

# **Angela Mary Church, née Langman.**

Interview by Jess Jephcott at Ditchling, Quilters Green, Fordham in 2007.  
A Fordham Local History Society project.

*(JJ) Angela, thank you for coming along. We're going to talk about your life story, so if we can start from the beginning, could I have your full name and age, please.*

*(JJ) Angela Mary Church.*

Née Langman.

*(JJ) Born, Angela Mary Unwin.*

Langman!

*(JJ) Sorry, Langman.*

Was that my bad pronunciation?

*(JJ) No, no it's me, I'm sure. Place of birth?*

Epping Essex

*(JJ) Epping in Essex and your present address?*

11 Brougham Glades, Stanway.

*(JJ) Now, how about brothers and sisters, what is the birth order and their spacing?*

Of my brother?

*(JJ) And sisters, are there?*

No, my brother was the only one, June 3<sup>rd</sup> 1926.

*(JJ) One brother, June 3<sup>rd</sup> 1926 and his name?*

Derek Charles.

*(JJ) Derek Charles Unwin.*

Langman!

*(JJ) Sorry, it's me, I'm sorry, I'm going to have to edit this. Langman. Why do I keep saying that. Right, father's name?*

Stanley Langman.

*(JJ) He was Stanley Langman and where was he born?*

I wouldn't know.

*(JJ) Not known, so how old was he when you were born?*

He was born in 1899.

***(JJ) So he was born in 1899 and how old was he when he died?***

October 1980, 81.

***(JJ) October 1981.***

Not quite 81, he wouldn't have been quite 81 because he died before his, but near it.

***(JJ) So where did he work?***

He was a wine merchant in Stamford Hill.

***(JJ) Did he have several jobs or..?***

Yes, we then moved to, he was the proprietor of a hotel in Ware and then, during the war, he was with Halton Press.

***(JJ) And where is that?***

Halton Press, national publishers, they used to produce Farmer's Weekly, Picture Post and he was a rep for the press during the war.

***(JJ) Right, during the Second World War and in the First World..***

Yes, and he flew in the First World War, as an under age, with the Royal Flying Corp.

***(JJ) He was a pilot?***

I would imagine, yes.

***(JJ) Or navigator, or whatever.***

Yes.

***(JJ) So was he ever out of work as far as you know?***

No, but he retired fairly early.

***(JJ) How about mother, mother's name?***

Gladys Victoria Webster.

***(JJ) And where was she born?***

Well, I would imagine that they were both born in Woodford, Essex. But that would apply to both of them, but she died in 1933.

***(JJ) So she died in 1933. Where?***

We were at the Canon's Hotel, Ware.

***(JJ) Canon's Hotel and so how old was she when you were born, do you know?***

She was born in 1900.

***(JJ) Born in 1900.***

She'd have been 33.

***(JJ) So she was only 33 when she died, very young, in Ware. And did she work before marriage?***

No.

***(JJ) Do you know?***

No. Well I suppose she helped in the hotel by this, as we were there.

***(JJ) So why a hotel, were they..?***

Father was the proprietor at the Canon's Hotel.

***(JJ) Of the Canon's Hotel in Ware, so did she work after marriage as well?***

No.

***(JJ) So when were they born, as far as you know? Sorry, when were they married, as far as you know?***

1924.

***(JJ) Right, do you remember your grandparents?***

My father had, my father's mother died before I was born, but I can remember my grandfather on my father's side and his stepmother, and I can remember both of my mother's parents. They died in, well the old dear, if I can use that word, but I shouldn't, died about 19.., she lived till she was nearly 90.

***(JJ) And where were they living, what area?***

They were, after my mother had died, they were both living in The Drive at Woodford and we used to go and visit them, this was sort of just, well prior to the war, and then my maternal grandparents moved down to Bournemouth, when they retired.

***(JJ) Right, what sort of people were they, say, your fathers' parents?***

They were, both lots of grandparents were in the licensing trade.

***(JJ) Pubs or hotels?***

Hotels, 'cause they used to, in the family, the Ram Jam belonged to the, my mothers, on the A1.

***(JJ) Yes, I know it.***

We used to go there occasionally, but I mean that was sold several years ago, and after my maternal grandfather died, the grandmother moved back to Essex, Woodford, that sort of, I can remember sort of going to see her then, when my children were young.

***(JJ) So where did they come from, do you know, as far as you know?***

I think they were all, sort of, Essex.

***(JJ) General, Woodford.***

Yes, Woodford, Wanstead.

***(JJ) Yes, that sort of area. So let's take you to your childhood days, so where you born at home, as far as you know?***

No, I was born, no, it's on the birth certificate, I think I was born in the, I wasn't born at home, I was born in, it's on the birth certificate.

***(JJ) Well, it's no worry, we can look at that. Do you know who delivered you?***

No.

***(JJ) No, but you think it would have been at home, you weren't born at home?***

I wasn't born at home, no.

***(JJ) No, so it was hospital. So, where was home, when you were born?***

When I was born, at the Canon's.

***(JJ) The Canon's Hotel, and how long did you live there?***

What at the Canon's? We moved from there to, I went to a nursery school in Ware, and then one moved to a little village just outside Bishops Stortford called Henham, right in the, sort of the depth of the country, and then we moved into, that was about '35, about 1937, because getting me to school, we moved into Bishops Stortford for a year or so and then we moved to Surrey in 1938.

***(JJ) What sort of house, or was it a hotel?***

No, it was a house, it was a semi-detached house and fields at the back and we used to watch the foxes and different things but now, I mean, it's totally obliterated, all the fields, like everywhere else.

***(JJ) All been built on, I dare say.***

Yes.

***(JJ) Was it an old house or?***

No, modern, modern-ish, you know. Post war, one would, post second war, First World War, rather.

***(JJ) Yes, so how many bedrooms, typically?***

Three, and father had remarried in 1938 and..

***(JJ) So you had a stepmother.***

Yes.

***(JJ) And did you get on well with her?***

I did, but it was much more difficult for my brother, who was then twelve.

***(JJ) And what was her name?***

Dorothy.

***(JJ) So you had all the mod cons, and whatever in the house.***

Oh yes.

***(JJ) It's quite a modern house, post first war. Question here: how was the water heated, was it again..?***

It would have been electric.

***(JJ) Yes, and the lighting would, well everything would have had all the mod cons, so who did..?***

Well they could even have had gas there, but I can't ever remember my stepmother cooking with gas. We were actually in Coulsdon when..

***(JJ) Coulsdon, Surrey.***

Coulsdon, Surrey, when war broke out. My parents had actually gone to France for a holiday, in August, and my brother had gone to stay with a cousin at Worthing, and I was actually at Walton on Naze with a wonderful, wonderful aunt that used to take me on holiday with her children.

***(JJ) What was her name?***

Ivy Webster and I could show you, take you to the bungalow in Walton, which is still there, and just as things were sort of brewing up towards the war breaking out, at the end of August, auntie decided that we shouldn't be on the coast, we ought to go back to Wanstead. So we moved back to Wanstead and my father's stepmother, no sooner arrived on her doorstep, and said "I'm taking the child to Bath." And the child was, more or less, picked up and carted off to Bath to people that I had never met, had no idea who they were, but they were obviously distant, distant, distant cousins. And it turned out that my great grandfather, I didn't learn this until, about five years ago, my great grandfather had married and had three wives, so this is where one gets these distant, distant cousins coming in because they had three different families.

***(JJ) So this was on your father's side.***

On my father's side.

***(JJ) And in what year, 1939?***

1939, I was taken down to Bath, yes.

***(JJ) And you were what age then?***

Nine. I can remember chambered into speech, if ever I hear it, I just cringe, because I can remember sitting on the grass and I didn't know where my parents were, my brother was sort of miles away down in Worthing and I was with all these strange people that I'd never come across in

my life, and my paternal step grandmother was not the most endearing figure, and one was totally bewildered.

***(JJ) But what was father doing at that time, during the war?***

Father was, well father was with the press, for quite a long period.

***(JJ) But back in London.***

Well, we moved, he worked from, with Halton Press, from Coulsdon and then he had this area designated, East Anglia, and was travelling quite a lot, so..

***(JJ) But you were left in Bath.***

Well, no he came back, soon as he got out of France, he came back and picked me up from Bath, and took me back to Coulsdon.

***(JJ) And there you stayed, for the whole of the war?***

No, there we stayed until, because he'd been transferred to this area and it was very, very noisy, Battle of Britain time and not that far from Biggin Hill and one used to spend quite a lot of nights down the raid, locally there wasn't a lot of damage. Most of the aircraft or bombs would be going over and not dropping them, sort of locally, but one used to spend quite a lot of nights down the dug-out and, when we first moved to Coulsdon, one can remember the two piers of Crystal Palace, but of course, they were obliterated, because they were such a landmark for bombers coming into the war and father decided it would be better to move out of that area because he was now working in this area. Well my brother and I were booked to go with our neighbour's son, who lived opposite in Coulsdon, to California for the duration of the war, and then the ship went down with the school children, so we got packed off to boarding school instead.

***(JJ) And where was that?***

I went to Barford in Warwickshire and my brother went to Burford in Oxfordshire. My brother used to cycle from the age of fifteen, he used to cycle, beginning and end of term, he did this for two or three years, from Fordham to Burford. It was 140 miles and no sign posts but, originally, his bike had been sent in passenger luggage in advance and the bike would turn up with a buckled wheel or a missing wheel or something so he said, right he'd cycle. So, he'd do his stint from Fordham to Hertford and stay with an aunt in Hertford for a night and then the next day, was 90 miles from Hertford to Burford.

***(JJ) So, perhaps a good run. And when did you actually come to Fordham then?***

My father bought the house in, I actually, for the first time I came to Fordham was March '41, 'cause I'd gone to boarding school from Surrey, father had bought the house and I moved to Fordham.

***(JJ) And what was that, where was the house, which house was it?***

Oak House.

***(JJ) Oak House, which is opposite..***

Opposite the church and we had, you've probably noticed it's got the three roof lines, we had evacuees in one end who, a woman who was there with two or three children, her husband was in the forces and she had been, come out of the east end of London.

***(JJ) And what were your first impressions of Fordham, the house, what sort of day was it when you came?***

I can't remember. Between.. I've obviously missed a bit out because, between going to boarding school and deciding whether we were going to go to California or not, we had had three months on a farm up in Worcestershire and one just sort of loved the cows and the country life and one was just pleased to be, but one, of course I didn't know a soul, because being at boarding school you weren't really involved with other, sort of, youngsters. I got to know the people that were farming at Archendines, Mrs Doe, she had a niece that was my age and lived at West Bergholt, so we used to meet up in the holidays and people that lived in Cobbs, on the left hand, down the way. She had got grandchildren that lived in Great Horkesley and had ponies, so one got to, sort of see them, in the holidays, but other than that, I mean there were so few children in the village.

***(JJ) Where were they all? Packed off?***

Well, there weren't very many, you see, I mean, there were only about, I had an electoral roll, until I moved, about 1960, and there were, even on that one, there were only about 250 in the village and, well I say, there were just very few children. Fordham Hall was farmed by the Cope family for the Gunnery's and it was all market gardening and one used to watch the cart horses going back, I mean, sort of, there weren't any tractors, he used to have about a dozen cart horses down there. I mean, a lovely sight, to see them going down and then they would, sort of, drink out of the pond opposite.

***(JJ) No cattle or sheep?***

No, I mean, locally, the Keedar's that farmed round where Peter Lofthouse lives, do you know where I mean, round on the way to Bergholt, the big farm that stands up there..

***(JJ) Fletchers Farm, I think it's called.***

No Fletchers is where Bradshaw's is, further on than that, going on towards West Bergholt, they had a big Ayrshire herd. The people that lived at Fletchers Farm in those days was a family called Reg and Mary Goymer and they, their daughter, their son was in the marines during the war and they had a daughter that tragically died as an adult, when she was an adult, and they sort of semi-adopted me because I liked the country way of life and one used to go round to milk the cows, I mean, before all the machine milking was going on, I mean none of that was going on.

***(JJ) Did you know any of the land girls, did land girls come to the farm?***

Not really because the Goymer's moved out in '48, when I was eighteen. By this time, I was working on a dairy herd down at Mount Bures. There were land girls around and, of course, there were the yanks around. I don't know if you've seen the picture, in the book of Fordham, with me with, I don't know what I'm doing with the cows tail, it looks as if I'm trying to milk the cow by lifting its tail. But the landlord of the pub had a Jersey cow, which he kept on our paddock at Oak House, and one used to, this is going back to, I'm going backwards and forwards rather, I'm sorry, I used to milk the cow, sort of at night, but the cow had to keep pub hours because when I wasn't there to milk it and he was, sort of, serving his customers, so the cow was never milked until about 9 or ten at night, and so, one couldn't sort of suddenly change it when I came home in the holidays, and when the yanks arrived, I was what, thirteen, fourteen and he always called me missy, and felt very responsible with all these chaps around, and they were allowed to come down and watch me milk the cow, but they had to come in two's or three's, and one particular day I went down and I couldn't make out why the cow hadn't eaten her mangle, so I bent down to pick it up and it moved, and I went screaming up there, and I think the poor chap thought I'd been raped or something, most concerned about all this, but what had happened, it was a rat, that had been, had some

poison and had moved from there to there. I mean, it was still alive, so these chaps went round there with a spade or shovel.

***(JJ) And the cow could see it.***

But when the beer would arrive on a Wednesday, it would usually have been all consumed by Sunday and then the pub would be shut for..

***(JJ) Consumed by whom, mainly the Americans?***

Well, a lot of the Americans and a few of the locals that were around because, I mean, most of the people that were left were women that worked for the, virtually all the village worked for the Gunnery's. And being a market gardener was a lot of work for them.

***(JJ) It was a very large area, wasn't it?***

Yes.

***(JJ) So there was another pub in the town, in the village. Of course The Vulcan, was that similar?***

I think that was quite well patronised because one, really being, right opposite the pub, you saw everything that was going on there.

***(JJ) So both the pubs were open.***

Yes, the highlight of my Christmas, as a child, was Christmas 1943. It was the last Christmas I ever spent with my brother, 'cause he joined up January 1<sup>st</sup> at the age of seventeen and a half and he said what do you do for six months, you twiddle your thumbs, you'll be called up anyhow, so he went on January 1<sup>st</sup> and we had six of the yanks for Christmas lunch, we had a doctor and a dentist and all medical staff, these were people that my father would drink with in the pub. And one of the American's names was Peter Hess, I think he got quite a lot of ribbing during the war with the other Hess over the other side of the water.

***(JJ) Rudolph.***

But they saw, I mean we saw things then, that I mean, one hadn't sort of really, not that we were really, I won't say that we were ever short of food or anything like that but a lot of the perks and different things that the yanks would turn up with the box of candy's and different things that one used to have.

***(JJ) Can we just go back to when you first came to Fordham, could you talk about your impression of the house, could you describe the house?***

Oh, I loved the house, I mean, it's a tudor framed house, very, very, I think it's about fifteenth, there are older houses in the village, but sixteenth century. The middle part is the oldest part of the house. At one time, it had been church property. Father bought it for fourteen hundred pounds with two and a half acres. Rowley Warren who had been the landlord, had owned the farm before the Gunnery's used to boast about how, cause all the beams, I meant to have brought the photographs, but all the beams were exposed by then and during..

***(JJ) Outside and inside?***

Outside and inside, I mean if you got them at the right angle, yes you could see daylight through, in odd places, and the windows rattled, I mean, when they were building the aerodrome and they

were on piece work, they didn't half drive through the village, but there so few people about it, you know, no one took much notice. Rowley Warren used to boast as to how he had had the whole place, sort of plastered and renovated and one thing and another, but if there was any air raids, sort of locally, and a few bombs did drop locally, it wasn't unheard of to suddenly hear an almighty crash and some of the plaster would come down between the beams and one particular time, I hadn't, didn't really know what a Doodlebug was, one being in the midlands, one had heard about these things, such were being flown over with no pilots, and one thing and another, and my first night back, it must have been Easter or summer '43 I should think, when they first started coming, I was, my father never approved of me having the dog upstairs, but the dog was allowed to the first night I was at home and in the middle of the night, and one heard this, sounded like a two stroke motorbike coming over and one had been told that when it cut out that was when you waited for it to land and the dog was on my bed, the dog had jumped on my bed, it was like a lump of jelly, and all of a sudden this noise cut out, and there was an almighty bang, and I got a thump on the back of my shoulders, I was sitting up stroking the dog, and a whole lump of the ceiling had come down slap on my pillow.

***(JJ) Where you should have been.***

Where I should have been, so I mean, after that the dog was given grace, the dog was allowed to come upstairs more often. It certainly would have given, it was quite thick plaster, it would have given one a nasty headache.

***(JJ) So where did it land, do you know?***

I don't know, I mean, there were the odd ones that would, Doodlebugs that did land locally, but one can't, and I can remember some plane came over, it was a plane, not a Doodlebug, that came over, and it wasn't that high above the Fordham church. Where it landed, I don't know, but it couldn't have gone that far.

***(JJ) But no, there was no damage to any buildings in Fordham, as far as you know?***

No, not that I know.

***(JJ) Quite well spread out I suppose.***

I think, I don't know whether something happened up at Houds Farm but I couldn't verify it, you know, unless ones fairly certain about what ones talking about, it's better to say nothing.

***(JJ) So what regiment did your brother go into?***

He was in the Kings Royal Rifles.

***(JJ) And what was his, how did his career go in the army?***

Well he always wanted to fly but, because he'd got bad eyesight, he would never, so he went in as an infantryman and he remained as a rifleman. And then, after the war ended, he was out in Aiden for quite a long time. He actually went in new years' day '44 and he was de-mobbed sometime in '48.

***(JJ) So where was he serving, what part of the world, Second World War?***

Second World War, he was, well, sort of, after the D Day crossing, sort of, the tail end of that..

***(JJ) In Europe.***

In Europe yes, yes.

***(JJ) Right, tell me about your life at home during the war, what work did you have to do, plenty of chores to do, were you gardening or..***

One used to do a bit of gardening because, I say, there was quite a big garden down there, but not a lot because, as I say, one was at boarding school until 1945 and then as the war finished father decided I'd been away long enough and he removed me from boarding school and I went to St Mary's.

***(JJ) At the age of fifteen, sixteen?***

Well I was just, a terrible time to move anyone, I was fifteen about a month, two or three weeks before VE day.

***(JJ) So you were back before the war had ended?***

Yeah.

***(JJ) And about the property generally, what sort of outbuildings were there? There was the main property and then..***

There was the main property, it's not much different to what it is today. We used to have someone to, because there was a paddock and, I mean, the cow used to graze a lot of the grass and then we would make hay, I mean, I'd make hay in the summer when one was around because it was all cut by scythe.

***(JJ) Hand scythe?***

Hand scythe, yeah, about an acre of the field.

***(JJ) And who cut it?***

Walter Ratcliffe, who was the grandfather of the chappie who's dog I've got and they used to live in the cottage just at the bottom of the, well where the Parkinson's live now. That was three timber framed, well, three farm workers cottages down there.

***(JJ) On Church Road?***

No below, the field going down towards Watercress Hall.

***(JJ) Oh yes.***

Where the big house is on the left which is where the Parkinson's now live. That was three farm workers cottages.

***(JJ) And what about the amenities at your house, water, electricity, sewerage?***

We had water, but we had..

***(JJ) Mains water?***

No, not mains water, we, when we first went there, we used to hand pump it, we had a well, which is still in the front garden, but I think it's been filled in, and not main sewerage, no. Got flush toilets and things like that but sewage, some sort of septic tank.

***(JJ) Which had to be, soil pit, or whatever, but the water you had to boil, did you, or did you not?***

No..

***(JJ) Drank it straight..?***

No, we drank it straight from..

***(JJ) No ill effects.***

No.

***(JJ) There's no gas, I presume?***

No.

***(JJ) And what about heating?***

We had no central heating, obviously, we had a boiler that, a boiler that sort of, it wasn't a Rayburn, but a triplex fire that had an oven at the side that you could cook by and I think that might have heated some of the water, well it must have heated the water, because there was no central heating, obviously, or anything like that. It's quite a cold house because it's got so many, I don't know if you've ever been in there, it's only one room deep so you've got outside walls..

***(JJ) Very draughty as well.***

Yeah, yeah.

***(JJ) What about your clothes, did you make your own or were they bought?***

Well you had school uniform, had to be bought, but other than that, one made a lot of one's own, because with coupons and things that, I mean, most of the coupons seemed to go on school uniform and you didn't have much choice.

***(JJ) How about shoes, they were bought?***

They were bought, yes.

***(JJ) What into town, into Colchester?***

Yes, yes.

***(JJ) What about repairing them, what..***

Yes, you used to have them repaired, sort of..

***(JJ) Again, not somebody in the village?***

No, I don't think, someone down, at one time, there was a chappie down at Ford Street that used to repair shoes but I couldn't guarantee what sort of time that was when he was there, I could take you to the place where he was, but I couldn't..

***(JJ) What about characters, local characters, in the village, that you can remember?***

Oh, there was Hoppity Beard, who walked with a hop, I don't know, sort of why, he used to, I think he used to be a grave digger as well. The Playles used to keep the post office when it was down..

***(JJ) Ponders Road.***

Ponders Road and then the Partridges were in the newsagents when it was about less than a quarter of the size it is now. Delightful couple, I can remember old man Partridge used to say, you know as you get older you don't need so much sleep, children might need eight hours, but women certainly don't need more than seven and men don't need more than six.

***(JJ) So that was the shop.***

That was the..

***(JJ) The newsagent but..***

Newsagents, yes.

***(JJ) What else did they sell?***

They used to sell, sort of, a few things but it's, not a lot, I mean the post office used to have a selection of different things there and, of course, they used to have the bake house next door, as well, and the Christmas that we had all the yanks for Christmas lunch, when the turkey was too big to go in the oven, the bakers would cook the turkey's for you and then you could finish it off on a spit on the open fire.

***(JJ) So, there was a turkey during the war was there?***

Yes.

***(JJ) What about butcher's meat, generally.***

Well meat was pretty short if, a lot of places, if you went, I can remember going out with my father to a pub in Stratford and he ordered chicken and he got the shoulder blade of a rabbit but, I mean, that was quite normal to dish up rabbit and, sort of, cover it up as if it was chicken but they got the wrong man, a very embarrassing time.

***(JJ) What about local, local fayre, rabbit, partridge?***

You would have, sort of, you would have rabbit and, of course you could keep a pig during the war, so we would have our, sort of, rations for the pig, that you could get and old Reg Bell at the Horseshoes, I mean, he used to keep a lot of pigs there and fatten, and then you'd be allowed to keep, I don't know whether it was one in six months or one a year and that was really quite an eye opener because you could, sort of, treat the ham, and different joints, and put them in brine, and then preserve them and they'd hang up in the kitchen, you had to put nets over them to make sure the flies didn't get to them.

***(JJ) So who would kill the pig?***

It would go off to, I presume a butcher, there used to be an abattoir down at Bures.

***(JJ) So they had to take the pig away to..***

Yes, the Chamley family that live up there, I mean, we, they would come and take, cart the pig off for you and then you would go back and collect it when it had all been jointed but, I mean..

***(JJ) So you didn't***

I mean you could kill chickens, we had chickens, we had these very pretty black and white ones, I think they were Ancona chickens, I don't think you ever see them around now and whether I've made up a fancy name or not I don't know but they were speckled, black and white and we had them for, I don't know, a few months and didn't get any eggs at all and father sold them to the local coal man who was a Mr Seymour, from Wormingford and he came and collected them put them back on his coal lorry and apparently they laid two eggs before he got them home.

***(JJ) So what treats were there for a young woman, during the war there, do you think?***

Not a lot, but then what you hadn't been used to you didn't miss. You had the radio, my step mother was very strict as to what you could listen to, you don't want that rubbish on, and sweets were rationed so there weren't, you know, you would walk the dog, you didn't feel deprived because you hadn't been used to anything. I used to, my step mother was one of these ladies, she, as I say, she was very strict, you didn't want to cross her path. Her one comment to me was, "you know my girl, you should read more," and I mean, I still don't like reading, I far rather sew, whether it's embroidery or making things, I mean, if you're making something, you've got something to see for it, but if you're reading a book, it's never been, I've never been very enthusiastic, everyone to their own.

***(JJ) You were talking about characters, this Hoppity Beard and, what about other characters?***

Ernie Bailey was the postman, as I said, Reg Bell was the landlord of the pub, he was a great, great chap and his wife was, and they had one grown up son who had a grandson called Michael and they used to have the R C Bell, the transport lorries, but I think they've..

***(JJ) No longer..***

No longer around and Reg Bell had a brother, a bachelor brother, that lived with them called... anyhow he ran the local fishing tackle, going round the farms, sort of, through thrashing from the stack, or as there were no combines at the time, it was a very busy sort of concern, as I say, the Gunnery's were the local landlord and virtually..

***(JJ) And they lived in the Hall?***

They lived in Moat Hall and the Cope family, Harry Cope was the foreman for them and he had many children and I think they sort of filled the hall with all the..

***(JJ) Fordham Hall?***

Fordham Hall, yes and the, Don Gunnery was up in Covent Garden, virtually all week, he'd go up on a, first thing Monday morning and come back at the end of the week when Covent Garden shut, so Mrs Gunnery lived there with her son called George, but I say, I mean there were very few commuters, I mean..

***(JJ) What about the rector, did you know him?***

The rector, reverend Oddie, he had three daughters, twins and a younger one. They would have been three or four years older than me. When the yanks arrived, if they went to a hop, they weren't allowed to dance with the men, they had to dance with each other, and the night, the night before

D Day, anyone caught within the area of, overlooking the drome, it was shut, and anyone in that area was, sort of taken into custody overnight and one of the rector's daughters was taken in with the dog and I gather there was a real old hum dinger, as one can imagine, with someone missing, and all the troops around, and that sort of thing.

***(JJ) But how would you know it was D Day?***

Well you didn't know it was D Day, you didn't know it was D Day, this came out afterwards. People were just walking innocently there, no one knew when it was going to be and they just happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time.

***(JJ) So where were you on D Day?***

I was at..

***(JJ) Here?***

No, I was at boarding school, June time.

***(JJ) Oh right so you didn't see what was going on.***

Term time, so I mean, this is only sort of hearsay, the same as the Doodlebugs, until one came back in the holidays you really didn't know what was going on.

***(JJ) So, that's your war time in Fordham, what about afterwards when peace was declared, how did life go on for you?***

Well, not a lot, not a lot sort of..

***(JJ) You left school when?***

I left school in July '47 and then I went as a farm pupil on a farm at Bures, because in those days, I mean, you paid to go, if you were going as a pupil, something like this, you paid to go, they didn't pay you. I went there for six months but only working a five day week, I mean cows work seven days a week but I went as a pupil down at Wither's Farm, Mount Bures.

***(JJ) Mainly working with cows.***

Entirely working with, entirely with cattle, I mean, Jersey cows were my one true love. Father was determined that I was going to go to university but as he had made me stay on and do a school certificate, two years running, I mean, has anyone else ever done this? Not because I did so badly but he said I wasn't going to leave school at sixteen and you didn't get your credit in maths which you would need to and of course a lot of the troops were coming back so they were taking a lot of the places and, I mean, I'd had, sort of my freedom and getting, well moving on a bit, getting a bit of money, no way was I going to, I mean, he'd sort of, I think that was about the only time that I defied him, and so, he used to give me, because for my efforts, and getting up at six o'clock and going off to work, cycling to Bures across the drome. I had to have permission to go across the drome because there were still, when Archie Howie was talking all about the drome, I mean I can remember his father being in the house there. And then I went, I moved on to living in Dunland Hall with Jersey's and I got the most appalling cattle ringworm and I was on the trub for about three months because I wasn't meant to be with cows and then I moved on from there and I was working on a farm, living in, and one used to show a lot of cattle, this was about '49, '50.

***(JJ) So how about romance***

Well one joined the young farmers, but you didn't sort of pair off in those days, I mean you went around in well, the Bradshaws had moved in by this time. There was Bill Bradshaw, David's father, an uncle and sister and there were the Percivals and so you would be, sort of, picked up and you would sort of, there'd be three or four of you, sort of, going off together, not, certainly not everyone had cars but there were one or two of the farmers, that father had a car and by this time I'd got a driving licence so one would borrow his car and one did quite a lot of Scottish dancing in those days. Well for the young farmers it was, sort of, the main way of life, so to speak. One didn't have, oh I had a 21st in 1951 and, I mean, yes there were sort of, boys and girls, sort of came, but there was no one really, particularly, that I was involved with until one went to, young farmers dance, they always used to be held at the Red Lion, I mean you would go to others, 'cause other clubs would have functions as well, and I somehow or other met up with a chap who was in the, well he was a purser on the ships out of Harwich and he would come and stay and one was quite involved with him for quite some time but nothing particularly serious and then, 1953, my brother had come back, 1952, my brother had come back from Panama with his wife and two children and father had decided that the garden was too much and they wanted to move on, I mean, one had moved into so many houses as a kid and been to so many different schools as a kid because, for evacuated, you know, you would be in a school for a term or two and then, sort of, one moved on, I mean I had four and a half years at boarding school but some of the other schools, I was only in for a couple of terms and so father, sort of, sold up and moved to Suffolk and I, by this time, was working away and then I was doing relief milking, which was quite interesting because, one went, sort of, around the countryside doing, but, I mean, you worked a seven day week maybe for two months, as long as they wanted you and..

***(JJ) In this general area?***

Oh no, by the time I was relief milking, I was down in Sussex, a real cushy little number. Some wealthy lady had half a dozen cows, so it was a question of sort of milking them, making a bit of butter, it was a real cushy number. I was down there for a month and then I got a phone call to say proceed immediately to Devon so, you'd gone away in the summer, with what clothes you had, and by this time it was getting on to winter so you'd got virtually nothing with you and we were milking about 80 Ayrshires and you were expected to remember the names and milk record them within about four days which was pretty tough.

***(JJ) So they all had names?***

They all had names, they were all individually weighed and individually recorded.

***(JJ) And you knew, you knew them all, individually?***

You, you sort of had to. You might have someone else there, well the farmer that I was working for down there, they had been out in West Africa during the war and they had come back to, to farm, and his only topic of conversation was how to drive a car and he hadn't got a driving licence, and what they did for the Spitfire fund out in West Africa during the war and he might come and just sort of, not help but he might know, verify the name of the cows. And then, so one came back, I was there for a month, whilst they were waiting for a regular cow man to turn up and when you've worked for eight weeks like that, you want a rest. I was sitting in the hairdressers in Sudbury when my, I'd just gone home for a time, I'd got a week off.

***(JJ) Where was home at that time?***

Well my parents were, sort of, living in, just outside Boxford, they'd moved from here to Boxford and I was sitting in the hairdressers and my father comes in and I think what on earths up. So he said well there's a phone call or telegram to say go immediately for the afternoon milking to Attleborough in Norfolk. Well, I was determined that I was going to a young farmers dance, I hadn't done anything or met anyone for so long, so I took his car, with his permission, went up to

Attleborough, and we were hand milking fifty Friesians and I said, I was meant to be living in and I said to the cow man, "well I'm off, I'll be back in the morning." Opened his eyes and he said "aren't you staying?" so I said "well yes but I've got father's car so I've got to get it back," so I drove back, went to the dance, got to bed at 2 o'clock and he got up at 4 o'clock and took me, it was mad, but then, I mean, one did things like that because, as I say, one hadn't met any youngsters for, 'cause when you were on these farms, you were totally strange, well you'd just got your own two feet, you hadn't even got a bicycle to get down to the village to, and you could be very isolated down in Devon.

***(JJ) So when did you meet your husband?***

I met my husband at a young farmers meeting in, before we'd moved from Fordham in 1952, at Chamley's farm, he was just out of the, having done his national service, and he, sort of, turned up there, I knew his sister, he has a twin sister.

***(JJ) What is his name?***

Chris Church.

***(JJ) A Fordham family?***

No, he was born in Colchester, his parents were living in Horkesley and at this young farmers meeting at the Chamleys he drove his pickup into a ditch. I'm not suggesting that he was drunk or anything like that, there was no, anyhow it was before breathalysing, drink driving and that sort of thing and, but we didn't start going out until about 1956 and then, I say, we got married January '59, engaged in April '57, April '57, yeah.

***(JJ) And where were you married?***

Great Horkesley church.

***(JJ) And how many guests, what sort of affair was it?***

Very small, there were only, it was not a white wedding, everyone thought I must be pregnant because we didn't get married, sort of, like that but there'd been so much family opposition on both sides. His parents didn't like it because I was four years older, my parents, well they objected, I don't really know, sort of, why. We had a reception at the Red Lion.

***(JJ) Red Lion in Colchester?***

Red Lion in Colchester, no bridesmaids, I mean, I just wanted to get married with, one was fed up to the back teeth with other people's reactions, as I said, when we separated, well we've proved them right haven't we, I mean the fact that we were married for 41, and we're still married but.

***(JJ) And where did you live?***

St Mary's. I bought the house.

***(JJ) St Mary's, where is that?***

Up here, I bought it.

***(JJ) Church Road, Moat Road?***

Ponders (think she means Plummers). It cost £2150. The garden is now about twice the size and, yes, he did spend a lot on extending it, but it was originally in my name, as the solicitors noted, when we got, when we sold the house, I wasn't, he didn't let me see hardly any of the papers to do with the house and it wasn't until the solicitors wanted to have the authority to know whether Angela Langman was Angela Church because the deeds were originally in my name. And then in 1980 before father died, when we had been married 21 years, father suggested that, because Chris had spent a lot of money on extending the house, and it was put in joint names then.

***(JJ) And what did your husband do, what was his job, Chris.***

He was in the family's seed business.

***(JJ) In the family?***

Seed business in Mount Bures.

***(JJ) Church Seeds.***

And he retired in September, so I believe.

***(JJ) And children, what children do you have?***

I have a daughter, Tina, who lives in the village and a son, Richard.

***(JJ) So you've spent quite a long time..***

55 years yes

***(JJ) In Fordham.***

I mean, the old dears in the village, there are a few, like Peggy, I mean, poor dear, I hear she's still in hospital, there are, have said to me several times, why have you moved out of the village and he's stayed in, well, whether he stayed in or not, was really immaterial, where could I afford to remain in the village and also ones got, I don't want another move, I had enough moves as a kid, and I'd never moved until I moved out of St Mary's and I wanted to go somewhere where I feel that I can cope with and there are buses for, I mean, at the moment, I don't mind doing the M25 or around but, I mean, one doesn't know for how long and how long ones fit enough to do it. I come across so many people of my age now that say oh I don't really like driving and I won't drive at night. Well if I didn't drive, yes you can bus, but where do you go to go out.

***(JJ) But you do come back to the village on a regular basis?***

Oh I, yes.

***(JJ) Take part in village life.***

Yes, yeah.

***(JJ) With what, what clubs are you with, is it the Friendship Club?***

Friendship Club but, I mean, I've got so many, when I moved, before I moved out, when we were both still in the house and I'd got so many bolt holes, I mean, it's unbelievable and one particular warm sunny day, I'd gone for a walk and I'd taken the dog with me and I was, well in his eyes, the dog and I were missing for five hours and when I got back in the middle of the afternoon, I mean, he really went, I mean he was a very kind, generous, honest, I can't say enough pleasant things

until this came up and he absolutely turned on me. He said “you should think about that dog, you’ve been gone five hours.” Well the fact that I’d been out and had lunch with someone, I had walked a mile and I’d walked a mile back but the dog was well rested, I mean, the dog is my life and no way would one do anything to..

***(JJ) And what is the dogs name?***

Jazz.

***(JJ) Jazz, yes.***

I mean, I’ve always had boxer dogs, I waited from the age of 14 until I was 29 to have my first boxer dog, my father said he would get one when I was settled and that sort of thing, so I always had boxer dogs but that’s another story, but alas I haven’t one now but Peter died so one took Jazzy in, and Jazzy knew me so it was no bad thing for her.

***(JJ) Well we’re coming to the end of our tape, we have a one hour tape and we’ve done something like 57 minutes, it’s been a very interesting story, this is the first one we’ve done and could we just say, thank you Angela, for being our Guinea Pig.***

Well I hope I haven’t been too boring or you know.

***(JJ) Not at all, thank you very much, I’m going to turn off now.***

**Transcribed by Theresa Jephcott in 2012.**

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