

West Quarter days, by - Mrs. Hannaford (nee Shapcott) 1918-1928

Well when I was a little girl we were encouraged to go to Penny Farthings breakfast and pay a penny and you would have a breakfast cup of hot drinking chocolate and a loaf of bread and we would give them another happeny, or (half a penny) and we used to get one for my brothers pack-up for work and I remember at Christmas time we used to have one toy, we would have to share sometimes, in the middle of the night we would get to go out into the back yard into an old shed which we used to take pictures in to put on the walls, to make the shed look pretty. I used to come home from school and sit on the step and wait for my mum to come home, as she was in the Bakers getting a penneth of stale cakes cause there was no money in those days. My mother used to take all our washing across the road to the wash house, and she had to pay a shilling to have all her washing done also take her Sunday roast over and pay to have that cooked - I used to lay in bed and we used to hear the rats, one day my mother covered over the rat hole with a fender you know - a fire fender but it moved and the rat bite my

brothers little finger. I had a brother before me and he was called Stanley, he had a little coloured top on - red - and a bull escaped from the Exeter Cattle Market and came up through Preston Street, where Central School was and put his horns into a tuft of his hair and then caught him as he came down and he died in the hospital. My brother was the youngest, I was the next youngest. I was born in 1918 it must have been 1912 something like that. It was hard times for my mother, my father he used to like his drink but he was a good man and worked hard to feed his children you know and we had 10 to feed 4 girls and 4 boys - 8 children. We had two down the bottom of the bed and two at the top. It was pretty hard times. Before we went to school mornings we used to go down to a place opposite the church. - The church at the bottom of those big steps - Step Cote Hill and we used to pay a penny and have a hot glass of blackcurrent juice before we went to school and then. It was really - we were happier in those days then children really are today because we knew we couldn't afford things. Then I remember the policeman shining his light up into my bedroom and my mother.

She said Oh I'll go down and it was to tell my mother that my father had died at the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital, He was 52 and with 8 children and she worked hard and brought us all up you know. Mum had to fend for us. She would- pick daffodils down Steps Bridge and she used to get Water Cress from the River to sell and she'd do all sorts. She was a Rag and Bone Woman really.

When we move out to Burnt House Lane, my father always said you won't get me out there. How right he was, he died before we moved. One of my brothers was working on the houses and said how good they were, Hot water, Bath, inside flush toilet all this in the houses in Burnthouse Lane, and I was only ten when we came out here to live. My grandparents lived three doors up from my Mum in Hawthorn Road, where we used to go through a long alleyway into the back yard and we used to go into my grandmothers and she used to give us something to eat like you know and things like that and we sort of wasn't very posh she was very good to us and

then when we came out Burnthouse Lane to live my mother brought her with us cause she was very good to my children.

The clothes we used to wear as children, black high boots and we used to have to use a hook to lace them up and I remember going to my fathers funeral and having to sit on someone's lap in the car and I had a dress that was very course and uncomfortable to wear. It wasn't very nice at all but that was what we had to do in them days. I used to have to wear my sisters shoes which were too big. Used to have to have the hems taken down. It was really a hard life but we were all so happy you know. Then one night we were all told with the neighbours to close all our windows and doors because a horse stable at Preston Street had caught fire and then all the rats were running loose and we used to look every night under our beds for rats you know. I remember in bed and when my sister was going to work I used to say to her "can I have a chip". She loved her chips in bed and she'd give me one and tell me to go to sleep. I can remember my brothers they used to say to my mother "Can I have some new boots to go to school with cause

they used to wear boots them days with little short trousers and my mother would say see how the money goes because sometimes my father wouldn't bring home any money at all and sometimes he would. He was a Fisherman who sold fish and he sold fruit as well. My father had a horse and cart and he used to travel all the way to Crediton to sell his fish to get money to feed us. Some days we would go in the horse and cart trap for a ride. He used to go down the Quay where the big shed is now and he used to buy his fish from the fishermen. Down at the Quay and he was very well known in Exeter. He come from a big family and he used to stand on a corner by Speck Savers on that corner on the Street and he used to have a huge great big basket with all the fruit on the top and when it was between my school dinner time I had to stand there and I was only about 8. I had a very nice friend - well I don't know where he got his fruit from. I should imagine he went to the markets and brought it. He sold bananas and oranges mostly and no grapes or nothing like that. Bananas, oranges and some lemons or something. He would make a good living to bring us all up. He was a good Dad but

unfortunately died and left my mother to bring us all up. You see my mother never knew her age and when she was born, as she was born in the workhouse so she could not get a pension. Mum she was a very good cook and make a meal out of nothing to feed us and I remember she used to say to us if you haven't got no money for fire in put warm clothes on. And if your hungry just dip some bread in some hot water with salt and pepper. She was a wise old woman she lived until she was 85. She helped me to bring up my children when I had them. She was a very well known woman. On a Friday she used to go to Central Station and she used to travel all the way down to Exmouth and sell plants in little wooden pots. If they didn't have money to pay for the plants she would take anything - shoes or anything to get money to feed us. She was very artistic - yes. Yet my mother could make May-flowers, daffodils with beautiful green leaves, roses, my mother could turn her hand to anything. She used to say to us Lily there is nothing you can't do. "There no such thing as can't" No. She worked hard and brought us all up. My friend she had a brother that was in prison and she

stood there selling her fathers fruit in town and unfortunately her brother was being hung that morning and as 9.0'clock struck on the Cathedral clock and bells he "was hung". You see he murdered a girl on the common, I think Woodbury Common or somewhere like that but it was so sad really you know. She was a lovely girl but I couldn't do nothing for her but put me arms around her and cuddle her like you know. As she was all- alone. I was about nine year old then. My friends family was very nice but it was unfortunately her brother happened to do this and in those days they hanged them in the prison at 9.0'clock in the morning and all I could do was cuddle her and I was only a child myself. My grandmother she used to Sundays always cook a nice meal. Sunday Roast you know. My cousin and I we both got big helpings, we used to go out the back window into a yard which is still there and pick the blackberries and my granddad used to say I'll get those redheads one day, I'll get em one day. I'll lock em out. But we had nothing else to do we used to play hop scotch and you know - skipping you know all sorts of things like that leap frog, jumping over each others back

and we were so happy. We used to play marbles we used to play you know but mostly in those days it was so hard to get a sixpenny toy in Woolworths you were lucky, really lucky. There was no such a thing as pocket money in those days no pocket money.

Well one Christmas I remember I had a dolly and it was the first dolly I ever had and after Christmas I couldn't find it and my mother said I must have left it somewhere lost it when it was my birthday in April along came the dolly all dressed in woolly clothes that the next door neighbour had knitted for me for my birthday. You know I had one banana one orange, one apple in a sock. Always washed your brothers socks or fathers socks you know. We had to make our own fun you know. I used to go to the top of South Street, in Stillmans the Butchers and queue up because if you queued up after a certain time of the night what was left over went half price. So we would have perhaps some stuffed pork or we could have a chicken, which we thought was wonderful. Mum used to make her own Christmas

Puddings with just custard over them. It wasn't healthy food we ate in those days it was all like fatty stuff. (Isn't that debatable cause how old are you Lil - 84 - and how old was your mother when she died - 85 - so who says what is healthy food) When you used to come my mother used to do toffee apples for all the children coming out of school. They used to queue up and she would sell them for a penny each. Toffee Apples on a stick and she was really loved by the children you know. I'm afraid that when I got older and I came out er to live in Burnthouse Lane, I used to hear her ringing a bell and shouting "any rags and that". I used to hide away cause I was sort of felt ashamed I suppose - yer and then I realised that she was doing it for us so I took my friend to meet her you know - as I was only a kid really but it was really hard for my Mum having to () us on her own. My mothers grandmother - my mothers mother - grandmother was not my real grandmother. My eldest daughter told me that my born was born in Babbacombe, I have never been told this by my mother but she never knew her age and she lived her life in Babbacombe, her young life and she

was very well known in Exmouth, very well known as Miss Friday always went to Exmouth on a Friday. My mother used to go to Central Station with her pram and all the plants in it with the flowers and catch a train to Exmouth, go round to the big houses in Exmouth. I can remember, but I don't know his name but I remember going to a big Doctors house. I used to be in the kitchen with a great big fire place with a bar coming down with a big kettle on it and the servants were all in their old fashioned clothes the Doctor always gave me a silver threepenny bit and a duck egg, every Friday he gave me a silver threepenny bit and a duck egg so I'd have kept it you know but the duck egg would have gone off (lots of laughing) and honestly he used to see to his patients there wasn't National Health then, people used to have to pay you know and he used to say Oh you got Pea Soup because I used to take a big jug - handbasin -jug up to Queen Street where you go into the main shopping precinct now and queue up (photo of Market) before I went to school for a big jug of Pea Soup. This was before I went to School, and by the time you got home it was cold but mother used to heat it

up for dinner you see and it was quite nice and tasty. We'd have bread with the soup. Sometimes we'd go to school because there was not enough bread for all of us and I used to go to my friends over in Rack Street (that's at the back of Preston Street) and she was called Doris Wood and her mother always had butter. She was better off than my mother and she always had butter so I used to look at her and Doris's mother would say "look at her looking, I must give her some butter" and she'd give me some bread, butter and jam. I wouldn't tell my mother about this cause my mother was very proud. She'd say you're my kids I'll look after you.

Then my mother used to go into Newberry's the Rag and Bone place at the bottom of South Street, she'd walk all in town from Burnthouse Lane with her pram to the bottom of South Street and she'd sell these white rags like sheeting and everything for Moons that where MacDonalds is now. For Moon's Piano Shop, for cleaning their piano's, and she wouldn't get much money for it but whatever she got for it, it was always put on the table

for us kids you know. She was a good cook. She loved my children – I lived with her 8 years of my married life and one day my daughter, Pauline, she was in the garden and she said Bovy Jam, Nanny, Bovy Jam because that's what they called her – they did it was always Bovy Jam you know not a cake and cakes was only for Sunday – rock cakes as they call them. My mother went into the kitchen to do her Bovy Jam but when she turned around there was no Pauline, but we went outside and she was out for the count. She had fainted or something but anyway we sent for the Doctor, and the Doctor said she had sun -stroke. She can't stand the sun and her father was helping deliver coal for Denleys that was nearby , in Burnthouse Lane beside where the Fish and Chip Shop is today, and he came into the door and said what's wrong and she opened her eyes and she said Oh daddy black face and she was alright then. We were so happy in our younger days you know but it was quite good when you had to go to the toilet out in the yard and there was rats. I remember once my sister said "stay indoors" and I'll go out and she had a pair of my brothers hob nailed boots with me. She

kicked this rat and kicked it until it went away or died or something. Before we went to the toilet you see. When we were small we sort of had to share and help each other because we had to if someone had an extra pair of shoes or sand shoes they used to wear you know. They'd help each other and then my mother she always had bad eye- sight she couldn't read nor write but you couldn't knock her. My mother She always made a living independent, – no Social Security not a penny from nowhere not even a pension and because she didn't know her age and you see she told my youngest daughter this, but I didn't know until about two years ago my daughter told me that my mother was born in Babbacombe. She was so, I don't know my children when they were tiny used to comb and brush her long red hair – grey hair as it was then and I lived with her 8 years of my married life until I got my own house here which I have been in 54 years. Mum had a widows- pension in the end.

In the schooling we used to be in school – we used to have these desks that you closed down and keep your little books in and everything and the teacher I remember I was doing some knitting – learning to knit and I had dropped two or three stitches of my knitting – I was doing a sock and when she found out she made go around the whole Central School classes to show the children how naughty I had been – not telling her I'd dropped a stitch. So I sort of said it was a pair – so I was put in a corner and I had to stand there for about an hour or half a day or something in the corner of the school. I was so naughty I used turn around and make faces to the children – they'd laugh and I'd turn around quickly, the teacher didn't know I'd done it. But you had to fend for yourselves those days. If you didn't fend for yourselves, No one else would. I remember my mother on the doorstep waiting for my mother to come home from Preston Street, she'd been to the Bakers, White's the Bakers and got some stale cakes left over from that day in the evening they'd sell them off cheap and we'd have stale cakes. Just glad to them em like mother said you could always make something you needn't go hungry.

Well when Mum said were going to live at Burnthouse Lane my dad said you'll never get me out there so long as I live you'll never get me out there. How right he was So he died before we got here. Mum had to bring us all out Burnthouse Lane and my brother he worked for Hill Palmer Edwards Bakery and he used to have a horse and cart and he used to park it outside the door and when the horses "done their business" the neighbours and my mother used to go and pick it all up in a bucket for the gardens. My mother kept a nice garden and done it all herself, . She had four squares with big rocks around it and she had all these flowers and once a year the Council men used to come around, Exeter City Council and judge the gardens and my mother had First Prize and I think it was 10 shillings for having a good garden. I remember that when the war broke out I used to sit in the front room by the airing cupboard on the floor I took the gas cupboard having six children I could only get the little ones in and everything was outside the cupboard and then we had air raid shelters that the Council gave us and an (photo) Anderson Shelter in the garden and I remember the bombs

dropping and over in Briar Crescent, which was new ones my husband was blown down the shelter by the force of the bomb. We also had chickens they were all killed and then I had all my children's clothes in the bath and they were all destroyed and I had to go out to Alphington Street, to a big house out there which is still there now for clothing coupons. It was really hard with six of them. Well when we moved out to Burnthouse Lane, my mother used to say to us "Now there's a bus that runs into the town" but you got legs so you can walk so we used to have to walk into town and walk back, which I didn't mind at all. My mother she used to walk along Topsham Road, and opposite the Barracks there was big trough, which is there now and my father used to stay there and let his horse drink the water. It was lovely on a Sunday to go in the horse and trap because all the week it was used for fish. We used to travel to Crediton but at Newton St. Cyres, he would get out and he'd wash all the fish and get them nice and clean so they looked fresh and take them to Crediton and sell them, which was a penny e, my father was very well

known in Exeter, very well known. In Crediton as well He had a big family and he sort of tried to give my mother what he could but what he couldn't do he couldn't do so we had to make do with what we got he was very good with my mother all the same. But my father used to talk about the 1914 war to my brothers. Always talking about the war and a man that was very strict, very strict but he brought us up the right way. My grandparents he had a very hard life because my granddad he used to go out and

..... - What was his job or his granddad's job - My granddad he used to go out selling, getting old newspapers and things like that. Then he got too old and he couldn't work and he used to sit by the fire all the time and he always loved his Sunday roast and I remember he always used to open the oven door and say "What meat have you got today Fan" and she would tell him and he didn't like her as she liked her little drink so she used to have to hide it away and out in the yard was a little toilet and she used to put it on top of the toilet and he came home one day and went to the toilet and it came down on his head, well they caused a hell of a row and

so she used to put it under the bed. It was a drink called City Special, it was a beer and he was a man that was strict very very strict. I don't know but he sort of loved you but you had to do exactly what he said. Funnily enough he opened the oven one day which he did and that was it he was gone. Granddad would have been in his sixties.

When I lived in Preston Street, my mother used to go to the pictures in Okehampton Street and it used to be four pence then to go to the Pictures. It was somebody with a piano on the stage in black and white pictures but you see we couldn't go unless we took some men's clothing down to an old lodging house which a Mrs. Adkins used to have and my mother used to say "I want a shilling for that coat, but ask two shillings cause they will back you back and if you get the right money you and your brother come down to Picture House and say my mum's in there and my grandmother and they will let you in so that's what we used to do but you see what happened was my granddad he chewed tobacco and he used to always spit out his tobacco - he was always spitting and people would not sit beside of him in the Picture

House but they didn't bar him. There used to be tobacco water all over the floor, but he loved his tobacco but they used to say "here comes the flood" and if we couldn't sell anything and go to the pictures we had to go home and do what we could do to keep ourselves occupied until mum came home but one day she didn't come home and we went looking and she was up the pub and we sat outside and remember there wasn't any crisps in those days and they brought out a sandwich and gave us while we waited for our mum. We used to listen to the big church bells there, there still there. Every Saturday I used to have to go up to the hill down in West Quarter up to the hill that leads to Fore Street, and buy a rabbit for dinner. Nearly always had rabbit, very rare we had chicken, couldn't afford it, very rare we had chicken and I remember going to school with frock that was cut off and my mother didn't sew it properly and the stitches all came out and I was made a laughing stock of and I just had to put up with it. Looking back we were a lot happier than the children today. They just can't get enough today. My father used to drink in Bonhay Queen Vic no in Bonhay Road, it was the

Paper Makers, my father used to go to the Pub and he came home one day with nothing, we had no food no nothing and she had no money for rent so she noticed his watch and chain was gone. She asked him where it was gone and he wouldn't tell her so she went to the pub and the barmen, the landlord said well he gave everybody in the bar a drink so he left his watch and chain till he can pay for it. So she said to them I shall go to the Police if you don't give me that watch and chain back. My children are starving so she took the watch and chain and she put it in between her brest And my father took her to court and she looked up and said I would do it all over again for my children. I thought that was wonderful and then another time my brother, my brother Fred he's died now but he poured some petrol onto the fire to keep warm and it caught the house on fire and burnd his chest He had to go to hospital with all these chest burns. He survived and was all right but it was just that it caused a lot of separation between my mum and my dad. My mum went up my nan's to stay and my father he couldn't accept that. Begging her to go back but he was different altogether then but it was too late as he died

just after horse and cart. My father he liked his drink and cause when he worked he really worked hard and my brother went on to bed now and should go to bed but in the morning she had gone to the shed and there was the horse and cart that had banged down the door and had my father in the bath and stayed there all night. He had brought him home from the pub took he horse and cart across Exe Bridge. We used to go to Ed Ware in Bonhay Road and there used to be a river if we wanted a swim and we used to pay a penny to swim there. It was a really wonderful life than today cause I told my great grandchildren now only last week that we only had one orange in our stocking and shared toys, and had to wear each others clothes. When I came out here to live I had to walk from Burnthouse Lane to Heavitree School and again dinner time and back again to school and home again in the evening and in the winter it was bad cause it was getting dark but those days the teachers they were very strict, you had to behave yourself. If we did not behave we used to have to go to the Headmistress and have the cane I remember once I said to the Headmistress, this girl she slapped me and I

slapped her back only on the hand but the teacher caught me doing it I was sent to the Headmistress and she was very very strict, very old fashioned and strict and her for a whole week I had to stand in the corner for an hour in the corner of the room with my back turned towards the class so I sort of really hard you seemed to think that your elder ones your sister had more than what you had. She would have fish and chips and penny piece of fish Fish was ever- so expensive mothers couldn't afford it well they can now as there is better wages now and a bar of chocolate at Christmas time you really looked forward to this. Christmas was a family day and we used to walk all out to Steps Bridge and we used to pick daffodils and go round houses when I first came out and sell them for four pence a bunch. Oh yes when my grandmother was living and I was a little girl from Preston Street I used to have to walk all out Alphington Brook and go all in the wet and mud and my granny used to wear long skirts and they used to be ringing wet and we used to pick the water cress and go around selling it at a penny a bunch. We used to talk people into buying it because of the money.