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Camp Hill and General Goings On In Life

In the years following 1945-6, when the second world war was eventually over, great changes, work wise were to start to take effect, this would be for the biggest majority of people and families that lived in Bugbrooke and the surrounding villages.

For our family dad was to be made redundant from working all the war years, six in total, this was helping to manufacture or repairing Aircraft at Brooklands Aircraft factories in and around Sywell, this he had done with hardly a break, along with his Home Guard duties, for him and many others in the village was to be quite a climax in there lives, and during this period, he was to spend quite some time, either in the Five Bells, or the Bakers Arms, celebrating the end of the war, along side of members of the Armed Forces that had survived the fighting.

That year he was to help Mr Campion from Home Farm collect in his Harvest, this was to give him employment for a short period, before he was to take employment down at Harold Wards the Ladder Makers and undertaker in Church Lane as a wood turner, turning out ladder rounds or rungs, this he did before moving and working at Blackwood Hodges, at Hunsbury Hill, the very large earth moving equipment firm, he was to work there until he retired, even after this period he was to odd job down Heygates mill, and at Wards for a time before packing up work completely.

Gwen my eldest sister who had been a Nanny to Major Broomhall and Major Perry's children, was to be made redundant when the war was over, and when they eventually moved away, she was to start a new job at Pattishall in a clothing manufacturing factory called The Brook, Gwen was to work there for many years until the factory moved to Northampton, but while at Pattishall, she would cycle back and forth up Birds Hill and along scurf from Bugbrooke, every day, winter and summer, rain or shine, She was eventually to move away, and later was to get married to Peter Cat.

Sid who had started work when leaving school for Mr Flood, the market gardener who lived down Church Lane Bugbrooke, he was to leave and go and work for Bill and Mont Grant, the Agricultural contractors for Threshing Grain, who worked from a field opposite Bugbrooke Manor, they would travel around all the local farms after Harvest time threshing all the corn and wheat Ricks, this they did in the early days with a steam engine for power, that pulled all the equipment that they needed to do the job with, before they changed to using a Oliver tractor in its place.

Sid was to leave and work for himself for a period in time before starting to work on the Grand Union Canal maintainace, hedge laying and strengthening the banks with Piles, he was eventually to leave this job and to go and work alongside of Dad at Blackwood and Hodges, until the place closed down, from where he was to go and work at Brown Brothers, in Bedford Road Northampton until he retired.

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I personally was to stay and work for Mr Harold Ward the local Ladder Maker and Undertaker, from leaving school in April 1954, until I was called up to do my two years National Service in November 1958, and after completing this duty in November 1960, of what left me in quite a state, as I found it very difficult to settle

back down in civilian life, as it was a bit tame after being in the Army, I was to start back at Wards in my old Job of Ladder Maker and Undertakers assistance.

On the 10th of June 1961 I was to get married to Maureen the love of my life, and after our Honeymoon, we were to live together at her mothers house, in Harpole, along with Maureen's brother Brian, until we could find a house for our selves.

We were eventually to rent a cottage from Peter and Sheila Bird in the West End of Bugbrooke, In the summer of 1962, while living in this cottage Maureen gave birth to Stephen in the Barrett Maternity Hospital in Northampton on June the 12th, we were both very happy living in this cottage, and I became very contented with life alongside of my Maureen and our son Stephen, I would walk back and forward's to the work shop, through the summer months and into Autumn, when all the leaves changed colour and fell leaving carpets of them to walk through on the pathway along Trent valley through the park and the Church yard.

One day from out of the blue Sheila was to ask us if we could vacate the cottage as she wanted it for her mother to come and live in it, we were to put in for a Council House at the time, we were offered one after a period of time when one became empty, but a bit of jiggery poke or untruths were told about someone else needing it before me and Maureen, and we were offered a flat at the Back of Bugbrooke Close instead, this we excepted without questioning the council about it, we were to move in.

On the 15-04- 1964 Maureen was to give birth in this flat to a boy we named Robert, and with the extra money needed to pay the rent and feed the family, I reluctantly left Wards to go and work for Harpole Coop for more Money, as working at Wards I took home after tax and stoppages just over £9 and a few shillings a week.

I was to go and work for Harpole Coop delivering Coal for a period earning over £12 per week, and this made quite a difference to our standard of living, this I did before going back to work for Mr Harold Ward, as he was to offer me more money to come back and work for him, I was not really happy due to certain problems that arose with a fellow work man.

Harpole Coop was to offer me a job as a Milk Rounds man, as well as bread come other deliveries rounds man, This was for £14 a week and more, I was to leave Wards and take on the job of delivering milk, In the mean time due to Maureen having problems getting the children and the pram up and down the stairs to the flat in Chipsey Ave, we had asked for a larger council house, and we were offered one in Harpole at no 11 Carr's Way, this was very handy as it meant that I did not have to travel to and from work, life was to get much better with this extra money coming in and I was feeling more contented once again, but for a problem that I did not for see arose while working for Harpole Coop, that it was a closed shop to none union members since I last worked for them on the coal delivery .

I was threatened with violence if I did not join the union! (They did not take in to consideration that I was a ex soldier, and that I trained very hard and regularly at my other love in my life of Judo, so as to be given a good hiding from one of the union

workmen as he said he would give me, became very entertaining for me along with a bit of fun, after this due to the fact that it was evident that for my future working on the Coop was a no go, I had took a few days of from work on the Coop to get myself sorted out, when Phillip Turland from Bugbrooke asked me to run him to Newport Pagnell in the car that I had at the time, this was to see if he could get a job resurfacing the M1 Motorway as the money was so good!.

While I was there with him the Agent in charge of the job asked me if I wanted a start, I told him that I had not handed my notice in to leave the Coop, he was to laugh and said that I could start work there and then, and he would sort things out with the Coop, I was to throw all caution to the wind, and took the job on working for Amey's Asphalt Company, my first weeks pay after stoppages was to be well over £60, this was a great difference to my £14 delivering milk seven days a week, and amongst men that did not want to work with me, and to top it up within the following summer months I was to take home after stoppages well over £120 per week, the days of struggling for a living from hand to mouth ceased , not only that, Maureen had given birth on the 17-08-1965 to another boy that we named Richard, and with the worry of the union activity on the Coop denying me from earning a living for my family, was the main reason to go and work on the motorway.

I signed a form to say that I would stay with Amey's until the job of resurfacing the M1 had been completed, this was to give me three years work through the summer months, with income tax rebate alone, it meant that I did not have to work through the winter months as I would have had more than enough money coming in to survive, but I was to go and help a Mr Hawkins a fencing contractor from the Village of Road out in the winter erecting fences along side of the new roads being built at the time, I was to help him erect the fences both sides of the Duel Carriageway on the A45 at the bottom of Harpole.

When all the work on the M1 had ceased Amey's asked me to stop on and work for them, but it meant moving away or a lot of travelling had to be done, Tarmac from Corby asked me to work for them doing the same sort of work along with the very high wages, this I did for quite some time, during this period Maureen was to give birth to a lovely baby girl on the 14-03-1968.

I was to do a silly thing I was to leave Tarmac and to go into partnership with my wife Maureen's brother Brian and a John Oaks a farmer from Harpole, this was doing general garden work and electrical jobs as Brian was a trained electrician, we were to acquire some moulds to make garden ornaments with at the time, but nothing much became of it, it was to go all horribly wrong, it became a living night mare, and I realised that I had made a terrible mistake, and I finished up working for myself, cutting grass and general gardening work, and due to my Judo skills and of being a very high grade I was asked to teach Judo to the children in all the local upper schools in Northampton by Mr Jack Heygate, this I was to do for well over twenty seven years, along with cutting grass for local people, until I was taken ill in August the 21 1993 with food poisoning followed by Guillian Barre on the 28 th, but that starts a new chapter in my life.

Malcolm my youngest brother when he left school, was to start work with me down Wards and stayed there until I came home from completing my National Service, but in the period when I left Wards to go and work for Harpole Coop, He was to leave and go and work on the Grand Union Canal maintainace, this he was to do for some

time, before going to work for Northampton Education Grounds Maintenance, after doing this job for many years, he was to be taken ill and had to leave through health reasons.

Before Malcolm left school he did jobs for a Major Adnit, who kept hundreds of Deep litter Hens, for producing eggs, Malcolm used to feed and look after them all as well as collecting all the eggs.

Regarding the work patterns of each and every one of us, especially when we were to change our places of employment, was mainly all to do with trying to get a little extra money in order to survive.

Due to the fact that when I was called up in 1958 to do my National Service, and was away for two years, and shortly after was to get married to Maureen, I do not really know much about what Audrey and Stella my two youngest sisters got up to regarding work etc as I was away from home from then on, I do know that Audrey lived in the USA working as a Nanny for a family over there,

As time passes with the continuing changes of work patterns either, for the demands or the lack of a certain produce or work skills, Wards ladder making work shop ceased to produce ladders, and in later years was pulled down to make way for new houses, many of the small shops in the local villages were to close due to the large supermarkets, public houses started to sell food and have now changed into restaurants, this was due to the new drink and driving laws that curtailed the heavy drinkers that normally used the premises during the middle of the day.

From a very busy time table that the United Counties Bus Company once had at one time in Bugbrooke, there was a bus every ten minutes to a quarter of an hour when folk had to get to and from work in the early mornings and evenings, and one every half hour during normal day times.

With union activity making the service unreliable for people to get to and from work, some were to start buying a motor car between themselves just for the purpose of getting to work, I have known six men that done this and shared a car for quite a few years until the time came when they could afford to buy a car for themselves.

It was to be the start of the demise of the bus service, as we once knew it to be.

The Grand Union Canal that runs through Bugbrooke, was to cease being used by the boats carrying goods, and it started to fall into disrepair and neglect, the water was to become very clear and one could see the bottom along with all the fish, eels, and crayfish, due to water being clear through lack of use, it started to be covered in weeds, but with the changes of use of the canal from trading boats to pleasure boats, and now as I write, many people are selling up their homes when they retire, and some before, to purchase a boat on the canal, as they can travel from one end of England to the other on it, like a permanent holiday.

When the M1 Motor Way was starting to get up and running along with other Motor Ways being built, in the late 1950s to early 1960s, it was to have great effects on businesses near or along its whole length, it was to be the end for all the trading boats

on the canal, along with the demise of rail freight as we once knew it, the union activity at the time on the railways, drove the freight onto the roads.

The A5 Watling Street was to see a difference in road traffic when the M1 was first opened, it became very quiet, many of the Café's along its route were to close, and some still stand unused and derelict to this day, but many new businesses are being set up locally, due to the fact that delivering goods to and from customers have been made easier and more economical to do so, due to the new motorways.

But with all the ever changing world around us, what with all the new prosperity be it for the good or bad, with all the new road systems, and with more and more vehicles on the roads, things start to get very interesting on the roads in and out of Northampton during the rush hour, when I was a child growing up in Bugbrooke the following people owned a motor car, Mrs Harrison the Rector's mother had a large yellow Vauxhall, Mr Heygate the Miller, Mr Philip Campion the farmer, Mr Tom Collings the butcher, Mr Harry Lovell the butcher, Doctor White, Mr and Mrs Tarry the coal merchants and haulage firm, Harold Ward the ladder maker and undertaker, Mr Barford at the Garage, Mr Adams the farmer, Mr Williams opposite the school, Mr Leedon Fish and Chip shop, Mr Barnes Post Office, Mr Cockerel farmer, Mr Botterill haulage firm, I may have missed out one or two, but that was about it, and at this moment in time up in Carr's Way Harpole in the year 2004, there are the same amount of cars as that from three houses near to us.

Many new roads and buildings are being built along with new houses within the county especially in and around Northampton, with hundreds of houses still to be built according to the future building plans, it will be interesting to see how other things will change along with all of this development.

In my time since the end of the Second World War, they said that Weedon Stores the very large Army Depot was to close, the place employed hundreds of personnel along with many soldiers billeted there, many of the old soldiers from Bugbrooke were employed there for years, some people were afraid they would not find other employment, but they did and after a while it was as though the place never existed part from the very large empty buildings of most of what still stand today.

Many of the very large shoe factories were to close down in Northampton, at the time before and during these periods, many were concerned about alternative employment, but other jobs and places of work just absorbed them, Express Lifts was to close putting hundreds out of work, it is now a new building site with many houses being built upon the site of where the old factory once stood.

British Timken at Duston that was built just to supply the war effort with Roller Bearings at the start of the second world war, was to last for Fifty years instead of Five that was intended, this has now been closed putting hundreds of more people out of work to find alternative employment, but like other places that have closed the majority of workers found alternative employment, there are plans to pull this factory down and build many more new houses.

The infrastructure of the county, be it roads and traffic control, transport, Shops, Hospitals, will have to change to cope with future the development, as it has done in the past, since being taken out with illness in 1993, as well as reaching 65 years of age one has more time to look about and take notice of all the changes that are going on.

A very old friend of mine from Blisworth, who has since passed away by the name of George Freestone, through all his life he took great interest as to what was going on around him, and he took the time to sit down and record it for future reference.

In my time since the second world war, no one at the time could envisage that when the large airdrome at Silverstone, was to close after the war had ended, that it would become a race track, and they would eventually hold Grand Prix's there, not only that the Hotel's and other businesses that it would help to support and thrive, it was to bring motor racing, car building, as well as engine building, for the racing cars that were to be built in Northamptonshire and Buckinghamshire, it is a multi Million pound producer, and indirectly employs hundreds of people.

The turn around of the canal is another example, to go from redundant trading boats, to a multi million pound recreation system, as well as a place for those that like to buy a boat and go and live on it.

One door shuts and another door opens as I have been told many times by the old folk.

From the enforced enclosure act, and the effects that it had on local people work wise, or money wise, to the coming of the Grand Union Canal, and then the Railway system, all of them changed every ones life local, be it direct or indirect.

In my time I was to see or witness the water mains, and sewer mains lain in Bugbrooke, this was to change many peoples lives, jobs were lost through it but more jobs were created by it.

The start of the building of the M1 had commenced just before I was called up to do my National Service in November 1958, and it was almost completed by the time I came home from Singapore and Malaya in 1960, the changes it has bought over the years is phenomenal, I never dreamt, that I would take a job resurfacing it in the following years, but I was to, and it changed my life and lifestyle.

I was to see the railway system go into decline after the second world war, along with union activity, and lack of investment, plus with Doctor Beaching closing down all the branch lines, and now that all the road systems are getting clogged up with transport, with the likes of lorries, and motor cars ect, great sums of money are now being spent on it to bring it up to date, or to bring modernization to it, in order to relieve the road network, and transport system in general, it is very interesting to see all of this development taking place.

In my time I was see all the main Shipping lines that took people all over the world collapse for passengers, and to witness air travel to take over, and become another multi million pound business,

And the changes still keep going on.

Stanley Joseph Clark.

