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Mrs K Nash. Recorded on 18th Sept 1989.

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Music, piano, violin

Playhouse had an organ

**Interview with Mrs. K. Nash, aged 86**  
**8 Ormonde Road, Hythe**  
**Recorded on 18<sup>th</sup> September 1989**  
**(Typed verbatim from recording tape – February 2003)**

*tape begins.....*Our cricket week was really lovely. The cricket ground was covered in canvas all round and there were the tents inside, the Conservative tent and another tent for flower shows and all sorts of shows, you know, we used to have on there. In the Conservative tent, Sir Philip Sassoon came one night and talked to the people. It used to get crowded, crowds of people, you know, and then there was a big fair on The Green called, Wall's Fair, further over. Then on Friday nights there was a fancy dress for everybody – I went in it once, and won ten shillings! And then on Saturday nights the Military Tattoo, which was, oh really wonderful, wonderful. On Wednesday nights I think we had the boats on the canal, really lovely, Walters' boat was something one never forgets and Mackeson used to put on a lovely one and some people in Folkestone, I can't think – I wish I could think of their name, but there was a band of people and they used to put on a lovely one, and of course the School of Musketry, and it used to be really grand, you know.

*Now who were the famous cricketers who came to cricket week?*

Oh, yes, A.P.F. Chapman and there was a Kent team, you know, who used to come, and A.P.F. Chapman used to stay here through the summer and his wife – they had a house somewhere, I suppose, but they did. He was quite a notable figure in the town in those days. I don't know anything else about cricket week, I can't think.

*Now that was before the war wasn't it?*

Oh, yes.

*The years between the two wars?*

Oh, yes, what I am talking about was all before the war. Then there was the lifeboat. I must talk about that because they took it for the war and we never got another one back. But Lord Wakefield gave the lifeboat, I think I'm right in saying that, and I can well remember one night, there was a wreck and the maroon used to go off when there were wrecks, you know, my husband went down there, and I said, "for goodness sake don't go out on it", and he said, "I shall if I get the chance". But he didn't, there were too many volunteers. And they went out to this boat and saved the people, and did what was necessary, I suppose. Then again, Lord Wakefield was a great benefactor to Hythe. The new seafront which was opened in 1938 by Lord Wakefield. And he came to Hythe and he gave some of the school boys, who stood there to welcome him or something, - they were given an autograph book, my son was one, and he's still got the autograph book, with Lord Wakefield's name in it. There were about 12-14 boys from the school did that. And he opened this new seafront, all along there, and now they talk about this Marina, which is all wrong, I think. I don't like the idea of it. I don't like to see Hythe spoilt. You see it has a lovely coastline and I think it would spoil it. A lot of people don't, they think it's progress, I don't. And of course, the fishermen would lose their livelihood, because there won't be the fish in the sea, will there? And now, there's no mackerel, and you know the fishermen used to go out with their nets; there used to be a shoal of mackerel and they'd be off and all round, go all round and pull these nets in. When we were kids we used to pinch them. I know my Mum said, "don't bring any more home". She didn't want them. We used to take them home on our fingers. They were lovely days really.

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*What about the Pavilion?*

Yes, well the Pavilion was the baths. You see people used to go down there and get a bath, you could do, you know. Then after that, there used to be summer shows down there, Pierrot shows, and that sort of thing. And Mrs. Emery used to dance down there when she was a child.

*Who is Mrs. Emery?*

Mrs. Emery – Avril Metherell.

*Oh, yes, I know her.*

Her Father used to ride a very high bike and he always wore a big hat like a cowboy hat. I remember him well. And Mrs. Emery always used to wear a black frock, of tulle, you know, very pretty. Oh, lovely days.

*Do you remember the old fishermen's cottages, you know, the Stade, what were they like?*

Well, where Stade Court is, there was a row of cottages and in the first one, Mrs. Sims lived, and she kept a laundry. And then a Mrs. Dearman lived up there and there were two others, I can't remember who the other people were. Oh yes, there were four or five cottages along there; they had long gardens. You could see all the washing blowing, you know, in the breeze. That's where Stade Court was. And then, on the top of the seafront where the fishermen used to have a green shelter, there was the big round thing that they used to pull the boats up with, a winch, or whatever it is.....

Oh what about the swans, you never see the swans on the canal now, and they used to be such a lovely sight, the swans with their cygnets, you know, and they used to ride on their backs, the cygnets did. Oh they used to look beautiful, but you never see them now, its only ducks on the canal, I don't know where the swans have gone to.....

Oh, and the hollow, St. Hilda's Road, I remember all that being built, because just below that was all hollow ground you know, and they built St. Hilda's Road and all the houses along the seafront, along the West Parade, they've all been built since I can remember. Also, a hollow up this road, the children used to have bonfires down there and we used to bake potatoes and take down there bonfire night....a lot of happy memories.

*Was that hollow always there as far as you can remember, where did those hollow bits come from?*

*Marbello*

Yes, well, yes they were, especially where the tower is, that was always there and some people used to live in that tower and the sea on very rough nights would come right over and in those hollows, you know, and I think there used to be some people living there, I think their name was Collier, but I wouldn't say for sure, but I believe it was, and they used to have to row across to go to school, they kept a boat there. Oh, yes, the sea used to come right over, I remember the sea getting down to the cricket field, and that was this end of Ladies' Walk, down there, often the sea was down there. So much has altered, Hythe has grown very, very much, you know.

*What was the school like, what can you remember of school?*

What the Girls' School? Oh, yes, well I went to the Infants, and then to the Girls' School, knew all the teachers there, there was Miss James, two Miss James's, Miss Wiles, Miss

Howland, she was the teacher in Number 7. There was Winnie James and Daisy James and Miss Ashby, she used to take Standard 3 and a Miss Pope.

*Was a Miss Potter the Head Teacher?*

She was Headmistress, yes, with her pincenez.

*What was it like, school, in those days, what sort of punishments did they have and what sort of teaching did they have?*

They had a poker, you know, a long poker, and if you didn't behave you got a poke with the poker but there wasn't much punishment, not that I know of. They used to go and get the cane sometimes, you know, I never did.

*Did they cane the girls, or only the boys?*

I don't know about the boys, they did the girls sometimes, oh yes. I had a poke many a time in a year but that's all. It was a very happy school really. Miss Howland used to take two classes, 7 and X7. I suppose they were girls who were a bit older, because you had to be 13 when you went into her class. I only had a short while in there before I left. She was a very strict school mistress, Miss Howland was. Do you know the book, Hythe?

*Which one?*

I've got it and I'll show you. [Tape switched off, and then resumes].

And then we used to have the trams run from the Red Lion Square to Sandgate and Mr. Pilcher was the driver of one of them. They used to run down Stade Street, along South Road and along the seafront all into Sandgate. Many times I have been on them. They used to call them the toast racks.

*Why were they called that?*

Well, I suppose because you had all the seats like a rack you know, but there were ones in the winter with hoods to them, that was very nice. We used to often go on them on a Sunday and walk home, but people don't walk today do they, we used to walk a long way in those days. And then the seafront was all broken and in a very bad state once upon a time, you couldn't walk along there, but you could ride.

Oh, then I was going to say about the Institute. What a pity they pulled that down, you know it was such a lovely building. They don't build like that today do they? You see and we had a nice dance hall at the top and there used to be parties up there. The brewery always had a party every year up there and as children, we went because my father worked there. And then there was the reading room and the billiards room downstairs, it was all very, very nice. And when they pulled that down I thought, what a pity, I was really sorry, I don't think they should have done it. But I don't know, because you'd never get a building like that again, would you, there are not the craftsmen about.

*It was such a big one, wasn't it; there was room for so much in it?*

The buildings now, well, what McCarthy's have built down the end of Stade Street are quite good, they're nice to the eye, nice to look at. I don't know what they are like inside, but they're very pleasant to look at. And so is Moyle Tower, they are too, but most flats are just plain, nothing in them is there

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*What can you remember about Moyle Tower, what that was used for?*

Well, there were some people by the name of Porter used to keep that. I don't know what they did, but after they left Moyle Tower somebody else had it and we used to have in the big ballroom, - there was a ballroom upstairs, with a beautiful window facing the Ladies' Walk - and they used to have dances upstairs, and whist drives, and quite a lot used to happen up there and then it was sold to somebody, I don't know. Then during the war there were a lot of refugees there. But Porters had a beautiful garden opposite the end in the Ladies' Walk, and you could go in there and sit down. It was kept beautiful, you know Hythe was kept really lovely in those days. Since it's belonged to Shepway it wants such a lot done to it, and this road, for instance, you walk up this path and well you can't walk on the path, I can't because I go in a chair you see, and they have to walk in the road because it is so bad. But they are doing them gradually, I notice. We were so much better looked after when we belonged to Hythe.

*Well, look at the Ladies' Walk nowadays, what a mess that is?*

Yes, but that's getting better, the trees are growing. I came down there, they brought me down there the other day and I said - "this is getting better down here now," it is. Some of the places, the Memorial is kept very nice. Some of it's kept nice you know, but it's not like it used to be. We had a gardener here and I think his name was Simmonds, he used to keep the gardens beautiful, belonged to the Corporation. And then we had the Town Clerk, now what was his name...Mr. Baker. I know when we were children we used to like climbing the trees in the Ladies Walk and we daren't climb them when Mr. Baker was about because he used to holler at us. It was really good, everybody knew him, he lived in Stade Street, one of those houses near The Star.

*What do you remember of Hythe during the war, were you here then?*

Yes, all through the war. Well, there was on the Duke's Head Bridge, a gun, but I can remember seeing the aircraft come over, about 20 of them in lovely formation, but I remember saying - "there goes death and destruction for somebody", because it was, you know. And then they used to come over one at a time sometimes and get shot at, and turn tail and go another way. Lots of them were blown down into the sea. I remember the air raids when the bombs fell in Ormonde Road and two houses came down there. I was living in Park Road then and my front door, - I was out in the kitchen making a batter because we'd got sausages and I was making a batter to put over the sausages, - and the front door came in. Oh dear, well I'd got a big shelter at the side of us, and my two children were standing there, by me, which was very lucky because my Bob was always off up the road somewhere. But they both happened to be with me and we all got under the shelter. And then they dropped bombs on The Nelson, and there were several people killed. There was a man on a ladder painting The Nelson, he was killed. Dr. Mandy, he had a broken arm, he was in the Men's Club. There was another young fellow killed who worked at the Swan Garage. The Conservative Club was ruined there, and then they went further down the High Street. We had an arcade there, an arcade of shops, and the bombs dropped there and people were buried. Mr. Carr, or Mrs. Carr was killed, oh, there were quite a lot of deaths then. And people were buried, that was the terrible part of it. But they got them out. There were several bombs dropped in Hythe. Some down Twiss Road, and up the Highlands, up Station Road, that house called The Highlands, that was demolished. But what was most frightening was when they came along machine-gunning, you know, that really was frightening. I used to get in (not in this house) in the cupboard under the stairs. It was really frightening, that machine-gunning.

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*You couldn't go to the seafront, could you, then, you weren't allowed to go to the seafront?*

No, no, it was a curfew area. No, all along these roads, were the Americans, before they went over. All these roads up here, every road, was full of lorries, well I think they were Americans, waiting to go over the other side, for the big push, or whatever it was. And yet, you know, it was frightening, but you lived through it, you don't take any notice. My Mother went away and she wanted me to go, she evacuated and she wanted me to go down there, she went to Holme, a little country place, and Fred said I could go, he said, - "you go if you want to, I'll look after myself", - but anyway, I'd got two young children, Bob and Joan and I didn't see how I was going to manage. By the way, Joan was born in 1940 and I was in bed with her when Lympne was bombed. I got out and sat on the stairs, oh dear, that was dreadful.

*That was the aerodrome, was it, Lympne aerodrome?*

Yes, August 1940, that was bombed then. Very frightening. But still, you just took it all, you know. My husband was in the ARP during the war. He had to go to Folkestone in one lot because they had bombs down by the Harbour, some street, and he had to come away and they were trying to get a man out, but he had to come away because another lot went on. They had been over there a long time - he didn't like coming away but anyway the man was saved, they got him out. There were terrible happenings, really.

*Did you have the shop in those days?*

No, I didn't have the shop until 1954. My sister died and she left me the shop and we had many happy years there. It was hard work, but I was very happy, everybody was so nice, people, you know. And we did quite well, there, made quite a good business of it. And then, of course, my husband got ill and we had to give it up in 1971. Then my son took it over and I came here and have been here ever since.

*Where did your husband work?*

What before the shop? He worked for Charlie Newman. First of all, he used to drive - before the war he worked on the Corporation - and then after the war he worked for Charlie Newman and he used to drive the bus from Hythe to Ashford, you know, the country bus, until he had an illness. He was ill for about 15 months and then he went back as a storeman at Newmans, and then when we had the shop, of course he left and ran the shop. When we were married in 1925, he worked for Bugden, the grocers down the High Street and I worked for Dan West, we used to sell wines and spirits - whisky 12/6d bottle; invalid port 4/6d, and Tarragona wine 3/- and 3d on the flagon, on the bottle.

*What was Tarragona wine?*

Well, it was a kind of port, but they called it Tarragona.

*Whereabouts were those two shops - yours and Bugdens?*

Bugdens was right down the end of the High street, near where the Post Office is now, but Dan West was on the corner of Mount Street. It was quite a big shop. We sold wines and spirits besides groceries. Yes, it was quite nice. In the early days, when I first started work I went to the World Stores to work, then after I left I went over to Dan West because the girl there was getting married and I took her place.

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*Do you remember how much you earned when you first went there?*

Twenty-five shillings a week when I went to West's – I was only getting a guinea at the World Stores, and I got four shillings more. Mrs. West came down to see if I would like to go over there which I did, and then when I left I was getting twenty-seven shillings, which was quite good money in those days. But it was a nice shop.

*You were saying that Bugdens was near the Post Office, what was there before they built the Post Office, what other places were there?*

Nothing, it was just a garden with a wall. At Bugden's he had to go every night because underneath there was a river running or something and he used to have to go and do something every night to stop this water going through the cellars. I don't know what has happened to that now, it's all been altered, you know, but in those days you did.

*Do you remember the old picture palace? – well tell me about that.*

The one in the High Street, oh yes. We used to go Saturday afternoons for a penny halfpenny, but in the evening it was threepence. We saw Pearl White, William Hart, I forget them all. They were lovely. They had a balcony on each side and it was ninepence to go up in the balcony and at the back it was....., it was 6d, 9d and 1/3d pictures in those days, at the old picture palace.

*Did they show two pictures, the big picture and a small one?*

Yes, you had the big picture and then you had a little comic thing, but I don't remember the news, I don't know whether they did, I just don't remember that, you know. But I always remember going to Folkestone to the Playhouse to see, "Way Down East", it was a big film in those days.

*And who used to play the music for the films, do you know, what sort of music did they have for the films?*

Piano. Sometimes a chap played the violin but at the Playhouse they had an organ, it used to come up out of the ground and a chap used to play it, but at the Hythe pictures we had piano. I forget her name.....Kellaway, a Miss Kellaway worked there, I don't know whether she played the piano or whether she used to take the money, now. But there were two sisters, Kellaways, one lived down Dymchurch Road and one lived in St. Leonard's Road. I think one of them played the piano. And then there was one in the desk, but those two girls worked there. I used to love the pictures when I was a girl, well there was nothing else was there? There was no television in those days.

*Did you ever see Rudolph Valentino?*

Yes.

*Did you like him?*

Oh yes. I was just trying to think who the hero of most things was, I forget the name of them.

*Well, of course, Douglas Fairbanks was in a lot wasn't he?*

Yes, he was one of them, and William S. Hart, he was another one. I really forget. My boy used to have the Picture Show every week and all through the war I saved it for him. When

he came home, he had a pile of them; I don't suppose he's got them now. But they were happy times, you know, really. Although there wasn't much money, our pay was very poor, really and there was no help with the children in those days. My Joan was 8 when we got the 5 shillings a week, 1948 that was. I don't know what else I can tell you.

*That was Mrs. Kathleen Nash, aged 86, of 8 Ormonde Road, Hythe, recorded on the 18th September 1989.*