

Married to a Man who didn't Dance!

Marjorie Brennand was born in 1912 and interviewed in 1996

I was born in a house in Allhallows lane which was built in 1600. There were seven girls, three boys and my mother and father in the family.

Father was the local greengrocer, the only one in town, and we had gardens all round town where he grew his own vegetables and everything. We never got into trouble, we never had a chance because when we came home from school it was straight to one of the gardens, weeding, picking fruit and vegetables. We never had time to play outside and there was no getting into trouble.

We had a horse and cart and father and me brother, went round town three mornings a week selling fruit. Then our Hannah went buying to Manchester every Wednesday. We used to meet her when she come back with the lorry around eight o'clock at night and we used to help her unload. I lost many a boy friend through that. I had one, he had an MG Sports car and he waited in the Woolpack until nine o'clock and then he gave up. We never saw colour of him again.

On Sundays we were busy baking bread. I made fourteen loaves of bread a week. Everything was home made. Me mother had a modern, coal-fired Triplex oven. Well it was modern in those days. It had two fire things and it was tiled. When our Hannah was twenty-one, she and my mother took St, George's Hall and she gave a party for a hundred people and they baked everything except the buns.

We had two pianos, one downstairs, one upstairs. We were a very musical family – not me I'm not musical! But me father played the melodion and Lynn sang and Doreen played the piano and her husband sang and our Shepherd was the bass baritone. There was no television of course so they used to sing for hours on end.

I went to school at the Central Girls' School. I loved it. I won a "Domestic Science," ("cookery" as we knew it then) prize when I was eleven. It broke my heart when I had to leave when I was fourteen. I longed to go to the High School but my mother said "No! you must finish at 14 and go to work" and I went to Illingworths snuff factory where my sister was packing cigarettes and I was doing displays and I hated it. Then they moved to Stockport and Hilda went with them but I stayed at home and went into the business. We made all the flowers. Our Hannah made all the wreaths while I wired for her all the flowers and that was my life.

There was a washhouse on Allhallows Lane which was the swimming baths as well. Our Lynn and Doreen would go across at six o'clock in the morning taking all the washing for the week. There were little stalls and you boiled and scrubbed and did everything. Then they had four spinning machines. You put your clothes in and you got the water out. Then you went upstairs and along two big long walls, big racks you brought out and hung your clothes on. We did all this for twelve then when they came out they went into another big room where you folded all your clothes and you put them in rollers. I think they were stone and you put your clothes on either side and these huge rollers went backwards and forwards and by the time they were finished they were like being ironed. Monday was wash day and Tuesday was bedroom day.

My brothers and father all fished and me father always used to come back with a load of trout. It didn't matter what time, nine or ten o'clock at night, I would clean them, 'cos I loved cleaning. Cleaned them all and fried them. We used to have them right away with tomatoes. Everywhere there was a dance I was there. One night in 1938 my sister Hilda got married. We had a wedding thing at the Kendal Hotel and then a dance at night. We all split up at the

end of the day and Louis and I were the only two left and the rest said “Oh for goodness sake get together you two and shut up”

We had a horse and cart, Heather Bell. We used to get our horse and take it down to my grandmother who live in Crosthwaite. We used to go every Sunday afternoon to visit her mother in the horse and trap. When we got to the bottom of the hill the horse wouldn't pull us up so we had to walk up every hill.

In May 1940 Louis was in the army. He'd been in Burma for four years. He got special leave to get married and we had the do at the Fleece. There was only 23, just the family, that was all. Dunkirk was on and our Harry was out there. Louis and I went off, borrowed his father's car and we stayed at the biggest hotel in Liverpool for two or three nights and went to see a show – Jack Buchanan. Then we went back as Louis only had a week's leave and I was married to a man who didn't dance! The following July Michael was born and he was just nine months when Louis came on embarkation leave and I never saw him again until 1945.

He was on the way to Singapore when the Japanese capitulated and he was in charge of 2,000 prisoners of war.

My granddaughter once asked “Did you agree to the bomb grandma?” I said “Yes I did, 'cos Grandpa wouldn't have come back.”

Louis became a family butcher after the war and loved every minute of it in Finkle Street. Grandad owned it. We were living on peanuts and I think the boys must have said something one day 'cos Grandad said “Right you must buy it.” So Reg, Louis and Terry did and then ran it. Then Michael, Tony and Terry, the three of them, took over when Louis retired in about '62 I think. During the war, although we were butchers we didn't get anything extra. Maybe a few odd sausages now and again. I can remember buying half a pound of strawberries and putting them in custard to make them go round. But then I made three meals a day. I think Steak and Kidney pie was Louis's favourite he loved it.

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