

Transcript of Sonya Teale's interview with Mrs Vera Newland, 23rd October 2007.

This is a recording of Mrs Newland made on the 23rd of October 2007 by Sonya Teale. Words in *italics* are those of the interviewer.

My name is Vera Newland and I live in Durrants Road, Rowlands Castle and my age is 91. I was born April the 28th 1916 and have lived in Rowlands most of my life and I was born over at was East Durrants then but is now known as Whichers Gate Road and mother was also born there and my granny Carpenter lived next door to us. I had six brothers and three sisters. They're all brothers are gone now but I have two sisters remaining and we used to always play on the common which was a little field next to her house which was given to us by Sir George and Lady Fitzwygram for the children to play on and so we played there my mother played there and her brothers and sisters and we all played there and had like at each festivals on we always held them out there like bonfire night, Jubilee night all the things that were for children were held in on the common at this end of the village because otherwise we had to go right over the village to the rec which was quite a long way for all of us children to go.

My name before I was married was Brown which was very well known and oh dear. *That's fine.* I just say that she was born over at East Meon and moved to, *yes this is your grandmother,* yeah grandma, granny, yeah yeah yeah. Her name was surname Spencer before she was married, *Yes carry on.*

Granny, my granny Carpenter she moved from East Meon where she was born to Wellsworth Lane where she was a midwife and brought good few children into the world that after that she moved down to Whichers Gate Road to where my mother lived and she was a great help to mother with all the children and she had I think eight or nine children herself maybe more but as far as I know I should eight or nine and everybody that was in trouble always came for granny because she was so marvellous

and when we were children and come out of school which was Saint John's Redhill School where mum went in all us children went and my own daughter went and my grandchildren has been there and now of course it is a new school up here so we have all been there and it was a great thing to run home and go and get a piece of granny's cake except for when it was seedy cake and we didn't like her bit so we didn't have any then. Anyhow we had quite a lot of relations about and one of the Carpenter's which was mum's cousin had a pub on the common called the Royal Oak and when I was a little girl of three I used to go down there. They had five daughters and they used to come and pick me up and take me down there and put me on the bar and I'd sing and then a sailor would give me a penny for singing. *What did you sing.* It was it was lovely I could remember that in the song was *A-be, A-be, A-be my boy, What are you waiting for now.* and but then when the pub closed, he moved up a bit further up the road and ran a wood what you'd call a wood business. He had two great Shire horses and it

We went down a long drive to it and we were allowed to go in and see the horses as long as we didn't make a noise and frighten them. At every Monday I had to go up the road and get what you call a bunt of wood for mum to put up the copper to boil up the water for the washing and it was

tuppence for a big bundle of wood and sometimes we had to have two because as you may imagine there was a lot of washing to do and she was at the wash tub from early morning till about 4:00 o'clock in the afternoon cos there was no, no washing machines or anything like that there was always put in the copper and put into a rinsing bath and then put into another bath with blue in it so it all come out beautiful and white and it took ages to dry because you couldn't get it all on the line but she used a hedge but it was fairly low and put all the washing on there and it was really we were always kept beautifully clean

We had plenty of fresh food because my dad had an allotment and he also had another allotment just next door but one which belonged to a little bungalow and they never used it so he had it as an allotment and grew all their own vegetables and then when it was time for potatoes to be dug up for you to have to come home from school and go down the allotments pick all the potatoes up, put the little ones in a pile to boil for the pigs and then the others were all put in a sack for him to collect and bring home, so we were always well fed well shod

and of course dad worked over the brick yard which was the great big industrial scene for Rowlands Castle he, he was what you call a burner which big kiln and you went up the big gantry to it and he fed all the little fires which were burning the bricks and I also had a uncle there who made the tiles. *What was it like.* yes and when I used to take his dinner over for him they used to show me all round how they were making them and how they cut the bricks and then when the kiln had finished baking the bricks they let it cool off and then open it up and then get all the bricks out, stack of all up and it was really it was a really great thing to go and see because it was so interesting but unfortunately all that is closed down but after that I think dad worked for a while for Winnicotts on the building so until he retired. Okay what else have I got.

When we went to the school once a year we had a tea fight down at Lady Fitzwygram's. We used to walk down the drive, all had to take our own mugs half of whom got broken on the way down but they dropped them and then we did races down there and if you won a race you got a penny you could choose a bag of sweets or a penny the lot of us chose sweets could we still have some of those and then we had a bun when we came home and scramble for sweets which was thrown it onto the law and I think we got as much dirt in with the sweets as we did anything went more dirt than that and we always saved half of her bun to take home to mum, we ate half and saved half to take home to mum and then then at Christmas time she'd come up we had to go so many weeks at school with out staying away and for every clear week you went she gave you a penny but sad to say I didn't get very many pennies because I was usually at home helping mum with the chores and the children but and then to when also as I grew up I was a dinner lady up there for 25 years I did quite a few years in the old school and then of course we had a moved into the new school and I instead of being a dinner lady I was a supervisor.

Looking after the children in the in the playground so of course I did 25 years up there all together that was you know and all the children were lovely and I didn't want to leave up there I cried when I left and everybody thought I was mad to cry to leave those children but I knew a lot of their mothers and fathers so it was a really you know a heart breaking thing for me to do to leave them but there you are.

The headmaster at the school at the time was a Mr Young and he used to wear plus fours and all the boys poked fun at him of course and he also had a motorbike sidecar which he always took down to Lady Fitzwygram's so he could bring whoever fell in the lake he could bring them home and nearly every year he had to bring somebody home because they had an old punt out on the lake and all the boys tried to get the punts and of course naturally somebody fell in there. Now I can remember them being all wet and he had to bring them home and it was really great fun.

I stayed up at school until I was 14. I had to leave at 14 and then I went out to domestic service because my mother saw you learn to do things properly when you went to service and so at 14 my first job was it Doctor Ricketts at Havant and we either had a walk or get a bus if you were lucky to on your half day off but I had a friend who had a bicycle and I used to put my foot on a little tiny thing at the back and put my knee on a carrier which wasn't very comfortable but that's how I got back home after my half day and we had every other Sunday afternoon off but I was staying there for nearly two years and I had to leave because mum was expecting my younger brother yeah unexpectedly sort of thing so I had to leave to come home help to look over after some of the other boys so that's how I came to leave down there but it was quite enjoyable and I learnt quite a lot while I was there and they were very kind to me.

And your next job my next job was at it in Westbourne where I met my husband Vic and we were married on his birthday in 1941 and we had 66 years together which was lovely. yeah so I was working at Westbourne at a house called The Lawn. There was only one lady and we had a lady's maid and Nelly, her old Nelly and my sister was cook and I was house parlourmaid and we stayed there all the summer then when it began to get cold and nasty we had another house in Southsea in Portland Terrace and it was a beautiful house but I didn't, I hated it down there because I didn't like the town but we were down there for all together we done seven years down there seven years at The Lawn but after the war on January the 10th we were absolutely when the Portsmouth had that fire and everywhere was burnt my sister and I had to go to the shelter underneath Saint Jude's church and when we came out everything around was burnt all Palmerston Road everywhere we didn't think we'd better get it anywhere but of course we could the next morning we packed up with whatever we could in the car we came back to Westbourne and we never went back down to Southsea anymore but Needless to say my poor mother and father were going frantic as I could see it from here and my dad got his bicycle out and tried to get down to us but of course when he got to Farlington he was stopped by the wardens and said you can't go any further sir, he said yes I can my 2 girls are down there but of course he had to come back but next morning when we got back to The Lawns the first thing we did was to come up and see mum and dad which was

It was a great relief to them we all had floods of tears, but it was quite an experience which we do want to live through too much.

I also had my hat ready to get married on the 1st of March so I had to put that over the wall of Portland Terrace and also a little bird I had and I thought he'd die of the cold but all was well and we my hat was quite good on 1st of March it looked quite smart with this little veil and the little bird survived so that was also very good.

Vic and I were married on the 1st of March on his first leave from the army. It was his birthday as well so of course it was great fun and speculation with that and we had seven days leave so we

spent two days over the Meon Valley and two days with Vic's mum, two days with mum and it was time for him to go back but going over to the Meon Valley of course we only had little tiny lights on the car so you couldn't see where you're going when we got to Horndean we had a puncture and we had a car full of people everybody come in there we were going on their honeymoon they all joined in and so we had to stop we stopped outside of a pub and they already have to see to the puncture we went in and all the men cheered us with their beer and then as we went on a bit further there was another loose pig that got out on the road and so we have it another stop for these loose pigs and then a bit further on there we were stopped and said put those bloody lights out.

When we go to where we stopped at my cousins at Meonstoke and she had a farm right in the middle of a field and it was no concrete path or anything you just walked in all the mud across there and at the bottom of the gate where we were there was a searchlight of course with that raid on the search lights were going there, planes were bombing over there but anyhow we got in there safely and they didn't have electricity or anything so we had little just tiny little oil lamps and cause everything was blacked out but when my brother he had been and collected all the eggs because of the big farm he would get down when it was bombing of course he had these eggs, he forgot he had these eggs in his pocket and so he had all these eggs in his pocket and that caused great laughter again so despite the war we had a lovely time and when it was time for him to go back.

The next day I went back to work at Westbourne to The Lawns and I stayed there until I was expecting my first baby so Mrs Barker asked if I'd like to stay on she would have looked after the baby for me if I would stayed on but unfortunately I lost her so I did go back there anymore I came home and then I went down to Leigh Park House where the Fitzwygram's used to be because of Mines Department had it and I went there as a Messenger and I stayed down there for quite a long time until I was expecting my second baby and then after about four or five months I left there but that was again great fun among everybody and it was really lovely job and I loved it down there.

The house I'm living in now down Durrants Road we kept moving here in 1943 and I was paying eight and sixpence a week everything included water rates everything and we rented it for a long time and then the landlady died and she offered it gave them to her niece and her niece didn't want to know about it so she offered us to buy them so I was very shy and didn't know what to ask, tell her I'll pay.

I offered her £250 which she said was very good and I could have it so in 1943 we bought the house and we have lived here ever since so we've been here 65 years now my daughter was born here and my niece was born here and my nephew they were all born here in my front bedroom so those call this their home coz this is where they were born so I think we can say we live in Rowlands Castle quite a long time.

My daughter Susan when she left Redhill school she went to Warblington school where her husband said she met with hated but they met now they're married. She went to Mr Kenwood's, Havant when she was 16 she left school went as a receptionist and she stayed there till long time after she was married and I'm not quite sure how many years it was but she done quite a few years there and when she left there she moved to Dunsbury Way Community Centre and was a receptionist there until she retired a few years ago for which it was 60 I think it was so should left there three years so she should do all the paperwork for the schools and that. So she was very well liked I think down

there everybody knew her and all the old dears used to come to get their feet done she knew and they all spoke very well over so I'm quite proud of her and she had yeah then she had two children Sally who is married and now got one little boy who would be four tomorrow and Simon who has two dear little girls, one's 6 and one will be 3 in February so we are quite a nice little family yeah

This is what I remember about the troops; they were all parked up the Horndean Road, all around the Memorial and all down Whichers Gate Road. We also had a pillbox at the top of the road. When my sister used to have a sleepover at night, when she went home in the morning to get all her things for work, we made a great big jug of tea and she used to take it out and give it to the Troops that were over at the Memorial. They were so grateful and always used to bring the jug back in the morning. One day when I was hanging out Sue's nappies on the line, one of them come down and says, "I've done this before, so I'll give you a hand". He gave me a hand hanging the nappies up which I thought was quite funny you know. They were very nice chaps and our hearts used to go out to them all because the next day they had probably gone, and you didn't see them anymore. I often wondered what happened to them all, but there you are, that's life. When the King came to inspect the troops, we all went up to the Staunton Arms on the corner there. Sue was a couple of months old then so as the King come down in his car, I took one of her nappies out – a lovely white nappy – and I waved it to him. He put his hand up and waved back, so that's my memory of seeing the King.

When we were all small the great event for the year was the Flower Show and the Fair which was held up in the recreation ground, we had 'Wars' fair which was lovely great big roundabout and swinging boats and the Flower Show was really beautiful. The men put heart soul into their allotments and my dad was a great one for arranging the trays so a lot of the men used to bring their trays for dad to arrange for them, much to my mum's disgust as she had to have all that indoors but he used to do it now they nearly all won prizes for it and my brother Tom, he was a great one in knocking coconuts down so he we used to have to take the youngest one out the pushchair and put all the prizes he won into the pushchair and then carry whichever one was in there but at one day I remember I went on the swinging boats were dead and he used to smoke a pipe and he thought he'd knocked it out and put it in his pocket and as we were going up all of a sudden all this smoke came out of his pocket coz he'd left some tobacco in there at the wind caught it was burning a hole in his pocket and we thought that was hilarious, and we never let him live it down ha ha.