

KINGSLAND ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interviewer: Sally Deakin

Interviewee: Lillian (Lily) Summers

Age: 99

DOB: 13.05.1920

Date of interview: Across visits in December 2019.

SUMMARY PARAGRAPH: Lily Summers was brought up in Kings Pyon on Brook House farm and came to Kingsland when she married Roly Summers. She started her married life at Jubilee Cottages and since then has lived on the edge of the parish near Eardisland. The interview covers the whole of her life from her childhood as the daughter of an estate worker, leaving at 14 to go into service, the start of the Second World War and her return home when she worked for five years at the Rotherwas Munitions factory. Her memories then cover her life since the war through working in service in Middlesex, her marriage to Roly and his work as the Saw Doctor at Kingsland Sawmills, lodging with her in laws at Jubilee Cottages when first married then the move to her current home after a year, her working life and her memories of Kingsland and its shops and people.

TIME CODED SUMMARY

TIME CODE	CONTENT
00.00	Introduction. Maiden name Weale. Family description. Father a farm worker (Brook House farm, King's Pyon), so always had food and had a vegetable garden and bees. Description of helping her father with the bees and honey. Father teaching her to read when 3 ½ and then going to school. Description of going to Sunday school and being in the church choir (King's Pyon). Description of a happy but poor childhood.
02.11	Description of living in Kings Pyon in a 'crick house' with a pitched roof but no ceilings. Description of playing in the Marley Pool as a child. Description of working in the fields as a child. Story about helping her father with a horse, having a row of potatoes from the farmer and apples to make cider.
04.01	Description of helping her father in the hop yard and the kiln. Bagging them for lorries and them going to make beer. The owners of Brook Farm selling the farm to the Pudges the year her mother died when she was 17 and away in domestic service.
05.53	Talking about her father wanting her to be a teacher and her teacher at school encouraging her. But no room at home for her to stay, needed space for the younger children, so went into domestic service to 'get a roof'. Left school at 14 and was paid 5 shillings a week.
06.20	Description of meals she made and what she did when in service at 14. Description of bridge dinner parties and no drink. Description of people at home getting their hair cut by her father so they could get a drink of his homemade cider at tuppence a time. Going into service at a friend of her fathers and why she went versus her older sisters.
07.40	Working in Walsall in service for 2 years looking after 2 children. Having to leave her first job in service before 16 because they wouldn't pay the cost of the insurance stamp. First service was a widow and her sister close to home. Story about her first employer saying her apron was too long.
08.33	Description of being happy in her second job in Walsall and them taking care of her. Description of the father being a friend of her father's and what his business was, making metal boxes for the Germans. Description of her two younger sisters also later on working for the widow and her friend but also having to leave at 16.
09.40	Memories of a mock air raid when she was in Walsall. Being 'terrified'. Left Walsall and went to a family in Worcester to look after 3 little boys. Another girl Milly working for them and description of having fun together. Memory of hearing war being declared on the wireless (age 19). Description of what the family's father did, managing Dents factory in Leominster.
11.08	Memories of the Sunday after the declaration of war being 'awful' with lots of planes going over. Memories of painting windows for the blackout. Having to register for war work and what her sisters

	did. Edie working at Rotherwas then going to Kidderminster to make parachutes. Story about her getting her a silk offcut and making herself a petticoat.
12.25	Description of how she felt when she heard war declared on the wireless. Terrified because her father had been at The Somme in World War One. Description of how loving her father was though she got the belt once and why.
13.31	Description of her father going to war as a farm worker and coming back as an officer's batman. Description of them being 'desperately poor' though there was regular money from farm work. Small two up and two down house. Father came back to work on Brook House farm after the war. Memories of him drawing out the plans for the hop yard and running it. His skills at planting and reaping.
14.28	Father being a bellringer at King's Pyon church. Description of her being taken on to help clean the church when 13 by her godmother who was the cleaner and being paid sixpence a week. Saved all the money and reason she saved because of a bread delivery her parents couldn't pay for. Vowed she'd never have anything she couldn't pay for. Description of the Weobley baker.
16.05	Spent 5 years during the war going to and from the bus stop at Bush Bank on her bike. Story about a hare.
17.03	Description of the children in Walsall and cuddling the little boy. Registering for war work. Her two sisters being married, one having a council farm and having 3 children. She tried to work on the buses but they wouldn't take her. Went to work at Rotherwas Munitions factory in Hereford though can't recall how that came about. Was there 5 years.
19.23	Living back at home when at Rotherwas. Description of the hard life. No running water, outside toilet down the garden. Description of the inside of the house. Description of how and where she got water from, a brick built tank at side of the road and sometimes carrying a yoke with two buckets. Description of how she did a big wash. Going to Marley Pool where one side was horse drinking and doing washing at end of the workday. On other side someone would help her carry a bath of water back to do the washing. Had an outside boiler. Description of how hard it was after living in the house in Worcester. Description of just getting on with it and a conversation with her father.
22.48	Was at home looking after her father and brother during the war, the latter the only one still alive of all her siblings. Description of after the war her brother in law married to her second sister came home and there was no room for her so she had to go back into service. Went to Middlesex for 12 months and described how wonderful it was.
23.29	Description of service in Middlesex when 26. Was near to her mother's sister Aunt Ethel and her 2 daughters a little younger than her. Day off a month and sightseeing in London with one of them. Worked for the old lady and her 2 sons and paid £2 a week. Lady's daughter Miss Joan also lived nearby. Kind and let her brother stay for a week. Had already met Roly her future husband.
24.55	Descriptions of working for 5 years at Rotherwas Munitions factory. Detailed descriptions within this section of all the various jobs she did there and what they involved. Description of an average day and how she got there and what happened if you missed the bus. Description of a big bomb exploding that had been overfilled. How the incident was kept quiet.
30.50	Near the end of her time there, description of one morning the lights going down and people shouting. How she went outside and saw a German bomber was above them. How it dropped a bomb on a house on the south side of the site and what she was told about the incident by someone from the BBC. Description of people scrambling for the buses.
32.43	Description of the end of the war and Rotherwas and getting the option to leave and why she did because of her family and how she had been looking after her father and brother at home. Description of her last day and going to get her bag from the canteen shelf and someone had stolen her apple, half crown and a picture of her boyfriend. She had her weekly money on her though.
34.38	Description of her friends at Rotherwas. Description of her name being on the memorial stone in Hereford. Description of Mary Reynolds/Berry making her wedding dress. Mary getting married early in the war and saving her money. Starting a business when he came home. Gladys also who kept in touch. The granddaughter of Gladys still comes to see her once a fortnight.
36.26	Didn't go out much because got the bus home. Didn't meet up much socially. Description of being introduced to her husband Roly by another factory girl. He was in the Royal Engineers near Cinderford

	near Gloucester. When he came back from the war he had thyroid problems and he had to rest at home. When he came to visit her in Kings Pyon he slept too.
38.19	Got married in Kings Pyon church and all her relations are buried there. Roly has passed but had his ashes scattered round the old ash tree by the river at their house and she will have the same.
38.57	[Interview continues on another day; description of photos of Brook House being shown to Lily]
39.16	Talking about the Pigeon House and the working horses going into the horse pool at the end of the day. Talking about as a child going up the back steps to the house, collecting milk and taking it to the farmhouse. Story about being chased by the goose and being told how to stop it by grabbing it by the neck and her experience doing it.
41.38	Description of trees that used to be in front of the house and at Christmas as a child singing carols at the house front door and getting tuppence each. New Year going to the back door to sing to get more money. The house owner was related to the original breeders of the Hereford cattle, the Cooks. Mr Cook was a widower with a housekeeper. Description of Mr Cook. Were servants and was where her mother met her father. Uncle Charlie and cousin was head cowman at Brook House. Aunty Alice was the parlour maid. Her mother's family was from Moorhampton. Learnt to cook by watching her mother.
43.55	Father hoped Lily would be a teacher and taught her to read when 3 and a half. Went to school early. Recalls her father telling her mother he'd had a shilling a week pay rise. Hard times but had a good vegetable garden, fruit trees and bees. Memory of finding a baby owl when going with her father to wind the church clock. Description of the Kings Pyon church clock tower. Description of her and friends being naughty and getting in the belfry door and climbing and exploring the church clock tower. Would get onto the top of the church tower.
46.21	[looking at a map] Description of Marley Pool on the side of the road that joined to the horse pool. As children Brook House was a 'magic' place for imagination. [looking at more pictures from Google]. Lived at what is now called Dower Cottage, Captain Bell's house was lower down. As a child her Aunty Alice who was Alice Lucas her father's sister had the Post Office. Her husband Uncle Charlie the cowman was her father's brother.
49.19	[picture of Ivy Cottage] when she was a child was a little house and when went in if you put your arm up could reach the ceiling. The owner had lots of pairs of ornaments. All the cottages were small and could touch the rooves. Further up the road was a turn to Weobley and on the bank were wild strawberries they collected.
50.32	Aunty Edie her father's sister never married and had a tiny cottage which on the Google picture has been extended [cottage on the right]. Description of cousin and wife who married and worked on the farm. Had a tiny hose with steps and memory of when small going there and their dog biting her leg.
51.36	Comment how village has changed from the photos. Was a forge for horseshoes, a house that was demolished. Brook House farm being sold to the Pudges when she was 17.
52.25	Description of an old sycamore in Brook House yard called the Stocks Tree. Description of the cottages. Their house was opposite Granny Stevens's and was a wattle and daub 'crick house' with no ceilings. Went in straight from the road. Memory of her father turning the door into a two part door so her brother could see out. Their house called Woodbine cottage before it was renamed Dower Cottage. Going up from their house the lane joined to Bush Bank and there was a bus once or twice a week to Hereford. Remembers the 'Tin Lizzies' buses started. Description of them.
55.24	Description of her school. Her father went to school at Miss Prescott's big house who was the church organist. There was also a house for the teacher and description of him told by her father. Description of her own wonderful teacher.
56.45	Description of her 2 up 2 down house with an outside toilet.
57.12	Her introduction to Roly by a workmate. Description of him signing up in 1936 and coming home in 1946. Roly met Eisenhower. Sister Edie got married in February 1949, herself April 1949 then her sister Tiny also in 1949. Description of another sister being cross that left on her own to look after her father and brother.
1.00.28	Description of all the wedding parties in their home. Still has some of her wedding presents e.g. pudding dishes and an embroidered tray cloth given to her by Miss Prescott the organist and her sister.

	Mis Prescott's big house had an avenue of beech trees and when she was homesick working in Middlesex that is what she wanted to see.
1.02.22	Description of Roly working at Kingsland Sawmills as a youngster before he signed up and had gone back there after the war. At one time his parents lived in Kingsland along from [Markham's] garage. Was a very poor house and Roly's mother and son lived there. No lights in the house, door was always open for light. Croase House 'irritated' Roly. Fire House was next to it. People at Croase House were offered money to make the crossroads corner safer but they wouldn't do it. Roly's parents then moved to Jubilee cottages. Roly's father Frank Summers died 3 weeks after they were married. Description of circumstances of his death at home. Roly's mother didn't like him marrying Lily because she had been in domestic service and didn't think she was good enough. Her other children had married e.g. shop workers but later she told friends in the village that Lily was the best of the wives because she could cook, sew and never had debts.
1.07.21	Roly's father Frank Summers was the Kingsland postman. Description of his bike and later van and his rounds. She was told the daughters said he as a 'bit of a monkey' and why. Description if their good relationship.
1.09.13	Description of having her daughter at the end of her first year of marriage in March. 20 months later had son Richard. Description of Dorothy slipping down the stairs before Richard was born. Description of Dorothy going to Ripon college and while visiting going to the cotton mills and getting cut offs and e.g. making Roly a shirt. Was always sewing and made Dorothy a coat.
1.10.57	Description of living at Jubilee Cottages when first married. Description of the toilet in the garden with 3 holes, one for each adult and a small one for children. Had running water. Sewage went down to the village down the side of the road.
1.12.29	Description of the doctor's surgery. Description of Marge Shatke working in the Kingsland Sawmill's office with Freda Jenkins. Both married prisoners of war. Freda lived near the sawmills. Surgery in big house next to Marjorie Shatke's house. Doctors were the Ovendons and how kind they were.
1.14.58	Description of the milk business near Lugg Mill and Roly being friendly with Crump as they were the same age. Roly's best man was Lacon Jones who has passed who was the son of the farmer at Sodgley farm [above Lugg Mill]. His wife was a Land Army Girl who had worked at Sodgley. She still has the knife and fork Lacon gave them as a wedding present.
1.18.30	Moving to her current home Drury Cottage. Description of what the house was like when they moved there. Had 6 months rent free from the farmer Mr. Davies from Arrow Mill who owned it to do it up. Paid five shillings a week rent when they'd done it up. Had lodged with Roly's mother at Jubilee Cottages when they got married as Roly's father had died. Moved to their new cottage on August 4 th . Description of Roly's mother Granny Summers and her life.
1.21.50	Description of Jubilee Cottage, 3 bedrooms and dark brown paint. Description of Drury Cottage. Used to cycle to Sodgley to see the 'old lady'. Description of Sodgley. Description of going hop picking at Street Farm on her bike when she was first in Kingsland and when her children were at school. Description of her father staying with them for a while.
1.24.48	Description of what it was like hop picking and friends she made including Mary Sankey.
1.26.40	Description of doing domestic work before and after she got married. Description of the Verdon's and places, land and farms they owned. Her cousin working for them as a parlour maid. Herself working at the Vicarage in Kings Pyon before being married. When first married still cycled there for work before she had Dorothy. Story about getting a puncture. Description of cycling everywhere until she was 82.
1.30.20	Description of catching the bus to work for Mrs Carlas and working for her for 4 years for 10 shillings a week. Caught the bus and had someone to watch her children if she wouldn't be there. Further description of what she did for Mrs Carlas who then died. Description of working for others in area including Miss Greenhous in Eardisland and then Mrs Stirling who she worked for for 20 years. Stories about Mrs Stirling and the Glazebrooks [former was mother of Mrs Glazebrook] and where she lived. Description of Mrs Stirling eventually being in a nursing home, description of her circumstances and going to visit her and then going to her funeral.
1.39.45	Talking about her diaries. Talking about Roly not going to the doctor when he should.

1.40.30	Descriptions of Kingsland Stores where she walked to when living in Jubilee Cottages. Two brothers running it and a story of going there and accidentally taking someone else's cheese. Description of the bread sold there and her own failure at bread making when she started.
1.44.07	Description of Roly being the saw doctor at the sawmills. Passing his saw test. Showing Lily how to set a saw. Description of what Kingsland Sawmills was like. Her daughter going to school with the owner of Border Oak. Sawmills making sleepers for the railway, coffin boards, brush handles. People would bring saws from Leeds and all over the country to Roly because he was an expert.
1.47.30	Description of huge timber piles. How they took the sides off and bringing offcuts home. How Roly did other things there too. Roly retired at 65 then story about him going to the butchers in Kingsland. Description of Walter Mitchell and the butchers. Would sometimes bring them unsold big pieces of meat but couldn't always use them. Walter was a good friend of Roly's.
1.50.57	Going to the Post Office. Description of a reunion in Coronation Hall when just had her daughter with mention of Godfrey Jones babysitting. Description of dancing with Roly. Dancing with the man who was running the Post Office at the time. Description of going to the Post Office to change Income Bonds. Description of dances at Kings Pyon when she lived there.
1.54.48	Talking about not going into Kingsland much when she lived in the village and why. Talking about saving and contributing for a piano for Kingsland church when children had grown up. The parson had come from the Navy and had 3 children.
1.56.10	Talking about using Eardisland more than Kingsland because nearer. Biggest changes in Kingsland are the posh houses that have been built. Always looks clean and tidy. The 'Millionaires Row' along from Cliff Davis. Recalls them being built up North Road. Undertaker Jack and Dolly lived up there and took her daughter to church and the choir. Knew the people at Lorne House and a house built next door.
2.00.26	That all the stores are closed. Now sell lovely sponge cake in the shop in the Post Office now. Roly was a bellringer on the tenor bell though the bells went wrong for a while and had work done on the them. Celebrations when they were repaired.
	END