

Winslow Oral History Project

Interview Summary

Interviewee	Dorothy Harris		Date of interview	6 June 2012
Maiden name	Price			
DOB	1929	Place of birth	Winslow	
Father's occupation	Farm Labourer			
Mother's occupation				
Interviewer	Sue Stainthorpe			
No. of files (tracks)	2	Copyright status	Cleared	
Abstract	In file 000 Dorothy talks about her early life in Winslow, her family and her schooldays during WW2, her working life having left Buckinghamshire and her return to Gt Horwood. In File 001 Dorothy remembers childhood games, the water pumps and one of the characters who lived at Winslow Hospital.			
Keywords	Vicarage Rd, High St, Calvert Brick Works, Greyhound Lane, Ingrams Butchers, Stag Public House, Winslow Hospital, Winslow School, Church fete, Winslow Hall, Royal Latin School, Winslow Station, Girl Guides, St Laurence Room, Windmill Pub, Winslow plane crash, Monkey Alley, Ministry of Defence Whitchurch, Sketchley's dry cleaners, Aylesbury, Finmere, Banbury, Manor House Finmere, Coronation, Whaddon, Swanbourne, Tinker's End, Byford's seed shop, Oddfellows' Hall, Cantell's Stores, Reading, Martock, Amersham			
Key people	Miss Henley, Mrs Mynott, Dr Leapingwell, Captain Lambton, Miss Chatteris, Mr and Mrs Butcher, Mr Phillips (Tailor), Mrs Treadwell, Lady Shuster, Mr and Mrs Turner (gents outfitters), Mr French			
File				
File 000	Dorothy was born Dorothy Price in Vicarage Road Winslow, but the family moved to 44 High Street (where the carpet shop is now) whilst she was still a baby. Her family stayed there for the first six years of Dorothy's life.			
0.40	Her brother was killed in an accident at work when he was only 22 years old. It was his third day working at Calvert Brick Works when he had an accident and died about 3 days later. Dorothy says her mother never really got over it, though in spite of this they were a very happy family.			
1.25	She describes their lovely long garden which stretched down to where the Greyhound Lane Car Park is now. Her father grew all the family's vegetables.			
1.39	There was a butcher's shop just below where they lived and Dorothy's brother used to run errands for Miss Henley. He was paid sixpence and given a pig's tail. Dorothy doesn't remember what her mother did with it! There were 3 butchers in Winslow at that time, and they all had their own abattoir. Miss Henley's abattoir was in Vicarage Road, where Braziers keep taxis now, Ingrams the butchers' abattoir was in Greyhound Lane, and another one in the lane leading to Winslow Hall (now beside an Estate Agents).			
3.10	Dorothy was 11 when WW2 started, and she and her brothers and sisters attended Winslow School. They would walk home for lunch and back to school.			
3.29	Dorothy's father had a smallholding and after her brother died her father bought six milking cows with the compensation for his death. The judge told him he should have spent it on his family, though Dorothy feels that he did, as he started a good business for them. Her father built up a milk round, and			

	<p>Dorothy says some of her friends have said he used to call out “Super Cream Today!” When the war started the family moved to “The Stag” public house, opposite the Winslow Hospital (now Swan House). They lived there for a number of years. There were pig sties at the back, and also stables and a big coach house. Her father started off with two pigs, and bought another one from Mrs Mynott (whose husband had a leather shop). Mrs Mynott had a small pet pig and when it got too big for the house Dorothy’s father bought her and kept her with the others. Dorothy and her sister used to have to make sure the small pig, who was called Sally, got her share of food. They also kept chickens and had incubators to hatch the baby chicks. Dorothy and her siblings used to feed the chicks with chopped hard-boiled eggs. Her father used to collect swill from Horwood aerodrome to feed the pigs.</p>
6.56	<p>The family had a very busy war and there were always lots of people in the house. They had two boy evacuees, one was George, and the other was a very tiny boy whose hands and feet were covered in chilblains. Dorothy and her sisters used to take him to Dr Leapingwell in Avenue Road to get them dressed.</p>
7.42	<p>The family was a large one, but Dorothy’s oldest sister was 18 years older than her, so she left home when Dorothy was young. One of her brothers went into the army. Her sisters got married, and there were always in-laws and friends in the house. They also let a room to two Jewish ladies, one of whom was a friend of the family who had moved out of London during the war. Dorothy says her mother was a wonderful cook who made lovely potato cakes, and they always had eggs from their chickens. They could also kill a certain number of pigs per year and always had sides of bacon wrapped up in pillowcases, or hams hanging in their kitchen. A professional man would come to kill the pigs, then her father would cure them in a big lead container, putting salt on every day.</p>
9.55	<p>Dorothy recalls that when she was at school, Captain Lambton, one of the School Governors, used to be brought up by his chauffeur. Dorothy thinks he must have injured his legs in WW1, because when he was sitting in a chair, a line would be drawn on the floor around him, which the children weren’t allowed to cross. He would always bring a big tray of apples, or sometimes peaches, and each child would be handed one. They all had to say “Thank you Captain Lambton”, bow and go back to their seats. This happened about twice a year and they always looked forward to it.</p>
11.01	<p>They did have one very strict teacher who was called Miss Chatteris, who was very good at sewing. They had a maypole at school and the girls did maypole dancing and Miss Chatteris made all the dresses in pink or blue. Only the girls did maypole dancing, and took the boys’ parts as well, wearing blue. They did beautiful displays at the Church Fete, which was a very big fete in McCorquodale’s grounds at Winslow Hall. Sometimes they also did country dancing on Winslow Market Square. She thinks boys did woodwork and gardening. Dorothy says she has some very happy memories of school.</p>
12.45	<p>When Dorothy was 11 years old she passed the Scholarship exam and went to the Royal Latin School in Buckingham. Her younger sister went to Buckingham School. They travelled to school on the train, walking down to Winslow Station to catch it. Often the train would be up to 2 hours late, because as it was wartime, they may have been waiting for troop trains to come through first. Sometimes they were Red Cross trains and Dorothy says that all the blinds would be down and the train would be travelling slowly. If the weather was very cold, the railway staff would let the children use the porter’s room to wait for the train, where there was always a lovely fire, a big kettle boiling and old</p>

	<p>armchairs to sit in. The train would pick up passengers from Verney Junction and Padbury on the way. Dorothy says they used to get told off at school if they were late, even though it wasn't their fault. One day there was a new young guard, and the girls were playing him up by getting on and off the train. He blew the whistle and they were left on the platform. The girls had to go home and get their bicycles to cycle to Buckingham. She says they got into trouble for being late, but she hoped the young guard didn't get into trouble or lose his job because of them.</p>
15.43	<p>Dorothy says she wasn't very academic, but started doing Latin. Later on they had a choice of continuing with Latin, or doing gardening instead. Dorothy chose to do gardening, though she doesn't know whether her mother realised what she was doing.</p>
16.20	<p>In the evenings they went to Guides which met in the St Laurence Room. They often went camping. There was a school for disabled children in London who were evacuated to Addington and they had a guide group as well, so the Winslow group used to go up and mix with them and also perform concerts for them. Also there was a sort of hospital for children from London with diseases such as scabies. This was opposite the Windmill pub (now Vet's surgery). The matron's daughter went to Dorothy's school and they used to perform little concerts for the staff and children. Winslow School also shared their premises with another school which was evacuated from London to Winslow. One school would go in the mornings, and the other in the afternoons. Mr Butcher was the Headmaster and Mrs Butcher who was also a teacher, used to put on lovely concerts, and made all the costumes. They had a daughter to used to read poetry. Concerts were put on twice a year, because people needed entertaining to take their minds off the war.</p>
19.05	<p>At the time of the Winslow plane crash, Dorothy was staying with her sister in Luton, and Dorothy and her younger sister wanted to go home. They went home after about 3 days. She says that two of her friends lived close by and one of them lost her little brother and baby sister. Dorothy thinks that the alley leading to the houses was called Monkey Alley, possibly because someone who once lived there kept a monkey. There was a Mr Phillips and his wife living there, who both survived the crash. He was a tailor and used to site cross-legged on his bench sewing. Her brother had had a black suit made for their older brother's funeral, and when Dorothy was about 14 it was suggested that this suit should be made into one for her. Mr Phillips did that for her, but she says she's never worn black since – she hated it, but there was no material available during the war.</p>
21.49	<p>Dorothy left school at 16 because there was a job as an accounts clerk going in the Ministry of Defence at Whitchurch at The Firs. She says it was mostly filing when she first started and distributing mail and clock cards. It was quite a large organisation. When that was closing down, the staff were offered work at an atomic place, but Dorothy's father wouldn't let her go as he thought it would be dangerous. After the war Dorothy went to work in Sketchley's dry cleaners in Aylesbury.</p>
23.33	<p>During the war they used to travel into Aylesbury nearly every week to the pictures, especially on Sunday afternoons. If they went with a boyfriend, they usually had tea somewhere and then went on to the cinema.</p>
24.28	<p>Even after the war ended, rationing continued and Dorothy says they were always making clothes.</p>
25.14	<p>After working at Sketchley's for about 2 years, Dorothy went to be a nanny. One</p>

	<p>of her sisters had been a nanny at Finmere and was living in the village. One day Dorothy was visiting and her sister told her that a Mrs Treadwell needed a nanny. They went down to see her and the little boy put his arms up to Dorothy straight away. She gave in her notice at Sketchley's and went to live in with the family. She enjoyed the job and the family bought her a bicycle, for which she paid them back in instalments. She used to cycle home to Winslow to visit her mother once or twice a week. Dorothy stayed with them until she got married at 21.</p>
26.49	<p>Dorothy met her husband on the farm. It was a farmhouse in Finmere and he was working there. Her husband got a job on a farm in Oxfordshire, so they moved. She says she had a wonderful neighbour there who taught her how to skin a rabbit and pluck a chicken and make pork pies. Dorothy's son was born the following year, (1950) and her neighbour often used to look after him whilst Dorothy went off on the bus to Banbury. She also taught Dorothy how to make boy's trousers and a proper Harris tweed overcoat complete with lining. There was a Manor House as well as a farmhouse, where Lady Shuster (mother of the farmer) lived and every Christmas Dorothy and her husband would get given a hamper. They also were given a turkey from the farm and a gift for her son. On Coronation day in 1953, Lady Shuster had bought a television, and had open house for them to go and watch.</p>
30.39	<p>The family stayed there about 5 or 6 years but Dorothy says she missed her parents so much that her husband found a job on a farm at Whaddon and they moved there. There was a regular bus service to Winslow from Whaddon.</p>
31.31	<p>When Dorothy was a child, her grandmother used to live in Swanbourne and the children used to walk from Winslow to her house on Sundays. Before they got to her house she remembers pulling up her socks and tidying her hair. They would have tea with her and catch a bus back. They usually had strawberry jam and fruitcake. She used to make jam sandwiches for them.</p>
32.45	<p>Her father's family lived in Winslow, but they died before Dorothy was born about 1926-7. They had lived at Tinker's End.</p>
33.29	<p>When Dorothy's brother came out of the army he bought the seed shop in Winslow from Byfords. This was in the High Street and had been neglected during the war because Mr and Mrs Byford were elderly and with rationing as well, they had difficulty keeping the shop going. Dorothy's brother and wife bought it and used to have a delivery round for corn and seed, but also tinned and dry goods and also gardening things, eg seed potatoes and seeds. When Elmfields estate was being built, the shop was knocked down and a new row of shops built, where they moved into (now Florence Nightingale Hospice shop). She says he was always very popular and everyone knew him and his wife, who worked very hard to get the business going in the late 1940s. On the corner of the parade was a gents' outfitters which was a very smart shop where you could buy bowler hats and trilbys and tweed material. Mr and Mrs Turner had the shop, and when they retired they moved over the road. By that time Dorothy's family had also moved to the High Street and lived behind the Co-op butchers. When Dorothy and her sister were dressed up to go to a dance, Mr Turner would look at what they were wearing and would know the price of the material per yard, whether it was good quality or not. She says they were a nice couple.</p>
37.15	<p>There were lots of socials when Dorothy was young. She remembers the first one she went to, when the RAF had moved into Little Horwood. Their mother went with them as it was a social. Sometimes there were two dances per week,</p>

	perhaps in the St Laurence Room, but usually in the Oddfellows Hall (now Public Hall). At one time silent movies used to be shown in the Oddfellows Hall when Dorothy was little. There were also lots of concerts during the war, and also talent competitions. Dorothy's younger sister, who hadn't had music lessons, could play the piano by ear and would quite often win a prize, whereas Dorothy, who had had lessons, could hardly play at all. She says she was a bit jealous of that. The children were even taught ballet dancing at school.
40.00	Dorothy remembers Cantell's Stores where they used to buy broken biscuits on their way to school. Mr French worked there. She thinks he was the manager, he used to make up little blue bags with sultanas, sugar, etc. as nothing was pre-packaged. There would always be a chair where people would sit whilst ordering their groceries.
41.50	Dorothy stayed in Whaddon until her son was 15 years old, then she went to live in Reading, as she had divorced from her first husband. She did temporary office work in Reading. At that stage she was always going to auction sales. She remarried and lived in Reading for a while, and then they decided to move to Somerset. Her husband worked for a vending machine company and Somerset was within the area that he worked. At first they lived in a cottage on a farm where Dorothy worked cleaning out the milking shed, then they bought a house in Martock in Somerset. By that time her son was married with children and used to visit. They would go to Lyme Regis, or Watchet and it was a very happy time. In the first few weeks after moving to Somerset, Dorothy and her husband used to go apple picking, which she says was lovely.
46.34	When she retired, Dorothy returned to the Winslow area to be near to her 3 sisters who lived in Winslow. Two of her sisters have since died, and the other one has moved to be near her family. She has lived in her present home for 24 years and says she is quite happy.
47.05	For a while she used to go to look after a lady in Amersham who had multiple sclerosis. Dorothy would go on Monday mornings and return on Fridays, and then her family would take over at weekends. Dorothy kept in touch with the family and still visits the daughter who now lives in Scotland. When the daughter had her three children, Dorothy went up to Scotland each time to look after her. Dorothy had got the job through an agency and had originally gone to look after the grandfather and when he died she was asked to stay on and look after the lady. The family had big parties at weekends and Dorothy used to cook during the week and freeze things for them. They had a big garden with a swimming pool. She has remained friends with the family ever since and is thought of as a surrogate granny to their children.
File 001	Dorothy says they played seasonal games when she was a child. Sometimes it would be whip and top, they used to colour the tops. Sometimes it was hoop and stick, or marbles, which they could play in the gutter right up to school as there was hardly any traffic. Skipping was also popular either with a long rope, or single ropes. In the playground they would play Farmer's in his den, Lucy Locket lost her pocket.
1.57	Quite often they would have bikes. Dorothy remembers her sister getting a tricycle when she was 5 which she never was able to ride, so Dorothy and her brother used to ride it. It was called a Fairy Cycle and cost 5s.
2.29	Little girls had dolls and prams and they used to wash the dolls' clothes and also have dolls' tea parties. Dorothy also used to pretend to be a teacher with her sister's friends. She also used to loan her books to them, like a library.
3.26	Her brothers used to help on the farm. The family didn't live in a farmhouse,

	<p>but they had fields, so they used to work on them. They had a little cowshed with a barn attached on the Buckingham Road which was where her father did the milking. Her brothers used to help with the cows and feed the chickens. Her brother who had a job at the butchers also used to have another job pumping water for a lady. At that time lots of people fetched their water from pumps in Winslow. There was a pump outside the hospital and one opposite the Windmill. Most people had to take their buckets and fill them at the pumps. Dorothy's family had a tap and pump in their kitchen. For a treat at Christmas, Dorothy and her brother were invited to the lady's house where they had lovely cakes but Dorothy's mother had told her not to talk with her mouth full so Dorothy was afraid to eat them. The lady had a car and took the two of them to the cinema where they saw "Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm" starring Shirley Temple. Dorothy thinks she was about 5 at the time.</p>
6.13	<p>On Sundays sometimes her family used to entertain a lovely little man from the Workhouse. He was of restricted growth. He would come to tea on Sundays and was full of fun. He had to be home by 8pm and they used to walk back with him. Her father knew lots of people because of his milk round. Some of the women in the Workhouse were there because they were unmarried mothers. Some of them would crochet hats or gloves for Dorothy and her sisters. The first house in Station Road must have belonged to the Workhouse because this was a home for the children who had been abandoned, or their parents were in the Workhouse. They would attend Winslow School, and one particular girl had parents who were tramps and used to push a pram with their belongings in it. They used to wait for their daughter to come out of school at lunchtime so they could see her for a few minutes. Another family in Winslow where the mother used to disappear every so often and the children had to go into the children's part of the Workhouse. Dorothy thinks there were a few tramps who left their children there.</p>