

## **DOP/01/027**

Mrs. Viva Chappill (nee Tilley) born 1905  
9 North View  
Sherrington

015 Lived at 81 Victoria Street, Wolverton. Married aged 34.

018 1913 – remembers soldiers parading round street. Her parents entertained sergeants to meal. Went up on Sunday morning to inspect camp with parents. Sergeants were uncles to her.

028 Father a toymaker – over 100 working for him at one time – where P. Office is. Belgium refugees put up by father in houses next door. Committee formed to furnish the houses – ladies went gathering household goods. (Mrs. C. has autograph book with a refugee's signature) 1915.

044 Father a timber merchant in first place then decided to make wooden toys. After war people reverted to German toys – bottom fell out of market. Before War German dolls were the thing. Father went to toy fairs, Royalty came round. Turned factory into theatre and ballroom.

058 A lot of Bradwell women worked there during war and boys who couldn't get into Works. Father said he got boys who were "sixpence of the shilling". As long as father worked in Works could get a job in Works. Made solid wooden toys, doll's cots, engines, trucks, tanks (during the war).

082 Supplied wooden soap dishes to Woolworths. Brother had Chevrolet van to take toys to London. When war was on and father heard of father being killed, father gave toys to family. Greta Saunders (nor Barker) was one of recipients – VC went with mother to deliver them.

098 Father a polio victim, very lame, rode on bicycle a lot.

103 Tickford Abbey was convalescent home or hospital for soldiers, mother one of a committee of auxiliaries that went there – rolling bandages. VC knitted socks, with khaki wool – can't remember if it was supplied for them. Also did balaclava helmet.

120 Very short of food, father wouldn't deal with black market. Mother was 323 when married, then and three children. At an unfortunate time of life when VC had to queue – she couldn't. VC queued for ounce of butter each at Co-op in square – were registered there – if butter ran out that was it. Much worse in First than Second War.

133 At Moon Street, school when Armistice declared. Vendetta between apprentices in Works and their 6<sup>th</sup> formers – used to come up during lunch hour, snow-balling if snow about. On November 11<sup>th</sup> all came out of Works and marched in body up to School and went all round school banging on the windows "Let them out, the war's over. Let them out". Teacher let them out – they came out in single file as we were taught to do and got a back-hander on the head each one of us. VC thinks she then went home I was a good girl. Lived on the square at that time. Upset about hit on the head.

157 Had relations – cousin in Battle of Jutland. Were a religious family. Went regularly to St. George's Church – always had hymns round piano on Sunday night and prayed for the boys that were away.

183 Can't remember the War affecting her life very much as she had a comfortable home – hardship in families where fathers were away.

195 Day war broke out. On August Bank Holiday father said they'd go away. Hadn't booked anywhere – went to Margate. Traipsed round street looking for digs got lady to take them in finally, as time was getting on. Father and mother slept in one bed in one room, three children slept together. Parents' bed was so terrible they had to put trunk under bed to keep it up. Had Zeppelin raid while they were there. VC very frightened and mother pushed her under the table. She was crying. Boys were out to have a look.

199 Remembers people named Severn losing father – about five or six children, met one of them recently, she said she'd never forget VC's fathers' kindness to them. Father always on look-out to see what he could do for people a most open-hearted man mother the same a soft touch. Mother a committee member of Mother's Union – they'd take food etc. to other sick, had part of town to oversee. Remembers being short of teachers at Secondary School. Had a shell-shocked master in a terrible state – boys very cruel, used to put blackboard so that it wasn't properly on pegs so that as soon as he touched it fell on his feet. shock all the time. Had to leave. Had a Latin master, Mr. Jerrum – if boys could get him talking of Test Matches – no more Latin. Had English teacher who always ended up crying. VC very sensitive and upset at this. Difficult time to get any teachers.

288 Had a happy time, belonged to Guides and went camping.

312 Thinks that Mabel Archer was involved in 1915 Strike. Talks of Albert Brown – a Labour man and MA was very red. Bradwell called "Little Moscow".

322 In 1919 went round to election meetings. Brother Len had a motorbike- with the Prudential – lived in digs at Newport. VC went with him to meetings. Labour Candidate got so used to him, one night in the Palace cinema he shouted up to balcony Come on my little Boy Scout, I know you're up there, have your say.

359 Politics always important in her family - grandfather was a Liberal. Talks of Grandfather and father and mother meeting and getting married in 1900-02. Father had been to States. Father never renounced American citizenship Grandfather had left Works and got contract of burying up old sleepers and making fire wood, then timber merchants VC's father inherited this.

When toy factory failed turned it into theatre – didn't do very well – as people could so easily get to Northampton – ballroom up above. Then turned into cinema did well as cinema. People with farthing fares always went to Northampton on Saturday, Wolverton dead.

524 Life went on as normal apart from the fact that we were all worried about the boys. Went to Church and prayed for them and sent parcels. Mother kept busy "We did all we could in our small way".

535 Class structure – Harnetts and Harvey’s and Superintendents etc. – professionals, then foremen. VC mixed with top people because of church. Thinks chapel people were not on a par with C of E people then, although VC had aunts who went to Cong. Church. She had to go to their functions as a duty. Mr. Hipsley the schoolmaster, his daughter married the bank manager’s son.

605 VC and her brothers paid to go to Moon Street school – not allowed to sit for scholarship. No prejudice against scholarship child – intermingled.

643 Little streets looked down upon.

659 When went to school it was a toss up whether she went to York House of Moon Street School. The boys said Let her come with us, Mother. She’d lost one year previously from illness, deaf from measles.

758 Wolverton’s always been a respectable town. They keep beautiful as you know, their houses. And they like everything out for show, don’t they.

Side 2

“Piano and Herrings”? why? – always had to have a big meal at midday – must have been sleepy in afternoon. After hard afternoons work had high tea – with herrings – 3 halfpennies each. Piano a sign of respectability – saved to buy one, saved to buy their houses. Be all land end all to own their own house. Probably couldn’t play piano. Had to pinch to pay back mortgage.

030 Christmas for them was always all right. One Christmas remembers mother and father going to communion and the children had clubbed together to buy mop and large tins of polish for mother. After went to church children undid parcels – a ten for the boys – and one had cowboy suit, the other and Indian suit. Had put up tent before parents returned and wanting something to do, they started daubing the furniture with polish. When mother came home every piece of furniture had thick polish on it. Never lacked toys because father was in the trade.

051 Refugees – father let them have cottages, probably free, in Church Street. Normally they were let out. Four or Five families came.

063 Lot of patriotic feeling about. Sigwarts had a very hard time. Occultist named Truinard on Square. Had to put notice up to say he was a very old Swiss family not German at all, as hostility was so great.

073 Marie Sigwart at school with her. No difference in the way she was treated. Shop was boycotted. Few non-union members escorted by hostile mobs home during General Strike. She went to watch. She never worked – was deaf – family didn’t want her to go to work. Tried to break away but came back. Father made over theatre to strike leader – had concerts while it was on. Presented with solid silver cigarette case afterwards.

104 Father's politics "he inclined towards socialism", but in the proper spirit of socialism. shows photos of Young Conservatives – called Imps – had rambles and dances.

120 New Bradwell – Little Moscow – was very red. "They seemed to breed the troublemakers". Thinks that Bradwell people moved up to Wolverton whenever they could as it was more respectable. Wolverton people set out to improve themselves – especially through night classes.

176 Mother had three houses in Stratford road – let to her by her father. Rented house where Masonic Hall is now.

196 "Young Imps" – Young Imperialists.

275 Shows picture of Secondary School uniforms.

313 Father Guest "a legend in his time". Went to a recital by him in St. James' Church in Bradwell. Had grand piano in Church. Went at it hammer and tongs. Half the notes were on the floor when he'd finished. Went down Station Hill with feet on crossbar. Went about in clerical gear – with his beretta. Very high Church, couldn't agree with wife – she left him. Had eccentric priest in Chichley once too.