

## GROWING UP IN SCARBOROUGH IN THE NINETEEN THIRTIES

My name is Margaret Glenesk Smolensky, formerly Morris, nee Beal. I was born in London, in 1925, but when I was a year old my parents moved to my father's home town of Scarborough. I am their only child. The recollections about which I am going to tell you are of the years between 1930, when I was five, up until 1940, when during the second world war, I was evacuated to Canada at the age of fourteen. I returned home in 1944, did my nursing training at the Scarborough Hospital, and midwifery in London. I returned to Canada, where I still live, in 1950. I am writing from Toronto, Ontario, in 2007.

My father's name was James Cooper Beal, and he had grown up in Scarborough, leaving in 1917 to join up in World War 1 (he lied about his age) and my mother Jane McCallum Glenesk, always known as Jean, who was a Scot brought up in Glasgow. My father went to work in London after the war, but, in 1926 he returned to Scarborough. He had a business of men's clothing at the corner of Aberdeen Walk and Westborough. It was a limited company in which the silent partner was a well known and wealthy Scarboroughian, Walter Harland. The building which housed it (and other shops and offices,) belonged to the Harland family and was pulled down some time in the late nineteen hundreds to make way for the building which stands there today. As the years passed, Daddy's business prospered and was enlarged bit by bit until it was recognized as one of the finest men's and boys' clothing shops in the north of England. I remember though that when I was very little girl in the early thirties, the shop was much smaller and only on one floor. Daddy's office was at the rear, and on his desk was a telephone, the old fashioned kind with a ear piece which you removed and held up to your ear. I thought it very special. There was a space next to his office too, it must have been for storage, and it had in it a small winding staircase made of iron. I used to like climbing up and down it. As I said, sometime in the thirties, the shop was much enlarged to encompass three floors. It had a red neon sign over the corner entrance which read 'The Man's Shop'. A very modern innovation. Neon signs were rarely seen in Scarborough in those days. The main floor had accessories such as shirts, ties and gloves. The top floor was boys, and the basement had coats, suits and tailoring. Shortly after the outbreak of war, my mother also went to work in the shop, for all the young assistants, seven or eight of them, joined up during the first few months of hostilities.

Daddy's office was now at the back of the top floor, and I remember that when I looked out of its window I could see Bar Church on the opposite corner. I remember too that next to the Library in Vernon Road there was another big church, both now long gone. Somewhere a little further down was the Art School, and I saw drawings done by the students in a window there which faced the street. The library had a big face lift in the thirties and a children's library was added. We loved it and visited it often. We considered it very up to date, which undoubtedly it was. I read all the Anne of Green Gables books by L. M Montgomery, the Biggles books, and the Just William ones. All those by Louisa May Alcott about the March family, the various colours of Fairy Books and the whole Swallows and Amazon series by Arthur Ransome. To go to the library my best friend Margaret Dean (now Mrs. George Rusby of Scarborough) and I used to push

our bikes up Westwood to the town. (this was when we went to the old Girls' High School in the valley, of which more later). I also got, every week, a magazine called 'The Schoolgirl'. It cost twopence, and I used to devour eagerly the doings of the girls of Cliff House. The ones whose exploits were most closely followed were in the fourth form. The form captain was Barbara Redfern, fourteen years old. Her best friend and vice captain was Mabel Lynn. Others were Jemima Carstairs and Bessie Bunter, The headmistress was Miss Penelope (for years I thought it rhymed with antelope) Primrose. Miss Bullivant taught math, and was cordially disliked. Barbara and her form mates got up to the most amazing adventures. My mother used to remark darkly that all they seemed to do was get half holidays! I used to think how marvellous it would be to go to a school like that. My copy was passed on to Margaret Dean, as was the annual which my grandparents sent me each Christmas. It cost two shillings and sixpence. There was also a magazine Mum took. It was called 'Picture Post' and was mainly of excellent photographs of newsworthy items.

What else can I remember from the down town area? Well, there was a restaurant immediately across Westborough from Bar Church. Called Rowntrees as I recall. Its decor was dark oak, and when, on the odd occasion, Mum went in there for a coffee, the sugar was coloured crystals, and Mum used to put a teaspoonful in a paper napkin, and fold it over for me to take home. I thought it was marvellous.

Most of the shops in the town then were, I think, owner operated, There were few of the chain stores so ubiquitous today. Things stick out in my mind. It was Hopper and Mason (in Westborough, but long gone) that had, to a child's eyes, a wonderful way of paying. The shop assistant put the money into a wooden holder, roughly the size and shape of a tin of beans, and attached it to a wire. The assistant then gave a pull, and away went the holder along the wire to some mysterious place where change was put in the holder, and back it came along the wire to where we waited. Amazing!!! At the corner of Westborough and Vernon Road there was a lovely grocery store, another Rowntree's. In the window right on the corner was a large metal cylinder full of coffee beans, which rotated and gave off the most glorious smell.

Right across from the station was the Pavilion Hotel, run by one of the Laughton brothers, Frank I believe. Tom ran the Royal Hotel across from the Town Hall, while the third brother was the actor and film star Charles. The Pavilion was an elegant building and had tennis courts next to it. Rowntrees the department store equally elegant, was further down Westborough, both buildings alas long gone. The restaurant in Rowntrees was called The Orange Room, a popular place for morning coffee and afternoon tea as was the other well known department store Marshall and Snelgrove on St. Nicholas Street. Oh SO posh. The shop assistants were even posher, or thought they were anyway.

Early in the time period of which I write, the present Northway was built. Before the alterations, over to the left was a building belonging to the Salvation Army. I used to see it from the bus I remember. I don't know whether or not the building disappeared, but the big sign certainly did. At more or less the same time the Odeon cinema (now Theatre in the Round) was built. Being Art Deco it was very 'with it' and we thought it wonderful.

Too, there was a subway built under the road from the top of Westborough over to the station, and a roundabout built right in the middle of the junction of the Valley Bridge Road, Northway, Falsgrave and Westborough. In its centre was a needle up which ran a ribbon of blue neon, still to be seen I think, but moved from its original position. It seemed to me at the time the height of sophistication! The seats at the Odeon cinema were two shillings and sixpence at the front of the circle, two and three at the back, and I think one and nine downstairs. That's in the old money of course. You got your money's worth in those days. What was known as 'the big picture' of course, but as well, a cartoon, a travelogue, a trailer, a newsreel, and often a shorter feature, added to which, if you wanted to sit round again you could, for as long as you wanted, thus you could watch the movies over and over again. Smoking was allowed, and ash trays were provided on the back of the seats. Now that I think about smoking, it was all over the place. EVERYBODY smoked, on the street, in the shops, in the restaurants, in the movies and theatres, on the buses, on the trains, absolutely everywhere So in the cinema we watched the picture through a haze of smoke!! And not only did we have the Odeon to go to. There was the Lonsborough in Westborough, the Aberdeen on Aberdeen Walk, the Futurist on the Foreshore and the Capital on Albemarle Crescent. I remember so well seeing all the movies with Jeanette Macdonald and Nelson Eddy, Mickey Rooney and Judy Garland, Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers, the Marx Brothers, Shirley Temple, Deanna Durbin, Sonja Henie and on Saturday morning, we went to the Mickey Mouse Club at the Odeon. It cost fourpence and there was always a good bill, mostly cowboy films and cartoons as I recall. The programme started with a song sung by Gracie Fields. I can still remember the words and the tune. 'When you cross the road by day or night, Remember the dangers that lurk in sight. Look the left and look to the right, And you'll never never get run over'. We all used to join in. Also for entertainment was The Opera House on Queen Street. (Also no longer there). I went there with my parents to see what I suppose one would call variety shows. In the summer, there was The Floral Hall where for many seasons the Folderols appeared. (I believe there is a bowling alley on the site now) and the Spa theatre with similar variety programmes, and of course there was the Open Air Theatre.

The Open Air Theatre really was quite remarkable during the thirties, Members of the Scarborough Operatic and Dramatic Society, an amateur organization, provided the chorus and the small supporting roles, while the principals were professionals, hired for the summer. The productions were on Monday and Thursday, Tuesday and Friday if they were rained off. The Open Air Theatre had its first performance in 1932. The production was 'Merrie England' by Edward German. My mother had the small part of Kate, and on opening night, I went with my father. Everyone in the cast got two free tickets for opening night. People took rugs and cushions (although you could hire the latter for the evening). Thermos flasks of coffee too, with a bit of warmth from a hip flask added! Coffee was also for sale at a stall which also sold delicious chocolate biscuits. They cost fourpence.

Many years were to pass before the fun fair was built at the top above the seats and the excitement and anticipation of the crowds of people on a summer's night was

palpable. Remember, this was long before television arrived, or even coloured motion pictures, so this outdoor theatrical spectacle under the stars was really something.

First the walk from the entrance to the seats which stretched up to the top of the bank facing the stage, and then there was the stage, an island in the middle of a lake. Finally the climb up the steps to the seats, and the utter hush with which the audience watched and listened. Not only did action take place upon the stage, but sometimes on the hill to the back of the stage, (there were no trees there then) or on a grassy flat place over to the right, and they used the water too in some of the productions. For example, in 'Merrie England', Queen Elizabeth was rowed to the stage in a beautiful barge and in subsequent productions the famous illuminated glass raft appeared. The orchestra sat in a shallow tank which floated on the water immediately in front of the stage. When one thinks of the brilliant sound systems which are used in theatres now, it is amazing that the nineteen thirties sound system provided by (I think) the firm of Good's Electrical was so well done. I remember seeing 'Faust', 'Hiawatha', 'Carmen', 'Tannhauser' and other productions there. They came to a halt with the onset of the war but were resumed for some years after until interest waned. During that time, my Canadian daughter, visiting my parents at the age of six saw 'The Desert Song' there and has never forgotten the magic of that outdoor production. Last time I saw the site it was overgrown and neglected and it saddened me to see it

The Operatic and Dramatic Society plays a well remembered part of my growing up in Scarborough in the thirties, because my mother was, for many years an active and respected member of the Operatic society. She was a gifted amateur singer and actress, and when she rehearsed at home, playing the piano and singing, I learned all the songs, and much of the dialogue. Each winter, the society, with no professionals added, mounted a production for a week at the Opera House. They put on Gilbert and Sullivan as well as musical comedies like 'The Vagabond King', 'Rose Marie' and 'Goodnight Vienna'. Again everyone in the cast got two free tickets for opening night, and I well remember how exciting it was going to the Opera House with my father to see Mum on the stage.

Back to the town. None of the streets was one way then, the walking only streets and the Precinct were well into the future and the buses rumbled up and down Westborough, Newborough and Eastborough as did the cars, bikes and motor bikes, for there was much less traffic to be seen then and no parking problems. In fact, my father used to park his car on Aberdeen Walk beside Bar Church. We lived at the top of Prospect Crescent before the council houses were built and had one of the few cars to be seen in the area. We had a telephone too. Big deal. Only one other girl in my class at Gladstone Road in the thirties had a phone, and that was undoubtedly only because both our fathers were in business. When you went along the streets where now there are lines of cars parked one behind the other, in those days there were none. People walked, cycled or took the bus.

There was a well known pork butcher's shop called Johnsons in Aberdeen Walk more or less across the street from the post office. From there, at Christmas time, we got the most marvellous 'standing' or 'stand' pies. They were big and round and were cut in

slices like a fruit cake. Made of ground pork with a marvellous short crust. I adored them. I remember Eccles cakes from Fields bakery shops and curd cheesecakes from Urwins. And there was a shop at the corner of Westborough and Huntriss Row which sold delicious simnel cakes at Easter. Aero came on the market in the thirties as did Black Magic chocolates. Rinso too. You no longer had to boil your clothes for ages the adverts assured you, all you had to do was merely bring the water to the boil!. I can only just remember when in the corner of our kitchen was a 'copper'. A big tub shaped thing with a gas ring underneath to heat the water. It wasn't there for long though. Originally, Mum had a great big mangle which stood outside. It had huge wooden rollers. It was a big day when a much smaller Acme with small rubber rollers arrived. There was an alcoholic drink much advertised called Green Goddess. It was a vicious green colour. It may have tasted awful, but I always thought it looked pretty exciting.

When November 5th was approaching Mum used to meet me after school from time to time and take me to the Balloon Stores. It was on the opposite side and lower down from Boots the Chemists which was at the corner of St. Thomas Street and Newborough. I'm pretty sure that the Balloon Stores was a hardware shop, but prior to November 5th, it also carried fireworks. I was allowed sixpence to spend each time, and since there were many which only cost a halfpenny, I was able to do a good deal of considering. My mother loved one called Chrysanthemum Fountain, and every year she treated herself to a sixpenny one. It threw up a great shower of golden flowers, was absolutely gorgeous and lasted for ages. Daddy loved rockets, and always used to buy several ostensibly for me, but really for himself! There was a smallish one, which only cost a penny and shot up in swoosh of gold. He always used to keep some of these back to be let off on auspicious occasions during the rest of the year. "Let's put off a rocket" he would say, and out he would go into the garden where he put the rocket in an empty beer bottle and away it would go. Once during the war he told one of his friends to watch from his back garden and then he let one off in the blackout!!

Bonfire Night or Guy Fawkes Night or Firework night, (take your pick) was a really exciting occasion. When my father cleaned up the garden as summer faded, he would put bits of this and that aside as he made up a huge bonfire. Some years we scrounged old trousers, a coat and what have you, stuffed them with newspaper and made a guy to sit on top of the blaze. There were massive bonfires down on the south sands and we used to drive down to see them. I imagine they are still there each year.

We played happily in the streets with no concern about traffic because there wasn't any to speak of. The baker came round with a van, the fishman pushed a huge cart by hand. The butcher's boy came each morning on his bike for an order which was supposed to be delivered so that Mum could cook it in time for midday dinner. The groceries were delivered too. I must have been very little when the milkman came round with a churn and Mum ordered a pint or so which he gave by dipping into the churn with various sizes of measuring jug and pouring it into the jug she held. Bottled milk came soon after. A good thing too. A man came by once a week and collected shoes to be mended. From time to time men came round with huge strings of onions. The window cleaner came once a week. In herring season a cart came round selling the fish seven for

sixpence. My parents took me down to the harbour once to see the women gutting the herring and tossing them into big barrels. Times were tough in the thirties and there were many tramps who came to the door begging. Sometimes they offered to clean out the drain at the back of the house. In fact there were many knocks on the back door in those days for there were many travelling salesmen too trying to scratch out a living. A clear recollection is seeing a tramcar at the corner of Prospect Road and Manor Road. It had an outside staircase to the upstairs level, was open at the top, and must have travelled up Prospect Road. Since I only remember seeing it that one time, I must have been very little. Airplanes, or aeroplanes as we called them then were very rare. If one appeared, we would dash outside to see it. Jets were far into the future!

There were a number of children my age in the area and at first we went either to Gladstone Road School or Central School. I started in the top class of the infants at Gladstone Road with Miss White, and then on to the lowest class, 1A in the junior school with Miss Wray. I had Miss Nalton for 2A and Mr. Harris for 3A and 4A. There was an epidemic of diphtheria when I was seven, and I came down with it, spending several weeks in a sanitarium in Cross Lane. One building was for diphtheria and the other for scarlet fever. Parents were only allowed one visit per week on Sunday afternoon, and they had to talk to us through a window.

The classroom floors in Gladstone Road were stepped up then so that the rows were in tiers. The chairs had little seats and little backs and were bolted to the floor. In the top class the desks went along each row in one piece with a break in the middle. Boys at one side of the room, girls at the other and the teacher at a high desk in front. In the top right hand corner of each place was an inkwell, and one of the most sought after jobs by the boys was that of ink monitor. Each Monday morning, two of them would make ink from water and powder (getting a great amount of it on their hands), and then, having put it in a little can with a spout (much like a watering can without the rosette) they proceeded to fill our inkwells. We wrote with a pen and nib, and I'm afraid, made many blots and smudges, well I did anyway! Milk at school was introduced when I was in class 2A, so that would be when I was eight or nine. The little bottles held a third of a pint. Discipline was reasonably firm, we did as we were told and sometimes the boys who disobeyed got caned. We had fun though. Lots of singing as I recall, PT out in the playground, and all the usual subjects. We put on plays, in fact I remember writing one which we performed in the assembly hall. At about age eleven we wrote the County Minor Scholarship and hoped to win one of the scholarships to either the boys' or girls' high school. I was one of the lucky ones. Those who didn't could write an entrance exam and pay fees. Girls could also try for the Convent, a grammar school on Queen Street run by nuns. Otherwise, children left school at age fourteen. In those days, grammar school went to university entrance. The eleven plus exam, comprehensive schools and sixth form colleges were a long way away into the future. We took O levels and left school having graduated, while those who intended to go to University stayed on for another two years and wrote A levels.

So we played on the street. It seems that the summers were always hot, but that's probably not true. The boys wore short trousers and knee socks until they were more or

less into their early teens and it was quite the thing when they got their first pair of long ones. We girls wore skirts and blouses and jumpers and cardigans and when it was too cold for knee socks we wore long stockings held up with suspenders which hung from a garment known as a liberty bodice. Sensible knickers too, of serviceable fabric with elastic round the waist and at each leg. (We removed our tunics for PT!) On our feet were sturdy lace up shoes, often with a bit of metal on the bottom for hard wear, and in the summer, sandals or, what we called sand shoes. They were canvas, much lighter than today's trainers, and the white ones were cleaned with a paste made from water and some solid sort of cake of white stuff. We played Hide and Seek, Stand All, Rounders, Arrow Chase, Cowboys and Indians and, as the seasons progressed (and only during those seasons funnily enough), whip and top (they cost a halfpenny each), skipping rope, and marbles. We had small pistols into which we inserted a cap. These were tiny little circles which I suppose were made of gunpowder or something similar. Anyway they were embedded in a strip of red paper about a quarter of an inch wide rolled up into a wheel. We pulled them off one by one and inserted them into a gun. When we pulled the trigger we got a most satisfactory bang. Nobody seemed to think that playing with guns would have a bad effect on us! We bounced balls off the sides of buildings (my own home had a really good wall with space to do this) over our legs, under our legs and between our legs. We chalked out a hopscotch quadrangle and hopped. We did handstands too. We had treasure hunts when we wrote out clues to be left in various places outside. The small forest now to be seen above Woodlands Ravine was planted when I was little. Before that it was a field. We called it The Plantation. We were able to get to it through a gap in the hedge at the bottom of our garden, so we played there too. We walked or cycled to Forge Valley every year to pick primroses and bluebells. In the early thirties before the council houses were built, it was all fields above our house at the top of Prospect Crescent where the road ended abruptly right in the fields. I remember fields too above the upper houses on Prospect Park and in Northstead before all the council houses were built. We roamed and ranged over those fields and far afield too. Our mothers never worried about where we were as long as we turned up for meals. A path lead along above where the plantation came to be, roughly following the direction of Woodlands Ravine. When we veered off to the right, we came to a field we knew as Ducky's Field where the boys sometimes played cricket. In the middle was Ducky's Pond. Further to the right were allotments, and we used to go there to look at the pigs. We didn't get our tadpoles in Ducky's Pond though, rather we went to Throxenby Mere each spring armed with jam jars. Our Mums put string round the top and made it into a handle. I was lucky for Daddy got me an old horse trough which he put in the garden. We spent hours hanging over it watching as the tadpoles developed legs, grew up and suddenly disappeared.

Ducky's field ran right down to what is now old Scalby Road, where at that time there were very few houses. We crossed Scalby Road, climbed over a stile and crossed the field where the Technical College is now. That brought us to another stile which landed us in Lady Edith's Drive. From there we could pass the Mere on our left and continue on to Forge Valley, or we could turn left and circle it keeping it on our right. There was a path through the woods that side which led to a huge tree, good for climbing, which was called King Oak. Another adventure was climbing Monkey Island. It has been long gone but was a small hill standing all alone at the Scalby Mills end of the north bay

sands. We used to climb it and survey the world from the top. I'm told that it was once a rather large promontory, but the sea washed behind it, and eroded it into an island which was eventually pulled down. I have a vivid recollection of being at Scalby Mills and finding a visiting flea circus there. I paid a penny or twopence to go in and have a fascinated look. That is a perfect example of how we roamed and ranged, for I can't have been very old and I was all alone. I went home and told my Mum and Dad about it in great detail!

In the summer, when I was little, my mother took me down to the sands on the south side. (When I was older I walked with my friends to the north side bathing pool). There was a Punch and Judy show, and the men used to wheel it along the sands from place to place. There were bathing tents too for changing which could be rented. Mum only got one of those when she too was going into the water. They were just a bit bigger than a telephone booth, were made of green canvas and they stood on the sand in rows. I just got changed on the beach. Well I remember going up towards home up the zig zag with sandy feet rubbing in sandals or sand shoes. How I ever went swimming in the north sea I'll never know. It is so dreadfully cold.

The corporation had booths on the sands from which ice cream was sold. A cornet was a penny. Sandwiches were twopence I think. I haven't seen one of those for years. There was a little oblong sandwich sized contraption with a handle underneath at right angles. The seller put a wafer in the bottom, slapped ice cream onto it, put another wafer on the top and pushed the sandwich up and out. Cones were threepence. The ice cream was made by the Scarborough Corporation, and it was really good. There must have been places down there selling sweets and so forth for another thing I remember is Smith's Crisps - really delicious. A packet cost twopence and inside was a little twist of dark blue waxy paper containing salt to be sprinkled into the bag. Mind you, twopence was a fair chunk of money so Smith's Crisps were a real treat not too frequently bestowed upon children. Rather we went to Mrs. Towes, who lived on Prospect Mount Road. In her kitchen she had a shelf holding the penny candy so beloved of small fry. It was covered with a cloth and when she removed it our eyes feasted on the contents. Most things were a halfpenny, so with a penny to spend we were well away. I remember gobstoppers, hard round balls which changed colour as you sucked them. Buttermilk dainties which were huge toffees. Spanish, which was liquorice about a quarter of an inch wide, rolled in a wheel with a hard sweet in the middle. One's regard for one's playmates was indicated by the size of the piece you pulled off for them! There was sherbet too, with a straw made of liquorice through which you sucked the powdered sherbet. Snowballs were the same shape as Smarties only about an inch and a half across: marshmallow in the middle with a covering of cheap chocolate dipped in cocoanut. And there were swizzlers. Shaped like an aspirin, only about a quarter of an inch across, in different colours. You put one on your tongue and it sort of fizzed away. We loved them all. Bars of chocolate cost twopence, so having one of these was very rare.

At roughly about the bottom of Vernon Road where it intersects with the Valley Road was Gala Land. An underground sort of amusement park which I can only just remember. I do vaguely recall though that there was an all girl orchestra. In that same



area, at the end of the Valley Road were the swimming baths. They were underground and what seemed to me at that time a long way down. The girls walked there from the old Girls' High School in the valley for lessons. Those of us who had bikes cycled and waited for the others. Once in the front door there were stairs going round and round and down and down to the low level baths. Since Margaret Dean and I had to wait for the walkers we spent the time leaning over the railing at the top spitting and trying to hit one or another of the black and white tiles on the far below floor. We never did get caught!!! Further along the Foreshore was Olympia where they had dances. I was too young to go, but I'm told it was a great spot. I think it was destroyed by fire.

It didn't snow much when I was a child, but when it did it caused great excitement. We tobogganed down a sloping field near Manor Road which we called Duggleby's field. Next to it was an open space called the tip. It's perhaps built up there now. Really warm footwear for youngsters had not yet arrived, so we wore our wellingtons, and our toes became mighty cold. The Mere froze one year, and folk skated on it. I ventured where I was told not to walk and fell in! Speaking of cold. None of the houses had central heating then, and other than the one room, where a fire was lit, houses were mighty chilly in the winter. Piano practice in the front room with only an electric fire for warmth wasn't much fun. At Christmas time with family and friends arriving, the fire was lit in the front room too, and that really was a treat. In the winter the wind used to howl around our house, and cold draughts came under the doors.

Oh yes. The Girls' High School. Girls had originally gone with the boys to the school more or less at the town end of the Valley Bridge. It was eventually made into an all boys' school, and later became Theatre in the Round. The girls moved to a site at the end of the Valley Road furthest from the sea. I believe the building had originally been a very large house. I went there for two years, forms 2A and 3A. The uniform code was very strict as were other rules. We wore a rather attractive navy blue tunic, unpleated with a V neck, fitted at the waist with a half belt at the back. Under it we wore a navy jumper in the winter which had two gold stripes on the collar, and in the summer a white blouse. Our school tie, worn with both, was navy with gold stripes. Black stockings and shoes completed the ensemble. We wore light shoes indoors, known as our house shoes, and sturdy, usually lacing shoes, outdoors. Winter coats and raincoats were navy blue, as were blazers which had the school crest on the pocket. Navy felt hats in winter and panamas in summer, both with a blue and gold ribbon bearing the school crest were worn until just after 1937 when I joined the school. At that time navy berets were introduced on which we pinned a rather attractive round brooch which bore the school crest in enamel. During the summer months we could wear any dress provided it was all blue, all white or a mixture of the two, and white socks. As already mentioned the school uniform had to be strictly adhered to. No doffing of our headgear on the way home. No wearing the blazer over another outfit at the weekend. Scarborough was, (and perhaps still is) a very small town from the point of view of being seen misbehaving or breaking rules. Someone, all too often a staff member, would catch you!! Seems to me we couldn't eat sweets or chew gum while we wore our uniforms either. Believe it or not, we had to walk back and forth to school until we received a permit to ride our bikes, and for some of us, home was a long long walk away. The staff members I recall are Miss Glauert

(Glue, of whom we were terrified, the headmistress), Miss Monica Roberts (Bobby, English), Miss Ashton (history and scripture), Miss Slark (french. In later days she became the Mayor of Scarborough), Miss Underwood (geography,) Miss Sowden (Susie, mathematics), Miss Driver (Tubby, history) Miss Ing (french), Miss Holmes (english), Miss Ross, succeeded by Miss Higgs (art), Miss Pratt (PT), and Miss Adcock (the adder, domestic science) We were divided into four houses. George, Patrick, David and Andrew, and gained or lost points for our houses according to our ability and our behaviour.

By the time term began in Autumn 1939, the second world war had begun and the new school on Stepney Road completed. We moved into it in September. In those days it really was state of the art. When visiting Scarborough in the late eighties I asked if I might make a visit. This request was readily granted, and I was allowed to wander around on my own. It was now a 6th form college and had been altered enormously to make way for more students and doubtless a newer curriculum. Sadly, I could hardly recognize it. Every part of it seemed to have been built in or on! In my day, the school was really beautiful. A separate gymnasium and assembly hall with a stage, Labs for chemistry and biology, a geography room, an art room and a cookery room, each beautifully equipped. We wore black overalls for chemistry, and white aprons for cookery. I remember well the showers after gym lessons for which we wore black shorts, white tops and gym shoes. These were very plain, with just thin rubber soles and canvas uppers. Trainers were far into the future. Young women at the age of puberty have vastly varying shapes and sizes, and the embarrassed squeals which ensued when we discovered that the showers didn't have curtains seem so laughable now. There was a dining room too where the girls who stayed for dinner ate. The tennis courts and netball courts were probably still there, I hadn't the heart to look.

Thinking of buildings makes me remember the immense changes to the north side in the areas of Peasholme Park, the Open Air Theatre and the bathing pool in the early thirties. I think that those days Scarborough had a town council with real imagination, and I recall my father speaking of the excellence of the head gardener. Where the north bay bathing pool is there was grass. I can just remember a visiting circus tent pitched there. Then a pool was built which had little boats of some kind which could be hired. The bathing pool replaced it. I think that the south bay pool was built first but it wasn't as beautiful or as up to date as was the north bay pool. In the late twenties, it was discovered that the 'valley' which became the Open Air Theatre, had marvellous acoustic qualities. The theatre was built, and the water chute, paddle boats and miniature railway were added in the area. Peasholme Park also came into being with the row boats, canoes, musical concerts and the battles with the miniature war ships.

The lily pond at the beginning of Peasholme Glen and the one in the south cliff gardens were immaculate. Peasholme Glen was a pleasure to walk through so beautiful was it. Before that it had just been rough with trees and a little stream running through. In fact the gardens all over town were meticulously kept I used to admire the ones along Woodland Ravine as we walked along to Sunday School at St. Luke's. I remember St. Luke's church being built too. Until it was, services were held in St. Luke's House, a

beautiful large house which can still be seen on Stepney Grove (although I believe it has now been made into two houses) in a room given over to that function. It had a recess which was the altar. I must have been very tiny when I went there because I remember being unable to read. The hospital (now greatly altered since I trained there in the forties) was built in the thirties too. I was one of the children representing Gladstone Road School when the hospital was opened by the Duke of Kent. He was killed during the war. And many years later, in 1948 when I was in my final year of training, his widow Princess Marina, the Dowager Duchess of Kent, came to open a ward named for her. Dior's 'new look' had only just come in, using scads of fabric with calf length skirts, unlike the skimpy clothes which rationing had compelled us to wear during the war and for several years after. The Duchess had always been a terrific dresser and I remember hanging, (along with several of my fellow nursing students) out of the window to see if she was wearing the new look. To our delight, she was. But that was as I say later, and isn't properly part of this 1930's recollection.

The crematorium and the new cemetery were some years away as was the new boys' high school. It was all fields fields fields, for where we lived when I was little was on what was then the outskirts of Scarborough. It's funny to say 'outskirts' because you could walk to town in twenty or so minutes.

I have had some chats by transatlantic phone with my childhood friend Margaret Rusby to check a few facts and place names. We are both eighty-one now, and sadly, several of the friends with whom we played in those far off days are no longer with us. Our memories of that time are still amazingly clear though. Life was a good deal different and perhaps a lot simpler, though I think keeping house as our mothers did was a lot harder than it is today and few if any worked outside the home. There was no television, and there was only one BBC station and that was it with one exception that I remember. The BBC didn't permit advertising but there was a station, Radio Luxemburg which did. I was an Ovaltine. To become a member you had to send in so many coupons or whatever it was. I can't remember, but I did have a badge, and on Sunday, on Radio Luxemburg, the Ovaltine show was to be heard in the afternoon. It had an Ovaltine song which I can still remember. On the BBC, I listened every day to the Children's Hour, somewhere about half past four or five, and, just after it, Henry Hall and the BBC dance orchestra. I recall too that the BBC light orchestra was on sometime about 1 pm when, after coming home for dinner, I was getting ready to return to school. On Saturday was the well known 'In Town Tonight'. Our records were 78 rpm. Among others we had Bing Crosby, Layton and Johnson, Paul Robson, and Peter Dawson.

As already said, life today is a great deal different for young people from that which we experienced in the thirties before the second world war. We led a fairly insular life, and knew little about what went on outside Scarborough. Youngsters are certainly a great deal more worldly than we were and know a great deal more about most things including sex than we did. There was some surreptitious smoking here and there, the advice against it being 'it'll stunt your growth', but that was about it. Talk of lung cancer, in fact talk of cancer of any kind was many years into the future. Mental illness was mentioned in hushed tones and considered something of a disgrace. Reproduction

and allied subjects was pretty well taboo, certainly in the media and in polite society too. Aids was many years away, as was the pill and to have a baby out of wedlock was something of a disgrace. Virginity was highly prized. I had friends who were under the impression that babies were found under gooseberry bushes! My mother told me the truth about such things, but warned me not to discuss them with anybody. Other mothers might disapprove! We most assuredly behaved ourselves in school, and not only in school, in fact we were taught to behave ourselves and respect all adults. If we were in any trouble our parents invariably sided with authority!

Some years ago friends in England sent me a tea towel printed as follows:

‘We Are Survivors’  
(For those born before 1940...)

I have permission from the author to use it, and here is the credit,  
Mr. Bridge. Ryden Grange, Bisley GU 21 2TH. Tel: 01483 489961.

We were born before television, before penicillin, polio shots, frozen foods, Xerox, contact lenses, videos and the pill. We were before radar, credit cards, split atoms, laser beams and ball-point pens, before dishwashers, tumble driers, electric blankets, air conditioners, drip-dry clothes...and before man walked on the moon.

We got married first and then lived together (how quaint can you be?). We thought ‘fast food’ was what you ate in Lent, a ‘Big Mac’ was an oversized raincoat and ‘crumpet’ we had for tea. We existed before house-husbands, computer dating and ‘sheltered accommodation’ was where you waited for a bus.

We were before day care centres, group homes and disposable nappies. We never heard of FM radio, tape decks, artificial hearts, word processors, or young men wearing earrings. For us, ‘time sharing’ meant togetherness, a ‘chip’ was a piece of wood or fried potato, ‘hardware’ meant nuts and bolts and ‘software’ wasn’t a word.

Before 1940 ‘Made in Japan’ meant junk, the term ‘making out’ referred to how you did in your exams, ‘stud’ was something that fastened a collar to a shirt and ‘going all the way’ meant staying on a double-decker bus to the terminus. In our day cigarette smoking was ‘fashionable’, ‘grass’ was mown, ‘coke’ was kept in the coalhouse, a ‘joint’ was a piece of meat you ate on Sundays and ‘pot’ was something you cooked in. ‘Rock Music’ was a fond mother’s lullaby, ‘Eldorado’ was an ice cream, a ‘gay person’ was the life and soul of the party, while ‘aids’ just meant beauty treatment or help for someone in trouble.

We who were born before 1940 must be a hardy bunch when you think of the way in which the world has changed and the adjustments we have had to make. No wonder there is a generation gap today ...BUT by the grace of God...we have survived!