

AN INTERVIEW WITH JOYCE UPRICHARD

SATURDAY 20TH MARCH 2010

Joyce and her twin sister Joan were born on 3rd October 1923 in a cottage at Mount Pleasant, Kintbury. The cottage sat on the side of the Kintbury Road. She had five siblings, Stanley and Elsie who were older, her twin sister Joan then Doris and John who were younger.

Her father Albert Edward Upritchard came from Kintbury and her mother Mary Fabian came from Surrey. Fabian is a French name however Joyce is not aware of any French connections? Prime Minister Gladstone owned land in the Kintbury area and lived at Wallingtons, Kintbury. Joyce's mother went to look after children for Mr Gladstone's sister. She then lived and worked in the London area as a kitchen maid during which time she kept in contact with Nanny Bayne who was nanny to the Gladstone household. Eventually she moved from London to Burghclere and then Kintbury.

Albert and Mary married Christchurch, Crossways, Kintbury in 1915 and lived in the small cottage on the track at Mount Pleasant, when the children were born, they then moved to a larger cottage, again at Mount Pleasant.

Joyce's father worked with the gardener at Mount Pleasant, he may have been an apprentice, he also worked at West Woodhay House but as the family arrived, he needed to find a position with a better wage and went to work at the sawmills in Inkpen. He made palings for fencing, shaving them by hand. The men had to turn their hand to any task that needed doing. He had a variety of jobs – digging sand at Lower Green. It was whilst doing this job that Albert Upritchard dug up the Inkpen Beaker and a saucer in 1936. This is a Bronze Age Beaker and is housed in the Newbury Museum today and is displayed under the name of Mr Edwards, the owner of the sawmills as it was found on his land. When he found the beaker Joyce's father walked from Lower Green with his bicycle, he wrapped the beaker in an old sack and carried it to Inkpen School to let the schoolmaster see it, but he had already gone home. He then went to the sawmills but it had closed. Joyce was at home when her father unwrapped his find, he was so pleased as he loved old things. A film was made of it; Joyce thinks she has a copy of the film. They showed the film in Newbury first and Joyce and her brother took Dad to see it, his was the first time he had ever been to the pictures. The weekly newspaper had already asked Joyce's brother John to go to the Crown and Garter to talk about the beaker and make the film but he didn't want to do it, however Dad agreed to go. They had a lovely time and there was a lovely picture of the landlord and her dad. This was probably on slides and the family all bought them. Joyce is rightly very proud of her dad, she says he was a good dad, one of the best. She has some lovely memories of a really happy childhood. There wasn't a lot of money to be earned in Inkpen. He worked really hard, sometimes having to work into the evening at Edwards Sawmills if he hadn't finished all his palings. Joyce and Joan would take his tea up to him, they would get cold and practically sit in the shaving to keep warm and walk home with Dad when he was finished.

Joyce's father also worked as a gravedigger and carried out this duty for 7 or 8 different churches in the area including Inkpen and Coombe. He also helped Mr Edwards to lay people out before burial. Joyce has a memory of her mum saying that Mr Edwards Snr giving her half a crown for the twins (Joyce and her sister) when they were in their pram. Half a crown in the early 1920's was a lot of money. Joyce has memories of old Mr Edwards as he had a lot to do with the chapel down the road, more or less running it. Mr Edwards had three sons.

A lot of the men used to go and help the local farmers in the evening at hay and harvest. The gardens at the council houses were very big and the men dug their gardens. Lots of the vegetables were grown in the front garden as well as the back gardens. There were no buses to 'pop' into Hungerford or Newbury to buy vegetables. Mum wouldn't buy things from the vans that came round.

Many children had to do jobs before they went to school, perhaps sewing or cleaning. Joyce said her mum never asked her family to do any jobs. They got up had a bit of breakfast and went to school. Nanny Bayne (who was nanny to the Gladstone children) used to say they would have enough work when they got older. Mum always cooked a hot meal for them when they came home from school and when Joyce and Joan were about 13 or 14 years old they had to take it in turns to wash up once a week. Joan loved washing up and would be out there all evening scrubbing and washing.

Joyce's mum did lots of sewing for other people. She used to make aprons for the servant girls at the big houses and carried out alterations hems etc. Sometimes the girls would bring clothes for mending and they had already unpicked the seams, Joyce's mum would have been happier if it had been left alone. Mum was self taught however Joyce's grandmother would like to have sent her to learn to be a dressmaker but in those days you had to pay for that and her grandmother couldn't afford it. Joyce's mum was the eldest of the family, so mum taught herself. Joyce didn't have a 'shop bought' coat until she was about twelve, mum made their coats out of adult's coats given to her. She would wash the coats. Patterns weren't really available then but mum could cut coats without a pattern, as could Joyce. Joyce used to sew for her own children. When Joyce's older sister Elsie went up to London to work as a nanny, she could buy things much cheaper. Doris her younger sister was always beautifully dressed in the clothes Elsie could buy.

Church

Joyce's family attended Christchurch (it was too far to go down to Lower Green). Stanley, Joyce, Joan and John were all christened at Christchurch. Her Mum and Dad were married there and one of her Mum's aunts was also married there.

St Gabriels (also known as The Tabernacle) by the Common was another church, which was given to the village, for the people of Inkpen Common end of Inkpen as it was too far to go to Inkpen Church. It was Church of England and connected with Inkpen Church. Two sisters came as Sunday School teachers. Joyce attended Sunday School there and Doris was christened at St. Gabriels.

Village Hall

Joyce was about two years old when the Village Hall was built, which dates it around 1921 however; it has undergone a few alterations and extensions since the original hall. Joyce was Caretaker for the village hall for just over 50 years. The Village Hall Committee held a retirement party was held for Joyce.

District Nurse

The District Nurse, Nurse Jordan lived in the thatched cottage by the village hall. She had to cover Inkpen, Coombe and Kintbury all by bicycle. Nurse Jordan was well educated and a good person. She would deliver one baby in Coombe and then cycle to Kintbury to deliver another, all on her 'sit up and beg' bicycle. During the war she adopted two children a boy and a girl, she also had another girl who came to school. She also adopted a coloured boy. Nurse Jordan was the first person to have a television. Joyce can't remember which year that would have been but certainly

before the Coronation. Joyce and her children David and Margaret were very interested and Nurse Jordan used to invite them and others around to watch the television, the house was crowded out. This was in the days when programmes finished at 9.00pm.

Joyce remembers watching the Queen Elizabeth II Coronation on a television owned by Mrs Watts at the top house. Joyce was busy knitting a cardigan for one of her girls and was trying to finish it, but she ran up to Mrs Watts to ask if she could have a peep at the Coronation.

Pubs

There were a number of pubs in Inkpen – The Crown, The Swan, The Craven Arms and The Olive Branch. There was another one by the sawmills but Joyce doesn't remember that one or its name.

Shops and Vans

Inkpen was a poor little village. Lots of people had a piece of land (smallholding). There was a cobbler in the village, the sawmills had a blacksmith and also built houses. Bricks were not made in Inkpen but in Kintbury.

The Edwards family run a grocery shop in Inkpen but the goods there were more expensive.

Joyce's mum used to buy things from a shop in Hungerford. A man would come round on a bicycle, take the order, then cycle back with it. The items were in small parcels as Joyce explains it would be one pound weight of a few different items. Eventually the shop progressed to having a van that would come round the villages

The butchers van came from Kintbury when Joyce was a child. There was also a coalman. Later on, the coalman also had a bus that used to come round, once a week, to take people to Newbury. Beryl Carter says her family used to walk to Hungerford to get their shopping.

An old man from along Craven Road used to come round with a tricycle with an old can or tin fixed on the back selling paraffin for the lamps in the houses.

Joyce had already left school and would have been about 15 years old before the electricity was put into the Council Houses. Each house was only allowed three lights, i.e. three bulbs.

School

Joyce attended school at Christchurch, Kintbury when she was little, then the government of the day changed the schooling arrangements. The girls all had to go to Inkpen School when they were 11 and the boys had to attend Hungerford School. The government paid for bicycles for the boys to cycle to Hungerford. None of the children who went from Christchurch to Inkpen liked Inkpen School. **Inkpen School** consisted of the porch; one room for the infants through to 7 years old, then a large fashionable screen pulled across and all other classes 8 to 14 years old worked in one room. It wasn't a big school but a very happy little school. Joyce had lots of friends at school but her special friend was Gwen Taylor who lived just below Olive Branch, in Kintbury. Joyce is not aware of any nicknames for the children.

They didn't have school lunches but took sandwiches to school. The children used to take a cup with cocoa, sugar and milk and a lady called Miss Little gave them hot water to make a drink to have with their sandwiches. Towards the end of Joyce's schooldays school milk came in, this wasn't free they had to pay 1d or 2d for it.

Miss Morby was the Headmistress who lived in the schoolhouse, went to Christchurch School around the time Joyce was born (1923). She taught Joyce and also taught some of Joyce's children.

The other teacher was Miss Dobson who looked after the little ones, she taught at the school all her life. She was a beautiful person and all the children loved her. She lived at Dobson's Hill, Kintbury.

The school was well supported by donations from local monied people. Joyce said it was a very happy school.

School Activities

Christchurch school children used to put on a concert at Kintbury Coronation Hall, for two nights. It was a good variety concert with singing and dancing. The hall was always full. The children were taken there by bus.

Christchurch and Inkpen Schools used to take part in the Newbury Schools Music Festival. The Edwards family all had beautiful singing voices and one of them helped to teach the children at Inkpen to sing. Joyce remembers Christchurch School beating the Inkpen School choir at one of the festivals. One year the song was a Scottish one. The choir was made up of girls and one boy!!

They were taught folk dancing. Joyce admits she was no dancer but her twin sister was a very good dancer.

The children were taken for Nature Walks. They did some gardening – the girls took over the boy's gardens at Inkpen School.

Sports were held on the Playing Fields.

Social Life in Inkpen (as children)

Children in those days had to make their own entertainment in the hamlets. Inkpen children on The Common never went to Lower Green and neither did the Lower Green children come to The Common.

The children played out on The Common as though it belonged to them. They played among the gorse and made little round houses. They would look in the sandpits and find broken pieces of crockery; in those days the sandpits was where the rubbish was dumped. The horse and cart used to collect rubbish from the houses and dump it in the sandpits. The girls could find bits and pieces to put in the playhouses. They learned about all the plant growing on The Common.

Joyce's sister Doris remembered that they used to have old tin cans, thread string through them, whiz them around and let them go and the boys had to go and find them.

Joyce remembers two girls and a boy, being brought up by their grandmother, Granny Hezel (Heazel)? as their parents had both died. They lived in quite a large house, which was situated just past the council houses by the trees. Joan and Joyce were invited to go and play with the younger girls (Joyce said they must have behaved themselves as they were invited there). The house had a beautiful garden and Joyce feels this is where her love of gardens comes from. The children had their own garden there and were allowed to go anytime they liked to do their garden. Granny Hazel allowed them to play on their own. They always had to go round the back of the house if Mr Hazel was around. Granny Hazel shared her birthday with Joyce and her twin sister and made a

cake every year, Joyce calls it 'maggoty' or 'seed' cake? The two Hazel girls they played with turned out to be very clever, Joyce remembers Jimmy their brother as a mischief, but full of fun.

Every few years somebody would set fire to Inkpen Common (although it may have been that they were asked to set fire to it!), Joyce remembers one year in particular the gorse was very, very tall and the fire was so hot it melted the icicles on the windows of the houses nearby. The fire engine would come from Hungerford to put the fire out; this caused great excitement for the children. Joyce said they were young and should have been in bed but would sneak out and watch the fire from the window. When they grew older they were allowed to go out and watch.

The girls would all gang up together, go up Coombe Hill taking a picnic with them. Nobody would worry or annoy them. They would walk for miles around the area – West and East Woodhay, always in groups of two or three. Nearly all the original Inkpen children Joyce knew are now dead.

Memorable Events of Village Life

Empire Day – 24th May

The children would march around the Flagpole on Empire Day on 24th May

King George V Silver Jubilee in 1935

Joyce remembers a celebration for King George V Silver Jubilee. It was held at the back of the Village Hall when Joyce's youngest sister Doris was about 5/6 years old. Joyce's mum used to look after a little boy Hughie who was the same age as Doris. He was a lovely little boy and lived just a few doors away from Joyce's family. The two children were the best of friends, like little lovers, they used to walk up and down The Common pushing the dolls pram.

There was a village celebration for the Silver Jubilee this included a Pageant and very small children were dressed up as King, Queen, Pages, etc. People made dressing up clothes out of anything they had to make cloaks, crowns etc. Doris and Hughie were dressed as King and Queen and the childrens' pageant won first prize. It was all beautifully done. Joyce's brother was dressed as The Bishop with a surplus and carrying a mitre, he would have been about 8/9 years old. Joyce did have a photograph of the occasion but had given it to her sister Doris, who has sadly passed away. She lived in Canada. The lady who organised the dressing of the children for the pageant was the sister of Joyce's godmother, she was really good fun. There were a few races held including the ladies egg and spoon race. Joyce remembers this event as one of the best things ever done for the children, she was one of the older children and they 'trailed' on behind the pageant.

Queen Elizabeth 11 Coronation – 2nd June 1953

Joyce has a Souvenir Programme of the Queen's Coronation celebrations held in Inkpen on 2nd June 1953. Joyce's children Margaret and Hilary were very young then Hilary would have been 3 years old. Pantings supplied lorries for 'floats' for the parade and these were lined up behind the Village Hall. The programme shows that the parade left the Village Hall at 2.30pm for the Recreation Ground; the Inkpen Trumpeters led the parade. The Inkpen Brass Band was also in the parade, this was a Village band not a school band.

Employment

When she left school at 14, Joyce worked as an under nanny to Nanny Bayne at Wallingtons. Nanny Bayne, was the nanny to the Gladstone children and had been kept on to look after the Gladstone grandchildren. Mr Gladstone Snr had two sons. One son lived in India with his family

but came back and forth to Inkpen and on these visits Nanny Bayne looked after his children. It was a 'live in' position and Joyce stayed in an upstairs room by the nursery. When the children were not there Joyce helped the housemaids. She preferred housework to looking after the children. Joyce felt she was very lucky in her position, as Nanny Bayne always spoke up for the girls in service and Mr Gladstone Jnr used to come up to the Nursery and speak to Nanny. When Mr Gladstone Snr died Wallingtons had to be sold.

Joyce's eldest sister Elsie worked at Wallingtons for a while, she then left to work as a nanny in London. Joyce's twin sister, Joan was also in service as a housemaid. The only work available for girls was 'in service' especially as there was no transport available.

Joyce worked in a big house in Webbs Close, Inkpen (going down towards Kirby House). She worked for the Hall family for a long time and has a photograph of them – Donald, Isabel and their family Christopher and Sarah. Isabel was a very attractive lady. Joyce did the housework and sometimes looked after the children. War was declared in 1939 whilst Joyce was working there. Joyce was working there one day when she heard a lot of noise outside and when she looked out of the balcony window she saw lots of soldiers running past, making their way up to Walbury Hill, where they were to be briefed. Joyce has a beautiful Christmas card given to her by the family. When the Halls moved away Joyce went to work for relations of Mrs Halls at Greenham Common, Joyce does not remember their name.

During wartime Joyce, like many others had to work for the wartime effort working in a factory in Newbury. She was working on machinery but doesn't remember what they made. She didn't like working there and preferred to be at home.

When she came back home to live on The Common that was when she met her future husband Louis. Louis originally came over from Ireland with his father and brother to work at Thatcham and they were lodging with Joyce's mum as she had space at home as the family were growing up and leaving home. They worked as carpenters during the building of Beacon House, which at that time belonged to the Bonham Carters. Louis was called up for the Navy but didn't need to go to sea.

Photographs

Joyce has a photograph of Edwards Sawmills including three brothers Bert, Will and Arthur Edwards along with other members of the family and staff.

Local Villages and Village Rivalry

Joyce couldn't really comment on rivalry between the Villages as the only rivalry she was aware of was on the sports field. There were also the occasional drunken fights.

Difficult to make comparisons between living in the different surrounding villages as she has always lived in Inkpen. She did go to Kintbury and in those days didn't like it very much.

Low Cost Housing - Joyce has kept lots of cuttings regarding low cost housing. Ever since she has been in Inkpen they have been arguing over the provision of low cost housing. They keep contacting her and wanting her to move somewhere else as Joyce is in a three bedroom house. Joyce has no intentions of moving from the home she loves.

What do you miss in Inkpen?

The thing Joyce misses most in Inkpen is the shops, especially the Post Office.

Buses not as good now as they were in the wartime. There was a 9.00pm bus which used to leave Newbury to come to Inkpen on a Saturday night and went back about 11.00pm. That bus was always packed probably a lot of soldiers. There may have been another one on a Thursday, as that was Market Day in Newbury. Joyce walked back to Inkpen from Newbury a number of times, not because she had missed the bus but, to save her hard earned money. Those who were in service didn't get a very high wage but had board and lodgings and some uniform (aprons etc.)