

Mrs Ellen Horton, age 89.

P1.

Born in Chapel St in 1900 and started work at 14.

She worked in the Reporter office (Local newspaper) typing and also making French books which were made by hand.

P2

Then she joined the ATS and worked at the Moyle Tower. Then the Hotel Imperial was taken over for airmen. German bombers bombed Hythe without opposition.

There were five butchers' shops in Hythe, the World Stores, the International and Vyes and a garage where Aldi is now.

There were two cinemas, the Picture Palace and the Grove. The Arcade was bombed. Before the RHRD Railway was built there was a field where fairs were held. When the railway was new the Queen and other famous people visited it.

P3.

Her school treat was a visit to Sandling Park, going by train from Hythe to Sandling Stations, and escorted back by Hythe Town Band.

Small fisherman's houses were pulled down to build the Stade Court Hotel: Horses pulled the tram to Sandgate and also charabancs to Folkestone. Empire Day was flag waving, sports, buns and a drink.

Church house held concerts, etc. and also the soup kitchen for the very poor.

P4.

In winter it was very cold and the canal froze. People went skating. Men took chairs to the canal and earned money by helping ladies on with their skates.

Mrs. Ellen Horton, age 89
Whitegates Close, Hythe
Transcript of tape recording made on 3.10.1989.
Recorded by Denise Rayner
Typed verbatim November 2004

Where were you born?

I was born in Chapel Street in 1900 and I spent the best part of my childhood there.

How old were you when you started work?

About 14 I think, we used to start early in those days.

Where did you go?

I went to the Reporter Office and from there I went to the ATS. The Reporter Office was on the corner of Conduit Street, right on the corner. We used to do typing, you know.

What did you do for the newspaper itself, what did you do to set up the type?

Well, in a little, it was like a little thing and you put them in and then after we done all that 'cos we used to do a paper called The Reporter, and then after you'd done that it used to have to be looked through to see if you'd done it properly and they used to correct it.

Did you have to do the correcting as well?

No, we didn't do the correcting, we put it in you see, no the older ones done it you see then 'cos we were only young .

Do you remember how big the Reporter Offices were, was it a big place?

No, very small, we were up there, there was just one room upstairs and one big room down, it wasn't very big. But we used to do quite a bit there.

What did they do apart from printing the newspaper?

They used to do these French books, we used to do. We used to print them and then we used to fold them up and they used go through the cutting machine and then we had to stitch them; all by hand though, a little tiny thing we had, we never had no machines or anything. And then I went on to the ATS. They didn't want me to go. Oh dear, they tried to put me off, you know, I think they had a job to get people to work.

Was it unusual to get girls to working there, or was it because of the war?

I think it was the wartime. There was a Mr. Halls, he used to be the manager there and they used to have a little shop up the street, dressmaking shop or something, his wife. He was very nice. They were all very nice. Then I left and then thewas took on and then eventually, you know, the Folkestone Herald took it over, and we were no more. But I enjoyed my time there, it was nice.

Was the Hythe Reporter a good paper?

Yes, it was quite nice – well I thought it was, I would, wouldn't I?

It had lots of Hythe news, didn't it, it was all Hythe news?

Yes, oh yes, it was nearly all Hythe news. You used to have to go about getting bits and pieces and that, well, it was run by the Folkestone Herald really, more or less, it was a smaller paper.

Do you know how many reporters they had on it?

About 4 or 5, it wasn't a great lot and Mr. Palmer used to come in occasionally and again to see us. He was ever so kind to us, he used to leave us a bag of sweets – then he used to come next time and he'd say: "I see the rats have been here." He was ever such a nice man.

Now, where did you work then after you left the paper, whereabouts in Hythe did you work when you joined the ATS?

Well I went to the ATS. I don't know what I did after that.

No, where did you work when you were in the ATS? You said, Moyle Tower.

Oh, Moyle Tower, yes.

What was that like?

Oh, that was very nice, I enjoyed it there. That was a nice place, now it's all gone, hasn't it, yes, it's all gone. Beautiful ballroom there was there but I don't think they had any dances.

Was it just used for the service men in the war?

Yes, it was for, you know...and then they took the Hotel Imperial over, well they had that for the best part of the war I think. We had officers there; we used to look after the officers. They all used to go flying and that.

Can you remember what it was like living in Hythe during the First War, were there any bombs?

Oh yes, there were a lot, yes, there was one in the churchyard there, such a great big crater up there; I think someone got killed, the verger or someone got killed on that raid. Yes, they used to come in and drop their bombs, and out again. We used to watch them. They used to come right into Lympne, come right round, drop their bombs and off – no one seemed to chase them. They seemed to do as they liked.

Break in recording...

We used to have 5 butchers' shops in Hythe. There was Ushers, that was down the end of the High street, then further up there was two shops there, and another one not far away. Then there was one at the end of the High Street, about 5 all together. And, oh dear, the grocers' shops there must have been about 6 of them.

Can you remember the names of those?

Yes, there was the World's Stores, the International, Vyes, all the well known ones there were there.

What was where Gateway's is now, what used to be where Gateway's is? [now Aldi Stores]

Well, that used to be a garage place, where they used to have all cars and that [Hythe Motor Cab Co]. Yes, that's what that used to be till they made that.

Break in recording...

There was a Picture Palace in the Hythe Street, you know the Post Office End. Well, you used to go there. And then there was the Grove one – we used to have quite a lot of people there, you know. Children used to go in the morning, you know, to do that. Then there was an Arcade where that was and that got bombed during the war and is no more now.

What shops were there in the Arcade, can you remember?

Oh, different ones, you know, like you have in arcades, dresses and all that. Quite a lot of shops, it was quite nice, and that got bombed, right to the ground they bombed. You were telling me you remembered what it was like before the Little Railway was built?

Yes, there used to be a field there and animals used to be there. And they used to have fairs, but that's all gone.

Were the houses then, the houses in Dymchurch Road, were they there at that time, or was it just a field?

No, no, yes I think they were. We always used to say they were Jerry built, we always used to say that so they must have been during the war, yes, we always used to say they were Jerry built. Of course, there wasn't them on the whatjamacallit now, all new down there. All houses everywhere now, aren't there.

Can you remember what you thought about the Little Railway when it was first built, did you like it?

Yes, we were quite excited, all of us. The Queen came there one day. Yes, we had different royalty there and film stars used to come down there.

Did you go on it?

Yes, I used to go on it. And when I was a child we used to go to Sandling Park for our school treat and we used to walk right up to the station – there used to be a station in Hythe, and get on this old train. Wasn't in it for long, used to think it was lovely!

Then when we came back the Hythe Town Band came up to meet us and we marched all the way down again. Ha, Ha, they wouldn't do it now!

Break in tape.....

Where Stade Court is now there used to be all little houses, you know, fisherman's places and that and then they were pulled down to make it [Stade Court]. And then there were the trams, they used to run from Hythe to Sandgate and back. They were drawn by horses. And then we had charabancs – they were drawn by horses, you know. They used to go to Folkestone and back. They used to come into the Red Lion Square and change the horses which was then – Betty's have it for a restaurant now - but there used to be the stables there.

Which way did they go into Folkestone, along the High Street?

Yes, along the High Street, you know, where the buses go now, the same way. I can see the man now, sitting up the top there! It was about sixpence I think it was, all the way. And then there was, what was I going to say.....you remember the Small Arms School, don't you. The Small Arms School, years and years ago, they used to march up there, to the Church, every Sunday. Then we used to have Empire Day and all the children used to go out on the Hythe Green, we all had flags and waved them. And all the boys used to have to go round and salute the flag. Then after that in the afternoon we used to have sports and we all had a bag of buns and a bottle of drink. We used to have those with the marbles in them, you know, the old ones. We had a rare good old time. Of course, we haven't got no empire now, so they don't do it! Then there was the Church House – remember the Church House? There was the Church House where we used to have concerts and all sorts of things in there. And then they used to do a soup kitchen, because people were very poor and they used to serve up this soup and a piece of bread and people used to line up for it.

Was that at the Church House?

Yes, that's where the soup kitchen was at the Church House. They used to do that and bread. I don't think it was very nice anyhow, but the people were so poor. You see, in those days, if you didn't go to work you didn't get no money, no money at all. So they had to do something, you know, you couldn't see them starve could you?

Break in recording.

It was very cold in my days and the canal used to be frozen over for months sometimes and they used to have all the chairs on there and skates, and the men used to put them on just to get a few shillings. And they had a shop at the end of the High Street where they used to sell skates. I can always remember it, the name was Brown. And it used to snow; people don't know what it is to be cold now. Do you know, you used to have the jug and basins in the bedrooms, you know, before you had anything like that, and the flannels used to freeze in the bedrooms. It shows how cold.....but we were healthy! It didn't do us any harm.

Did everybody go skating, ordinary people, or was only just the people....?

No, anybody could go skating, if you'd got the skates. But these men used to take these chairs to get a few pence, you know.

What was that, helping the ladies on with their skates, how did they earn the money?

Yes, putting their skates on, you see, some of them used to carry.....because they used to be....Saltwood used to be a posh place. If you lived up Saltwood, you was a millionaire. But anyone's up there now. But they used to come from Saltwood down you see, but if you lived up there you were supposed to be very well off.

End of recording.