

Eric Livall – I Remember When...

Long time Highworth resident and recently retired gardener, Eric Livall, shares his fond memories about growing up in Highworth.

Although Eric was born in the outskirts of Bristol in 1943, he only spent 5 years there before his family moved to Pentylands Farm. Eric recalls his childhood being a time of much freedom and discovery and said, "We could go off on our bikes and play with friends in the fields and woods all day and our parents didn't have to worry about us."

"At this time the Coleshill to Swindon train line was open. My friends and I often watched the steam train coming in from Swindon to drop off Highworth workers from the Great Western Train workshops in Swindon. On other adventures we would ride our bikes over to the American airbase at Fairford to watch the planes, or we would swim or fish in the Thames at Hannington Wick", explains Eric.

Living at the end of Pentylands lane meant that Eric and his family got to know the local postman well. "Our postman would ride his bike from Hannington to Hannington Wick across country lanes. The postman would also help out delivering coal as there were no amenities back then. He often helped an old lady who lived halfway up the lane between our farm and the Thames Path (although



the cottage is no longer there), by bringing supplies to her. Our postman's job was never done. He delivered the post everyday except Sunday and even on Christmas Day".

Eric was one of the first students at Highworth Warneford when its doors were opened in 1956. "When I cycled to school, I used to go up Grove Hill, which was a single track road with only a few houses on it. Henley Drive was a small farm and the Windrush and Home Farm estates were orchards, market gardens and farmland. I remember when Highworth only had 3 street lights, unlike the large orange glow over the town today".

"The Wise Brothers started a bakery at the top of Westrop, near the family property at Coffin Close, and at the old Co-Op site (where the new Old Manse flats are being built). They became a large business selling cakes nationwide and their renowned mincepies were graced with royal approval, along with being sold in Marks & Spencers".

"Growing up and going to school in Highworth allowed me to see many changes over the years. Throughout the changes in my time here, Highworth has grown into the wonderful, friendly market town that it is today."

Gail Gibson

Operation Christmas Child 2007

A VERY BIG "THANK YOU" to everyone who was involved in Operation Christmas Child in 2007. A total of 1,350 filled shoeboxes were checked and sent off from Highworth. A brilliant effort!

These shoeboxes went to needy children in the Ukraine and Romania, via lorry from the Operation Christmas Child Warehouse in Melksham. The total number of shoeboxes despatched from Melksham for the 2007 campaign was approx 40,000.

We are very fortunate to have so many willing volunteers in Highworth and the surrounding area who help make Operation Christmas Child so successful. We are especially grateful to everyone who knitted the hundreds of hats, scarves and gloves that went into the shoeboxes. In addition, we received 321 knitted jumpers, 309 blankets and mixed baby wear. We are always delighted to receive them!

Special thanks go to the Highworth Silver Band for the use of their hall again to check the shoeboxes.

We are also very grateful to The Bridge for the use of their premises as a drop-off point for shoeboxes. Last, but by no means least, a big "Thank You" to all the schools, churches, day care clubs, playgroups, Brownies, Rainbows, local groups, families and individuals who filled a shoebox or contributed items. We couldn't have done it without you.

If you would like to do some knitting for this year's campaign, please contact Margaret Jones on Tel. (01793) 783888. She can also supply wool and patterns for hats, gloves and hand puppets. Look out for more information in the Link magazine about the 2008 campaign.

Susan Greenfield

Editor: By my arithmetic, about 25% of Highworth households support Operation Christmas Child, surely a big vote of confidence in this project.