

KINGSLAND ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interviewer: Sally Deakin

Interviewee: Chris Burleigh

Age: 84

DOB: May 1934

Date of interview: 14.12.18

SUMMARY PARAGRAPH: Chris Burleigh owns The Horse Boutique in Kingsland and came to Kingsland in 1962 when he married Mona. The interview covers his life here including pig and poultry farming and the beginning of Sun Valley, starting the school PTA and being a Church Warden twice. The interview also includes memories of Kingsland and its residents in the 60s and 70s including the Bread and Coal charity; raising money for the church organ; The Monument and digging for gold there; The Angel; the Corners Inn and bowling alley; the village stores; the butchers; cattle being driven through the village and the village as it was then.

TIME CODED SUMMARY

TIME CODE	CONTENT
00.00	Description of his life. Living in Switzerland and returned to UK just before the war. Father killed at Dunkirk. Moved round country with mother and brothers then did army service. Went to agricultural college then came to Hereford as agricultural advisor/specialist in pigs. Married Mona in Kingsland in 1962. Lived in Eardisland when first married then moved to Kingsland. Bought house from Lowes who was Brian Markham's uncle. Arrived in Hereford in 1959/60 where had a flat.
02.15	Earliest memory of Kingsland was getting involved with Kingsland School with young children. Secretary for a while. Started the PTA. Mr Jones headmaster, lived in the schoolhouse. Didn't approve of parent's involvement so no PTA before that. He left and new headmaster so started PTA and very active raising money for the children. Date around late 1960s. Same time he was involved with church and became Church Warden. Mrs Shepherd was the sextant or similar; description of her. Herbert Thomas was reverend and Chris became the People's Warden. Mrs Shepherd said he was far too young for the job. He took over from Mr Morgan.
04.48	Description of what he did as the People's Warden. Involved with the Bread and Coal Charity. Description of the charity and what they did and where income came from. Had a piece of land rented by Bert Crump plus another piece of land. Description of villagers applying for bread and coal and how they did that. Claimed in church vestry on Christmas Eve. Mr Wall delivered the bread from the village shop. Coal delivered by Bengry's. Description of sitting in vestry when claimants came and some ladies getting very irate if coal not awarded to them. Description of history of the charity and how changed to Relief in Need charity which still operates. Description of the latter charity and how they decided to help people and description of what they did to help a lady. Latter charity started around early 1970s.
08.47	Description of bread and coal distribution. People given a hundredweight of coal and some bread. Description of sitting with Herbert Thomas. How decision to give coal and bread made. Local doctor on committee. Using local knowledge of who to give it to. Being called by a lady who was very cross she didn't get any coal. Ten to fifteen people benefitted. Deeds lost to one piece of land. One piece of land still rented.
11.08	Description of problems with the church organ. Had to raise £20-22 thousand pounds. Needed to raise money. Description of 3 day Flower Festival and Sonia Priday of Corners Inn doing the catering. Mrs Petit who lived in the old Rectory told them to go ahead and repair the organ and she would guarantee the funds but it was to be anonymous. She also gave the large picture in the Lady Chapel of the church as a memorial to her promising the money. They then did raise all the money. This was in 1970s.
14.11	Tarmacked the new churchyard which is all grassed now. Put a new kitchen in the church which was controversial at time. Herbert Thomas tidied the churchyard. Flower festival they did, Mrs Agnew organised the flowers. She was from Leominster but then lived at Fairfield. Before her at Fairfield was Richard Hollis.

15.52	Description of The Monument pub when they arrived. Mrs Wall the landlady sitting by the fire and people not being let in unless they had clean clothes on. No bar. Beer from the barrel. No spirits. Bengry's coalmen had to sit in the porch, she wouldn't let them sit inside. Description of the inside. Sat in her living room and drank the beer. The Monument extended by a later licensee.
17.25	Digging for gold. TV cameras in Kingsland and a big to-do. He was poultry farming at Norton Cross where Mona's (wife) mother was. He came back from there and TV wanted as many as possible in the picture for the television. He said no because busy. They were digging for gold in the bar but can't remember who was or why.
19.00	Ernie Cross from Lower Cross farm, uncle of current farmer there, would go up to the Monument when extended. Was a one armed bandit and he used to sit and tell stories. A4110 was not the main road before, said when he was a lad it was just a dirt track. When Chris arrived in Kingsland, Jim Harding the local road surveyor who worked with Cliff Davis lived next door. Description of Alfred [??] Morgan who farmed The Showers. Married Jean late in life and had a daughter. Learnt to fly and had an aeroplane at Shobdon.
21.32	Description of Kingsland when he arrived in early 1960s. Doctor Vaughan at The Red House and what it was like going there. Corners Inn with a bicycle shop and hairdresser there. Description of the ten pin bowling alley at the back and having fun there. Marquee being put in the car park. Putting on a fashion show there.
23.10	The Horse Boutique – buying it off a lady who'd started it as a hobby. Description of what it was like.
23.53	Description of bowling at The Corners. Description of the inside of The Corners as it was. British Legion suppers with Bert Crump. Description of Bert Crump joining the army during the war; putting his age down so he could get into the army. Joining up with the man who ran the butcher's shop. Description of Kingsland Stores [Edgefield] being run by Wing Commander Jimmy James and his wife. Shop stocking everything. Top end of food. Christmas Eve couldn't leave until you'd had a glass of sherry. Bakery there with deliveries by Mr Wall daily. Had 2 deliveries of post a day by bicycle.
26.40	Description of the butchers at end of Park House. Run by Walter Mitchell and his father. If no customers the father would be in his garden. Walter would deliver the meat around. They still have a relation in the village but can't remember name. Grace Burnham who now lives in Surrey was a relation and lived in the village. Butcher's inside was basic. Description of shopping in the butcher. Thinks there was another butcher in Shirleath when they first came to Kingsland on the side of the road by the current Car Auctions. The son still lives there and has the smallest dairy herd in the country.
29.56	The Angel he recalls being owned by Basil Frost who had a manageress called Jane who now runs the New Inn at Pembridge. It was then the first dining pub in the area. The Boot at Orleton was another – always went there for duck. The Angel was fine dining. The Red Lion was also in the village. No recall as only went a couple of times.
31.38	Memories and description of Mr Hamlyn Williams who lived at St Mary's. Getting cross with Kaarlson who's cattle used to walk through the village and the mess on the streets. Told off children who were on the pavement with their bicycles. Description of Kaarlson's driving their cattle through the village for milking. Their cattle on the Glebe land. Memories of cattle coming in on the train to Leominster. Train still running through Kingsland when they arrived. Chris bought some of the railway line at the other end of the village when it shut because he wanted the sleepers. Recall of loading the sleepers onto a tractor and trailer.
34.01	Description of when he kept 1,000 pigs on his land in Kingsland. Started with bale pig housing with sleepers on the floor. Ran the pig unit through 70s and into 80s until bottom fell out of the pig market. Also had poultry houses behind. Started with broiler breeders when Sun Valley was starting. Had arks in the field with 10 hens and a cock in each ark. Eggs went to the hatchery at Shobdon and that is how Sun Valley started with others like him growing broiler breeders. Is when he first knew Bert Crump who took his cracked eggs to sell on his milk round. Mona (Chris's wife) was the first secretary for the Colonel [Shobdon Court]
36.57	Description of pig farming in Herefordshire in the 60s. Nearly every farm had pigs then. He used to rear to 8 weeks old and sell them as weaners. Sold to a couple of local farmers who fattened them then sold them on.

37.44	Kingsland feel then [early 60s] was a village. Church was the centre and he knew everyone. Had two periods as Church Warden. The Church Warden then had more responsibilities and got to know people. Cliff Davis was Vicar's Warden and Chris was People's Warden. The latter they were led to believe was 'keeper of the village morals'. Doesn't know if true or not. Kingsland had an undertaker down North Road. The Wardens was an old folks' home and had own refrigeration for deaths. Was where his mother died.
40.22	Jenkins farmed The Luctonians and land on North Road where bungalows are. Luctonians bought their field at auction in 1970s. Thelma Pudge was their daughter he thinks. Thinks the bungalows were built when he arrived but not sure.
41.59	The Bell had shut when they arrived in 1962. Involvement with the school. Chairman of Governors for a while. Did not get very involved with other village events as young with a young family and business to run. Has no recollection of church bells being restored.
44.57	Biggest change he's seen? Expansion and all the new housing going up. Plot next to them having 10 houses. Walls' at The Monument were always applying for permission but always turned down. Now a building plot. Now in 'suburbia' which is sad. Feels more divorced from village than ever. Doesn't go to church now. Don't get to know people in the village.
46.34	Favourite memory? – the era of raising the children and being involved with the school and church. Used to employ around 10 of the village boys and got to know all the young lads well.
47.49	END