INTERVIEW WITH COLIN COTTON

**Interview conducted on 19th November 2018**

**NB Restriction - DO NOT PUBLISH ON WEBSITE FOR 2 YEARS 20th March 2019 - 20th March 2021**

DATE OF BIRTH : 26th December 1946

PLACE : BEDFORD

Interviewer: Jenny Ford

JF I'm Jenny Ford and today's date is the 19th November 2018. Could you tell me what your name is?

CC Colin William Cotton

JF And what is your date of birth?

CC 26th 12 1946

JF Were you born in Turvey?

CC Err No, I was .. North Wing Hospital, Bedford.

JF Was the parental home in Turvey?

CC Yes

JF Well you won't remember, but, where was that? Where was the parental home?

CC Emmm ... Mill Green. And … Yeah, er I can ... Mill Green. My father did live at erm … for a short while I think, in Vine Row up May Road. May Road area, yes.

JF Right. And how long has your family been in the village, do you know?

CC His grave is at .... I'm not sure … Well, I believe we've got a relation, his grave is at er ... I'm not sure, it could either be at the church, probably at the church or at the cemetery and he was around in 1790 or something like that. So I've been told, I've not actually seen it.

JF So, what jobs did your grandparents have?

CC They both worked on farms.

JF So the Cottons and the Esserys both were farming people?

CC Yes.

JF Gosh. So did they both work in Turvey somewhere?

CC Erm ... I think my grandfather on my mother’s side, I think he lived in Turvey as far as I know. Worked in Turvey all his life, I think.

JF What was his name?

CC Thomas Essery

JF And his wife?

CC Mary. Sorry, no Ester, Ester, sorry.

JF And your grandfather on the Cotton side?

CC He worked in, I think he worked in ... he came from Olney originally and he worked at several farms in Olney I think and then he worked at Rushden on the A6, the A6

JF Gosh. So did he move, because it's a long way isn't it?

CC Oh yeah, they moved there, they took a cottage over … yes. I think this chap who owned the farm he was somehow related to me grandfather, I'm not sure how, but or where or what he was, but I think he was related somewhere along the line.

JF And what was Mr. Cotton, your grandfather, what was his Christian name?

CC Samuel

JF And his wife?

CC Erm, Mary I think, yes.

JF I wonder where they met?

CC That's right, it’s a bit ... I know they got married in London

JF Do you know where?

CC Erm Whitechapel, Whitechapel, yes.

JF Gosh, .... gosh!

CC It was a bit strange, I'm not sure how he become to be over there. I'm not sure.

JF So in those days for both sets of grandparents if they were farming ... I mean it wouldn’t be like today for them.

CC No.

JF What do you think they have been doing?

CC I think they just ... it was it sort of general work on the farms, they did just about everything I think. They looked after the animals and cut the corn and things like this, they did everything. Because they sort of lived ... a lot of times ... they didn't actually ... there was little transport in those day because they were never rich enough to have a horse, that's all there was a horse for transport, a few buses I suppose, but mainly people worked on site or close to it and then walked to work and stayed there all day and five or six days a week, full time.

JF Yes, yes. Gosh. So, Samuel started off in Olney, Samuel Cotton, and ended up in Turvey or was it his son that ended up in Turvey, your father?

CC Well, well he ... I'm not sure, he went when he was a young man, he went to live in Rushden, near Rushden, and he went to live with him before he got married, in Rushden. Then he come back to Turvey.

JF And so what was your father's name?

CC Reginald Cotton

JF And .. your mother, what was her name?

CC Doris.

JF Doris.

CC Doris Mary Cotton

JF But obviously her surname would have been Essery. Gosh. Do you know what your mother did for an occupation?

CC Well, erm when she was young, you know teenage or around that age, she worked ‘in service’ in ... somewhere in Northamptonshire, I'm not quite sure where.

JF Gosh.

CC And then when she left that I think she worked at Marks & Spencers, probably just before the second world war I think.

JF So was that in Bedford do you think?

CC I think so, yes, yes.

JF And how do you think they met? Because Reginald would have been in Rushden or Olney?

CC I think he'd come back to Turvey by then. He was working at Paine's, I think he was telling me he was, Paine's farm at Turvey.

JF So is that Great Oak's Wood, Paine's?

CC That's it, yeah. I think that's right yeah. I think it's the same, it's the same, I think they were in the same farm.

JF Gosh. So when did they get married?

CC 1941

JF Gosh, and would that have been in Turvey Church, do you think?

CC Yes, erm yes I'm pretty sure it's Turvey Church, yes. I know the reception, after, was at the King's Arms. I can’t remember …

JF Oh gosh, wow! So, their first home was in Mill Green?

CC. I'm not quite sure, thinking about it, I'm not sure because she was a Congregationalist, but I can't recall, I can't remember whether they were ... they went to, *(whether)* they were married at Turvey Church or the Congregation Church, I'm not quite sure. Erm, I've got to find out I suppose.

JF Because, is that your mother and father in that photograph?

CC Yes, that's right

JF It looks like The Three ... er … it looks like the King's Arms, doesn't it?

CC Yes, that's right the reception was ...

JF Yes, yes. So the other couple in the corner, is that Mr. Stevenson and her sister?

CC Yes, that's my Aunt Daph and that's my mother and yes they were sisters.

**Colin Cotton’s Early Childhood**

JF Yes. That's interesting. So, erm so going back, because obviously they were married and you were born in 1946, so do you remember anything about your early childhood?

CC Erm I used to like, I used to like gardening when we were kids, … tomatoes … and we used to go for walks in the country.

JF So did you learn about the plants and the birds from your father?

CC Mostly plants, yes. Yes.

JF So that was an interesting introduction, at least you might know which was a weed!

CC That's right, yeah. Right. I did, yeah. When I was a kid I did actually dig some cabbages once, and I thought they were weeds but he'd planted some spring cabbage and I didn't realise he'd planted them in and I dug them up it was a mistake, I didn't make it again!

JF So was that in the garden or the allotment?

CC Well I think it was in the garden.

JF Well yes, because it would be safe for a little one wouldn't it? Because, presumably it was all enclosed?

CC That's right. Well, er I was erm, when we came here, how old was I? I was at Harrold, about 12, I think when I came here.

JF Oh what, to Tandys Close?

CC Yes, to 28 (Tandys Close), yes. But when I first lived down at 18 (Tandys Close), I was younger then, I think I ... five or six, something like that when I first moved ... if that. Yeah pretty ... I had started school when I lived at 28 (Tandys Close).

JF So why did you move to 28 (Tandys Close)?

CC Well, it's a bigger garden here, it was my father, he ... that was the main reason, a much bigger garden here. It was a terraced house down at 28 (18) and he, my father, he didn't like to be enclosed too much.

JF So, he was lucky that they erm agreed to him moving, wasn't it?

CC That's right, you can't always do that. But I think that the Council must have thought he is a keen gardener, so, it's a big garden, so you've got to get someone up there that likes gardening or else you soon lose it, it's a big garden, so you've got to keep at it.

**Meals in the 1950s-1980s**

JF Yes. So what sort of food did your mum make for the family? Because obviously there is every day, and there's then the Sunday lunch and Christmas lunch ...

CC I think we used to have roast beef and Yorkshires Sundays, chicken or turkey at Christmas. But we had beef, quite a lot of beef because it was a bit cheaper then I think and chicken was more expensive then its reversed now, isn't it, chicken is cheaper and beef is more expensive. But er ... fish fingers and things like that...

JF So, were there particular sweets that you preferred?

CC We had a lot of rhubarb, quite a lot of rhubarb I think if I remember right. Well there are puddings

JF I suppose there is rice pudding as well.

CC Apple crumble as well.

**School Days**

JF So, thinking of school days, which schools in Turvey did you go to?

CC Turvey Infants, which was down the High Street at that time. And then I went to Harrold, Harrold Infants’ School.

JF So you didn't go to the 'Big School'? Had it closed by then?

CC What the big school? No.

JF The village hall?

CC No, that was before my time. No, I didn't go there, no. I think, it ... it had closed down by then. No I never went there. We used to you know, Christmas parties and things like that there I remember, but I never went. It was a school but not in my time I don't think.

**Harrold School**

JF Yes. OK. And erm so, so how did you get to Harrold?

CC Various buses

JF I hope you were well behaved on the buses.

CC Well, not bad I don't think really … laughing … average children I would say.

JF Laughter So did all the boys go together and the girls stay together?

CC In the main yes, I think so, yeah in the main yeah.

JF So. So do you have any memories of a special teacher or events that had happened at school time?

**Recording time - 17.15. Memories of teachers at Turvey School**

 CC I can remember that at Turvey school, in the school Miss Harding, she was the head teacher. Erm she came from Emberton I think and there was Miss Truphet, she was sort of … I don't think, she was second in command and she was kind of … I think her husband died, was killed in the second world war so she was ... yeah, she lost her husband like. I'm not sure anyway, I think he was in the RAF, but he got killed in the second world war. mmmm. (*See his name on Turvey Memorial Cross - G. Truphet, A/C. R.A.F.)*

JF Mmmmm so, was it a big class size or was it fairly small?

CC Erm There was quite a few ... yeah I think there was probably ... not incredibly big, but something like 30 or so, I wouldn't have thought, well I should think 15 to 20 I would think. Not that … not that brilliant, it was only a village infants school, there weren't that many kids there.

**Harrold School**

JF So when you went to Harrold did it change in that sort of respect?

CC Yes, I think a bit bigger classes there yes, because Harrold children, Turvey children, Carlton children. (Mr. Hardy), ***corrected to Mr Oddy on 20 March 2019***, was the ... he was the headmaster.

JF What was his subject?

**Recording time 18.47.2**

CC Well, he was sort of general of a ... it was an infants’ school … it was an infants’ school, sort general kinds of things aren't they? A bit of everything really.

JF So did you move to another school or was the Infants school the last school?

CC No, then I went to the Secondary School

JF And where was that?

CC Which was next to the ...

JF Oh, on the same site! So having left a small school in Turvey how did you feel about going on the bus and meeting all these new children?

CC OK yes! Yeah, not too bad ... I think Miss Truphet’s son, he was there, I think he ended up at Bedford ....

JF Bedford?

CC Bedford Modern School. Most of them went from the junior school to the senior school.

**Senior School at Harrold**

JF Was it a different regime at the Senior School?

CC Yeah, Mr. Hill.

JF Mr. Hill?

CC He was OK, yes.

JF Did you do sports?

CC Yes, played football, you know, the usual things. Sports Day, had a go at the usual things, but ... javelin and erm you know yeah we used to yeah ... oh, we had cross country running as well.

**Recording time 21***.*

JF You know, we think of Harrold Park ... was it still pits at the time?

CC It was still in operation at the time. It was a bit ... they used to usually keep an eye on you as you had to walk through ditches, trenches, and that ... it was a bit ... there were places, if you fell in, if you fell, you know if you fall in a gravel pit you would find it difficult to get out because there is nothing to get hold of but ... it was in operation, the gravel extracting at the time.

JF So, did you have particular friends with the other pupils?

CC Yeah, I had er ... there was ... my cousin Ken, he was a year younger than me but ... and there was you know, there were people I knew from ... Trevor, Trevor he came from Wymington, I remember him yeah. John Cole, there was a chap called John Cole, he came from Turvey, lived down the bottom of the road and there, and Michael Bliss he (later) had an electrical shop ... television shop then, in Harrold. Tony Parker, he came from Harrold.

 JF So what was the curriculum, were there subjects that you enjoyed more than others.

CC Where was this?

JF At the Senior School

CC Yeah, I suppose history and geography were the best, I suppose.

JF So did you do Technical Drawing at all?

**Recording time 23.16.6**

CC Technical Drawing, yes, used to do that as well, yeah. I wasn't particularly ... average, I wasn't particularly good at it. I used to make marks on the dots and things like this and he would say you've drawn a dot and not drawn to the dot and things ... you got by.

JF So what age was the school leaving age when you left?

CC 15

JF 15. So how was it decided where you would get job?

CC A Career Master came round and em ... I went to em I went to Allen's and I went to British Gas.

JF What, for interviews?

**An apprenticeship at the Gas Board, Ford End Road, Bedford**

CC Yes. I went to RAE, at the Aircraft Establishment at Clapham but I got the Gas Board. I didn't hear anything from the rest. I got the Gas Board and I thought it was a good job, out and about and things like this, meet people and so forth, so I went for that. But I didn't really fancy being stuck in one place all the time, to be honest, I liked to move around a bit.

JF Where was the Gas Company?

CC Ford End Road, Bedford.

JF And erm, so was it a sort of an apprenticeship?

CC Yes, an apprenticeship.

JF So how long was that, what was the term?

CC Five years!

JF Five years! Gosh. So how old were you when you started?

CC Erm, 17, although I signed before that, but you had to start proper when you were 17.

JF So what did you do between 15 to 17?

CC I worked at British Gas but it just sort of, I yeah ... I worked for British Gas but you weren't sort of allowed to sign your indentures until you were 17 for some reason, I think ... I'm sure, if it was still applicable in those days, in those days it was.

JF So did they have a Works ... a big shop, different things going on?

CC Oh, yes,

JF Were they producing the gas?

CC Oh, yes. They produced the gas as well, yes. You know, I was sorting of fixing gas appliances and made things, mainly, yes.

JF So you were learning on the job?

CC That's right, you learnt a lot of it on the job, on you know, rather than with somebody er ... But they won't let you until your got your … passed the exam, the test, and they wouldn't do in case ... it's a dangerous quantity isn't it? Gas.

I went to Cambridge, Cambridge College of Arts and Technology.

JF Was this once you had started your apprenticeship?

CC Yes, that's right, yeah. That's where we went, yeah. Because ... there wasn't a teacher at Bedford because there wasn't enough of them, apparently. So I went to Cambridge, Cambridge College of Arts and Technology. There was Anglian Ruskin University in there I think.

JF So how many days a week was that?

CC Well, it started one day a week originally, at one day a week and then it was Block Release later on. There was people from all over place, from Peterborough, Cambridge of course, erm ... Hitchin, erm

JF So how did you get there?

CC Well originally by train. The train was still open then, when we went. They closed it down soon after I think. Erm ... used to go from St John's station down … not down Midland Road, it was another one top end, near Ampthill Road, it used to go from there. They are talking about re-opening it, aren't they?

JF Mmmmm. Yeah. So, that was the case for five years? You were doing one day a week and then when as you got further through learning ...

CC Yes, yes .... mmmm

JF So did you enjoy it?

CC Yes, not bad, yeah.

JF So when you got to a certain stage in your apprenticeship did you go out with gas fitters or was it all based in the factory, in the Works?

CC Oh, I went out around ... it was Works based, gas fitters, and you know we went round the houses. I was one that, you know, residential sort of ... yeah I went, yeah ... I was never in the Works thing, there was a Works department but it was mostly ... some of it was industrial as well. I did have a session there at Industrial, yes we went round to Allen’s Works and Brocklehurst, Igranic and Robertson's, mainly maintenance you know. We used to do it often on a Sunday because that's when the Works were not in use.

JF Although you didn't work there, you certainly knew how they worked. I mean at these, you know, other important factories.

CC Yes, that's right. Yeah, they ...

JF So you mentioned going on the railway, so does that mean you would have ... where would your journeys start?

CC What? To Cambridge? Well it was, well we used to get to St. John's Station.

JF But where from?

CC We got a train there from, well Willington, Sandy, Blunham, Potton, Gamlingay, all the way to Cambridge.

JF So would you have started your journey in Turvey?

CC Yes, yes.

JF So that's quite unusual to able to start your journey on the train straight away, isn't it? Until Beeching ...

CC That's right, Beeching come along and that was it then. Yes.

**Mr. Reginald Cotton, Colin’s father, worked on the railways**

JF So you previously said that your father worked for the railway at some point, em where em was his depot when he was working on the rail?

CC Bedford I think. He, he was mainly a plate layer you know putting the rails down erm you know he, he had a section that they looked after, you know, they just maintained it, their section sort of ... and on a Sunday they moved onto the main line sometimes erm the London Midland, Scottish, you know the rail goes through erm Oakley along there sometimes, on a Sunday usually, he used to tell me. Because that was ... in those days they did most of the maintenance on a Sunday.

**Working for the Gas Board after completion of apprenticeship**

JF So, after you'd finished your apprenticeship what happened then in regard to your work?

CC Oh, just ... well, you know, I worked doing maintenance jobs and fixing jobs and made new pieces really.

JF So did you go with someone else? Or were you deemed to be able to drive your own vehicle and go to the …

CC Oh yes, it was deemed by that time, once you've passed the exam you were on your own really?

JF And what sort of vehicles did they have, did they have a fleet?

CC Well to start with they had bikes and then they erm got cars and vans and ... because you know, they sort of, before my time, they had these gas lights and they must have had bikes to go round and you know, on your way home to go and look at some of these gas lights that had gone wrong, and our way home go round and look at them on your way home sort of thing, before my time but we still had bikes.

**Mother and Father both worked for Unilever**

JF So coming back to Turvey, did your mother and father go to work for Unilever after the railways closed?

CC Err, Yes, errr he worked, that's right, he went to work at Unilever after he left the railway, that's right.

JF So he was back to his farming? Was he?

CC Well he did that sort of work, yes, he was doing horticulture. Yes, that's right. He looked after, you know, they were sort of experimenting with different types of peas erm because on occasion I used to work there, I was ... the trouble was there was a lot pigeons around Sharnbrook in the wood there, and if you didn't keep the pigeons off the peas there'd be none left for ... I know once or twice I went up there on a Saturday morning to keep the birds off the peas. They went to all the expense and experimentation and nothing had come of it because and the birds had eaten everything ...

**Recording time 35.40.0**

**Recreation in Turvey**

JF So let's think, going back to before you went to you, well probably when you were a teenager or what have you, erm, recreation in the village. So what did you used to get up to when you were, you know? Just when you were getting that bit older?

CC Well erm ...

JF Did you have meeting places? Play sports?

CC Yes, I did play the occasional game of football but not that often,

**Recording time 0.36.20.3**

JF Was there a Turvey football team?

CC There was, there was, but I didn't play that ... I did play the odd game for various clubs but I didn't play regularly because I played Rugby quite regularly.

JF Yes. So, did you go to any dances and activities in the village hall?

CC The occasional dances yes.

JF What sort of music would it have been?

**Recording time 37.09.7**

**Recreation Club in the Reading Room**

CC Erm ... well it was … erm I used to go to the Rec Club as well The Recreation Club at Turvey.

JF Where was the Rec?

CC It was in the Reading Room, I think

JF Oh, in the Reading Room?

CC I think so, it was then yes. Erm ... and they had a youth club in the village hall as well.

JF So what did you do at the Rec Club? In the Reading Room?

CC I would have played billiards or table tennis’

JF They had these things there?

CC That's right, yes.

JF So was that mainly boys or was it mixed?

CC Yes, it was mainly boys, there were some girls there, yes.

**Recording time 38.22.2**

JF So was this in the sixties still?

CC In the sixties still, yes, that's right yes. In the sixties.

**Village Shops**

JF So, thinking about emm ... the village shops and different things, can you remember anything about any of the shops?

**Recording time 38.50.1**

CC Yes, there was a shop ... err ... you know where John's shop is, the same place as that, yes there was …

JF What was there?

CC There was a shop you know, you know, groceries and there was another one up the ... up the you know, used to be Mr. King, he ...

JF The Spar Shop?

CC The Spar shop, yes. He used to run that, you know that was before Mrs. King went there, but ... I think me mother and father got most of their groceries from the Spar, from the shop up the top there, but obviously when they got a car and that they went to Sainsbury's. You get more variety at a supermarket.

JF Mmmm and what about the infamous Corner Shop and the sweets?

CC Oh yes, we use to go there, yes, well mainly you know, the kids because the buses used to wait there to go to Harrold School, kids, you know used to get sweets from there.

**Recording time 40.20.00**

**Village pubs**

JF As you got older did you used to go to the pubs?

CC Oh yes, as we got older, yes

JF Which was your haunt?

CC The King's Arms, I think, mainly yes

JF Why was that?

CC Oh, everyone went there

JF Oh, people of your age?

CC Yes, that's right, yes. Derek Wadsworth used to go, yes we erm ... I did go to the Mad Dog before, at Odell, mind you I was underage then, but I did used to go, with older people, you know.

JF So they had a car did they?

CC Yes, they did.

JF Mmmm

CC Going underage was, you know, bit of a thrill but when you reach 18, you know ...

**Playground games**

JF So going back a bit further did you have any favourite playground games?

CC Erm ... hop scotch, not a lot really I think. Erm ... I suppose not a lot, but I suppose mainly football but obviously there's not much room to do it in Turvey Infant's school.

**Recording time 42.08.50**

**Sunday school – Congregationalist**

JF No. Did you go to any Sunday Schools

CC Yes I did. I went to *(oh, I'm getting further away aren't I, I didn't realise my thing was working ... to do with the recording equipment)* erm ... Yes I went to Turvey Sunday School.

JF Which one was that?

CC The Congregationalists.

**Recording time 42.37.--**

JF Gosh. So, so why is it that you went there?

CC Well my mother went, em ... she was a Congregationalist, you know in the Thirties I think or even earlier, and em you know em well, I think ... well they used to say that the Tory Party at Prayer, didn't they? It's not quite the same now but it used to be something like that so that was part of it.

JF And you went to the Sunday School?

CC Yes.

JF Can you remember the Pastors names?

CC Gosh, what's his name, I've forgotten, what was his name, I'll tell you in a minute ... I think it was Thomas, was his name Thomas? His name was Thomas? I believe his name was Thomas. I'm not quite sure about that but I think it was him.

JF So did your mother go there quite often for different events, to the Chapel?

CC Oh yes, they used to go quite regularly, yes. PWA, Pleasant Wednesday Afternoon.

JF Oh, what was that?

CC Pleasant Wednesday Afternoon

JF Who did she go with?

CC My Aunt, Mrs. Stevenson, that's the lady up there (referring to a photograph on the wall).

JF So that's Daphne?

CC Daph, her sister, yes. I don't think my Dad used go but ... he couldn't ... my Dad they quite often used to get call for Jury Service, well he was an honest man. So he didn't go to church that much to be honest.

JF So what do think the draw for the Pleasant Wednesday Afternoon?

CC Tea, I think.

JF Tea!

CC Tea and biscuits I think. I don't know. Chattering, yes that's right, to talk. I think I did go once or twice myself but you know we were a little down here, we were young, the youngsters. ???????

JF So it was quite a busy community, then?

CC Yes, yes. Oh yes.

JF That was good.

CC You know, at that time, you know people couldn’t go very far in those days, they hadn't got cars and all that so they had to stay put really.

**Recording time 45.45.0**

**Village Characters – Mr. Church the Gamekeeper (Horace)**

JF So do you remember any particular people in Turvey who could be called 'Village Characters'?

CC What of my age,like?

JF Well, people ... because when you are smaller some people seem to be older obviously but seem to be characters or they could have been your age or just generally known as a ...

CC I think Mr. Church, the gamekeeper, he was known as a bit of a character.

JF This was Mr. Church?

CC You know ...

JF Yes ...

**Recording time 46.34.59**

CC Syd Church's, dad, he was a gamekeeper. He was definitely er ... laughter ...

JF And do you know what he Christian name was?

CC I'll tell you in a minute, I'm just trying to think what it was ...

JF Mind you, if you were small you wouldn't ... it would be Mr. Church, wouldn't it?

CC ... I know his name but I can't think what it was. You've probably got it with ...

JF Yes, Malcolm ... (his interview)

CC With Malcolm's ... what's his name, not Syd

JF Was it Sam?

CC Pardon?

JF Was it Sam?

CC No it wasn't Sam, no. Erm ... I know it but I can't quite think what it was.

JF So what made him such a character?

CC ... Well I eh ...

JF Or can't we talk about it?

CC Well probably not too much, he was kind of poacher turned gamekeeper, sort of. Can't say too much ... sort of ... give the impression ... laughter!

JF Your lips are sealed! OK.

CC I can't even say ... Laughter.

Recording time 48.13.00

JF So is there anybody else who might of fitted that description?

Mr. Pickering – Village Policeman – Colin and co caught disturbing the pheasants

CC Err ...No not really. There was a Policeman, Mr. Pickering. He was 'Old School' ... he em ... we were caught in a woods once and in the fifties if you disturbed the pheasants it was, you know, it was capital punishment, sort of thing. And he, he, he ... we got caught in the wood and disturbing the pheasants and somebody ... we'd obviously made such a noise, he come up on his bike and he said, telling us off, 'Get out of here, I'll sort you, I had to get out of bed', or something because he was on nights, because you know, well I don't want to say too much. The, the … you know like, the em Turvey House and that, they sort of, shooting and that, it was the big thing and that, they had got quite a lot of their finance and that I suppose. Going round disturbing the all pheasants they...

JF So where were you then? Which area of a farm where you? I mean, when you disturbed them?

CC Oh, in a wood. Woods round Newton Lane.

JF Newton Lane? Oh, there are lots of woods around there, aren't there?

CC Oh yes.

JF So, so I suppose all that sort of industry has shrunk now hasn't it?

CC Yes, it has but they do shooting. They were shooting the other day I think, but not like they used to, I don't think.

JF Yes, because it used to be quite an industry, didn't it?

CC It did. Because all the, you know, like the ex, well the armies and that have been reduced, hasn't it. There were a lot of people in the army years ago but …

JF Oh, people who could shoot.

CC And obviously they have to keep their 'eye in' for shooting, shooting practice and this sort of thing but I don't think there are not so many, there's not so many in the army now-a-days is there as to what there used to be, are there? So it's shrunken a bit.

JF Yes.

**Recording time 50.48.00**

**Ghost stories, myths village and supersititions**

JF So do you know any ghost stories or myths and village supersititions?

**Talk of passageways – Turvey Abbey**

CC Well not really. I did, well, something about, I can remember about the Abbey site. There used to be talk about a secret sort of passageway you know. I don't know whether it's something to do with the Catholics and the … you know, it's something going back hundreds of years. You know they sort of hid there, and er... I'm not sure they if they did actually but it was a thing that they hid from James I or Elizabeth I. If you were a Catholic priest or something you were in big trouble, they were sort of lucky to get away with their life ...

**Recording time 51.23.0**

CC So you know, there was some sort of myth about whether there is a secret passage somewhere. We used to talk as kids 'I'd like to find this secret passage', you know. Never found anything but er but I'm not ... there probably was probably somewhere, probably was somewhere, never found it did they? If they did, they kept quiet about it anyway. But it was hundreds of years before that, so it’s probably forgotten where it is anyway, nobody's alive that knew about it, so ...

**Recording time 52.20.0**

**Local dialects, particular words**

JF So, do you remember any particular words or how people spoke, you know in contrast to how they speak now? You know, oh, that's a village word, you know?

CC Ermmm they probably spoke broader in those days because people stayed put in their own village, didn't they?

JF Mmmmm

CC They had their own particular ways of talking, and dialect in that particular village, don't they? But you know it's all bigger areas now but they used to be .... stayed in, stayed in their village and they spoke, you know, in their own unique dialect.

JF Yes.

CC But erm ... I think Syd Church's dad, you know the gamekeeper, he spoke in ... he was a bit broad like, a bit broad. Horace! That's it, Horace.

JF Horace

CC Horace, that's it, yes.

JF So Malcolm would be the one for that sort of thing, wouldn't he?

CC Yes, yes.

**Recording time 53.37.00**

**Village Allotments off Newton lane and Garden Field**

JF Yes. So erm ... Allotments. Now, you were telling me that your father, came to number 28 (Tandys Close) here on the end, because he was obviously very skilled at working the land and producing lots of vegetables and flowers for your mum. So could you explain about the allotments erm on the opposite side of Newton Lane?

CC Yes. Well there was quite a lot of allotments up there really. I think they used to use it for the 'Dig for Victory' in the Second World, you know, but it was before my time. You know obviously, but it was still prevalent well into the fifties because I think there was a bit of a shortage even then, wasn't there. Er, so but em but me father had a lot of them, he had this garden, he quite a lot up the garden field as well, allotments.

JF So did have more than one?

CC Yes. Oh yes, oh he had erm ... oh yes, he did, yes. He had em, more than one, oh my father he spent most of his time digging. You know, he liked to mostly, you know, cultivating the land and all this sort of thing. He erm ... but anyway, he had chickens as well. That's another thing he had. Well people had chickens and some had pigs but me dad never had pigs, but …

JF So you had fresh eggs?

CC Fresh eggs, yes.

JF Lovely. And the odd chicken as time went on

CC Sorry?

JF And the odd chicken as time went on.

CC That's right, as they passed away like, yes. That's right, yes.

JF Yes. So was this when you were working or were you helping with the chickens?

CC Yes, erm when we were kids we used to go up the hen runs quite often, you know, to feed the chickens and one thing and another.

JF Mmmm. So that was a bit of wild life, wasn't it?

**Recording time 56.07.00**

**Climbing trees and fall into the river**

CC Yes ... and climbing trees, I used to climb a lot of trees, you know. I fell in the river as well. I did actually fall, fell down the tree and hit river once as well.

JF Gosh, where was that?

CC My mother weren't too happy about it. Round Newton Lane, I just was climbing the tree and slipped and fell into the river.

JF What further away from the bridge? From the sluice gates?

CC Newton Lane.

JF The sluice gates, yes? But where the river is close to the edge of Newton Lane?

CC Yes, yes, that's right. Where the road is close to the, that's where it was, close to the road. The river goes really close to the road doesn't it, near there?

JF Oh, and all these tempting trees?

CC That's right, that's it and I just slipped and fell in.

JF Where you by yourself?

CC Yes, I was, yes.

JF Oooh, and you managed to clamber out?

CC That's right I was, yes I think I knocked myself out for a few seconds. For a few seconds, I lost it you know, I think I banged my head on the way down.

JF Gosh. So were you over the river in the tree?

CC Yes, yes. I fell into the... you know ... the trees and that were overhanging the river and er came too then, but ...

JF Wow.

CC I had a big gash in me arm, luckily ... well I could of ... mother won't too happy about it, I know that!

**Learning to swim**

JF So did all the children learn to swim?

CC Ermmm well I couldn't swim then, I don't think to be honest, I don't think I could swim then.

JF So how old would you have been?

CC Errmm

JF Quite small?

CC Oh yes I wasn't that ... about 10, 12 something like that I suppose. I didn't learn to swim actually until I was a teenager or something. We used to go to ‘The Mounts’ in Northampton, go there swimming.

JF Was it a swimming pool?

**Recording time 58.38.9**

CC Swimming pool. It was like a ... em I think it's been up since the twenties, something like that, it was quite ... I think it's still there. It's a concrete looking place.

JF And it's called 'The Mounts'?

CC 'The Mounts', yes. Erm … It's emm not that far from the ABC Theatre, well that might be gone now, the ABC Theatre. It's as your coming into Northampton erm ... you turn right at traffic lights, go straight on and over the next set of traffic lights and erm ... and you head towards, I think it's Wellingborough Road I think, well anyway, it’s a road that ... it's up there, its near, it’s not far from the Fire Station, I don't think. Well it was, they might have changed it now.

JF How did you get there? How did you get there?

CC Car.

JF Car. So you were driving by then?

CC That's right, yes. It might not have been then because I went with somebody else, but ... somebody older.

**Recording time 59.48.0**

JF I'm just amazed, you know, the mill pond, the mill stream, all that water and children didn't learn to swim, you know.

**Fishing in the river at Tuvey**

CC That's right, yes. Yes. No, I didn't learn to swim there, I didn't ... my mother was a bit worried about ... because the fishing as well, a lot fishing.

JF Oh yes, yes.

CC I think she was worried about fishing because I think she was there when somebody drowned, years and years before. They dragged somebody out and he died like, he'd drowned.

JF So where did you go fishing? Was it by the bridge, that area? Or further along?

CC Yes. Well sometimes round Newton Lane, sometimes by the bridge, mill pool sometimes. I used to like fishing in the mill pond.

JF So how old were you when you started?

CC About seven

JF And did your father take you?

CC Erm ... No, he didn't. I can't think, it was somebody else. There was a chap used to live ... who came from Northampton. He used to live .., his name was John, I've forgotten his other name. He's passed away since then. He mmm I used to go with him down there when I was, you know, before I was 10 and I sort of ... you know ... carried on. I liked fishing quite a bit. I used to go fishing a lot. I used to go fishing when I was a teenager as well, you know.

JF Did you with friends, then?

CC No, I used to go on me own. Occasionally, Ken came sometimes but mostly on me own. Erm ...

JF Mmmmm ... Right. So is there anything else that you can remember that you'd like to talk about?

CC Erm ... I can't think of anything ...

JF Well I'm sure if do you remember ...

**Recording time 1.02.06**

CC Yes. Well, I know that the railway, the railway, me Dad …

Recording stopped

***Railway Derailment***

***SEE Recording 19 11 18B recording of Colin Cotton’s memories of railway derailment on line in Turvey***

**WAV file: Colin Cotton 19 11 18 File B**

**Word file: Colin Cotton 19 11 18 Transcription**

Derailment of an engine on line in a Turvey cutting (circa 1958)

CC Dad worked on the railways, I can remember him, I went up there, … there was a derailment.

JF Oh gosh, where about was this?

CC It was up, it was up, it was up by the bridge there, it was about a mile from there, I think down a ... it was em

JF What, towards Bedford or towards Northampton ...?

CC It was towards Bedford.

CC Er, I went there and there was a train, luckily nobody got … I don't think nobody got hurt. I can't think ... it got derailed anyway. It was laying on its side, the engine. It was quite a sight, you know.

JF A great big steam engine? Or was it a diesel?

CC cough … I think it was a steam engine, I think. I think it was. I'm not quite sure about that but I think ...

JF Gosh, so can you remember how old you were then?

CC Er, not that old, twelve or something like that I should think. I'm not that sure, but I wasn't that old, I was still at school anyway.

JF Yes. Well that must have been erm ... were there lots of people going to look at it?

CC Oh Yes, there was a lot of people up there, you know. You know, I think it was on the local news and all this way.

JF Mmmm ... There must have been a photograph in the paper?

CC There was. I think. Yeah, oh yeah. I think I've told you before ...

**Recording time 01.44.0**

**Fyfe Robertson and Nell’s Well**

CC Nell's Well at the bottom there, people, they were saying it was 'Tonight', you know, Cliff Mitchelmore and I think I've told you anyway.

JF Yes. So what happened?

CC Er ... He em ... well they found out there was bacteria or something in the water or ... or em you know, artificial fertilizer stuff erm that had caused it.

JF Oh, the run off?

CC Yeah, it was getting in the water supply, and they found a certain amount of bacteria in there as well I think and they said, em people are saying, I can remember, they were saying that they prefer the local water than the mains water and Cliff Mitchelmore, I mean Fyfe Robertson, he ... he came up and it was on 'Tonight' on TV.

JF Gosh, so did you see it on the television or were you there when he was recording it?

CC They were recording it. Yes. Yes. Ken and me self, I think we were going to be in the interview but we didn't go in the end because er there was not enough time left. There were several other people, you know, to be interviewed by Fyfe Robertson so we didn't go in the end. But ...

JF So, did you actually see him though?

CC Yes, Fyfe Robertson, yes,

JF Yes. Saw him there doing it?

CC Yes that right, yes.

JF Wow, amazing.

Well, thank you very much Colin and no doubt, we will ... it'll be transcribed and then we'll bring it back, you know, let you have a copy.

CC Oh, OK, alright.

JF OK. Well thank very much again.

CC That's alright, OK

**End of recording**