

Village Lowick

Hind's Row no 2

A Northumbrian Lad

1947

2009

Family



Father James
Mother Annie

Brothers

- Henry
- Albert
- Eddie
- Peter
- Frank



Frank

Sisters

Twins: Kathleen & Margaret

I was born 12/1/1947 at No 2 Farm Cottages, Lowick, a small village a few miles from Berwick. The farm cottage was very basic. No electric, toilets outside. It had three bedrooms, small cast iron fires in each room. The rooms were very cold. Bare floor boards. A few home-made clippie mats. As there was no toilets indoors, a potty was placed under each bed. The lounge was very dark. Gas lamps were the only form of lighting. We had candles which was often used as back up.



Frank & Albert

A range fireplace was used for cooking. Mother seemed to be always cooking or washing. A big black cast iron kettle was on the boil all day. The floor was similar to bedrooms- a couple of very heavy mats. The kitchen used to have a sink with 1 cabinet. The water was heated by range fire. We got a bath having a galvanised tub in front of the fire.



Albert & Frank

Washing was done in the wash house outside. The boiler in the wash house was a half round cast tub built with a fire underneath to heat the water. When the water was boiling Mam used to pour the water into a poss tub. Clothes would be passed till clean. If by then the clothes was not clean she would use a wash board and fairy soap. After this procedure Mum would drain water from tub, fill with cold water then put all the washing through a mangle. A mangle was a large cast iron machine with 2 huge rollers powered by two giant cogs with a handle which you had to put all the washing through several times to get most of the

water out. Finally all the washing was put on the washing line to dry. No dryers in those days. Most people in the village washed on Mondays. Very often when I came home from school I would help by turning the handle on the mangle.

Outside toilets were situated a few yards from the wash house. Toilets were made by making a bench boxed in with a hole in the top. Old newspapers was the only form of toilet paper. We used to tip our ash from fires in the same place. These pit toilets used to get emptied once a fortnight. Most people in the village had a coal shed.

When I was born on 12/1/47 my eldest brother Henry had married and was living at Ancroft Mill.



Henry



Eddie was in the RAF LAC.

Peter was at home going to Lowick school.



Peter

Albert had also married and was living at Cold Harbour.



Albert

My father worked for Tony Barber on the farm on the opposite side of the road of our cottage. He worked as a groom for many years. In later years as horses got less he became a pig man. The farm had lots of breeding pigs. Father would work long hours. If he wasn't working with pigs he would help with any other jobs. Many workers would work on the farm. We lived in No 2 of 10 cottages. All the farm workers lived in these cottages.

I started school in 1952 (very reluctantly). The first day seemed to go sweetly. By the second day I must have thought this wasn't for me. I remember running out of school with my brother Peter in hot pursuit.



Peter & Frank

I was told it took most of the morning and part of the village to get me back to school.

By now I had 2 twin sisters-the last two in the family of seven.



Frank and the Twins.

The farm workers who lived in the cottages had kids which we all got on very well. School was something I hated from day one. The school was in the middle of the village- stone built Victorian. A couple of years we got a new school further up the village. I went to this school until I was eleven. When I was home from school I used to play with Ken Warner & Bob Patterson. I remember when we moved from the old school to the new school. Bob Patterson stole the Headmasters cane. He snapped the cane in two and hid it behind school in some bushes. Being kids we thought that was the end of (six of the best) as it used to be known. Much to our horror a new one awaited us at the new school. When we moved to the new school I was now starting to play a lot at Jeffrey's farm next door to Barbers. As most kids do we got up to quite a lot of mischief. Most of the mischief involved petty theft. We used to steal apples from local gardens, stealing turnips from farm fields and selling them for 3d old money. We would get all the money and share it out for sweets. We had one small sweet shop called Sadies. There was three pubs in the village. We used to gather empty lemonade bottles return them for cash. The pubs were The Black Bull, The White Swan and the Commercial. Kids wasn't allowed in pubs even with adults. When we returned bottles we used the back doors with the empties.



Mum with Eddie, Albert, Peter Frank.

I remember we never got many new toys. Most things we got was hand downs or from your neighbours. We still found plenty of things to amuse ourselves. I can remember always having a bogie. This was very simple to make. We would get four old pram wheels with axles, 1 long plank of wood which was the main part, with the first set of wheels fixed across the back with a box where you sat. Then another piece of wood across the front with the other set of wheels with a hole drilled in the middle to allow for steering with a piece of string tied inside of each wheel. This so called bogie used to last for ages. My mate Bob Patterson used to have races all over the village.

From about the age of 8 to 11 we would start to learn a lot about farm work On Jeffreys at The Black Bull I started to learn to drive the Massey Ferguson by sitting between the legs of the driver. Very soon I got the hang of it. As soon as I got the hang of it I used to drive while an adult was doing different jobs such as driving between stooks collecting turnips, leading in silage, collecting bales of hay. I used to think I could do some of this work myself until I ruptured myself picking up bales of hay. It is the only operation I have had to this day. By now there was lots of kids doing farm jobs. We used to get the occasional bottle of pop or crisps for our work. Nearly everything we done on the farm would not be allowed nowadays.



Frank

A good few of the kids in the village would keep pigeons. I had a dozen - a mixture of homing and wild. The wild ones were known as skemmies. At weekends or the long summer nights we would regularly visit the local rubbish tip known as the dump. In winter nights we would sit round the fire and listen to Radio Luxembourg. Some nights we would help mum & dad make clippie mats. The method for making these mats was two long pieces of wood, two short pieces at the ends with holes and slots for adjusting the size of mat. The mat was made by rolling a sack of material onto a long piece of wood, pulling the sacking tight. All sorts of cloth colours would be cut into strips 3 inches long and about 1 inch wide. A piece of round length of wood with a sharpened end so you could make a hole in the sacking was used. You'd make two holes close to one another, push the cloth through the holes to leave two pieces equal underneath. A big pile of cloths was put in the middle of sacking, then we all took our positions- Dad, Mum, Peter, myself, two sisters and anyone else who came through the door. Candles & gas lamps was our only light. Some light would come from a good log fire. I think we must have supplied half the village with these clippie mats.

With the farm having so many pigs father nearly always had one. Most of the farm workers kept one too. Behind the toilets was a row of pig stys. We used to

get the job of feeding scraps from the house food. These pigs were nearly always the smallest one in the litter known as the crete. When pigs were large enough to kill kids would gather for the killing. I won't go into detail as to how it was killed but it wasn't nice. Once the pig was killed it would be cut into portions and salted. Lots of the pig would be rolled and wrapped in muslin cloth and would hang on hooks from the ceiling in the living room. When we needed bacon father would remove the muslin, cut the first piece off, then slice as required.

We had a pantry in the kitchen which would store most of your meat & veg etc. Potatoes would come from the farm. We would make a potato pt. Method- dig a large trench, place straw, pile potatoes up, cover with more straw. Finally cover with soil. The amount of potatoes you got depended upon how big a family you had. Father was an extremely good gardener. Gladiola and Roses his speciality.

Lots of tramps would be around in those days. They would knock on your door and ask for a cup of tea. Mother used to always oblige. She would fill a billy can and make them a jam sandwich which they were always grateful for. Travelling vans used to come round the houses selling groceries. I used to be a favourite of the baker. Every time he came he gave me a cake for free.

At the end of our cottages used to be a post office called Starks. Often we would be sent to the shop as it used to sell many other things. When we went to the shop we were told to go and get some messages. The village also had a bakery known as Mabons. Further down the village was a farrier. Almost opposite the Police Station was a drapers shop known as Sintons. They had a travelling van. Opposite The Black Bull was a Nunnery. Kids used to torment the nuns by keeping knocking on the door and running away. Preachers would often come round the houses. At one particular time these preachers erected a kind of porta cabin on the outskirts of the village known as The Common. I can remember at least one occasion where mother took us to listen. They had a large stove for heating this place. On one of these sessions someone stuffed a rag down the chimney of this stove and smoked them out. When this cabin wasn't there all the kids in the village would play on the Common. We had games of football approx. 30 on each side. Darkness would arrive then we were rounded up by parents. No one wanted to stop especially if the score was 20-20. We had to play for the winner. Although the village was quite small there was quite a lot of big families.

A doctor seemed to be always calling at your house. Ours was a Doctor Francis. My parents was stuck what to call me so Doctor Francis said why don't you call him Francis- so they did.

We never got to many places. Money was scarce. My sisters and myself would occasionally be taken to Berwick on the bus. I can also remember going to Spital Beach. As I mentioned earlier we didn't get many toys. Most were hand downs or second hand. I can remember getting a cricket bat and ball from Woolworths at Berwick. That was the only memory of something new. Although we weren't well off we never went without food. Mother was an excellent cook. She would make about seven pie dishes of rabbit, various different meats with thick pastry. She would also make huge dishes of rice pudding tapioca.

In the late summer we would travel miles around picking rose hips. We would take them to school, get them weighed and be paid 3d a pound. In the winter we would sledge and play on the ponds frozen with ice. Not recommended nowadays.



Eddie

When I was nine years of age tragedy struck the family. My brother Eddie in the RAF took seriously ill with a brain tumour. He went into a coma. Mother and Father received a telegram for them to travel down to Worksop in Lincoln where he was stationed. He died almost as soon as they got there -age 19. To this day we all seem to remember him as the cleverest in the family. I can still remember their faces when they walked through the door to tell us the bad news. Life had to go on as sad as it was. With having such a big family we seemed to pull together as a unit. We got great support from close neighbours and villagers. Eddie was buried in Lowick Cemetery. As time passed by we got back to some sort of normality.

We got electricity in the house. There still wasn't many electrical appliances in houses. Mother still used to put irons in the fire to heat and put in the iron. Mr Barber from the farm got us a 9" black and white TV put in every farm cottage. Reception was not good but we were very grateful for this new commodity. From now on there was kids coming in to watch TV. Programmes popular at the time

was Tonight hosted by Cliff Michelmore, The Six Five Special with such favourites as Don Lang and Lonnie Donnigan. Another favourite was The Lone Ranger with his Indian friend Tonto. Another western was Wagon Train. On Saturday night I would watch telly at The Black Bull. Lots of kids went there. They had a better TV than us.

George Turnbull, Cliff Appleby, Bert Dobson, Eddie Hall



Ken Warner would think of daft things to do. We often stole wood pigeon eggs, boil them in an old pan and eat them. Another thing we would do is ride round on bikes with no tyres and lots of spokes missing from the wheels. Very few cars were around in those days. There was more horses and farm vehicles than cars. Parents didn't have to worry about you being on roads.

I cannot remember mother going out for a night.



Mum & Dad

Father used to go out quite a lot. He used to like to go to The Black Bull and The Commercial. His favourite tippie was rum & pep. Most women never went out. Henry would occasionally take me to Ancroft Mill where we would have a bit of fishing. Peter worked full time at The Black Bull while Albert worked full time at Cold Harbour



Henry

Henry had a brief spell in the RAF, didn't care much for it, then became a lorry driver. Although there was four of us at home, myself, Peter and two sisters, occasionally my father's brother John would stop with us. He was a little backward. Different parts of the family & relations would take it in turn to have him. At that time including mum and dad we would have seven to cater for. That was why I often used to say all I could remember mother doing was cooking and washing.

Lowick had a football team. They used to play in the 2nd field above The Black Bull. I would sometimes watch them play, then rush home to get the football results read out by Kenneth Wolstenholme. I used to dread Sundays. We sometimes had to go to Church, then Sunday school and then Church again. Our family is Presbyterians. There wasn't a choice, you had to go. Father was very strict. The three eldest brothers often got the belt for doing very little wrong. I did get the belt but not as much as my brothers. I have seen my mother in tears when they were belted. Most of the time he only had to loosen his belt and everywhere went silent. Nowadays he would probably be put in jail.



Henry, Frank & Albert

Health wise I suppose we were pretty lucky. Lots of kids got measles, chicken pox and German measles. The one thing I do remember getting was ringworm. You got that climbing gates or fences where cattle had been rubbing themselves. It was contagious. My father put a poultice on it. I still have the scar to this day. It wasn't really sore- more itchy than anything. Whooping

cough was another thing kids got. Father & mother used to have good health. People didn't seem to have as many ailments as nowadays. Whenever we said we didn't feel very well father would say give them a dose of castor oil. 5 minutes later you'd say I feel better. Nobody wanted castor oil. If you were poorly you were given a small thimble full of Lucozade and told that would make you better.

Xmas time was a happy time. We all got a stocking with the usual fruit and nuts. I don't remember many of the toys. I can remember having a Scottie dog made of grey cloth and stuffed, also a giraffe. I used to treasure these two items. Most of us used to like the things we got from the dump -the old bikes and of course my bogie.

There seemed to be snow every year and it was very deep. People say the year I was born was one of the worst they'd seen. Mother told me later in life she used to keep me in a drawer to keep warm. Apparently this was what lots of mums did then. Prams were very big with two big wheels and two small. I can still smell that plastic smell that the pram was lined with.

Neighbours were very helpful. If there was any problem they would be around and help. Close neighbours would often be around with hand down clothes. Foot ware was never very good. I went to school with clogs, short trousers, black jacket and grey shirt and tie. White sandshoes were worn for PE. When the shoes got worn we had to put whitener on to clean them up. Later years we had black and white baseball boots. Most of the shoes came from Woolworths. I remember my sisters having pairs of sandals- different colours with one press stud at the side of the strap.

Mother & Father moved to Lowick in 1937.

Neighbours in Hinds Row

Bob Dobson / Allen Malloan bungalow

George Elliot

Ernie Waters

Jack Redpath Grave digger

Ken Allen

Jack Howie Garden House

Raymond Hogg Footballer offered to play for Hearts. Went to Aston Villa



Peter



Kath (8)



The twins