

# Memories of Jeune Morris (Mrs Mitchell)

*May 2007*

I was born on 15 April 1933 and baptised **Jeune Maureen Morris**. At the time of my birth we lived at 1 Bulan Place Headington Oxford, which later became 121 Bulan Road. Our postal address was Headington, but we came I believe in the parish of Cowley: I think the old stone wall was the boundary line.

## *Memories passed on to me by my father*

I am lucky that my father, **Stephen Morris**, told me many things about his family. My grandmother **Rosa Morris** (née Louch) was a laundress. I think that she washed clothes for the Berry family (the bakers of Headington). My father said that she used to shop in St Clement's sometimes, and that the long dresses worn then had a wide band of binding on the inside of the hem to save fraying and mud. As she died in November 1915, I never saw her, but through my father's eyes I did. She had what is now termed strawberry-blonde hair, She loved her children, and they her. My father said, "You never saw your grandmother, but I know that you would have liked her, and she would have loved you." I do not know which son it was, but one of them had the cane at school. Rosa went marching up there, and said, "If my children are wrong I will hit them myself, not you."

My grandfather **Walter Ernest Morris** was a founder as well as a player of Headington United (later to become Oxford United) Football Club: I think he played centre forward. In the time of Mrs Phipps, the Six Bells had three photographs of the team in the club-room, but I do not know what became of them when the pub changed hands. The first fixture was on 5 March 1898: it resulted in a draw, and the game was replayed two weeks later on 19 March. (There is a photograph of my grandfather and the rest of the team on page 35 of *The Changing Faces of Headington*, Book One: it was sent in by my cousin Joyce Allen, who is the daughter of my father's eldest brother Rowland Morris.

My father said that at Christmas time they had a stocking (or more like an old sock: there were no fancy net-trimmed net jobs then). Inside would be a sugar mouse, an orange, an apple, and perhaps a few nuts.

My grandmother Rosa Morris died in 1915, leaving young children: my father was 11 years of age at the time. On her deathbed Rosa begged her mother Martha not to let her children go into the workhouse, and Martha, at a grand old age, kept her promise.

My father's friend for life was Edward Tolley, known as Ted. Ted was born in Church Street (now St Andrew's Road), and my grandmother Rosa Morris was at his birth. Mrs Tolley needed attention, so Ted was put aside, and it was Rosa who brought him to life and revived him. My father and Ted went to school together.

When my father was young, his stomping ground was where the John Radcliffe Hospital is built, and Stow Woods. In the summer months he and his brothers and one sister ran around without shoes; footwear was for school, and

then boots were order of the day. But they all had good feet. My father went to the Field School on the London Road (also known as St Andrew's School), where Gaffer Stace was Headmaster.

The fire engines at this time were still horse-drawn.

My father left school at the age of 12 or 13 and started work at the Home & Colonial shop in Queen Street, walking down Headington Hill and back again at night; but as soon as he became 21 he was put out, because they didn't want to pay him a man's wage. He went to work for a while at Vallis the baker's in Headington Quarry, and then moved on to work at Mowbray's in St Aldate's: by this time he had a bicycle. He was to spend the rest of his working life in print-works, going on to the Church Army Press and then the Nuffield Press in Cowley, where he learnt to become a guillotine operator.

When my father worked at Mowbray's, his address was 1 Western Road (now Holyoake Road) in Headington, and both he and his friend Ted were lodging there with the two Miss Tolleys, who were Ted's maiden sisters. My father was Ted's best man, and when my father married my mother, Kathleen Room, Ted was a witness the other witness was Frank William Room, one of my mother's brothers. Ted married Florence Adams at St Mary & St John in Cowley, the same church as my parents. They had a daughter, Janet Tolley, and we used to visit them in Cranmer Road, Cowley. Ted was my godfather.

When my father acquired a bicycle, he would ride all over the place, mostly with Ted. He cycled as far as London, and on holidays to Weymouth. My mother went to work in the bindery at Mowbray's. She was six years younger than my father, and it was said that he was cradle-snatching. He would ride his bike to Cross Street, to the end of the road, and my mother would go out. After sometime, Granny Room said, "Don't you think that you should invite this young man to come into the house?" My father was then still living with his father, Walter Ernest Morris, and his father's third wife Martha (formerly Mrs Cooper) in the new council houses on the London Road near Green Road (it was later he went to live with the Tolleys.) My mother would come out of Pembroke Street (now Rectory Road) and as she walked along St Clements my father would stop and give her a ride to work. She would stand on two little step-pieces, one either side at the back. When they were married at St Mary & St John Church on 20 September 1930, my mother had to finish work at Mowbray's, as the order of the day was no married women. My father was given a large clock with an inscription, and my mother a much smaller wooden one.

My parents took out a mortgage on 1 Bulan Place, a dead end with a field beyond. I think Bulan and Dene Roads were built in the late 1920s, with three different designs. Unfortunately the sand used in the construction had salt content, and my father struggled with this all his life.

Even when married, Janet Tolley went for summer holidays with us to Weymouth, with Ted and my father riding bicycles (perhaps to save money), and

Florrie, Janet, my mother, and myself (being about two years of age) going by train.

### *My St Clement's grandparents*

At the house of **Granny Room** at 20 Cross Street, St Clement's we would make peg rugs. These were extra special owing to the fact that Grampy Room was a tailor: the material used would be off-cuts from the suits and waistcoats and suchlike that he cut out. In general the borders were black, with various coloured middles. There was a pigeon loft at Cross Street because my Uncle Bert and Uncle Frank raced pigeons. They kept the Sabbath, and no one worked at all on Sunday, The Sunday dinner was cooked at a bakery. On Sunday morning there was church (at St Mary & St John) followed by Sunday dinner. Grampy bought a bag of sweets and shared them out, and would read from the family bible, which I now have. (Their marriage St Mary's in Witney and the births of their eight children are recorded in it.) On Sunday afternoon I went to Sunday school, and Grampy and Grandma Room would come to meet me after with my father and mother. Granny wore a fox fur around her shoulders. We would all go to the woods. Grampy loved the anemones but didn't like them picked. Then we would go home for Sunday tea.

With my mother I would go to Cross Street on Wednesdays and Saturdays. On Saturday I would have threepence pocket money, as did the other grandchildren: Grampy used to give it to us. After school most days my mother would give me a penny, and I would go to the shops at Cinnaminta Road, mostly to Hyme's sweets and newsagent.

Grampy and Uncle Frank worked for Sheppard & Woodward in the High; Uncle Herbert (Bertie) was a tailor; and Aunty Ethel was a children's nurse for the people at Stanton Harcourt, and went with them when they travelled abroad. Uncle Jessie worked for the *Oxford Mail* (but it was, I think, the *Journal* first). Aunty Mabel was kept home to do the running, taking work back to Shepherd & Woodward and bringing more home. Uncle Bert was in the Ox and Bucks regiment in the First World War. Uncle Frank also served in that war, but not in the Ox and Bucks. Aunty Ethel married William Huxley and lived nearby at 27 Cross Street. and then Aunty Mabel married, so my Aunty Margaret was kept home to do the running, and my mother went out to work. I expect that after Aunty Margaret married, Aunty Ethel did the running.

### *Christmas time*

Before Christmas my mother would make a Christmas cake, and this would be taken to Cross Street in St Clement's, where we would go on Christmas Eve. We would sleep there, and when I was very young my cot would be taken. I loved it, because upstairs we had candles. I had gifts on Christmas morning. Granny and Grampy used to give me slippers and I would put these on, and

when the time was right go in to show Granny. We had breakfast and dinner there. Dinner was all cooked in or on the black range, which had a fire in the centre, an oven either side, and a gas ring on legs on the top left side. There was always a fire because Grampy, being a tailor, had irons on the go all the while (not at Christmas though, or at weekends). Grampy worked with Uncle Frank in the parlour, but come the weekend, it would all be put back in order, with the carpet rolled down and the furniture uncovered. They had lovely mahogany furniture, and wax fruit under a glass dome.

After Christmas dinner, the rest of the family would stop by and join us in the parlour, and we would have a grand tea, which was mostly prepared by my mother. We slept there Christmas night, returning on Boxing Day to our own home because it would be straight back to work for my father: we did not have a long time off then, as now, and there was nothing for New Year, because we were not Scottish. We would keep up Twelfth Night, however, and my Uncle Frank and Auntie Edie gave a party at Crotch Crescent, Marston.

We had our own Christmas party, usually the first Saturday night after Christmas. My mother and Mrs Munt would save threepence each week from September, and then, come Christmas, would buy something for each child invited. The gifts would be on the tall Christmas tree, which my father bought from a chap in Hollow Way (on the opposite side from the Co-op, and further down). This man sold garden ornaments made of cement, planters and tubs, animals, ponds, bird feeders, bird baths, and weather dials. I used to go with my father to buy the tree, and he would put it on his bicycle and wheel it home. The neighbours' children, family, and friends were invited to our party, and we would have a gift from the tree. One year we were all standing round the tree, including young Paul Witts, and in came Father Christmas. Paul stood there looking and taking it all in, and then he said, "Father Christmas is wearing my Dad's boots", and this was correct, because it *was* his Dad. But he was told that Father Christmas was very tired, he had travelled through some really bad weather to get there, and his boots were all wet from the snow from the North Pole. He didn't think he would be able to come, but the ladies were so kind. He had some good food and drink, and Mr Witts had allowed him to borrow his boots (so kind). Paul lived at 141 Dene Road, and was the second child of Bert and Mary Witts. He went to Magdalen College School, and later I believe became Manager at Lloyds Bank in Headington. Sadly Paul, Bert, and Mary are no longer with us. Paul married and lived at Cumnor, and is buried there: he had a son also named Paul Witts. His elder sister went to Australia: she was a nurse and met a doctor on the voyage, and they were married before arriving down under. I met her again when I was on a visit home from America and she came over to visit her parents and have her second child some time around the 1970s. I do not know if they are with us any more or not: who knows, with this I could find out. The children at the time I last knew were only two girls: one was Penelope, the other one's name has escaped me.

At the parties we would play games such as "How Green You Are", "Old Ma Mackenzie's Dead", "Sally go round the sun", "Lucy Locket", "The Farmer's in his Den", "Oranges and Lemons", and "Simon Said". One Christmas Father and Ted Tolley made a huge cracker, filled with small gifts, and my cousin Margaret Bye and myself pulled it – magic times. Sometimes there were small prizes for the games we played, such as marbles, hair clips, pencils, notepads, crayons, paint, sweets, and more.

I used to make Christmas tags to sell. I cut out pictures and scraps, wrote "Merry Christmas" on them, made a hole with a knitting needle, and put a cord in.

At Christmas I saved my pocket money, and with Joy Horwood and my cousin Margaret Bye we would buy gifts for our mothers, such as handkerchiefs, a Ricketts blue-bag, hair-clips, a few sweets, shampoo in little packets of paper, bath cubes, darning silk for stockings, darning wool, soap, envelopes, etc. For Dad, there was tobacco, a pencil, seeds, a comb, and snuff, because he could not smoke when he was working with paper in the print works.

### ***Shops in Headington***

I remember the following shops in Windmill Road: Edgington's, a branch of Cape's, a wet fish shop, Mr Aston the Sweep, and a newsagent's. West's was further on down Windmill Road, and beyond that was Mattock's Roses. Mattock's used to have land at the top of Headington Hill, on the site that is now Oxford Brookes University. There was a tobacconist shop run by Fred Grain in Windmill Road, on the right leaving Headington, and one of his sons kept the Butcher's Arms pub in William (now Wilberforce) Street. I went to school with their daughter Barbara Grain. If I remember right, there was a fire at the pub around the mid-1940s.

In New High Street was John Hall's picture house, where there were specials sat for children, and there was a yummy fish and chip shop on same side as the picture palace. On a Friday night I went with my mother and our neighbours Ann Horwood and daughter Joy Horwood, and we would walk home in the blackout – with Dad too when the works were on short time on Mondays. We would ride our bicycles to the pictures and leave the bikes at a little cottage two doors down. It was cheap parking: I think it was tuppence, which we paid when we collected the bikes on leaving.

There was a chemist shop at the top of Windmill Road, and a Butler's. There was another chemist on the corner of London Road and Western (now Holyoake) Road. There was also a chemist on the corner of London Road and Manor (now Osler) Road. Coming down from the traffic lights, there was an electrical shop on the corner of the traffic lights of London Road and Headington High Street. Holyoake Hall was built for dances etc., and most Saturday nights there would be dancing.

I think that there was a second-hand furniture shop in New High Street, and a little radio shop called Andrew's. Coming out from New High Street, there was a group of shops opposite on the corner of Manor (now Osler) Road: Gurdon's, a hairdresser's, and a baby and furniture shop. On the right there was Walker's baby clothes shop, with lovely little smocked items. Further on up there were some big houses and a doctor's, and a toy shop up by the traffic lights. There are so many shops to mention: Berry's the bakers, the Co-op, and around the other corner a sweet shop and Durham's greengrocer. After the second world war my brother-in-law Harry Mitchell ran this. He lived in Old High Street and was by trade a butcher, as was his grandfather James White, who kept a pub and a butcher's shop at Cowley. My uncle Ern Morris, who lost a leg, was a cobbler in competition with Smith's Shoe Repair, and later sold knitting wool as well. He worked from a little shop by the name of Chaundy's. This later became a sweet shop with toys and a Dolls' Hospital (now part of the Mount Pleasant Hotel). Uncle Ern later moved to Somerset.

There was a little shop on the corner of Windmill Road and Margaret Road. When I went to school they sold grocery and sweets, but later it became an antique shop (like Grain's, although he was more of a secondhand dealer). There was a builder's merchant on the opposite side of Windmill Road to West's greenhouses. There was I think Powell's the wood merchant's further up towards the traffic lights, before but on the same side as Aston the Sweep. On the London Road in Headington, on the same side as Edney's Menswear, there was a restaurant, and I think they sold jam and such. Most people know of the Britannia pub on the corner of London Road and Lime Walk. Opposite there was a garage, and going on down there were two or three little shops, one being a bakery shop. Further down on the other side was Headington School, a private school for girls. They wore grey uniform, and I think dark blue or purple trim and capes.

### ***Margaret Road Schools***

I went to all three schools in Margaret Road: Infants, Junior, and Senior.

Between the top end of the front of the Infant School and the Senior School was a little stone-built building where children (infants and maybe juniors) would be sent for medical attention, I think on a Monday.

A nurse would come round to the school to check for head lice. Each child would have to go behind the blackboard, the hair would be lifted behind each ear, and then the back. I never worried because my mother checked mine every Friday with a special comb.

There was a fancy-dress competition during my time at the infants. I do not know the occasion, but it was a celebration of some kind. I was about 5 or 6 years old, and it was summer time.

In the mornings, if we paid I think a penny, we had Horlicks. and a chocolate biscuit. The Head Mistress was Mrs Doughty.

One teacher, Miss Franklin, used to ride a sit-up-and-beg bicycle (also known as a daisy mower). She was a dear, like someone out of Mary Poppins, complete with carpet bag.

In the hall of the infant school there was a very large table all laid out with trains.

At the senior school Mr Sammy Eason made us all feel important. If anyone showed more interest in certain things, they were given every opportunity to do better.

We used to have teams for sports day: I think they were Chandal, Handlo, Bassett, and Drewitt. We were assigned to whatever we were to be in when we first moved up. Each team had a colour: Chandal was red. We used to go swimming to Temple Cowley swimming baths, where we passed our tests.

I enjoyed most subjects at school, but especially Cookery, methods of cleaning, and washing. It is a pity these are not mandatory these days.

The Science teacher at Margaret Road Senior School was a Mr Saunders. Mr and Mrs Silcox taught Art.

I was not too keen on all the dates in history. (So what am I doing now? Yes, my family history with all its dates, but I find more interesting and it has a purpose.) Geography came to life for me, and we had a fill-in teacher from New Zealand who explained to us about her grandfather arriving there: she told us about the land, animals, and all of the people and why they were there. We learnt of the Maoris' lives, how they lived, and their many crafts.

In the first year in Needlework lessons with Miss Godfrey, we were required to make our gear for PT, in general a pair of bloomers in the green school colour. Next we made a very nice apron and hat for Cookery lessons. I think Miss Fox took these, and I believe her father was someone of account to do with the police. I was in my glory with Needlework. There was a store cupboard, with all types of material within. While I was at school I used to be allowed to see the material. We were still at this time having clothing coupons, which were not just for personal clothes, but for bedding, tablecloths, curtains, tea clothes, and towels. No wonder flour sacks were used and stitched together; and when I was married my wedding slip was made out of parachute nylon. During my time at senior school I made bloomers for PE, an apron for Domestic Science, a blouse, a tweed skirt with panels, an all-over slip with shoulder straps and fancy edging, and two smocked waist aprons (one was for my mother for a Christmas gift, the second for my own use). The last item, and the prize of the lot, was a very fashionable summer dress with a dropped waist to the hips, short sleeves, and a pleated skirt. I thought that I had arrived. About this time I had a pair of wedge-heel shoes, in tan leather.

Other teachers were Miss Hornsey, Mrs Haithwaite, Miss Macann, and Miss (or Mrs) Spurs. We used to sing "I've got spurs, the chingle changle chingle." I did think highly of her, she was strict and very fair, and this I could deal with.

### ***Cinnaminta Road/Bulan Road area***

There was Bennett's the butcher and Cotton's, as well as Simpson's the grocers. Simpson's was originally also a Post Office, but when it was sold and became a fish and chip shop, the Post Office moved to Oak's. Next to Simpson's was Hymes the newsagent, where my father bought the "Green 'un" on a Saturday night. The daughter of Mr & Mrs Hymes married Mr Oak, and they took over. When Hymes had the shop it was smaller, and their living room was at the back. Then next to Bennett's there was Bowles the greengrocer. It was run by an old lady in a long black skirt, her adult son, and other staff. Giles Fish and Chips later became a hairdresser's. Next to Giles was Brookes Dairy (possibly related to the Brookes in Cross Street, St Clements).

On Guy Fawkes Bonfire night when I was young, we would all save our fireworks and have a bonfire on the land that Peat Moors Community Centre is now on. (This Centre was build with the late Cyril Hopkins, secretary, and workforce, the people of the area giving of their time and skills and labour for the community.) This area was also known as the Pit. Many years ago this was a quarry with stone, the same as Rock Edge. At the bottom of the pit, the area was marshy, leading through to the Southfield Gulf Course. Like Rock Edge, Lye Valley was filled in with all manner of waste.

Growing in the marsh were Cotton Flowers and Cuckoo flowers. There was a stream that came from Shotover, and springs. It then went underground to Peat Moors and the bottom of The Pit through to the Golf Links along the Cowley Marsh Protected land, and under Oxford Road Cowley, and then through the allotments to Iffley and the river.

In Lye Valley there used to be what we called the Horse's Field. I am not really sure who had it or rented it then. The little stream that ran along the bottom of the valley and on to the golf links was a good place for frogspawn, Quaker grass, cotton-flowers, iris, and yellow cuckoo-flowers, and on the slope were Tom Thumbs, cornflowers, and Scabious. In the Second World War. Italian prisoners-of-war dug out all along this ditch. These prisoners would make toys and come round selling them. They made one that was like a wooden bat with four carved chickens fixed on to it with string, and a string with a weight underneath. By twirling this around it made the chickens appear to be pecking. They also made a carved man fixed between two thin pieces of wood: by pulling the two lengths of wood together, the man would somersault. They also made felt slippers.

Before the council estate was built, my father used to have an allotment that backed on to what became Churchill Drive. A Mr Keene kept pigs over that

way. You could see him going backwards and forwards with two buckets, one either side of him, on a yoke. His family had been moved from Quarry, along with many others: Coppocks, Masseys, Smiths, and Gardners.

As I have mentioned Bulan Place was a dead end, and there was a five-barred gate across the end where we used to play. In the later 1930s the Council built an estate there and it was fun climbing in and around that lot; but the field was better.

When I was 8 years old, Alfred & Ann Horwood came to live next door at 3 Bulan Place. They had been renting a house at Headington Quarry, somewhere off of the Old Turnpike Road. In that area, and on the left-hand side going up to Shotover (when I was about 8 years or so) there was a lovely little thatched-roof church [St Ebba's]. It was very small. with a piano in the far-right corner. It was open all the time.

Opposite them was number 4, and both these houses were owned by Mr Andrews, who kept the little radio shop next to the Headington Palace Cinema owned by John Hall. Mr Horwood was renting from Mr Andrews, but later bought it. Mr & Mrs Higgins at number 4 rented and chose not to buy, so moved on. On the day the Horwoods moved in, my father said, "Guess who is to be our neighbour: it is Alf Horwood (Curly), I know him well from Headington." Joy Horwood was to be my maid of honour. Her husband was Brian Greenwood from Headington who worked at Burton's Dairies in Windmill Road, and later went to Botley Road and the Summertown branch. He also played the drums at Holyoake Hall Brian was my husband's best man, and Mrs Munt our other neighbour had a party.

### ***Gypsies in Headington***

Along the Slade (before reaching the Corner House pub) there used to be a number of gypsies. A group camped in one place, and when there was a death the caravan was burnt. Behind a high fence further along there were three gypsies: two sisters and their brother. One of the ladies was named Binner, and they sold flowers and pegs that they wheeled around in a big old high black pram. It could be that they grew the flowers up an entrance off the Slade and at the back of the big houses on Old Road (on the side going past Titup pub). It was interesting to talk with them. But I was only a child when they came round, and my mother and myself were in our neighbour's garden. (This neighbour was Mrs Munt, who I knew as Aunty Munt. As young woman she had been in service at Shotover House in Wheatley to Major Miller. We visited one Sunday when it was an open day, and I spoke with the gentleman. He said, that at one time they owned the land right up to the Green Road roundabout, on the McDonald's side.)

The gypsies who camped in the Slade are mentioned in R. D. Blackmore's book *Cripps the Carrier*. Cinnaminta Road (off the Slade and Bulan Road) was named after Princess Cinnaminta of the Gypsies.

### ***Games and Occupations of Children***

We played Statues, Hopscotch; "How many miles to London?", Marbles, Whip & Top (colouring patterns on the tops with chalk); and Kerb & Wall. We also had roller skates, and would walk on Golden Syrup 2 lb tins with holes and string handles.

There was a craze of buying plastic from Woolworths: it was about ¼ -inch wide and in different colours. It was sold by the yard from a circular wheel. We used four colours and made bracelets.

All sorts could be made from a piece of string, such as the fancy diamonds of cat's cradle, and parachutes. We also played cards.

We either skipped on our own, or in a group over a large rope with twirlers each end. The skipping games included "All in together, this fine weather, when it's your birthday please run out"; and "Who will I Marry? In the last of these, you skipped while chanting "Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Sailor, Rich Man, Poor Man, Beggar Man, Thief", and the answer came when you missed the rope. It continued with chants such as "How many children?", "Where will you live?", "What would you go to church in?".

I did embroidery, and more so when I was getting my bottom drawer made up before marriage. I knitted with darning wool, as we did not need clothing coupons for this: It was cut at one end of the loop, but we got round this by knitting along a row and joining another piece to come back.

I had an autograph book; I collected stamps; I was in the Brownies; and I joined Bury Knowle Library.

We used to go to the different fairs and fetes, and always to St Giles' Fair. We also went to the pantomime, but in those days it only opened for the first day on Boxing Day.

### ***General memories***

When I was 13 years old I had scarlet fever. Dr Firth from Cowley was our doctor, and I was whisked off to the Slade Hospital, where I could only see visitors through a window. I think that I was in there for three or four weeks, and before leaving everything had to be fumigated. It was a good hospital at that time.

When I first left school. I went to work at The Church Army Press. I expect it was thought, "Well we did it, Jeune will be OK." But it was not: there was not enough movement and change, so I left.

Then when I was still in my teens I went to Will R. Rose, the photographer's in the High. I also worked at their laboratory in St Ebbe's (opposite Brewer Street): this was very interesting, and I worked at all types of work. Sometimes I

would go to the shop in the High Street and do office work, sending out the bills or doing stock-taking. We would have special club tickets to enable us to go to the Rackett Restaurant on the corner of Blue Boar Street and St Aldate's. During the lunch break sometimes we would window-shop, and sometimes go to Christ Church Meadows. I would get the number 5 bus to go home from the end of New Inn Hall Street (now Bonn Square). Cooper's big hardware shop then was opposite Bonn Square: most of this became part of the Westgate shopping centre, and it was very interesting when it was being taken apart, as everyone could then see all the old cellars and the structure of buildings from years and years ago. The number 5 bus would stop at St Francis Hall, and in one direction went down to Oxford via Cowley, and in the other via Headington.

It is well known that when the Cowley factories came out at mid-day and in the evening, the traffic was horrendous: head-to-tail all across the road, mostly push-bikes but also mopeds, a few cars, and buses. It was like a river in flood and out of control that led to all arteries, not only the main roads. At Temple Road and all cut-throughs there was not a hope in hell of crossing the road at these times.

When I was growing up on a Sunday evening, we would go or meet up with family and friends at Bury Knowle Park. Very often there would be a band playing. Other times we would go across the three fields of White's Farm (now Wood Farm Council Estate). We would walk to Shotover: it was lovely, sometimes The Ridings, Horspath, Brasenose Woods. It has changed there now. At one time there was a good-sized pond, which had some strange newts. In both places there were bluebells, primroses, Star of Bethlehem, and ragged robins, and in Brasenose Woods hazel, catkins and hazelnuts. What a wealth we had. In the early 1950s there were motor-cycle scrambles held at Shotover, and these pulled large crowds. We would walk there and back.

At Easter time we had our Easter eggs and often a basket. We would take the basket with chocolate in it, and pick bluebells and primroses (which is not allowed now). I am surprised back as 1951 we would go to Combe Woods Wheatley and there were masses of primroses, but two years ago (2004/5) you could hardly see any.

During the lovely long summer holidays we would go blackberrying in a group: Aunty Margaret (my mother's sister), cousin Margaret, Mrs Horwood and Joy Horwood, Mrs Munt, my mother and I. The ladies carried long deep baskets, and we would carry food and drink. We would leave Bulan Place, go along the Slade, past the Isolation Slade Hospital. and on down, past the air-field where there were aeroplanes for scrap: we were interested when we saw some with swastikas on. We went out on to the Garsington Road, and where it splits in two we took the Stadhampton road. There was a woods there near what is now Blackbird Leys. We picked some blackberries, and played close to our people. We had a lovely time, and then walked all the way home: we were so

tired. The baskets were loaded to the brim. After this we had blackberries every which way that you can think of.

My mother was a member of the Co-op: I remember her number to this day, because she used to tell me to be sure to give the number if I shopped for her, and to bring the ticket home. It was 18134. When I was in my teens and in town, and told that we could not afford so-and-so, I said; "We could go to the Co-op and get out some of that divi", but my mother replied, "NO. I expect, one day you will marry. We are saving it."

My cousin Joyce Huxley (Aunty Ethel's daughter) was head cashier at Weber's in the High Street. They used to have the system like the Co-op and Cape's, and possibly Elliston & Cavell's too: the money was put into a container and it was whizzed off to a main point; the change came back the same way to the counter with a receipt

We could if lucky get nylons from Luck's, which was in the Covered Market between the High and Market Street. This was when there were seams down the back of the leg. (At that time there was a repair service for nylons: a girl would sit in the window at a machine near Carfax, on the corner of Queen Street and St Aldate's.) Luck's also sold material for sewing by the yard then. It was from here we had the material for the my bridesmaids when I was married in 1953. We had three bridesmaids and one maid of honour. The two elder ones were in pink, and the younger ones in lilac, which was unusual at this time: but they carried pink and lilac sweet peas and pink carnations. The little ones had posies, the older ones bouquets, and they came from Mattock's in Market Street.

My husband and I started dating when we were 17 years old in 1950. We met when we went on the coach to Thame with Littlemore Club. I was not a member, but my future husband was, and I was invited along by my Aunty Margaret, who ran the club. It was the same day as Press Steel Sports Day. The reason for going to Thame was that Littlemore were playing Thame at rounders, and there was a get-together in the hall afterwards.

In February 1951 my husband started his National Service in the RAF. He was an apprentice tool-room machinist at Pressed Steel. He chose to go while younger rather, than lose man's money when 21 years. We were married while he was still on boy's money, and he had to complete his time when he was demobbed.

I became ill with rheumatic fever and in May 1951 I was admitted to the old Radcliffe Infirmary in Walton Street. I was put in Lichfield Ward (then Alexandra Ward). I was completely in bed for most of this year, and in September was transferred to Maids Morton in Buckinghamshire, where patients would sometimes stay before their heart operations at Guy's Hospital London, returning to Maids Morton for convalescence. I had hoped to be home for Christmas, but it was not to be.

We were due to become engaged when I fell ill, and we did anyway, Arthur and Ralph had leave, and a kind lady in the village opened up her home for my

parents and they had B&B with her in the village, and my future husband was put up in the men's ward. My goodness, did the nurses play pranks on him. Well, it was a different engagement from most.

When I went home in about February 1952, it was to bed, All went well in time, but I will always carry the aftermath. We are extremely lucky to have had our two children.

The material for my wedding dress came from Elliston's. My mother's friend Rose Surman from Cranmer Road Cowley was an expert dressmaker, and made my dress, while my Aunty Margaret (my mother's sister) made the girls' dresses.

Before Oxford had buses there were trams: their garage was at Leopold street opposite Divinity Road, on the side of St Mary & St John Church and the home of Cowley Fathers. I do not know the extent of the tram routes. Later these garages at Divinity Road. became the Advance Laundry, where after marriage I worked in the office and checked in and out the shirts, The Americans used to send in lovely shirts.

My mother's sister Aunty Mabel (Mabel Kate Room) married Frederick Cherrill, who at the time was in the police force. He moved to London, becoming Cherrill of the Yard and Superintendent of the Fingerprint Department, with the famous telephone number Whitehall 1212. Uncle Fred saved stamps for me, because, he received post from all over the world: I still have my stamp books. Aunty Mabel came to stay with us in the war, and it was she who taught me to tell the time. One Christmas Uncle Fred joined us, and that was some Christmas! Frederick Cherrill had two books published in 1954: his autobiography *Cherrill of the Yard* and *The Fingerprint System at Scotland Yard*. He was also awarded the MBE. His daughter Joan married John Godsell who worked at Whitehall.

Ted Tolley was a carpenter, and in about 1936 he and my father built a summerhouse for some people: I think it was at the top end of Kennett Road, on the left side coming in. It was a lovely building, and there was a big pond, We all went there with our friends Olive and Len Cornwell. I have photographs that were taken at the time.

Mr Banister (called Banny, I think from Headington) delivered cakes for Week's bakery, and he had a horse and large van, which had trays of yummy cakes of all kinds. The horse was named Daisy. I loved her, and to see her: the smell of her; the feel of her eating from my hand held flat. I would wait at the front gate for her and run in when I could hear her coming calling "Mummy, Mummy, Daisy's here. Bread please." One day Banny came out from a house he had been to deliver cakes and found that Daisy had gone. Well yes, she had come off round to see me.

We would have delivery of wet fish and vegetable on Fridays from Mr Jones. He also had a stall at the Oxford Market in Oxpens on a Wednesday. I remember a man called Mark of Universal Milk Delivery. There was also a

bread van, and rag-and-bone men: we were given money or china in exchange for rags and bone or metal. Later a man by name of Mr White came round with a little van that was more like a car with a big boot: I think he charged tuppence a book. Newspapers were also delivered.

### *Memories of the Second World War*

We had evacuees, a brother and sister, in the war. After they left, my mother had to go to Morris Motors for war work making aeroplanes. By this time (1942) my Grampy Room had died, and the family would all take turn to go to Cross Street and sleep there. I would go with my mother. In the morning I would leave for school, and later my mother would go shopping at Oxford, meeting up with a friend.

In the wartime we kept rabbits, and on the way home from school used to pick cow parsley for them. In the summertime we would go gleaning to get corn for the chickens. The rabbits, chickens, and allotments were all to do with the war effort.

When I was about eight years old and cycling to school, army tanks would come along the road.

After 1942 when the Americans came into the war, people used to go to Oxford city, especially on Saturdays, where there would be many American service personnel wearing jackets with their home State on them.

During the war I was helping my cousin Joyce Huxley deliver the St Michael-in-the-Northgate Church magazine. This was the church they attended. We were going up Morrell Avenue hill, this Saturday being just after D-day (6 June 1944). There were American ambulances coming up the hill to the Churchill Hospital (which had been built at that time by the Americans for the Americans) and other ambulances coming down the hill: it was a never-ending flow. I learnt that wounded American servicemen from the war zone were coming from the Oxford rail station via this route.

In the thick of bombing at London, from our high landing window in Headington we could see all of the red light in the sky.

We had bonfires in the street at the end of the war. On VE Day and VJ Day there were parties in the streets, with everyone giving something. There were races, money prizes, dancing under the stars, flags and bunting all over, and lighting.

I remember the street lights being put back on soon after the war. As a family we walked to Headington. It was magic to my eyes, because I could not remember any lights before I was 5–6 years old.

In wartime we would be up early, and get a bus to Banbury Road and then go to the back streets to Oliver & Gurden's, cake factory and line up in a queue for cakes. There was some kind of restriction, and we were not allowed to talk to mother etc., and then we could get double the amount. The same kind of pol-

icy operated at Lyon's in Cornmarket. As long as I can remember we had one week's holiday a year, but not in the war years – at least not to the coast. Near the end of war we took our bicycles to Morris Cowley Railway Station and went to High Wycombe to stay with Olive and Len Cornwell, friends of my parents. It was a nice week. The three of us, and Olive and Len with young David their son on the little seat at the back of their tandem, would travel around the countryside. One day we were up with the lark and went to the rail station and to London. We went to London Zoo: many animals were not there, but it was still all very interesting. I will always remember the devastation of the bombing and the piles of rubble.

Another place we visited was West Wycombe Hill and the golden dome that at one time people could climb up to, the Mausoleum, the painted ceiling, and the Hell Fire Caves, which were not open then. We had a picnic. Len Uncle (Uncle Len by then) had a sledge he had made: there were plenty of offcuts of wood at Wycombe; and — guess what — if we put oil on the runners with a cloth, it was possible to use the sledge as if we had had snow.

### *Leaving England*

In 1966 we went off to America for work. My husband was a tool-room machinist. but when Pressed Steel did not change the dies just slightly for three models, it made a big difference. We left these shores for Cleveland Ohio, on the east coast. We had an interview at the Hilton Hotel in London, and were accepted. We sailed on the Queen Mary in November 1966. We were what was known as “desirable aliens”, and had a Green Card; we did not become American citizens. In time my husband went to Chrysler Corporation.

When my Father died 1980, my mother was registered blind, and our family of four returned to England, and Mother came to live with us at Freeland.

### Brief family history of Jeune Morris (Mrs Mitchell)

#### *My Father's Morris Family*

- My father, **Stephen Wilfred MORRIS**, was born in August 1903 at Headington, in what was then Church Street (now St Andrew's Road).
- My grandfather **Walter Ernest Morris** (born at Marston on 14 February 1870) was a founder as well as a player of Headington United (later to become Oxford United) Football Club). He was married to my grandmother **Rosa LOUCH** (died 1915), the daughter of **George and Martha LOUCH**. Martha's maiden name was **GREEN**, and she came from Elsfield.
- My grandfather's parents were **John MORRIS** and **Matilda PARROTT**. Matilda was born at Marston in 1846, and her parents (Thomas Parrott and Angelina Rhodes) were from Oakley.
- John Morris's parents were **William MORRIS** (1802–1861) and **Elizabeth JACOBS**
- William Morris was the son of **John MORRIS** (born in Horspath in 1776, died in 1849) and **Sarah BILLINGS** (the daughter of **Thomas BILLINGS** and **Elizabeth BURROWS**, baptised in Stanton St John in 1772, died in Headington in August 1848).
- John Morris was the son of **WILLIAM MORRIS** (1740–1827), a yeoman of Stow Lodge, and **ELIZABETH DOSSETT** of All Saints parish, Oxford, who were married at All Saints Church on 1 October 1767.

#### *My Mother's Family*

- My mother was **Kathleen Mary MORRIS (née ROOM)**, and she was born on 18 July 1908 at 20 Cross Street St Clement's, Oxford. She was the eighth and last child of **Henry Herbert ROOM**, a tailor, born at Luton, Bedfordshire. He in turn was the son of **Ezra ROOM** and **Susannah ALDRIDGE**, both were born in Bedfordshire. Ezra was also a tailor.
- My Grandmother was **Florence Kate ROOM (née BUCKLE)**. She was born in Witney, the daughter of John and Ann **BUCKLE (née WIGGINS)**. John Buckle was born at Long Crendon in 1816, and was a carrier and baker.