



**James Henry Yerbury**  
**'Jim'**

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## GROWING UP IN THE COUNTRY IN THE NINETEEN THIRTIES

I was born on the 14/3/1926 at Kings Sutton and named after my Father. James Henry Yerbury who lived with my mother and myself in Red Lion Street, my grandfather Steven Jones lived a couple of houses up the street and up a yard.

There was a small square on the right hand side was Mr Cades saddlery

On the left was Mrs Dancers house.

Behind the right at the back on the garden was a coup and pen.

There was about six ducks in the pen. A path went between the house and the pen and up to my Grandfathers house..

There were two cottages, one was my Grandfathers workshop and seemed to be knee deep in shavings.

He was a carpenter and builder by trade also he specialised in repairing ramms which were used to pump water around the farms for the cattle to drink.

Sunday mornings was usually a walk in the country with my father and grandfather.

A walk I remember most was to Nell Bridge, along the Ayhoe Road to the main road up to the canal bridge

All the meadows were under water the canal and over the towpath there was at least ten barges tied up along the towpath the water was too high for them to get under bridge.

Children from the barges were taking the horses and mules back along the canal to the stables.

I was afraid they would go into the canal because you could not see where the canal or towpath was.

I still remember this today

Another day my father and I went for a walk across the allotments and down by the brook, on the way we heard a noise in the sky, we look up and there was the airship R101

Sadly not long afterwards it crashed.

I could have only been four years old

A little man named Sammy Dingle used to come on the train in the evenings to come round the village selling Oxford Mails

I remember we used to follow him shouting oxford mail.

Mrs Cousins shop was just down the street, you had to go up some steps and the door at the top was like a stable door the top was always open

Sometimes we would play on the grass bank in front of the shop, and slide down the iron rail beside the steps.

One Sunday morning my father took me birds nesting up the Astrop road, we found a blackbirds nest with two eggs, I had a cap on so it was suggested I put them in my cap.

.On the way back home we passed the policemen's house I was unlucky he was in the front garden.

He had a word with my father and then said Hello young Jimmy have you been birds nesting and put his hand on my cap breaking the eggs he laughed and so did my father I did not think it funny

with egg running down my face. Another time I was taken to catch tadpoles up the Astrop road by St Rumbles Well in a little stream

We filled the jar with tadpoles, then carried on up to my grandfathers allotments

While we were there the sky got very black, my father said we have to get shelter somewhere dashing to get under a tree I kicked my jar of tadpoles over

A few weeks later going up to the allotments passing St Rumbles Well a lot of frogs were crossing the road, I asked where they had they come from, and father said if you had not tipped those tadpoles over they would not have to cross the road.

Kings Sutton club was once a year and always on the green, what I remember most was Tuzzio's ice cream. He always parked his pony and cart under the big elm tree by the church entrance

He was a short man standing in his little cart which had a canopy over and a small roan pony  
 He came from Banbury and lived in Cherwell Street, you cannot buy ice cream to day that tasted so  
 Nice.

,The elm tree is not there any more, it must have been cut down  
 My parents always took me to see the sideshows, there was coconut stalls ,three balls for sixpence.  
 All the coconuts you knock down you can keep  
 Rolling the penny was my favourite.

Balls on elastic and lead tubes to squirt soapy water, I can also remember the cakewalk was there  
 one year.

The swingboats were always up in the corner by the public house.

I started school at Kings Sutton, but was there only a few weeks.

One day my father caught me in the street and asked why I was not at school.

I told him I did not like it, his reply was we will see about that and took me back to school

At the time I started a new headmaster did as well.

His name was Mr Easy

A few weeks after we moved to Deddington to house in Castle Street. My brother moved in with us  
 From my grandfathers Alfred Yerbury who was a chimney sweep the same as my father..

There was no mains at that time.

Water was got in buckets from a well in Miss Turners yard.

The sewerage was collected Saturday mornings by a Mr Canning with his horse and slurry cart.

On Saturday mornings I had to go to Mr courses bakehouse to collect the dough for my mother to  
 make a dough cake.

When it was made I took it back to be bake, somewhere along the way I had to pass Mr Canning  
 Or make a detour to the bakehouse.

I started school at Deddington in Miss Millers class. She also taught my father and Aunt Cis.

She was a very old lady and lived in cottage at the bottom of oxford hill on the right hand side.

That cottage has also disappeared.

From Miss Millers I moved to Mrs Allens class, and then to Miss Busby;s

Around that time a caravan was towed into the playground and parked this was the school dentist

We were all given a check on our teeth.

Then the drama was about to begin. I had to have two fillings, the mothers came to school to go into  
 the dentist with their children, but my mother never came, so I went in on my own.

This I did not mind, but a lot of them where very upset.

Afterwards we where given a small tin of Gibbs toothpaste and a brush, and told we must clean our  
 teeth every day

Mr Harmsworth was the headmaster and lived next to the post office in the market place

Another teacher was Miss Smith. she came from Banbury on a motorbike.

It was belt drive which was like a fan belt on a car, and had a big gear lever up the side

We always played football in the playground Deddington and the foreigners which was Hempton  
 and Clifton

If the ball went out on to the main road ,we would nip over the fence to get it as there was not a lot  
 of traffic in those days

Sometimes a traction engine would be seen pulling a heavy load.

Also big chain drive scammel lorries taking engines between Oxford and Coventry

Certain times of the year gipsies would be seen with their caravans and a lot of horses.

They usually stoped in papermill lane or green hedges lane.

I had not been in Deddngton very long, there when there was an annual event in the horsefair..

All the horses and ponies were tied up to rings on the wall.

They were trotted along the street one at a time to show them off , before putting them up for sale.

I do not know if this sale had anything to do with Deddington Pudding Pie Fair,

One weekend it was decided we would go to Kings Sutton to see my Grandfather.

We walked to Aynhoe Station, two and a half miles, Got the train to Kings Sutton, It was a tank engine and two carriages.

We then had to walk one mile to my Grandfather's.

We were at his house all day, while my Mother did jobs about the house for him.

My Grandmother Jones died when my Mother was only twelve years old.

Homeward journey was walk to the station catch the train to Adderbury a distance of one mile, The station was beside the Duffield Iron Works.

During the second world war it was the aluminium, after the war it was Twyford Seeds

From Adderbury it was a two mile walk back to Deddington, It was a pitch black night

Walking back up Deddington Hill, which at that time there were two hills with tall trees on both sides. I was only six years old so I was frightened.

I think you would call it part ride part walk type of journey

Red slot machines on the station platform had a Nestle's milk chocolate bar

Also for a penny Fry's Cream bar, very tasty for a young lad.

The Castle Grounds was the favourite play area,

In the Summer the younger children would go for a picnic on the castle banks.

My Mother would make bread and jam sandwiches, and fill a lemonade bottle with tea,

And off we would go.

I can remember a sports day in the summer there were races, jumping, tug of war & five a side football,

And quite a lot of other amusements.

Most of the village used to turn up for sports day

One time I can remember Coky Smith's amusements coming down the Castle Grounds.

Everything was pulled by horses, two to a caravan which was similar to a gipsy's van

The wagons also had two horses to each side by side

The majority of his amusements were stalls a think the biggest was the swingboats.

Deddington Fire Brigade practice in the Market Place about once a month.

The fire engine was a Merryweather Steamer with a big brass boiler and chimney

One evening practicing the pressure gauge went up passed the danger mark, not knowing what to do at first, some were going to run away, but it was decided to turn the water on

In doing so it burst the hose pipes.

It was kept under the Town Hall, there was no arches at that time, there was two big red doors on the southern end.

It was specially adapted to be pulled by Jack Callows' commercial lorry

He was in the fire brigade, I think the Captain was Stanley Hall also Freddy Davies and a Mr Cox that's the only ones I can remember

Fridges were not about in those days so things had to be got daily

Nine o'clock in the morning my mother would give me tuppence halfpenny and a jug to go to

Mrs French's farm to get a pint of milk

You could get butter from there as well.

Hopcroft's the butchers shop was in Chapel Square.

Also they had a slaughter house up the Grove, around sixty pigs a week were killed there, and taken to Smithfield Market in London.

We used to go up there to get a pig's bladder, and get them to blow it up and tie it, so we could play football.

There was at least six people work there, about once a day two of them would bring a tank on wheels to the market place, and fill it up with water from the reservoir which was in the middle of the market square.

The water was boiled and used to clean the bristles off the pigs by scraping

There were two sweet shops Mrs Sanders in Castle Street, and Miss French's in the Market..

On Thursdays carriers would go to Banbury to collect goods from the shops, and the brewery and any where that items needed picking up.

Jack Callow and Fred Deely took their lorries in the morning and it was teatime before they got back.

Before this Fred Deelys uncle run a carriers cart to Banbury

Jack Callow and Fred Deely also coal merchants and delivered around the district, they collected the coal from either Aynhoe Station or the canal wharf, sometimes Adderbury Station

Sometime in the thirties foot and mouth was at Mr Goffes farm at Adderbury which is opposite the Gashouse turn and down a lane..

All the farm stock were burnt in the field on the left at the bottom of Dr Micheals hill.

Big trenches were dug out, loads of coal put in and set alight, the cattle were then put on top,

The smell reached as far as Deddington

Wintertime was always great fun, if we meet Fred Deely on the way back to school and snow was on the ground, we would throw a snowball at him, he would respond with a good old snowball fight, which would last for at least twenty minutes. He love it, so did we.

Sledging was always a must, We would start in the castle grounds the best bank was the first one in on the left side. If conditions were good you could go down the bank along and down through the gate into the lane.

The pesthouse was also a good place to sledge. It was a lot steeper than the castle grounds.

John Fortescue had a really good toboggan, but one time he came off and broke his arm.

If it was very frosty and no snow a good slide was always made in the senior playground at school I can remember having my first pair of glasses, coming out onto the slide falling and smashing the glasses to pieces.

Fullers pond along back lane opposite the gates into the farm was a good place to slide.

Sometimes at dinner times Mr Harmcworth the headmaster would come to make us go back to school.

Sundays was always a special day, A day of rest for most people

We always had to wear our best clothes, if not we were not allowed out. We went to Sunday School And every one was given a stamp to put in our sunday school book.

The Wesleyan and Methodist chapels always had a trip for the children once a year either to Wickstead Park or the sea this sometimes decided which one you went to.

Walking along the street when the dinners were all cooking you could tell what meat it was by the smell. Some people took their meat and pudding to the bakers to be cooked. the bakers never let the ovens go out as it was too much trouble to light them up again.

Across the road from where I lived were two big gates leading into Mr Frenches paddock.

Just inside on the left was a big walnut tree, in the Autumn when it was windy the nuts would drop on the road being children we were always there to pick them up.

On both sides of the gates were two wagon sheds there was in the winter wagons left in there.

Two Oxfordshire wagons in one and two ex w d first world army wagons converted for farm use in the other.

In the middle of the paddock stood a big chicken coup, usually about fifty laying hens would roost and lay their eggs in the nestboxes, they were always shut up at night, but one night was forgotten.

That was when a fox came, seeing the door open the fox was in and killed every fowl in the coup.

They were all laid about the place, why did they all have to be killed

Smetimes Mr French put the bull in the paddock, one day we were looking over the wall, when the bull saw us came up to the wall put his down and pushed the wall over

We never stopped to see what happened afterwards.

Most households made homemade wine.

The favourites were dandelion wine, cowslip wine elderberry wine and potatoe.

In the spring we would go and pick the dandelion tops filling a basket, these would be layed out on a sheet to dry out. They were then put in a big red pan, hot water yeast and a few other things added and left to ferment.

We always went down the Oxford road and into the plank meadow to pick cowslips, the field was always covered in them. We did the same with the cowslips as we did with the dandelions, usually. It was about six months before the wine was ready to drink.

In the winter when the willow trees in plank meadow had been lopped, an old gentleman would come down there to make hurdles from the willow branches that had been cut off. He would be there a couple of months making hurdles and staking them for Mr French to collect. They were used to pen off the sheep in a field of root crops, to make sure all was cleared in the field. In the winter Reverent Frost had woodwork classes in a big room over his garage. Bernard Sykes had a carpenter for Mr Hopcraft the builders also came along to instruct. A project was taken on to make folding chairs to be used in the town hall and foresters hall. Usually about ten children were there at a time, I think we made about forty chairs and they were used a lot.

The Vicar always kept his car underneath in the garage, an Austin seven.

On the end of the garage growing up the wall was a big fig tree, figs could be seen on the tree growing, but I never saw any ripe ones.

September was always a time for mushroom picking, a favourite place was down the Clifton road opposite Chapmans lane into Mr Frenches field straight through into the next with the wild pear tree in top corner. One time I can remember there was that many mushrooms we just kneeled down to pick them. We filled a big cane basket then took our jackets off and filled them tying the sleeves to carry.

Another good field for mushrooms was Mr Cannings at the bottom of Papermill lane.

The Castle Grounds was always a good play area, climbing trees was a favourite with most lads.

There was not a tree in the Castle Grounds that had not been climbed at some time.

Sometimes one of my mates and myself would go wooding in the grounds.

We would take our trucks and a lasso, a stone was tied on the end of the lasso, thrown over a rotten bough then twisted and pulled this usually broke the bough down, it was then broken up and put in the truck. Every body had coal fires at that time so the wood helped out with the coal.

Fishing was a popular sport. Being young we started off down plank meadow. Minnows were the most we caught, but in May when the mayfly was about a good dace three quarters of a pound to a pound could be caught.

When we got older we would go down the papermill in Mr Cannings mushroom field where the water came out of the mill in to a big pool. There was perch, roach and dace there.

Swimming was also very good, the other end to the papermill.

Another place was Clifton, off to the right from the bridge in the Cherwell, on the left of the bridge was the deep hole but only the very best swimmers went in there. Usually only the men swam there.

Johny Runicles shop in New Street was a great favourite with the children, you could buy all your fishing gear from him. He always had a big stock of fishhooks, floats, line and weights.

Another thing he stocked was catapult elastic in two or three tensions. If you were well off a aluminium catapult stick could be purchased. He stocked all types of hardware, even bird cages.

As we got older we would go fishing in the canal, a permit was needed which we got from the public house at Aynhoe Station priced six pence for one days fishing.

We would cycle along the towpath to Bonners Wharf and fish in that area, sometimes by where the trout stream came into the canal from Aynhoe Park. A good trout sometimes about a pound in weight. Loads of perch were caught, on a good day twenty or thirty would be pulled out.

We would also visit Aynhoe Station to see the goods trains, one would always be waiting at the signal just by the road bridge to let an express pass on the main line. When the goods train was given the signal we would count the trucks, if they were empty there could be as many as one hundred and twenty.

Sometimes we would watch the barges being unloaded, depending on the time of the year it would either be coal, or stone chippings for the councils to collect to tar the roads.

I have seen the wharf filled right up with chippings, with coal it would only be a quarter full.

One afternoon when we came out of school into back lane Percy Franklin gates were just opposite.

Coming out of school through the side gate into Back Lane we had to pass Franklins the wheelwrights. Perce Franklin and his Father were fitting a tyre to a farm wagon wheel. The new made wooden wheel was laid on a big round surface plate, I think the hub was elm, the spokes ash and the rim oak.

Beside the wheel was a ring of fire and on top the iron band tyre, when the tyre was hot enough and expanded so it would fit on to the wheel. the tyre was picked up with big blacksmiths tongs and dropped onto the wheel, water was tipped on straight away to cool the iron tyre down. This tightened all the wheel together.

This was maybe the last time a iron tyre was fitted in Deddington

Around 1935 Mr French purchase a new Fordson tractor, this was his first tractor

It was dark blue with red iron wheels with big lungs that went into the ground to get a grip.

Fred Ware who lived in the lodge by the entrance to the Castle Grounds was stockman took over the job to drive the tractor. His son Albert and myself used to ride on it, we stood in front of Mr Ware one either side and held on to the mugard and would up and down the field pulling a two furrow plough.

At a sale at Tomwell Farm which is halfway between Hempton and Deddington about a mile down a lane on the left hand side. One of the buyers was Theodore Lamb who purchased a hen coup, it was about eight feet long and six feet wide its height was six feet with an apex roof.

This he pulled to the out side of Deddington and stopped on the grass verge by the old council houses He stopped there for about a week, and went to the shops on his bicycle daily

He went to Comptons shop in New Street to buy sausages, he would bend down to make out he could not see but really he was smelling them.

We were stood by Holidays Garage the other side on the corner when he came out and got on his bike. His only cloths was a corn sack with a hole for his head and two holes for his arms.

Getting on his bike two or three women who were stood by us burst out laughing. I could not understand at the time but found out later why

He moved from Hempton Road and myself and two or three of my mates helped him, Theodore asked if we would help him down Deddington hill. When we got to the bottom he gave us a shilling each, and said he could manage as it was all flat.

He got to Stilgoes Hill but could not pull the coup up, Mr Stilgoe let him have a horse and took it all the way to Milton. How he got on from there I do not know

My mates and myself one of them being Jim Gardener whose Grandfather had a farm down the Clifton Road. There were two sons Charlie he lived at Clifton and Bill Jims Father who lived in Castle Street. They had a donkey and sometimes we would get him out on the road to go up to Deddington, but he never wanted to go, we had to push him. As soon as we turned him round he would run back to the farm.

They also had a mail coach on the farm, and sometimes if the pony was not wanted on the farm Jim Gardener would saddle the pony up and hitch on to the coach. We would then go into one of the fields and play cowboys and Indians, this was great fun.

Accidents at school were very rare, but one day Eric Fulbrook was getting the ball that had gone over the wall Banbury side of the playground. It was a grass field then and a gate from the road with iron spikes on the top. Eric was climbing over the gate and slipped a spike went into his leg under his knee leaving him hanging on the gate.

The Headmaster came and lifted him down and told us to go and get the wheelbarrow He was put in the barrow and wheeled to the nurses in the market place.

Another incident was one dinner time, after the children had eaten their dinner it was too cold to go out to play, So it was decided to play football in the main room The ball was kicked and hit the picture rail which was an iron bar ten feet long and one inch thick. It was lifted off the hooks and fell and hit Jack Taylor on top of his head.

When I came back from dinner he was laid out on the big table with his head pouring of blood.

The teachers attended to him and then taken to the Doctors, He cycled from Barford to school, so I do not know how he got home.

Collecting blackberries to make jam was always a job around September time. We would go with big baskets and a walking stick to pull the brambles down, there was usually plenty down all the lanes. Depending on how much jam was being made we would perhaps go two or three times. Blackberry pies were also very tastie, my Mother always made two or three, some had fancy work on top if there was pastry over

A favorite game was playing with the hoops, most of them were iron rings but sometimes you would see a cane one. We ran along with the hoop at the side guided with a handle with an hook on the end to fit round the hoop, We would may be go a couple of miles.

In May and later we would go swimming down Plank Meadow This was usually haymaking time so we had to go round the outside of the field so not to tread the grass down We would never go in the hay field until the grass was cut, the same was for the cornfield, We would always shut the gates I think the farmers understood we would do this, and never stopped us going in the fields.

When the grass was cut , it was left for a day or two to dry, then put into rows. If it was dry enough two rows were put into one, with a swarfe turner pulled with one horse. When the hay was dry it was loaded on to the wagons, the wagon being loaded would have two horses pulling and an hayloader was hooked to the rear. They would go along the rows ,the loader picking up the hay from the ground the loader being like an elevator would take the hay up onto the wagon. This would go on until the wagon was full. Another wagon was hooked up to the loader and started again. The filled wagon was taken to the rick to be unloaded.

When I first went to Deddington street lighting was by gas. Cast iron lamp posts with two arms at the top, the lamp in a glass type box on top. Being children it was favorite to climb up and swing on the arms. I can remember one on the green in Castle Street one at the bottom of Goose Green by the coal barn why it was called this I do not know there was always the old fire engine in there There was also a lamp in the middle of the market place.

Some time after the gas lamps were replaced with electric.

In the summer holidays at harvest time we would ride in the wagons back to the field down Clifton road and down the lane, if Blossom the cart horse was pulling the wagon we took it back ourselves. As she was a very gentle horse.

The wagons loaded with sheaths of corn was carted to Mr Frenches farm and stacked into ricks to dry out before being thrashed.

There was seven cart horses on the farm at that time. After a days work they were taken to the stables in Hudsons Lane, and given a feed and drink.

About seven o'clock we would take all seven horses to the field, we would lead a couple the others would follow it was down Chapmans Lane in the field on the right at the bottom . All those horses seemed to know every one of us.

A cottage at the entrance to the stables was used as a store for potatoes, the rooms were filled almost to the top.

In the winter afterdinner we would take potatoes to school to put on top of the rose stoves ,the headmaster would turn them with a ruler ,we then had them at playtime,

If we had no potatoes at home we would put our hand through the broken window and get a potato from the cottage. We washed it at school from a big storage tank of water as no mains water was laid on then, we then carved our initials on the spud ,so we got our own back.

In the winter or early spring the thrashing machine would come to Mr Frenches to thrash the corn. There was the thrashing drum and elevator pulled by a big old Tiron tractor, it had big rear wheels about six feet high and a big fly wheel, I think it ran on parafin It was usually there about four days A big improvement to Deddington was the laying of the water mains. Every street was dug up and the pipes laid this took a few months to do.

After that the mains sewerage was laid. This took a lot longer as some of the trenches were twenty feet deep and all dug out by pick and shovel. The next big thing was connecting to the houses. In our house a trench was dug through the front door and living room and out the back. The toilet was out in



the back yard and a tap fitted to the sink in the kitchen. So that was the end of Mr Cannings slurry cart.

The Police Station was on the cross roads Oxford Deddington corner, there was two houses and the court room. Sergeant Ponsford lived in the house next to the court room, and Pc Butler in the house at the side.

The police sergeant had a son Stanley who was the same age as I was. And I always remembered his birthday parties. The courtroom was used for this, may be there would be a dozen or more at the party

Stanley always had nice presents, one year he had a hornby clockwork train set, the engine was a four four four big tank engine, a big lay out of rails with points plus carriages trucks and other accessories.

There was always a machine gun in the room, which belonged to the police, and on these occasions we could play with it. I think it was a Lewis machine gun which we had great fun.

One weekend Sergeant Pondford and his family took me with them to the Malvern Hills.

He had a big square car I think it was an Austin and it took all morning to get there.

I can remember walking up the hills and round to the beacon at the top.

On the way back we came round to Stratford On Avon, stopped there for a while ,and then came home at eight thirty at night tired after a lovely day

Johnsons from Oxford built a big new buildings for a timber yard just opposite from where my Granfather lived. He told me that Franklins used to have a timber yard there and they would bring the tree trunks on a timber carriage with sometimes as many as twelve horses pulling the timber carriage and had difficulty turning up to there yard.

They did a lot of wood carving and specialist work for the Church.

A lot was for export to Australia.

When Johnsons new yard was finished they had a lot of timber which they cut to the sizes required. The last cut on each piece of wood was usually narrower at one end, so this was thrown on the scrap pile.

We would take our truck and sixpence for a load of the scrap wood, as much as we could put on the truck.

I still have a bench which I made from some of the wood, and that was over sixty years ago.

Rabbit hutches chicken coups and anything else that was required.

George Clark was the yard foreman, when we went for wood we had to see him

In the thirties a lot of families kept a pig, if there was big enough stie two or three would be kept one for the house and the others sold.

My Grandfather always kept pigs, and one would be killed for the house. This was an all days job.

It would be arranged for the butcher to kill the pig clean and cut it up.

First of all he would stun it with a humane gun, then the pig would be hung up by the rear legs, its throat would be cut , and left a little while to let the blood drain out.

After that the pig was laid on the ground and straw put over and set fire to , this burnt all the bristles off.

Then it was put on a bench and cut up. Two hams two sides of bacon the head to make brawn, the leaf was rendered down to a big dish of pure lard.

There was also other parts of the stomach my granny and mother took care off.

The salting lead which was in the panty ready for the two hams and bacon sides to be put in.

A big block of salt was put on the top, broken up and rubbed into the hams and bacon.

The block of salt was about nine inches square and two feet long.

The hams and bacon was left in the salting lead for about six weeks with extra salt being put on as it soaked in.

After the six weeks it was hung up beside the fireplace on a big board, if a smoked ham was needed it was hung in the inglenook chimney

After that bacon and ham was cut off as you wanted it, and it tasted good.

In the Summer school holidays my friend Topper Davies and my self sometimes helped his father to mow the churchyard.

His father was the Sexton for the church, also grave digger etc. we would work for three or four days to get it all mown.

We were rewarded half a crown each for helping to do the work.

That was a Saturday morning in Banbury. first to the pictures six pence to get in, then fish and chips usually fourpence a bag from a Mrs Gardeners in Broad Street.

After that we would go and look around Woolworths, there was a top price, nothing was more than sixpence.

Freddy Davies liked his drink, and when my antie had made some wine, he would come to see my Grandfather, between them they would tip so much out of each bottle and top it up with water

When enough bottles were filled they took them up to the cemetery and put them in a little shed which was in the corner

According to hearsay one day when he was stoking the boiler for the church heating he put the deads of the churchyard in the fire, The Vicar Ref Frost let him have his set, but it is said Freddy Also burnt them..

When my Mother died we had to mark my Fathers grave with a stick for the grave digger to know where to dig. But we think children moved the stick and caused a problem. So my Mother was buried At Hemton Road cemetery

I have a small New Testament given to me in April 1936 while at Deddington School by the Mother of Mrs Muriel Jones in memory of her love for the children of the school.

It is still covered with blue paper from a suger bag, the type of bags used in those days.

When it was time for Banbury Fair, on a Tuesday afternoon some years a lot of the fair vehicles would park in the market place in Deddington overnight.

Then go on to Banbury the next morning and get their show ready for the afternoon to open. There would be as many as six traction engines pulling about four trailers each. I was only interested in the traction engines, and would go round and look at all of them

My Father took me to Banbury fair one year, we had to go on thr Midland Red bus service number 491 Deddington Adderbury and Bodicote.

I was more interested in the traction engines than the fair

One engine was by Lampreys shop, Standing by the rear wheel and looking up it seemed massive.

It was rocking slightly as it made the electricity to drive the amusments, all you could hear was the click click of the oiler as the motion going backwards and forwards

The Wall of Death ride used to be in the Market place, and also the Boxing booth.

Bertram Mills Circus came to Banbury sometime around 1935 and 36, the bigtop was in the field on the corner of Bloxham road and Oxford road, Oxford side.

The Circus was transported by rail from town to town, then taken to the site on trailers towed by small tractors.

The elephants were walk from the station, also the horses.

My Father took me to the circus to see the show, I can not remember much about it but I know I enjoyed it.

Another show I can remember was the County agricultural show in Easington past the grammer school in a field, which is now the school campass.

It was a two or three day show, I can remember the Royal Dragoon Gaurds on parade and given a demonstration,

Stables cowsheds and pigsties were all built of timber to house all the animals.

There was also lots of farm machinery tractors etc on show but the machinery is a lot different today

I can remember the election, when the Tories got in for North Oxfordshire.

When he came to Deddington a rope was tied to the front of his car, then pulled around the village. It was a Major somebody who lived at Sandford St. Martin.

When I reached the fifth class at school, we had to go to woodwork class at Bloxham.

We were taken on Stanley Halls bus, Jocky Callow was the driver

Soon after Mr Hall purchased a new Bedford streamlined bus which sometimes took us.

The woodwork classes was in a top room at the Joiners Arms, and the teacher was Mr Merryfield who cycled from Banbury

We were always getting into trouble for disturbing Mrs Welshes sitting hens, which she kept at the rear of the pub.

There was a lot of derelict houses in Bloxham at that time, After we had eat our lunch which for me was always egg sandwiches, we would go and play in the old houses.

We were always reported to the teacher when he came back from lunch.

The first thing he did was to get a leather belt out of his desk and lay along the front.

A lecture was given for about half an hour, also being threatened with the belt from time to time Phil Canning had made a bottle of French polish, and was told to make a wooden cork to fit the bottle on the lathe, Instead of a slight taper he made it more like a spinning top.

Mr Merryfield took one look and said how do you expect that to fit, picking up a mallet he gave the cork an almighty bang, smashing the bottle and the polish running over the floor

Another time Den Malcher cut a piece of wood the wrong way, the teacher picked it up broke it on the bench and then cuffed him round the ear and knock him down the stairs.

The bus ride was the best part of the day

Deddington was like the Last of the summer Wine, with the characters that lived there.

Dooker Harper Duffy Tayler Dibby Gibbs and one or two more I cannot remember their names.

Dooker would swear at you if you called his name and jump over a stick when held out.

Duffy would chase you round the street if you called out duffy to him.

Dibby was a little man who stuttered a lot.

Cracking Sykes would be at the football match in the Castle Grounds on Saturday afternoon.

He had usually been to the pub beforehand and a little worst for drink we would shout his name and run around the back of the goalposts he chased us and always triped over the wire that held the nets out..

Mr Johny Loveday was a favorite with the children of Deddington, He was a big smoker and always smoked Players cigarettes. When we saw him we always ran up to asked if he had any cigarette cards.

He was a very tall man with hunched up shoulders and lived with his sisters Mary and Helen in the big house at Castle End.

Helen did a lot of horse riding, she had a very big horse which she always rode side saddle around Deddington.

1935 was the Silver Jubilee of King George v and Queen Mary

All the children at school were given mugs and a party, I have still got my mug.

Beacons were set alight all around England.

A big fire was built just outside Deddington at top side of Clifton and could be seen for many miles.

Harvesting was a good time to go to catch rabbits, when the binder had been round a good few times and it was getting towards the middle, I would go with my Father and take our little dog biddy

We would go to the bottom corner of the field and wait, when the binder came round one or two rabbits would run out and biddy would chase after them and catch, we would keep a couple and leave the others for the farmer..

When the corn was cut the sheaths would be stacked up a dozen at a time to dry out

My Mother would give me sixpence and asked me to go to Hopcrofts the butchers for a sheeps head.

This was put in a big iron pan with all types of vegetables and left on the fire for three or four hours. When my father came home, he would get a cup dip it in the broth and drink it.

By this time the second world war was approaching. The young men in the terriers practiced in the Castle Grounds in the evenings and weekends.

Sadly they had to go to war, and a few never returned.

I joined the Air Cadet Corps, which was Twenty Five Squadron, Later became Fourteen Sixty Squadron.

Mr Deacon was Flight Commander for the Deddington Flight. Mr Jock Machion was the warrant officer

Mr Peak a Dentest in Banbury was the Squandon Commander of Twenty Five and Fourteen Sixty Fred Smith who owned a garage in Banbury and a Mr Benstead who worked at Alcan came to Deddington every week to teach engineering. Mrs Wing the Headmasters wife gave us morse code For a hour every week.

I think I was taught a lot more at A.T.C than at school mostly on the engineering side We made visits to Chipping Warden R A F Station, and also spent a weeks camp there.

Best of the visits was a flight in a Wellington Bomber

We took turns where we sat, first in the rear gunners turrent, then in the middle turrent, Moving up to the front layed in the bomb aimers place, right in the nose of the plane.

Then we sat in the co pilots seat.

Another time I flew in a Avro Anson from RAF Barford St Micheal.

Later on the jet air craft was tested there

Deddington flight ATC was for a time called upon to be runners to call the firemen out if there was a raid alert on. We would stop up all night two of us and two firemen, It was usually once a week, I think I was about fourteen years old at the time.

Upper Heyford RAF Station was only six miles away and just before the it was open to the public for a air display, and to show the lastest planes.

The Blenhiem Bomber an all metal plane was on show, this was about 1938. there alsowhere the bibplane Hanley Page Heyford bombers plus the Hawker type fighter planes.

On weekends just before the war the young men of the area would gather down the Castle Grounds to play cards and pitch and toss..

Pitch and toss was also very popular

It started with a knife being stuck in the ground, then a line was marked six feet back from the knife, and silver coins were tossed at the knife.

In turn each person would throw a coin at the knife usually two shillings or two and sixpence. the one that came nearest to the knife would toss first, all that came down heads was his. then the next nearest went and did the same, It would carry on until all the money was won

Another game was three card bragg, five or six would usually play

Sometimes quite a lot of money was involved if a good hand was obtained. I have seen pound notes in the kitty

Unfortunately some of the lads went off to the war and never returned.