

20/9/01

Recollections of Branston W/T Station 1946 - 1954

Seven!
Some fifty ~~that~~ years has passed since I was at the "Mere" — in consequence some memories remain sharp — and others lost in the shuffle of confusion — !! Hence my account could well be flawed in some respects, so I apologise if some dates and accounts are slightly misplaced.

IN "BRANSTON REMEMBERED" — BRANSTON'S SECRET WAR" A FAIRLY COMPREHENSIVE ACCOUNT WAS GIVEN OF THIS SMALL — BUT VITAL WIRELESS TELEGRAPHY STATION DURING THE WAR YEARS. IN THESE YEARS — LIKE SO MANY SERVICEMEN I WAS "OTHERWISE ENGAGED" OVERSEAS, AND ON RETURN, MYSELF AND MANY MORE WERE POSTED TO APPROPRIATE DUTIES IN THE UK.

I FOUND MYSELF AT BRANSTON IN 1946.

AS A RADIO OFFICER I HAD NEVER FOUND SUCH A SMALL WATCH ROOM IN ALL OF MY SERVICE. BUT IT WAS UNIQUE — SMALL BUT VERY FRIENDLY. I ALSO FOUND IT STAFFED BY VERY EXPERIENCED RADIO MEN, SOME WHO HAD BEEN AT BRANSTON W/T DURING THE WAR — AND PREVIOUSLY. HOWEVER I FOUND MYSELF IN GOOD COMPANY AND SOON SETTLED IN.

HERE I GO INTO "MEMORY LANE" BECAUSE I FIND PEOPLE MAKE PLACES — AND LINK UP LIFE FOR US — AND SO IT IS WITH BRANSTON ~~~~~

A DOZEN OR MORE OF US "NEWCOMERS" WERE FOUND ACCOMMODATION IN THE VILLAGE — MYSELF AND WIFE MOLLIE AND
BILL HOBKIRK WERE LODGED WITH MISS WEST IN SLEAFORD ROAD; OTHERS LIKE JACK TONES WITH ROSE GREEN. DOUG TAYLOR WENT TO THE NEW ESTATE (AND MARRIED RENE REESON?). I RECALL GORDON KENNEDY AND WIFE JOYCE; GYRIL HUMBERSTONE AND FAMILY ALL MADE WELCOME IN THE VILLAGE.

INTEGRATION WAS FURTHER ADVANCED AS TIME WENT BY, WHEN OPTIONS AROSE, TO RENT OR BUY PROPERTY. MOLLIE AND I WERE

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FOR THE RECORD WERE:-

JOHNNY DALE GRAMAM HOWLETT FRED BURGESS:
JOHN SKELTON JACK CUBITT, JACK KEAL, CHARLES SCASE.
HAROLD TACEY, VIC KERSHAW, FRANK GASCOYNE, GEO BARRAND,
ROLAND CHEVINS, FRANK LAW, GORDON KENNEDY JIM BARNEY
AND YOURS TRULY CLIFF ODDFIELD.

I CAN SAY HERE THAT IN MY 44 YEARS OF SERVICE IN RADIO
I HAVE NEVER WORKED WITH A MORE DISTINGUISHED AND
HAPPY GROUP THAN THESE.

OTHER THAN THE OPERATIONAL STAFF AT THE MERE,
VITAL SERVICES WERE ALSO CARRIED OUT BY
LOCALLY EMPLOYED STAFF.

WHERE ELSE COULD WE GET A HAIRCUT AS GOOD AS
A BILLY REYNOLDS?

CHARLIE BARNES - A WIZARD WITH BRUSH AND BUCKET
- AND OUR DRIVER GEORGE CREASY WHO FETCHED
AND CARRIED NOT ONLY VITAL PACKAGES BUT
FERRY'S FAMILIES AND FURNITURE ABOUT BRANSTON
AND WAS A SOURCE OF ALL KNOWLEDGE ON
INTIMATE OCCURENCES IN THE VILLAGE. HE ALSO
REPAIRED BIKES.

CYCLING TO THE MERE BECAME A HAZARD DURING THE
HEAVY SNOW FALLS IN 1946-7 - AND THEN IMPOSSIBLE
- AND THE LONG WALK TO THE MERE AND BACK BECAME
THE NORM FOR MONTHS -

BUT THE OTHER HAZARD CYCLING UP MERE ROAD
ON NIGHTWATCH WAS P.C. JACKSON. LAMPS THAT
FAILED AND POOR REFLECTORS WERE HIS DELIGHT, AND
APPREHENSION WAS CERTAIN ONCE HE HAD CAUGHT UP WITH US.
BUT P.C JACKSON WAS A VERY GOOD BOBBY - HE ALWAYS
LET US OFF.

Socially, THE MERE STAFF WERE ALWAYS MADE WELCOME BY BRANSTON RESIDENTS IN MANY AREAS OF ACTIVITY.

Fancy Dress Dances at the Village Hall were well supported by staff in various disguises - I recall Arab sheiks were common place, and scarecrows and Bisto girls very popular.

The Branston Cricket Clubs Annual Supper presided over by Mr Young, with the Village Butcher providing a huge stuffed Grouse is well remembered. as was Jack Jones impromptu songs at the piano at the Waggon & Horses.

The Wireless Station Cricket Team formed in 1947 initially had no field, no gear and a pavilion was a pipe dream - But not for long.

Pers Truly took advantage of an Auction Sale at Lincoln Market. The Lincolnshire Regiment was selling off all its Sports gear after an Overseas Tour.

With cash raised in Raffles etc, I took off with some £25 and was able to purchase pads, bats, balls, ~~swickets~~ ~~and~~ sufficient for our needs. Cricket Caps & badges were later added. The badge was thus! -
a Simple Electric Flash!



THE CRICKET FIELD WAS KINDLY LENT TO US BY MR BRANSTON OF SPRINGFIELD, UP MERE RD, AND A WICKET WAS PREPARED WITH THE AID OF BILLY FORMAN'S PETROL DRIVEN ROAD ROLLER! - THE PAVILION WAS AN OLD CHICKEN SHED - SCRUBBED OUT WITH JEXES FLUID, PAINTED & WHITEWASHED. WE JOINED THE ENCLOSED GROUNDS LEAGUE AND ENJOYED MANY SEASONS CRICKET. POTTERHANWORTH WAS ALWAYS A FAVOURITE AWAY FIXTURE - MAINLY FOR ITS FANTASTIC TEAS. THE TEA LADIES WERE MRS DAY AND DAUGHTERS - THE TEAM WAS - GUESS WHAT - WELL AT LEAST 6 MR DAYS WERE LISTED.

A STONE ONCE STOOD AT THE SITE ENTRANCE AT THE MERE :- I STILL REGARD THIS AS A TALISMAN TO ALL WHO WORKED THERE. THE FIRST AIR MINISTRY STATION EVER AND SIGNIFICANTLY AT BRANSTON.

A VILLAGE WE ALL LOVE



Cliff Clafford