



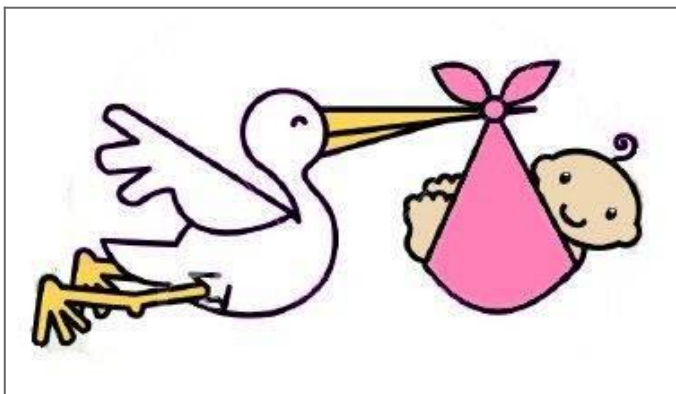
# My Lifestory by Audrey Pettigrew



# Family Life



**I was born on 21st August 1932 at St Mary's Hospital, Manchester.**



**The only photo taken of me as a baby is the one below, when I was 12 months old.**



**Before I was born  
my mother gave  
birth to unnamed,  
stillborn, twin boys.**

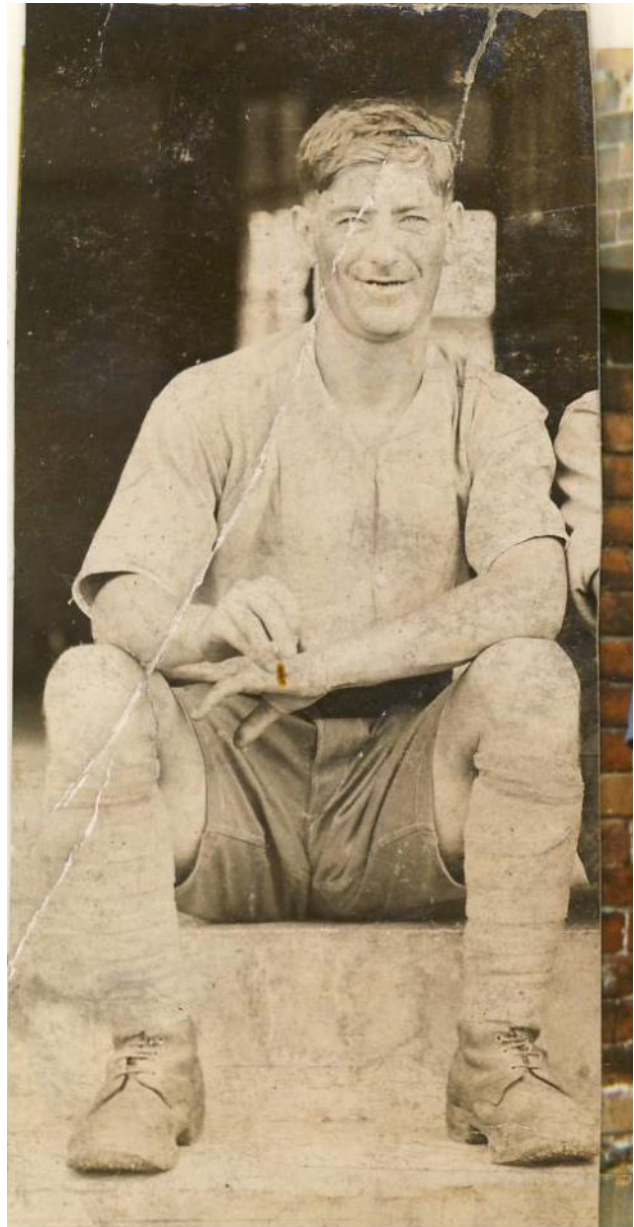
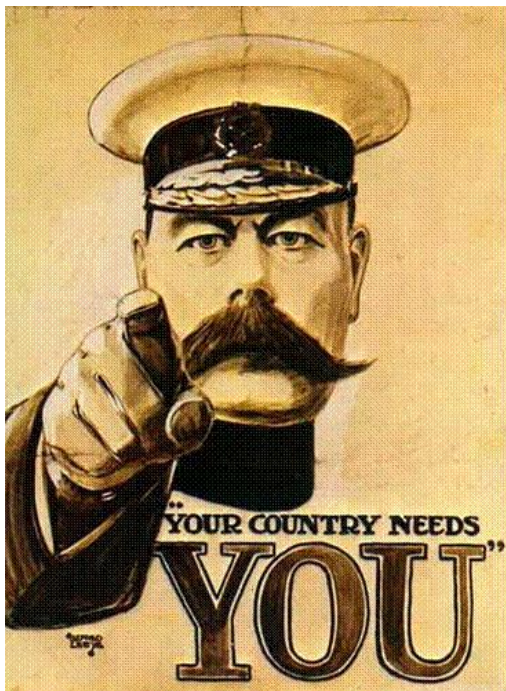


**My mother was Margaret Evans  
and my father was Arthur  
Gregory.**

**My dad served  
in World War I.**



**A soldier's  
tin hat, WWI**



**Dad when he  
was in the  
army**

**After the war  
he became  
an engineer  
at Platts,  
Oldham.**

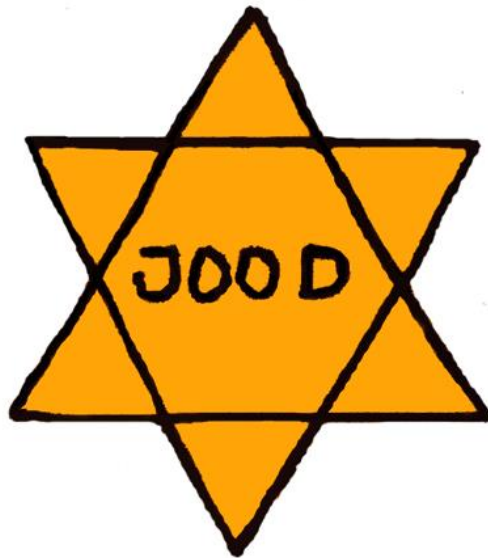


**The  
headquarters  
of Platts**



**As a young woman my mum worked in cotton mills.**

**Later she went into Service working for a family of Dutch Jews, who had fled to the U.K. to escape the Nazis in their homeland.**



**The holocaust badge. The word Jew is written in Dutch.**

**The Dutch family became very instrumental in my upbringing, and became lifelong friends.**

**Mum would take me to work with her where I met Jan, a Dutch boy.**

**As youngsters we played happily together, and in our teens we spent many happy times in Holland.**



**I lived in Cranberry Street,  
Glodwick, Oldham, quite a poor  
neighbourhood.**

**I lived in a two up two down  
terraced house with no  
bathroom.**

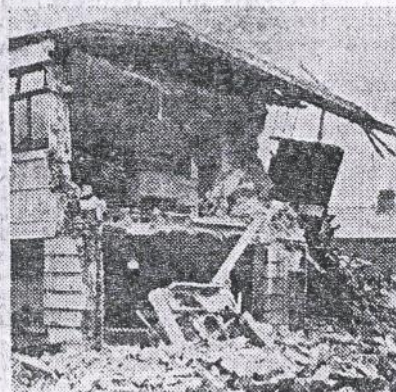
**When I was 8 years old in 1940, I  
witnessed a bomb exploding in  
my street and destroying houses  
and the local pub, the Cranberry  
Inn.**

## Memories of Three Years Ago

Three years ago last Thursday night, just after eleven o'clock, the sirens sounded the alert in Oldham, and shortly afterwards the town had its first real experience of an air raid, which lasted until nearly 1 a.m. High explosive bombs were dropped at many points including Foxdenton Lane and Broadway, Hollinwood Cemetery, Hollins Estate, Incline Road, Garden Suburb, Manley Road, Mirfield Avenue, Cranberry Street, Napier Street East, Leesbrook and other places. The death roll was 25, eighteen people had major injuries, and thirty were treated at first aid posts.

The picture shows damage caused to the Cranberry Inn, Glodwick, by a high explosive bomb.

The last time the sirens sounded an alert in Oldham (apart from tests) was in the early hours of August 18, 1943.



OLDHAM STANDARD.  
14 OCT 1944



**My mother had several sisters who lived nearby. I affectionately knew them as the “old aunts” and they took turns at looking after me, whilst my mother worked.**



**My mum in her eighties**

# Schooldays

I attended the same school throughout my education, from the age of four to fourteen years.

It was Oldham Church School, Burnley Street, Oldham. The Headmaster was John William Beastall.



I loved school and was Head Girl when I left in 1946 aged 14 years. Below is the reference I got from the Headmaster.

Oldham Education Committee.

~~XXXXXXXX~~

PARTER CHURCH SCHOOL, School,  
MIXED DEPT  
.....OLDHAM, Dept.

.....- 8. AUG. 1946.19

It is with much pleasure & complete confidence that I recommend Miss Audrey Gregory who is leaving school to-morrow.

She is our Head Prefect & was chosen for that position because of her ability, sterling character & generally excellent bearing.

She has a quiet dignity, is capable (she is top of the school in the final examination held this month), & is most industrious & painstaking.

She has amply justified her

selection as Head Prefect, using  
tact & showing herself efficient  
in every way.

She has the advantage of  
an excellent home influence.

Her choice of occupation  
is needlework at which she  
is very proficient.

She deserves every encourage-  
ment & I am completely  
confident that she will prove  
herself successful.

John Wm Beestall A.C.P.  
(Headmaster). MRS. T.  
F.R.H.S.

ARTER CHURCH SCHOOL  
MIXED DEPT  
OLDHAM

Miss Audrey Gregory,  
41. Cranberry St.,  
Oldham.

**This is a transcript of the reference.**

**Oldham Education  
Committee, Parish Church  
School, Mixed Dept,  
Oldham. 8th August 1946**

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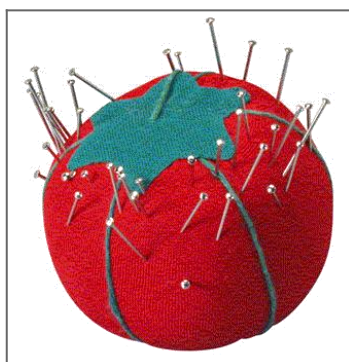
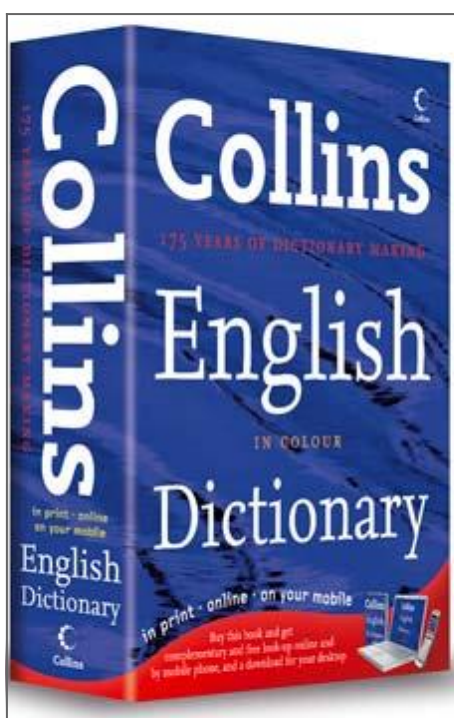
**She has the advantage of an excellent home influence.**

**Her choice of occupation is needlework at which she is very proficient.**

**She deserves every encouragement and I am completely confident that she will prove herself successful.**

**John William Beastall**  
**Headmaster**  
**A.C.P.**  
**M.R.S.T.**  
**F.R.H.S.**

**I had no dislikes and enjoyed  
English and Needlework.**



**I participated in school plays.**



**The above photo shows me performing as an angel in the school nativity play when I was 5 years old.**



LOOK! HERE COMES THE BAND

1939



*Some of the infants of Oldham Schools' Mased Percussion Band arriving with their instruments at the Empire Theatre for a final rehearsal before their "big show" to-night. They are to hold their first musical festival.*

**This photo shows me in the percussion band aged 7.**

**I was chosen to present the Mayoress of Oldham with flowers when she visited the infant class.**



**I was frightened of forgetting my words and was very nervous because a photographer was watching me.**

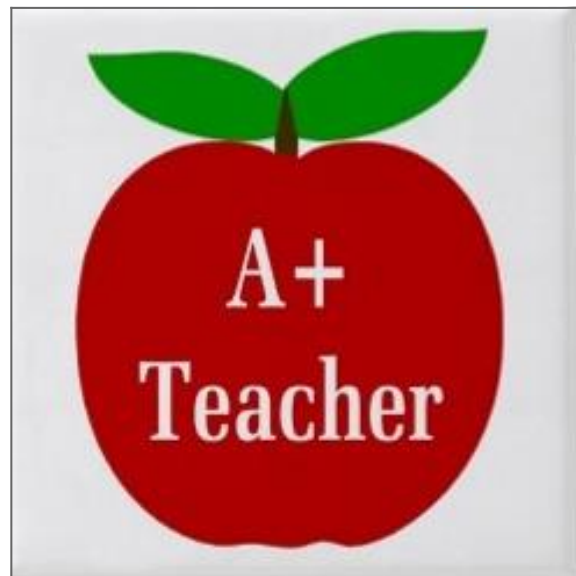




**Me  
presenting  
flowers to  
the  
Mayoress 61**

**My favourite teacher was my class teacher but I can't recall her name.**

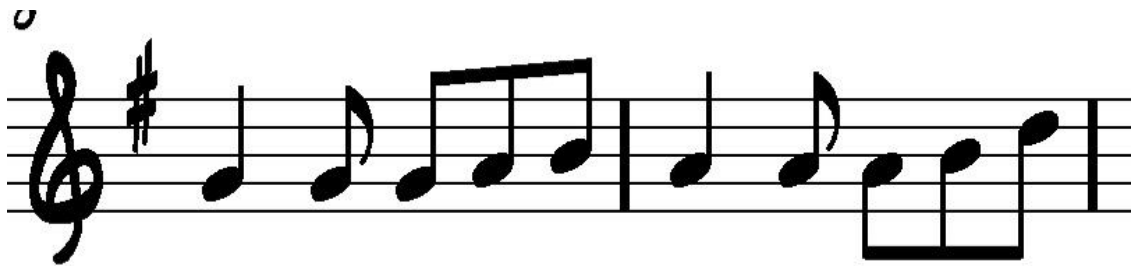
**She would never leave a child to struggle with something they couldn't do, and was always helpful.**



**My good friend was May Lumb, but she was nicknamed Bunty.**



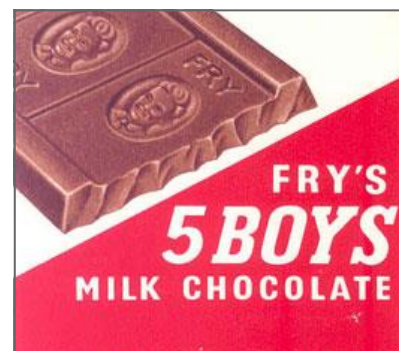
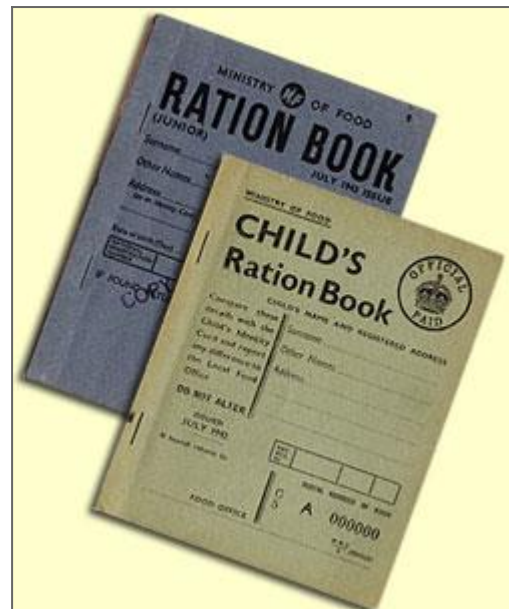
I liked playing netball and practising cymbals in the school band.



# My Teenage Years

From the age of 16, I spent two weeks every year with friends in Flushing, Holland.

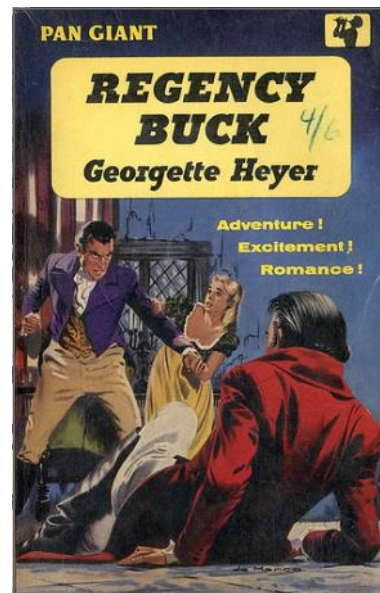
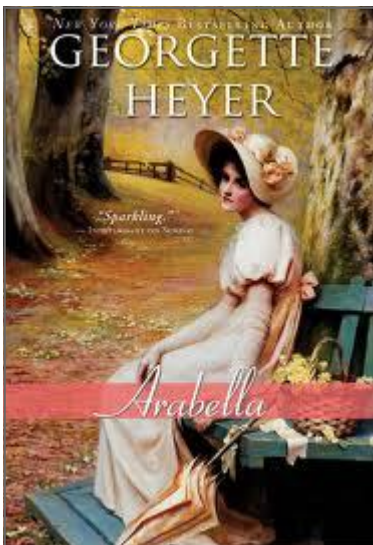
I saved all my family's ration coupons for chocolate, and took the chocolate over to the Dutch children who couldn't get any.



I enjoyed sewing, knitting, and reading thrillers and Georgette Heyer novels.



THE NOVELS OF  
*Georgette Heyer*



**I loved going to watch Manchester United football matches at Old Trafford, Manchester City at Maine Road, and Latics at Boundary Park. Usually I went with my dad.**





**We would buy cups of tea and ice cream from the vendor outside.**



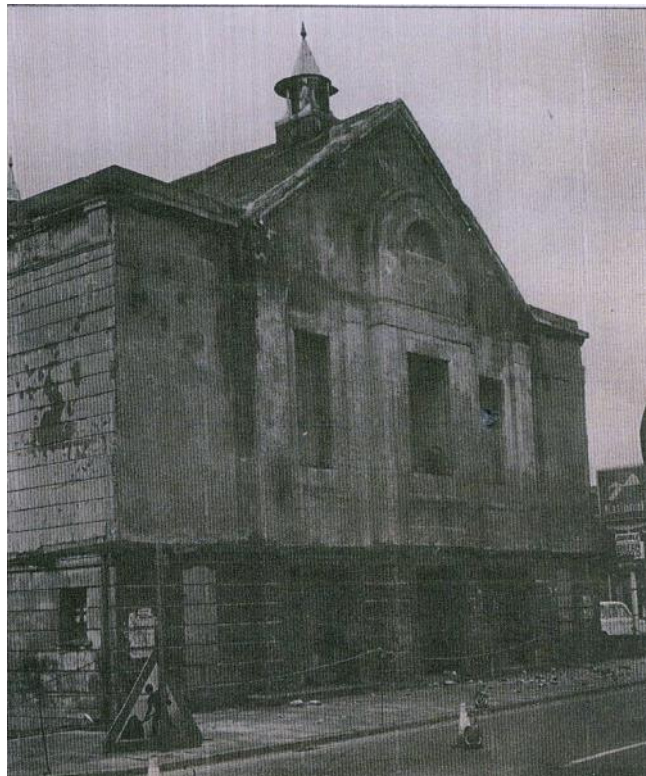
**In those days, girls were not allowed to attend matches without a male, so I saved up for my own ticket just in case dad was working and couldn't take me.**

**Then I would ask *ANY* male relative who would be willing to accompany me!**

**I lived in the same house in Cranberry Street all my young life.**

**Betty Carr was a friend who I had from early school days to young adult life.**

**Bunty and I would go to the local cinema in Royton, and we nicknamed it the “Bug House” because it was so scruffy.**



**The Royal Pavilion Cinema (otherwise known as the “Bug House”), Oldham Road, Royton.**

**We always felt itchy when we came out, but we enjoyed going because we liked watching films and it was very cheap.**



**The owner knew about the nickname and laughed with us about it.**

## Working Life

In 1946 I started work at Freddie Gregory's Ladies' Tailoress on Union Street in Oldham. I was a seamstress for approximately five years.

I was very happy there, because I was being paid for something I loved doing - sewing.



The photo shows me (back row, 1st left) with Mr Gregory and staff in 1946.



**I remember when Mr Gregory sold his business to Elisabeth Gray, but I continued to work there.**



**She said my standard of work was very high, and asked me to make clothes for her personally.**



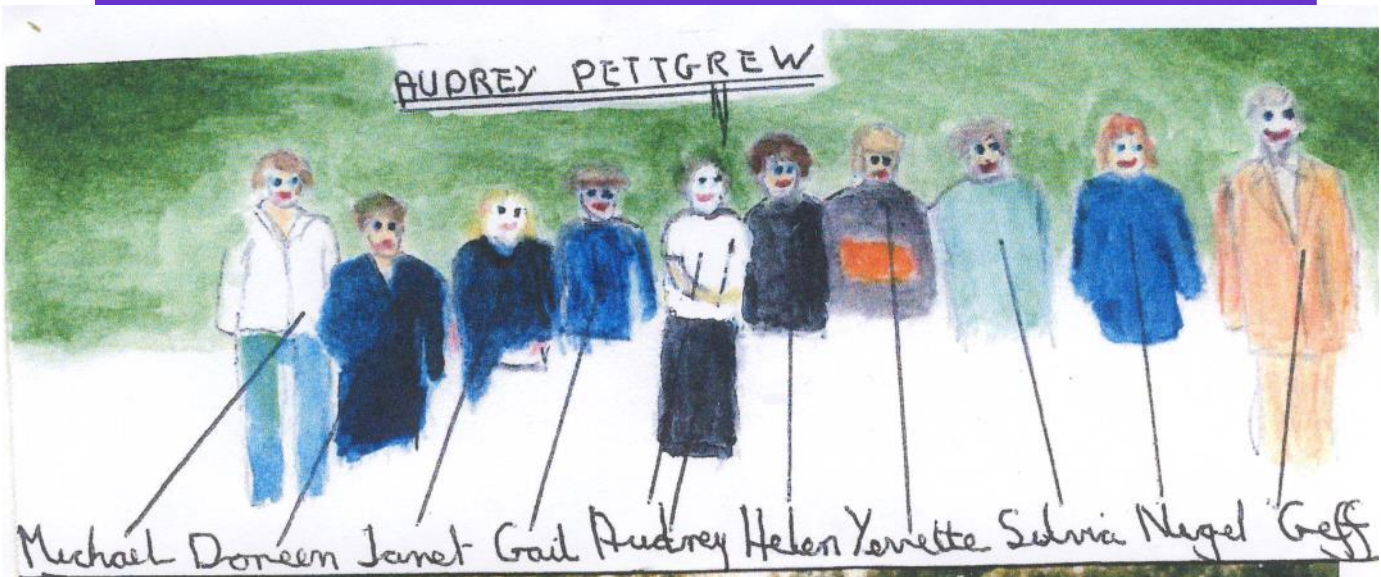
**I worked at Hyngart's Screen Printing at Scouthead, Oldham, from 1961 for 18 years.**



**I was very happy here. I made lifelong friends and Mr Gartside, the boss, looked after his staff so well that we all knew him affectionately as “Father Gartside”.**

**Mr Gartside**





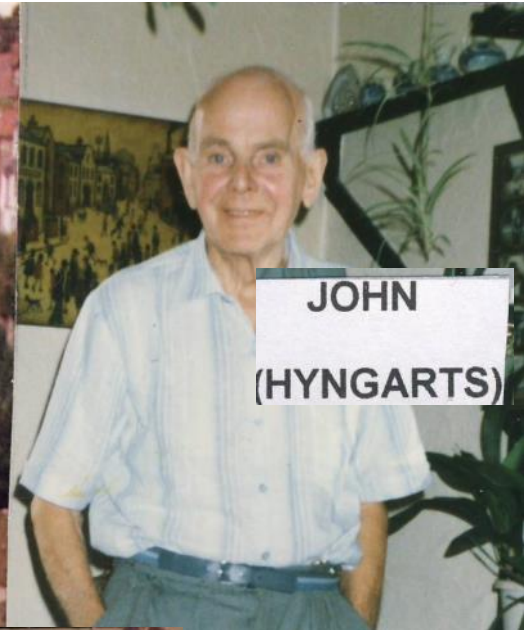
HYNGARTS 1978



## My friends at Hyingart's



**MARY**  
**(HYNGARTS)**



**JOHN**  
**(HYNGARTS)**



**ANN**  
**(HYNGARTS)**



**BUNTY AND ME**  
**1940s**



**Me aged 44**  
**years**



## My Husband

My husband was called Thomas Pettigrew but everyone knew him as Tom.

Tom was a bus driver/conductor and I met him on the buses. When he saw me regularly coming home from work on his bus, he would pay my fare for me.



Tom's badge with his driver number

**My interest in football stayed with me throughout my life, and Tom and I did our courting at Old Trafford.**



**Old Trafford Football Stadium**





**Tom in Italy in  
1944**

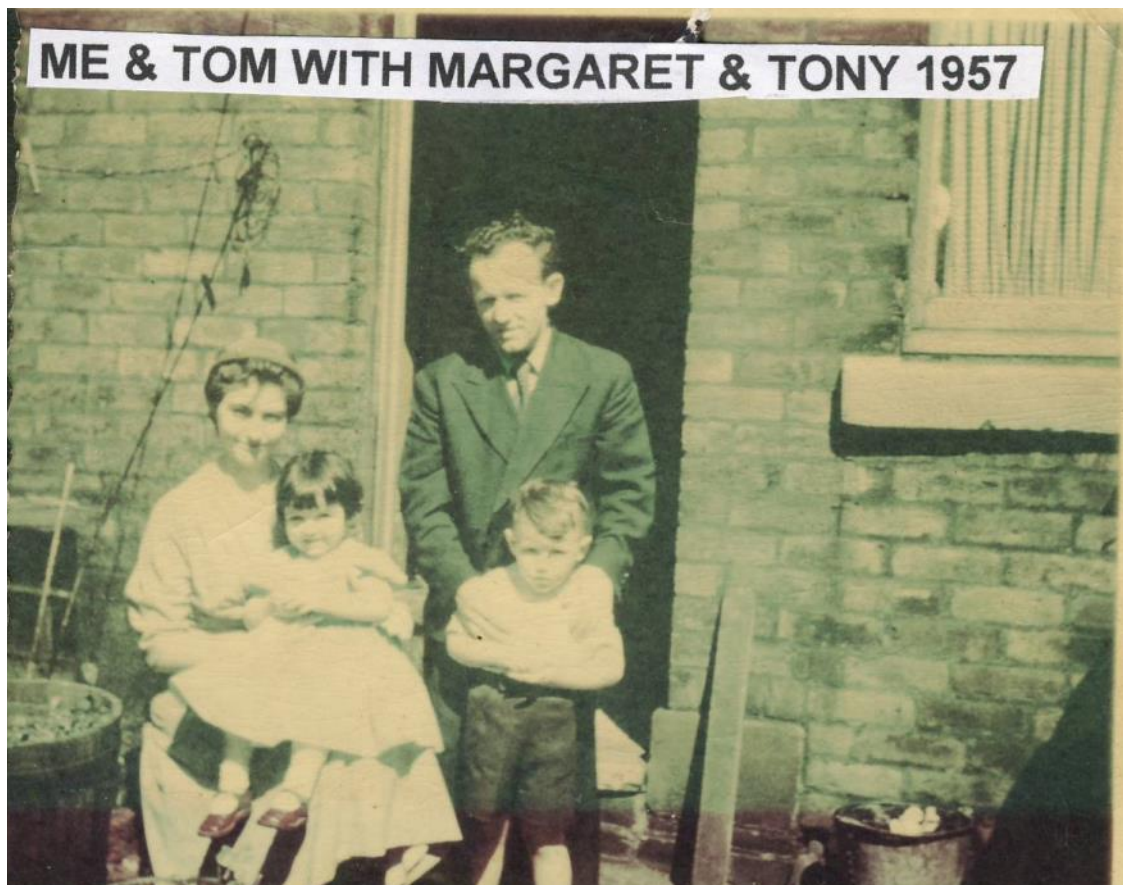
**An important date was my  
wedding anniversary on 1st  
August 1957.**



## Our Family

**I had three children, but sadly I have outlived both my sons.**

**My children are called Tony, Margaret and Phillip.**



**Tony was born in 1954 but sadly died in 2008 aged 54.**



**Margaret was born the year after Tony.**



**Phillip was born in 1960 but was tragically killed in 1978 aged 17.**



**We never had a family holiday because we could not afford such a luxury.**

**Tony and Margaret did manage to have one holiday during their childhood. They went to Southport with their dad.**



**It was the year after Phillip was born, and I stayed home looking after him.**

**Although I have lost both my sons I still keep in touch with their best friends from school, nearly 40 years later. My youngest son Phillip's good friend was Sandra Collins, nicknamed Col.**

**Col  
with  
friends**





**Tony was best friends with Geoff Haigh who regularly visits me and keeps in touch.**

**In their teen years Geoff lodged with us for a short period and Tony and Geoff were inseparable throughout their lives. Below is a photo of them together shaking hands at Geoff's wedding in the 70's.**



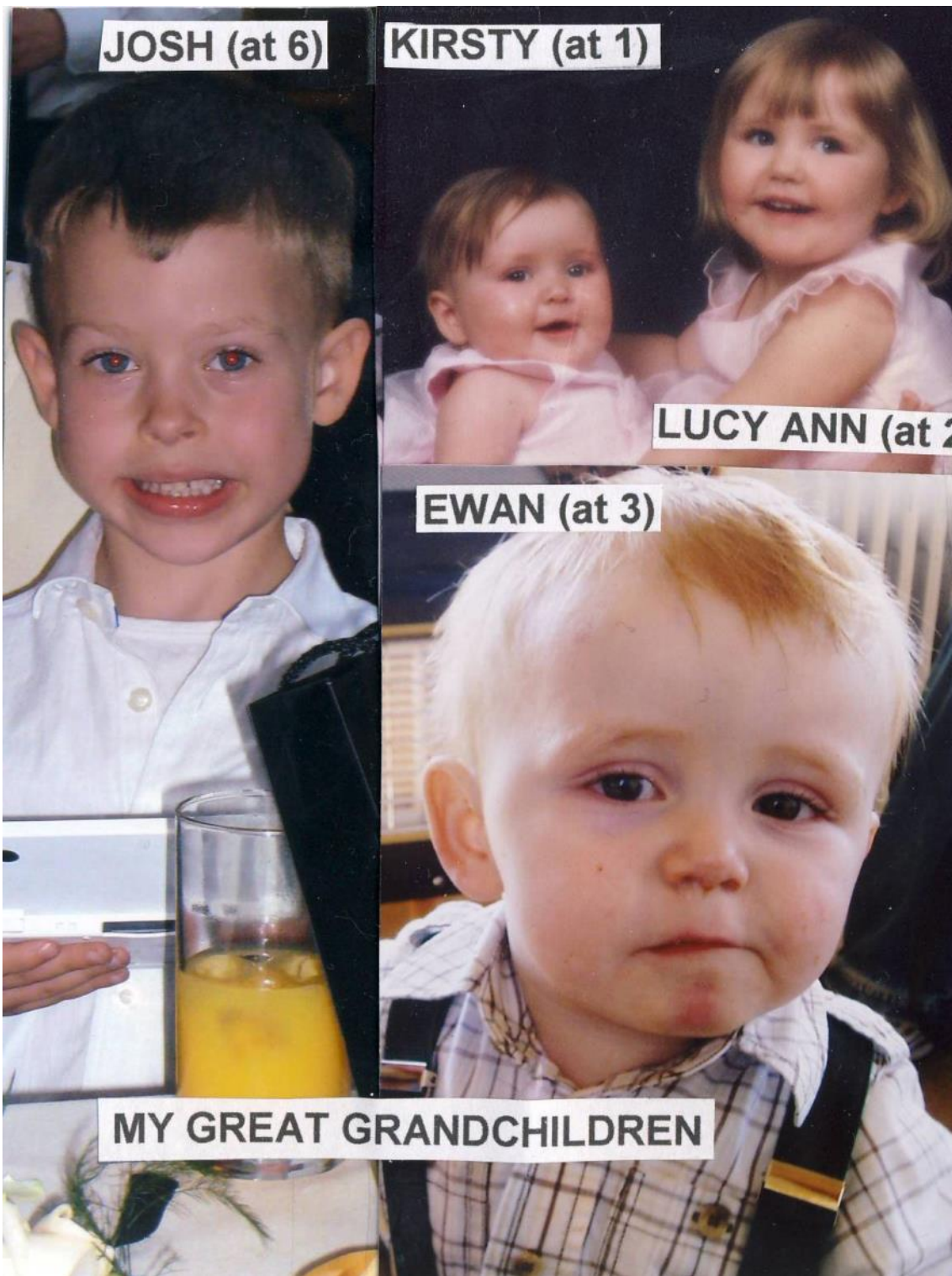
**Tony with Geoff (family friend)**

**I have five lovely grandchildren.**

**They are all in their 30s and are called Debbie (who is married to Craig), Gary, Michelle (whose husband is Terry), Lucie Ann and Mark. They all live in the Greater Manchester area.**

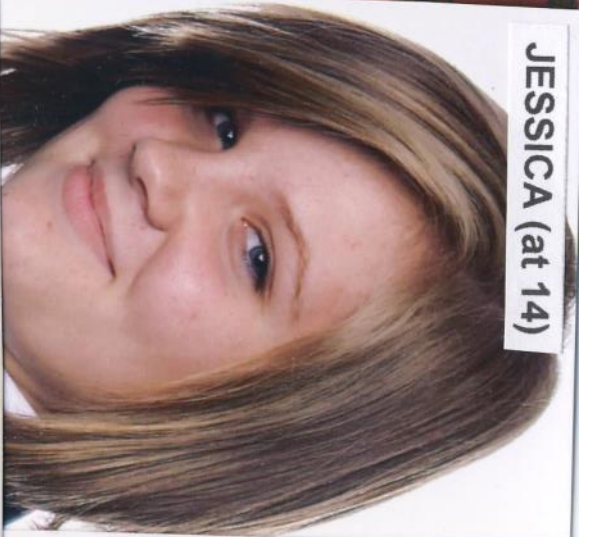


**I also have eight  
great grandchildren.**





**OLIVER (at 16)**



**JESSICA (at 14)**



**MAX (at 3 days old)**

**MY GREAT GRANDCHILDREN**



**JACK (at 11)**

## Family Pets

**My children had a faithful dog called**



**Jip whilst they were growing up, but sadly Jip was killed on the busy main road.**

**I adopted a neighbour's cat called April, who always came to my house for extra food.**



**My friend Bertha had a lovely little dog called Tricky, who enjoyed my visits to her house because I had cooked chicken especially for her. My family would tell you that I bought better quality chicken for the dog than I did for myself!**



## Special Friends

I think the last holiday I went on was with my dear friend Edna in 1994.

We went to St Leonards on Sea and had a lovely time.



**Tom and I lived in Birmingham in the mid-1950's which is where our first two children were born.**

**Tom introduced me to his best pal Stan and his wife Edna.**

**We all became lifelong friends, sharing holidays and family occasions.**



**Me & Tom with Edna & Stan 1960**



**Edna was my rock when I was away from home having my first born, and also supported me the following year when my daughter was born.**



**Me with Edna & Stan – Blackpool 1992**



**Gloria (L) with Margaret (Centre) and Susan (R) - early 1960s**



Me & Edna in 1960s with her sons Michael and Brian

**Sadly, both Tom and Stan have now died but even to this day, Edna phones me regularly at Stoneleigh for chats.**

**She also keeps in touch with my daughter, to make sure I'm keeping out of trouble!**

## Special Events

**My teen years in Holland between 1949 and 1953 were some of the happiest times of my life. I grew up with Jan, a Dutch boy who was living in Oldham. After World War II, he invited me to stay with his family in a town called Flushing, South Holland.**



**My life in Flushing, Holland with my friends Jan, Tinika and Bram**



**Jan and I became very close friends and I became good friends with his sister Tinika.**



**Early 1950s**  
**TINIKA (Jan's sister) & ME IN TRADITIONAL DUTCH COSTUME**

**We went everywhere together and experienced the usual fun that young people do.**

**Then I met and fell in love with Jan's friend, Bram.**



**We still all remained friends together.**

**My life in Flushing, Holland with my friends Jan, Tinika and Bram**





Jan & Bram 1951 Vlissingen Pier



JAN & Me on pier 1951



JAN & Me on Veere Harbour 1949

**Bram and I wanted to get married but we faced opposition from our families. Mainly my mum forbade me to get married and told me to return to England.**

**You might think the reason was because she thought we were too young.**



**BRAM & Me on pier 1951**



**BRAM by Monument No 4 Comando Vliissingen. This is the last photo taken of him in 1953.**



**Me by Monument No 4 Comando Vliissingen 1953.**

**However the reasons were because she did not want to live alone and she wanted me to return to my employment a seamstress. This would ensure she had a steady income coming in each week.**

**In those days, children did what their parents said and I returned broken-hearted to England.**

**I never really recovered from this but I did maintain contact with Jan's mother, Mrs Marijs, for the last 50 or so years.**



**The photos tell their own story of our happiness.**





# A Step Back in Time...



**It is nearly 65 years since my wonderful time in Flushing (Vlissingen), times that I clearly remember to this day. I was therefore very excited when my daughter Margaret and my granddaughter, Lucie Ann decided to retrace my footsteps in December 2013.**



**With the knowledge and kind assistance from local residents, the curator of Flushing's (Vlissingen) Museum and staff at the Tourist Office they successfully located the exact places I visited with my Dutch friends, Jan, Tinika and Bram.**



**Vlis-**

**singen Museum.**

# The most poignant one was No. 4 Commando Memorial on the coastline.



**Mar-**

**garet and Lucie Ann  
at the Memorial.**



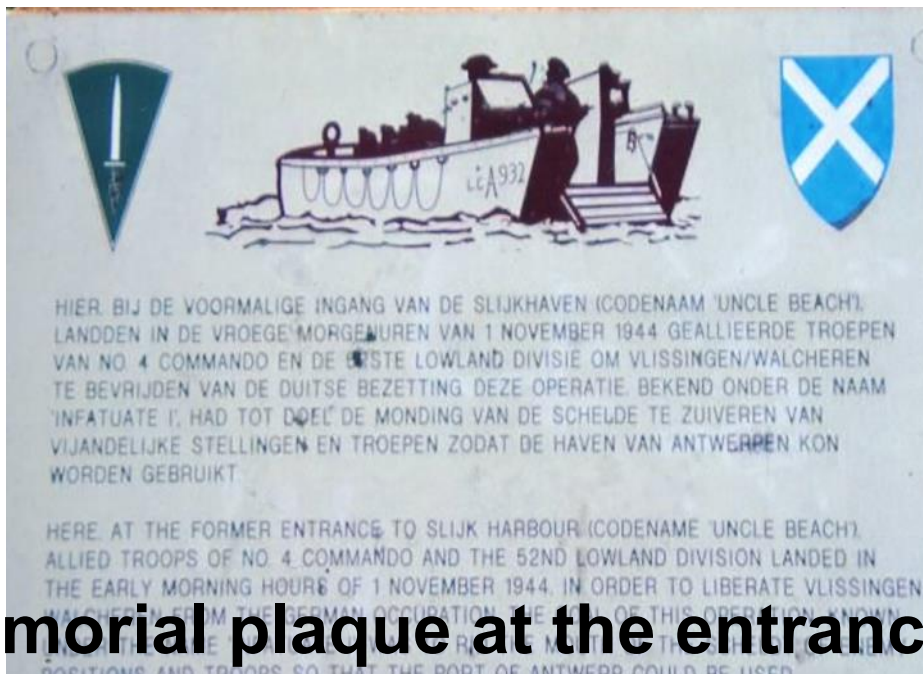


**It was here, that in the early morning of 1st November 1944, No. 4 Commando, 52nd Lowland Division, French Troops and eleven Dutch Commandos landed to liberate the Dutch people. In doing so, there was huge loss of life, both military and civilian. Even when I visited years later, I still recall seeing men, women and children openly crying, walking down the streets as no family had escaped the loss.**





**Assault on Vlissingen/Walcheren  
1st November 1944.**



**Memorial plaque at the entrance to  
Slijk Harbour.**



**Unveiling of the Commando Memorial in 1952.**





**Ariel View of the exact spot of coastline near the windmill where the Commandos landed.**



**Lucie Ann at the same location.**

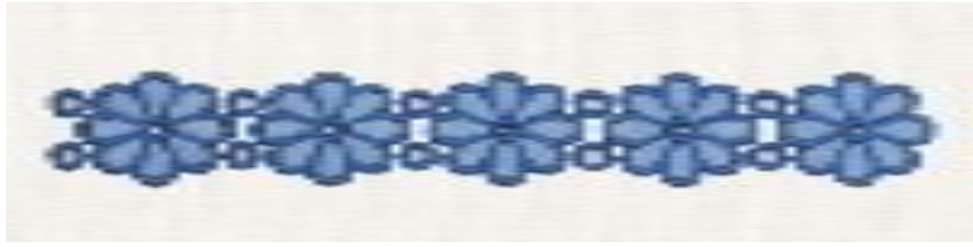




**My daughter and granddaughter also visited the exact locations on the coastline and central Flushing (Vlissingen) that suffered during ‘The Big Flood of 1953.’**

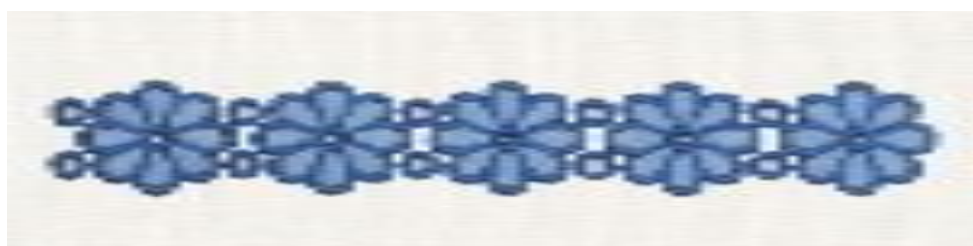
**I remember the devastation and storm damage caused by floods which afflicted the Dutch people, as if they hadn’t suffered enough during WW2.**





**On the night of 31st January, 1953, over 1800 people died and thousands of animals perished. More than 70,000 residents had to be evacuated and 4,500 buildings were destroyed. Many of them being beautiful architectural masterpieces.**

**As a young girl, it never ceased to amaze me that again, during this catastrophe, the Dutch people displayed such selflessness when helping their neighbours and complete strangers alike.**





**Central Flushing underwater, 1953.**



**The exact spot today.**



**The storm damage  
to the seafront in 1953.**

**Immediately after this tragedy the  
Dutch Government placed a ban on  
all tourists entering Holland until  
such a time as the clean-up  
operation was finalised.**

**When I was finally allowed to return, I had the unofficial role as ‘postmistress’, by volunteering to deliver letters from British families to their loved ones living in Holland because the damaged infrastructure was restored extremely slowly and communications poor.**

**It was unusual for a young girl like myself, especially from a poor background, to travel regularly to Holland therefore local people ladened me down with small packages and letters for the stricken Dutch people.**

**The ultimate 'finale' to my life in Holland came by way of postal communication from Jan's daughter to my daughter in December 2013. Previously, every Christmas I would receive an annual letter from Jan's mother, Mrs Marijs until her death in 1997.**

**Jan's daughter, Els Marijs, sent many unseen photographs of me as a young girl aged 15 - 17 in Holland, taken by her father over 65 years ago.**

**She said that he had treasured them all his life.**

**Below are just are some of these new images that my family will now have the opportunity to enjoy and share during my lifetime. One shows me with Jan's Great Aunt to whom he was very close.**



**Receiving these unseen photos  
made a lovely start to this  
New Year, 2014, especially as  
I shall be 82 years old in August  
and I can still recall my life in  
Holland as though it were yesterday.**





**Vlissingen revisited by 4th  
Generation—March 2017**

**My Daughter & granddaughter took my great grandson Adam (aged 18 months) to visit No. 4 Commando Memorial at 'Uncle Beach' on 28th March 2017**

**Insert mum's original photo**

**Vlissingen revisited by 4th  
Generation—March 2017**

**Insert photos 1 & 2 + mum's  
original)**

## **Vlissingen revisited by 4th Generation—March 2017**

**My Daughter asked an elderly man to take their photo by the statue. Unbelievably, he told her that he was on active military duty during the Commando campaign and he regularly visits the Memorial area!!! What are the chances of that?**

**They noticed that the Commando Memorial area had been improved and the former entrance to Slijk Harbour (codename “Uncle Beach”) had been identified by a large wall plaque for easy recognition**

**Vlissingen revisited by 4th  
Generation—March 2017**

**Insert photo 3**

**The old grey cobbles where I stood in 1953 had been covered by white concrete paving slabs. These improvements were to mark the 70th Anniversary of Liberation of Vlissingen & Walcheren, commemorated on 3rd November 2014.**

**Vlissingen revisited by 4th  
Generation—March 2017**

**Insert photos 4,5 & 6**

## **Dutch Jewish connection to my family**

**I was particularly pleased that the Memorial area now includes a beautiful coastal memorial to the Dutch Jews who lost their lives under German occupation of the Netherlands (Vlissingen)**

**Insert photo 7**

## **Dutch Jewish connection to my family**

**This is very poignant to my family because my mother (Margaret Gregory - dob: 11/2/1890) made friends with Mrs Soloman and her family back in the 1930's in my home town, Oldham, Lancashire.**

**The Soloman's Dutch friends in Vlissingen gave shelter to a young Jewish man named Mr Cohen when the Germans occupied the town. The family hid him in their attic for many months and he spent his days drawing pictures.**

**It is extremely similar to the Anne Frank situation except Mr Cohen produced drawings instead of a diary AND this talented young man did survive the War.**

## **Dutch Jewish connection to my family**

**His pictures were mainly of the local canal visible from his limited view from the attic window. All his drawings were made using charcoal. After the War, he gave signed copies to Mrs Soloman's family who, in turn, shared these with my mother.**

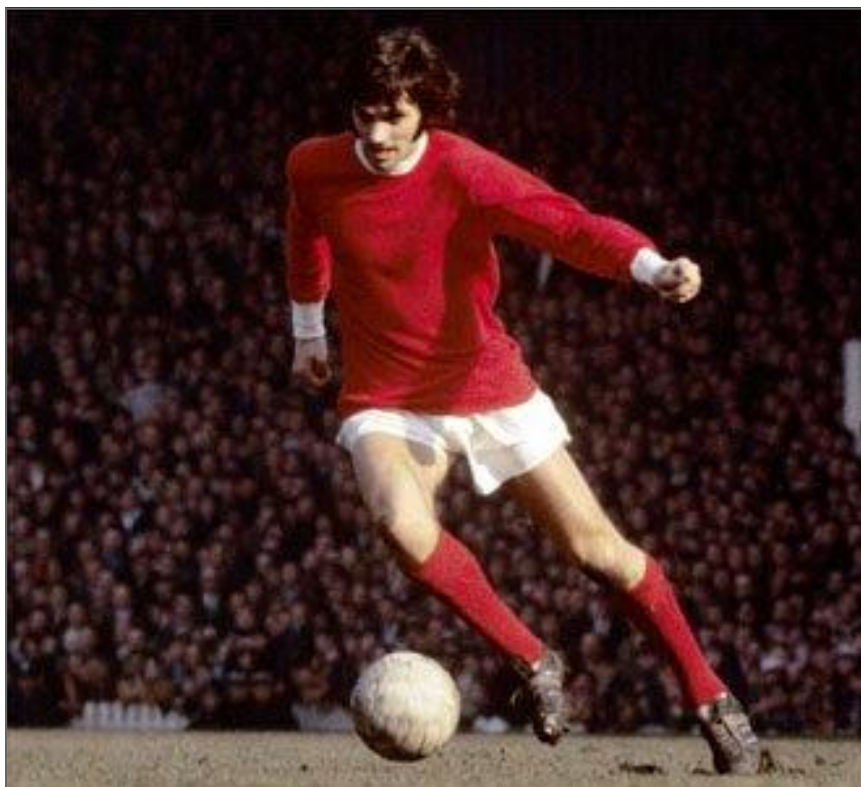
**Insert photo 8**

**A piece of history!!**



# Present Day Life

**I still like to watch football when it's on the TV.**

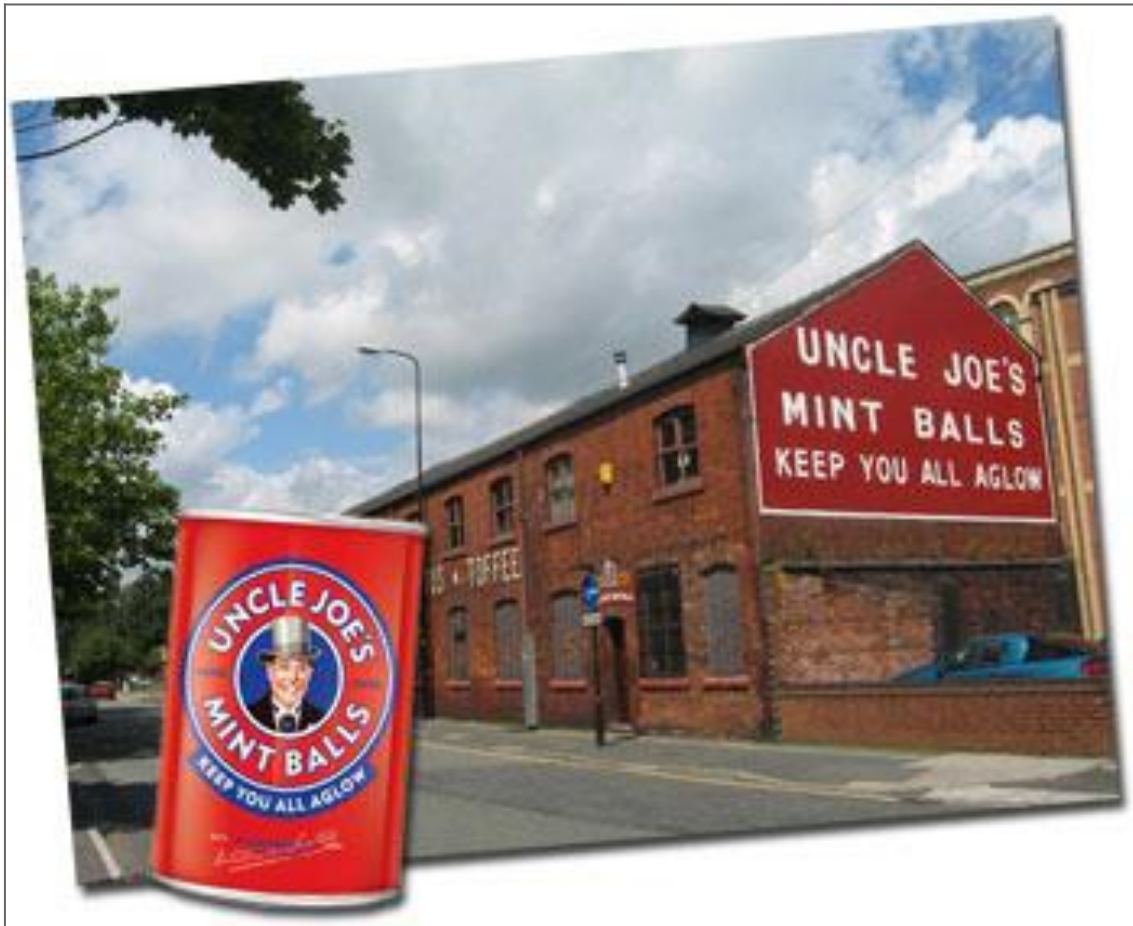


**I also enjoy going out for my favourite meal, fish and chips.**



**I enjoy visits from my friends, daughter and grandchildren and great-grandchildren.**

**I love fish and chips and Uncle Joe's mint balls, but not together!**



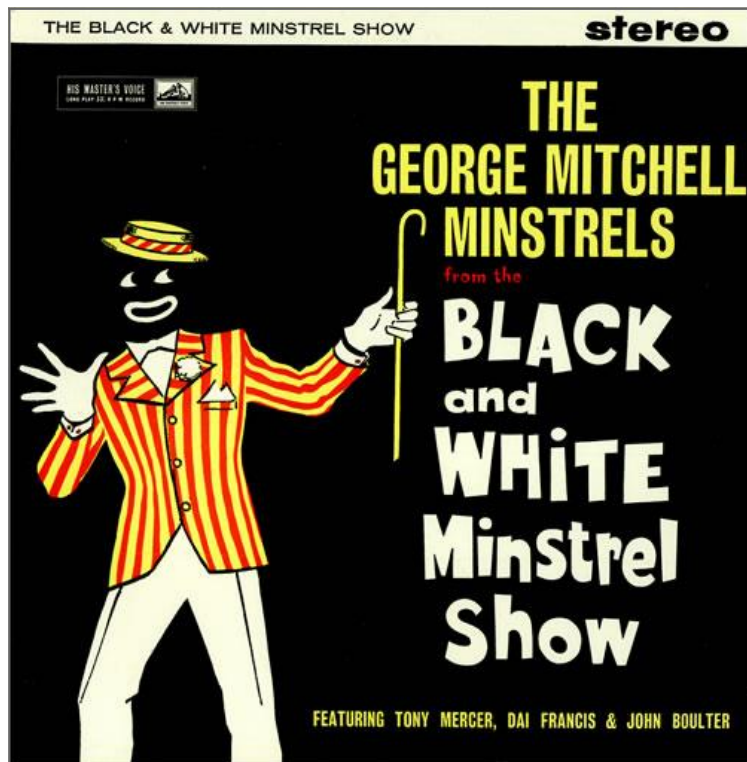
**My favourite colours are brown and beige.**



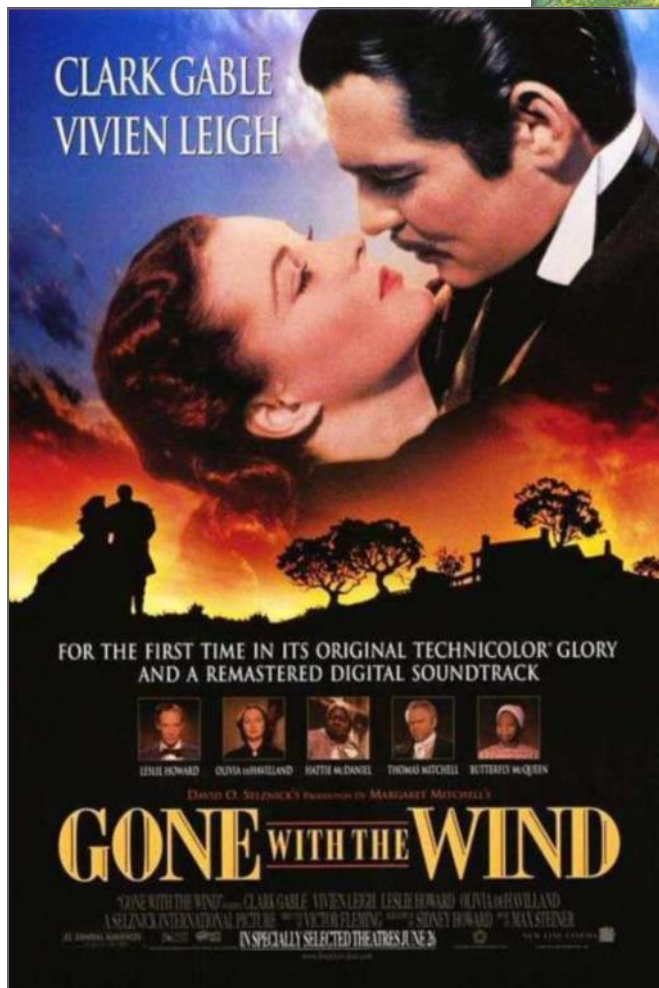
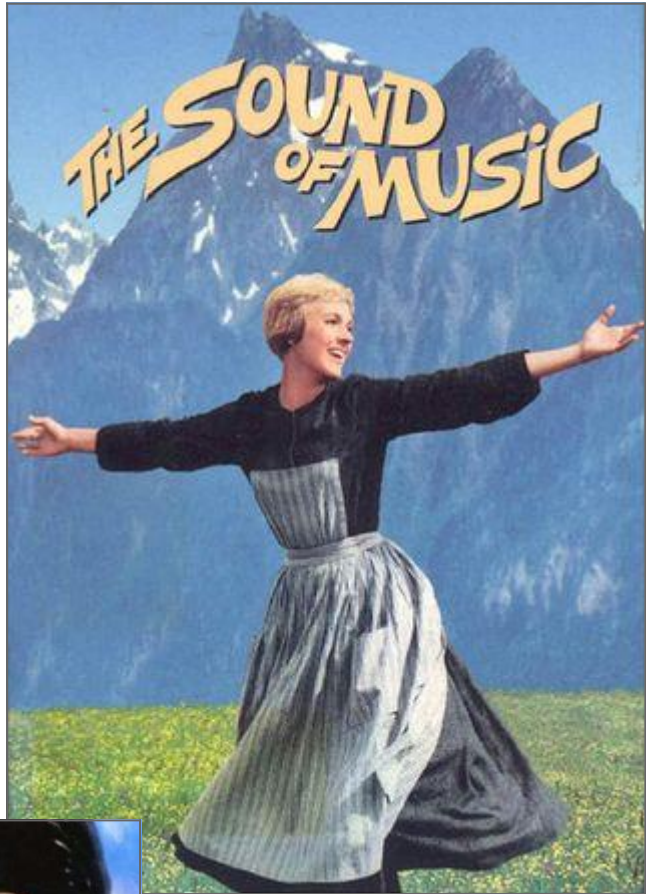
**I enjoy watching cricket on the TV.**



**I used to enjoy the Black and White Minstrel Show, but it isn't politically correct now, is it?!**



My favourite films were The Sound of Music and Gone With The Wind.



# I loved listening to Mario Lanza.

SUREFIRE ENTERTAINMENTS LTD in association with LAST SERENADE PRODUCTIONS LTD present

# LANZA

## THE LAST SERENADE

By Dave Dennison

Mario Lanza 'the American Caruso' was idolised by millions. Known as the greatest singer in the world he was to die tragically aged only thirty eight.

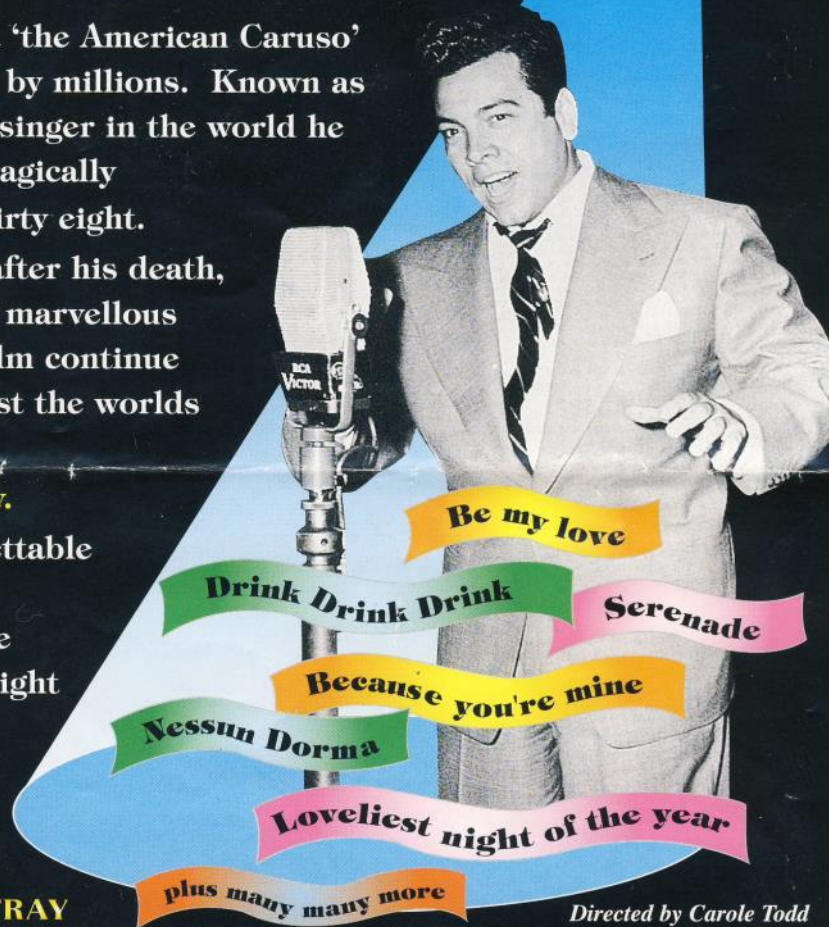
Forty years after his death, his legacy of marvellous music and film continue to be amongst the worlds best sellers.

**Find out why.**

This unforgettable story, with unforgettable music, is a night that you will never forget.

*Starring*

**MARK RATTRAY**



*Directed by Carole Todd*

***The Last Serenade is guaranteed to thrill and entertain you like no other musical...***



**Monday 14th June - Saturday 19th June 1999**

Monday - Saturday 7.30pm - Matinee Wednesday and Saturday 2.30pm

Ticket Prices: Mon-Thurs Stalls/Circle: £14.50/£12.00/£10.50 Grand Tier: £10.00/£8.50

Wed & Sat 2.30pm all seats £10.00 Fri & Sat 7.30pm Stalls/Circle £17.50/£15.00/£13.50 Grand Tier £13.50/£11.50

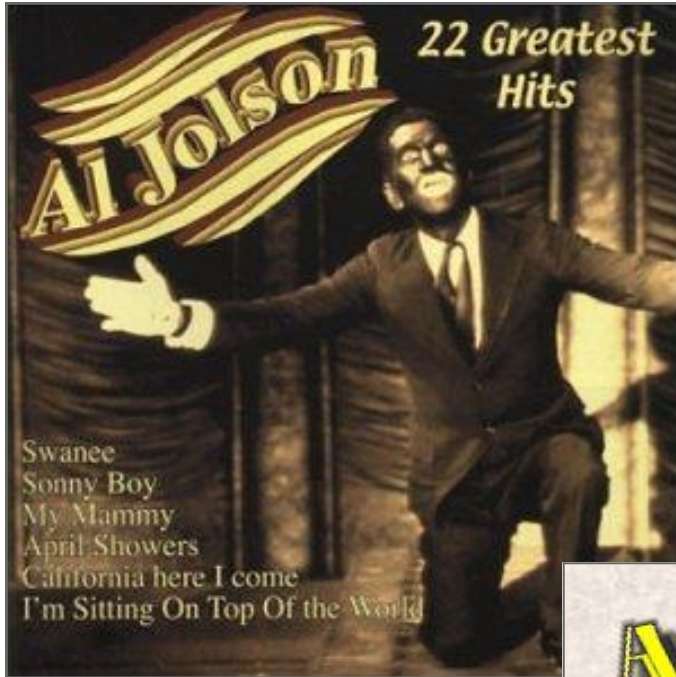
CONCESSIONS: First night 2 tickets for the price of 1. Theatre Card Holders £5.00 discount on Tues, £2.00 discount Weds & Thurs.

Senior Citizens/Registered Disabled/Students/UB40's/Children £2.00 discount Tues-Thurs Eve. Parties 8+ £2.00 discount. Parties of 15+ £2.00 discount plus 2 free tickets.

**CALL TICKETS DIRECT: 0161 2422503\* - GROUP BOOKINGS: 0161 2456666**

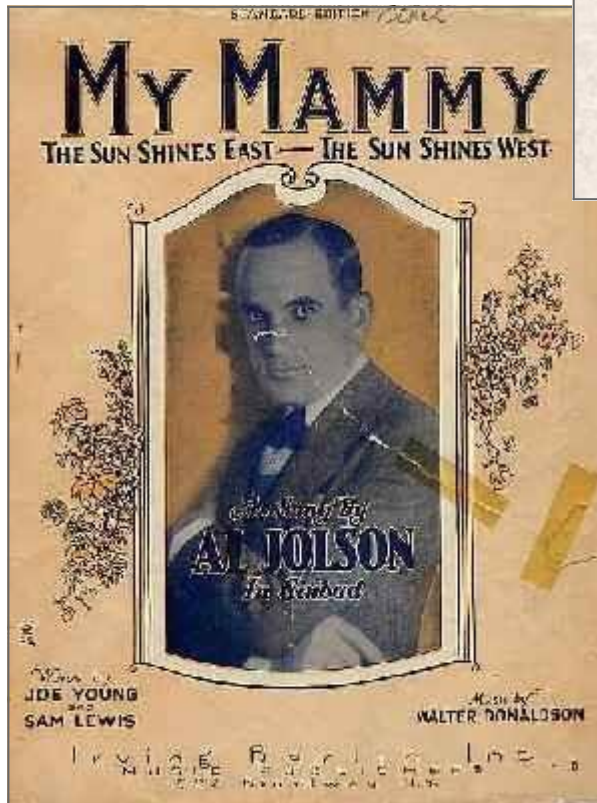
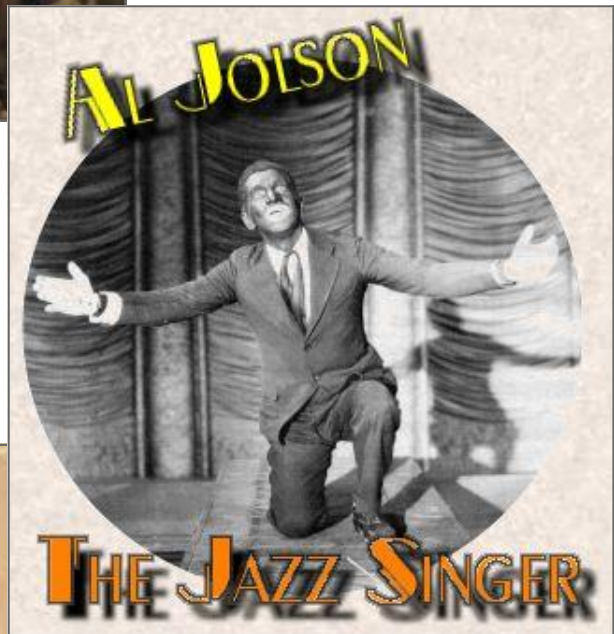
(\*Subject to £1.85 booking fee per ticket)

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I also liked

Al Jolson.



## A Perfect Day

**If I had one wish for a perfect day,  
I would wish that my two late  
sons, Phillip and Tony, could join  
me and the rest of the family for  
one perfect day.**



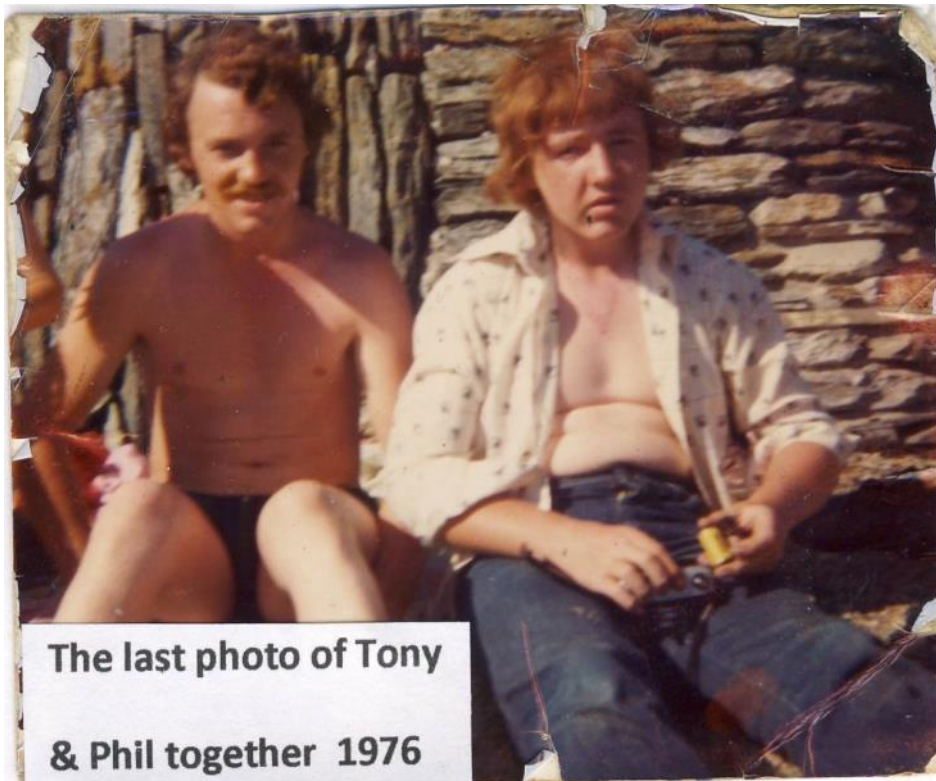
Me with Tony & Phil

(Debbie in buggy)

On holiday 1976



**My two sons Phil and Tony, although deceased, are still very important to me. Margaret always ensures that I have their last specially written birthday, Christmas and Mother's Day cards with me on those occasions. These cards hold immense sentimental value to me as it is nice to see both my son's handwriting again.**





**My daughter Margaret is also important to me, as are my**



**Nise was married to my late son Tony and we were very close. We share books together and the odd glass of wine!**



**Other important people in my life are my great grandchildren Oliver, Jessica, Jack, Joshua, Lucy Ann, Kirsty, Ewan and Max and my good friends Edna, Mary, Bertha, Denise, Ann, Col and Geoff.**



# Anecdotes Involving Family Members

## My Great Grandfather

On June 2nd 1852 my great grandfather, John Evans, and two other “Oldham lads” including his cousin Daniel Evans, set sail from Liverpool, on board the ship Lady Head for Melbourne, Australia, in the hope of making their fortune in the gold fields.



**Unlike most of the gold diggers, on 31st January 1853 they actually found the largest nugget of gold ever discovered in Australian history, in Canadian Gully, Ballarat. The nugget weighed in at 134 pounds, 8 ounces, and became known as “Leg of Mutton Nugget” because of its shape.**



**A large gold nugget mined in Australia**

**They refused all offers for it and brought it back to England, where, according to an article in the Oldham Chronicle dated 15th October 2008, it was shown to Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. It was then kept in the vaults at the Bank of England in London. Eventually it was sold for its bullion value to the Bank of England, where it was melted down and cast into gold bars.**



**Bank of England,  
London**

**Gold bars**



**Nugget Street in Glodwick, Oldham, is named after my great grandfather's achievement.**



**How  
Nugget  
Street in  
Glodwick  
looks  
today.**

**However, my great grandmother was shamed by the antics of her husband, because not only did he discover the largest nugget of gold in the world at the time, he also found himself an Australian wife whom he bigamously married!! Although the people of Oldham celebrated this great gold discovery, it brought nothing but shame to my great grandmother.**



## Fred Hilton

**My husband's half-brother, Fred Hilton, was a lovable local rag and bone man in Oldham. He thought the world of his horse, Daisy, and his health deteriorated when she died. Such was his lifestyle that he could not adapt to living in a house and was more comfortable living in Daisy's stable!**



**He would always tell me when he'd be in the area, and he'd bring me extra donkey stones to clean the front steps.**



**The photos were taken by the Oldham Chronicle in 1988.**

**A donkey stone**



# Rag-and-bone man could teach us a few things

OLD-TIMERS, and perhaps some of those who are not so old, may remember the rag-and-bone man.

His decrepit bone-shaker, aptly named, pulled by a sad-looking pony, would be seen in the back lanes of our towns and villages.

He would be unwelcome in the more affluent suburbs of the city.

Usually an elderly man, his cry of "Any rags, bones or bottles" would be accompanied by the ringing of a bell or the toot of a whistle. It was convenient for the housewife to dispose of her empties and cast-offs.

Children would be rewarded with a handful of chalky sweets, a gimcrack toy or a balloon. Their mothers would be persuaded that he did them a favour by taking any discarded clothing off their hands.

Whether there is still a market for bones and rags is problematic, but the emphasis these days is on metals. The industry, if such it is, is now upgraded. "Any old iron" is the call of the young men, maybe moonlighting on the dole, who arrive with a lorry.

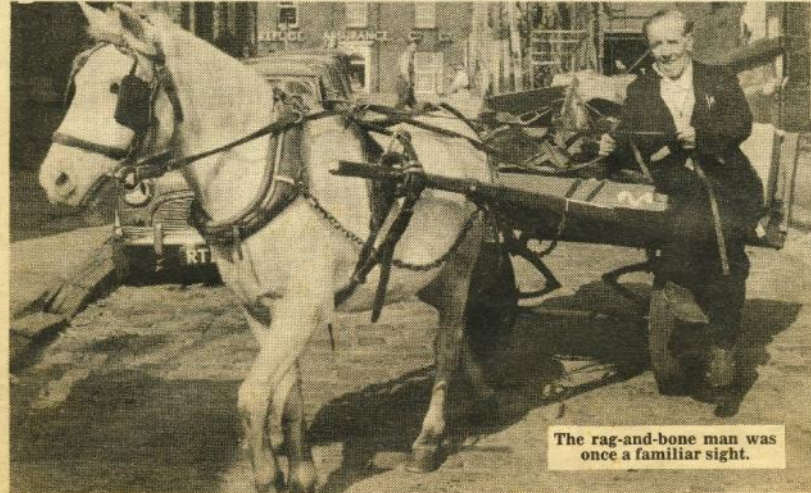
## CAST-OFFS

At least they do a necessary service. Their beat, as with the rag-and-bone man, continues to be the back lanes. The affluent, if they happen to have disposables or cast-offs, obviously have their own means of disposal, probably Oxfer or Barnardo's.

That the market for which they collect fluctuates is evidenced by the age and condition of their conveyance and the number in the gang. Yet they are regular callers and adept at ferreting out anything likely to be saleable. They will open a garden gate and shout, and the unscrupulous proceed to investigate. A householder will return from a holiday to find that his incinerator has disappeared. A replaced sink unit, promised to a friend, suffered the same fate. An unoccupied house is liable to be stripped of piping and fittings.

Anything metallic is acceptable to the scrap-metal merchants. They are able to dispose of discarded television sets, car batteries, cooker, washers, refrigerators and the like.

Yet what these back-door scavengers collect is merely a drop in the ocean. For we are now a throwaway society, intent



The rag-and-bone man was once a familiar sight.

on keeping up with the Jones's. Manufacturers and retailers urge the householders to "throw out the old and buy new".

Our forefathers would be aghast. Craftsmen then had pride in their product. Elderly people often retain furniture handed down from their own parents. Ironically, much that has been discarded is now valued as antique and displayed proudly as valuable acquisitions.

## DUMPING

What were once regarded as luxury items are now considered necessary adjuncts in the home, especially by the younger generation. The price of such items is no problem, as credit has become a way of life. High-pressure salesmen and advertising stress the importance of buying the latest model.

Inevitably, the problem of what to do with the discarded items escalates. Some local authorities make collections, but the disposal of household waste becomes ever more expensive. Clean Air Acts, the disappearance of the open-fire grate and the back-garden in-

## by C. J. WHITE

cinerator put increasing pressure on systems of rubbish disposal.

Sites such as old quarries and sandpits become ever scarcer. Marine life suffers from sea dumping.

In our affluent society, surplus food thrown into a garbage can would feed a Third World family. Yet it is our countryside which is the greatest sufferer.

Cars, in particular, but also pick-ups and lorries, are used to deposit unwanted utensils and garden waste. Every lay-by and picnic area gets its quota of bedsteads, cookers, television sets — ad infinitum.

## DAMAGE

Town and city dwellers are the chief offenders. Country people in particular, and rural communities, have more regard for their environment.

Those who live in the glorified antheaps of our cities drive out to what they consider to be their playground. They seldom connect the cows they harass

with their morning milk. Or the corn they recklessly trample with their daily bread.

Worse still is the litter they leave behind, with no thought for the damage the do and the discomfort to animals.

A modern refuse collector of the rag-and-bone genre would have a field day to follow such despoilers.

A civilised society should not tolerate such despoliation. Children, especially, should be taught that such waste is unacceptable.

Most important, maybe, is that recycling and regeneration should be of major importance. Unfortunately, to the authorities concerned, the mention of recycling of waste is anathema. They cite the cost of the necessary plant. Yet surely we owe it to future generations to be more frugal in our use of our Earth's irreplaceable assets.

Perhaps our modern way of life could take a lesson from the rag-and-bone man of yore, or maybe the more modern metals man. At least his effort, if infinitesimal as compared to the magnitude of the present problem, is a pointer to the way in which we should proceed.

## **My Uncle**

**My uncle, Norman James, was fortunate enough to meet Princess Elizabeth during one of her visits to Oldham in the early 1950's. He was presented to her because of his exemplary workmanship during a visit to Platts Engineering Factory.**



**Princess  
Elizabeth**

My Auntie Janie,  
his wife, always  
boasted about the  
meeting, and  
continued to send  
**THE** photograph  
with Christmas  
cards years after  
the event!



Uncle NORMAN meeting Princess Elizabeth

in 1950s



## **Craig the Fireman**

**Craig, my grandson-in-law, is a fireman. He always took me shopping to Sainsbury's every Thursday without fail.**

**On one particular Thursday when I didn't answer my door or telephone, he became concerned that something may have happened to me.**



**He urgently needed to get a ladder to access my bedroom window, so he phoned his colleagues at the local fire station who sent a fire engine.**



**He climbed the ladder to my bedroom window, only to find me in bed waving at him and shoosing him away whilst I got dressed!**



**I didn't realise the panic I had caused by oversleeping and I felt a little bit embarrassed, especially when the neighbours started gossiping.**



**Bless him, Craig still took me shopping, but I made sure he had a door key after that performance!**



**Craig, my fireman grandson**

**My home now is at Cleggsworth  
Care Home.**



**Age UK Oldham presented  
my Life Story book to me  
on  
14th August 2012**





**My Life Story was produced  
with help from  
my daughter Margaret  
and Age UK Oldham volunteer  
Rosemary Bailey**