

In each issue we hope to be able to feature a life story from one of our 'older' village residents. This time it is

FRANK MASSINGHAM



My parents moved from Norfolk to Blankney during the first World War and my Father took the job of Sawyer at the Sawmill on the Londesborough Estate. I was born at Blankney in the year 1921, and went to the village school until I was eleven years old, I then had to go to a more senior school at Metheringham.

On leaving school I got a job at Mr. Charles Creasey's farm at Blankney Heath. At the end of the Summer I was stood off (times were hard in the thirties) but I was lucky enough to find another job at Johnson's Dairy Farm at Metheringham, but when Spring came the cows were turned out to grass and I was stood off yet again.

Once again I was lucky to get another job as a 'Guard Boy' on the Nocton Estate Light Railway. Later on to become a Driver which was a job I really enjoyed. In January 1940 I lost my Father who died suddenly at his work. The Foreman Mr Albert Ingall at Nocton asked me if I would take the job of Store Keeper as Lawrence Morris who held the job was volunteering for the RAF. The Foreman said it would mean 2/6d per week more for me which was quite a boost in those days, so I accepted the job.

By that time W. Parker & Sons had the Estate at Blankney where I lived with my Mother, so I had to leave Nocton in the Autumn and work for them where I worked on the land.

In early Spring of 1940 I volunteered for the Local Defence Volunteers L.D.V. which was later called Home Guard. I served in that until it was disbanded in December 1944.

I played cricket for Blankney Cricket Club when I was fifteen years old until the club finished at the onset of the war. British Crop Driers asked if I would play for them during the war which I did (except at harvest time).

I met my future wife Joan at a local dance in early 1944. She was in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force. She was posted from Topcliffe, Yorkshire, where she was in Bomber Command, to RAF Digby and then from there to RAF at Blankney Hall.

Joan lived in Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire before she volunteered to join the RAF. We were married at St Judes Church in Stoke-on-Trent in March 1945 and came back to live at my Mothers until September 1947. I applied for one of the Nissan Huts on Metheringham Airfield which the Council had taken over and were transforming them into living accommodation for married couples and I was given the tenancy of one on the Martin site.

Having moved to Martin I worked for Joe Webster on the land. We raised a family of four daughters who visit us often. In 1951 the Council offered me the tenancy of a house in Fen Road, Timberland opposite the vicarage. I accepted it and moved in early June. Eventually I left Mr. Webster and worked for Mr. Harry Burrows of Thorpe Tilney.

After a couple of years or so I left Mr. Burrows and land work and in 1955 got a job on the Upper Witham Drainage Board at Lincoln, where they asked me if I would learn to drive a Dragline Excavator. I accepted and drove Draglines for twenty years and Hydraulic Excavators for ten years until retiring in 1986.

We still love living in Timberland and have enjoyed some happy times with local people and different events, like playing cricket and Joan helping to serve teas and the Darby & Joan where she used to help.

I myself like Nature Study and my garden particularly growing flowers with their lovely colours.

We celebrated our Diamond Wedding in 2005.



Frank in 1938 - Nocton Railway



Summer 1984



Joan in RAF



**Frank at Drainage Board
Museum, Timberland Fen**



Frank and Joan in their garden