

The Cooper family background

1. Introduction

I have written this account of my family background as a result of reading two books. Firstly my brother Steve suggested that I read Michael Frayn's "My Father's Fortune: A Life". Coincidentally, I came across Tony Judt's "The Memory Chalet". Each book contains an account of the authors' childhood and these intrigued me in two ways. Firstly, many incidents in these authors' early lives were close to those in my own. Secondly, the authors' and my world of the 1940s, 1950s and early 1960s is so different from today to an extent that my own children, David and Simon – let alone their children in turn – might in due course like to read a first-hand account of the Cooper family in those times. (It looks as if on the current basis of using surnames, my sons David and Simon will be the last males to carry our branch of the Cooper name anyway.)

So, this memorandum sets out to relate what I know of the lives of Marcus (always Mark) Ashley Cooper (1915-1976) and his wife Elsie (nee Hugill) (1915-1997) and the early lives of their children, me Marcus Ashley (1944-), Stephen Manfred (1948-) and Amanda Margaret (1950-). Hereafter I shall refer to Mark and Elsie as Mum and Dad.

Since I drafted this account in late 2011, and told others in the family what I was doing, we have made a couple of discoveries. Firstly my brother Steve found some notes that he made when talking to Mum ca 1990. By that time her Alzheimer's was marked but her memory for older times was still sharp. I have included these notes as Appendix 5. I had not previously seen these notes that I can recall. But their existence nagged at me and after some searching I realised why. Some years earlier I had also taken note of some of mum's recollections! These are given as Appendix 6.

As for my own account which follows, I have stuck with my original intent of its being what I experienced first-hand or remember being told during my childhood, and I have only modified it to make the occasional correction where I think Mum's accounts are the more accurate.

2. Ancestors

We have a family tree of several generations for the Coopers and the Hugills (Appendix 1). This can be summarised as follows:

- a) Until the mid 1800s the Coopers seem to have lived in Tring, Hertfordshire but at that point moved to Manchester. Dad's grandfather, also Mark (1856-1934) made a career in the Post Office and seems to have risen to the rank of Inspector. At least, that is the interpretation that we have of a photo taken in his later years wearing a fancy uniform. We also know that Dad's father, Mark Arthur, (1886-1918: killed in WWI) worked in the Post Office. Mark Arthur's wife Margaret Thomas (1885-1962) was the daughter of the manager of the gasworks in Knutsford. So by the time of Dad's birth both his parent's families might be said to have risen from "working class" to "lower middle" or even middle class.

The gasworks in Knutsford disappeared some years ago, presumably in the 1970s when coal gas was phased out in favour of North Sea Gas. Nana's family house was Gas House, Gas Street, I believe. There is no longer a Gas Street but from some preliminary work that I have done I believe that it is now "Windsor Way" which contains some Victorian looking houses, one of which may be indeed be "Gas House" albeit renamed.

I have some clear memories of Nana Margaret from 1950 and even before. At that time and for the rest of her life she lived at 3 Hillingdon Road, Wavertree, Liverpool with her unmarried daughter, my aunt "Ann". (I was told that she was christened Annie, but was always referred to as Ann). We have a photo of Dad and me (aged 4 according to Mum's note on the back) outside the front door. Nana was not much over 5 feet tall and was stout, a stoutness that was emphasized by having very thick, swollen looking ankles. Early on I remember her having a Pomeranian dog (whose name may have been "Chappy") but I think that this was not the case after 1950. Later, I remember one occasion (probably mid 1950s) when she visited a locum GP who, somewhat appalled by the appearance of her ankles, assumed that she had dropsy and prescribed a diuretic (I even recall that this was "Diamox"). The inevitable occurred – frequent visits to the toilet by Nana; a panic phone call from Ann to Dad (Mark, a pharmacist, who knew that his mother had had that shape for many years and didn't need diuretics); followed by Nana stopping taking the pills - which was to be confirmed when her usual GP returned.

On almost all occasions, Nana wore an outer "housecoat" - a darkish but florally decorated calf length garment open at the sides but with ties at the waist. This was common at the time for those – like her – whose main role was housework.

Attached to Nana's house was a garage but there was no car there until –to the surprise of much of the family – Ann- who was really a most timid soul -

announced that she was going to start driving (the late 50s I think). Passing her test was a prolonged event, not without unkind comment from some. Until then the back part of the garage had been rented as a workshop by a Mr Lowe, a cobbler. Even in the early 1950s Mr Lowe seated at his last seemed an ancient figure - stout, with a huge leather apron and a mouth full of tacks, peering over his glasses as he either carved out replacement shoe soles from great sheets of leather or deftly hammered them onto the shoe. He rode a "sit up and beg" Raleigh bicycle which he pedalled at little more than walking pace.

Nana was a great reader – much of it being Charles Dickens, of whom she had a full bound set. Another book that I found there was "the Diary of Anne Frank" but I suspect that this was Anne's not Nana's. I remember that this book caused some discussion in the family, mainly because Mum and Dad went to some lengths when we were quite young to avoid our seeing images of the holocaust. (Example- I remember, I'm sure when I was not yet 10, that some images from a concentration camp came on TV. Mum immediately leapt up in front of the TV so that we could not see it. Not too difficult when you remember that we had a 9 inch screen). Nana and Anne also had a TV that showed ITV before we did –this must have been around 1955.

b) The Hugills:

Mum's parents were John William ("Jack") Hugill (1888-1955) and Mary Campbell ("Polly") Pickstone (?-1949). Their origins were in the Lake District and they only moved down to Manchester in the early 1900s. Jack was a truck driver but apparently became a specialised one. I was told that at one time he had driven massive trucks (Try Googling "Scammell 100 tonner": these behemoths made their debut around 1930. I am particularly struck by the fuel economy (?) figure of 0.75 mpg) on such routes as from the Midlands to Glasgow, carrying railway engines for export. These trucks proceeded at just a few mph and were so unwieldy that they had manned steering mechanisms both front and back. Family legend told of these beasts crossing Shap Fell in foul weather so the trip must have been a heroic endeavour. (One does wonder, why were the railway engines not exported via Liverpool rather than Glasgow?). Mum also told tales of going to the truck depot with her father on a Sunday morning where (apparently) the drivers met socially despite it being their day off – but of course they probably seldom met during the week, being out on the road. One such incident led to Jack being scolded by Polly for putting Mum's coat at risk of becoming oil-stained. Jack's job in transport meant that he was in a reserved occupation during World War I.

We have a watch presented to Jack by his workmates in Shell-Mex at Weaste Garage in 1925. This must be Weaste in Salford. The date is interesting. Jack would have only been 37, so this presentation cannot have marked retirement. Nor, according to Mum's recollection that he only moved to Manchester aged 19 (ie 1907) can it have marked say 20 or 25 years' service. But we do know – from Mum's reminiscences that for a time Jack ran his own garage business which folded ca 1929, so maybe the watch was given him when he left Shell-Mex to go independent.

Jack's wife Polly was hardly known to me. My earliest recollection of her is of her being house-bound and largely confined to a chair –she had had a stroke around 1945 and succumbed to something similar in 1949. From both my recollection and photographs she was not physically attractive, having a large nose, but I believe Mum told me that this feature developed later in life.

My main recollection of these Hugill grandparents is of them at home in Briardale Road, Liverpool - where family life mainly proceeded in the kitchen which was dominated by a huge, black kitchen range. Polly was sat in a rocking chair, wearing a house coat or smock, always coloured black, with a small flower decoration. I remember that she had a distinctive odour (I suspect she was mildly incontinent). As a small child I remember commenting on this – I could only have been 3 or 4 at the time - and being reprimanded. The Briardale road house was also occupied by Pip (Mum's sister, born 1923) and her husband Harry and from 1952, their daughter (and so our cousin) Geraldine. Pip was certainly living in the house from an early age (they moved to Briardale in 1929; until recently we thought Pip was actually born there) until her death in 2004. Appendix 3 shows Mum Pip and Polly, I would guess around 1930.

Briardale Road was a terraced house backing on to the main railway line going into Liverpool Lime Street. On the far side of the line were the playing fields of Liverpool College. At this time in the late 1940s Briardale – unlike a surprisingly large proportion of British houses - had been fitted with an inside bathroom and loo but it still retained an outside toilet with a hatch for “night soil” removal (albeit more recently plumbed to the sewer). Only during the 1950s did Harry replace the kitchen range.

A note on cigarette cards: Harry had what seemed to me to be an enormous collection of these. To explain, it was usual for many years for a packet of cigarettes to contain a picture card, roughly 1 inch by 2. The series of say 2 dozen cards might be of, say, battleships, kings of England –in one case I remember it was canaries. Occasionally a display case of these cards is to be seen on a pub wall. Similar sales gimmicks have been tried on many

occasions, but I don't think that they rivalled cigarette cards for scale. Anyway, Harry had this large collection, many of them complete runs and (under suitable supervision so as not to dirty or crease them) we were allowed to look through them. I remember that when about 10 I had a reasonable collection myself, but by no means of the same quality. I then started on postage stamps and have built on the collection to this day.

Harry also used his skills to make us jigsaws. He would select a nice picture – usually from the cover of a magazine and paste it onto a 1/8th inch board, then cut it into a jigsaw pattern with a fret-saw.

The few memories that I have of my grandfather Jack include the following. Firstly he enjoyed a pint in the nearby pub, “The Rose of Mossley”. Secondly, one highlight was him taking me to Chester Zoo (it must have been around 1951 or 1952). I have to say that I found the vultures the most fascinating exhibit; there was something awful about their ugliness and their lazy flapping around their compound. This trip was quite an expedition when done by bus. My brother Steve has reminded me that Jack was a pipe-smoker and that he had a way of holding his pipe with a curled forefinger that we used to imitate with the toy pipes made of liquorice that were a favourite sweet. Jack was also famous in the family around this same time for his fortitude in having an abscessed tooth extracted without anaesthetic. He died of a brain haemorrhage aged 67 in 1955. According to Mum's notes he had retired in 1953, at 65, which was the usual retirement age both then and for at least 30 years to come. And yet it seemed to me that Jack was at least semi-retired from when I first can recall him – say 1948. Maybe he had a light routine in the company office- he never seemed to be out driving.

A wedding photo of Mum and Dad in 1939 (Appendix 2) shows them together with the Hugills (Jack and Polly, plus Pip), Margaret Cooper and Dad's sisters Peg (1910-1997; with husband Henry/Michael) and Ann (1912-1995). Ann's fiancé - who was to subsequently jilt her - is also present. Steve remembers his name as Arthur Thomas. I cannot identify the young girl in the photo. Steve believes it is Michael's daughter by his first marriage. Her name might have been Helena. This lady also visited us occasionally with Peg, Michael and their children on Boxing Days.

A note on Ann and Peg: Ann worked in the Ministry of Supply and maybe later for the Council having I believe some junior managerial position. In later years she became quite deaf and her reaction when she could not understand something was to giggle – which made her seem much simpler than she was. After being jilted she retreated into herself and had no further men friends.

Peg was a more forceful personality than Ann. I do not know where she worked when single but by 1939 she was married. Her husband was either a widower or a divorce –the latter seems less likely given the expense in those days of obtaining a divorce. There were aspects about him that were never too clear. For example he was always known in the family as Michael (Davidson) although apparently his real name was Henry. Whether this was merely a change of use (perhaps he was “Michael Henry” or Henry Michael”) or involved a deedpoll we never knew. Michael died mid 1950s of pancreatic cancer. They had two children Rosemary and Nicholas. I believe that after Ann died, Rosemary moved into Hillingdon Road. From the later 1950s for a few years Peg started working in a bookshop and was very involved in it and its world, subscribing for example to a literary magazine called “John O’ London’s”. Dad and more especially Mum thought she was “putting on airs”. I have added some further memories of Nicholas and Rosemary as an Appendix.

3. Mark (Dad) and Elsie (Mum) Cooper

Family legend has it that Dad was to be christened Mark but the Vicar got it wrong and named him Marcus. Anyway he was always Mark to the family.

Dad’s family income was constrained by the death of his father and probably consisted of a small pension from the Post Office plus whatever the government provided to war widows, and the rest of the family might have chipped in. Nana was 33 when widowed in 1918 and was to live a further 44 years.

Dad was bright and got his school certificate from the Oulton (a school also attended by Peg and Ann) but left school aged 15 or 16 be apprenticed to a pharmacist in Myrtle Street, Liverpool. This apprenticeship probably involved some cost to the family but this was presumably less than the cost of higher education. Dad eventually qualified as a pharmacist in around 1937 – the same year he got engaged and he married Mum in 1939.

Around 1974/5, hence not long before Dad died, I took a new role in ICI which included liaison with ICI Pharmaceuticals. Dad asked me in passing if I had come across someone working there called Reg Hoare who had been a pharmacist’s apprentice in Myrtle Street at the same time he was there, and who had later joined ICI. In fact it turned out that Reg Hoare was by then the chairman!



Mark Cooper, Postal Inspector (b. 1859 m. 1882; d.1934)



Mark Cooper (b. 1915)



Margaret Cooper (nee Thomas, with Peggy, Mark – in frock – and Annie)



**Mark Cooper with donkey in backyard of 143 Albert Edward Road,
Liverpool**



Mark and Anne Cooper (1933?)



Mark Cooper and Elsie Hugill (in Lake District 1934)



West Derby Church of England School



Mark Cooper outside his chemist's shop, c. 1954



Mum with me 1947



Dad with me 1948

Outside 3 Hillingdon Road, Liverpool (Nana's house)



Dad with all three of us



Mum with all three of us, on beach



The whole tribe

Mum left school at 14 to become an office worker. I was told by family friends that Dad was initially attracted by Mum's red hair - she had the nickname Carrie - for "carrots".

We know that Mum and dad did some of their courting in the Lake District (see photo). A famous family story recounts a time they were up Helvellyn and had to come down in a hurry (weather?). Apparently they decided the quickest way down was via some scree which Mum descended on her bottom.

I am not fully clear on where Mum and dad lived as young-marrieds, though they seem to have oscillated between Liverpool and Manchester. I was once told that at one point early in the war they rented a house in Wavertree not far from Nana. They used to talk about fire-watching in during the blitz which must have been no earlier than 1941. (We always thought this fire-watching was in Liverpool but Mum's notes show that they were in Manchester from some point in 1941; so if Liverpool was involved it can only have been briefly). But certainly Dad spent much of the latter part of the war in a reserve occupation, using his scientific skills to improve the electroplating of aero engine parts at the Ford factory in Trafford Park, Manchester. At the time I was born in 1944 they were living in a flat at 181 Canterbury Road, Davyhulme, Urmston, Manchester. (A Google photo of the area suggests that this part of Canterbury Road has since been redeveloped).

This flat was above a chip shop and its entrance was through a yard filled with old fish crates. I can remember playing amongst these as a small boy, emerging with both hands and knees full of splinters and smelling awful. I believe that the family who ran the shop were called Umbers. Their son (Willie) was an arch enemy of mine and on one occasion he threw a stone which gave me a small scar on the right temple that I still bear. Although I was born in the local cottage hospital, I remember Steve being born in the flat. By that time, Dad had had spells as a pharmaceutical company representative and as manager of a pharmacy for a man called Rosenbloom (or similar). One vivid memory of that time was a visit with Mum by train to a different city (something tells me it was Sheffield) to meet Dad who was working away (presumably this was during his rep days). We arrived at the hotel as dusk fell and I remember the cawing of rooks around the smoke darkened building.

The winter of 1946/7 (until I looked it up I thought it was 1947/8) sticks in my mind-it seemed so cold for so long. The records suggest that after snow in mid December, the weather relented for a while but then the snow returned from mid-January to mid March.

I can recall that at this time rationing coupons played a large role in our lives. The nation was in dire economic shape following WWII and could not afford to import all the goods that the population might have wanted. Hence there was rationing of many products ranging from foods to clothes to petrol. Apparently at some point in the late 1940s it was decided to end rationing on certain products; this led to such an upsurge in demand that the national balance of payments suffered and further rationing had to be imposed until the early 1950s.

As I've said, Steve was born in the flat in 1948. I remember that once I was allowed in to see my new baby brother I dumped a pile of dinky cars on his blanket and was then upset that he didn't show much interest.

In 1949 Dad moved to Liverpool to manage a pharmacist's shop for a man called Tom Colton (who many years later, 1976, wrote Dad's obituary in the *Pharmaceutical Journal*). Mr Colton had two shops, one in Stanley Road and the other in Picton Road and managed one himself while having a manager in the other. Both these shops I remember sold Coca Cola and a bottle was always forthcoming when we visited. Two other things I remember about Mr Colton. Firstly, having shed his baby teeth and got his adult teeth he then proceeded in his 30s to shed these in turn and grow a third set. Secondly, he always gave us generous Christmas presents. On one occasion he gave Steve and me boxing gloves. We knew these were coming and looked forward to thumping one another. But when we opened them we found that they were all left hands. Mr Colton kindly rectified this but it took a few weeks.

For some reason, I remember hearing that in this role Dad was paid £17 per week. From the internet, the average weekly wage seems to have been about half this, with labourers (a category into which many would have fallen) getting about £4 per week.

As a result of this job move, the family moved to 1, Lisleholme Close, West Derby, Liverpool 12, where Amanda was to be born in 1950. I believe that the house cost £850-this was our first house purchase as opposed to rental. Lisleholme Close consisted of four pairs of semi-detached houses and 4 pairs of semi-detached bungalows. All were small -by my estimation our house was little more than 800 square feet. In later years a loft ladder was installed and the loft boarded over to take Steve's train set. Uncle Harry played a large part in this conversion and introduced us to the Liverpudlian term "a Welshman's". This stood for "a Welshman's screwdriver" ie a hammer.

At this point I'll mention some of our neighbours in Lisleholme Close. Opposite us, in Nr 12 lived Mr and Mrs Lee and their son Francis who was a few months younger than me. We became friends and he later was my best man although we lost touch in the early 1980s. At Nr 11 were the Jones family while their parents the Adamses lived in the bungalow at nr 6. The Adamses had an adult son who apparently was a chronic bed-wetter. This secret got out which didn't make his life any easier. The Jones/Adams family ran Bluebell Piggeries which was out near Whiston. Outside their house stood a bin in which we were invited to place left-over food which went to feed the pigs. I can remember a number of occasions on which all the stock had to be slaughtered because of disease (Swine flu? Foot and mouth?). At nr 10 lived the Andrews family - he was a joiner. Their son David had TB meningitis in the early 1950s, I remember, and was dangerously ill but was cured I believe by one of the new antibiotics then becoming available. Steve remembers the onset of David's illness - him falling down in the Close and frothing at the mouth and that Dad was consulted. Dad had the common sense to realise that things were bad and far beyond anything he could help with, and that an ambulance was needed. Nr 9 was occupied by a reclusive bachelor, Mr Thompson who taught Geography at the Holt High School to which Steve and I would go in later years. Other than in school we never spoke to him. He rode a bicycle with a basket on the front which was handy for carrying exercise books to and fro. (What happened when it rained?). A retired couple, Mr and Mrs Jude lived in the bungalow at nr 8. Mr Jude had a car which he seldom drove, nonetheless he seemed to be regularly asking Dad to bring him a bottle of distilled water to top up his battery. Next door to us at nr 2 lived Mr & Mrs Fazackerley. He took a lucrative posting overseas (Steve's recollection is that it was in Borneo, hence christened him "the wild man of Borneo") so she went back to her parents house until he returned some months (or even a year or two) later. I have a recollection of a do at my parent's house on the following New Year's Eve, when Mr Fazackerley was boasting of his newly acquired capacity for drink. He then proceeded to demonstrate this by driving his car round the nearby streets in a most erratic fashion. Dad and the neighbour from nr 3, Tom Tipping, managed to get him safely home and I remember Mr Fazackerley's abject apologies the next day. When the Fazackerleys moved on, nr 2 was occupied by a strange family, the Tomlinsons whose life seemed to be a chapter of accidents eg nearly setting their house on fire one Bonfire Night. Mr Tomlinson was very thin and had dark circles underneath and possibly right round his eyes. We nicknamed him "Weed". My memory of the other occupants of the close is less clear, mainly I think because they tended to move on more frequently. I have listed some other neighbours in an Appendix.

In 1954 Dad decided to open his own business and he took on a combined pharmacy and post office business in Great Homer Street Liverpool. This combination of businesses, whilst not common was not unique (a similar business has existed where I now live for over 30 years). Steve points out that this meant that Dad, his father and grandfather all worked for the Post Office. This business had been run down for some time and I remember that in the early days he wondered whether the business would make it –eventually it provided a reasonable if not a lucrative income. For some years I am sure that this income would have been little more than £1000 pa ie not much more than he had received as a shop manager.

Steve believes that Dad borrowed the funds to buy the business from Ann, but I had never heard this. The shop had a cellar, unlit except for a grating, and I for one dreaded being asked to go down there to fetch something. Upstairs there were two more floors one of which was used as a library by a (Catholic, I think) Working Men's Educational Association. The pillar box on the street corner outside the shop bore the stamp "VR" so was at least a half century out of date.

Great Homer Street was in a fairly rough area of Liverpool not far from the more famous Scotland Road ("Scotty Rd"). Pre-war this whole area consisted of a mass of terraced houses (think "Coronation Street" writ large) whose construction went back to around 1850. The bombings of WWII had devastated large areas which were slow to rebuild. In fact, Dad's shop adjoined a pub and there was some space around. The city planners clearly intended to raze the whole area but faced a major obstacle in the cost of paying out some significant parties. One of these was the breweries. (At that time many crossroads in that part of Liverpool had a pub on each corner, so pubs and their owners had a big influence). Dad's adjoining pub was I believe owned by the brewers Ind Coop & Allsop. (If remember rightly, their symbol was a red hand : in the 1970s this was changed to a golden hand to avoid association with the Red Hand of Ulster). Negotiations with the planners, in which Dad was to be a minor player, lasted about 15 years.

Steve has reminded me of two stories from the shop that Dad brought home. One concerned a man looking for work who sought it by saying to Dad "Eeh, Mr Cooper, there's all muck behind your shop." For a time this became a family rebuke to the untidy. Apparently Dad gave him some money to perform a modest tidying. The second involved a person who came into the shop, with no prescription:

Person: "Can you give us some pills?"

Dad: "What for?"

Person: "To take, of a night."

Outside the shop a woman called Aggie sold greengrocery from a barrow. She was a matriarch and had great influence in the area. Notwithstanding this, at least one of her sons was a thief who on one occasion was held responsible for breaking into Dad's shop.

I'll try to describe what life was like at Lisleholme for much of the 1950s and early 1960s:

During the day, Mum was at home. For a time around 1950/51 when Steve and Amanda were very small she had some help from a Mrs Glover who was one of the "squatters". About 300 yards from our house there had been some form of military camp, equipped with Nissen huts which were essentially built of corrugated iron. At some point in the late 1940s (my guess) the military moved out and left the locked huts behind, pending demolition. However so great was the demand for housing (lots of couples wanting to marry after WWII and to move out from their parents' house; the origin of the baby boom) that these huts were swiftly broken into and occupied by people claiming squatters rights. I suppose that they didn't need to pay rent either.

The daily routine at home is worth spelling out. Firstly we had no washing machine or drier. Clothes washing was done in the kitchen sink followed by putting the clothes through a mangle to squeeze out surplus water. Finally the clothes would be dried on a line outside if the weather was fine, and if not, either on a ceiling rack in the kitchen, or a fold up rack in front of the fire. If there was a frost, it could happen that clothes that had been drying outside would freeze into a rigid shape. A pair of trousers or say a vest, standing upright against an interior wall to thaw was always amusing. As I recall everything had to be ironed, there being no modern textile materials that avoided this. Pots pans and plates etc were all washed in the kitchen sink and dried by hand. The size of the kitchen was no more than about 8ft by 5ft.

Shopping was done nearly every day since we had no refrigerator. As there were no supermarkets, this involved individual visits to the baker, butcher, fishmonger, grocer and green grocer, just to mention food shopping. Customers queued up at the counter with their shopping lists and the shop assistants fetched the items. Although some shops did offer home delivery it was far more usual for the shoppers to carry their goods home. Until about 1952, many items were still on ration from the War, so an eye had to be kept on coupons, without which money alone was insufficient. Milk was delivered by a horse-drawn cart from a farm just round the corner. Because of the lack of refrigeration milk-bottles were stored beneath the sink, wrapped in a damp cloth. The evaporation from the latter helped to keep the milk cool.

Cleaning the house? We did have a vacuum cleaner from fairly early on but most houses relied on a brush and pan to pick up dust.

I think the above list of tasks as well as cooking and looking after children shows why being a housewife was a full time job.

We had no central heating, so heating at Lisleholme originally consisted of setting a coal fire in the lounge. Elsewhere there might be an electric fire and for the bedrooms on a cold night there was a hot water bottle. Steve has reminded me of the rigours of a wintertime bath-night. This took place weekly –usually on a Friday and was indeed a bath. We had no shower, except for a rubber tubing device that fitted on to the taps and was useful only for hair-washing. On getting out of the bath, one rushed to wrap oneself in a towel and dashed with chattering teeth to the feeble warmth of an electric fire in the bedroom to finish drying and get into pyjamas.

Later on the coal fire in the lounge was replaced by a gas one and we kids took over the coal bunker in the yard as a somewhat leaky den. The yard also contained a cluttered corrugated iron shed which was originally built as an air raid shelter. This was despite the house being built after WWII; fear of a renewal of war was all around and was soon to become a reality in Korea for example. Dad seemed regularly to be complaining about the mess in the shed, although he contribute to it with a gear box from one of his former cars. However he took good-humouredly the cry that we kids put up whenever he went there: “Dad’s going in the shed. Take to the hills!”

School: I was five in 1949 and I remember that the nearest school – the one that I should have attended - was Blackmoor Park. However the roll was full, and I was registered late because of our move, so I would have had to delay my entry by a few months. However there was space for me at West Derby Church of England school in West Derby village about half a mile away. Despite our being more Congregationalist than C of E, I went there and –after a traumatic start on the first day when I had to be prised away from my father, I was very happy - in due course being joined by Steve and Amanda. As I remember I was in any case 5 years 5 months by this time so any more delay would have been unwise.

Under its headmaster Mr Herbert Simpson, West Derby C of E had some remarkable features. Firstly it was physically tiny despite (at the time I started) taking ages from 5 to 15.

The infants wing had its own playground and had only three teachers - Miss Close, Miss Howard (later Mrs Bridge, which is how Amanda remembers her) and Miss Roberts. All three wore for teaching the sort of floral smock dress

that I have already described. I think we were coed for the infants but single sex in the juniors, where the only teachers that I remember were Miss Wood, Mr Balderson and Mr Tharme. Mr Balderson had been in a POW camp (Steve believes that he was an escapee and that the camp may have been that famed for the "Wooden Horse"). Certain of the years (eg the 9 and 10 year olds) shared a teacher and classroom and in many cases one room was separated from another only by a curtain. Anyway, I can't remember anyone who hadn't the rudiments of the 3 R's by the age of 10 - although I presume that there must have been a few. In fact, in discussing these notes with Steve, he recalls an "Opportunity Class" which sounds like it was remedial. I have no recollection of this. Possibly it came about after I had left.

Corporal punishment was used but not that often. I once received a stroke of the cane on the palm of the hand because in a lesson the teacher came out with a fact that amazed me and I gave an involuntary short whistle. The most severe punishment that I can remember is somebody who had been caught stealing small sums from the coats in the cloakroom, being given 6 stokes of the cane on his bent over backside –he was still wearing trousers but had to remove jacket and pullover. Evidence against the thief was obtained by taking an abandoned old coat and putting a dye in the pockets which stuck to the thief's hand then developed into a bright colour. Steve thinks that Dad may have been asked to recommend and supply a suitable dye on this occasion.

By the way, in the juniors we wrote with pen and nib and each desk (they seated two) had an inkwell which was topped up each day by a pupil acting as ink-monitor. The temptation to soak a pellet of blotting paper in ink and flick it at another pupil was always going to exceed some boy's power of resistance even though the perpetrator knew that a caning would likely result.

I particularly remember that Mr Simpson was a science enthusiast. He did a number of experiments with us which I didn't see again until a couple of years into High School. I particularly remember the differences between the force pump and the lift pump being demonstrated, and simple barometers, density measurements etc. We also listened to series on the radio- one of which graphically described a time traveller reporting from the age of dinosaurs etc. I think it was the 3rd form in High School before the topic of evolution came up again. I got high marks for an essay and was asked how I knew so much about it. I'm not sure that my reply of "we did it in primary school, sir" went down well.

My recollection is that in about the same year, 1955, that I left West Derby C of E to go to the Holt High School, it was decided that the 11-15 year old

pupils at West Derby no longer constituted a viable unit and so they were transferred elsewhere.

A vivid incident concerning a schoolmate: the Murphy family lived in West Derby village itself. I'm unsure of the first name of the lad concerned (I suspect it was Danny; by a strange trick of memory I can better remember that a close neighbour of his was a big lad called Freddy Smith). Anyway one evening after the younger children were in bed, an older brother (and I believe also the father) decided to clean some motorbike parts in the kitchen using petrol. Almost inevitably a fire started and the whole house was engulfed in flames killing the younger children.

Another incident that sticks in my mind from around 1950/51: A number of the Commonwealth countries, knowing of the economic plight of the UK and our consequent rationing, sent us presents. On this occasion we lined up in the school yard, as if for assembly and were each handed two or three apples which had been sent over by the kind citizens of Canada.

It may also be worth recollecting some others of my classmates. The school adjoined the estate of Lord Sefton (who was a famous figure in the racing world) and a number of the children of his estate workers, among them Sandy Lyon and David Shaw were in my class. Lord Sefton and his wife had no children so in due course his title disappeared. His grounds became a public park. Sandy went on to the Holt with me and David I think to Liverpool Collegiate. Alan Stemp lived on Town Row and also went to the Holt. Jeremy Jackson lived right by the school and went to Liverpool Institute on a Margaret Bryce Smith scholarship. Douglas Eaton went to the Collegiate and to Liverpool University where he made something of a career managing rock bands, I recall.

Having discussed something about West Derby Church of England School, it seems appropriate to discuss religion in the Cooper family, for whatever else we might have been we were not Cof E. Nana and Ann were regular attenders at the nearby St Stephens Wavertree which is now described as a United Reform Church although "Congregationalist" is what I remember Nana, Ann and Dad describing themselves as being –in Dad's case only nominally. So, there were regular Cof E services at school and across the road at (CofE) St Mary's and then for a while we attended a Congregationalist Church in Norris Green. I have to say that we kids were not terribly interested and we were happy to backslide. Steve has spoken to me about Dad taking a rationalist line on religion, perhaps to the point of even having an agenda, but this isn't part of my experience. Just about the only comment of his that I can

recall is an assertion “many pure mathematicians are believers, but in the messier experimental sciences the proportion drops quickly”.

A typical evening: Dad typically stayed at the shop until 7PM and didn't get home until 7.30PM. By then we kids had eaten (usually not long after getting back from school) and the younger ones might have already been in bed (or ready for it). The evening was spent in the house with only rare visits out (Mum and Dad seldom if ever went in pubs anyway and didn't in those days drink at home either). Theatre or cinema visits were perhaps annual eg to the pantomime. From about 1950 we did have a TV – black and white of course and with a 9 inch screen. Having any sort of tv was relatively rare eg for the Coronation of 1953 many of our neighbours (I would estimate 20+) squeezed into our house to watch the ceremony. Programming was very restricted. In the early days I remember that programmes only started at 8PM and began with a 15 minute newsreel. This newsreel only changed weekly (Sunday evening I recall) so for 6 days of the week there was nothing new before 8.15 PM which by accident or design was my bedtime in the early to mid 50s. Even if Mum had the TV on Dad would usually be doing his paperwork for the business. Often this consisted in shuffling huge numbers of prescriptions, covering much of the floor and table (perhaps to sort them by prescriber?).

Occasionally we would have visitors. Most Saturday evenings my Aunt Pip, Harry and Geraldine would visit. Weekly, “Aunt” Marjorie Jones –who was really a friend of Mum's from girlhood would visit. She worked at a dental clinic and having gone there once for an extraction, she visited me as I was being readied for the anaesthetic. I found it quite weird to see an aunt in those circumstances. “Aunt “ Lil and husband Bill Heslop and their sons Donald and Keith were also occasional visitors although we saw them more often on Summer Sundays at Ainsdale Beach. Muriel and George Sutherland also visited and also played occasional games of tennis. Muriel had worked in one of Dad's shops and George was a detective.

Cars: My recollection is that in the late 1940s/maybe early 1950s Dad bought his first car. I think it was a pre-war Sunbeam Talbot which he named Osborne. This car was actually in a garage waiting a replacement part which was a long time arriving, although I believe that we went in it to Rhyl in 1952. Eventually I think he gave it up and went in for a series of (also pre-war) Rover s and then a Vauxhall. I believe that we went in the Vauxhall to Heysham in 1954. Sometime in the mid- 1950s, my memory is that he started to have Fords including a number of Zephyr Zodiacs. In the case of one of these cars – it must have been in the earlier 1950s - I remember that with assistance from uncle Harry he took the engine out and reground the valves. Where he got the knowledge to do this I do not know although he was an

avid reader of a number of car magazines. One of these I remember would reproduce annually an exam set by one of the Engineering Institutes. Despite no relevant training in theoretical mechanics that I can recall, Dad was capable – to my amazement -of answering a number of these. He was also quite skilled at a range of tasks - I can remember him changing the washer on a cold tap without turning off the water at the mains (or perhaps only partially doing so). This involved placing a heap of towels over the tap to restrain the force of the water and then working by feel under them, in a torrent of water. Anyway, he did it. He also did his own interior decorating.

Holidays: the only family holidays that I went on were to guest houses in the UK. By guesthouse, I mean a small establishment where there were a few rooms , sharing bathroom facilities, in a family run house. The first occasion that I remember was to Silverdale (near Morecambe) where we stayed with Pip and Harry (Geraldine was not yet born) with the Shorrocks family. There was a nearby hill with a monument on it called the Pepperpot and we went to a beach on Morecambe Bay where we were told of the speed of the oncoming tide and how Jenny Brown's Point was named after a poor girl who had been trapped and drowned there. A similar tragedy happened to 23 Chinese cockle pickers in 2004. We visited Silverdale two years in a row, 1950 and 1951.

Our trip in 1952 to Rhyl was mainly remarkable in that we met a couple, Hilda and Albert Whittaker from Bradford and there children who became friends for many years. A particular memory is that supper (ca 9PM) always consisted of water biscuits, cheese and celery. "Uncle" Albert's Yorkshire accented diatribes against the injustice of this, and similarly his scathing remarks about the adequacy of spaghetti as a main meal, live with me still.

In 1953 we went to Barmouth in Wales. Geraldine had been born by then and we travelled, the eight of us, in one of Dad's Rovers. The following year -1954, the year that Dad opened his own business and could not afford to leave it, so only came for a few days, we went to Heysham, to a caravan park. Mum's aunt, also Elsie, and who in fact was only about 11 years older than Mum, lived there in a caravan which was made from a converted railway carriage. Elsie's husband Tom (Olive was his surname) had a job at a nearby (ICI I think) works where as I understand it he spent his day (well, actually many years) carrying sacks from one place to another. Years later (1963) when I had a vacation job with ICI I remember seeing a film about mechanisation. This showed a before and after shot where the "before" had men carrying sacks from one place to another and the "after" showed some sort of conveyor. I was pretty sure that one of the sack shifters in the "before" was this same Tom but by then he and Elsie were dead, so I could not ask. My ever helpful brother Steve on reading this account has chided me as to why I haven't

mentioned Elsie's ever present housecoat. Amanda remembers that Elsie did not smell too sweetly. Allowing for the fact that she was in any case rather stout, that it was summer, and that her home had no washing facilities other than the kitchen sink, this was hardly surprising. But then Amanda remembers that she smelt little better at other times...

In both 1955 and 1956 we went to Lytham. On the first occasion, there was a trip to a local marina where one could hire a dinghy by the hour. We were fairly hopeless at handling this but one man from the boarding house – who was indeed rather better than us with a boat – made himself out as an accomplished sailor. However, when coming into berth, things went slightly wrong and he ended up stepping off into the water up to his knees. (He was by the way wearing long trousers shoes and socks, maybe even a tie; not unusual for a British man on a sea-side holiday in the 1950s –see some of the photos of Dad at Ainsdale). Anyway, the following year when we turned up at the same boarding house, there was this same man. Dad turned to me and said something like “You remember Mr Smith from last year don't you, Ashley?” “Yes”, I replied, and being twelve I knew the devilment in what I was about to say, “He's the man who stepped in the water”. I was rewarded with a very narrow-eyed look from Smith, and Dad's expression wasn't much kinder.

By the time we got to the late 1950s/early 60s holidays were more sophisticated and we were having a week at Easter, for a couple of years at Bishop Eaton near Hereford at Mrs Powell's and a fortnight in the summer renting a house, Blue Waters at St Austell, Cornwall.

In Appendix 4 I have listed these holidays in the sequence that I remember them.

These holidays away from home were on top of what were regular Sunday visits in summer to Ainsdale Beach. This was a huge expanse of sand with sand-hills at the back for hiding in. When the tide was out the walk to the sea seemed endless. On one occasion I was in charge of Steve and we got lost so we handed ourselves in to the St John's ambulance station to await reclamation by our parents.

School: Amanda, Steve and I excelled at school. Partly this was native ability but we were also well taught and Dad proved able to assist us on a wide range of topics. It wasn't just his knowledge base but his help with thinking up ways of tackling problems. We were the first in the family to be educated beyond the school leaving age of 15 (later 16) and he was very proud and pleased by this. To his undoubted intelligence was added Mum's common sense.

The quality of some of the masters at the Holt is worth a comment. A number of them had Firsts or other high academic attainments but as young men in the 1920s/30s had had no opportunity for going further academically and had entered teaching. As they retired around 1960 onwards it was noticeable that their replacements were no longer of the same class –they would often reveal gaps in their knowledge. Of the more outstanding teachers I remember in particular Paddy Malone, senior maths teacher (who in fact had taught Dad at the Oulton); Lofty Lawrence of Physics; Herbie Milne in Chemistry and of a younger generation Max Barton who died very young: he had been a POW in the War. Albert Wilson of Latin, Ecce Lowe of History are also memorable and I have also mentioned the rather strange Mr Thompson. One notable ex-pupil of the Holt was the mathematician John Horton Conway who was moving on to Cambridge as I arrived at the Holt. Conway was famed for completing his 3 hour A level in little more than an hour and for getting full marks. He is perhaps most famous for devising a number of games eg “Life” in addition to much elegant mathematics.

I won't spend too much time on the Holt-mainly because I don't think that my time there differed hugely from say the time that my sons had a generation later at King's Macclesfield. But there are some things that may be worth recording. The first perhaps marks a failing in me. Whereas Steve still has, nearly 50 years later, several good friends from those days, I have none. (Equally he has retained more friends from university than I have). One boy from my class that both Steve and I knew was Alfred Neville May. “Alfie” was fat and was very clever. Whereas I was seldom outspoken, Alfie was around the ages of 13-15 a rabid communist who would harangue our teachers. (Maybe a further reason for me taking sciences?). He went off to Cambridge (Fitzwilliam) to study History and got a First. Did he also do a PhD? But he could not fit into the world thereafter and was close to mad. Steve knows more of the subsequent events than me, but I know that our old History masters at the Holt fixed up some part time teaching there for him. This was not wholly successful and thereafter we lost track of Alfie.

The next story, I have included because it involves both the Holt and my future father in law – the psychiatrist Dr Benedict Finkleman. There was also a boy in Steve's year called Rix. He was found to be very strange and was asked to leave after a few years. In 1962 (so he can only have been 14-15) there was a horrific murder in Childwall, Liverpool. A 12-year old girl was butchered in the hallway of her home whilst she was babysitting. Rix was arrested and subsequently sent to Broadmoor, being found insane. Dr Finkleman was one of those consulted, Steve tells me.

Play: Our main game was football, played either in the street, a park or on a nearby hockey field which was fenced and locked to keep us out but we could always find an access point. And indeed some of our playmates live in houses which backed onto the field and access only involved negotiating a 3ft fence. This hockey field gave access to a number of other delights. First a drainage ditch in which we would paddle in our wellies looking for fish and frogs-being more successful with the latter, or at least in finding their spawn. The banks of the ditch were wooded and we could build dens, sometimes incorporating bits of corrugated iron. We had rival gangs which attacked one another, sometimes wielding large pieces of wood as weapons. The fact that some of us were wearing helmets (sometimes military from the war; more often I think that they had been issued to fire wardens etc) was meagre protection. Looking back we took appalling risks of injury, fortunately getting away with it most of the time. I haven't yet mentioned the use of bows and arrows made from string and garden canes, catapults, and one wheeze that we never quite got to work – a gun consisting of a copper tube, a ball bearing as projectile and a "banger" firework as explosive. We also climbed trees to heights which would have been hugely injurious and probably fatal if fallen from.

A bizarre incident: Not far from Lisleholme there was a site of about an acre called "Benkies" – scrub and bushes surrounded by larger trees. One day Francis Lee and I plus a slightly older neighbour, Alan Gardner (unlike most Gardners, he hated being called "Gus" and would thump you if you so offended) had climbed a tree. As a result of the effort we were relatively quiet when we spotted a man entering Benkies and carrying a sack and a shovel. We looked at one another, whispered "Shush" and watched the man as he dug a hole and buried the sack. He then went off. Of course, we were convinced that we had seen the concealment of buried treasure. We came down from the tree and went off for just enough time to get some digging implements before going to the spot where we had seen the man. A few minutes of frantic digging and we could see the sack! A few more minutes and we had access to the neck of the sack and could start to open it. Alan reached inside and came out with a handful of feathers. Reaching further, he pulled out a dead pigeon. This coincided perfectly with a roar from the man we had seen earlier: "Leave them xxxx birds alone!" We scarpered. Later we found out that the man bred racing pigeons and those who didn't merit their corn, well, he wrung their necks, put them in a sack and buried them.

Health: All we kids had chicken-pox, measles and mumps – there were no relevant vaccines. We had regular dental fillings and extractions as a result of too much sugar, too little brushing and no fluoridation of the water supply. I had some orthodontic work to relieve overcrowding in my mouth, but in the

fashion of the time this ceased when the main structural problems had been overcome and achieving perfect symmetry was not a priority.

Mum and Dad had all their teeth removed and dentures fitted, well before they were 50. They smoked until the early 1960s and I remember starting to do so aged 16. (I did not stop until I was about 30). After a year or so of primary school it was noticed that I was squinting at the blackboard and sent for an eye test which showed that I was short sighted, like Dad and I have worn glasses ever since (so at the time of writing over 60 years).

In 1962 I was 18 and went to University. I had a range of places to choose from and, if I had wished to stay a further term in the VIth form could have applied to Oxford and Cambridge. I decided instead to stay living at home and go to the local University, Liverpool. This was not an unusual decision - I estimate that at least 30% of the students in my freshman Chemistry class (about 80 of us) were living at home and a check on the photo of the 20 of us in the Organics section of the Honours year (1965) shows that at least 8 of us (40%) lived at home. Mum and Dad only asked for a small contribution for board and lodging and I had scholarships bringing me the princely sum of £270pa which in those days was not means tested. On this I could manage well.

By that time Lisleholme Close was getting a bit claustrophobic and I for one was suggesting that we could do with more space. This took a while but in 1964 we moved the short distance to 23 Whinmoor Rd, also Liverpool 12. I believe that this house cost Dad £4000 and he sold Lisleholme Close for £1700. Almost immediately after we moved to Whinmoor, Steve went off for a few months to study French in Caen. When he returned, he could remember only that he lived "somewhere in the middle of Whinmoor Road". He had to knock on a few doors before finding us.

From around that time, Mum and dad seemed to have a bit more cash and to be a bit more relaxed. If not then, soon after, they started taking motoring holidays abroad and seemed to go out more often to meet friends or go to the theatre.

Appendix 1 Part of the Family Tree

Margaret ? = Robert Hugill (1793-?) 1857	Harriet ? = John Cooper (1780-1826) 1848
Ann Robinson = William Hugill (1835-?) 1887	Ann Wallis = John Cooper (1822-?) 1882
Elizabeth Wright = John Hugill (1860-?) 1914	Annie Perry = Mark Cooper (1856-1934) 1909
Mary Campbell = John William Pickstone Hugill (?-1949)	Margaret Thomas = Arthur Cooper (1885-1962) (1886-1918) (1888-1955) 1939
Elsie Hugill = Marcus Ashley Cooper (1916-1997)	(1915-1976)

Appendix 2 Wedding photo of Mum and Dad 1939



Appendix 3

Photo of Mum with younger sister Pip and mother Polly.



Appendix 4
Where we went on family summer holidays
(approximate list)

1950 Silverdale
1951 Silverdale
1952 Rhyl
1953 Barmouth
1954 Caravan Heysham
1955 St Annes
1956 St Annes
1957 London at Easter time: summer?
1958 St Columb Minor nr Newquay Cornwall
1959 Old Colwyn
1960 St Florence nr Tenby
1960 St Austell
1961 St Austell

Appendix 5

Notes made by Elsie Cooper (1915-1997) circa 1990 at the request of her son Stephen

1915 5th November I was born, at 5 Miller Street, Winton, Patricroft, on the South side of Manchester, 5-6 miles from the City. My parents rented it for 11/- a week.¹ The Bridgewater canal was near to our house.

The house had hot water (which was unusual). 2 bedrooms and a bathroom. Gas only. No electric. Coal fire. Kitchen range oven. Loo outside. Terraced house with a front garden and a back.

We had a corner house next to St Joseph's convent. This was a Catholic convent which seemed rather foreign – statues etc. I once went to a neighbour's house to look from the top windows into the convent garden. On the canal was Patricroft bridge nearby, Worsley was in one direction. The barges were drawn by horses.

We used to go on holidays to New Brighton.

1918 my earliest memory. I was playing in the garden and my father came home and my mother asked him why he was home. He said 'the War's over.' Everyone seemed very pleased. I remember often hearing about 'the Great War.'

1920 I went to school at St Michael's Church of England school. We had a wireless crystal set. Children's hour 'Auntie Muriel' (Muriel Levy).

1923 30th September my sister Pip was born at 5 Miller Street. I went for a walk with my father leaving the midwife with mother. When I got back a baby sister was there. My mother said she wanted to call her DORIS. I said I liked Marjorie.

[Harry born Dec 19th]

¹ /- was the symbol for shillings. Before decimalisation in the early 1970s, we used 'old money' – pounds, shillings and pence, which originally dates from the time of Charlemagne. As we all learned in school, there were 12 pennies in a shilling and 20 shillings in a pound; and woe betide any child who couldn't add up and subtract (without benefit of calculator, of course) [ed.]

1925 I went to Godfrey Irmen Secondary School in Barton upon Irwell near the Asquiduct [sic] Swing Bridge. Towpath, Bridgewater Canal. I used to take the short route to school. Horse drawn barges.

I began piano lessons (Miss Ferguson). We bought a piano. Uncle Bill (Mum's youngest brother) left for USA, New York, Brooklyn, to stay with Gt Uncle Robert Stevenson.

1929 Removed to Liverpool. House 96 Briardale Road, Liverpool 18. Electric light. Bathroom, loo combined. Also loo outside in yard. 'Coal-fired'. Mangle.

I went to school for a short time at Mossley Hill School.
I left school at 14.

1932 First wireless. Visit of Gt Uncle Robert from USA. Trams to Pier Head 2 1/2d later replaced by Green Goddess and eventually Bus.

1934 Met Mark Oct 13th at a Dance Holy Trinity Hall, Wavertree. Mark born Aug 1915 Liverpool, Albert Edward Road, Kensington. Father killed 1st World War.² Family moved to 3 Hillingdon Rd. approx. 1930.

1939 Married Aug. 19th. 1st house Morval Crescent Walton. Electric light, coal fire, modern washing machine, Ewbank had hand agitated effort. Ewbank carpet sweeper.

1941 Move to Urmston Manchester. Mark to Fords on war work. Lab research on aero engines etc and flat there to start with. First house Canterbury Rd Davyhulme. Mark Joined Home Guard. Ack-ack sight [sic], I was A.R.P. Warden.

1944 Ashley born Urmston Cottage Hospital April 24th Pip joined WRVS 1942. Harry Navy 1941. Overseas Egypt until demob 1945.

1945 May 9th War Over.
May 12th Pip and Harry married.

1947 Holiday Rhyl

1948 Stephen born Canterbury Rd. Jan 7th

² Bear in mind, these notes were written c 1990 when it was conventional to refer to the First and Second World Wars. At the time, in 1934, they would have called it the Great War. ed.

1949	June. Removed back to Liverpool, 1, Lisleholme Close. Ashley started school W.D.C.E. July. My mother died August 8 th .
1950	Amanda born Lisleholme Close May 15 th . Holiday September, Silverdale.
1951	Television. Silverdale hols
1952	Geraldine born May 9 th .
1953	Jan 7 th Stephen started school W.D.C.E. Hol, Barmouth with Pip and Harry.
1955	Amanda started school WDCE Sept. Ashley to Holt High 11+. My father died Oct. Hols. Morecambe, Heysham.
1957	Friday Magazine started by Stephen and Amanda.
1958	Stephen to Holt High School 10+
1961	Amanda to Holly Lodge 11+
1962	Ashley to Liverpool University reading Chemistry.
1964	Moved to Whinmoor Road. 25 th Wedding Anniversary (silver). Aug.19 th trip to Sorrento.
1965	Ashley and Angela graduated, Hols Venice.
1966	Angela and Ashley married, Stephen to Oxford reading History Balliol.
1968	Amanda to Oxford reading Physics. St Anne's. Ashley and Angela to USA.
1969	Stephen and Gaye graduated.
1970	Stephen and Gaye married Oct. 17 th Ashley and Angela home from USA
1979	Amanda and Subir married May 2 nd 1979 Japan.

My paternal grandparents

John Hugill and Elizabeth Wright, married 30/7/1887 at the Register Office, Penrith, Cumberland. They had

- 1 My father John William Hugill b 1888
- 2 Uncle Bob, a butcher
- 3 Uncle Fred, a driver
- 4 Uncle Tant (Anthony)
- 5 Uncle Ted
- 6 Ada – was burned to death as a child – her nightdress caught fire
- 7 Aunt Elsie

They moved from the Lake District to Whitefield (*she referred to it more narrowly as Besses o' the Barn*"), near Manchester, when my father was 19.

They were very happy.

My grandfather was a farm labourer. After he moved to Lancashire, he was a carter, working with horses.

My grandmother had a stroke.

My grandfather lived till he was over 80, died in about 1941. He was a real countryman. He loved gardening. In about , after he retired he got the chance to become the caretaker of a clinic in Whitefield called 'The Uplands'. He took this job and he and grandmother moved there.

After my grandmother died he moved to live with my Aunt Elsie, who had then married (Uncle Tom) and was living at Radcliffe.

My maternal grandparents

William Pickstone and Elizabeth Campbell Stephenson married,

He was of Irish descent, she of Scottish.

They had

1 Uncle Bert

2 Uncle Robert

3 Uncle Billy

4 My mother, Mary Campbell Pickstone b.....

And 3 others who died of diphtheria. They lived in Besses of the Barn near Whitefield, Manchester. They were not happy, because my grandfather was an alcoholic.

My uncle Robert – my grandmother's brother – went to the USA. He begged my g'mother to go with him; but she married my grandfather, and stuck by him, despite his drinking. My grandmother was told she was hard to everyone, except my g'father. People told her to leave him.

My grandfather worked in the mills.

When I was growing up my mother had no time for my grandfather. She always said it was the happiest day of her life when she got married and got her own home.

I used to visit my grandparents very little. On one occasion, I did go to visit. I was sitting on the settee and my grandfather came in. He sat next to me. My mother immediately called me over to her.

She [g'mother] died in 1926 of cancer. She had a colostomy. He died in about 1928, I think of delirium tremens.

My father

John William Hugill b 1888 born Westmoreland. Came to Lancashire when he was 19. Moved to Whitefield near Bury. He found a job driving horses for the Chandler in Whitefield. The Chandler got a van. My father taught himself to drive the van. (My father had a reserved occupation and didn't go to the War.) Married 30 October 1914.

My father got a job in a garage at Weaste near Salford as a (self-taught) garage mechanic for B.P. When he married they got a house in Florence Street Patricroft. Moved 1915 to Miller Street.

Got own garage c 1927 in Clifton. They did repairs and he hired a van out (one petrol pump?). He had a partner called George Maiden. He went to work by tram.

My father was very well liked. He was known as 'Jack'. When I met a parent's friend one time, I was told that if I was Jack Hugill's daughter I was 'all right.'

My mother wasn't happy with my father being self-employed. She liked to know how much she had coming in.

1929 crash finished the garage.

My father applied for a job as a driver at Marston's Road Service (later Edward Box) in Lightbody Street Liverpool. He got it.

He became a long distance lorry driver. The firm put a phone in the house. My mother would not answer it. I used to answer it. It was a black upright model. You went through the operator.

One day I was at school my teacher Miss France said she wanted to get in touch with her sister.

'Can anyone use the telephone?'

'I can.'

'How is it you can use it.'

'We have a phone at home.'

She sent me home to phone. I walked home with a friend, Olive. We walked home. My mother was very surprised. I phoned. Went through operator. I gave my father (who arrived home) the 2d³ for the call. He refused it. We took it back. She gave us the 2d and I split it 50/50 with Olive.

My father travelled to Liverpool to work – by train. He transported ship's propellers, railway engines and the like.

My father decided to move. He found 96 Briardale Road. £1 per week rent. This was a terraced house. It had a bathroom inside; inside toilet; electric light; coal fire.

My father took me to the docks to see the trains being loaded onto ships, to go to India.

Dad drove the 100 tonner. Gt North Road many times caught in snow drift. He used to get stuck on Shap Fell in the snow. Picture at Briardale must [?] this. Drove a 100 ton lorry from c 1929/1930. There was a cab at the back with a phone through

³ Two old pence.

to the front. He would go away 3 weeks at a time. He didn't write or phone. Once he was going through Manchester, they were escorted by the Police. They pulled in at Manchester, his father's house. There was a crew of 4.

We all went down to see the 100 ton lorry.⁴ I talked to him on the phone in the cab. At weekends I would go down to the yard to look at the lorries.

⁴ There is extensive material on the internet about this 100 ton lorry – they were very rare beasts: ed. Steve

Appendix 6 : Anecdotes and Reminiscences

1. Some other teachers at the Holt

There were four streams A-D in my year. Miss (but all three female teachers were addressed as Sir anyway) Maggie Lawson was my “form-master” for 1A, Maggie Evans led 1B and Fannie Harkness 1C. We were told that Maggie Lawson (Geography) had been around long enough that she had taught Maggie Evans (English). One memory is of Maggie Lawson drumming into us the direction of wind-belts “The trades are the winds of the tropics, 40-60 the westerlies.”

Mr Charnock taught biology. He suffered badly from indigestion and his lessons were punctuated by burps, so much so that an occasional book was run on how many he could produce during a lesson. He also would comment on a wrong answer with the comment “How many jamjars did you have to collect to come here, boy?” (Collecting jamjars for recycle was a favourite way for the scouts and others to raise funds; I remember that Duerr’s marmalade jars with their distinctive polygonal design did not count).

One master (name Poppleton, Popplewell?) was extremely badly affected by loud noises, perhaps as a result of a war experience. If your desk lid should fall shut with a bang, he was likely to deliver you a thumping.

The woodwork masters were Messrs Burgoyne and Kissack (the latter nicknamed “Ruby” for no reason that I ever heard). Both Steve and I can remember their grim expressions when examining our latest offerings and their comments which usually unkindly compared the piece to firewood.

2. Cousins Rosemary and Nicholas Davidson

Rosemary was several months older than me and Nick several months younger. Rosemary married someone called James whom I never met-he committed suicide when probably still in his 30s.

Nick was a free spirit. When not yet of school age he set their house on fire. A toy had rolled under a couch and to enable him to see it he pushed a lighted taper under the couch, with inevitable results. At about age 18 he bought a new leather jacket which turned out to be on the large side so he sliced it

down the back and presented it to his mother to re-sew. She totally lacked the skills to do so, and so did all family members that I heard of. Later, he bought a car. The family home (49 Parthenon Drive) was on quite a busy road and had no parking space. Nick solved this by driving up over the verge (which was council property anyway), taking down the garden fence and parking his car on what had hitherto been the small front lawn and flowerbeds of the property.

3. Other neighbours

At the side our house abutted the King's and the Gardener's houses which were in Lisleholme Road. (Alan Gardener has featured in my description of "Benkies"). Across the neck of the Close from the King's was the Stone's with son Norman (a few years older than me) and daughter Joan who on occasion baby-sat for us. Next to the Stone family lived the Heitmanns, the father having been a German POW. Their son Kenny who was slightly younger than me suffered a scar on his chest when he ran into and upset a pot of molten lead being used by a repair-man. Also in Lisleholme Road lived the Jeffs family whose son Graham is a friend and cycling buddy of my brother Steve to this day, and I also remember the Nicholson family (daughters Anne and Fiona).

In Lisleholme Crescent lived a friend of mine Graham Balfour who went to Liverpool Collegiate School and died in young adulthood and near to him the Horton family whose son Derek attended the same school as me, the Holt, and was head boy there around 1959.

Appendix 7

Notes by Elsie Cooper(1915-1997) made at the request of her son Ashley and transcribed by him January 2012.

Additions to clarify shown in italics.

Notes of 19/4/1982 The War and early 1950s

We were married in August 19th 1939, two weeks before war was declared. I remember sitting in our house in Morval Crescent, Walton *Liverpool* – our first house – hearing Neville Chamberlain’s voice on the Sunday morning “a state of war exists between ourselves and Germany. If we travelled we had to take gas masks. These had been issued about a year before. I can remember going with my mother and Pip (Dad was away driving) to the local school about a year before I was married to get the masks. Mother proved difficult and we had to jolly her into going. So we half knew the war was coming but it didn’t sink in that it was real.

On the 3rd *_September* we were going to see Mark’s mum at Hillingdon Road *Liverpool* so we took our gas masks on the tram. Ann (Mark’s sister) giggled when she saw the masks.

The phony war came in. Mark moved jobs to Tharratt’s (*pharmacy*) he was war exempt till he was 25. In late 1940, or early 1941, he was no longer exempt. On a visit to friends (Olive and Jim) in Manchester we met Olive’s dad who told us that there were jobs for chemists in the Trafford Park Industrial estate. Dad applied and with other friends was taken on. Dad was put up by Olive’s parents until we could get a flat – near Urmston Station. For a time he was in Manchester and I was in Liverpool. I went to the Inland Revenue in India Buildings – it was bombed in the blitz, 1941 I think. When I went to Manchester I worked for Turner’s Asbestos Cement in Trafford Park. I can remember a short while later an Inland Revenue job came up in Manchester and I was “directed” there. Turner’s objected and I had to go before a panel. Turner’s won. The pay was fixed. I stayed there until I was pregnant with Ashley.

Mark and I joined the Air Raid Precautions (ARP) in Liverpool as volunteers. Our job was to go on duty, in uniform, and that when the air raid siren sounded, to report to a command centre then patrol – “put that light out” etc. During bombing we reported bombs and generally helped. In the May blitz on Liverpool in 1941 I think, we’d been out during a raid and saw a man lying in the gutter, dazed by something. A lit house was nearby. Nobody was in. Round the back was a huge

submarine shaped mine – not gone off – we walked up to it not recognising it until Mark said “don’t touch it it’s a mine”. It was that which had shocked the man. We reported (?clear) the area for several streets. People had to go into church halls. Everybody had a case packed as a matter of course. People didn’t want to move – they were very grumpy as the all clear had gone and they had gone back from shelters into bed to get some sleep. Of course our own house was in the area.

The next day the bomb was declared harmless, so we were only out of the house part of one night and all the next. A collection was taken for the bomb disposal lads. Most people gave 6d or 1s but one or two saw their night of discomfort as caused by the ARP or bomb disposal.

Before we moved to Manchester we moved from Morval (*Crescent*) to “The Cairn” Woolton Road which was near Mark’s mother, which we rented.

We became fire watchers. After a few months we went to Manchester. The bombing there wasn’t bad.

In 1941/2 I think, rationing came off meat, butter and many other products. We had margarine but it tasted horrible compared to the modern stuff. This (?rationing) lasted for some items to 1950 odd.

The conversation here jumps to the early 1950s;

Mandy was born in May 1950. We got a TV it was a 9 inch in a big cabinet soon after. In Sept 1950 we took a family holiday –the first- to Silverdale travelling by train with Mandy’s pram in the giard’s van. We went to Mrs Sharrocks which was a farm or at least a smallholding. We went there once or twice. One year Pip and Harry came with us. This was before Geraldine was born. The year after Geraldine was born we went by car to Barmouth Wales – the five of us plus Pip Harry and Geraldine. This was 1953. I can remember Geraldine kicking up a right fuss all the time.

(Note by Ashley: Dad drove and Harry sat in the front passenger seat with me on his knee. Mum and Pip and the three smaller children shared the back seat. I too remember that Geraldine (?teething) “kicked up a right fuss”.

Notes of 29/8/82 The Coopers and the Hugills

The Coopers

Arthur Cooper came from Manchester (Crumpsall or Heaton park area). He was the second son with older brother Mark and younger George. About 1909 he married Margaret Thomas of Knutsford (born 1885). Her father was manager of the gasworks –they lived in Gas Lane. After marriage they lived in Manchester - I can’t remember where.

Their first child was Amy Margaret (Peg) born in 1910 and the second Annie (Ann) born 1912. The youngest was Marcus Ashley (Mark) born 1915 –who married me. By the time mark was born the family moved to Liverpool. Arthur was killed in the war about 1917. The family lived in Albert Edward Road until about 1929 then moved to 3 Hillingdon road Wavertree. Arthur had worked for the Post Office, they paid for his children to go to school – the Oulton.

I first met Mark when we were both 19. Nana Cooper died in 1962 (February).

The Hugills

My father was John William Hugill (Jack) born in Westmoreland, near Grasmere in 1888. He was the oldest son there were 5 sons and one daughter (Elsie-she died late 1981 or 1982, Easter 1982 I think, aged 76). The family moved to Whitefield near Manchester in 1904. Jack became a motor mechanic and went to drive with Shell Mex at Eccles.

He married my mother, Mary Campbell Pickstone in October 1914 and lived in Eccles (*actually Miller Street, Winton, Patricroft*). I was born November 5th 1915. My sister Marjorie (“Pip”) was born in 1923. We moved to Liverpool in 1929 when Dad went to work for Marston’s Road Service, later to be Edward Box. What it is called now I don’t know. He retired at 65 in 1953 and died in 1955. My mother died in 1949 not long after Mark and I returned to Liverpool. The home we moved to in 1929 was 96 Briardale road –Pip still lives there –as she has done all her life (*ie has not moved since she was 6*) – a coincidence as Ann has lived in Hillingdon Road since 1929 also.

As I said it was in 1934 that I met Mark Cooper. I was working as a clerk in Littlewoods Mail Order. Mark was an apprentice pharmacist with George Tharratt in Myrtle Street Liverpool. He qualified in 1936 or 1937, taking his exam in Edinburgh and we got engaged at the same time. We married August 19th 1939, just before the war broke out. We lived at 57, Morval crescent Walton Liverpool and dad was manager for LC Turnpenny in County Road Walton. I gave up work when I married –that was the custom. In 1940 Dad went back to Tharratts as a manager with a view to partnership. By 1941 though it was necessary for him to do work in Trafford park Manchester with Fords on Merlin engines (he was not eligible for the army-poor eyes). Meanwhile I had returned to work with the Inland revenue and I transferred with him to Manchester. We had a flat in Station road Urmston and later (1943) moved to 181 Canterbury Road Davyhulme. Ashley was born 1944.

When the war was over, dad did locums then went with Evans medical as a rep. Stephen was born in 1948. Shortly after Dad (*ie Mark*) applied for a job as manager with Tom Colton in Stanley Road (*Liverpool*)-Tom’s other shop was Picton Road. We bought a house at N. 1 Lisleholme Close West Derby Liverpool. Mandy was born there in May 1950.

Notes of 19.4/1984

Thomases

Mark's father married Margaret Thomas:

Mum then described the family tree that follows which was taken down by Ashley. Mum stressed that some of the dates were approximate.

Margaret Thomas's mother was a Massey. Margaret had a cousin named Fred Massey whose wife was an Elsie. They lived in Lovely Lane Warrington. They had one son who worked at Dounreay nuclear power station. He was killed in a climbing accident around 1960 – he wasn't married. Fred died in the early 1970s. There were also Fred and Mabel Thomas – no children – who were probably cousins of Margaret Thomas. They lived opposite Knutsford Heath with her mother. *(Note by Ashley-I can remember visiting them in the early 1950s.)* I can remember a holiday in 1940 at Fred and Mabel's. Fred worked in Manchester in a wool firm – Paton Baldwins I think, as a clerk. We went by train. I can remember a day out by train to Alderley Edge. We didn't have a car then.

Children of the Thomases

1. Younger brother, name not remembered, committed suicide before WWII. Wife Maud, daughter Marjorie.
2. Margaret b 1885 d 1962 ("Nana") married Arthur Cooper, children Peg, Ann and Mark (Dad)
3. Amy b 1894 d 1976 married Bert Clack (d about 1961). Children Esmee (b 1919), Stanley (b 1931), Sylvia (b 1925) and Audrey (b 1923) died of cancer about 1960. Esmee married Malcolm Burns in 1941. They had a son Ian (b 1943) who died in 1961 and a daughter Sylvia (b 1945). Malcolm died in 1983.
4. Norman who married Lily.

Bert Clack was a police sergeant. He died of cancer a year or two after his daughter Audrey died, also of cancer. There was a family row, starting in 1941 at Esmee's wedding between the respective children of Arthur and Margaret, and Amy and Bert. This healed around 1958. *(Note added by Ashley: Thereafter Mark and Elsie often met Malcolm and Esmee. In fact the four of them were out at the theatre on the Saturday night in 1976 before Mark (Dad) died on the Sunday morning).*

Amy died the same day as Dad in 1976.

Malcolm Burns was in the wood trade with Keiser Venesta. He was a director when he retired. His and Esmee's son Ian died in 1961 at 18. His kidneys failed.

Transplanting was in its infancy-also Malcolm the most obvious donor only had one kidney himself. The death was a great shock particularly to Esmee. Sylvia their daughter married a vicar named Davis.

Esmee's sister Sylvia married Gordon Cook who was a sailor, a Lt Commander. He took an overdose of sleeping pills around 1970. He and Sylvia had twins Michelle and Maureen. I can't remember how old they are. After Gordon died, Sylvia bought a draper's.

Stanley Clack – I last saw him around 1974 when Amy had her 80th birthday. He was in the RAF. He married Vera during the war and they lived in the South-and still do. Vera died in 1983 a fortnight before Malcolm Burns. Stanley remarried march 1984-I don't know who.

Norman Thomas married a girl called Lily. They lived in Kensington (*Liverpool*)-Albert Edward road or nearby. Lily died many years ago – I'm not sure what their children did-there were 2 boys and 1 girl. Norman worked in Birkenhead – Harland Wolff I think. Recently I heard that Norman was ill in hospital –he's probably in his 80s.

Notes of 28/9/85

Pickstones

Elizabeth (*Campbell*) Stephenson married William ("Billy") Pickstone. They had 5 or 6 children:

Mary, my mother (b1889) was the oldest of a family of 5 or 6.

Bert(ram)

Robert

Ada –died in childhood

William (b 1905).

(*In the record which Mum provided to my brother Steve at a later date, she mentions the above children plus "three others who died of diphtheria". See comments below about Mary and Ada having had this disease*).

Mother married my father in 1914 at Stand Church Whitefield.

Elizabeth Wright (*note by Ashley: this is what I have down in the notes though I am sure it should read Stephenson; Elizabeth Wright was her other, paternal grandmother whom we*

shall come to) called Lizzie, died in about 1928 (*or 1926?*) of cancer after a colostomy. Billy was a drunkard-this made most of the family teetotal. He died fairly soon after (*her*). Lizzie wanted to ensure in her last illness that young William escaped the influence of his father and sent him to an uncle in America at about that time.

Lizzie had (at least) one brother Robert and two sisters Mary and Agnes. Agnes lived in Bury. Robert was the one who went to the States. I can remember him visiting Briardale road in about 1932. He lived in Brooklyn.

Bert married Lottie-no children, lived Radcliffe

Robert married Alice and had two daughters –lived Prestwich Clough.

I can remember my mother told me that she had had diphtheria –possibly Ada died of this.

Hugills

Elizabeth Wright married John Hugill. They had about 7 children:

John William (Jack) was born in 1888 and was my father.

Bob was born next. He was married twice, first to Lily who died in 1922 after having had a son Stanley (b 1918) and secondly to Ada Whitworth with whom he had no children.

Fred married Mabel Whitehead and had five children, the only two I can remember-Tom, my age and Ada.

Anthony Wright (Tant) married Annie and had one son Tony and one daughter , born about 1920.

Ada (*there is a question mark opposite this name-it would need checking. In the account given to Steve, she is the one whose nightdress caught fire*) died young.

Ted married Sally Brodie. He worked at the Westinghouse in Manchester. For a long time they had no children then Derek. He often visited my aunt Elsie in her caravan at Morecambe (Heysham). Then they had twins –Dorothy who died young and Clifford.

Elsie was born in 1905. She married Tom Olive (b 1893) and died 1981/2. No children.

The Hugills came down from the Lake District in about 1904 (*in the account given to Steve, 1907*)-because work would be easier.

John Hugill married Elizabeth Wright and his brother Wiiliam married Kate Wright. Kate lived in the Lake District. Her visits to Manchester ("filthy place") caused consternation!