

MAUREEN TURNER

Born: **NORWOOD FARM, SKIDBY** (known as "Turners Hill")
29th July 1929

Moved: **When baby to COTTINGHAM GRANGE**

Father: **LEONARD TURNER**
Market Gardener

Family lived at Grange Lodge until my Grandma Turner died, then moved into the Gardeners Cottage to look after Grandfather.

The Lodge was let to a family called Quest. When they left my Grandfather decided to move there, and eventually married a Kate Hodgson of Cottingham, and her father, Jim, moved in with them.

My father took over all the garden with the help of his father and a man called Tommy Robinson. His father gave up work eventually and I think he used to do odd jobs at Woodhill Farm, which was run by his sister, Emma Turner. I believe he liked working with horses.

Mother: **ELSIE (nee WILSON)**

Mother used to help in the gardens. She used to live at Rudston, and played with Winifred Holtby, the writer. She came to Cottingham with Mrs. Holtby as a maid, and worked there until her marriage.

I can remember when Cottingham Grange was still there. It was a beautiful house with a large orangery built on the side. There were 2 lions at the front, one on each side of the door, my friends and I had great fun sitting on them. There was, what must have been used as the front garden in front of it, and there were still a number of fuchsia bushes growing there, plus a pond shaped like a dragon fly which was populated by newts and snails. There was a Summer House halfway down near the Park Lane end of what was called the Planting. Also a life size statue which looked like Venus, it has the arms broken off above the elbow and a dog leaping up the right side. I don't know what happened to these.

To approach the house there were 2 drives – the front one had fancy gate posts, and the one which led to the back also gave access to a Paddock which led to the Lodge and gardens.

The rest of the area was woodland which led from an entrance at Park Lane right through to Harland Rise, with a path leading off to the Garden Cottage and orchard.

When my dad showed us "the big house" (I think I would be about 8 years) the only inhabitants were a family of wild cats which immediately let us know they were there by scratching and spitting. When we negotiated around them, I saw a room which could have been a ballroom, papered all the way round, even the door, which you had a job to find if someone closed it. If you stood at the bottom of the stairs and looked up, you could see the top floor ceiling which was painted like a blue sky with clouds. That is all I can remember about the inside.

At the back there was a big yard with a pump room built in the middle, there was a water tower among the trees and every few weeks 2 men used to turn the pump on to make electricity for the Lodge and the gardens. If the pump failed we had to use candles for lighting and oil lamps.

Unfortunately, "The Grange" was sold to a builder who pulled it down before the war, and he used the bricks to build houses on Southwood Drive. The Pump House was eventually pulled down and we were back to candles and oil lamps.

The two stone lions from the front were sold to the owners of a house on Harland Way and erected on their drive. I don't know if they are still there.

We eventually had gas put in the cottage, but to get it my dad and Uncle Kitch Wilson (mum's brother) had to dig a trench from Harland Rise, through the wood and paddock, otherwise the Gasboard wouldn't fit the gas pipes. That's when we got our first gas oven.

When we first moved into the Grange, dad was a florist. The gardens were Victorian with a wall round and about nine greenhouses, potting shed and storage rooms. There was a 'stoke hole' with a large boiler at the end of the potting shed which was a flight of steps lower. Dad used to feed the boiler regularly to warm the greenhouses. There was a mushroom house attached to the 'stoke hole' and plenty of mushrooms. I believe some of the "Secret Army" were overcome by fumes there.

Near the Lodge there was an open fronted building for coaches, carts etc., and at the side of that were pig sties and stables, plus chicken house. A massive walnut tree stood there, we (my friends and I) enjoyed finding dropped ones when the wind blew.

There was an orchard at the far end of the garden with damson trees and lilacs. We often had young raiders coming through the woods to try for free damsons as that part was outside the big garden wall.

There were numerous sorts of apple and pear trees. I remember picking apples and eating them whilst reading. I haven't tasted any like them elsewhere.

My cousin, Jessie Naylor, used to come and stay pretty often. She lived on a farm near West Lutton on the edge of the Wolds. She used to keep me company because I was an only child at that time. We had great fun keeping ourselves occupied, having all that area to play round in, and no traffic, but it was long way for us to walk to school. Jessie came to school with me, we went to Hallgate Cottingham School.

In September, 1939 when I was 10 years, the war started. My father was told he could only grow 25% flowers, the rest being turned over for growing vegetables. A third of the paddock in front to the house was ploughed up in order to grow more potatoes. About 3 months before Christmas dad started looking for Holly trees and Laurel bushes so he could buy berries and leaves from farmers or landowners in order to make Holly wreaths, Craplets and Laurel wreaths for the shops at Christmas. Then in November and December it was 'all hands on deck' to help make the wreaths. Nine o'clock finish most nights. Dad also used to help a neighbouring farmer to kill geese and other poultry ready for Christmas. He used to also rear our own birds for the table.

In another area of the Paddock dad made a chicken run which was also in the area which mother used for a drying area. The massive white Rooster used to attack her every time she went to hang the washing out, which caused some amusement, but mam's legs were usually in a bit of a mess unless someone fastened him in the hen hut.

We were not given Anderson shelters because it was thought we would be safe from bombs etc., so we used to have to use a gunpost which the "Special Army" had built at the end of the drive. It was rather a trek to get there and quite often we had to jump into a ditch when shrapnel started falling.

We watched the Hull blitz as we passed the greenhouses, which reflected everything. After that the people from Hull used to come out with their precious items and tents etc., and they

camped in the woods and chalkpits or anywhere they thought was safe. Dad was asked if a man could put his caravan on what was left of the paddock. We ended up with about 8 caravans on. They were used at night mostly. Dad had to have water laid on for them.

We had 10 people sleeping on the living room floor one night. (Mr. Colletta's family who knew dad). I can remember sitting on the roof of the potting shed during daytime watching planes having 'dog fights' over Leconfield Aerodrome. If the sirens sounded after tea we didn't have to get to school until 12 o'clock the next day. One night we were all kept awake by the dogs barking, we learned the next morning that an Ariel torpedo had landed in a field but hadn't exploded. Men were sent up from London to deal with it. It was surmised that all the Dutch greenhouses on Park Lane could have looked like water from above.

The Grange Gardens Cottage was badly shaken when a landmine exploded in a field. I think it was two small fields away at Park Lane end, leaving a crater which would have held a pair of semi-detached houses and a lot of little dead songbirds. It was amazing the crowds of sightseers who turned up to look at this hole in the ground! All the windows in Grange Gardens were blown out, and there were over four hundred panes of glass broken in the greenhouses. As it was our living, the greenhouses were mended first with glass of every kind - some fancy - some frosted, indeed, any sort that could be found was used to patch them up.

As for the cottage, an uncle was able to make some screens to cover the windows and they stayed like that until the war ended.

For part of the war we had refugees from Guernsey living with us. They slept in the Lodge and ate and worked in the Garden Cottage. The two daughters went to school. I am still in touch with one of the daughters.

Another family who took over the front room of the Cottage were Mr. & Mrs. Blackith, who had a shop on Beverley Road in Hull. Their son was a prisoner of war, one daughter was in the Airforce, and the older daughter I believe helped her parents.

My father and Uncle Kitch were in the Home guard, but dad fractured his femur and he was demobbed, Uncle Kitchener Wilson stayed on as one of 'The Secret Army'.

I joined the dance class run by Barbara Fewson, and we used to have Reviews for various charities. I remember a concert for 'Warship Week' when Doctor Sissons kindly allowed us to use one of his rooms to rehearse in. The dancing was outside on the lawn. Some of the other dancers were Vera Buttery, Mary Brocklesby, Barbara Hildreth, Pamela Stevens - I cannot remember any more. I am still in touch with Vera who is the daughter of the late Mr. Buttery, Stonemason.

I don't know how, but I have always been able to play the piano. Perhaps it was a legacy from living miles from the village at the Grange Gardens and having to amuse myself. I remember being asked when I was about 14 to go and play for dancing at the Sergeant's Mess in Cottingham. (Dad was asked first). It became a regular thing. I also played for the RAOB who met upstairs in the 'King Billy' sometimes.

Mrs. Fewson (Barbara's mother) gave me singing lessons so I used to sing during dancing concerts, and I was often asked to sing in various churches. Alas, my voice has gone now. I guess it's old age!

When I was 16 I was presented with a sister, Susan Margaret. She eventually went to the school which is now standing where the Grange was.

I was married when I was 20 years old and a year or 2 later dad was given a year's notice to leave the Grange, as the Council wanted the land to build a School. This, as you can imagine, caused a lot of heartache. Mother wanted a 3 bedroomed house, and as there were none

available they opted to live on the Camp up Priory Road, which had previously housed displaced persons. Eventually, after a few years, mother got her wish and went into a new house on Southwood Road.

My sister joined the Airforce, and now lives in Australia, but comes back over to England about 3 times a year.

My husband was moved up to Newcastle by his firm about 40 years ago. Unfortunately, he died in 1999, not long after we celebrated our Golden Wedding Anniversary. I now live on the side of the River Tyne in a new flat, and I am pretty well settled.

The last time we were at Cottingham we went to Leslie and Josephine Hardwick's Golden Wedding celebrations. Yes! The Hardwicks are cousins a few times removed. Although I don't know them, but my sister, Susan, went to school with one of them. I was a bridesmaid at Leslie's wedding when I was 3 years old. My father's mother was a Hardwick.