

Remembering Rodborough.

April 8, 2023

My name is Peter Philpotts. I was born July 16th, 1945 in my mother's bed at Wribbenhall, Rodborough Hill, Stroud. I am the youngest of three brothers, Bill (deceased March 2022), Bob currently retired and residing in Kent and myself. My mother was assisted in my birth by the nurse who lived across the road next door to Mr. and Mrs. Redmond. We were living in Lightpill at the time of my birth in a culdesac just off the Bath Road. Our neighbours were Mr. and Mrs. Mills and they had a spaniel named Nigger. Our future history teacher Owen Williams lived at the end of the road. Also living there were the Watkins family, Mr. Cyril and Mrs. (?) with four sons, Glanville, Winston, Michael and Christopher. In later years we all attended John Street Sunday school and church. Glanville and Winston were both in the choir together with Howard Beard.

But I digress. When I was 3 or 4 we moved to Wribbenhall to live. My grandparents Bertie Philpotts and his wife Annie lived in their own three room apartment that formed part of the house. Prior to WWII, Wribbenhall was a bakery. My father's sister Nancy and her husband Wally Cawthorn lived there during the war until they moved about five houses further up the hill and we moved in. Wribbenhall was my home until I emigrated to Canada in 1966. My father Jack Philpotts died in 1958. He had worked in Nailsworth and Brimscombe as a millwright during the days and assisted his father in the cobbler shop in our back yard in the evenings. Dad purchased his materials from a Mr. Spicer who worked in a shop on the High Street. Mr. Spicer lived on Coronation Road. He smoked a pipe and had a terrier named Randy. The cobblers shop consisted of a bench at which both Dad and Grampa repaired shoes for most of our neighbours. They had all the required "lasts" on which the shoes slipped onto while the repairs were completed. There was also a machine like a lathe used for buffing the leather edges smooth and polishing the finished product. The windows of the shop looked out over the back yard to the side of which Dad had a raised flower bed where he grew an amazing variety of dahlias.

During my early years I remember my Saturday mornings when Dad and I walked from Wribbenhall on Rodborough Hill all the way to Kingscourt where a lady by the name of Mrs. Roper had a grocery store which happened to be in a building adjacent to where my Uncle Rennie Boualt and my Aunt Queenie lived. Although there was a Co-op on the opposite side of Spillmans Road a mere twenty feet from our home, Dad chose to walk to Kingscourt because Mrs. Roper would allow him to use our ration book for what we needed, not necessarily what the stamps were for. When I was 10 or thereabouts I would also walk along Bath Road, past Lightpill to a Mrs. Holbrook's with my chip basket to get a dozen eggs.

On Sunday mornings we worked in the allotment off the dairy fields at the end of Kings Road. I was happy to see the allotment is still there. I saw it just below and off to the side of the soccer pitch when I was visiting family a few years ago. The first two fields are now all houses. (My father later moved to an allotment on Rodborough Avenue apparently because the soil was better). There used to be an old falling down barn between the first two fields. I also remember helping my Uncle Bernard Browning load hay bales in those fields. The hay rack was then towed by tractor to a farmer James yard on Kingscourt. Farmer James had dairy cows and a huge red bull named Rosie. Between farmer James and Walkley Hill was a market garden where we went to get our fishing worms from their compost piles. We were friends with the manager there and my father and brother Bill would sometimes play billiards with the

owner at his home that was on the corner of the hill. I believe the greenhouses and gardens were adjacent to Stringers Court.

All the walking as a kid stood me in good stead for when I took on a newspaper route when I was 14. I would leave home at 6.30am and walk to Mr. Henry Marriot's news store at the top of High Street. From there I walked back through town and started delivering along Wallbridge, up Rodborough Hill, along Lower Spillmans, back along Middle Spillmans, up the Hill to the Co-op, cross over the hill then down to Rodborough Avenue and do both sides and then home. Eat breakfast and off to school at Boys Tech. Some of the names on Rodborough Avenue were Gaskill, Wicks and Friend. I took over the route from one of the Friend girls after her father died. I also took over my brother's Citizen route after school which covered a part of the Bath Road, Spillmans Pitch and Spillmans Road where some of the customers were sisters of Laurie Lee.(Marjorie and Phyllis I believe).

All three of us boys were at one time or another cubs and boy scouts. Our leader was Eric Daniels who owned Daniels on the bath Road. I believe his home on Kingscourt was very close to Farmer James.