

DOP/01/025

Nellie Abbey (ne Smith) born 1885
105 Victoria Street
Wolverton

018 Went to Northampton entertaining the troops with girls from Stantonbury Girls Club – very popular, they nearly went mad, throwing food at them. Used to go to Newport to Workhouse which was V.A.D. hospital.

028 Men who booked them for Northampton said You've got to give us the best. Did Characteristic songs all dressed up. Made Union Jack up of strips – each of girls held bits on sticks got idea from Drury Lane. Started to sing and worked the Union Jack, I was very proud of that, they nearly went dotty over that at Northampton.

051 Called Stantonbury Girls' Club – did a lot of work, nothing else to do. Always a success.

062 Lived at 105 Newport Road. Had three brothers in War. Joined up at beginning of War – one came from Buenos Aires. All were badly wounded, but lived.

077 When War broke out – they were at Scarborough on holiday. We were all a bit numbed. Brothers joined up straight away. One brother had just been to England for a holiday from Buenos Aires, went back, War broke out, left clothes and property there and came home and joined up. Not many would do that today.

095 Parents upset about brothers going away. Worried about them in trenches buried in the trenches in the mud.

104 NA in Sewing Room during war. Didn't work on munitions.

129 Remembers men going away – was up on the railings at the time.

162 Did Club performances in evening – had tie off to catch 4 o'clock train. Paid own expenses.

203 Concert party had 25-26 members.

220 Hospital fetes held in Bradwell Rec. Had 16 wagons (floats). She did organising. Lot of men helped, especially on the day. Wagons were decorated by men. N.A. organised the theme, but others did them. Up at 6.00 a.m. to start decorating the floats with leaves ivy etc.

305 Has 1913 programme of concert at Assembly Hall.

310 Did 21 years of Fetes. I used to go mad. I used to start thinking before I came out of that field on the day as I done the one, I sued to start thinking as I come out, whatever shall I do next year? Remembers one year had committee meeting and they said what have you got this time? I said, I haven't got anything. Oh yes you have, you've got something up your sleeve, they said. And I hadn't. And do you know, I come home, and in that kitchen there on the table in there, and I just was exhausted trying to think whatever to do. Well, I picked up a

catalogue of music and it said Scenes and Sounds of Rural Life. I thought to myself Scenes and Sounds of Rural Life. I got warmer and warmer and I kept thinking and I started to think a bit and I just collapsed on that table trying to think what to do. Well, I got it, I got the beginning, and it's in one of those programmes, the best of the 1st.

345 Describes details of it.

381 About 300 performers in groups/tableaux of two dozen each.

414 People in Bradwell were more sociable, Wolverton more select. In Bradwell all were very helpful.

448 Youngest brother only 17 when he joined up. I remember the boy in the kitchen before he went away He'd got the blooming cat in his arms. Oh pussy he said He was talking this cat before he went away. It was most sad, I didn't let him see me. He was wounded, gassed he was, and he never got over that gas, he never did, never got over the gas.

479 Woman was mad on brother when she met him at relatives He cleared off back to the war, glad to get away from her. Well, he come home wounded and she got the address from my mother, and she went to see him and he come out and got better and he married her. She haunted him.

502 Brothers when came back – youngest one went mad – went out boozing. Thankful to get home.

517 "It was always of the mind the war was. I don't know whether it changed them, but they didn't forget the war. None of the soldiers would that was in that blooming war. I think it was worse than the second one, the First War. I think it was the worst, it was terrible in the First War in them blooming trenches in the mud and sleeping in there and in the mud and."

558 Had rations a little skinny bit of butter, when it was gone you had to have marge.

575 Can't remember having to do overtime during war.

676 Girls in Club were 18-20. Had to be 14 or 15 before they could join. Started 6 weeks before to practice for fete. Little ones at 4 o'clock all others in turn each evening.

740 Used to be two women who'd be seamstresses making costumes – used to charge about 6d.

Side 2

000 Leader in each group who had to make sure each in group had same. Went on for 21 years, last year was 1939. After war can't remember what happened.

018 Started within. getting up Maypole dancers and charity concerts. I thought to meself, why can't we do something different to this, something bigger? Why can't I do the same thing only bigger and that's how it started. always on Whit Monday, then changed to Whit Saturday.

040 "Father Guest?" The devil Oh, of all the humbugs he was one. Oh I can't tell you anything bad enough about him, that I can't. He tried to smash everything up. Came to Girl's Club and kicked up and the girls got the blooming umbrellas at him. He wanted to be President of the Girls' Club. Tried to turn them out of the school room they met in.

061 Came to mothers about her brother. She wouldn't let him go. He'll never be forgotten I don't think in Bradwell. N.A. was Sunday School Teacher.

076 When he first came, didn't take much notice of him – but soon found out what he was. He started raving and bellowing about. 18 of them (teachers) left the Sunday School (also in Girls Club). Used to come and upset them, couldn't get on with things. Oh he was a beauty, I'll tell you. A good pianist. Got married. He picked her up at the seaside on the beach. She was somebody a bit decent. She left him in the finish. He had a valet – an elderly man to get his meals, thinks he played up with him – made arguments with everybody. talks of riding his bike he was a daredevil dick he was.

162 After finding out church wasn't licensed, a friend of hers got married at Stanton Low.

178 Didn't like people in Baptist Church Oh he could murder them all. Used to insult them as he came by the Chapel. "He used to kick up hell's delight there, over these Chapel people. Don't sound a clergyman does he?"

193 He was a handful to deal with – upset her mother when her brother hadn't been to church.

282 A lady from Birmingham came to help in the fete – but NA didn't like her or want her, so I packed up and I thought to myself you can do it, you can do what you think. I let her get on with it, and it wasn't a success. The next year somebody else started having a go, a schoolteacher – a success. NA did a group in that.

313 People different today – they don't associate – talks of neighbours who live next door and don't take any notice of her.

384 Costumes for Fete made from butter muslin (many children got costumes free) used a lot of crepe paper, but dresses made of butter muslin. NA got ideas from book Weldon's fashions.

476 Father was in Works' concert party that went to gentlemen's houses – Little Linford etc. In her blood you were born with it. Father was a good singer – happened in 1880s