Phyllis Denning letter dated 26th August 2011

Dear Steve

Many thanks for e-mails and photos from Dennis, I’m sorry that I`m not computer literate and you had to reply on “snail mail, however here follows my comments on Dennis Leatherbarrow`s letter which if I have remembered correctly:-

Photo 005. The older girl was Sheila Pike an evacuee at “Trefusis” later friends and family of hers stayed at Woodhayne at various times, the Flays lived at Trefusis, Bishopswood.

Photos 008 and 009. We referred to it as Rick Barton

011 I am not certain who the boy was –not Roy or Ronnie

012 We would get 6p if we opened the gate for the hunt. The shooters from the estate would come to the farms and expect the tenants to be beaters. Once Captain Benson then at Sheafhayne used our bottom room as a picnic base for his team. Later a team would come from Axminster Carpets and tenants were given an Axminster rug each time

Re the Pople family (who possibly came to us after Dennis and Pam) John now lives at Madford in the Hemyock/Dunkeswell area and Mollie (now Bright) is at Downhayne Farm just outside Colyton June who became Sparks was at Stapley near Churchstanton but she has passed away. They would provide you with memories of being evacuated to Woodhayne maybe?

Uncle Herb and Auntie Doris lived at Hawthorne House just below the Chapel – (now extended) after we left to go to Woodhayne

Geraldine Winslade at the bungalow is the widow of John, the son who went to school with me.I`m not sure if she would have heard of re-charging the accumulator.

The Drake reference is to my maternal grandfather Robert Drake Rich who retired from Broadley Farm Yarcombe to live at New Barn in part of the house where Reuben Turner their son in law was tenant. I think the boys thought it a joke to refer to him as Drake. His mother was a Lydia Drake from Churchstanton; thought Sir Francis was a rogue. We have traced back (as many more Drakes have) .I think Roy Cottey now farms New Barn, it’s the Bishopswood side of Marsh.

We often walked to New Barn and latterly Ronnie used to cycle there with library books for Granddad-selected from the wooden boxes sent to the village hall by Somerset County Council. Regarding school children from Clifthayes, Shorthayne,New Barn, Elscombe, and Foxenhole attended the Bishopswood one which converted to a chapel with Baptistery at weekends. The Gready daughters went there as well.

Because I was living so near to the county border I took both Somerset and Devon scholarship and was awarded a day place at Bishop Foxes Taunton and a boarding place at Okehampton which we took. I went into Honiton Secondary to sit the exam with the surrounding village candidates. Roy went to Honiton cycling out to Stop Gate to catch a bus. Ronnie and Kay went to Chard living with Gran Denning at Hawthorne House in the week

Uncle Reg and Uncle Don in turn had a walking post round from Coburns, It included Foxenholes and Elscombe,I think and was collected from Bishopswood Post Office. Joe Satterley delivered ours on foot and later Reg Studley.

I don’t remember Reg Sumption, the baker, doing any carpentry; his assistant Harry Payne delivered our bread on foot. Mr Pring was the carpenter, who lived in the lane below Sumption`s Lane as we called known of course as Pring`s Lane. When we lived in the village Dad sometimes assisted him, I think they removed some of the wooden structures from Otterhead House. We called him “shaver”, his wife taught Roy and Kay to play the piano and presumably Ken Hayward (Cleve House Bishopswood) who was their foster son and Yarcombe Church organist. I believe Dan Gready`s sister used to walk to Yarcombe Church from Woodhayne.

I was pleased to receive the 1911 census copy, Dad`s family were at Westhay, Otterford then. My Gran`s family (The Cousins) were there before Gran married; her mother was head teacher at Brown Down school and she and her sisters in turn were pupil teachers and assistants.Dad1s family moved to Hawthorne House from Westhay –the older boys working on local farms and living-in.My uncle Don who passed away recently at the age of 94 remembered their move to Coburns, he said he was 5 and carried a jug walking all the way. Chas Henry Denning was father to Shirley Briant and moved to Moorhayne Yarcombe when he married.Grandad Denning was the only son when he lived at Bishopswood with his parents and sisters, and yet he had eight sons.Dennings have been traced back to Chardstock and Cousins to West Hatch area and Great Grandmother to Wiltshire.

We sometimes walked to the village via “8 acres” but often went to school via Trefusis orchard. I used to get tupence hapenny a week for delivering milk to the Flays. I often bought a Mars bar with it-bigger than this we can buy now!

We certainly were more Somerset orientated, but Dad and Uncle Don belonged to the Yarcombe Home Guard and Dad paid his Conservative subscription to Mr Parris, I think he did a year as a parish councillor at Yarcombe and of course tenants paid the rent annually at the pub there. In the war we got a sugar allowance for cider making, I think that came from Devon.

I hope my ramblings have put you in the picture. Thank you for the invitation, I think Michael, Kay’s son would like to visit one day too.

I`ve just remembered that the Devon District nurse, came from Upottery when Kay was born at Woodhayne.

Hoping you are both well

With kind regards

Phyllis

PS We used to walk to Foxenhole through Higher Wood to exchange papers and magazines. It was a great wood to play in. I remember riding on Dad`s shoulders on our way to Coburns through a boggy stretch which we called “The Sogs”