bottom Club tonight, Oh ay tell 'em outright he didn't care.

659 As I say he were different to the other people that they'd had before you see, so of course, they didn't like that.

666 WH's family didn't go to church, but boys were in choir. His brother in choir at time of strike. WH followed after strike and then younger brother joined.

677 Used to go to St. Peter's occasionally. Went in 1952 with choir of 32 – pulpit font and rush-bottom chairs were there. Norman arch taken and built into St. James' in west door.

691 Nothing happened when he died. Had parted from wife, just before he died, when he was away choir had re-started. Had belated Harvest Festival, church filled to overflowing.

730 Died aged approximately 85. Married late in life, had one daughter and two sons. Eldest was Naval Officer in war. Had new organ in 1930 and his wife had lot to do with getting money for it – but they'd parted them – so her name didn't go on the plate. Eldest was Caster, daughter was Betty youngest was Newman.

## Side 2

000 Wife came from Eastbourne – a lot younger. Met when he was on holiday.

009 Things changed a lot when first married – she was a good influence – worked hard for church. Went carolling for Bucks blind – got four guineas – a lot of money then – always finished at vicarage – with drink, mince pies and sing song, but Father G had gone to bed.

017 She went back home – her parents started as rag and bone merchants, but were big furriers when he met her. Newman in New Bradwell three years ago – a banker. Marriage confusion – people applied to get married, register full – as applied for new one. Then found out it was just a chapel of ease – not registered for marriages. Over 400 couples had been married there. Quickly passed bill to legalise marriages. Last two couples were Mr. and Mrs. Bull and Mr. and Mrs. Pedder – married in St. Peter's while waiting for new register. Has cuttings of National Press coverage of the event – about 1910, they came home once they had been out and they said They've just given it out in church that we're not married.

078 Has Guests obituary. (Mrs E) Well, I think he was a marvellous priest. You went to church and you felt as if you'd been to church. But of course, I mean, he done some funny things. (Daughter) These days he would have got away with it. People wouldn't have taken

any notice these days. (Mrs H) He definitely I don't know somehow he passed it all over to you didn't he? I know he was wrong in a lot of things, but if ever he preached a sermon you felt you'd had it.

139 Sometimes got nasty with choirboys. One day in vestry he went to clout boy, he ducked and Faster G caught WH's brother on side of head – end of his choir days.

143 Thought he was a Liberal from the way he spoke – but he didn't ever say.

152 He started Mothers' meeting a Bradwell, together with Squire Knapp's wife at Little Linford – every Monday – a lot of people went – made things for church.

Frank Harrup – in choir – went of to war – in High Street, Old Bradwell Road end – three houses for end aged 84-85.