

My name is Sheila Henderson (nee Barnes). I was born in Branston in 1929.

My father, Charlie Barnes worked at Mere W/T Station and I understand he started work there in about 1930 when I was about a year old.

My first visit to Mere, when I was quite young, was to Wing Commander Swanborough's daughter's birthday party. The Swanborough family lived there in a wooden bungalow which later became part of the Officer-in-Charge's offices.

My father worked there until December 1938 when he was transferred to Cheadle in Staffordshire and our family moved there at that time. At the outbreak of World War 2 my father was called up and joined the RAF and was posted back to Cheadle where he remained until the end of the war.

When my mother died in May 1946 my father was transferred back to Mere and worked there until his death in 1958.

I went to work at Cheadle W/T Station for about two weeks in May 1946 to train as a teleprinter operator, after which I was transferred to Mere. I worked there with another girl called Marjorie Johnson who was an ex WAAF. I believe she was there during the war.

I lived at Waddington during my working days at Mere and travelled by bicycle each day. We worked from Monday to Friday (8:30a.m. to 4:30p.m.). Marjorie left in about 1948 but she was not replaced.

The Radio officers comprised about 50% servicemen and 50% civilians and gradually as time went by it became manned by civilians only. It was a very happy and friendly place to work. The Radio Officers were housed in a wooden hut and our teleprinter office was part of this building. These buildings were heated by coke stoves on which we boiled kettles in order to make hot drinks. We took packed meals, as there were no facilities for heating food.

Flight Lieutenant Jock Murray was in charge of Mere who was assisted by a sergeant. My job was to pass the radio messages via the teleprinter to Cheadle.

I worked at Mere for three years until 1949 when I left to further my career in education.