

Yvonne Wass interviewing Mrs. Joan Wilcox and Joan is going to share some of her earliest memories. (March 2007)



Well, my earliest memory was in 1925 when there was a total eclipse of the sun, not quite a total eclipse in Tickhill, but very nearly. My Father took us to a vantage point up Apy Hill Lane and we went in the car, Mother, Father and I and a boy who lived across the road who was interested. We had smoked glass to look at it, I am not sure it is the sort of thing we would have nowadays but it didn't do us any harm. Anyway that is my earliest memory.

That same year my sister got scarlet fever and normally if anyone got scarlet fever they were taken to the isolation hospital in Conisborough as well as anyone with diphtheria. My mother wanted to nurse my sister herself and the Doctor said, "Well you can but your husband and younger daughter will have to move out". We did, we went to my Uncle and Aunts, who lived next door. None of them married, two spinster aunts and a bachelor uncle, they lived in the house that my grandfather had lived in. Some precautions had to be taken in the house because of the scarlet fever. A blanket had to be soaked in a solution of Lysol, which was the disinfectant of the day, and hung across the doorway. This had to last for four weeks. Well during that time my Father and his brother bought a new car, a Singer, I remember it being delivered. It was really something out of the ordinary – it was a pale green and it had a soft roof for you to take down. The windows weren't fixed as we have them today, they were like a sort of plastic and they fitted into the body part and when it rained they weren't terribly waterproof but we were really thrilled with this car.

How many people had cars in those days?

Well the doctor had one and the Castle [the Atkinson-Clarks] had one. There were a few who did but ours was one of the first in Tickhill.

The other thing that happened before I went to school was that I had my tonsils out. The local doctor took them out. We had to go to the surgery on the Sunday morning and we had them out, my sister had hers out as well, it was the fashion in those days if you remember. If you had lots of colds you had your tonsils out. Not that it's done me any good really, but there we are. Then we were brought home by father, who carried us upstairs and I suppose we then had two days in bed, or something like that, I don't remember any more details. We were fortunate we went to the surgery but a lot of children had their tonsils taken out by the doctor on the kitchen table, but that was the way things were in those days.

In 1930, when I was eight, Miss Cynthia Atkinson-Clark started a Brownie pack in Tickhill. She was the daughter of Mr. Atkinson-Clark from the Castle. There had been guides since 1926 but this was the first introduction of Brownies. There are a few of us left who were in the first pack, but not many. We had the meetings in a room at the castle in the part that is now pulled down. It was quite a big room where they kept the horse riding tackle. It was quite a nice sized room for a meeting. After

Miss Atkinson-Clark got married the Brownies moved, but the Guides did stay on at the Castle. Because Miss Ruby Atkinson-Clark was not the leader, Brown Owl, it passed to Miss Brookesbank at Sandrock. We really loved it down there because we made tree houses in the wood and little gardens and things like that. That was one of things I most remember about enjoying it there.

Everybody went to school in those days until they were 14. They didn't go on to other schools, like secondary modern schools and things like that, they stayed on at Tickhill until they were old enough to leave, unless you got a Scholarship, in which case you went to Doncaster Grammar school if you were a boy or Doncaster Municipal High School, if you were a girl. In the early 1930's pupils went to Maltby Grammar School

The big event was always the May Queen in the spring, not always in May; it varied a little but was always called the May Queen. The crowning ceremony was on the steps of the Buttercross. After the crowning there was maypole dancing, the maypole was there and after the maypole dancing they did country dancing and the country dancing was always finished with a minuet. That looked very spectacular, the children in their muslin dresses.

Where you ever May Queen?

No, No, I think I told you that I didn't go to that school, I went to Miss Goodwin's school, but I was always there for the celebration. I remember quite a lot about it.

When did they stop doing that then?

Well I think up to the beginning of the war, I don't think they had it after that and anyway I doubt they would have had it at the Cross at that time because there was so much heavy traffic about then.

Another event at the Cross was the Fair in October [second weekend in October] it was a funfair. I mean previously it had been a hiring fair as well, but it was just a funfair when I was young. It covered an area up a bit into Northgate and certainly down into Sunderland Street. There were roundabouts and all the other sideshows you get at a fair. I was always told that they moved from Hull [Sommerbys] and then stopped at Tickhill on their way to Nottingham Goose Fair. Then there was Tuby's who stayed at Tickhill and there was always more excitement about them staying than anyone else. I think they must have arranged between them which one would stay on at Tickhill. I don't know that but it was probably what happened. They couldn't do it today because of the traffic. The only time the traffic stops nowadays is on Christmas Even when the Salvation Army come and sing carols, that is the only time and it does bring some people here.

Has that been going on for a long time?

No, that is relatively new, from the 60's probably, I don't think it goes any further back than that. The Salvation Army would often come round and stop at different places and then move on. Perhaps at the end of one road or at a crossroads like the one leading to Wong Lane. There were all sorts of stations and then they would come round collecting. In fact the Salvation Army used to come every Saturday night selling the 'War Cry'. They also had a newspaper for young people called the 'Young

Soldier', I don't think they still have the 'Young Soldier' but they certainly have the 'War Cry' still, but they don't come round, they came round every house at one time on a Saturday night.

Another thing that happened at the Market Cross, on occasion, they used to bring pots up from Stoke on Trent in Staffordshire and have a big sale. It was usually held on dark evenings and had Naphthalene flares to light everything up and one of them used to shout "Pots, poes and pancheons". They brought all sorts of pottery, you had glazed ware and earthenware. You know what a pancheon is don't you? It is a big mixing bowl that people made their bread in.

A pancheon?

A pancheon yes, it is wide at the top and narrow at the bottom and on the outside it was earthenware and the inside was glazed and people made their bread in them because nearly every household made their own bread at that time.

So there was a stall when the funfair was here?

No, they came on a separate night. It was usually on one winter night but it was something unusual seeing these flares there.

There was the Harvest Festival at Church at the same weekend as the fair and I mean the Harvest Festival is nothing now but in those days you could smell the flowers and the fruit there was so much. It was quite a thing and you had to be there early to get a seat. You don't get that much these days, it has taken a different meaning.

Now we had a bellman. He came round ringing his bell and giving notices out. If the council wanted to tell you anything he would come round and ring and shout.

A bit like a town crier?

Well he was a town crier but he wasn't in an outfit like a town crier of old so he was what you would call a bellman.

Just in the village?

Only in Tickhill and he was only paid for the times when he went round. He would give notice of any farmers who wanted some casual labour, you know e.g. pea pickers wanted on somebody's farm and that sort of thing. Any events he would come round shouting about.

Was he like a rag and bone man?

Oh no.

Did you get rag and bone men?

Yes, they weren't regulars but they did come and they would take your jam jars for a penny or a halfpenny and rabbit skins they liked to collect as well as any old iron, anything that they could turn into money.

Other people that came round included the muffin man and he came round selling what nowadays are called crumpets but what we called pikelets in those days. And then there were the big oatcakes that they had which were about the size of a small dinner plate.

There was a fish man came round and he came from Retford and he came round for forty years because he came before my mother was married and he still came round when I was married, so he must have been coming for forty years. Of course Retford is not near the sea, so he had to get this fish from somewhere before he came to us.

There was a greengrocer came round and he always shouted “cherry ripe, cherry ripe” when he made a stop.

The local shop, Jarvis’, a grocer used to have, usually a young school leaver, come round. He usually had a wooden, you couldn’t call it a barrow, a covered cart and they brought round bread and cakes and pies, little meat pies and they were twopence each. Sometimes my mother bought them and we used to have half each.

Also coming round there was a travelling draper and he came from Everton and he brought certain things you could buy and you could order things from him. If you wanted sheets he might not have them on but you would order them. He had things like pillowcases and towels and things. I don’t think he had any other means of transport so he pushed his cart right from Everton to here - nine or ten miles.

Then occasionally you would get the knife grinders round from Sheffield, sharpening your knives if you wanted them doing and there was also a little man who used to come about twice a year with an enormous portmanteau and he serviced sewing machines, I could do with somebody like that now because my sewing machine is very old. Portmanteau if you know what that is. Well people used to use them for holidays. They are big, sort of soft bags with metal at the top, that’s what a portmanteau is.

Would you get warning that these people were coming round?

No, you knew about the regular ones, like the muffin man and the fish man, you always knew when they would be coming.

What about the knife man?

He would just turn up, in fact there was one still coming round in the 1970’s, he would come once a year, with his grinder behind his bicycle. He probably came from Sheffield.

What about your school days at Miss Goodwin’s?

They were happy enough days, it was a very cosy atmosphere shall we say. When you started you did rows and rows of pothooks before you learned to write properly. You know what pothooks are? They are just like the top of a question mark and you had to do them both ways so that you learned to get them very smooth. You had to do that for perhaps a week or so before you were allowed to do anything else, even though you had probably done it at home. Then for counting we used to have beads, but now they would say you might swallow them I suppose.

How many people were in your class?

Well you could not say there were any classes because we were all at different stages. I think when I first started the first group there were perhaps 4, 5 or even 6 in it and we were in one corner of the classroom. I know my next step was at a desk where there were four on, three boys and me, I didn't like that particularly. Then when you got a bit further on there were tables and chairs. That would be when we were 9 or 10. You only stayed mostly until you went to secondary school. Some of them stayed until they were 14 but not a lot. Some of the boys only stayed until they were about 10 and then went to the other school because they wanted to take their scholarship.

Did you have to wear a uniform?

Oh no, uniforms weren't thought of then.

Did you have your dinners there?

No, the ordinary school didn't have dinners at that time; they only came in during the war when they used to go to the library to eat them. They were brought from Harworth Pit Canteen as far as I know. They didn't have a school kitchen until the new schools were built and there were no facilities at the other school. All they had was a washroom to wash their hands and things. There were outside toilets at what we called the National School, in St. Mary's Road; it was always known as the National School, I suppose that when compulsory Education came in it got that name. There had been a school before that; it was just between where I live and in the Church Yard, which my Grandfather's brothers went to, but he didn't because he went to the new one when it was built in 1866. This 'new' one, was pulled down in the 1970's. People wanted to keep that to use for meeting rooms and things like that but Doncaster Council didn't mean us having that and we were very disappointed because it would have been useful to have had that, but they pulled it down and it became the playground.

To go back to Miss Goodwin's School, the last part of the afternoon we always used to sew and whilst we were sewing Miss Grace Goodwin always read to us and it was quite a good idea, in a way, because we got to know a lot of books that we might not have read, in serial fashion sort of thing. The boys sewed as well. Not that I ever became a good sewer. Now my sister is a beautiful sewer, but I am no good at it. I mean not like my sister, she is very good at it, but it didn't make me a good sewer.

We didn't go out on trips or anything like that. I think we went on a bus once to Roche Abbey, that's the only thing I remember doing for an outing, I don't think we ever went anywhere else. I cannot remember going anyway so it didn't impress me if we did. I know that when I was one of the older ones, a friend, who taught in the educational system, took one or two older ones to the cinema. It was called the Night of the Garter and she thought it was Knight of the Garter in the historical sense, but it was a comic farce. She took us out for tea afterwards and asked us what we had thought of it and we were all amused, we were just about old enough to realise it was not what we had expected.

I think I was perhaps a bit of an awkward girl when I was at school, because I asked Miss Nellie Goodwin, the one who was the Senior Teacher, when we were doing the 10 Commandments, "What is adultery?", so she said my mother would probably tell me and that was the answer I got.

Doncaster had quite a useful airport in those days near the Racecourse, it was quite a busy one and Sir Alan Cobham brought his air display, he used to go round the country with these displays. Mother took my sister and I and we went up for a flight. I can't remember what it cost. The only other person who went up of my age was the doctor's daughter and with her mum, they went. The planes went up every 10 or 15 minutes, you only just went round Doncaster and back again. It was taking off and landing more than a flight, but anyway you had been up in an aeroplane and that was something in those days. I think it was a Handley Paige, a biplane, that we went up in and the seats were like basket weave, but they must have been fastened down.

Were you scared?

Felt a bit funny going up rather than coming down, but then people feel the same nowadays. So it was something to talk about when we went back to school the next week and Margaret, of course, had been too.

How old would you have been then?

About 9 or 10 but she [Margaret] was younger than me and I thought well she is younger than me and she has been up.

Did Sir Alan Cobham and his display come every year?

I think he came more than once to Doncaster, but not regularly, I think they toured the country all the time. He was well known in his day. Now the other flight I had was from the field in Water Lane when somebody brought a biplane to Tickhill, but that was a bit of a bumpy ride. My uncle paid for me and this friend, the one who went to the Eclipse with us, went and the postmistress, Miss Lye, there was just the three of us who went, but the ride didn't last long, but it was an experience wasn't it? I have never flown since. We always went across on the ferry when we went abroad, we never flew. I don't think we wanted to fly, I know we never did. We certainly never wanted to go to any of the Spanish places that they all go to now. We liked to see the country and that sort of thing.

Did you speak to me about a Youth Club?

The Reverent Shaw, who was only here a short time, he started the Youth Club and that would be in 1933 probably, certainly the early thirties. I might have been 12. This was on a Saturday night and the first part of the evening we played Whist, which is a bit amusing when you think of the young people of today spending an hour playing Whist? Then afterwards we had games or we had dancing, alternate Saturdays – we thought it was lovely. The Vicar's wife also decided to put on A Midsummer Night's Dream and most of us in the Youth Club were in it in some degree and there were other people who sat in on it, but it was really the Youth Club that did it. It was quite a success in a way, it might not have been Shakespeare like you would go and watch it now. I did once go to see Hamlet at Harrogate and it was a

professional company but it was poor and you can't really watch Shakespeare when it's not done well and I came out before the end, that was very disappointing.

Where did they put on A Midsummer Night's Dream?

Oh, that was in the Library, we had a stage in the Library, it was the only really good meeting room we had at that time and then it did have quite a good stage in it.

Is it the library which is the library now?

Yes, but it didn't have books. The tale of that was that a man called Shaw, not the same man who was the Vicar, left money to build a library. Now the local council were a bit ambitious and they wanted to build a nice big room, in fact the first plans were for it to be two storeys, but the money wouldn't go to that. I don't know if they tried to get any extra money by public subscription, I wasn't even born because this was 1908. It was decided they would build a big room and they had two rooms at the back, two smaller rooms and one of them was a reading room and it was an excellent reading room, they took all the daily newspapers. They made a fire in it every day in winter and a lot of men went there and spent an hour or two. It was free to go and read the papers. The monthly papers and periodicals were auctioned off every quarter and afterwards you went and collected them. I had an uncle who always bid for the Illustrated London News and he had copies all over the room, piles of them in his living room.

So the library that is there now was really a meeting room with a stage in and it had this reading room?

The other room was used as a kitchen and that sort of thing.

What did you used to call it before, now it is always referred to as the library?

It was always called the Library. In the reading room there was a cupboard full of books and a man sat there on a Friday night and you could go and borrow the books, but there weren't many of them. It was not really a library. I think I once went with my sister to it but there weren't any children's books. The thing was we were in the West Riding then and if we had had it stocked by the West Riding, which we could have done, we should have had to pay a Rate of X amount and they didn't think that the people of Tickhill would accept an increase in their Rates so they kept it to the meeting room. It was very useful and we miss it because it was a good room. You could imagine that it was just nice for meetings. The WI used to meet in there at first and there was the keep fit class. The lady that took the keep fit was Mary Parkinson as she is now, you know the wife of Michael Parkinson the TV man. Now she used to come in on the bus from Doncaster to take the keep fit class, which was held in the school I think, and he used to come to the Council Meetings to monitor what the Council were talking about and they got talking and that's how they met.

The Michael Parkinson?

The Michael Parkinson, he was a junior reporter on the Doncaster Chronicle as it was then and that's how they met.

So what year was that when she was taking the keep fit class?

I don't know I didn't take keep fit. I know when he was on This is Your Life they brought it in then how they met.

I wonder if a lot of people know that?

Well the older people in Tickhill would know about it.

So when you were a child what kind of games would you play to occupy yourself with your friends?

Oh, we played all sorts of silly games. Well we had plenty of room in my Mother and Father's garden, my Aunts and Uncle, who I referred to earlier, lived next door and had an even bigger garden. We played made up games mostly. Doctors and nurses and mothers and fathers. I remember one boy that used to play picked up my doll, my pot doll, and banged it's head on the cot and said "There, I am never going to play mothers and fathers again", so that was the end of my doll. We had lots of fun, we also had two houses at the bottom of Pinfold Close. I think I told you my Father was a builder and he kept the yard behind the builders and it was a bit of a scrap yard and there was always things like chimney pots and things like that and we used to play games with them, using them for various things. There was also a tin truck and rails which we were supposed never to touch, but we did I'm afraid and there was the first carillon that used to be in the Church, that was there but when the war was on the powers that be ordered that everybody had to give up their scrap so they came and more or less cleared the yard, including the carillon, as well as the cannon that had been on the Castle gateway.

What's a carillon?

Well it was what played the chimes and it was there until when they replaced it with a new one in 1897, the old one was in the yard from then but it was metal and it had to go for scrap, but you see people didn't keep things like they do today. There weren't many people who remembered it you see, even people who played with us didn't remember it. To them it was just an old 'something or other'. There were the prongs you know how it is to catch and make the sound. It was only a six note one and the present one is eight. There were plenty of people who came to play with us because it was an exciting place to play. There was a field so we had everything we could wish for. Then I also went up to play with Margaret at Dr. Lindsey's house which is at the top of Westgate; we didn't all go there to play but quite a few of us were invited and it had different bits that we enjoyed. Then we would go down Water Lane and over the Castle fields.

Where did you used to live?

Straight behind where I live now, in Westgate. I have only lived in two houses before I moved here.

So you have still got friends around today that you have known for a long time?

Two of the girls I was really friendly with have both died, one was 75 and the other 76. I don't think there is anybody really, oh there is, Mr. Hulley who lives down Sunderland Street and his brother who lives on Westgate. They were two because they lived opposite us, but the girls I don't think there is anybody left, but these two

sisters who I was really friendly with they died within a couple of months of one another. I miss them. There were others that I was friendly with but not quite as close as them.

Continued interview with Mrs. Joan Wilcox

We went to a cricket match at Bramall Lane on my 16th. birthday. It was the 5th. July and Yorkshire County Cricket Club were playing Australia. Cricket was played at Bramall Lane as well as football in those days, and a group of boys were going, not a great many, but a few and then three of us girls thought that we could go and we went. We went by train no teacher went with us, we went on our own, we were all 16 or something like that. We went on the train from Worksop to Sheffield and found our way without any trouble. We enjoyed it up to the time the rain came, Yorkshire County Cricket Club was on top, playing Australia and Don Bradman was playing and we were all very thrilled and then the rain came and the match was abandoned. We were sure we were going to beat them.

Well later on 19th September, think it was September, it might have been October, came Munich, it was Autumn anyway and we were very apprehensive about that, I know I was, I used to lie in bed and think "oh dear", 'cos you didn't know what war was, our parents did, but it was a completely different war as it turned out and in fact I think I remember that the caretaker and some of the older boys started digging ready to make an air-raid shelter and then of course Neville Chamberlain came back from meeting Hitler and said it was all over and we would have 'Peace in our Time' and that was the end of that for 1938. 1939 was somewhat different I think we all knew from the Friday before the Sunday that it was announced I think everyone knew that it was inevitable and it was Sunday morning when we heard the news on the radio. Then early in the war people got a lot of propaganda leaflets dropped from the German planes, they just sort of dumped them on us, I don't know quite why, I think they were just getting rid of them because there were a lot came down.

And then of course the war didn't really get going until 1940, when the bombing of London started. Hull was one of the early places. In fact Hull, although it is not talked about a lot, got a lot of bombing but it was not blitzkrieg like Coventry or some of the others and Sheffield. It was just repeatedly coming over and bombing because it was an important port on the East Coast and I was at Driffield in the Air force and I had to change stations to come to Doncaster and as the train went through the areas of mostly railway houses and dockers' houses there was not a house without windows broken and boarded up in part. I always thought Hull looked very sad during the war. Well I suppose most places did but it seemed to show scars. Now Sheffield, yes that was bad because I went to Sheffield and seeing everything that had once been fine buildings all down that was different somehow. There were empty spaces, I don't quite know what the difference was, but there was a difference somehow.

Well, at the beginning of the '39 war my father made an air-raid shelter in the garden of my aunt's house, which was next door to us and he did it based on the sort of shelters they had in the trenches in the first world war, made with railway sleepers and it was like a slit trench in a way, there were steps down at each end of it and right across the length of it for us to sit on and we never went into it. There was nothing serious in the bombing in Tickhill, we heard the bombing in Sheffield but in Tickhill we weren't affected. There were a couple of bombs that went off in the open fields but nobody was hurt or anything like that. I think it was just a case of them getting rid of them before they went back. The air-raid shelter stayed there until I think the

people who are still there, I think they were the ones who actually got rid of it, the other people who were there kept it as a museum piece, I think. Of course they piled earth up on top of it, pretty gruesome. Although I do remember that we went in a few times with our friends, though we never had to go in for an air raid. So that's 1939.

I used to help at the canteen. Oh after Dunkirk we had soldiers billeted here in Tickhill and at that time I used to help in the canteen that they had in the Parish Room. I also helped the WVS. Although I wasn't a member I did things with them, like running about for them and that sort of thing. Mother was a member and so was my Aunt. My Aunt was the leader in Tickhill. Mother actually went on a course – Just for cooking for if there was a big catastrophe and they had to feed people in the general way. They had all new dustbins there.

For Cooking?

You don't think about those sorts of things that people had to think about.

How old would you have been Joan during the war?

I was 17 when it started and 19 when I went into the WAAF.

So did you know many men in the area who had gone to war?

Well there were quite a few because conscription started the year before and there were quite a few just a bit older than me that went that I knew pretty well, in fact some of them were in our Youth Club. I think a lot of us were all going about the same time into the Forces so you weren't really sure who was going and who wasn't going. I was there until 1946, first at Driffield and then Eastmoor, north of York. After that I moved about a bit closing different offices down. You know, when the Stations were going to close down. I think I told you I was in the Met. Office.

So you really enjoyed that work?

I did, I really liked the work in the Met. Office. I still take a lot of interest in all these things, I don't like the graphics on the weather forecast nowadays, but still that is a matter of my opinion.

I think going into the WAAF was a really good thing for me because you meet all sorts of people and you learned not to judge anybody by what their background was. You found out what the true person was and I don't remember us ever having any disputes between ourselves, living together even there. I lived I think mostly, at Driffield I was in barrack blocks but at Eastmoor where I was for four years it was in tin Nissan huts and a heavy stoke up stove in the middle which you were weren't allowed to light until 5 o'clock, but we managed all right. You had to go quite a distance to get washed and to go to the toilet.

And that would have been your first time living independently away from home?

Yes, I had struck out on my own, you might say. I really do think, and a lot of my friends, who I am still in touch with, they all have the same opinion about how it was good for us. I suppose we were really a generation that would perhaps have gone to university, but we didn't, because the war was coming. In fact not many did go, certainly from Tickhill they didn't. My brother-in-law went to Oxford and that was

something hardly heard of. But very few went to university. A few went on to teacher training. Anyway that came to an end and then I came home and went in the Civil Service after that until I got married.

Where was that?

In Doncaster, I worked at, well it's not there now, but the Department of National Savings and the work was to recruit people's help in making savings and they would expect us to recruit people's help in making savings groups, each street in Doncaster used to have its own savings group. The stamps were 6d, they were when I was there and they would get two shillings' worth, which was four stamps. Another method of saving was to get people to have their money deducted and put into the Trustee Savings Bank. The Manager of this Trustee Savings Bank nearly pulled his hair out at times, because they put their money in and took it out straight away again, so he was not exactly happy with the situation. Some did save and built up little nest eggs with it, but I suppose it wasn't in their nature, as it isn't nowadays, for people to save, I mean look at what they do with credit cards don't they – they run up debt.

The trouble is you can actually get hounded by people.

It's quite ridiculous. I mean I have one card and I don't need anything else.

I know that the older generation tended to save up first for things they wanted to buy.

You didn't get it until you could pay for it. When we first got married we went to household sales to buy things for the house - if you wanted new stuff, you could make some quite substantial savings in the sales. There were country house sales but you don't get them anymore. Anybody with a large house, when they were leaving or they died, you would have sales in a marquee.

I haven't told you about when the guides went to camp in 1934 to Bridlington, I haven't told you that tale. Well, we went by train, we had a local builder who took us to Doncaster Station with our equipment and put it on the train, that was all right, for Bridlington. I think we had to change at Hull. My sister, who was guide captain, she was quite a bit older than me, she had arranged for the bus company to meet us and take us to site which was about three miles out of Bridlington. The train was late and the bus didn't stop to wait for the train coming in so we didn't know how we were going to get there, so she was running around seeing what she could do while we all stayed outside the station. She came back and she said, "Well, I have got something but it's not very but it is the best I can do". It was a coal lorry, but the man said he had given it a good sweep and he'd put a tarpaulin over it. We had to sit on it. There were no sides on it and we were hanging our legs down. The equipment was on the lorry with us. Anyway we got there safely.

So, how many of you were there?

Oh, there would be about 14 or 15 of us went.

And you were all on this coal truck?

Yes, on this coal truck. What would Health and Safety say now? Never mind, that was the way things were in those days.

We had bell tents there; you know what bell tents are? They are round ones the Army used to use, a pole up the middle and then they were circular and then they just had a skirt of about 12 inches at the bottom and then you just draw it out with lines and pegs. You all had to sleep with your feet to the pole. They were ex-Army tents. They were called bell tents because they were in the shape of a bell in a way.

How many in a tent?

I think there 7 were of us in a tent, I don't quite know, but I do know that the oldest guides and some of them were actually rangers; they were in one tent and the younger ones in another. Well I was the youngest actually and one of us had to go in with the older ones' tent to get the numbers right and being the youngest I had to go in there to be looked after and for my sister to keep an eye on me. Well this was 1934 and a lot of them had been reading H.G. Wells book 'Things to Come' and this was about what would happen if we had a war, they were talking about it and I laid in that bed petrified. Oh I did worry about it but I never told anybody, I never mentioned it to anybody. I have told my sister since, she said well perhaps we never thought it would upset you like that, but there it was, it did. Anyway we had a good time despite the way of getting there. There was one day it absolutely rained all day and the farmer came and said that we could go into his grain store for the day if we liked and we did very thankfully, we couldn't do anything, we couldn't light a fire. I don't know what we ate, I suppose we took sandwiches. We all went on the steamer that went out from Bridlington, a pleasure trip and three of the girls were so seasick they looked green and they remember it to this day. Sometimes they say, "Do you remember when we went on that steamer at Bridlington?" Most of us enjoyed it but these poor three didn't. It wasn't really rough. When we were in Cornwall we went out to the real Land's End from the sea and you were green. I was so glad when we got back to land, you can't get off, can you when you're in, but almost as soon as you are on dry land you are all right, it's just the motion.

We did have two lots of different soldiers billeted here during the war, the Veterinary Corps and the IMC [Medical]; both lots came just after Dunkirk. There were sure to have been some billeted at the Millstone. There were quite a lot of girls from Tickhill who married some of the soldiers who were here during the war.