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

**Mill Street Memories – Winnie Voss by Frank Voss**

We’re getting into the late 50’s now.

We moved into Mill Street and from Mill Street, came up to the parking area and I thought I would never get to the house because it was at no. 203. We walked and walked, your mum and your Aunt Cess and I was pushing Teresa in the pram. I never thought we were going to get to the end. Anyway, we found it and we moved in, in the New Year didn’t we.

We had Christmas at Mill Street and then, the trimmings weren’t up for very long, we had to take them down to move, to 203 Damer’s, which was very nice.

Nicola was born in there at 203 and luckily, the people on the end 205, was moving because they had managed to buy their own house which was Bartletts and I went to the Council and asked them if we could move next door, luckily we could because they were desperate for a two bedroom house.

That was lucky then.

Yes, so we moved in here, Gina was born and also Robert was born.

So apart from Teresa, the rest has never lived in Mill Street?

No

Teresa wouldn’t remember it anyway, only if she saw pictures, she could remember that I suppose but no, she had no knowledge.

So technically, this is still Fordington as we know now, outside the boundaries of Dorchester but Mill Street is only a small bit of Fordington.

One thing I remember though Alfie Edwards, who was.. or was it superintendent, no because that was Mr Oates wasn’t it.

I always thought that he was the main preacher, I might have been wrong.

Did you have a picture of him? I know our mother always had a picture of Alfie Edwards over the fireplace.

Yes, we never had a photo of him but he asked me if I would lay a wreath on the German grave in the cemetery which was overlooking Swan Bridge, I said yes, naturally, I’m not sure whether I regret doing it now. Seeing at all the conflab we’ve had recently about that grave and...

You’ve found it hard to say no to Mr Edwards being a Christian man and a being a Christian woman you did it.

You automatically done... and I asked my mum and she agreed, so I just went ahead and done it, it’s only after all these years that I’m not too sure whether I should have done it or not.

The thing is as you’ve just said, you’re just coming up to your Diamond and the Japanese you meet now it’s not their fault these things... it must be hard for you to....

I’ve no sympathy for any Japanese people at all,

We can all understand

And even all the stuff that comes onto the television, I’m not really interested in the wars and all that but Ray likes it, he’ll watch it obviously, but I don’t enjoy it.

It’s a man’s thing...

I don’t enjoy it at all, so basically, he tries to watch it without me being in the room. We had a conflab through the Legion, most of us are members about them wearing white poppies and about making a yearly thing of having a service down there at the Germans grave. I know they had to be buried somewhere but I’m not sure why they ought to have done it but there again, it was years ago and I done it and I have the photographs to prove it.

I wouldn’t let that worry your conscience, you done what Mr Edwards asked

Well I know I done that but deep down I’m not sure whether I should have really.

It wasn’t their fault

No it was their fault and it wasn’t like... I don’t think I would have done it for a Japanese memorial.

I think that would have been a bit much

Yes, I don’t think he would have thought to have asked me. Because Mr Edwards was so good to my mum when my dad was missing and then when we heard he had died, he was very good and I suppose really, truly, I done it as a payment of thanks.

That’s fair dos.

But, now thinking back, I’m not so sure.

So, your memories of Mill Street is pretty good from the Mission?

Oh, yes, all the years I lived there, I enjoyed it, the only thing I didn’t enjoy was being the only one in the family, I wish I had a brother or a sister or something. Someone else that I could talk to but I didn’t and it isn’t the sort of thing you could talk over with friends.

You say that but I know it would be worse

Well, I’ve always... that’s why I always said that when I was married, I would never have an only child – never. It’s not right.

Though I understand, my dad wouldn’t let my mum go through it again because she had such a bad time. Even if I had to adopt..

Well, I’ve always... that’s why I always said that when I was married, I would never have an only child – never. It’s not right.

Though I understand, my dad wouldn’t let my mum go through it again because she had such a bad time. Even if I had to adopt.

You would have had more

I would have had at least 2 but then as the years went on and I had three girls, I desperately wanted a boy then. I always said that if I didn’t have a boy with the next one, then I would adopt one definitely. Whether they would have let me adopt, I don’t know.

Well, you won’t know now will you

As it turned out, I had my boy and that was it. The girls reckon I spoil him but I don’t.

No, you treat them all the same

Exactly

They just don’t see it

Now, he doesn’t live in Dorchester, I don’t see him very often.

Not being funny, we’re old and they are young, they don’t want to watch or do anything like you did

I hate being left out of anything. When they were first married and had children they always used to come in, all together and all that, I was really glad when they all went.

Sunday dinners were pretty big

Exactly, like Christmases and that, they had their own families and I understood that but it just meant that it was just Ray and I and your dad, my mum and that was it.

That’s your family but down Mill Street, everybody, apart from Ted Cox was sort of family anyway

Well you knew them all, Kit Lucas, Mrs Hammond, we were a great friend of Barbara Board and Mrs White, Sal Vallerd, Mrs Andrews, you knew them all and they always spoke but now...

Yes, well no, nobody speaks to their next door neighbours

You could go out and leave your door unlocked or your window open and nobody ever did it but now you wouldn’t dream of going out, even if you were working upstairs, you would lock your doors before you went upstairs.

You know that our mother used to give her vegetables away, just give it away...

Your dad toiled all the way down there to the allotment and then.....

You did, down Mill Street, you did give each other something, not money because nobody had it.

No, you were very grateful for anything given you. You never said no to anything, whether you liked it or not.

You wasn’t jealous of anybody because they never had anything either did they?

No, no not at all. I mean, the men used to like a drink which they all went to the pub and many a time because we lived next door to the Swan, our front door was opened and they used to come in, our dad as well, well my stepfather as well. Come on in, come on in. There was Harrison, he used to come in. I mean, they were... we never had no money but they were good times, we enjoyed life more I think.

Everybody your age, when I meet anybody my age, we always have a laugh about it.

That’s right, how things used to be. The kids, as soon as they left school, they want a car, they wouldn’t save up for one, luckily my son did exactly that, he saved up until he had enough money to buy a car right out, wasn’t it Ray?

Most of them now, as they see it, they want it, they’ll have it and that little plastic card, it’s a menace.

Too right

No sooner do you have it, you’ve got to start paying for it and when the things worn out, you’re still paying for it. That’s why I used to say to mine, don’t ever buy anything on tick, just save up if you really want something, you’ll appreciate it much more but there you are, you can’t dictate, you can’t run their lives.

So looking back on it, apart from wishing we were all born millionaires, it wasn’t bad, you couldn’t change it, so you made a good time of it

They never left a will or anything, nothing ever came to you, from grandparents or anything like that but nowadays, if nothing don’t go right then they think compensation is their first word.