A child of the Thirties.

By E. R. Harrison

Harthill

Harthill was and still is a small rural village in the extreme south of Yorkshire, 12 miles east of Sheffield, having its southern and western boundary with Derbyshire, and 2 miles to the east with Nottinghamshire. Harthill developed along a north/ south axis road between Kiveton Park to the north and Clowne to the south. The road branched west to the hamlet of Woodall and on to Highmoor, Killamarsh and on to Sheffield. The road branching east towards Thorpe Salvin and Shireoaks and on to Worksop. Harthill date back to before the Domesday Book and was a self sufficient community mainly concerned with farming with associated trades like blacksmith, cooper, thatcher, etc. The Parish of Harthill with Woodall was owned by The Duke of Leeds. The small areas of Firvale field, The Hopping and Loscar belonged to a Mr Duckworth. The Duke wanted Harthill to remain rural, so put a ban on any form of industry, Mr Duckworth disagreed with this, so following the sinking of Kiveton Coal Pit in 1865 Mr Duckworth leased Firvale, at the top of the village to the influx of miners coming into the area to work. They built closely packed, back to back terraced houses, using the clay they dug to make the bricks. On the death of the Duke of Leeds in 1922 the rest of the village was sold to the council who set about building council houses for the miners. The houses on Winney Hill, then joined Firvale to the rest of the village. Harthill sits sheltered within the curve of a cresent shaped hill. Winney Hill climbs up from the school towards the highest point in the area at 500 ft above sea level, just beyond the water tank. The view from the Recca field, at the top of the steep gardens of Winney Hill, looks west over Sheffield and to the Pennines beyond and east down beyond Worksop to the spires of Lincoln Cathedral in the far distance.

I was born in number 69 Winney Hill, directly opposite Firvale on 5th January 1931.

My grandparents

In around 1901, Thomas Harrison a carter in Sheffield, lost his job for some reason and so lost his home. He and his wife and their eleven children had to go and live with Thomas' brother in Clowne, north Derbyshire. They lived in one room. Thomas and his eldest son, Herbert found work at Pebley Pit, locally known as Peggers Pit (peggers being poachers). Herbert was 13 years old. They then got jobs at the much bigger Kiveton Pit. On their walk from Clowne to Kiveton, they passed through Harthill. They found a house vacant on Firvale and so moved the family to one of the small terraced houses there. Herbert was my father.(1888 – 1959)

Between Harthill and Whitwell lies open farm land. Here in the farm cottages at Bondhay, lived John Edward Lindley and his family of 13 children. John was a champion ploughman for Bondhay farm and Castlehill farm. He was also a champion hedge layer. He drove the first steam traction engine in the area, going round all the local farms threshing the corn at harvest time. He came to Carr farm in Harthill and got water from the dyke in the bottom nearly toppling the engine over. He was loaned out to the Welbeck estate to do their hedge laying. Gertrude, his eldest daughter married and had 2 children, William (Bill [Tyke]) and Cecilia (Cis), but her husband died in the 1914- 1918 war. She then married Herbert Harrison and had 3 more children, Jack, Grace and Joyce. She died of flu when her youngest, Joyce, was 3 and a half. Gertrude's youngest sister Ethel, only 16 years old, was brought in to look after the children. She got pregnant at 18 and married Herbert in December 192" as Alice, was born in January 192. Ethel was my mother. (1908 - 1987)

School

I started school aged 4 in January 1935. I went with my older brothers and sisters. My first day was very frightening. The teacher was called Miss Headworth. Very severe looking, hair tied in a bun, she wore glasses perched on the end of her nose. Her dress was long and dark. She soon made me aware that she would stand no nonsense. We were given a slate and chalk. We were told to bring a teaspoon to school for cod liver oil. We had to line up before playtime morning and afternoon. The cod liver oil was in a big bottle which Miss Headworth had to hold under her arm. You held out your spoon for her to fill. If you spilt any you were scolded and made to have a refill. It tasted awful, but you had to lick your spoon clean ready for the next time. You had to learn your letters and numbers and to practice your times tables. The next class when I went up was Miss Atkins. She was a small lady with grey hair. She was a little bit deaf, but she knew when you were talking in class. She was a dead shot with the board rubber, she could hit you if you were sitting at the back of the class. She was nice though. She retired soon after I went up to Mrs MacDonald's class. She was an old tyrant who loved dishing out the cane. If you were called out for being naughty, you had to stand in front of the class and hold out your hand. If you pulled your hand away when the cane came down, she would slash you round your head and shoulders, and then give you six strokes on your hand. After Mrs MacDonald came Miss Illott. She shouted a lot and appeared to spend most of her time sewing aprons and talking to the Headmaster Mr Garbett. From Miss Illott it was to Miss Shipstone's class. For me this was the best class in the school. She was a wonderful teacher, firm but kind. She brought the best out of all her pupils, and coached you for the exams for scholarship to Woodhouse Grammar School. Apart from the normal

school work we were regularly taken on nature walks, where we learned all about wild flowers and plants. Another subject was Harthill history, a pet project of Mr Garbett the head. There were pictures and scripts around the classroom walls, produced and drawn by Miss Illott. The last class was taught by Mr Garbett and most of that time was spent gardening. We were provided with special clogs that fit over our shoes, and all the garden tools were a small size for the use of children. Being during the war, any vegetables were either used in the school kitchen or things like radishes, spring onions and lettuce we went round the village with a wheelbarrow and tried to sell them, money raised went to buy seeds for the following year.

The War 1939-1945

The war started when I were 8 and a half. It were a Sunday and I was wi me gang at t top of t steps on t Back Lane (Serlby Lane). The gang were me, (Yog Harrison), Jinna Noble, Pan Bateman, Bert Robinson, Willem Hicklin and Tinny Unwin .Wi were wondering what to do, when Twib Twibell cem dashin up t steps shouting "We're at war, we're at war, mi fatha heard it on t wireless." "What shall wi do", we all said. Wi were all reit scared. Wi decided to run and hide, so we ran along t Long Hedges to Loscar wood. There wi med a den and hid, keeping a look out for t Jerries. Wi waited all afternoon and into t evening, gerin ungrier an ungrier. Wi were gerring a bit fed up waitin , so wi decided to go om an cum back tmorra. When I got om, me Mam gev mi a clout for missin mi tea. I were sent to bed wi nowt to eat.
Next day at school Mr Garbett, the headmaster, told us about being at war and what it would mean to us. We were all issued with gas masks and shown how to put them on. We had to take them wherever we went. They were kept in a cardboard box on a string, which soon became rather battered, so powdered milk tins or any tin the mask fit in was used. A tent was erected in the school field and filled with gas and all the children had to go in and out of the tent to see if their mask fitted properly. Quite frightening, but fun, as some of the kids came out with runny eyes because the masks weren't fitting correctly. The masks used for babies was a large contraption that the baby was fitted into, and the masks used for smaller children had red rubber on so as to be less frightening for the tots.

All the windows in school had sticky paper fitted to stop flying glass if there was an air raid. Everybody had black curtains fitted to all windows and doors to stop any light being seen in case there was an evening plane about. It was called "the blackout". Air raid wardens patrolled the streets at night making sure everybody was blacked out. If any light could be seen, they would bang on the door and shout 'put that light out'. The same would be said if someone was lighting a cigarette and the match wasn't shaded. Most of the men had to join either the LDV, later to be the

Home Guard, the AFS which was the fire service, or the ARP (Air Raid Precautions) who were wardens. The Home Guard met in Smiths Yard which was next to The Blue Bell. The AFS used the outbuilding of the Blue Bell and the big room upstairs at the Bell was their headquarters. The ARP used an old cottage next to the Post Office. The ladies joined the Red Cross or the WVS. The Red Cross Post was in the Chapel school room and the WVS was in the Church room.

We had lots of fun watching them all training, and it was amusing when they all got their uniforms. At first the Home Guard only had arm bands to wear with LDV in red letters, but later they had khaki uniforms like soldiers. Before they had rifles issued they had to manage with brush handles to practice their drill with. The only fire engine in the area was a horse drawn pump at Kiveton pit. At the start of the war a village fire service was set up at the back of the Bluebell pub. The Fire Service only had a pump which was towed by Mr Lancashire's car (he had the shop at the top of Firvale) It was like watching a scene from the Keystone Cops when they were practising. The car was full and two men on each side standing on the running board, clinging on for dear life, racing up to Woodall and back. The Air Raid Wardens wore long black overcoats with silver buttons and had white steel helmets.

I don't know if it was started on purpose, but the remnants of a haystack situated at the end of Loscar Lane caught fire. It was panic stations. The Fire Service, the Home Guard and the Wardens were running all over the place. We've got to put it out before the German planes spot it. The Fire Service couldn't get any water for its pump so people were running with buckets to Burwell about 300 yards away to fetch water. The Firemen were then using stirrup pumps to try and put the fire out. It was fun watching. They had been there a long time and the WVS came to bring something to eat and big jugs of Camp coffee. I asked one of the Firemen what was in the sandwiches and he said "It's flippin tripe"

My brother Jack was called up into the army as soon as the war started. He went to Sheffield first and managed to get home a few times. It was thrilling to see him in uniform and carrying a rifle. He didn't smoke but brought home hundreds of cigarette cards from the other soldiers. I could then, with my share make sets of pictures and swap or play with the spares. He was then sent to India, so we didn't see him for a long time and only had occasional letters.

One morning, having breakfast before going to school, we heard a big noise outside on the road. It was a lot of soldiers on horseback, practising to ride. They rode three abreast and there seemed to be hundreds of them. It was very exciting, and after they had gone, dad sent me out with a bucket and shovel to fetch the horse muck for

the garden. After e few weeks the horses went and Army lorries came to the village, all with learner drivers. They came from a new Army Camp at Southgate about two miles away. (opposite The Van Dyke Hotel) Quite a bit later there were Bren Gun Carriers and light tanks. Towards the end of the war the camp was turned into a prisoner of war camp, filled with Italian prisoners.

One day we were round the ponds when all these army lorries came round the bank. They started unloading what looked like boats. We watched all day as they lined them up side by side across the pond, tying them together all the way across the narrow part of the pond. Then fitting boards across each boat to form a bridge. When it was all finished a lorry went across to the other side to test it. I was later to learn it was called a 'Bailey Bridge', called after the man who invented it, 'Hayden Bailey' who lived in the next village, Thorpe Salvin, at the time.

By the second year of the war all the organisations were getting well trained The LDV was now called The Home Guard. I was asked if I would volunteer to be a patient, there was to be an exercise between the different forces in Harthill and the Home Guard from Kiveton. I had a sealed brown envelope pinned to my jersey (it told the Red Cross what injuries I was supposed to have) and I was sent to climb up to the top floor of some old three story houses in Firvale. There were no windows left in the houses and it was a bit scary lying on the floor on my own. I kept hearing voices, whistles blaring and men shouting. It was the ARP giving people instructions on what to do. Then I heard the sound of the Fire Engine with its bell ringing, getting closer. There was a lot of activity going on in the street and I was curious about what was going on. Looking at the window I saw the end of a ladder being placed against the windowsill. Then the figure of a Fireman appeared looking in. It was our Bill (Tyke). He looked at me and said "What a thar doing here", and he came in and looked at me. He then picked me up, put me over his shoulder and went towards the window. He turned around and climbed out of the window and carried me down the ladder. I kept my eyes closed because it was very frightening looking down the ladder at all the activity below. When we reached the ground I was placed on a stretcher and put into an ambulance. I was then taken to the First Aid post in the Chapel Schoolroom. I was placed on the floor and a Red Cross nurse came to examine me. She took the envelope from my jersey and read what it said. She then started putting splints and bandages on me. Dr Mackenzie was there walking round checking that everything was done correctly. I was given a cup of hot, sweet tea. The nurse was Mrs Flowers who lived near us and she said I was a very good patient. A messenger came running in with the news that we had to evacuate. The enemy was moving closer so we had to move. Everything was transferred to a barn in Whitlam's Farm. At about midday the exercise was finished and we were thanked for our co-operation and sent home. All

the Services had done very well and had managed to keep the enemy out.

Sitting in class at school, we could look out and see the aeroplanes flying back probably from bombing Germany. The German aeroplanes only came at night. When the Air Raid siren sounded, Mum would wake us up and take us into the pantry under the stairs. The pegged hearth rug was placed on the floor for us all to sit on. It was very scary. German planes had a distinct sound, which seemed to throb. One night they dropped 2 landmines on Kiveton Pit. One exploded with a very loud bang but the other didn't go off. The one that didn't go off was very near to the pit shaft. I slept through it all.

They came to bomb Sheffield on a Thursday night and then again on the Sunday. They wanted to destroy all the steel works. We were taken to the Air Raid shelter down Firvale, on the Thursday night which was very frightening. You could hear all the bombs going off and all the big guns firing. On the Sunday night Dad said it was too dangerous in the shelter and took all the family up the lane out in the open, away from the houses. It was moonlight and we watched the raid take place. We saw the flashes of light as the bombs went off and saw the sky glow as the buildings burnt. We could hear the terrible explosions and gun fire You could see the German planes going over to bomb Sheffield and then coming back heading home. Some bombs fell on Loscar and the next day the gang went to have a look. We found a big hole near Loscar wood and found a lot of shrapnel which was still warm. The bombers must have thought they were bombing Netherthorpe aerodrome as its only a mile or so away.

Food production was very important, and everybody that could, helped the farmer gather the crops when they were ready. Older children from the age of about 9 years old were allowed time from school to go potato picking. Green cards were issued and if a farmer needed you during school you could have time off so long as the farmer signed the card. Some evenings were spent in the fields striking and singling turnips, mangolds and sugar-beet. At harvest time everybody helped bring the harvest home. One war time slogan was "Dig for Victory", wanting people to dig up their flower gardens and lawns to grow vegetables. School was no exception. Some allotments up Dr Lane had been taken over by the school, and all boys over the age of 10 were taught how to dig and prepare the soil for planting. All produce grown was either used for school dinners or taken round the village to be sold.

Home

I was born into a big family, being the 8th child. The family was rather complex. My mother's maiden name was Linley. She was the youngest of 13 children, living in

Bondhay cottages, just outside the village. My father, Herbert, was the eldest of 11 children. My father married the eldest daughter of the Linley's, Gertrude, after her husband had been killed in the Great War (1914-1918) She had 2 children from that marriage, William(Tyke) and Cissie Coupe. She then married my father and had 3 more children, Jack, Grace and Joyce, dying when Joyce was 3 and a half. My mother Ethel, the youngest Linley, was brought in to look after the children and to run the house. She was 16 years old. She became pregnant by my father and gave birth when she was 18 years old. She went on to produce 9 children of her own. Alice, Wilfred, Ernest, Ruth, Marie, Brian, David, Jean and Alan. Me being her 3rd.

My father was a coal miner at Kiveton Colliery, and when I was still very young he developed a serious illness with his kidneys and was unable to carry on working. Consequently we were very poor and had to be brought up on the Parish, a local charity, as there was very little sick pay from the pit. We did still get a small coal allowance. As soon as anyone became old enough to earn money they had to go out to work. Running errands or working on the farm, if and when work was available. (turnip picking, potato picking, stacking corn, anything to earn a copper or two to help the family) We also had to go to the woods to find firewood or go to the pit tip to pick cinders to keep the fire going.

I once remember cinder picking with dad and part of the tip was on fire. Dad had warned me to be careful and to keep away from where it was burning. The fire was deep seated and had formed a crust on the surface. I strayed too near and my feet went through, setting fire to my boots and burning my feet. Dad had to carry me home and treated my feet as best he could. I wasn't allowed any time off school so had to be carried donkey back by my older brothers. The boots were my only pair and Dad did his best to repair them. (we couldn't afford to go to the cobblers, so Dad did all our shoe repairs) I went to school with my feet bandaged and couldn't wear anything for over a week. The boots didn't last long and I had to wear some hand me downs that were much too big until another pair could be found. Sometimes the poorest children in school were provided with a pair of new boots that had to last a year.

Clothing was also a big problem, my mother having to take a loan from a man who came collecting every week. Usually just before the Chapel Anniversary, we were taken to a shop in Sheffield where the loan had to be spent and set us up with a new set of boots and clothes. These were only worn for the Anniversary and then kept for Sunday best until your old clothes were no longer fit to wear. They again had to last a full year.

Most of the time our trousers were patched and our socks darned. Very often patches on top of patches and darns on top of darns. Boots very often had a piece of cardboard covering a hole in the soles.

The house was always noisy and boisterous with mum and dad ruling with a very firm hand. Mum was always cleaning, baking, cooking and washing, and had a very short temper. If you had been scolded once and carried on doing what you had been told not to do there was no second chance, you got a clout or hit with whatever she had in her hand at the time, whether it was the floor cloth, copper stick or even the flat side of the carving knife. If you ran away you still got it next time you came in. Dad wore a thick leather belt with a big brass buckle. He wore the buckle round the back and if you were being really naughty you would see him reach round and slide the buckle to the front and you knew you were in for a real thrashing and then sent to bed with no food until next day.

Food of the thirties

We were a very poor family and there were a lot of us to feed. The food was therefore very plain, but wholesome. Mother baked bread everyday. Occasionally she made teacakes, scones, tarts or sandwich cakes. This was most often for Sunday treats.

Breakfast was usually bread and margarine or sometimes we had porridge. There was always a fried breakfast on Sundays, bacon, eggs and tinned tomatoes. The tomatoes would be let down with water to make them go further (always cooked in the frying pan after the bacon and eggs). Sometimes an egg had to be shared between two of us. You filled up with bread.

Dinner was the main meal of the day and I think mother must have been a magician. She could make a meal for everybody out of very little in the way of meat. School dinners didn't start till the beginning of the war, so we had to come home for dinner. It was always ready for when we got home at dinnertime. NB. We couldn't leave any food that was given to us, if you left anything, you had to put it in the pantry and eat it up before you could have anything else. Everything had to be cooked on the fire or in the oven (at the side of the fire) The staple, of course was potatoes, a big saucepan full. The other vegetables given, being whatever was in season. Mother could make a little meat go a long way, but she made wonderful gravy.

On wash days through the cooler months, it was usually potatoes sliced and placed in two big roasting tins, with layers of sliced onions in between. They would be stewed in

the oven. When cooked she added thickening. A plate full of that was very filling and full of flavour. One day a week it would be Hash, made with all the vegetables to be had and a couple of Oxo cubes to add flavour. She made broth with two pennyworth of bones and dropped suet dumplings in. In season we would be sent next door for a couple of rabbits from Ned Gaye, who was a poacher. "And tell him I don't want Milky Does", Mum would say. Dad would skin the rabbits and cut them up. They were then stewed. The dinner would start with Yorkshire pudding with rabbit gravy, then vegetables and rabbit, a meal fit for a king. Other basic meats were neck of mutton, breast of mutton, sheep's head, liver, stew meat ..... always something that would make good gravy and go a long way. On Sundays it was always roast beef and Yorkshire pudding.

Tea times it would be bread and jam, lemon curd, sugar, treacle (syrup) or dripping. Through the summer we had salad, made mostly of lettuce, and whatever was available in the garden. You made your tea with bread and beetroot, bread and cheese, cheese and onion, bread and watercress(when some could be found), cucumber and onion in vinegar. Sometimes on a Friday a van would come round and you could buy chitterlings, tripe, brawn, palony, black pudding, penny ducks(faggots) in gravy, potted meats, cow heel, hazlet and pigs trotters. Also on Fridays if mum had any money, we were given a ha'penny to go to the chip shop for either a portion of chips, scallops, or take a basin and get some mushy peas and make our tea out of that. Supper was just a slice of bread and margarine, or dripping if there was any left.
In the winter and early spring, when greens were in short supply, we were sent out into the fields to gather turnip tops(new young shoots) before the farmer put the sheep into the fields. You needed a big bag full to make enough to go round.

My Family

I slept in the girls bedroom until I was about 3yrs old, then moved into the boys bedroom, sleeping between our Jack and our Wilfred. Bill had just left home and I had his spot. Our bedroom was the small room at the end of the house, with just a bed and little set of shelves in it. The girls (Cissy, Grace, Joyce and Alice) slept in the big back room which had 2 beds and a blanket chest in it. Mum and dad slept in the front bedroom which had a bed, a cot (Ruth slept here till she was about 18 months old, followed by Marie, Brian, David, Jean and lastly Alan), a trunk and a dressing table in it. The bathroom was on the front corner of the house and was very sparse and cold, just a bath and sink. All the floors upstairs were covered in Lino, with just a few mats, and in Winter was very cold to walk on. Mum and dad had a chamber pot under their bed, but all the rest of us had to use a bucket on the landing, the toilet being downstairs. The only light upstairs was a candle on the

landing, (mum couldn't afford the electric light on as dad was unable to work through ill health). I later learned that dad had a kidney complaint and was often in agony.

Because dad couldn't work, we were very poor, there being very little sick pay from the pit and the rest coming from the Parish. There was "The means test", where a man from the council came to see if anything in the house could be sold to make a bit of money. As soon as any of us reached 14 years old we had to go out to work to help the family budget. The amount of "Parish" then being reduced. You had to hand over your wages to Mum and she would give you pocket money. Even the girls who had left home to go into Service had to tip up. Even those of us doing National Service had to send money home every week. You only started paying 'board' when you became 21yrs old.

Mum's main concern was trying to feed us all. She had to bake bread every 2 days and the food she cooked was plain but wholesome. She was very good at making a tasty meal out of just about anything. We had our portion of dinner and if we were still hungry, we had to fill up on bread and marg. If, for tea, we had jam or cheese sandwiches, then we had very little marg on. We soon learned to forage for food. In the Autumn and Winter we went out into the fields pinching turnips or potatoes or picking mushrooms and blue stalks or finding watercress, scrumping apples and pears and picking blackberries to make a pie. In the Spring we were sent into the fields looking for young turnip tops, these boiled up were our greens as the Brussels sprouts and cabbage in the garden were finished. If we didn't forage all we got were dried peas.

As soon as we were old enough we had to help around the house, fetching cinders from the pit tip and fire wood from the woods to help out with the coal, or helping doing the gardening, or running errands or doing anything mum wanted doing. In Spring, me and Wilfred would be sent out with the wheelbarrow and shovel to find horse or cow muck for the garden. Whenever the milk float or rag and bone man came round with their horse and carts there was always a rush on to pick up the droppings before anyone else.

Family Life

Family life was bleak but happy. All the boys slept together in one bedroom. The girls in another room and mum and dad in the front bedroom. In bed you wore the shirt that you had on all week. You kept one another warm by cuddling up together because there wasn't a lot of bedding. In winter overcoats were thrown over for extra warmth. The bed was an iron bedstead with a hard straw mattress, and very often

you would wake in the morning with little red spots all over your body where you had been bitten by fleas. I remember in winter it was very frightening. As soon as all were in bed the light was switched off and everything was pitch black. The wind howled round the guttering and through the trees, and if you had been hearing tales of ghosts and goalies you daren't lift your head from under the bedclothes. Bath night was on Friday and all the girls went in first, the boys following. The youngest first 2 at a time followed by the older ones. If you were lucky the water would still be quite warm but the bathroom always felt cold. The windows were iron framed and very draughty and the floor was covered in Lino. The only mats were at the side of the beds, so in winter you didn't spend much time running about in your bare feet. At meal times you ate what you were given, likes or dislikes didn't matter. If you were hungry you ate up. There was always someone who would have it if you were awkward. If you asked for another slice of bread and then didn't want it, you were made to put it in the pantry and had to eat it before you could have anything else. Discipline was very strong. As there were so many of us, we had to stand round the table for our meals, there wasn't enough room for us to sit. If anyone forgot their manners or fidgeted, you were first given a warning and then given a clip round the ears, or if dad was nearest, you were likely to get hit by the strap he kept hanging over the side of his chair arm. All the cooking had to be done on the fire and in the oven beside the fire. Big iron pans of vegetables or broth, and a big stew pot in the oven.

On wash days it was an all day job. The copper in the kitchen would be lit first thing in the morning. As soon as breakfast was over it was off to school all of us old enough, and the days washing would start. The kitchen would be emptied of rugs and bikes and anything else that might be in the way and then the tubs and mangle were pulled out and washday began. Everything had to be done by hand, and in the early days soap powders were rare and could only be used by families that could afford it. Carbolic soap was used, big blocks of it were rubbed on the clothes down a scrubbing board, then put in another tub to soak and knocked about with a wooden posher. They were then transferred to another tub to be rinsed, rung out and then mangled.(2 wooden rollers turned by a handle that the clothes were passed through and all the water squeezed out) If the weather was fine the clothes were pegged out on the washing line up the garden. Dinner had to be prepared and ready for us kids to come home to at 12 o'clock from school, and also a stone of bread had to be made to be baked for tea time. If it was raining, all the clothes had to be dried in the house, round the fire, so tempers were very short. Mum had a very short temper at the best of times, but on wash days, woe betide anyone of us daft enough to get too close when she was trying to get finished. You were likely to get hit with anything to hand, copper stick, floor cloth, or even carving knife. It didn't even matter if you were one of us or not. If any pals or anyone who called, walked on the wet floor or anything

that upset her, then they were just as likely to get clonked as one of us.
As soon as we had eaten our tea, someone was ordered to wash and dry the pots and then we could go out to play, with strict orders to be in the house by 7.00pm. If you were late, Dad would be waiting at the top of the steps, looking for you. He wore a big leather belt 10cm wide and he wore the buckle round the back. As soon as you reached the edge of the road opposite he would reach round and bring the buckle to the front and start taking it off.. You knew you were in for it. With a bit of luck you might dodge past and only get 1 or 2 hits. By the time he got into the house you had shot upstairs to bed and hoped you weren't followed. Of course you didn't bother with supper. Anyway you had probably been up to mischief and had to wait for someone to go into the house before you dared to come past. If anyone did come to the house to complain that you had done something wrong you were dealt with very severely and got a good thrashing. But if you had been accused of something you hadn't done or been hit by another man, Dad would go and sort it out.

As you got a bit older your pals formed a gang and of course everyone had a nickname. I was named Yog, and the others were Willem Hicklin, Pan Bateman, Jinna Noble, Bert Robinson and Tinny Unwin. You played with others but the gang were your main friends.

In the home you made your own entertainment. Reading (you couldn't often find paper to write or draw on), play cards or dominoes, draughts, snakes and ladders, or play hide and seek around the house. If it was fine we had to play outside. If it was light at night the games would be agreed what was to be played. Skipping with an old piece of washing line, or whip and top if you could find string or a shoelace for the whip, buttons, marbles, fag cards, rimming (that was running along with the rim of a bike wheel or old car tyre, or if you were very lucky you had a steel hoop, and would run for miles) In the dark nights we would play kick can, Hollow or get into mischief playing Bullroar or tying 2 doorknobs together and then knock on both doors and run and get hidden. The occupants couldn't open their doors very wide and there was usually a lot of shouting and swearing before someone came round from the back of the house to see what was going on. That again was a chase if they saw anyone who might be the culprit. Kick Back Donkey was another game that often ended up with angry people chasing you if you kicked their door.

Early October was the time to start collecting wood for the bonfire. Searching the fields all around the village to find where the farmers had cut the hedges, then dragging it home to build the bonfire. All the kids in the street were doing the same thing, so it wasn't easy to find material. As Bonfire night got closer there would be a lot of raiding each others fire heaps, but when the night came every yard would have

a good fire. Fireworks could be bought for a ha'penny or a penny. Ha'penny Little Imps and penny Porn Porn Cannons were bangers. Sparklers were a ha'penny and a penny a packet. The other fireworks weren't very interesting to boys.

If you were lucky some of the women would bring trays of bonfire toffee or Parkin (ginger cake) and everyone had a good time. The next day we would find a big potato and place it into the hot ashes to roast. Of course impatience soon set in and you raked your spud out of the ashes with a stick. It would look like a lump of charcoal, and as soon as you could handle it you started to eat it. Breaking the hard black skin with your teeth, you gnawed at the outside edge. Of course it wasn't cooked so was put back into the fire and start all over again.

Sunday was the big day of the week. We had to wear our best clean clothes. Play was not allowed so we had to go for a walk or sit and read. Sunday breakfast was always special with bacon, eggs and tomatoes. We then had to go to the Chapel Sunday School. When we came home we would eagerly wait for the paper man to come with the comics, Dandy, Beano, Wizard and Champion which we would read cover to cover. After dinner, which was the main meal of the week (Roast meat, Yorkshire pudding and vegetables) we were given our Sunday ha'penny to go across to the shop to buy sweets. It would get you 2oz of boiled sweets or 5 caramel toffees or you could get lollipops or small bars of toffee. You made it last as long as you could because that was all the sweets you got for the week. Sunday school again in the afternoon and then home for tea. Mum always tried to bake a cake and some tarts and there were never any left for another day. In the evening we would play table games or in winter we would sit round the fire and dad would tell us tales of when he was young. At 7o'clock it would be bed time. Supper was a slice of bread and margarine or dripping and a drink of water. Then off and get washed and into bed. Dark nights we had the landing light on until we were in bed and then the only light was from a candle on top of the banister. The only floor covering upstairs was Lino with a little mat at the side of the bed, so even in summer it was cold. In the winter an oven shelf wrapped in a bit of old blanket was put into the bed to get it warm. If you stubbed your toes on it, it was very painful. Coats were laid on the beds for extra warmth.

On Saturday we all had jobs to do. bad would take us to the tip, cinder picking for the fire or to the woods to fetch dead branches which had to be carried home and then sawn into logs for chopping into sticks or to help keep the fire going. In spring we had to help with the garden and get sent with the barrow (a box on pram wheels) to fetch horse or cow muck from the fields. If you saw a milk horse drop it's muck near your house you ran out with a bucket and shovel to collect it. As soon as we were old enough we had to find work to help out. Running errands, potato picking or working in

the fields. All the money earned was handed over to mum to buy food or whatever. We were given an extra penny to spend on ourselves for encouragement. When we reached the age of 10 years we were encouraged to try to reach the standard at school to go and sit the exam s for the Grammar School. Mum would tell us it was up to us to take the opportunity and get a high school education, otherwise the only jobs were either down the pit or farming which only offered very low wages. Alice and Wilfred passed to go to Woodhouse Grammar School, but when it came to my turn I didn't want to go. I had a job as a delivery boy for the butchers (being allowed out of school for an hour twice a week to deliver meat rations round the village) I was always near the top of the class and Miss Shipstone had high hopes for me. We were coached in sitting the exams by doing old exam papers from previous years, and she was sure I would pass easily. I kept saying I didn't want to go, I couldn't see myself as a clerk or working in an office. I thought I wanted to be a builder or an engineer and go to the Tech when I was 13yrs. I didn't try when the exams came and failed. Miss Shipstone was very annoyed with me when the results came and she gave me the cane for not trying. When she was old enough Ruth passed but none of the others did. Marie, Brian, David, Jean and Alan all went to the Secondary Modern School at Thurcroft.

Play

We were sent out to play from about 2 or 3 years old, the older ones being made to look after (always reluctantly) us younger ones. You soon made pals your own age and soon became part of a gang. We lived on Winney Hill opposite Firvale. Firvale was full of yards (rows of terraced and back to back houses) all different and exciting. In the younger days you played with the kids from around the top of the street, but as you got a bit older and having started school, you played with your gang all up and down the street. We played loads of games , using things we could beg borrow or steal (rope for skipping, buttons, marbles etc.) Cricket was enjoyed by all. We were the only family with a proper cricket bat so all the kids in the street would come to see if any of us were coming out to play. We would play in one of the yards, using a dustbin for the wicket. It was always a problem finding a ball so it was a major catastrophe if the ball got lost. If there were too many to play in the yard we then went either up into the Recca or went into the field at the bottom of the street. We often got chased by the farmer if he caught us playing in the field. Games would last several nights until everybody had had their innings. Fence rails were used to make a bat so that both ends of the pitch could be used. It didn't half hurt your hands if a hard ball was being used. When the Fair came to the village, wooden balls from the Coconut shy were pinched to use as cricket balls. Kids would hide behind the stall and any balls that came behind were taken. These often split when hit by the cricket bat.

Kite flying kept us busy for quite a while. Trying to make a kite out of newspaper and string. Finding 2 straight sticks to make the frame, using flour and water paste to stick it together (which took ages to dry) and making the tailings out of folded newspaper tied together on a length of string to make the kite balance so it would fly. It was quite a fete to get your kite flying, and running repairs were always needed. Fancy coloured kites could be bought for a penny each, but it was more exciting trying to make your own.

From the war starting women knitted scarves, mittens and balaclavas for the soldiers called up to fight, and it was most boys wish to own a balaclava. Our Jack was called up early on in the war and he brought me one home on his first leave. I wore it every day and all day until it was completely worn out.

Your everyday clothes were virtually rags. Buttons missing from your shirt and trousers. Your trousers were patched, often with material of a different colour, the bits rescued from the peg bag. A pegged rug was always in the process of being made and the clippings were always in short supply. Handkerchiefs were unheard of for kids, you had to manage with a bit of old rag from the girls worn out underwear. More often than not you wiped your nose on your sleeve.

bad cut all the boys hair and he only knew one style. He held a tuft of hair at the front, and all the rest was cut off. Partly to avoid catching nits and lasting longer in between haircuts. The shears were often blunt and after a haircut you often felt as if you had been plucked.

Memories

One day I was with dad in the allotment helping with the gardening. bad had fetched some long bean sticks from the woods. He was busy sticking them in the bean row and tying them up to a wire stretched between two posts. I had seen him chop a point at the end of the stick with the axe, so I decided to have a go. I lifted the axe and gave a good chop, but I missed the stick and hit my shin. It went in about half an inch, but it didn't bleed. I got a clip round the ear and sent home for it to be seen to. There was no sympathy from mum only another scolding for being so daft.

Another time I was with dad and our Wilfred cinder picking up on the tip. Even at an early age you had to do jobs. Part of the tip was on fire. You could not see the fire, only smoke, the fire being below the surface. Dad had warned us to keep away from that area. Not looking what I was doing I strayed onto the fire. The surface broke

and I sank through. My boots (which were only like cardboard) caught fire and both my feet were burnt. I got another smack around the ear and carried home. My feet were bandaged and I got another scolding from Mother. I still had to go to school, the others carrying me on their backs and I had to stay in at playtime.

Being poverty stricken, we had very few clothes. 2 shirts and 2 pairs of stockings, the rest was what you stood up in. A shirt and stockings had to last a week, while the others were being washed. You had one pair of boots that had to last a year. Dad had a set of cobbling tackle, and mended all our boots as best he could. While the boots were quite new, Dad hammered steel studs in the soles and heels. It was great fun trying to slide down the school yard or making sparks fly when you kicked the road. Often you walked about with holes in your boots, fitting pieces of cardboard in and hoping it didn't rain. Stockings, trousers and jerseys full of holes, mum tried her best to patch and darn, often the patches and darning being done on material that had already been done before. At that time in the early 30's most of the kids in the street were the same. Haircuts were close cropped with a tuft at the front, which dad held on to while he cut your hair with the hand shears. Most of the lads at school were the same. You made pals and played with the other lads in the street, running in and out of one another's houses.

Older brother Jack had a cricket bat and a proper football and the other lads would come to our house and ask if either Ernest or Wilfred were playing. If the answer was no, then they would say, " can we borrow the bat (or ball) please?" (which ever the season).

All the kids in the street used our garden path to get up to the Recca. Be it football or cricket, the first 2 picked sides to play. It wasn't long before the other kids turned up and were picked alternatively to go on each side. For football, the goals were marked out by using 2 coats for the goalposts. As more and more kids came, the 'goals' were moved further and further back till they were at each end of the field. As many as 40 or more kids would be playing. Some of the older lads that had started work, came and played in pit boots, at times getting very boisterous. The game only finished when it was too dark to play. The ball or bat was always returned home, sometimes the ball in a very sorry state. When the bladder was worn out we managed by stuffing the case with dry grass. There was a season for all the games, i.e. skipping, whip and top, kick can, marbles, fag cards, rusty fusty or hollow. Autumn was a time for making winter warmers out of clay, these were shaped like a hollow brick with small holes in the ends. While waiting for the clay to dry, the problem was finding touch-wood to burn.(This was semi decomposed wood from a fallen tree) The fun was trying to get the fire going. A bit of dried grass in the bottom, then small

thin twigs and then the touch -wood. Somebody had to find a match and when their fire started you got a light from them. They only smouldered and trying to keep them alight called for a lot of blowing through the holes, usually getting a black face and sore eyes. As you got older, you found a can and made holes in the side. A piece of string tied to the top the can. The fire was kept going by swinging the can round your head. In October when the harvest was finished, the farmers cut the hedges. We would go after school and collect thorns etc. for the bonfire. A piece or clothesline used to drag it home. A lot of excitement was had trying to get a halfpenny or penny to buy fireworks. They were bought one at a time and saved for bonfire night. One year, when I was about 5 years old, I was playing with Andrew Lumley, who was about 7. He had bought a box of coloured matches. When lit they burned either green or red. It was a cold windy day, so we went and sat between 2 corn stacks in a field. The stacks were close together with only a small gap between them. Andrew struck a match and when the colour was burned he dropped it on the ground. The match was still alight and started burning the loose straw. We tried to put it out, but ran out of the way and hid behind a hedge. The fire got a good hold and both stacks were ablaze. The fire engine came from Kiveton pit. It was drawn by 2 white horses. They couldn't put the fire out and both stacks burned to the ground. No one ever knew how they had got on fire.

Our bonfire was built in the back yard of the houses down the street, (Firvale) each block of houses having their own yard and the kids from each yard had their own bonfire. A lot of fun was had, by raiding another yard for their bonfire stuff, this often ending in fights. Come the big night and everybody was full of excitement. Not many fireworks, but the older lads would be throwing bangers behind people watching the fire. I was happy if I got a sparkler. The next day we would put potatoes in the dying embers to bake. Of course we couldn't wait for them to cook and kept raking them out and trying to eat them, covered in charcoal or not. We kept nibbling at the edges and then putting them back to cook some more.

After bonfire night had done, thoughts turned to Christmas. At school we started making paper chains and drawing pictures to make paper lanterns. We also learnt Christmas carols. In early December we started to go round carolling. One verse of 'Away in a manger' and the little rhyme:- 'Hole in my stocking, hole in my shoe, hole in my hat where my hair peeps trough. If you haven't got a penny a ha'penny will do. If you haven't got a ha'penny then God bless you'. Then knock on the door. Very often there would be a shout of 'Ya too early' or later on ' ya too late'. You soon learned who would give and those who didn't.

At home we would be sat round the table making trimmings out of coloured paper and

flour paste, or writing letters to Father Christmas and posting them up the chimney. At the weekends we searched the hedges and woods for holly with berries on. One year I remember we found 2 holly trees that were full of berries. It was hard work trying to climb trees and even harder to reach up to the ends of the branches where the berries were. The boughs were awkward to break but we managed to get a good bunch. We were always scared that the farmer would come and chase us. We had just started walking home when we met a woman coming towards us. We wondered what she would say. When she got to us she smiled and admired the bunch of holly. She said 'I'll give you a shilling for it'. We didn't argue and came home happy agreeing to share it between us. Come Christmas Eve and it was all excitement having begged mum to darn my stockings so that nothing would fall out.

We slept 3 in a bed, with the boys in one bedroom and the girls in the other. Mum and dad had the front bedroom. Our bed had a hard straw mattress and was very cold. The sheets and blankets were thin and poor. To keep warm overcoats were thrown over us and a hot oven shelf wrapped in a piece of cloth to warm the bed. We only had our shirts to sleep in, so you snuggled up together to keep warm. NB. I didn't know what vests and underpants were until I went into the Army when I was 18 years old.
We hid a small piece of candle and a match so that we could see early what Father Christmas had brought. In the stocking would be an apple, an orange a few nuts and maybe a few toffees. We only had one toy. One Christmas Wilfred and myself had a Tommy Talker, it was like a small tin trumpet. You made a noise talking and humming into the mouthpiece. There was a hole in the top and a small funnel shaped piece that screwed in and held a small piece of pigskin. Once the pigskin was worn out you made do with a little bit of greaseproof paper. So that Wilfred wouldn't pinch my funnel piece I put it on my finger and went back to bed with it. When I woke next morning it had cut into my finger and my finger had swollen. It had to be cut off and my finger went septic. So I got another good hiding.

Another Christmas I got a chocolate battleship about a foot long and I sat at the bottom of the stairs and ate it all. You didn't put anything down or somebody else would take it. I made myself sick and had another clout for doing it.

Every Sunday we had to go to Sunday school at the Methodist Chapel. Always scrubbed and bathed on a Saturday night. We were not allowed to play on a Sunday, and if not at Chapel, we all had to go a walk, with the girls as well (sisters). I hated this because I would rather have been with my pals. Each year for the Chapel Anniversary, we had new clothes, which had to last till the next year. Woe betide you if you got dirty, you got a good hiding and kept in the house for a week. So as soon as you got home from chapel you got changed into your old clothes. For the Chapel

Anniversary you could be chosen to learn a piece of poetry and have to recite it at the afternoon and evening services for 2 weeks.

As I got older I had a set of pals, a gang. At the weekend or in the school holidays, we roamed all over the village, fields, woods or ponds. As a rule, what one did everyone did. If one jumped over a gorse bush or stream, then all followed. We all had egg collections and spent hours looking for birds nests. To blow the eggs we used a thorn from the hedge, made a small hole at each end and then blew it, hoping not to squash it with your fingers. Any eggs that were big enough to eat, i.e. partridge, pheasant, any of the water birds, pewits or even crows or wood pigeon, were taken home and mum would poach or fry them for our tea. We knew every tree round the ponds and climbed every one and carved our names on them with a pocket knife.

One of the first jobs in Spring, was to find or cut a stick. This was your tool for the summer, to poke into holes, drive birds off their nests, test how deep the water was when wading into the pond trying to reach a coots nest (often getting your trousers wet then having to run about trying to dry out). We all learnt to swim in the ponds, no clothes on (no- one had swimming trunks in those days) and getting dry by running around, shivering and drip- drying.

One winter the ponds were frozen over and mum warned us not to go near the ponds. Of course we did. We were testing the ice with our sticks and ventured on to the edge of the ice. We were near where the bank was steep. I did a little jump, the ice broke and I went through. I had presence of mind to push my stick downwards and it lodged on a stone in the bank saving me from going under the ice. The other lads pulled me out. I was wet up to my waist and I was frightened to go home. We tried to make a fire to dry me out but didn't manage to get it going big enough to get warm, so I had to go home and got a good hiding and sent to bed.

During the summer we would go to the woods, making bows and arrows (if you could get any string for the bows). Then we'd make a camp or den to hide in, playing cowboys and Indians. We would only go home when we were hungry. Wherever we were we usually found something to eat, mushrooms, pignuts, turnips, apples, anything that we could find or pinch. We were once in the rectory gardens pinching raspberries, gooseberries and loganberries. We had filled our shirts with young apples when the gardener caught us. He was a big man, with a big dog. There was no escape and he cornered us against a high wall. He said, "What are you doing, and what have you got there?" We said "Apples", and he said, "What are you going to do with them". "Eat them", we said and he said "Right then, get them eaten", and he made us eat them all, even though they were young and very sour. "Eat everything" he said.

When we had finished, he threatened us with his stick and chased us out of the garden. We were all suffering with bellyache, but daren't say anything to mother or that would have meant another good hiding. We knew all the apple trees and orchards in the village and often raided them when the fruit was ready.

My Family

I slept in the girls bedroom until I was about 3yrs old, then moved into the boys bedroom, sleeping between our Jack and our Wilfred. Bill had just left home and I had his spot. Our bedroom was the small room at the end of the house, with just a bed and little set of shelves in it. The girls (Cissy, Grace, Joyce and Alice) slept in the big back room which had 2 beds and a blanket chest in it. Mum and dad slept in the front bedroom which had a bed, a cot (Ruth slept here till she was about 18 months old, followed by Marie, Brian, David, Jean and lastly Alan), a trunk and a dressing table in it. The bathroom was on the front corner of the house and was very sparse and cold, just a bath and sink. All the floors upstairs were covered in Lino, with just a few mats, and in Winter was very cold to walk on. Mum and dad had a chamber pot under their bed, but all the rest of us had to use a bucket on the landing, the toilet being downstairs. The only light upstairs was a candle on the landing, (mum couldn't afford the electric light on as dad was unable to work through ill health). I later learned that dad had a kidney complaint and was often in agony.

Because dad couldn't work, we were very poor, there being very little sick pay from the pit and the rest coming from the Parish. There was "The means test", where a man from the council came to see if anything in the house could be sold to make a bit of money. As soon as any of us reached 14 years old we had to go out to work to help the family budget. The amount of "Parish" then being reduced. You had to hand over your wages to Mum and she would give you pocket money. Even the girls who had left home to go into Service had to tip up. Even those of us doing National Service had to send money home every week. You only started paying 'board' when you became 21yrs old.

Mum's main concern was trying to feed us all. She had to bake bread every 2 days and the food she cooked was plain but wholesome. She was very good at making a tasty meal out of just about anything. We had our portion of dinner and if we were still hungry, we had to fill up on bread and marg. If, for tea, we had jam or cheese sandwiches, then we had very little marg on. We soon learned to forage for food. In the Autumn and Winter we went out into the fields pinching turnips or potatoes or picking mushrooms and blue stalks or finding watercress, scrumping apples and pears and picking blackberries to make a pie. In the Spring we were sent into the fields

looking for young turnip tops, these boiled up were our greens as the Brussels sprouts and cabbage in the garden were finished. If we didn't forage all we got were dried peas.

As soon as we were old enough we had to help around the house, fetching cinders from the pit tip and fire wood from the woods to help out with the coal, or helping doing the gardening, or running errands or doing anything mum wanted doing. In Spring, me and Wilfred would be sent out with the wheelbarrow and shovel to find horse or cow muck for the garden. Whenever the milk float or rag and bone man came round with their horse and carts there was always a rush on to pick up the droppings before anyone else.

Next door adjoining us, lived the Hicklins, who had a big family. William was the youngest and was my age. His older brothers either worked down the pit or on the farm. Nellie and Annie, the only 2 girls, had to stay at home to help Mrs Hicklin look after the men.

They were a grumpy lot. I played with William and he ran in and out of our house, but I rarely went into his house. We would be playing cricket or something on the back garden and getting excited, and Nelly would come out all nasty, telling us to shut up, someone's in bed. The menfolk being on shifts at the pit. They all smoked, but were not allowed to smoke in the house, even old Mr Hicklin stood outside to smoke his pipe. At the other side was Mrs Tyler, a little fat woman, and her husband who was also small and a bit crackers. After her family had left home, Mrs Tyler took in a lodger Ned Gaye, who was a drunkard and a poacher. In Winter mum would send me round to buy a couple of rabbits. "And tell him I don't want any milky does," she would say. I loved watching dad skinning the rabbits and cutting them up for the pot. All was washed, carcass, head (with the eyes taken out), liver, heart and kidneys and all going into the stew pot with vegetables. What a wonderful meal, everybody enjoyed it, mopping up the gravy with bread.

Mrs Tyler would often ask Wilfred or myself to go across to the shop and fetch her a gill of beer. (Shows shop at the top of one side of the street and Lancashires on the other) She would warm the beer in a pan on the fire and then drink it. One Sunday morning Ned came round to our house and asked Wilfred and me to go across the fields towards Pebbly and to look for his false teeth. He had been drinking the night before , been sick leaning against a tree and lost his teeth. He said he would give us sixpence to go and find them. We went and looked but didn't try very hard to find them, and went back and told him they were nowhere to be found.

On Sunday mornings the Salvation Army used to come round the street singing hymns. They would start at the bottom of the street first and then come up to the top and stand in front of the shops. Old Mr Tyler used to come out of the house wearing nothing more than his shirt, a Bible in one hand and a poker in the other, all the time they were singing he would be ranting and raving. After a few times they came and took him away to the asylum. He once escaped and found his way home wearing only a shirt and trousers. Mrs Tyler locked herself in the house. It was raining very hard when the police came looking for him. At first they couldn't find him, he had got himself hidden at the top of the garden, laying behind the fence. They came back the next day where he had locked himself in the house, Mrs Tyler let them in through the toilet window. It was only very small, but 2 big policemen managed to climb through and got him. They took him away and he later died.

By this time Bill (Tyke) was working down the pit. Cissy and Grace had gone out to work in Domestic Service and left home. Cissy came home pregnant. She had a baby girl and gave her to Tommy Lakin and his wife, who adopted her. She was called Pamela. Cissy went back into service in Cornwall and we never heard from her again. Grace was in service in Lytham in Lancashire, where she later married a local man, Reuben. She was a sickly girl who smoked heavily and was unable to have any children so adopted a boy. She died in her forties of cancer.

Jack had left school and worked for a builder at Clowne. He was called Frank Smith and he owned a small sand quarry, up the lane. He kept all his tools in our coal house. Picks, shovels and all sorts of steel bars to drill holes. He also kept the explosives to blast the sand, on a shelf in the coal house. Jack was called up into the army at the beginning of the war. When he came out at the end of the war he worked in the pits in Durham, met Jean and married. They moved down to 011erton, in Nottinghamshire, working in the pit there, and had 2 sons, Gerald and Kevin.

When Joyce left school she went into service, but when the war broke out, she had to work in the woods, sawing trees that had been felled. She met and married Bill Faxon and went to live in Sheffield, and had 3 boys, Michael, Geoffrey and Alan. Alice, Wilfred and Ruth all went to Woodhouse Grammar school, but had to leave at sixteen to start work. Alice worked in an office in Sheffield. She married Dennis Lawson and had a boy and a girl, Barry and Janet.

Wilfred worked in an office at Waleswood, but when he was seventeen and a half he joined the R.A.F and made that his career, reaching the rank of Pilot Officer. He married a Scottish girl, Betty, and had 3 children, Carol, Kenneth and Fiona. He died when he was only 41 years old of a brain tumour.

Ruth went into nursing in Sheffield. She became a state registered nurse. She moved to London and became a midwife, riding round the Notting Hill area on her bike, delivering babies. She married Jack Forman, who was divorced with 2 children, Sonia and Mark. Ruth never had children of her own.

Marie left school and worked in a shop in Kiveton. She married Ron Cassidy and had 3 sons, Philip, Steven and Brian.

Brian was a very difficult child to bring up. He was only 3 weeks old when he got a chest infection and mum thought she would lose him. It was early in the war. Jack had been posted to India and we hadn't heard from him for a long time. Mum had heard that he was ill and had been moved to the foot hills where it was cooler. One day a Romany Gypsy came to the door selling pegs. Mum said sorry I can't afford anything. The Gypsy said "Don't worry, I can see you have got trouble". "Yes" said mum, "my baby is ill and I'm frightened for him". "Don't worry", said the woman, " Send someone into the fields and fetch a fresh turnip, peel it and cut it into small cubes, then sprinkle it with sugar. Let it stand overnight and then give him a spoon full of the liquid every few hours". She also said "You have a son abroad who is ill, but don't worry, he will be alright". How she knew that nobody knows. We later heard that Jack was okay. Mum kept giving Brian the syrup and he got well. Amazing!

Brian grew up to be an accident waiting to happen. When he was 3 years old he climbed on to the kitchen table, on top of 2 orange boxes that dad had put there out of his way. All the lot fell over with him on top of it. He landed on the floor, banding his head on the pedal of Jacks bike. It split his head open on his temple and he had to have it stitched up. Another time he had gone into the pantry stand picked up a glass dish. Rushing into the room he tripped over the step falling and smashing the dish. He cut both his lips, top and bottom, right through. He had to be stitched inside and out. He was always missing and never came straight home from school. Mum would send me and Wilfred to look for him. Whoever found him gave him a good clout and dragged him by the scruff of the neck, not letting go until you had got him into the house. There was always people coming to the house complaining about what he'd done. One day Mr Lawson, who kept fowls in a pen, came to say Brian had killed his chicks. Apparently it had been raining and the hen pen was sludgy. The chicks had got covered in mud and Brian decided ti give them a bath in the drinking tray. Being wet and cold the chicks had died. Another time he was coming up the street not looking what he was doing. He had a rusty Oxo tin in his hands and was looking at something he had put in the tin. He slipped off the causeway edge and landed with his thumb in the tin. It nearly cut his thumb off. Another time he had been up in the field playing

in the trough with an empty treacle tin. Getting fed up he decided to fill the tin with Lime, that was in a heap in the field. He thought he would bring some home for dad to put on the garden. He had put the lid on the tin and it was 'quick lime'. He always came home round the back of Hicklins next door, and when he was between the houses the tin exploded, blowing lime into his eyes. We thought that he had blinded himself. After a lot of visits to the hospital, his sight was saved. In his early teens he developed Mastoids in both ears and became very deaf, only hearing a bit in one ear. Later he started travelling around with a pop group from Kiveton called Jade. He could set up their sound equipment perfectly. One night in Grimsby, part of the act required fireworks on stage, one exploded while being set up and nearly blinded him again. Around this time in his late thirties he married Pat, a divorcee with one son, Steven. They then had a daughter Cathy born with Spina bifida.

David left school and worked for an engineering company in Killamarsh. When he was old enough, he joined the R.A.F, where he became an air frame welder. He left the forces and went to work at Watneys Brewery in London. He married Gret and had one daughter, Susan.

Jean worked in a shop in Worksop, She married Reg Marshall and had a son, Brett. They adopted a daughter Gail. She divorced Reg and married Jim.

Alan worked at Kiveton Park Steel and wire works and later the Umbraco Steel works in Kiveton. He married Susan and had 2 children, a girl, Dawn, and a boy, Paul.

My life

When I was 10 years old, I got a job as an errand lad for Mr Clarence Wainscoat the butcher on Kye Lane, getting an hour off school on Tuesdays and Thursdays to deliver rations of meat round the village and to collect the money. I wasn't big enough to ride the butchers bike so had to push it with a full basket on the front. Anybody that could, was allowed to keep 2 pigs, and during the winter time it was time for the slaughter. Every Saturday night I helped with the killing of 3 pigs, and the same again on Sunday morning, the pigs often weighing up to 40 stones. Mondays the carcases were then cut up and cured for bacon and ham. Often I was sent to find out why a pig hadn't arrived for killing. I was only small for my age, but often found the people were frightened of their pigs, or couldn't get them out of the sty, and I had to do it, putting a rope round it's snout and driving it to the slaughter house.

At school I was always near the top of the class. We were preparing for the Grammar School exams and I was expected to do well and pass easily. I didn't want to go, as I

believed anyone who worked in an office were a sissy. Miss Shipstone, the teacher, was very annoyed with me when I failed to pass and gave me 3 strokes of the cane for not trying. I then went on to pass for the Technical college to study building. I was then 13 years old. I had only been going to Tech about a year when I got a diseased joint in my right index finger. Mum took me to The Royal Infirmary hospital in Sheffield where the doctor told me to take all my clothes off (with mum sitting there, how embarrassing). The doctor was called Dr Little, but he was the biggest man I'd ever seen, and he had 10 students with him, all stood round the bed looking at me. He started with my feet and examined every inch of me. I later learned he was looking for signs of TB. The doctor thought of cutting my finger off, but decided to try and save it. They fashioned a wire splint and kept bending it a bit each time I went to hospital. I was under the hospital for a long time and had to do exercises to make my finger bend. Unfortunately I couldn't hold a pen, or do any of the practical exercises, so as soon as possible I left school and started work full time at the butchers. I learned to drive the van, long before I was old enough to legally hold a license By this time the round had grown and I was delivering to Kiveton and Todwick. During the very bad winter of 1947, there were 20 foot snow drifts in places and Harthill was cut off, with all the roads blocked with snow. We had to drag a sledge with a box on it to take the meat deliveries round Kiveton, getting wet through and cold. I developed acute rheumatism following this and was in bed for eleven weeks. I was off work for 18 weeks. I was determined to get better and went for a walk every day, going a bit further each time. I was 16 years old. I worked at butcher Wainscoat's until I was 18years old when I was called up in April 1949 and passed fit to go into the army. I went to Aldershot, which seemed a long way off seeing as I'd never been far or been on a train. I joined others on the train and went along with them. After the initial shock of being away from home and in the army, I started to enjoy it and made some very good friends. I was posted to Kimberly near Nottingham and was there for 2 years.

When I came out of the army, I found it difficult to settle down. Nothing was the same. I had several jobs, but couldn't find anything that suited me. I eventually went back to butchering, getting a job at the Bacon Factory in Clowne. I started work at 5.30 am making sausages and pork pies. I met Doreen James at the Palais in Worksop and started courting. I would rush home from work, get washed and changed, have my dinner and then race to Swallownest to meet her. I changed my job again and went to work for Hills Pork butchers in Worksop. I really enjoyed working there. Doreen and I decided to get married. We married at Aston Church on 6th March 1954 and after a weekend honeymoon in Nottingham we started our married life in a little bedsit (the front room of someone's house) in Worksop. We only had 9 pounds between us and on our first day together, Doreen had to go and buy plates, 2 mugs and some cutlery as

we didn't have anything at all. Doreen worked at Wigfalls electrical shop in Worksop. She soon became pregnant, which caused all sorts of problems as we then had to find somewhere else to live. Fortunately a house came empty opposite mums on Winney Hill, and Mr Shaw the owner let us have it. The rent was 6 shillings a week. It was damp and cold but it was somewhere on our own. It was a 2 up 2 down house with the toilet across the yard and a cellar underneath. Both Patricia and Lynn were born there. Tricia on 7th January 1955(10 months after the wedding) and Lynn on 5th July 1957. In our row of houses lived Chrissie Ibbotson next to Shows shop, Marie and Harold Laws and their son Kieran , then a bachelor George Haydock, then the gennel then us. Next door was Jack and Mabel Evans with their 2 children Valerie and Alwyn, then Albert and Mirrie Laws.

In 1958 we moved into a brand new council house on Firvale, after the old rows of back to back houses on the left of the street had been demolished. To have 3 bedrooms and a bathroom and toilet upstairs was bliss. Years later we bought 9 Firvale and I still live there.

Games

Games played at school

- Whip and top
- Fag cards
- Buttons
- Marbles
- Skipping
- Rusty - bum - bum Hopscotch
- Catching on chains
- Battle door and shuttle cock
- Snobs

Games played at home

- Kick can
- Hollow
- Bullroar
- Duck stone
- Winter warmers
- Kick back donkey Kite flying
- Throwing arrows
- Sledging and skating

Ancient Egyptian Wisdom

Better is bread when the heart is happy than riches with troubles.