*Typist’s Note: The interviewer’s comments have been underlined for ease of reading* Mill

**Mill Street Memories – Colin Basket & Terry White by Frank Voss**

Frank: Colin, you were born in Mill Street?

Colin: Hardye’s Avenue.

Frank: When? What Year?

Colin: 1938, 21st December.

Frank: So you can remember the war a little bit.

Colin: Yes, I can. When our Dad and our Leonard or Walt went out the front gate, and we could see these things go across, that’s when our Dad told our Bill and Walt, he said “get these boys out the way”.

Frank: You came from a big family?

Colin: Yes, I reckon our Mum had 16 children. 3 sets of twins, Jack and Muriel, Syl and Lily who died, Gordon and Douglas, they were born on my birthday – December 21st, oh and Keith and Glad.

Frank: All born in that little 3 bedroom house.

Colin: Um, I was born down there, our Jack was, Syl was, I think Mary was born over...

Frank: Keith – he must have and Glad

Colin: Yes, that was when my Aunty Em, whilst our mum was having those two, I went upstairs being nosy and she came up and said “what are you bloody doing up here Colin” and she slapped my bloody hands, I went on down the stairs crying my bloody eyes out. I can remember that. “You stay down there, you got a new brother and sister soon”.

They’re not identical as you can see.

Frank: and you’re a bit younger Terry?

Terry: Yes, born in 1941

Frank: In Mill Street?

Terry: Yes, 84 Mill Street.

Frank: You can’t really remember the war then? You would have been 4 when it finished.

Terry: The end of it, I can sort of remember things, our mum would say when talked to, “........them buggers coming over here again”. They used to tell by Warmwell, when they went up, we would hear something coming over.

Terry: The fire warden, the Dorchester Steam Library. She got sacked because everytime the sirens went, she flew off and ran away.

Frank: Right at the end of the war then, you must have started school?

Terry: Yes, infant school.

Frank: Up our Fordington. Colin was already there then.

Colin: Yes, I can remember it too.

Frank: Who was the head when you were up there? Was it Miss Parsons?

Colin: She had a gert long stick, like a bloody pointer, like a cube.

Frank: she had her hair done up in a bun.

Colin: Yes, light gingery hair.

Frank: Strict wasn’t she?

Colin: Thick tweed like costume. Two piece

Frank: No wonder we didn’t like school, having that as our first teachers. If we had a nice teacher, we might have it.

Colin: We had Miss Kimber and Miss Welsh and Miss King.

Terry: Her brother was his roadie. She said don’t ignore...

Colin: Who was that?

Terry: Miss King, the gentleman that came, saying he was her brother.

Colin: I can’t remember that one Terry.

Colin: Miss King used to live down near the Tec college in that road there.

Frank: Miss King used to put us in the bed in the afternoon.

Colin: Yes and when she talked she always talked with a whistle and she had glasses. We never went to sleep.

Frank: No, but we had to lie down didn’t we.

Colin: It was all on these little mats.

Frank: Did you have the milk?

Colin: Yes, I used to pinch Frank’s

Frank: I still can’t drink milk now. They used to put it around the fire.

Colin: Miss Welsh

Terry: The playground used to have flint in the walls didn’t they?

Colin: Yes, that’s right Terry they did.

Frank: So about that time then, you started at the famous Mill Street Mission. That was going?

Colin: Yes, how old were we Terry? You’re thinking about the white suit?

Frank: You had to go didn’t you.

Terry: Yes

Frank: Yes, the mothers made us go.

Colin: Yes, our dad did too.

Frank: Do you remember that clock? Used to watch it go round, waiting for....

Terry: When we were in Mr Oates class, used to do gymnasium and stuff in there, he used to stand there and say “we’ll all pray now – all stand up”.

He undone these rings....

Missed, he must have known because he would go “doink”. In his prayer he would also say “Lord, I forgive them children that are trying to make a fool of me – its Colin”.

Colin: How many was there? You, me

Terry: Dave, Alan Condon, Dave Moxom,

Terry: He was cruel to him.

Colin: Not Pete, Dave. He had a thing in his eye didn’t he?

Terry: Yes, he had a gas fire, little ones would steal his shoes and he used to say “Dave” and Dave would say “What” and Pete would say “Catch” and (a verbal demonstration of something happening at this point – I presume something went in the fire).

Colin: I remember that, poor bugger. I felt sorry for him.

Frank: You had the Mill Street Outings?

Colin: I remember them well. Coming up Ridgeway and the bus driver would say or sometimes your Dad and sometimes they would say “here it is, the sea lion of the sea” and he would go mad Frank. We used to go on the beach didn’t we Ter, get your place and then at 4pm we used to get on the bus and drive us around. What was the name of that Hall Terry? The Methodist.

Frank: By Alexandra Gardens. We all went there, I think they still had the same sandwiches...

Colin: You had an orange and an apple, a toy of some kind, yes, I remember that well.

Frank: We used to come back Warmwell Cross ways.

Frank: You started Mill Street then, for the outings, you had to go every week otherwise you would miss it, or so they said. And the apples and oranges we had every Christmas.

Colin: You’ve only got to show him that photograph Frank and you’ll see all on the step who were there. I didn’t see you on there Ter.

Terry: I don’t know.

Colin: Paul and Naze was there.

Frank: Yes but my year would have been in the other photograph.

Colin: Marion Larmenter

Terry: Oh bless her.

Colin: I saw her the other day, first time i’ve seen her for......

Frank: So that’s all your age, isn’t it.

Colin: Yes, they are. How old is Dave Old? Is he my age Ter or is about a year younger.

Terry: about a year younger.

Frank: Because, it wasn’t a year, you used to take everybody, when did we stop going to chapel, about 16? 15 or 16 perhaps?

Colin: I suppose

Frank: 15 I suppose when you started work.

Colin: Yes

Terry: You’ve met Bill Stowell?

Colin: Yes, I was quite surprised at Bill.

Terry: He was a refugee.

Colin: Can you remember him Frank?

Frank: No.

Colin: Lived with the Horsey’s

Terry: Lived down there and he stayed after the war finished, because his place was done, then he said he was going to join the army. When he come back, these photos were, they sent the coloured blokes out, bring them back and pay them a shilling and all that. He was sat behind me last time until someone tapped me on the shoulder and said “Who’s that”. I said “Bill Stowell”, “he didn’t grow much did he”.

Colin: He’s on that photograph, he’s got black hair, come straight round, like a fringe. Now what was he? An evacuee Ter?

Terry: Yes and the Forsey girls.

Colin: Aaron now, did you say he’s some sort of relation to you Terry, I couldn’t quite get how.

Terry: His gran, Amy,

Colin: Mrs Clench

Terry: Yes. Amy Clench and my gran White were naughty and Mussel, his family, he put them both up the spout.

Colin: Who is Mussel

Terry: Mussel Boys Boxers. When you see me and Alan together, people would say “don’t they look bloody twins”. Well we must have done because my dad and his mother looked like bloody brother and sister. Tony – my cousin, he went into all his background. He said one day that “I think gran and gramp had split up for a while”. I said “why” and he said “I’ve been through the family history and there’s a bit of.... I think they split up for a while” and I thought “oohh, I can tell you why”. As luck would have it my gran was a White before she married a White.

Colin: How did Pappy come on...

Terry: Well, he was in the Army in the Welsh regiment and Tony thought that she was married to him when my dad and his mum were conceived.

Frank: A lot of that went on mind.

Colin: Yes Frank, of course

Terry: I used to see him grow up and would say “you don’t half remind me of someone”.

Frank: It’s like we’ve found out that the Basketts are related to the Pashons, the Damons, the Browns and I’m related to the Browns.

Colin: I spoke to Paul Damon, I didn’t recognise him. He said “Hello Colin” and I said “You know you’re related to me Paul?”, he said “Am I Col” and I said “Yes, now let me tell you” I said “You’re gran Damon is my cousin, John’s mother. John is my second cousin and that makes you my third cousin”. He went “I never bloody knew that”. Old whatsisname – Noddy, down Fordington, Little Britain, what was her name now Ter

Terry: Bugler

Colin: Bugler, now our mum’s brother, knocked around with her, I didn’t know until our Peg’s daughter – Linda, we met her a few weeks ago, and they’re going back on the history of our name. She said to us that my mother, I always thought that our mother had Aunty Cissy, Aunty Annie, our mum, Aunty Bobby – Beatrice and Sarah Paynes... Wyatt Payne. I said that our mother came from a family of 6 – anyway to cut a long story short, Linda said “your mum got more sisters than what you think Colin”. I said “what do you mean Linda?” She said “you got more aunties”, I said “who are they then Linda” and she said “your mum come from a family of about 11”. I didn’t know this at all, you didn’t Terry? You didn’t Frank?

Terry and Frank: No

Colin: I said “do you know their names” and she said that they’re sorting it all out. I said “well, I’m buggered”. I know our mum’s father was a painter and decorator, a place up town somewhere. Our dad didn’t like him because he would come down, he used to live up north somewhere and he would come down and always wore a brown pinstripe suit, collar and tie and a trilby hat and he used to say “is mum in there my son” and I’d say “yes”. I didn’t know he was my uncle. I gotta find out from Linda their names, because she’s going back and back and back as far as she can go.

Frank: We all kept together in Mill Street, didn’t we?

Colin: Oh yes.

Frank: It was a bit like an island down there. We had our own women and our own men didn’t we.

Colin: I used to say to you Ter, that in someway, we’re related.

Frank: Oh for sure.

Colin: I can remember your mum, I used to go ..... in the fields there at weekends and just sit there and yarn away.

Frank: The trouble was, when the women used to meet, they used to stand there and talk for hours.

Colin: All with their pinafores on.

Frank: Always got up in the morning and put their pinafores on.

Colin: Our mum used to put it on and bring them round and do a bow at the back. Slippers, your gran always in slippers.

Frank: They were all the same weren’t they?

Colin: Yes.

Frank: Do you remember they would bring a chair out and sit outside in Mill Street, peeling the potatoes and talking to the next door neighbour.

Colin: Yes I saw Mrs Watt, she used to..... What was her name..... Sally. That’s your aunty isn’t it.

Terry: Yes, great aunt.

Colin: Charlie is your.... great uncle?

Terry: Yes, something like that, second cousin.

Colin: Charlie Watt, remember him? Reggie Barrett? Kenny Barrett? John Barrett?

Frank: The Barretts were a big family down there, they were related to the Legg’s and all them.

Terry: Remember Lord John Sangers Quinten. His father was in the circus. Sangers Circus.

Colin: Didn’t know that Ter.

Terry: My dad and my mum used to go out on Sunday afternoon’s, they was out in the tip and he said to my mum “stay there, I’m going to nip back and have a pee”. She would say “he’s gone a long time” then she spotted Johnny, through the hedge watching them.

Uncle Len, my dad Len, gave him a hiding. “what for” he said. “Oh, we was just sat talking and reading the paper on the tip, he caught him peeping through the hedge”. He went “ooh, bet he didn’t like that”, he said “nor did he – you should have heard him screaming”. Two days later, he came home and said to gran “I think I might be in the shit Mother”, she said “why”, he said “well I caught that Quinten down London Road and I dragged him into that copse on the left hand side and I gave him another hiding”.

Frank: Did you have any girlfriends then locally, from down Mill Street or did you wait till you met your Barb?

Colin: Oh now....

Terry: When I was with Jan, the first time I went in her house and that, her mum said.... (her old man was a lovely bloke) and she said “where are you from then”, Jan said “he comes from Mill Street” and she said “right”. I thought “oooh, the nerve”, later on she said “Dad said don’t be such a bloody snob”.

Frank: I think we got the wrong reputation, it wasn’t as bad as some people said.

Terry: We gave back a lot of the stuff we nicked didn’t we. The fishing keeper bloke that we done with that, we were out Mel’s and pinched some apples... he was out there fishing and ....... (can’t make out what they’re saying – all talking at the same time).

Terry: We were up Pope’s up in the walks, got over there in the greenhouse, grapes and apples. Nippy said “oh, someone’s coming”, he got his foot in a bloody birdbath, he had to run with one shoe on, we came down over Pound Lane saying “I think we’re alright now” Monk said “what you doing up there”, Mozie went “give us an apple” and he went SMACK.... apple everywhere.

Colin: You know where we were, you know as you go down Holloway Road, on the left there...

Terry: Pound Lane

Colin: whatisname: the scrap merchant?

Terry: Thorney?

Colin: It was there before you go over Mushroom Bridge, old gramps came out,

Terry: with a cricket ball

Colin: I don’t know why, he threw it at him and it hit him, we heard “wahhhhhh”. We ran over and we ended up in Charlie Lowes pigeon hutch in the garden.

Frank: If that’s the worst thing you done, it wasn’t so bad.

Colin: I don’t think Molesey meant... god knows if it had been a bow and arrow.

Frank: Do you remember Sunday mornings down Mill Street, people used to have egg and bacon. During the week you had to go to work but the smell that used to come out... only on Sunday’s wasn’t it?

Colin: Yes, that’s right.

Colin: I remember going to school in a brand new suite, all speckled. Blue, red and all colours. I think it was by Aldi’s having a mess about ................................... (can’t clearly hear what they’re saying). I couldn’t let our dad see that, there was no invisible mend back then.

Frank: Was that long trousers then or still shorts?

Colin, I think I was still in shorts then.

Terry: Talking about Bernie again, he was in hospital with pleurisy. We went up to see him, he was in that green house type place, Bernie had tubes in his back and everything. Nurse came in and said “Bells today Mr Thorne”, he said “no, not got none”. We all thought “bells, what bells”. She said “no, I said have your bowels been opened today” and he said “NO, I’VE GOT NO BELLS”.

He said “what’s she talking about “ and we’re all going “have you had a shit”. “Oh, yeah, tell her I have”.

Frank: We didn’t know those types of names then did we.

Terry: 2 days later out the swimming baths, Bernie was coming, he had a hole in his back. He had a white muck cloth and a pair of pyjamas cut off. He had to get back before 4 o’clock because the tea’s come round, he’d climbed out the window.

Colin: we never had good costumes did we Terry?

Frank: If they done the things that we used to now, they would be in trouble wouldn’t they. It was minor then.

Colin: I can remember, Dolly, his cows up that end and they’d all go in the water and go to the toilet in there but we used to still swim in there.

Terry: We used to go swimming there.

Terry: We went up the dump and found an old marked lorry with mud guards, the big mud guards. We brought it back, Matt, Rick, Kelly and Bernie brought it back and said “wonder if that would float like a canoe” because it was banana shaped. Bernie was refusing to go on it, so they tied him to it, Matt, Rick, Kenny, you, Nige Lucas. Got him down on the hatches part saying “go on Bernie” and he went on.

Colin: Out at the swimming baths, cos old Brian Harris, he called it Ten Hatches didn’t he. I can remember standing on there for a dare and dived from there, I’ve done that.

Terry: I was too scared.

Colin: On the left there was a bloody gert big Portland rock stone, one down at the bottom where you come in and I’d swim as far as I could underwater and when you come to the end where the swimming bath is, if that wasn’t there, I could have still gone on.

Frank: Can you remember at Mill Street before they knocked it down how dark it was, where the buildings were so close?

Colin: Yes.

Terry: The sink in the kitchen part ran out into the river, so you can imagine what that was like – mostly dark.

Colin: Is that the little house that was on its own?

Terry: Yes. .................... “get in here, get your shoes and socks off and get in that river, my ring’s gone down the sink”. I said “it’s all shitty”, “never mind that, you can wash your feet”, I had to go through all this and I found it, I said “why don’t you put it on a bloody string or something”,

He had a brand new boat for Christmas,

Colin: Jim

Terry: brought it down there, it had a step where you could go down to the river to do your washing, he put it in the water, kicked it, out it went and on down the Mill, he said “if that goes down the Mill, I’ll kill you”, I went “oh, alright then”. Ted said that the only person went under the mill was Walt Vallard and they went on to tell his mum that Walt was dead, he’d drowned. She said “what do you mean”, he wasn’t though, he came out the other end.

Colin: we all went down there, you, me, I don’t know about Lil Loder.

Frank: I paddled through there once but you have to get right down don’t you.

Colin: You weren’t frightened though, I only done it once – no more.

Terry: Under the flats was the air raid shelter for Mill Street. It must have been p\*\*\*\*ing all day with that water rushing through.

Frank: remember the water rats? We called them rats but they were water voles. We had caddy boats to try and hit them, we’d be on Swan Bridge and you’d hear a ‘plop’ to see one swimming across.

Frank: There were quite a few that lived in Mill Street who worked for the brewery.

Colin: I worked there, I was there for about 6 weeks. I used to paint because I couldn’t stand the hops, I used to pass out. Betty Hayes, Pauline Hayes.

Frank: Big Sammy Rogers

Terry: Sam used to take a lot of the brewery home with him. He was in the wines and spirits.

Colin: Our Bill was there, Quentin.

Frank: I was born in my other gran’s in Bridport. My father was born in Pound Lane.

Colin: Terry, who was that bloke in the corner, he used to frighten us?

Frank: Mr Howe

Colin: No

Terry: George Riglar.

Colin: he used to live on the back of Pope’s place, where you got the back to Terry’s gran.

Terry: Nancy said that she thought it was him who drove her old man to top himself out Pigeon Copse.

Colin: He hung himself.

Terry: Yes, he converted him and told him what a heathen he was....

Colin: He was missing for a long time. He was out here in Grays Wood, hanging by a tree.

Frank: I know that all the Brown’s were born in Holloway Road, next door to the Burdens, it was knocked down, Harry Burden’s built a new house there now. In front of Howe’s. All that was left was the front door step.

Frank: Chapel Square was a proper square, now I try to explain how the road was a lot smaller.

Terry: When Fry used to go by in his little electric thing, you could nip out, run behind and pick two bottles of that chocolate out and he wouldn’t know.

Colin: and the bakery, Mr Bugler, no Arthur Bullock. He had a horse and cart and we would say where were going in the afternoon and we would see him come up with his horse and cart, lovely horse and he would get out and eat his food, get up in the back, he had bread, cakes, buns. I think he used to sell butter and he would walk all around Hardye’s Avenue, Gregory Buildings and we’d say “whose going to get up in the back?” We’d go up and take out cottage loaves and other things.

We would go out and play bow and arrow fights.

Terry: those reeds you could snap them off, better than bloody arrows.

Frank: Do you remember when they came back from the war? In the 40’s.

Terry: I remember when Jimmy Damon came back late, I was outside Sophie’s and our mum said “where have you been”. He said “I’ve been banged up”. “When I got discharged, I said to this Colonel, can I have a word Sir” and he said “yes”. Jimmy Damon went smack and knocked him down. 6 months they gave him.

Colin: wasn’t he a big bloke.

Colin: last time I met John Damon, we went to Cricket St Thomas, we were going across this bridge over the river and there was pink flamingos in the river, I heard this bloke say “how you doing Col”, I look and it was old John Damon, right on the bridge, of course, he was married then, like we all were. I said “bloody hell John, long time no see”.

Frank: It’s like, we’re all over the world now. You go back a hundred years and you never went out of Mill Street.

Colin: our dad didn’t.

Frank: Your job was all within walking distance of Mill Street. You were only farm labourers and that was it.

Frank: John Damon lives in Cyprus now.

Frank: How things have changed. Nobody ever bought their house did they, nobody had a car. Nobody’s kids went to university.

Terry: a couple of them went to Borstal.

Frank: Did we drag ourselves up out of that? I didn’t think it was bad.

Colin: we were just youngsters getting up to mischief.

Frank: You might have been envious of like a chicken, we had it once a year.

Colin: we never pinched no lead or anything like that, did we Terry.

Frank: I never because there was none left.

Frank: We’ve had one confession on hear that they pinched the lead ornament from a garden in South Court Avenue, some of the people from Mill Street, took it away and cut it up.

Colin: we were just boys, we played the games with the girls, we used to play kiss chase, we knew which girls we wanted, didn’t we Terry?

Frank: Its the food that’s wasted now, in our days it wasn’t. If you had bread over, if it wasn’t toasted, it was made into a cake.

Colin: or a pudding.

Terry: Bubble and Squeak was on Monday’s.

Colin: always had plenty of food Frank, our mum would make jam tarts.

Frank: in September, we started salting stuff down, shallots and your runner beans, it was all put in a jar with salt and you had it in January.

The only thing I don’t like is Cauliflower.

Colin: Ooh, cauliflower cheese. Our mum when she used to make liver and onions and sausages. I used to eat that raw. Our mum used to say alright, have that little bit there.

Our biscuits weren’t in packets, you had a pound of broken biscuits.

Frank: You never had a chicken all ready for the oven. You had one at Christmas and pluck it and gut it yourself.

Frank: Going back, we all agree that it was alright growing up there.

Colin: Absolutely.

Frank: Do you think they’ve changed it for the good or not.

Colin: for the good.

Terry: I liked living there when we did, not now.

Frank: Alright, the houses weren’t very good but I really think that if we all moved back down there together, I think we would all get on. There was something about Mill Street people. We all had our arguments and scraps but we were all mates.

Colin: Good times.

Terry: We all liked it and if it were possible we would.

Colin: I had a good mate in Michael Hoare, Ray brought him up last night, I was his good mate because we used to play together.

Colin: I would want to go back and live in Mum and Dad’s house.