



The Friends of Chain Bridge Forge Blacksmithing and the Dodd Family

Prepared By:	Geoff Taylor	
Business Name:	The Friends of Chain Bridge Forge	
Address:	Site Address: High Street Spalding Lincolnshire PE11 1TX	Postal Address: 107 Hawthorn Bank Spalding Lincolnshire PE11 1JQ
Tel. Number:	07960 587724	
E-mail Website	chainbridgeforge@googlemail.com	

Comprising the following recordings

File identification	Date	Interviewer/Interviewee
VN680014	15/10/11	IB/Geoff Dodd
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VN680014

Ian Meeting with Geoff and it is the 17th October 2011, time is just after 11 o'clock and we're going to be spending about an hour talking about the first topic.

VN680015

Ian So Geoff, what I want to talk to you today is about the blacksmith. Hi,

VN680016

Ian So we're talking about the blacksmiths, the role of the blacksmith at the moment, Geoff, and the first thing I wanted to ask you about was about the Dodd family, so can you tell me what you can recall about the Dodd family and its relationship with Chain Bridge Forge?

Geoff Can I get some notes?

Ian Course you can

Geoff If I can get my hands on

Item 11 on Stick (VN650018)

Geoff And is husband, husbandsman, a small farmer from South Kime in the middle 1500s.

Ian I see.

Geoff Alright?

Ian Yes.

Geoff There's an inventory of his possessions. He died in 1569 and then there are other documents of the 1600s where the name Dodd appears in several places. In 1842 William Dodd was recorded as living and farming at White House Farm, which is still there, middle sized farm, about 56 acres at South Kime Fen.

Ian I see.

Geoff He was a tenant of Lord Brownlow, the farmhouse, range of buildings and barns and stables.

Ian Do we know who Lord Brownlow was or is?

Geoff He was one of the adventurers they called them, I think. One of the people who provided the money to drain the fen which I think, round about the .. as late as the 1800s I think was when Kime Fen was drained.

Ian I see

Geoff There was .. that's it, a farmhouse and a range of farm buildings, barns and stables and lofts set round a crew yard, typical of that period and probably built for a tenant, built with a view to finding a tenant anyway. He, this William Dodd, or perhaps even his father, probably the first occupants as it was drained in the early 1800s. That's only a few years before the time when we're beginning to talk about.

Ian Yes

Geoff The fen before that, probably would not have been viable as agricultural land, probably pasturage, certain amount could be farmed. Not ever so sure about that but that's ...

Ian And would that have been subject to seasonal flooding?

Geoff Oh, pretty sure the .. yes , yes, yes

Ian Yes.

Geoff At that same time there was another tenant farmer with something like 170 acres apparently and that was Banks Chambers. He lived in the Manor House at South Kime. He wasn't Lord of the Manor. Before Banks Chambers there'd been a Willie Dickinson living in the Manor House. Apparently he farmed something like 500 acres and then before that we know that the Manor an Anthony Peacock who was Lord Brownlow's agent. William Dodd married Banks Chambers daughter and their son, Banks, was named after his grandfather, the Manor House, was born in 1840 and he married Ann Thorpe of Heckington in 1861 and they lived in Heckington Fen. The first child, who was a boy was born in 1862 and in the next 10 years there were five more children, all boys, and the seventh, another boy in 1875, after William Dodd had taken the White House Farm from his father. The eldest boy was Christened William Dickinson Dodd so that set up the family link with William Dickinson, Willie Dickinson, who farmed 500 acres and lived in the Manor House, 40-50 years before. The third son died in 1875, he was nine years old, he was also Banks and my

father, that's his nephew, was Banks Dodd and I am the great, great, great grandson of Banks Chamber and have middle name Banks as well.

Ian So Banks is really a family name ..

Geoff Family name but where it .. how it came in to then Chambers family I really don't know. I could find out

Ian Fascinating

Geoff But that's as far back as we can trace it. Ann Dodd, the mother of these children seems to have been rather a presumptuous lady, at least as I understood it from an aunt, and I'm afraid that aunt too, had quite a lot of her grandmother about her, oh she was always a lady. Auntie Tiggy said - on Sundays entertain the vicar to lunch after the service while the boys ate boiled bacon in the kitchen. Ah - yes - oh - she drove to market, Sleaford that would be probably, in her own trap and pony and always wore a fur coat. I suppose if you were the daughter-in-law of the big farmer who lives in the Manor House you've got to keep up appearances perhaps.

Ian So the standing in the community for the family was quite a high one?

Geoff I would think with 56, a farm of 56 acres would be a reasonable ...

Ian It's substantial

Geoff .. a reasonable .. yes.

Ian Yes.

Geoff Then there was serious agricultural depression in the 1880s and 1890s, and the boys didn't seem to have had any particular incentive to stay on the farm and it couldn't have supported them anyway, not all of them. This son Charles, he did take a farm and its on record in the 1920s he still held that farm but it seems not very successfully and he was rather a sad figure as I remember him when we used to go visit him in the 30s when I was probably only about seven or eight years old.

Ian I see

Geoff He was then, at that time, living in one room of his house which was a lovely big old house, it's still there, once the gamekeeper's cottage apparently and it had been built out of stone that was taken from Kime Castle. The one room that he lived in with a room above it was as I remember it, not much more than a loft. It had an enormous cupboard that puzzled me a bit, but I was told that that's where he slept but of course they did sleep in an alcove with doors and they ... There was a duck pond in the middle of the yard and there was a games store, again a stone built building with rows and rows of racks and hooks for hanging game after a shoot.

Ian And what happened to the other members of the family? Did they disperse?

Geoff Yes ... what did I see ... the house was a ?? during the war, it's been modernised now and is occupied by a descendant of that same Banks Chambers and she remembers Uncle Charlie when she was a young girl riding very unsteadily down the road on his bicycle and I think that was his problem all his life, I mean I didn't recognise it in 1936 or 7 when we used to go and see him. The second brother was John, he was a wheelwright, a joiner at Tarry Hill in Swineshead. Two of the brothers I think, became butchers but we're not ever so sure about that. The fourth son, George, was born in 1867 was my grandfather, seems tired and ??? and not attracted to the sort of life his father used to say to him perhaps, come on boys, it's too wet to work today, get your coat on, we're going to mend the gates and the fences so he was indentured apprentice to a blacksmith in Swineshead, five perhaps seven years apprenticeship in those days, roundabout 1880 but in 1872 there were seven blacksmiths in Swineshead close around. Couple of stories that I've heard about my grandfather, his boss had to leave him alone in the workshop one day - George, you'd better make up gate asps??? while I've gone. Gate asps is the bit that fastens the farm gate. It would be a good practice for an apprentice because there's an eye welded on one end, sometimes two if it's padlocked with a ??? at the other end and they'd always be able to sell them, farmers would ... they'd be in store anyway so the iron wouldn't be wasted and if he didn't make a very good job of it and it was wasted there wasn't very much gone to waste. But when his boss came back at the end of the day the gate asps were lined up on the anvil apparently for inspection and his boss picked one up????? I wouldn't chuck one like that done my privy. I don't suppose he said privy but grandfather said tha needn't worry, master, there's three down there worse than that. And there was another story that they told about him. He and a gang of mates all went to Heckington Feast,

Heckington Show and they would walk so whether they went from his home in South Kime or whether they walked from Swineshead where he was probably lodging, it would still be a good six mile walk each way and they had a good day and had set off home and one of them turns???? hadn't had our fight??. Turned on their heels and went back to Heckington Show to pick a quarrel with somebody to finish the day off nicely. Things don't change, do they? At the end of his apprenticeship he left Swineshead and he went to Newmarket as a gentleman plating race horses.

Ian Newmarket in Suffolk?

Geoff Yes, yes, plating race horses which was very well paid, I mean, as it is today, simply with the idea of putting enough capital, saving enough capital to set himself up in business.

Ian And did he talk about his time in Suffolk at all?

Geoff Not an, not an awful lot. I know he had, he still had contacts right to the end. People in the racing set-up used to still send him tips. I remember as a boy days when the BBC gave racing results after the news in the evening, if I happened to be in the house, sssh, sssh, had to be silence whilst grandfather listened to the racing results to see how he'd done. Anyway, in 1898, he'd be 30 then, in the meantime he'd married Elizabeth Badcock at Burwell. She'd been in service with the Jellis family, they were horse trainers, and with one child, he had a daughter, says he did of George Leavesley in the County of Lincoln, master mariner, and Joseph Bradford Arch, of the same place, ironmonger, agreed to rent and hire of the landlords all that ??? dwelling house, buildings, yard and premises and all the blacksmith shop lying opposite to the same situated at the bottom of the High Street in Spalding aforesaid in the occupancy of Edward Fisher and he paid a rent of £16 a year. The workshop had previously been the property of Joseph Rose, a blacksmith, in 18.... Joseph Rose died in 1811. I think probably built the workshop in the first place but he didn't actually occupy it. He had another business, we've discovered, in London Road which we've not been able to trace yet but it was let from the early 1800s to roundabout 1850 to Francis South, the workshop and the cottage opposite and then after Francis South, Edward Fisher had it and then he, at some stage, had bought the properties and grandfather bought them off Edward Fisher or I presume that George Leavesley and Joseph Bradford Arch, named in the document, probably were executors for that's something else we weren't able to ..

Ian And was there any indication as to why the previous owners of the forge had moved away or hadn't continued with the business?

Geoff Well, it was let after Joseph Rose died. He owned, I mean, not just the blacksmith shop and the cottage opposite but the two houses next to cottage as well. The building on the north end of the workshop which is now a holiday home, was built as a sail maker's workshop between 1838 and 1850. Francis South we presume, only after he'd worked in the workshop for 50 years probably had died. Edward Fisher, certainly, I think, had died before my grandfather came. We had wondered how my grandfather had ended up in Spalding but discovered that Edward Fisher was born in Swineshead so if grandfather had gone back to his old boss in Swineshead to say he was looking for a business, he'd say well old Ted Fisher has just died, there'd be a place at Spalding and that's assumption but it

Ian Probably sounds reasonably. And what sort of a character was your grandfather?

Geoff Ha, ha, ha ... I don't know, he was a better build for a blacksmith who was going to shoe horses than I am anyway. He wasn't particularly tall, stocky without being overweight but he was a lean man but a stocky build, about the right height for shoeing horses. Very quiet man, I suppose. I don't quite know what to say.

Ian Was he someone who was well known in the community?

Geoff Oh, he was certainly very well known in the community, yea, and well respected. His hostelry was The Vine, not much more than a hundred yards away from the workshop and there were two seats in the bar at The Vine. If my grandfather walked in or Skip Brown, a retired sailor, contemporaries, the two seats, if either of those two seats were occupied when Skip or my grandfather walked in immediately they were vacated. That was George Dodd's seat and Skip Brown's seat in the ...

Ian So there was a respect for him and the job that he did.

Geoff I'm sure, yes, I'm certain, yes.

Ian And was he renowned for the quality of the work that he produced?

Geoff I'm sure he was. He was a good blacksmith. There are not so good blacksmiths, I've heard about them but no, knowing my grandfather I'm not sure his workmanship was tip top.

Ian And how did he generate business?

Geoff I don't think he had to. The business was there as it has always been.

Ian And moving on to your father. How many children did your grandfather have?

Geoff He had, he was one of seven boys and he had six daughters and only produced one son. His, er, one of his son-in-laws is quite sure he persisted in having children in the hope of producing another son. My father was the third in the family. He had not intended being ... he hadn't intended being a blacksmith at all and started an apprenticeship with a precision engineering firm in Middle Lane, off Winsover Road, what's the chaps name? But that business was taken over by the Fisher Clarks of Boston and closed down the Spalding workshop. My father had to go into lodgings in Boston to finish his apprenticeship but some time during the First World War grandfather was shorthanded and had him come home to help in the business.

Ian And how did your father feel about that?

Geoff I was just going to say, a reluctant blacksmith I think or he obviously settled into the business. They worked together till we didn't finish talking about Joseph Rose, did we? Can we go back and finish?

Ian Yes, yes

Geoff Yes, there's a document among the papers that I've got that relates to Joseph Rose's daughter, Rachel Christian, she's married another blacksmith called Christian. They .. and .. presumably, I'm pretty sure, that Rachel Christian's husband took on his father-in-law's business at the London Road workshop and they had two sons, Jim and John. They were both blacksmiths and these two Christian brothers were forebears of a firm at Long Sutton which became Christian and Dobbs. Edward Fisher rented the workshop for a while and he bought it in 1849 from the then owner was a William White, mariner. This designation, mariner, crops up several times in the documents I've got relating to the workshop. They managed to build up a little capital to invest in property, how it came about don't quite know, but Edward Fisher 'for and in consideration of the sum of £190, lawful British money, to him, the said William White, in hand, was well and truly paid by Edward Fisher of Spalding aforesaid blacksmith'. The workshop's described as that blacksmith's shop, shoeing shed and coal yard, east, bounded on the east by the turnpike road, that's the present High Street, and on the west by the River Welland. It's right on the river bank as we know. The sail maker's shop was mentioned. It was still in ships, boats, supplies, ship's chandlers in 1898 when my grandfather came but it was converted into a fish and chip shop by 1911 by the Knipe family, who later had a fish and chip shop in New Road. My father told me he used to fetch the fish for Frank Knipe from the railway station on his little hand cart for a, can't remember if it was a half-penny or a penny a day he got, and with the workshop grandfather bought Ed Fisher's little cottage this side and it later became my father and mother's home for 40 years. At the end of the 1800s there were 11 blacksmiths in Spalding, between Spalding Common and Fulney. Rachel Christian, I think, is recorded as the owner of the one in London Road and there was an Annie Coates on Bourne Road. I presume that she was a widow carrying on her husband's business and of course there'd be a lot of employed men, they were the master blacksmiths and of course the employed men didn't get their names in the Post Office directories do they, train directories. Most of these were out of business over the next 30 years or so. By then Johnson Bros. in Bath Lane, in High Street, they employed around seven or eight blacksmiths.

Ian And why did the numbers dwindle?

Geoff I presume the work dwindled and engineering firms, I mean some blacksmiths set up engineering firms and probably started as a blacksmith and then after a few years wouldn't be recorded as a blacksmith because ...

Ian They'd diversified

Geoff Yes. This drifts away from the workshop for a little while, do you want

Ian If we can look at the recollections of the family, so what I'm after here is looking at reminiscences that you have regarding both your grandfather and also your father, as well as leading onto your

own recollections so the earlier part of your life before the Second World War, during and immediately after.

Geoff This deals with what was going on around the workshop rather than the workshop I, my father had it that there were a hundred horses stabled within 100 yds of the workshop in the early years of the century. Birches, the corn merchants and millers, 100 yds up the road, had 40 I think and ...

Ian And everything would be horse drawn at that time?

Geoff Oh yes, in the 80s, in the early 1900s I should think very few vehicles, they do crop up later in the ??? of grandfather's day books, you could see and you could see the changes in the sort of work that was happening. In 1913, one day in January 1913 they, I think grandfather would certainly have employed one man, possibly two, I don't know but they put on 134 horse shoes in one day, trimmed 116 feet, farm horses weren't always shod at the back because the work is done with the front legs, in one day and I reckoned if I put on four shoes in an hour and a quarter I hadn't done too badly but they'd done a .. and that was a long day's work. They would have been in January, daylight would have been short and before they started shoeing, in the day book it was recorded that they roughed it, grandfather should have written roughed, it's called roughing, putting frost nails in place of the ordinary nails. So there were 88 feet that the process of ease off the shoe, loosened the nails and ease off the shoe a little bit, then take each nail out, one at a time, and replace it with a chisel pointed horse nail. So 88 feet, seven nails in each shoe for 2d a foot.

Ian 2d a foot

Geoff Yea, at that time he was charging 2s 4d for a set of four shoes, 7d a shoe and that wasn't increased. It was 2s 4d when he started work at .. and it wasn't increased until into the Second World War. I was charging £2 10s, nowadays it might cost you £50, £70 or more for a set of shoes.

Ian I see.

Geoff Blacksmiths, of course, now go to the horse rather than bring the, the farmer bring the horses to the forge. Grandfather, he'd taken some examinations and he could style himself up a registered shoeing smithy, RS after his name.

Ian And having those qualifications, would that have meant that he could charge more or be more

Geoff I wouldn't think so, I don't know it would have made the slightest difference. There would be .. he would have to have done some practical examinations and a certain amount of veterinary knowledge and today it's a legal requirement before a chap can shoe horses professionally.

Ian Would he have .. so in your grandfather's time .. would he have worked closely with the local vets?

Geoff Yes, actually my father worked more with the vet, don't quite know when the vets set up in Spalding but, of course, in earlier years the blacksmith was probably the nearest there was to a vet in the area at all. Probably a vet in Spalding but out in the country the blacksmith would deal with most problems, foot problems particularly, as best he could. My father did actually work a lot with Harry Reeks, his business was in Red Lion Street. Quite often I remember him in the 30s, quite often he'd say I'm out with Reeks today and help with operations on the feet.

Ian And do you think the time your grandfather spent down in Suffolk in Newmarket, would that have helped him when he was dealing with all matters equine?

Geoff Oh, I'm sure it would, yes, I'm sure it would, certainly there were vets there and a lot of people working in the stables with a lot of knowledge of horses which they probably hadn't learnt at veterinary college but simply through experience and he would have as well, I'm sure.

Ian And what sort of hours would your grandfather, if we start with your grandfather. What sort of hours would your grandfather keep in terms of the blacksmith?

Geoff I really don't know. I remember, they probably started work at 8 o'clock, it would depend, I suppose, on how busy they were, and certainly they'd work longer hours in the summer than the winter but he .. there wouldn't be many harder days work than shoeing those 130, putting on those 134 shoes on. He and father always started work before breakfast and the workshop was unlocked and open and the doors weren't closed until they locked up at night. If the workshop was left empty it was always open, I remember.

Ian And how many days a week did they work?

Geoff Well, five and a half anyway.

Ian Half day Saturday.

Geoff I would think so, yes, my father did work Saturdays.

Ian I see

Geoff I suppose grandfather, if they'd been busy, as I did, if the work was there and needed doing you worked the hours to finish it.

Ian And can you remember what sort of recreational activities they might have. I mean, you mention going drinking at The Vine.

Geoff heavy drinker

Ian Were there any recreational activities that they would participate?

Geoff I don't remember grandfather other than he a garden, not an allotment, a bit of land lose to West Elloe Bridge on Marsh Road. I think it was a big garden to a cottage that stood there, probably the cottage owner, I really don't know the arrangement, couldn't manage it and grandfather had that garden where he grew vegetables for the house. Other than that, don't really remember grandfather no leisure activities.

Ian Did religion play a key part of their lives?

Geoff Not .. not a large part of their life, either of them.

Ian I see

Geoff My mother came from a staunch ???? Methodist family and she was involved with the church, as I am, but my father and grandfather, not that I can remember, although grandfather's family, all the girls, all were members of the Methodist Guild and the Broad Street Methodist Church as young people but after that I don't think any of them had very much connection and if they'd been asked they would have said they were Methodists.

Ian I see. And as far as your grandfather's offspring were concerned, having mainly daughters, am I right in saying?

Geoff Yep,

Ian They, did they marry local people or did they migrate to somewhere else in the country or ..?

Geoff The eldest daughter was a governess, very, very ..rather a stern lady as I remember her, but she .. after she gave up .. she was actually governess to the Fox's Glacier Mint family.

Ian I see

Geoff Just where, I don't quite know but then became housekeeper to a widower with two daughters who she married. The second daughter married a bank clerk, became a bank manager right down at Arundel, Littlehampton, somewhere.

Ian I see

Geoff Somewhere there. But the others, I think, married locally.

Ian I see, I see. And as far as your father was concerned, when did he marry?

Geoff I think he married round about 1924 or 5 I think, a daughter of a smallholder from Weston Hills. When grandfather had occupied the little cottage which involved the blacksmith shop, for a few years he moved across the other side of the river in Albert Street, Albion Street. By 1928 he was back in High Street. The original cottage is now no.31 and he bought no.35, before 1928 anyway. When my mother and father married he bought no.36 for them. I was born in no.36. When I was six months old the little cottage, which he still owned and let, became empty and my mother decided she would rather live in that .. in the little cottage because it, simply because it had a garden, it wasn't simply because it wasn't nearly such a good house as no.36, nevertheless they moved into 31 and that was their home, Mother died in .. not sure .. she died before I was married and I'd lived there 14 years then, early 70s.

Ian I see. And you were born on what date?

Geoff On the 23rd July 1929. At six months old we moved into the cottage which was my home for nearly 40 years. When I married no.32 was empty and we bought no.32 so I've lived in 36, 31 and 32. Father owned 31 and lived in 36 and came back to 31. Grandfather bought 31 and lived in 35 the rest of his life so we've lived in a 40 yd stretch of High Street.

Ian And how many siblings did you have?

Geoff I have two daughters.

Ian Two daughters and as far as the children of your father, are you an only child or are .. ?

Geoff There was a younger brother and sister. My brother became a police cadet and, was in the Royal Military Police when he was doing his National Service and from there he went to Southern Rhodesia as it then was, in the British South Africa Police where he serves for 25 years, starting as a constable and retired as a chief superintendent. When he would have only been still in his 40s, I should think after 25 years police service, and went into industry with a company making oil products, cooking oils, toiletries and so on.

Ian And the daughter of the family?

Geoff My sister started in banking and then moved to London in market research.

Ian I see

Geoff Married and Australian and emigrated, or at least emigrated, met and Australian, they emigrated and she married him in Australia and is still there.

Ian I see. And as far as your father was concerned, you mentioned that he was quite a reluctant blacksmith ..

Geoff It never, it never showed but it wasn't his intention.

Ian Ok, Talk me through why it was expected that he would continue the business or he would help. Is it something that was just, that's what????

Geoff ????? It did happen, didn't it? And not to any great advantage. I think very often, I mean, I know of a number of smallish and middle-sized farmers who expected their son to ... and they worked on very low wages simply with the prospect of inheriting the farm or the business eventually, where of course, often not a very good arrangement for them in the mean time on low wages.

Ian And if your father was here now what do you think he would tell us that he would really want to have done?

Geoff Oh, well, precision engineering was what he had in mind. He started doing it.

Ian And did that initial work, did that in precision engineering, did that impact on what he did in the blacksmiths or is that something that he didn't use?

Geoff Well he wasn't really able to because in the blacksmith shop, today it's still a very primitive workshop with only the simplest of tools. No, he couldn't possibly have done that sort of work.

Ian I see. So your grandfather was actively working at the forge from 1898 until what date?

Geoff Ah, well, in 1947, I'd just left the Grammar School and was doing my National Service, grandfather nominally had retired I can't quite think, when at 67, he'd be 65 at retirement, where did that bring us to?

Ian About 1930 –32 or something like that.

Geoff No, it was certainly later than that. I should think it would have been in the 40s, probably late the 40s before he retired but he ..

Ian In his 70s?

Geoff I should think he must have been close on 70.

Ian Yes, yes.

Geoff It took him about a couple of weeks to square off his garden and a couple of weeks to tidy up the house and repair the cupboard doors and whatever and after that he was back in the workshop, though not working at the same rate but helping.

Ian And your father, was he still in the workshop at this time, so in the 40s?

Geoff Oh yes,

Ian How did he feel about your grandfather coming back into the workshop?

Geoff Oh, I wouldn't think they thought about it at all. It was just the way things had been for 30-40 years, yes.

Ian Yes, and you had mentioned that you had started your National Service

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- Ian So just finishing off the part about the blacksmiths and the Dodd family, you were in the army, as in National Serviceman, after you'd finished at the Grammar School. You'd obviously passed your 11+.
- Geoff Er, yes that's right, I got a scholarship to go to the Grammar School.
- Ian I see. And what had you hoped to do with that level of learning?
- Geoff I aimed at going into industrial optics, not spectacles but instruments optics.
- Ian Why was that? Was it something that interested you?
- Geoff Physics had been my favourite subject at school and the science of light particularly. It may or may not have happened but that's what I had in mind at the time.
- Ian And teachers had influenced you in that direction, they had encouraged you.
- Geoff No, not that I remember
- Ian And you started your national service just after
- Geoff September '47
- Ian And where did you commence your initial training?
- Geoff At Lincoln, six weeks at Lincoln. Because I had a background of physics and chemistry, one of the subjects that I was offered was to work in explosives, which certainly appealed to me and the lads that I met later who went into the same line. With a physics and chemistry background and after a short wait at Portsmouth where I did a clerks course, just to fill in the time until we could get to the school of ammunition. I didn't actually finish all the course. My father was very seriously ill just before Christmas of '47. Grandfather would then be 80, trying to keep the business together. A retired uncle who had been an engineer, one of my father's brothers-in-law, was a retired engineer from the sugar factory. He came in and gave granddad a bit of help but I took leave to come home, I mean, and then when I had used up all my privileged leave I applied for compassionate leave and then also got some compassionate leave as well so I was backwards and forwards to Portsmouth and working in the workshop when I could get leave. We got in touch with the, forgotten what it's called, the organiser ... the SAFA, Solders, Sailors, Airman Association, was a retired bank manager in Spalding and knew us. I think, he also was a partner in a farm we did the work for but not that that would have influenced, I mean, he was a very straight up and down man but I think he discovered more about my father's illness than actually we knew at the time. I applied for a temporary release expecting probably after three months to go back into the army but instead of that I go a discharge to come home and work. Grandfather then would be say 80 or 81, still shoeing horses, bless his heart, not many, I think were only shoeing three horses every couple of weeks or so, certainly not more than that but ...,
- Ian And was there any talk of winding the business down if you were doing something else.
- Geoff Well, no because we really expected my father, you know, really only keeping the business going until my father recovered but he did not, wasn't capable of doing I would think any work really for nearly four years and another four years that I mean in fact after another four years, so for 12 years, I mean, he never got back to full health but he did get well enough to be able to do the lighter jobs.
- Ian And would there have been any talk about getting somebody other than yourself to come in to help?
- Geoff Er, no, I don't think it would have been practicable. I mean my grandfather had made a reasonable living in that workshop.
- Ian I see
- Geoff The time my father had it, less so and today, if you look at the workshop it isn't really a place where you could run an efficient business to make real money.
- Ian And would you say that as far as your grandfather and father were concerned, were they good businessmen, were they ...?
- Geoff Not particularly, I think they probably .. my father ... I certainly I could or should probably have made quite a lot more money than they did. If they'd perhaps been better businessmen, they

probably weren't charging enough and I'm quite sure I wasn't, but they could have charged more but that wasn't the way they looked at life,

Ian I see and as far as .. you mentioned about the scholarship, how did you achieve that? Was that something ..? Were you always very academic or is that something you enjoyed?

Geoff Not particularly. We had a good school teacher called at the Council School in Westlode Street, always seemed to produce very good results in the scholarship examinations, probably the best of all the schools in the town. He really worked well with us. Er, ya. Moving to the Grammar School, probably to ,, I ,, er,, I got a Form Prize the first year in the Lower Third Form, 3B. For a short time I was Gamlyn House Master before I left and between that seven undistinguished years I would say but from moving from the Council School was a bit like becoming a .. perhaps at the Council School a big fish in a little pond and I moved to the Grammar School and everybody else had passed scholarships, it was a small fish in a big pool. stayed in the A stream right through and I think my higher school certificate results as it was then, A levels, would have just about got me into uni at that time which was what I was hoping for.

Ian I see and you mentioned that your mother was the religious one in the family and that was imparted to yourself, how big a part of your life was chapel?

Geoff At that time, not ever so big. When I came out of the army I became more involved and after a number of years I started conducting services in village Methodist Church, well, the town. Because I was involved in the business and was busy and at that time I was virtually breadwinner for the family. My brother was a police cadet earning very little, sister still at school, again not earning very much when she started in the bank in those days. I was .. I didn't have the time for the prescribed study but eventually it was accredited. After a few years became the local preacher they called the Methodist ... as you know do you.

Ian Yes