

## **Whether it's a Dishcloth or Blanket you treat them as though they are spending £100**

### **Wyn Newman was born In 1926 and interviewed in 2009**

I was brought up at Crooks Beck Farm, Ravenstonedale. It is two miles from Ravenstonedale and we used to have to walk down the lane to school. It was called the Ravenstonedale Endowed School. It is still there now and lots of children go there. Mr Denney was the headmaster with Miss Walker and Miss Law were the two teachers. Mr and Mrs Denney moved to Kendal when they retired.

Whatever the weather we just walked down the lane. There was a few of us would join up from different farms. It used to take us about half an hour to walk to school. I always remember coming back. I'm not a good traveller in a vehicle and the butcher used to be coming round the farms when I was coming home from school. So I used to turn round as though I was going the other way so he wouldn't pick me up that's how much I hated getting in a vehicle then. I've grown out of it now.

I left school when I was fourteen. My father was taken ill in 1938 he had rheumatoid arthritis so from about when I was eight or nine years old I used to milk so many cows before I walked to school. Of course it was all done by hand. We used to get up early, 6.00am or before and because dad wouldn't let the horses be working when it was hot I had to go round and round a big field with a double mowing machine. I used to love that. I did quite a lot of work on the farm. We kept two horses and they had foals. One died and my brother went and bought this other one. I used to love getting on our young horses and ride. I used to say "I'm getting on first" cos I could get my legs underneath it to break them in just for the ploughing.

Then my brother came home. In 1943 you could only have one hired hand on the farm so I put in to join the WRENS. I went up to Glasgow, Loch Lomond, Balloch and Largs as a driver looking after this officer.

We had six or eight cows and calves and pigs but they were mainly for our own use. My mother used to make sausages and black puddings. Although that was quite a job for my mother she'd plenty to do in the house really.

When Blackpool Illuminations were on, our farm, Crooks Beck, was the halfway house between Newcastle and Blackpool. People used to come and mum had set up the front rooms, one to the right of the front door and the one on the left had a painted ceiling, a sailor had done it laid on his back. It's a real picture and I think it will still be there today. She filled them with tables because they used to come and want a meal, sometimes breakfast and sometimes sandwiches and they would have a good meal on the way. But when they came back, they had just two shillings or half a crown and we would do them homemade bread and tea cakes. I remember we used to get up at four o'clock and bake it before they came.

I was with the Women's Royal Naval Service (WRENS) for about three years then my grandma was taken ill and I came home to look after her. In the meantime I'd met my husband, Bert. He was stationed round there to do Army training. He was on tanks actually and he was in the King's Own Hussars. First of all it was the Reconnaissance Corps then it was the Kings Own Hussars. When Bert was demobbed he went back to his old job in Swindon but he never settled and eventually we came back up.

Bert was travelling for shoe firm in Swindon. He left there and came and worked at Hepworths and then he went to Lindsay Brothers and worked there for quite a while. I got a job at Hawkins in Stramongate and one night we couldn't get home and had to sleep in the shop and Bert said "We'll have to move to Kendal", and we bought a house in Helme Drive.

In 1970 Hawkins announced that they were closing all their shops so we took the shop in Finkle Street.

Kendal is a thriving place to have a business. We had lovely customers, you couldn't have nicer. Apart from one gentleman ... he brought a vest back with sleeves in, you know, buttoned over. "This hasn't washed very well", he says, "I'm not happy with it". So I says "It's High Cross, it should be good". When I opened it out I let him carry on a bit and then I said "Well you're in the wrong shop, you should go to the Coop further up. That's where you bought it". I used to say to our staff "Whether it's a dishcloth or a blanket you treat them as though they're spending a hundred pound". I miss everybody so much I really do.

Bert, my husband was a councillor for nearly twenty-five years. I always had to be ready to get dressed quickly and accompany him – in the background really. We met some wonderful people and we went to such a lot of interesting places.

Of course we got the farmers from round-a-bout into the Mayor's Parlour and they were interested in everything there. There's lots of interesting things in the Mayor's Parlour including Queen Katherine's Prayer book. We took it down to the church once, believe it or not. We had special permission to take it out of that little place and the pages are so fine.

Bert was Mayor 1973-74 and a second time 1979-80. There was a pop group came on Appleby Road. Of course we were invited as Mayor and Mayoress and there were crowds of young people. It was like a jazz festival and we went up on stage and they were looking at the Mayor and Mayoress's Chains and one lady said "Did you dare go up there with those chains on?" I said "Yes they won't harm you."

I've also been involved with the older person's party at the Town Hall. This year (2009) is the one hundred and twenty fourth. The Mayor drew the raffle, there's loads of lovely presents from different people and businesses and we give £5 each to the oldest man and woman and £10 to the oldest couple. Bert enjoyed his times as Mayor of Kendal.

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