

Doris Armstrong - nee Worth 1913-2012

Doris Evelyn Worth was born on the 1st of January 1913 in the School House in Michaelstow. During this time her father William John "Jack" Worth was ringing in the New Year at the family's Church at St Tudy. Jack and her mother Emily Amelia "Millie" Worth, nee Carthew, who came from St Teath had only been married a few months and were unable to find a suitable place to live in St Tudy so they were very lucky to get a small house only a couple of miles away in the small hamlet of Michaelstow.

Jack's family, the Worth's were builders and have built many properties in and around the village including the Old Rectory on Redvale Road, Tregarrick Cottages, Hendra farmhouse and alterations to Tremeer, Wetherham and the rebuilding of Hengar after the fire. It was when Jack was working on Wetherham Lodge that he met Millie who was working as a House Parlourmaid for the Reverend Bridgewater at Wetherham, which was the Rectory at this time.

When Doris was about 9 months old the family moved back to St Tudy to a small cottage called Lesley Cottage opposite the Chapel in which in 1916 her sister Phyllis Mary was born. It was here a few years later that there was an epidemic in the Village and Doris caught scarlet fever and Phyllis had to go and stay with her grandmother at St Teath.

All our Yesterdays – 1900-1950

My name is Doris E Armstrong. Born 1.2.13. I live in the village of St Tudy in North Cornwall, between Wadebridge and Bodmin.

Yes, I have lived in the Golden Uplands through two World Wars. No doubt things were bad after the war, until the country settled down. I was too young to remember those early days, but I do remember growing up in the lovely village of St Tudy. I lived with my parents and younger sister in a row of two cottages, ours was two up and two down, the other was one up and one down with one WC between the two cottages. We had a little garden in which was grown potatoes, vegetables and cabbages. My father was a mason and worked with his father and brother in the family business.

In the kitchen we had the range, where my mother did all the cooking. We fetched our drinking water from a well, a little way down the road, my father had a barrel in the garden to catch the rainwater. My sister and I fetched the milk in a can, from a little dairy in the village. We had the glass oil lamp on the table and we had a candle in a candlestick to light us to bed. The floors were slate and covered with two strips of matting, quite cosy.

Our village had three shops, one with a Post-Office, two-family carpenter shops, a blacksmith shop, a pub, a school, a doctor's surgery, a village hut which was a Nition (Nissen) hut from the WW1 war, a church and a chapel. It was a very happy community where we all knew one another, and helped each other in sickness or other trouble.

There were four gentleman's houses with gardeners and servants etc. who employed men and boys as gardeners and odd jobs, and women and girls as servants. Around the outskirts of the village there were farms, and that gave employment to men and boys as labourers and handymen.

Yes, we knew our place and our manners and lived happily together. My sister and I had a happy childhood. We were free to roam and play in the fields, picking blackberries and daffodils from the woods. We played with our playmates, with bats and balls and ran with hoops and marked out squares on the road to play hopscotch. Wintertime we played with our dolls and games such as ludo, snakes and ladders, dominoes and snap. We knitted dolls clothes and read nursery rhymes and fairy stories and told them to each other when we went to bed.

I remember the lovely summer days, running to school in our summer frocks, and calling for playmates on the way. We liked going to school and looked forward to the summer holidays. In August it was the Sunday school trip to Polzeath. We travelled in farm waggons fitted with seats and pulled by two horses, later on in a few years by charabanc.

The next big treat was Christmas; the Christmas tree, and carol singing, the Christmas stocking, in it was an orange, an apple, a nut or two, a little game or a doll and a pair of socks.

We kept Sunday and Good Friday. On Sunday we went to Sunday school and church in the morning, to Sunday school in the afternoon and to church in the evening with our parents. Our father was a bellringer.

After church in the summer, we went for a walk around the lanes with our mother and father, picking honeysuckle and wild roses, and strawberries from the hedges.

I remember going to bed in broad daylight and hearing the corncrake in the fields across from our cottage. The first car in the village belonged to the doctor who lived down the road from the school.

The first tin of fruit was pineapple and we shredded wheat with it for our Sunday tea, great excitement. (You say our food was stodgy?) My mother was a good cook, we had our Sunday roast with vegetables, boiled ham, stews, fried bacon and eggs, milk puddings and the Sundays with apple tarts, and bread and butter, and saffron cakes and we all survived and lived to a good old age.

Another thing we always looked forward to in the summer was the Ice Cream Man, he would come with his pony and ice cream cart and ring his bell, and out came the children with their pennies for a penny cornet. There was also another excitement when the cherry man came to the village with his pony and trap, shouting Cherry Ripe! and we all came out with our bowls to buy those lovely black cherries for 6p and 9p a lb, 6d and 9d a lb. These were the good old days.

Going back to the village today it is quiet, no longer can we hear the voices of children as they laughed and played at their games, and the shouting and excitement as they come out of school at 4 o'clock. Today they are brought to school in a car, the older ones go off to Bodmin and Wadebridge in a bus, and a few minutes after they unload, the village is quiet again. Today's children have better advantages and education, but are growing up too quickly, especially in the cities and towns, they are not free to roam and play because of traffic and other dangers and are missing those happy childhood days.

Memories of World War II – 1939-1945

August 1942

On a lovely summers evening in August 1942, about 7.30pm, our peace was shattered by a big bang and explosion coming from St Breward, the next village. A German plane had dopped a bomb in the centre of the village, demolishing the Sunday school, and killing a little boy who was playing nearby. The German plane was being chased by our fighters, and as it flew over, it dropped a bomb here and there, to lighten its load.

Later in time, I heard of several places where a bomb had been dropped, as it fled that evening. Our peace was certainly disturbed. That was way too close to be comfortable.

February 1943

It was a dark evening in spring about 9 o'clock, my sister and I both had a cottage in the village but we came down to sleep each night at our father's and mother's house, our husbands were both overseas in the war.

It was at this time; the war was raging on and things looked bad for Britain. The Germans were coming over and bombing Plymouth, night after night, they came nine nights in succession. We dreaded each night as we lay in our beds and heard the droning of the planes as they passed over.

This particular evening, we were sitting and talking together when suddenly we heard a crack, crack, cracking from a German plan as it passed over the village, the next morning all was clear.

I was an Infant Teacher at the village school, on that particular day I had the afternoon off by permission to go to my grandmother's funeral in the next village of St Teath. During the lunch time I went up to y own cottage to get my black hat and gloves, and as I passed through the bedroom, I noticed dents in the linoleum on the floor. I looked up and saw a bullet stuck in the wall. I took it out. The next day I carried it to the Headquarters in the village and asked if I could keep it, of course the answer was "No, it is a live bullet and you have to hand it in". I was thankful I was not sleeping in my cottage that night as the bullet had just missed the bed.

Even in this quiet countryside village we were scared at nights when we could not see what was happening in the darkness.