

Second World War Memories by Joan Naulls, St Ives

In 1940 I was 7 years old and I was evacuated from London to Hornton with my sister Audrey who was 5.

We arrived in the village on Sumners coach which stopped outside the little general stores that had a lovely bow window. On the wall outside was a red chocolate machine where I think the chocolate cost 1 penny for a bar.

We were very lucky that family who took us in were named Miles. The father was called Earnest, the son Arthur and daughter Gladys. Their home in Bell Street was a 3 storey house called Jubilee House. We had the bedroom on the top floor, outside the bedroom on the landing apples and other fruit was stored. There was no bathroom at that time but there was a hip bath in the outhouse where a huge copper was used to heat the water which was pumped up from the well. The toilet was outside and really primitive to use as were the candles used to light us to bed.



We attended the village school, I learnt to sew and made myself a white bib top apron for use in the cookery class. I remember being praised for my darning, which I did on a darning mushroom!

I have so many happy memories of my childhood in Hornton, we would play in the sheds adjoining the house where the family business was run. Mr. Jeffs would be in the smithy shoeing the horses, I loved watching him and can remember the smell even now. In the big workshop at the top of the garden coffins were made, I was fascinated by the many tools used and the boxes of black pitch used for lining the insides.

Gladys was a wonderful surrogate mother to us, she did everything for us including teaching us to knit and even made clothes from hand me downs.

We played with the children in the village because it was a close knit community, you knew everyone from one end of the village to the other. David Jarvis was friend, he pumped the organ at the chapel for his father who was the organist. Olive Robbins was another of my friends, I would go with her each day to collect the milk from her fathers farm. Mrs. Kate Turner ran the post office and the radio repair shop was owned by Mr. Roland Miles.

At Christmas we went carol singing around the village carrying lanterns. In the summer we went on Sunday school outings to various destinations, Wickstead Park in Kettering was just one.

On a Sunday we would attend Sunday school in the morning, a chapel service in the afternoon and then again in the evening. After the evening service on a summer night we would go for a walk along the country lanes. We regularly went looking for mushrooms and water cress in the fields near by. Opposite Jubilee House was a big barn where sheep dipping took place.

Our brother Alec was evacuated to the village in 1939, he lived with Norman and Polly Wheeler at the Gables, the house next to the old Red Lion pub. He learnt to drive MR. Sumners 32 seater bus and also drove the tractors on Mr. Wheelers farm, all this before the age of 14 years old. Alec also recalls large blocks of stone being taken to London for Lloyds bank from the stone quarry at Edge Hill.

I also remember when forces were mustering for the D-Day landings, we were amazed to see a succession of tanks, lorries and jeeps with all their equipment driving through the village. They in a nearby field where we children were treated to chocolate and sweets from the soldiers who looked so smart in their uniforms.

