

Oral History – Doreen Emily Hemus

Recorded by YVONNE SHAW and TERENCE DRISCOLL

The late Doreen Emily (née) Hemus was born on 11 November 1921 to parents Frederick William Hemus and Emily (née) Gammage who had married at St Barnabas, Clapham Common in that same year on 17 August. She did not marry and she died in 2014.

Introduction

Miss Doreen Emily Hemus was born on 11 November 1921 to parents Frederick William Hemus and Emily (née) Gammage. She did not marry.

She was interviewed and recorded on 2 August 2010 by Yvonne Shaw and Terence ("Terry") Driscoll. The recording was abridged in 2010 by Yvonne Shaw and fully transcribed by Christopher John Hogger in 2020. Words not transcribed here (owing to indistinctness in the recording) are marked ***

The audio recording is accessible on Effingham Local History Group's website.

Doreen died aged 93 on 17 December 2014.

Transcript

Yvonne: Start with where you were born and we can take it from there, it'll be absolutely fine.

Doreen: My name is Miss Doreen Hemus. I was born across Effingham Common in a very nice farm called Norwood Farm. My Grandfather moved there in 1912 with his family. They worked very, very hard.

Terry: Were they farmers?

Doreen: Oh they were farmers, yes, my grandfather was a farmer, you see, and my father was the son, but he didn't really want to take on farming; it was too much hard work, getting up at 4 o'clock in the morning and milking the cows. Today they don't have to milk them by hand, you see, and now they've got lovely hot water and everything laid on; and the farmhouse was facing the farmyard, and the cowsheds were along the side. Grandfather was very fussy and he did keep them nice and clean or rather his employees did. He employed quite a lot of men from Effingham village, because Effingham village was a little – er, the school was called the Church of England School *** it's got that bit added on, you see, and I went to school and the headmaster was Stewart Adams and his wife was the Governess. I was in the Governess' class and they were there for 25 years [actually much longer].

Yvonne: How many children were in your class?

Doreen: They had no children ...

Yvonne: No, in your class, how many children were in your class?

Doreen: Oh, I don't know that I could tell you that. I suppose easily [?] about 30, because they had several classes, and a great big fire grate with big lumps of coal like they used to, on the railway, have with those steam [engines] – puffing billies we'd call them, they were so big.

And it was a lovely farm. It had five bedrooms but of course like all farms [in] those days they had a well to get their water, you see, for drinking, pumping well, no sanitation at all but they had a double one; a little one for the children and a bigger one but of course they were what they called in those days ... farm toilets were called earth toilets. They used to put special stuff in.

Terry: Presumably that was at the end of the garden or somewhere?

Doreen: That's right and, oh, it was really wonderful! Outside the back door was a great big tree and it was full of walnuts when the season was on and they really hit your head, you know – oh they were lovely. They had a nice lawn.

Terry: So how long did your father stay there?

Doreen: Grandfather went there in 1912 with his wife and his family, my father being one of the sons, you see? And he was there for 16 years, Grandfather was. He moved from there in 1928. He still loved farming so he went to Ockham, Guides Hill [Guileshill] Farm. It was more of a modern farm, it did have a proper toilet, you see. Well of course, as the years went on, so one ... I suppose, was a little bit more modern and at Guileshill Farm there was a lovely little church in a field, and that's where I was christened.

Yvonne: Oh how nice. Can I just stop you there for a second to make sure we're getting this ...

Doreen: *** Norwood Farm, there was a great big common, Effingham Common, facing Norwood Farm. There was a great big pond facing Grandad's farm and when it was bad weather and ice (silly thing to do really) but all my father's brothers and sisters including him and me, because I was the first grandchild, you see, silly that, we used to go skating on there, so you can see what severe weather we had then because we didn't fall

in, the ice was like that. And I can remember when I was about – what, six? – trying to skate on there not knowing what I was really doing, but it was fun for Grandad’s brothers, er, sons and daughters, you see.

Terry: Was that the pond that’s in the grounds?

Doreen: Yes, it might still be there ...

Terry: It is.

Doreen: ... but it is covered, I think, with a lot of bushes, hawthorn bushes now, but Grandma and Grandad in their bedroom when they looked out, they could see the main road because the trees hadn’t grown on the Common then.

Terry: So was the pond between the house and the main road?

Doreen: Yes, right facing it, yes. The farm was quite a big farm really and as he walked out to walk along the little path to get onto the main road, the great big pond was facing his farm, you see, and well, all the boys and girls liked skating there, it was a silly thing to do, but I mean severe weather, I suppose they were safe. Not any fell through!

And then I’ll tell you what Grandma used to do. She used to get up early in the morning and Grandfather would always make a big fire and make toast, you see, with a big toasting iron but Grandma would take one of the boys with her in the fields, early hours of the morning, and pick mushrooms and then come back and after the milking session had finished they went indoors to have bacon and fried mushrooms. She loved going out there every day but she always took someone with her, you see.

Then the railway, they could see the train leaving Effingham Junction and going round the line to Bookham and Leatherhead, Ashted and right on to Victoria, but a steam train, of course the children used to like that, Puffing Billy and steam train, you seen then.

I remember when I was a girl of ten going to ... on a Saturday, going on my own to Guildford – mother would want something, you see, and I would like to see the shops, in a puffing billy, a steam train then, they had them then. I can remember, it was only about ... grown up fare was only about tenpence return, that’s going back many, many years.

Yvonne: How old would you have been when you went to Guildford on the train?

Doreen: Oh, only about ten or eleven, that said, but it seemed safer [in] those days, much safer really.

Terry: But you moved to Guileshill Farm, didn’t you? And when did you come back again?

Doreen: Oh, we – not *** mother and myself – Grandad moved, he was there 16 years at Norwood Farm, he loved it, but a wealthy Russian man [Anthony Nicholas Diamantidi], he bought the farm, so Grandad, had he known it was up for sale, he would have loved to have bought it, but he was just too late – this was in 1928 so he was ... he liked this area and he moved with his family to Guileshill Farm. And it was *** there was the field and a little church, and it’s still there. I don’t know what they called it though, although it’s very, very tiny but I was christened there.

Terry: But your father didn’t move there, it was just your grandfather?

Doreen: Oh, just my grandfather.

Terry: So where did your father move to?

Doreen: My father in 1924, I think it was, he didn’t exactly ... he wanted to be on his own, he didn’t really want to take orders from his father, if you know what I mean, so he went to Virginia Water, only for two years, Mother, my Father and I, and Father managed a farm for the meat king – Vestey – and I suppose Vestey’s name from one generation still stands – he was the meat king of those days and he had a farm down at Virginia Water and Father managed that for him for two years, that was the meat king, you see. They liked it down Virginia Water, but somehow Father liked here, so he moved back here and of course, Norwood Farm, Grandad wasn’t there then and we moved to New Marsh Farm which is just down the hill. But of course it’s been pulled down now, but it was about five hundred years old. And we had a few rooms there. We were there for ten years and then we moved up here. And I’ve been here 73 years *** I wasn’t quite 16.

But we loved the area. And something very interesting. Not any of Surrey Gardens’ houses was built then. It was one complete field to ... near the railway bridge and where the new bridge today is built. But I don’t know whether they’ve given it a name or not, but it was a field from where the pub, the Lord Howard, to the bottom of that hill. That was one complete field and in the middle of it, my father remembers it, was a pond; no houses built in Surrey Gardens then, it was a field surrounded by ... [Interrupted by “Oh, it’s my window cleaner! I’ll go round in a minute.] It was a field surrounded ... in the middle was a pond, where Surrey Gardens is. Now then, I have heard many years ago when I was a young woman, and even today, somehow they didn’t drain that land and you’ll find even now, there’s dampness. Do they call it, um ... it’s got a name, when the ground is damp ...

Terry: Marshy, boggy, that sort of thing?

Doreen: No, the building, the houses, it’s the foundation.

And it still ... some of them are damp now, so therefore that field where the pond was, I don’t know the builder but I do know, in my young days it was Holfords, they were big builders of Guildford, but I don’t suppose they are there now.

Terry: I think they are.

Doreen: Holfords, yes.

Terry: Because I think my daughter ...

Doreen: Yes ...

Terry: ... was taught ballet by a Holford who was a builder, er, the daughter of a builder, so I think they are still around.

Doreen: They were the first-class builders in those days, Holfords, and they built nearly all those houses in Surrey Gardens.

Terry: So ... so, you'd moved here and your father was doing what at this stage, because ...?

Doreen: Oh yes, my father, you see, he came back from being ... [interruption by door-bell ringing]

Doreen: My father came back from Virginia Water, [he had] worked for the meat king down at Virginia Water, and er, Father didn't want to do farming any more, so he did a little bit of gardening for a time and then he thought "Right I'm going to see if I can be a painter", and he liked painting. He used to go round painting the houses, but of course they don't do much of it now, because you see, these double glazing windows are wonderful you don't have to paint them every so often. The sun used to blister the paint, I remember it – and I used to paint outside.

Terry: But when you said ... when you came back here you were sixteen, or something like that.

Doreen: Oh, not from Norwood, er, not from Virginia Water. No, Father was down with the meat king, I suppose for about three years. It's very nice down there, I remember the school, and I could go there now, and I was only five, at the top of Virginia Water hill.

Terry: So you came back and you moved into this house then.

Doreen: No, no, we came back in 1927 or – yes, in about 1927-28, and of course Father liked farming. We went to New Marsh Farm ...

Terry: That's right, you went to New Marsh, that's it.

Doreen: ... which is just down the hill on the road towards Cobham and we were there ten years. We had a few rooms, a few rooms there, but that was the old New Marsh Farm which was five hundred years old. And there were cottages, you can see the cottages on the main Horsley road and it's got the date, well I suppose they were cottages for the farmers of New Marsh Farm, you see. And there is the date on the cottages, when they were built, which I think was about five hundred years old. But we lived in the old ... Now, of course, they've pulled that old New Marsh Farm down and built a new one, but part of one field, the farmer now has let it out to a nursery. Have you seen the nursery – yes, it's a very small nursery. And ...

Terry: When you came back from New Marsh did you come from New Marsh back to here?

Doreen: To here, yes.

Terry: So now you'd be about sixteen or seventeen, wouldn't you?

Doreen: I was nearly sixteen. We came – I can remember it – the fourth of October 1937 we moved here, and it wasn't called Old Lane Gardens then, what it was called [was] Surrey Gardens Old Lane. Surrey Gardens is over there, but we were Surrey Gardens and they put Old Lane, because Surrey Gardens, my father, when with his parents, moved down to Norwood Farm in 1912, Father was only fourteen then. And he can remember, my father, *** [that opposite?] here, right to the railway bridge, was a big field with a pond in the middle. So then, of course, as the years went on, so they built some nice bungalows and houses in Surrey Gardens. But when Father came there wasn't any of that, so we ***

These bungalows here, the four, three they pulled down in 1950 – was it 1950? – no 19, er ... in about 1980 ...

Terry: Yes, that's more like it.

Doreen: ... that's right, 1980, they pulled the three down and of course I wouldn't move, I own this and I didn't have to move, you see, it's my property. But I only wished that, um, they had pulled them down completely, therefore I would not have a party line [sic – wall?], I've got a party wall there.

Terry: But just going back then to – you'd be about sixteen ...

Doreen: When we came.

Terry: ... when you came here, yes, so what did you do then when you were sixteen, fifteen ...

Doreen: Oh yes, I'd left school when I was fourteen and my first job, that was a chemist's shop, right where, well where Budgens is, that used to be a chemist's shop, and it's called Ashfold. And Adams the headmaster at Effingham School, when the boys and girls were fourteen he always found them a job in a shop or whatever. The boys, I suppose, some of them went gardening. And he found me a job in the chemist's shop. But I didn't work in the chemists' shop. I looked after the little girl, and used to – well, I say little, she wasn't in her pram, you know – and I used to help the lady, she was very nice and she was trying train me to do housework! But I didn't mind. And to be quite honest, right from today, I love housework, loved it. But that was my first job, it was only a temporary job, you see and ...

Yvonne: Can we just stop you? So when you were going to school in Effingham, how did you get there? Were you walking?

Doreen: Oh, yes, how did I get there? My mother used to have a bike and at the back of it, it was, er, like a seat, what do they call – carrier, yes that's right – and I had a cushion and the feathers came from Grandad's chickens and Mother made a cushion for me. And she used to cycle with me at the back to Effingham School for years. Well then, of course, there wasn't a lot of traffic [in] those days and the first bus was a green, old-fashioned bus. And then, of course, once they started running the bus, it only ran about once an hour, it was the most old-fashioned bus I've ever seen, then of course I packed up.

Yvonne: And did you have to go through gates on the road, were there gates on the road down to the ... ?

Doreen: No, I know what you're trying to ... I'm going to tell you something about Toll Gate, that's what you're on about, this is the Effingham road, I remember what you're talking about.

Oh, so when the buses started to run, of course Mother didn't want really – it was hard work for her, me at the back, and she cycled to Effingham village every day because there was no other transport. Well, when I was about, I suppose, ten or eleven Father bought me a second-hand bike. We bought it in Cobham in a garage for twenty-five shillings, a second-hand one, and I had that for years and I had to cycle. Oh the wind used to blow across that common, and it was so cold! But, er, that's the first time, I was only about, I suppose, ten when I started cycling, and then my mother gave me a lovely job! When I use to come home, just before it was dark, she'd say "Will you go on your bike to Cobham and do a bit of shopping?" And ever – I'm glad she did because right to this day, I absolutely love shopping. Some people say "Oh, I hate shopping, or ..." I don't buy many clothes now, I can't go out, I'm housebound now. But I used to love to do that, do Mother's shopping, and I had an old-fashioned straw basket and I think they were only about five or six pennies (new ones) with a handle. I used to throw it over the handlebars full of shopping, and I loved that! Come home from school going shopping in Cobham. So, it was an easy life then, really was an easy life.

Terry: So how long did you stay with the people who were the chemist's?

Doreen: Oh, in the chemist's?

Terry: Two or three years?

Doreen: Oh no, a few years and then he moved, you see. They were very nice people, they were lovely I only went there to be trained, you see, and of course the money was terrible, only a few shillings. But then I did a little bit of domestic work, but not a lot, more or less a training. Then the war came, you see, in 1939 so of course with my age I had to join up. Well, I had such a homely home here, and I'm not really a good mixer, I didn't really want to go into the forces or anything so I had to join, so I joined the Land Army. And have you seen my badge?

Terry: Well, I'll show it to her [Yvonne] afterwards, yes.

Doreen: Yes, I've got a nice badge, but it took sixty years for the Government to give us, the Land Girls, a badge. It's been finished off beautiful. Sixty years after the war. And my sister saw the advert in *The Surrey Advertiser*, so she bought it for me, I didn't know anything about it. So one day when she came to lunch, my sister Eileen, she lives at *** you see – there's ten years difference there – she said "I've got a present for you, darling", and she doesn't really buy presents just like that *** she said, "You were a good Land Girl", although I never worked on the land, I was lucky there, I did a milk round.

Oh yes, I had a black horse that walked all the way round with me; I was frightened of it but it wouldn't trot, it was too old. And an open float. I used to get drowned. But I did a [milk] round, round here, so I knew all the customers and they liked me and I liked them. They used to give me lovely Christmas boxes, about 2/6d, some five shillings. One gentleman always gave me £1 – and that was a lot! And I was in uniform, and when the war ended I did [had done] the milk round for four and a half years.

Terry: So which was the dairy?

Doreen: The dairy was – not now – in the middle of Effingham village, where the little chapel is and opposite the little chapel, it was called Home Farm. And I was there for 13 years. I did the milk round for four and half years and I'd had enough of it. To be honest, I liked the customers, I liked the round, I liked Christmas time, they used to give me lovely presents. And one farmer across Effingham Common, he was a tree surgeon, I forget his name ...

Terry: Sounds like Mr Estler.

Doreen: Estler, that's it, that's it. Well, he was very nice and his wife was like a lady and they had a little boy and girl, she dressed them beautiful. And every Christmas time, he wouldn't give me a tip or anything, but gave me a lovely joint of venison – is that deer? Yes. I brought it home and I said "Mother, here's a beautiful roast joint you can do. I've got a piece of venison". She said "Oh show me". But every year he gave me a lovely piece for Mother to cook, you see, and that was my Christmas present. Venison, from Estler.

Terry: So who owned the dairy?

Doreen: Who owned the dairy? Oh yes, do you know what? I only wished, I only threw it away about a few months ago ... There's somebody in Effingham, I don't know if it'd be you ...

Yvonne: I shouldn't think so.

Doreen: ... oh, someone in Effingham wanted to write every little interesting piece of Effingham. And they did, er, with this monthly circular that went round to all the villagers, only last year, and what a pity I threw it away. A friend of mine, before I had my illness, I used to go every Wednesday morning with the blue bus of East Horsley called Horsley Community Bus, and they still do it, you see, they pick up the villagers, the elderly people

that have no cars, and take them to Sainsbury's in Cobham and we do our shopping. And they were the nicest shoppers out in the bus, we were so friendly, all of us, no cattiness or anything, they'd rather help people.

Yvonne: Mmm, that's really nice.

Terry: So ...

Doreen: Very, very nice ...

Terry: ... going, going back to the dairy for a moment, who was owning the dairy in those days?

Doreen: Pardon?

Terry: Who owned the dairy in those days?

Doreen: Oh, yes, oh two nice brothers, their names were Curtises. C U R T I S. William Curtis he did all the farming and, um ...

Yvonne: On Home Farm.

Doreen: ... at Home Farm and they were all Jersey cows and they used to go out in the fields. It was a beautiful sight, with all the buttercups, it was a pretty sight. And then his brother Charles, Charlie – Charles, we called him – he did all the machinery, if it went wrong or whatever, of the bottling department, he organised to see all the bottling was done properly, and if there was any nuts and bolts he could do that. They also had a beautiful shop in Church Street, Bookham, next to the telephone exchange and he had it built and that was the Dairy Shop, nice groceries and sold milk. But they didn't have any cows and that, we had the cows in Effingham village, you see, and he had that lovely shop built and that was good trade for him.

Terry: Did the brother live down Effingham Common Road?

Doreen: Yes, and I can tell you where he – oh, they both did.

Terry: They both did?

Doreen: Yes. Now then, where you live – do you know Kingham's?

Terry: I'm next door [Birch House] to where Kingham's lived [Lynwood House].

Doreen: Yes, nearest to the hill, or nearest?

Terry: Nearest to the hill.

Doreen: Yes, well there's only one house ... there was Kingham's and then only one house and then you went up the hill.

Terry: That's right.

Doreen: And there was a farm next to that.

Terry: That's the Lower Farm.

Doreen: That's right, yes, you'll remember that.

Terry: A huh.

Doreen: Now, coming the other side of your house, I think there's two houses in between, and Mr William Curtis he did all the farming side, and the cows, and how many cows he wanted, all the Jersey cows and the milking side of it – Mr William Curtis – and he lived where you are ... if I could remember ... a house in between, and then his was an older looking house.

Terry: It's still there.

Doreen: Yes it's still there. And then I'll tell you what he had, a big orchard with apples. When he moved and retired, that orchard was all, um ... the trees were all dug up and a beautiful bungalow – and it's still there, I think it's, yes it's still there – Mr Curtis' niece had a house built. And you know the, er – did they call it Lynt, or is it still Lynt House or something, Mr William Curtis?

Terry: No, I can't think, was it Haver..., not it wasn't Haverthorn? Was it Haverthorn?

Doreen: No.

Terry: I know the house, anyway.

Doreen: Yes, and it's got a wooden verandah on top.

Terry: That's it.

[Transcriber's clarification: William Thomas Curtis' house was called Glen Lynn at the time he lived there, but was later renamed as Haverthorn.]

Doreen: That's right, well that's where Mr William Curtis ... he was the farming side of it with all the cows and that.

[Terry] So where did his brother live?

Doreen: Now his brother lived in the next block of houses called Windy ...

Terry: Windy Ridge?

Doreen: No, next block of houses was called Windy Ridge.

Terry: Yes.

Doreen: Now the actual owner – Mr William Curtis and Mr Charlie, they were brothers – they had a mother. Their father died, you see, and the mother she died – she lived to 94 – and she lived at Windy Ridge next to the house that got burnt down with the doodlebug, did I tell you about that? Haven't I told you about the doodlebug?

Yvonne and Terry: No, not yet.

Doreen: Oh. You know where Windy Ridge is, don't you?

Terry: Yes.

Doreen: Yes, Windy Ridge there, and the end house, Mrs *** [Clara Isabella Curtis] was the owner but she lost her husband, which was Mr William Curtis' and Mr Charlie's father. Because they originated from Ewell. They had farms – their father and grandfather and going back there – in Balham, oh yes, well in the 1800s, and they had farms in Ewell then, and then from there they moved to Effingham Village in 1933 and William Curtis, the house that you know, is still exactly the same. He had a cook, live-in cook, and then Charlie Curtis, which was his brother – and he did all the bottling part of the dairy or anything that went wrong, or set things up – he lived not at Windy Ridge, but there's another block of houses before you get to the school, and he lived in the first one.

Terry: So in those days what was at Indian Farm?

Doreen: Indian Farm?

Terry: Was that a farm as such?

Doreen: Indian Farm?

Terry: Yes.

Doreen: No, this is what puzzles me. You see, Willie Curtis lived, you know where he lived, near you, and then there was his big orchard and then there was what you call Indian Farm. That was never a farm, not in my day.

Terry: Was it not?

Doreen: No; no animals at all. Mr and Mrs Sales – S A L E S – this is during the war years – he was a gentleman that went to business and, erm, they had a little, well, like a little summer house, so to speak, but made of brick, and a lady, well, a man and a woman, she was the cook and he half the time was ill, he lived *** [inside?] the little summer house. And they had a garage and the garage was made into a flat, and the husband was a gardener/chauffeur and they moved to these cottages opposite – well, you know the Railway Cottages, what did they call that, erm – well it's a turning off of Old Lane, just over there.

[Transcriber's clarification: Doris and Alfred Sale (not "Sales") owned and lived at Indian Farm; the gardener/chauffeur and the cook may have been Ernest and Edith Arnold.]

Terry: So Indian Farm was never a farm.

Doreen: Never a farm, never, I do honestly know that. They had a great big tennis court where I suppose in the olden days they could have built cow sheds and that, but they never never [sic]. And they made the garage top into a beautiful flat and when they sold the place, the chauffeur/gardener and his wife – oh, she was spotless – they moved over to the flats over here.

Terry: So when do you think they sold it?

Doreen: What, Indian Farm?

Terry: Mmm.

Doreen: Yes, I can partly tell you that. One minute ... 19 ... about 1973, something like that?

Terry: Right, so erm, Basil Moss bought it then, did he?

Doreen: Basil Moss?

Terry: Moss. Of Moss Bros.

Doreen: I don't know who bought it.

Terry: That's who it would be.

Doreen: It was £90,000 – is that right?

Terry: Oh I don't know that. But we know that when we moved into the area the person that was in Indian Farm was Basil Moss who was one of the Moss Bros. brothers.

Doreen: Yes, well I knew the people before him, because I served them with milk, and I know their name, Sales, S A L E S. And then of course the gentleman you're talking about moved there then. But there was never, never any cows, nanny goats, no dogs – nothing and I know that because I used to walk across their lawn to deliver the milk to one of the, well er, the husband and wife [the chauffeur and cook], but he was always ill, in like a little cottage – they had a little cottage there and a garage, erm, a nice flat over the garage. And the main house was old, but modernised and I knew them as Sales, S A L E S. He was a lovely gentleman and he used to go to business in London. But there was never never any animals whatsoever. Probably, I suppose, might have been [animals] in the 1800s, something like that.

Terry: On the Common, just at the entrance to Norwood Farm ...

Doreen: Yes.

Terry: ... what's the name of the property on the corner there?

Doreen: Mallaby-Deeley – is that who you're talking about?

Terry: Where Ray Davies lived.

Yvonne: Slater's Oak.

Terry: Slater's Oak, what do you know about Slater's Oak?

Doreen: Mallaby-Deeley – I think they pronounce it that way – they had Slaters Oak and one side of the house was a field and I can see it now. They had donkeys for the children to play on. He did have a title, he was a Sir Mallaby-Deeley, Mallaby-Deeley.

Yvonne: How is that spelled, do you know?

Doreen: I don't know. And his mother – to a girl it just sticks! – his mother was an old fashioned lady and she always wore a black ribbon round her – do you remember those? – black ribbon round there [her throat] and I do believe she was Lady Mallaby-Deeley, as title, so he would be Sir, wouldn't he?

Terry: Yes, possibly ...

Doreen: That's right. And they had a simple boy and I don't know whether it was on her side or his side. The mother lived there as well, she was a nice old lady with this black ribbon, and they used to walk this poor simple boy up to the station, it was so sad. I suppose he might have been about fourteen or fifteen. But they were titled. I think Lord and Lady Mallaby-Deeley or something. And they had one side of the house was a great big garden and they made into an orchard and it was the most beautiful sight in the Spring, full of daffodils, oh it was beautiful! Full of daffodils. They were kind to me because they had quite a long path to get down from the road to the big house so they always used to say to me, just open the gate by the side of the road and put our milk behind a tree. That was nice.

Terry: Did you ever come across Mr Calburn, who was the Lord of the Manor? Did you ever come across him?

Doreen: Ah yes. What did you call him?

Terry: Calburn?

Doreen: That's right. No, I didn't, but Mr Curtis – the two brothers – Mr William [Curtis] at the house, you know, more him than anyone else, he was great friends of the Lord of the Manor, really great friends, and of course the Common involved, didn't it, you see, and Mr William Curtis lived near you [Birch House] so he was more involved. Mr Charlie Curtis, which was his brother, before he came down here, Mr Charlie, he was a director for United Dairies of Streatham, they were dairy people, but you see before 1933 all the Curtis lived at Ewell and had farms there, but all the land is built up now, you wouldn't never know there were farms there, but in the 1800s, the two Curtises, their grandparents, you see, they had farms in Ewell West, then they decided they wanted to come in 1933, had the big dairy built and the offices, nice offices and we used to look out the window and see the cows in the fields and the buttercups – really nice!

Yvonne: So were you in the office, were you doing the books or something?

Doreen: Yes, after four and a half years when the war ended, I said to Mr Curtis "I've done the job properly" – but I didn't like it, because I didn't like the horse, I mean I wasn't used to horses, but they gave me an old one to walk round – so I said "Well now I want to leave", you see. So they didn't want me to leave so they said would I go in the office? And I went in there for thirteen years and I left [in] 1955.

Terry: When you were doing the rounds did you come up onto the Common, did you come up to – you were talking about Mr Estler, did you go and – did you deliver to Mr Estler?

Doreen: Oh yes, yes, he had a housekeeper and (oh, I suppose I ought not to say this) he had a most attractive wife, she was like an actress, and a little boy and girl *** about four or five and she was quite, er, made up nicely and dressed beautiful, Because he, well, he dressed according to the farm, you see, but something went wrong and she left him. And she left him for an officer in the Second World War and took her children with her. He [Estler] spoke beautiful, he was a tree surgeon and I do believe he was something or a relation who – there was a bit of German blood in there.

Terry: He had a brother.

Doreen: He had a brother, didn't he?

Terry: Yes he had a brother, definitely.

Doreen: That's right, and erm ...

[Interrupted by telephone ringing]

Doreen: And then they had the Catholic Church and he [George Pauling] built that church. Did you know ...

Terry: Who built it?

Doreen: Who built it? Right opposite the Catholic Church ...

Terry: Yes ...

Doreen: ... right opposite is called The Lodge ...

Terry: Effingham Lodge, yes ...

Doreen: and the big house, and I'll tell you what was nice, but I was frightened of water. Us school children with our headmaster Stewart Adams – and his wife was the Governess, you see – every Monday he wanted us – he had permission to ... that big house had a big swimming pool, I expect it still has – it was called The Lodge?

Terry: Yes, that's right, yes.

Doreen: ... yes, a big swimming, er, well, I suppose ...

Terry: A swimming pool, yes.

Doreen: ... a pool, and once a week all the children of Effingham could go there, at a certain age, I suppose they might have had to be ten or eleven. But I was nervous of the water so they said well you stay in the school and do your lessons, and the children who want to go swimming and be taught swimming, and that was very nice for the children.

Terry: You say he built the church?

Doreen: Oh yes, erm, now what was his name? I believe it's in here ...

Terry: Ok.

Doreen: ... and that's a Catholic church, yes, and erm – I can't think of his name now [George Pauling] – and I'll tell you what, the gentleman that owned the big ch..., er, the big house and the swimming pool, he came from, I suppose lived over in a foreign land because there was an Indian railway and he built that – well not himself, he employed men – to build the Indian railway ...

Yvonne: Oh right ...

Doreen: and after that he come over to England to live in the ...

Terry: In the Lodge.

Doreen: ... in The Lodge.

Yvonne: Gosh.

Doreen: Whatever was his name, I might think of it. Yes, so he originated from a foreign land and when he came over, after building the Indian railway he had built – from a building firm, I suppose – that church which was the Roman Catholic church. And oh, mind you, a little village like that, it was a good little village, they had the Roman Catholic church and that man built – oh, if only I could remember the name – and then they had the big church, erm...

Terry: St Lawrence, the main one, yes ...

Doreen: ... oh, it's in here ... and erm, and then they had a little chapel.

Yvonne: That's right ...

Doreen: *** [And for?] a little village, had everything, we had a blacksmiths, because Curtises had to have their horses, their shoes done, you see, it was very convenient and next to that was two dirty little old rooms and he was, they called him a "snob's" [old term for shoe mender; this was Arthur Archibald Stovell] ...

Yvonne: Shoe mender.

Doreen: ... repairing shoes. And then *** nearly opposite the big church, there are some houses [Church Cottages] that are built that way, not facing the road, and the very end one – talk about being a bit primitive – his name was Payne, and he bought a great big shed, a new shed, and put it in his lawn, and that was the hairdressers' shop. And the lady that cut the hair, a young girl, well I suppose about a teenager, she was trained and she came down and she cut the ladies' and the gents' hair. Well, not the real ladies, the parents shall I say, and all the children, all the schoolchildren we used to go in our lunch hour, for sixpence, for our haircut and the big shed, oh he had it painted you see, and it was the very end of that little old path. And he kept it clean, and he did well, because there was no other hairdresser, I don't really think there was a hairdresser in Bookham, not those days – but there was in Effingham! Oh, he must have made a lot of money, and us children in our school lunch time we used to go and have our hair cut for sixpence. That was a bit primitive, but it was the only way to make ***. Then they had two pubs, I don't know why they wanted two. But that's the Douglas Haig – the name was altered, did you know?

Terry: Yes, it was ...

Doreen: During the first world war it was, the pub was a German name ...

Terry: Bulcher [Blücher].

Doreen: ... that's right? It was King George V, wasn't it? I think ... and a German name, you see, so they altered it to the Douglas Haig. But that's what it was called before *** Because my father then, at that time, he was a teenager, you see, Father was only twelve – er, fourteen – when he left Norwood Farm and er, he used to, well he used to go in and have half a pint to drink – they didn't drink much [in] those days. So they had two pubs, you see, they had one round the corner called the Plough, and that's in that, erm ...

Yvonne: Orestan Lane.

Terry: Orestan Lane.

Doreen: Yes, what's it called?

Terry: Orestan Lane.

Doreen: Oh yes, that's right, Orestan Lane, yes. And my grandfather, he – there was a nice farmer down there, on the right, at the back of Plough

Doreen (off recording): and my Father used to go there in a nice friendly way to play cards, although not for money.