

MEMORIES OF KATHLEEN WINTER née SOUTHWELL

I remember staying in a house in Tods Terrace with my aunt and going to the hut in Tods Piece to see a silent film – don't remember what it was about – just the piano playing – and sitting outside on the steps waiting for the door to open – (I would be about 3). My Father said the hut in Tods Piece was built during the first war (1914-18) to house German prisoners of war, who were marched daily up the London Road to dig for iron ore – somewhere opposite the (as it was called in my time) Central School. The dig went back along the valley, ending up in Newtown Road – which was “the tip” where all the rubbish collected by the council was tipped – I remember going up there hoping to find a bike in the rubbish – I once found a cycle wheel!!

I used to stay in Uppingham every summer before the war with my Aunt and Uncle who moved from Tods Terrace into a new modern house – 2 The Quadrant- it had a bathroom which I thought was wonderful, as we lived in ‘rooms’ in Essex – my Father was unemployed – he used to clean windows, so we must have been poor – but we didn't seem much different to all the other people who lived around us – my mother had 6 children in 13 years (no family planning in those days) and I used to go to Uppingham to stay in the summer and at other times, I don't remember how I got there but I never wanted to go home – when I did there always seemed to be another baby!

Just before the outbreak of war in 1939 there was a real panic, and children were being evacuated from London and the surrounding areas. Our school was going to be evacuated (I don't know where to) and we were given a list of clothing we had to have packed, and told to be at the station at a given time. I thought it was wonderful as I didn't have that many clothes – I just thought they'd appear from somewhere! But I never got to be “evacuated.” A telegram came and we all ended up in Uppingham at Grandma's in Adderley Street.

In the panic before the outbreak of war, children and pregnant mothers were to be evacuated to the countryside. In Uppingham a ‘billeting officer’ went to every house, and if you had spare bedrooms you had to have evacuees. Grandma had two spare bedrooms – so we all ended up there. ‘The devil you know is better than the devil you don't know’ being her thought!

By this time my Father had joined the A.F.S. (Auxiliary Fire Service) and was working in London, which must have been somewhat of a godsend, as I previously said, he was out of work. We settled in Adderley Street (me staying with Aunt Annie in ‘The Quadrant’ which to my way of thinking was wonderful.) We went to the school at the bottom of the Scale Hill (now demolished) and as the work they were doing wasn't as difficult as we'd done in Essex, I used to get sent up to help in the infants with reading and writing. They used slates and chalk, which I'd not seen before. It wasn't long before other evacuees came to Uppingham – I remember they were due to arrive in a coach from London on this particular afternoon – and some of us locals (I was one of them!) went down to the playground to await the arrival of the evacuees. We sat on the wall – people who were to give a home to the evacuees were waiting – the coach came and some of the kids looked so thin and poor – some were crying, the people who were waiting chose which kids they wanted!!! (the clean, smartly dressed ones went first!!) My cousin who lived in Bisbrooke had two little boys, one 6 and one 4 years old, I remember I felt so sorry for them, they both wet and cried almost all the time. Bisbrooke certainly was a bit different from London where they came from – they didn't stay long as the Blitz on London hadn't started. There were one or two evacuees who stayed on after the war – maybe they have contacted you – but of course they would all be in their 80's!!

When I went to the Central School, I believe it's not called that now, for a short time we only went to school in the mornings, the afternoons were given over to what we called the 'Green Girls'. They were from Camden High School in London and were evacuated to Uppingham – I don't think they stayed long. We were supposed to go on 'Nature Walks' in the afternoons, overseen by a teacher, but of course us locals used to 'slope off', it was lovely, the weather always seemed good. I suppose we had to keep to school hours as coaches came at 4pm to take home the children who lived in the villages around Uppingham. Also Kingswood Boys School was evacuated to stay with Uppingham Boys School (they didn't have girls there then!) I think they stayed quite a while. Sewing lessons were very boring, as material wasn't available, we made shorts for PE – white for boys, navy for girls, and pinafores for Domestic Science, and had to bring in old clothes to be made into anything wearable – make do and mend it was called.

I remember Market Day in Uppingham on Thursdays. The cattle would be down at the bottom of Station road in pens, sheep and pigs in the market place. In the afternoon, after all were sold, the market place would be hosed down, but it still smelt of animals. Thursday was early closing in Uppingham, and I always hated Thursday afternoons – everything was closed and you could walk up the High Street, and not see anyone! No traffic – nothing!

My Grandmother died in January 1947. It was a very bad winter, lots of snow. Teddy Toon fetched her body from the house the night before the funeral, up to the church. As it was so slippery he thought it better to do it in the dark, in case of trouble!! After the Church Service we all followed the hearse down High St., Queen St. down to the cemetery as it was too slippery down Scale Hill!

Back a bit now – to when we first moved to Uppingham in the November after the outbreak of war. My mother gave birth to a daughter, and my father appeared one day – on his bike in his fireman's uniform! He'd cycled all the way from London to Uppingham to be with his family. He wouldn't have been missed at first, but by the time he was he was working at Steward and Lloyds at Corby. Shortly after, he rented a house in Hopes Yard, no. 7. Very small, I do not know how we all fitted in, I stayed at my Grandmothers. In Hopes Yard one bedroom had a double bed – Mum and Dad, a single bed – two boys, one each end. The other room a bed and a cot. Only a skylight window, so crowded, so hot. Every night my Aunt Annie would walk round to Adderley Street to my Gran's (her mother) and they'd chat. I remember them hearing the church bell tolling, very muffled and sombre – I think it went something like this, one for a man, two for a woman, three for a child. Then one of them would say – "it must be for old so and so – he or she hasn't been well lately!" The passing bell it was known as – the bells were not pealed during the war – they would only be rung in case of invasion! Except for the passing bell, I don't know when this practise ceased.

Italian prisoners of war worked on local farms during the war – they wore brown uniforms with big patches on them. Towards the end of the war (I think Italy capitulated) they were allowed in the cinema, but had to stand at the back. A very smart cinema on Ayston Road, now gone, run by Bertie Wilson!

Boys and girls from the central school had to go and help out on local farms – potato planting – potato picking – and my most hated, sugar beet singling. All by hand. You were told in assembly how many 'volunteers' were needed – of course the boys were always keen, a lot were farmers' sons, then the girls had to make up the number. You were paid, I think it was about 4 old pence per hour, which was paid out at Christmas. I hated it, not the work, but the fact that you got hot and smelly and we didn't have a bath then, we must have been a smelly lot! Pea picking was OK because you could eat some!

In Hopes Yard next to no. 7 is a building that I remember being a chip shop sometime before the war, I think at sometime it was an Antique Shop. The other little buildings opposite what was Loves Bakery, were the toilets for our house and various other houses. My Grandfather Southwell was a gardener, he had two or three allotments (they were always referred to as gardens not allotments) and he kept pigs on one down behind Tods Piece, with an old copper where he cooked up swill for the pigs – there was even an old earth closet (lavatory) I thought it was a wonderful place (Health and Safety would have a fit now!) I wasn't allowed at pig killing time!! I think all those allotments have been built on now. During the war we kids would play paper chase at nights, during the winter – remember it would be dark and there would be no street lights, and we would go over walls and through gardens where we had no business to be! I was lucky as my parents would think I was at Grandmas – she would think I was with them, so long as I was back at Grandmas at 8.30 for supper everything was OK!!

I like walking round the church yard and cemetery. It seems the more well known people were buried just to the right of the church, in the old church yard, but I don't suppose there is any room there now, as I see there is a very new cemetery up Leicester Road.

I remember sledging – it seems it snowed and froze every winter, my brothers would get fish boxes from the fresh fish shop (think it was in Queen Street, can't remember the name) and make sledges –they did stink a bit, down Beast hill, across between the nursery gardens and allotments and down the narrow lane to the stile – better still from the top of the field (can't remember the name of the field) down to the brook, if you were unlucky you hit the stile! The boys from Uppingham School would use that run and make it like glass by pouring water on it at night, when it froze. The local boys were always on the lookout in case the posh boys had left one of their posh sledges behind!! I wonder if anyone goes sledging down there now – bruised legs and 'hotaches' in hands and feet! The school dentist parked his nasty caravan on Beast hill and threw all the teeth he'd extracted down by the wall. Dreadful man - McTaggart – with his horrible foot drill! If you were a lucky kid your mother would come with you, but as I was the eldest I had to go alone. The Doctor – Doctor Wallis – was not known for his kindness and gentle ways! School Doctor – Doctor Rolleston – remember him – school nurse – some kids called out, to return with wet heads. No one wanted to sit near them – we'd all shuffle up! Happy Days.

The Misses Baddley who lived at the top of Queen Street- one was a dressmaker, one married Mr. Wheeler who worked in Hawthornes, and one was a teacher – Poll Baddley as she was known to the kids. She taught my Father, so she was getting on a bit, she was very handy with the cane. She had one leg shorter than the other. They were known as Hoppy, Twitchy and Jerks. There was a brother, Mr. Baddley, he was a tailor and had a little wooden hut down by the side of the old infants playground, where he'd be sitting cross legged on a bench sewing. They lived with their old mother and we kids liked to watch for one of them going down to the Cross Keys with a jug to buy some ale!! Kids can be beastly at times.

There was a Red Cross First Aid Post next to Boots Chemist where you could get wool – khaki, navy or air force blue, free to knit "comforts for the troops". We were allowed to knit during some lessons. I got very good at gloves, we must have knitted a heck of a lot of "comforts" because you became so good and fast at knitting, we tried to get the boys interested but they thought it 'sissy' to knit.

The swings and things in Tods Piece were locked up on Saturday nights until Monday morning, by a man who lived near by – can't remember his name – seem to remember he was the Town Crier.

Unfortunately my brothers died recently. They certainly would have had tales to tell. Geoff was a great a.m. radio buff, he had radios etc. set up in front of our house in Leamington Terrace during the 40's. Boys from Uppingham School who were like minded would come to the house (not allowed of course!) and my mother would have to stand at the door to make sure the coast was clear before they left! Geoff worked for Dale and Green before he was called up.

I hope some of this is of interest to you. The sketch of part of the school and reading room was done by my brother Geoff, it is a very true likeness – just excuse the Victorian additions.

Kath's additions to the article on page 18 of Uppingham in Peacetime (see Publications Page)

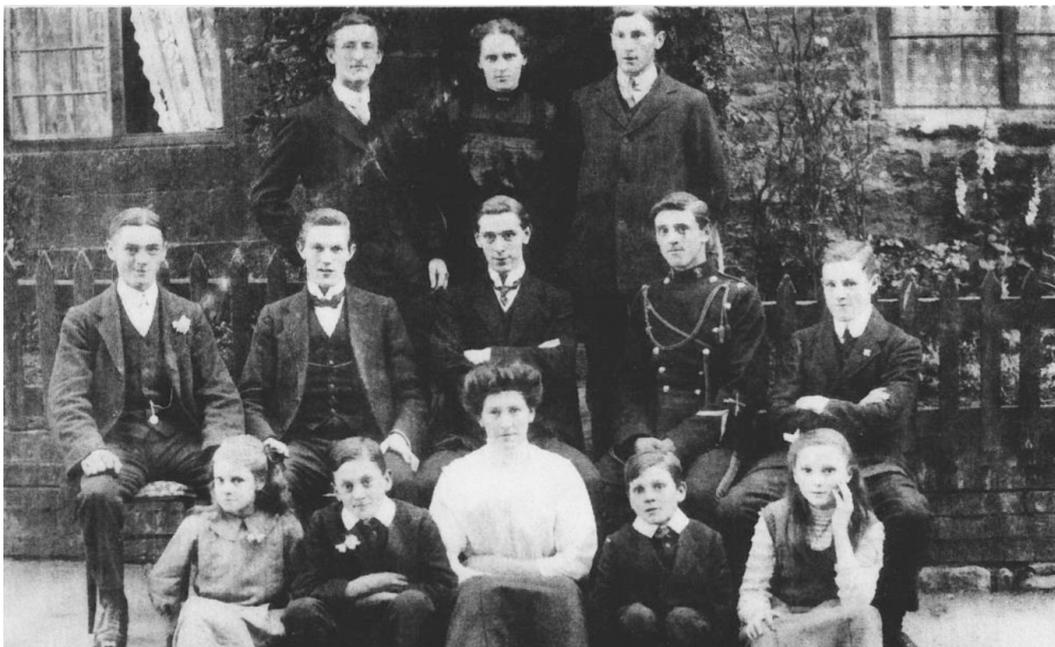
Thank you so much for booklet 'Uppingham in Peacetime'. I was quite excited by the picture of 'Sisterhood' on page 18 – Aunt Annie (Atton) Southwell at the end of first row and Grandma in middle of the row (the unknown one!) Harriet Ann Southwell of Adderly St. She had her best walking stick with silver top – only used for 'special' occasions. It's a pity you can't see her feet – she always wore lace up boots, very soft leather ones. One of her sons, Geoff, was a boot maker and he made all her boots. Some of the other names are familiar to me, as I used to stay in Uppingham every summer and Aunt Annie would take me to the Sisterhood – at the Chapel in Orange St. near the traffic lights – I loved the singing but especially the cream buns at tea time!

The Mr. Atton (Leamington Terrace) you mentioned could have been Aunt Annie's step son – Quince or Quinton (strange name) who once lived in School Lane. She also had a step daughter Annie Atton, sister to Quince, who lived in London – I remember her coming to Uppingham once – very smart with a special little case full of make up, and she had a fur coat! In my mind as child she seemed like a film star!

I remember the Stevens' daughter Jean, her mum used to come to the railings of the infant school at playtime and bring her a cake!

Kath Winter (née Southwell) 2014/15

WALTER. 1895-1928.	HORACE. 1884-1964.	ANNIE. 1883-1959.	TOM. 1885-1969.	WILFRED. 1896-1954.
LUCY. 1905-1980.	WILLIE. 1889-1970.	ALBERT. 1887-1958.	HERBERT. 1891-1952.	DORA. 1900-1951.
	GEOFFREY. 1903-1973.	ELLEN. 1892. 1979.	RONALD. 1901-1985.	



SOUTHWELL FAMILY 1910 (13 SIBLINGS) probably cottage in Spring Back Way



HARRIET ANN SOUTHWELL nee CHARITY
BORN HARRINGWORTH DIED January 1947 aged 84.



TOM AND HARRIET SOUTHWELL

*'This was taken in South Back Way before they moved to Adderley Street, Grandma's hair is still dark.
I never remember them having any animals (only pigs on the allotment)'*