

Raymond Smith - Memories of Hankelow (18/11/2011 and 9/3/2012 at Thornton House)

Raymond is 83 and was born in 1928. He lived with his grandparents John and Alice Boden. So he was known then as Ray Boden. They owned land alongside the Green where 'Cartwright's bungalow' was built. He went to Hankelow school and later in the old Grammar School (HM Mr Coffin, Mrs Coffin also taught and Mr Callaghan was there during the war), Raymond left school in 1941.

Mrs Nunnerley was at Hankelow Hall, her nephew Jimmy Hall farmed it. She was only small and always dressed in black but kept everything under control with an iron hand. When cakes were given to the children she made the little children go first, then the middle sized ones, then the bigger ones. Similarly for potato picking you were allotted a length according to your size. She drove a black horse and trap onto the field. You were allowed to take a bucket of potatoes for your own use at the end of the day.

She used to have 'hide and seek' weekends when the children could play and have cakes and buns at the end. They used the Drift house, a tall open sided building for carriages. She drove to church each Sunday in the black horse and black trap. They later moved to Manor Farm. They also lived at Buerton Hall

At Hankelow Court he could just remember the Forbes-Adams family and Mr Pudney snr drove their carriage, he lived in Bunsley Bank Lane. When the Killicks were there they held a fete each June. The Killicks at Hankelow Court owned a Rolls Royce and a Daimler with a driver for each. They had a turntable to turn the cars which you could hear in Hankelow like a rumble of thunder.

Ray lived on the road towards Bunsley Bank and Jim Mottram, Charlie Coppack and Ernie Evans were neighbours. George Bates and Charlie would sweep the road and tidy the green in Hankelow once a week on a Saturday.

The Smithy was behind the White Lion and the blacksmith was Mr Bert Malkin. Ray loved to help by pumping the bellows and would sit on the anvil and get a cup of tea with cream in it from Mrs Malkin. They had two dogs Happy and Trig. They would lie under the bellows.

When you went to see 'old' Dr Thornton (Gifford Thornton as distinct from young Dr. Michael) there was no privacy, you went behind a screen but everyone in the waiting room could hear the conversation. He had a direct manner and a wry sense of humour, two examples being:

of toenails taken off in Nantwich 'where've you had them done, Tom Northen's (the butcher)?'
Ray's father was given the choice of a few days in bed or 'You go to work and I'll go and see Jack Bailey (the undertaker)'.

Some country Characters

George Dutton had a wooden leg and in the White Lion they liked to trick strangers by getting him to sing 'the green eye of the little yellow God of Kathmandu' and when the line came up about the knife he would stab himself in his wooden leg.

Ernest Bate (Norah's uncle) went to the White Lion every night where he only had a couple of pints and then walked home with 2 bottles of beer in his pockets, one as a nightcap and one for first thing in the morning. When asked how he go on if he was in the army he replied that he wouldn't be any use to them Churchill could save his money. He would walk to Audlem every day and had two walking sticks, one for the week and one for Sunday. He lived with his sister Ethel who was maid for Nunnerleys. He did not speak to his brother for donkey's years. He would ask Ray 'How're you goin on?' And tell funny stories. His dad George and Charlie Coppack were lengthsman and would tidy the green.

Joe Clark of Woolfall would collect dead animals in a wheel barrow but would drop in at the pub and leave them standing outside. He wobbled home with them with a string round his neck to help with the barrow and got more blood on himself butchering them than the carcasses did.

Ray was born at Sullins Hill at the top of the bank on the Woore Road after Buerton. He was left with his grandparents in Hankelow at about the age of 2. George Walker (who worked for Nunnerleys) was across the road with Wilf, Richard, Dolly and Tiny. Next to them was Arthur Basford who left Harry Hobson to mind the cooking of 2 **waterends** but he fell asleep and when he came back and found them burned Arthur fired his gun over Harry's head to show his annoyance. Harry ran off but he fired a second time. Arthur used to give Americans a ride in his pony and trap during the war. Madge Brookes nee Walker is descended from George's brother Ralph at Bunsley Bank where people went to have their hair cut.

Jimmy Glover was a drover. There weren't many cars, the Dr. had one DTU 300. The Killicks had 2 (see above). The Forbes-Adams had lived at Hankelow Court but they left in 1938 to go to Tabley. Walter Pudney, father of Roy and grandfather of George came from Reigate as coachman to them. The coach used the gravel path with gates at the bottom which are all overgrown now.

Langleys Farm was then Mrs Potts (it had many names). George Baker had a caravan there. One house was

called Bob Lloyd's Lodge. Bob Lloyd worked at one time Hankelow Court. Tom Hassall's grandfather Osgood Pudney was keen on horses, whenever Ray's grandfather got together with him they talked steeplechasing and show jumping. The Nunnerleys had show jumpers before they moved to Manor Farm.

Charlie Dutton was at Ball Farm he had a son John and daughter Margaret who became a doctor. Ray's grandfather used to buy houses for about £200 using loans from the Oddfellows Club. One time he wanted to buy a house on the Green from Sam Bonell and travelled all the way to Shrewsbury only to find that it had been sold to Joe Williams the day before. The only person he had told was that same Joe Williams. He advised Ray 'Dunna never to tell anyone what you are goin to do'.

There was a chapel to the North on the main road before the present golf course but this was demolished when the road was improved. The present chapel was built on land donated by Chris Williamson and everyone contributed. The bricklayers were father and son known as 'Major' Shenton and 'Jack the lad'. As they spent the lunchtime from 11am to 2pm in the White Lion the chapel became known as the 'Drunken Chapel'. The joiners lodged with Ray's grandmother-they were employed by Mayers of Chester.

Across the green was Joe Lear who had a club foot and didn't walk a lot. If he saw Ray he would call 'Hey young Boden come 'ere an go across to Byram's shop and get me 5 of the wildest Woodbines they've got, here's thruppence'. He would supply 3d and Ray could keep the 1/2d change.

Jimmy Cliffe of Hankelow House (Tom's grandfather) was a Sunday School teacher. He and his family - May and Mrs Latham - would walk to church. Every Sunday morning without fail Joe Lear would be sitting on a stone and calling out "On the way there they'll be singing 'Something for Nothing' and 'Something I must die for' coming back it will be the well known hymn 'Abide with me'."

Edna Hankey's grandad, Jake Whiston, had a dairy and when she annoyed Ray when playing he bolted her inside the dairy for the day. The rest of the family had gone out somewhere. They were about the same age-12 at the time.

Joe Cartwright was the cobbler (Cobbler Cartwright) and his wife only had one eye. She was very jealous and used to ask Ray, when he came back from school, if he had seen her husband on the way back from the village. 'Where was he and what was he doing?' he would tell her 'yes he's by so and so's'.

Florrie and Wesley Timmis ran a shop. Norman Timmis owned the primitive methodist chapel. May Cliffe was let down by Joe Batho just before her wedding. They had been going to live just past Audlem station. Later (1947) she married the Rev. Barnett who came to Audlem as a probationer in about 1946 and was ordained while here (they married in Hankelow chapel). Barnett had an OK Supreme motorcycle which Ray part-owned when it was sold.

Mrs Leigh had a toffee shop as well as the Post Office and Mr Leigh had the garage, they came from Northwich where her husband had worked for ICI. The garage was further down by Banks' row it was run by Jimmy Wakelin who sold it to Mr Leigh.

In Audlem Moseleys ran the ironmongers shop, a building firm and a garage. The White Lion was altered c. 1935, Tommy Mottram, Jack and Bob Kendall did the work. There was a pair of cottages- Miss Birchall was in one (no one could remember who was in the other.) She would say if you're going past would you call at Woods the Bakers and get a loaf. Mrs Cartwright did this too. The bakers changed hands from Woods (father of John Wood now in Corbrook Nursing Home) to Horace Allen and Alf Perry. Mr Wood went to the Baptist Chapel. Bert Malkin was the blacksmith in the Blacksmith's shop and Ray used to go there a lot. Once he was asked in Chapel what did the blacksmith do?

Roland Timmis (Chapel End) made wheels and was next door to Fred Ashley (Madge's grandfather) who was a blacksmith and usually hooped the wheels for him but he sometimes brought them to Hankelow. The circumference of the wheel was measured using string and 1/10th inch knocked off the hoop for each foot so that when it cooled and contracted it was a good fit. The two ends of the hoop would be chamfered and welded together then heated by fires put round it and lowered over the wheel which sat in the circle like a metal saucer held by an Archimedes' screw on a spindle at the centre. I would help by pouring water from buckets placed all round the circle. Ernie Bate if passing by would be called to help lift the hoop. In a very dry summer farmers would drive carts into ponds so that the wood of the wheels could get damp and swell to prevent the hoops coming off.

When Sandy Cliffe arrived with a new car Mr Malkin and Ray went into the house and looked in the book to see what he owed them and would get a ride in the car out of it. There was a lot of bartering-home grown food was plentiful but money wasn't. Ray would walk horses home or move them to the 'penthouse' where they were shod.

Hankelow Hall was lived in by Howarths and then by Codringtons. Mr C was a commander in the Navy. If he walked past a lad who didn't speak to him he would report it to Mr Coffin. He had an old Sunbeam car with an

outside handbrake. He got his horses shod at the Smithy. Bob Edwards was a groom and Percywas the gardener. There was old Mr Bolding, Mrs Bolding got to be 100. Blooming Heck they thought that was really something in the '40s.

He adopted a stray dog, a black labrador, and his grandfather then sold it to Winwood the groom at the Hall for a quid. When Ray was upset grandfather said to 'stop scryking and that he could easily get another, as they all looked the same'. At Christmas they would get 2 cade lambs from Yarwoods at the Parkes and look after them until Easter when they were butchered at Tom Northens or Joe Potts. This reminded him of the time when Joe hung a boy called Tom Hughes by his trousers from a meat hook in the shop window for some misdemeanour. He used to hit the kids fingers with the back of his knife. 'Get your fingers off he'd say'

Of the Langley brothers (Sheila married Ken) Ken and Eric went to Audlem school but Roy went to Hankelow school. Roy had a stutter. They were working at Daisy Bank, Alf Perry, Fred Davies the painter. It was when Horace Allen was the Baker. Fred used to 'go on' and he said every schoolboy knew that Alfred burn't the cakes but Roy with his stutter said no it was not AAAAlfred but Horace AAAAllen and got a cup of tea poured over him. Everybody was employed in those days.

Ray then read an amusing poem about a man who could fix anything with a bit of binder string. You can find it if you Google it. There were 3 telephones in the village, numbers 350, 351 and 352. If you were taken ill Clifford Lee would take you to the hospital for free. Ray and his brother both had appendicitis. Two cars he remembered were BUT 643 and TU 93 ? .

They never went away for a holiday. They went to Nantwich if the conductor was Wilf Morris who kindly let the children travel free, they had to see which one it was. They could go at about 5.30pm on a Saturday night, jump off at the railway crossing, buy fish and chips and come back about 8pm. They didn't go to Crewe, 'how could you get?'

They went on Sunday school treats-to Trentham Gardens or through the newly opened Mersey Tunnel in 1936. They came back saying they had gone 2 miles under the sea. They had to go one better than Moseleys Sunday school, so they always used Salopian saloon coaches. Their teacher would find out what the rival was planning and try to out-do it. Mrs Williamson would tell her husband to take them to the pictures for a treat.

When Kendalls were at Taintree there was a man called Frank Sproston, his brother lived in Hankelow, Sprostons, he was father to the von Trusler empire. The Von Truslers were at Holly Farm Buerton. Ray Mortimer married one of their girls. I don't know how he got associated with her. He changed the name of Woolfall to Brookfield when the Archer's started on the radio.

Frank Sproston was a drinker and his drinking partner was 'Bubbles Booth' married to Sheila's mother's sister (Madge Coxall) so, that made him her uncle. One time Bubbles couldn't get the top off a bottle of whisky and Frank just hit it off with his stick. Frank would come out of the Crown, go across to the church, and meet the vicar. When the vicar told him he shouldn't drink he replied that next time the beer wagon got stuck on the vicar's drive to call him and he would soon lighten the load. Frank had no children of his own and when the circus came (on the Crown field) he would count the children in the school and buy them tickets or for the fair or whatever was on.

Jack, Luke and Mark Kendall were builders and undertakers. The Hockenhulls were in the house that was later used as the Land Hostel. It was thought that Joe Potts committed suicide, Mrs Potts was left alone. There were 3 butchers in Audlem, Tom Northens, Whites and Potts.

Shops in Audlem were Edmunds, Turners (where the fire station is), Roystons, the Co-op, John Woods', Bournes. Stan Williams was a coalmerchant and he had a model T ford. His brother lived at the Gasworks House. Audlem made the wrong sort of gas so it was closed. Madge has photo of the gaslights. Stan Williams drove for NW farmers from Hankelow to Warrington but was often drunk.

Bonells: Tom Pearce, Tom Evans and Noel Eaton were drivers, Bill Bailey had only one arm and a hook but he used to drive. Ray's brother went out with the 'nightdress queen'-she always wore white frocks-Muriel Evans, Tom Evans daughter, lived by the new bridge in Audlem. Cyril Crompton was the fireman for the wagons. Mrs Shuker at Cox Bank used to live in Tisbuts, her husband was a traction engine driver. I can see the toll house now, it had 2 recesses, they took one gate away but the other side hungthere for years. In the house behind lived the Armstongs.

Ray would go with the steam wagons to Liverpool to get corn from the BOCM mill. They took water from the river at Stamford bridge although you weren't supposed to. It would take 2cwt of coal at 1/9 a cwt for the journey. The wagons were Sentinels and Burrells, the traction engines were Fowlers and Burrells. Then they went into tractors. There was a handy pool at Little Heath.

In the war Ray registered at 16 and was a police messenger for about 4 hours a week. He would deliver the licences to the farms which allowed them to get fuel to take the animals to market. The observer post did not

have a telephone so messages from London were put in an envelope for him to take up there. There was no STD then a call to London might go through 10 or 12 operators, you had a job on.

Of course there was the Home Guard, -Capt Lloyd was like Capt Mainwaring in Dad's Army and Richard Walker was like Pike. The photo of them was given to Charlie Foster (see Hankelow web site). It was exactly like Dad's Army.

He was once asked about a bath, 'what do you mean a bath', Ray never used a tap before he was about 7 or 8 when they put the water round Hankelow. Eric Buckley fell down some steps when he was about 14 and was crippled but he worked at the garage. George Dutton was the lead boiler but ended up director at Lambs he stayed that long. (He was the one with the wooden leg in the stabbing with a knife story.) The first water came from Bearstone out of artesian wells-2 big bore holes. Ray worked for Gresty's and built the extra pumping station at Bearstone. There was the reservoir at Woore and a valve on the green by the finger post on the corner. The valve was put there about 1952 it was to reduce the pressure. Lambs put the water round Hankelow.

There were tennis courts down Hall Lane -grass courts and they went past in their white skirts to play, Betty Wardle, May Cliffe (died 2 years ago age 93), her dad was a stonemason, Jim Cliffe. Tom helped him shift a large stone slab using wooden rollers taking one out at the front and putting it in the back. He did most of the gravestones in Audlem cemetery.

Olive Brooks has just died at 90 odd. Oliver Brooks owned a holly tree which was a nuisance and Rays grandad wanted it cut down but he always refused. So when he came home from the auction at Newcastle mellow from drink Ray asked if they could cut the top off. He said 'do what you like' and they soon cut it down but he wasn't pleased when he sobered up and he came round. He used to kill the cows with a poleaxe as they came through the door.

Mr Malkin had a farrier's certificate which mean't that he could treat horses. He always called Ray Roger for some reason and would tell him to put the tools in a box, the paring knife, pincers, a sharp knife, the shoeing hammer. The horses would get thrush in their feet and he would pull the shoe off, pare the hoof and make a hole to let the pus out then the horse would stand in a sack of hay soaked with Jeyes fluid. He would be called a 'horse doctor'. Wilson was the vet who came round. Codringtons at Hankelow Court and Pidducks at Corbrook Court had hunters which would get sprains and all sorts.

Joby Buckley was the postman up here and he had a dog he would take into the White Lion. If he clicked his fingers at the dog then anyone that moved he'd have their leg off. Joby did this one day and when Reg Banks entered the dog snarled at him. He went back round (he lived with Ma Cartwright) to the house and came back with his shotgun. He cocked it and wafted it round the room, everyone ducked their heads and he said 'Right now click him Joby if you dare'. It was like the wild West.

Coming home from school they would pass Little heath, where Wesley Timmis and son Clarence lived. Clarence's wife died and he died a couple of weeks later of a broken heart. Then Viggars' on the right was a gardener at Corbrook Court along with Holmes. If Joby saw you coming you would have to run all the way to Hankelow.

Mr (Bert) Farrington lived opposite Corbrook (where Mullocks are now 'the place has been altered by the family who sell cars from Crewe'.) He wound the church clock and was a sidesman at the church. He was a painter and decorator and worked with Billy Minshall, the painter, a little man, (Keith & Jean Minshall's dad). It's the electric shop now. If you went carol singing to his door it had to be Christmas Eve and you had to sing properly before you got your mince pie and a drink of cocoa or whatever the kids wanted. Some of the children Ray's age were Wilf Walker, Mary Walker, Tiny, Clive Shore, Frank and Jack Robinson.

Wesley Timmis was a gamekeeper at Hankelow Hall and would walk around with his gun under his arm like a sheriff. So woe betide you if you got in his way. The policemen in Audlem when Ray was at school were Sgt Foley and PCs Goldstraw and Beasley who used to swing his cape at them. Ray was taken to court for letting Wilf Walker ride on his crossbar and was fined 10/-. He got a good hiding when he got home but his grandfather paid the fine.

They used to leave parcels in the road with someones name on them but they were often large heavy batteries with acid in. The policeman would put them on the back of the bike. The children had to be sure to keep out of sight.

Out at Kinsey Heath there was Jack Prince known as 'Banana Jack' because he sold bananas and oranges, he kept them hanging from a tree. One time Ray had a message for Mrs Prince but just as he walked past their window he heard them arguing and saw Mr Prince push a dinner into her face, gravy all over the place. He still knocked at the door but was abruptly told she was not in. Charlesworth was in Paddock Lane, he was a pump man, Bob Cliffe had the coalyard by Bert Hassalls which had been Princes. Jos Goodwin took cheese once a month. Bert Jones had bought the land to Kynsal House and Ray's father was turned out of his house, (not an isolated occurrence at that time) the furniture was stored at Swanbach for a while. The owners of Kynsal had only kept the

farm as a novelty. Harry Moss and his father worked there. Arthur Warburton lived next door to his dad and had 7 or 8 kids. John Henry Healy always known as Jack was born at Ashtree but lived rough. When he was stopped for having no lights on his bicycle he gave his address as Stall 4, Illingsworth stable. He didn't ride the bike just pushed it around for company. He had mice eating his food. Noel Eaton told Ray that Jack had wanted to marry one of the Walley girls from opposite Tisbuts but then he went 'funny'.

Lighting was paraffin lamps. The children could not go under the table for fear of upsetting the lamp. They had a good water pump and cleaned it out once a year.

Joe Martin had the mill in Monks Lane, Denson had the other mill. The manager was Tomlinson who had 2 sons and a girl. There was a shop at Chapel End run by Mrs and Roy Marion. She baked cakes and Chatwins in Nantwich ended up with her recipe for currant loaf. The children would go to the Ash in Woodhouse Lane (Jack Nield's place) when the hounds were there for the hunt and get pennys for opening gates then they would spend it in the shop.

Miss Etches the school teacher at Hankelow had a brand new Morris 1000 in 1938 its registration was FMB 983. Mrs Williams from Nantwich was also a teacher and 'Pockets Williams' lived behind the old co-op. Hankelow school room was also used as a church and they performed religious plays he remembersButters (there were 17 in their house), playing Herod.

They would go across to Hankelow Mill and swim there, boys and girls without costumes they didn't worry about modesty. His grandad knew he'd been swimming because he smelled of the river. George Goodwin was at Over the Water. Joe Booth's wife would walk from Bunsley Bank to the chapel at Buerton.