

## New Forest Remembers WWII Project

### Oral History Team: Transcription Document

Contributor's name	Margaret Norcliffe (nee Cox)	Name code	M-C
Interviewer's name	Gareth Owen	Code number	001
Audio Typist name	Sue Jackson	Transcription Date	01.11.14
Transcription file name	M-C - Margaret Norcliffe		- OH Transcription.doc

#### Web Pages:

Oral History article:

<https://nfknowledge.org/contributions/memories-of-an-italian-pows-gift/#map=10/-1.82/50.73/0/20:0:0.6|34:1:1|35:1:1>

Project information:

[www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/wwii](http://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/wwii)

**Checked by - John Martin**

File name	M-B	001	0001MO	Interview date: 11.10.13
-----------	-----	-----	--------	--------------------------

**00:00:00**

*So, we'll start with the beginning and if you could please introduce me with your name or the name that you would like to use and the year of your birth.*

Right. My name is Margaret Cox and I was born in 1942, which was during the War, and I was brought up in an area of Southbourne, of Woodside Road, at a garage that my father owned and had owned since 1927. So he was there during the War and we had facilities for, at that time, the Army and their trucks for maintenance to be done to them in a very large garage area to the back which had an inspection pit which was an extremely useful item in those days for them. And after the Army we latterly then had the American GIs and they used to bring their tanks down through the driveway between the two houses that belonged to the property and I believe at the time, because I was only very young and not actually witnessed this myself, but many stories at many years over many years about all these goings-on that the tanks had about a four inch clearance either side of them between these walls going into the garage. And I can remember riding one of these little tiny metal Triang bicycles, I think they were at the time, in the garage, haring round this because it was empty after they'd all gone, to be called out by my mother to come out because there were glass tanks in there full of tubes full of acid that were used for the batteries for the tanks, for the charging up of them. And like a tomboy that I was – 'cause I had two older brothers – backed up the bicycle to go down the driveway and I can remember doing this, only to have the back wheels of the bike go down the pit (laughs) followed by the bicycle on top of me, which resulted in a rather nasty split eye. Anyway, that's by the by. I managed to survive it, and so did the eye.

© 2018

**New Forest National Park Authority**

Lymington Town Hall, Avenue Road, Lymington, Hampshire SO41 9ZG

Email [archaeology@newforestnpa.gov.uk](mailto:archaeology@newforestnpa.gov.uk)

[www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/wwii](http://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/wwii)

VAT Reg No. 871 9343 00

CHAIRMAN OLIVER CROSTHWAITE-EYRE CHIEF EXECUTIVE ALISON BARNES

**00:02:38**

We're actually looking at the moment at a picture, the middle picture, of the front of the property which is Parkwood Garage. And there are three likely lads out the front, the one on the left being my father, the other two I really don't have any idea who they are, and the driveway is directly behind them which goes right to the back of the property. And then we come to the smaller photograph of a truck, a flat bed truck, which is outside the actual garage doors. And you can see right into the back, how far back this garage did go, and it really was quite a large building. We do come in between here with this handsome chap who actually is my father, Wilfred Ernest Henry Cox, who as you will see was in the 7<sup>th</sup> Home Guard and used to patrol the cliff tops at Boscombe on a nightly basis and did so for a total of four years and 211 days. The larger picture, which is now the same property, but my father renamed the business Metro Motors after the War and he was appointed sole ex-service agent within a 30 mile radius for the provision of Solex carburettors. And was an amazing chap because he would be able to take the type of car and he would have that carburettor all ready exactly to go on the car and it would work straightaway and wouldn't need adjusting because he was able to adjust it for that particular car. He certainly was a very clever chap. But also the big picture shows we have gone over to Esso fuel, whereas the original one was BP, and new pumps, all the up-to-date mod cons of the time.

**00:05:06**

*Do you recall when this ... can you give me the date when you think this photo – the large photo - was taken?*

I think this was probably taken around about - I'm going to just hazard a guess - at around 1948'ish I would have thought that would have been taken. Some-when in there.

*And is this the garage that you spoke about the fuel being replaced, is this the garage that would have had that?*

This is, yes, during the War he was asked to remove all the fuel from the underground tanks. They had to be drained and filled with water. My father's reply to that was a little bit unsavoury I think, I quite imagine, because they would have been totally useless with water and would never have been able to use those tanks ever again. So they didn't get drained and also he was well known to have some fuel in the area during a time when there was very little fuel available and was also able to supply the Army, the trucks that came there from Setley, with some fuel if it was needed and also kept the local people on the move.

*Now this is the connection you have, then, with Setley – the prisoner of war camp there. Can you tell us what you recall or remember or know about any connections we have with the garage and the Setley camp?*

Well the only thing that I have is the fact that the German and Italian prisoners of war did come along – I don't know at what time either of them were actually there – but to go along with the trucks from Setley when they were having to be taken in for any maintenance or they actually did work on

© 2018

**New Forest National Park Authority**

Lymington Town Hall, Avenue Road, Lymington, Hampshire SO41 9ZG

Email [archaeology@newforestnpa.gov.uk](mailto:archaeology@newforestnpa.gov.uk)[www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/wwii](http://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/wwii)

VAT Reg No. 871 9343 00

CHAIRMAN OLIVER CROSTHWAITE-EYRE CHIEF EXECUTIVE ALISON BARNES

them themselves. But I have in my possession, or I do at the moment but I won't shortly, a little toy that was made for me by one of the Italian prisoners of war called Tony (that's all I have of his name) and I must have been around about two at the time. Now obviously I don't remember him doing it or him himself, but this has been passed down to me by both of my brothers who were much older than me, Brian and Ron, and that is the story and this little truck here with – a horse and cart it is really, not a truck – has been with me ever since. And it is really quite a delightful little thing. The children have all played with it, stood on it, tried to sit in it, and it's still intact from the day it was made and all I can say he was a very, very good craftsman (laughs).

*And this is the object that you would like to donate to the project, etc. Why do you want to donate it?*

I would like to donate it purely for the reason now that all my family are well grown up. They don't want it – and there is one little one at the moment, 2½ - but I don't want this to be popped into a loft and forgotten about if they move and I would like it now to be part of this exhibition that you are putting together and for all to see what a wonderful thing that could be made out of virtually such little material and is still intact today. Although I was two at the time, it's been with me a long time and I think I just want it to go where it can be safe and not just end up on the top of a skip for somebody that does not know what it was for.

*Lovely. What I'd like to do now is to go back to the garage and give an accurate location of where the garage is. And then you were also speaking about the fact that it's still there. So maybe just like you said to me earlier on, talk about just exactly where the garage is on the bend of the road and the, as it were, the address of it almost, as it were, and then what it is now and that you can still, as it were, see the building – not necessarily as it was but at least the building is still there. So if we go back to the garage and if you can then introduce with – can you tell me where the garage is, and if it's still there?*

**00:10:00**

Yes, the garage is still in exactly the same spot and it's in Woodside Road that if you go from Fisherman's Walk, with your back to Fisherman's Walk towards Boscombe, it is on a bend where the road joins and becomes Parkwood Road. And it's still – the two buildings are still there. There aren't any pumps there anymore and the shop that used to be there has now been reverted back to a proper living house, much the same as the one that's actually next door to it. It is now owned by - it's called Marina Garage - and it's owned by Jaguar and it is their body shop and it's still exactly as it is, with the driveway that all those tanks went down (laughs). I'm still surprised that the walls are standing (laughs). Yeah, but it's still there and it's number 7 Woodside Road.

*Brilliant. Now you've got some other bits of document there so can we have a look at those? So we've got the certificate of the Home Guard and also his certificate of his qualifications, I take it?*

Yes. That's the Institute of Motor Industry and it's to certify that my father Wilfred Ernest Henry Cox was elected an Associate of the Institute at the meeting of the Council held in 1950. It's a diploma and it's still here in its entirety. It was incorporated in 1927 and founded in 1920 but issued to him on 13 April in 1950.

© 2018

New Forest National Park Authority

Lymington Town Hall, Avenue Road, Lymington, Hampshire SO41 9ZG

Email [archaeology@newforestnpa.gov.uk](mailto:archaeology@newforestnpa.gov.uk)

[www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/wwii](http://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/wwii)

VAT Reg No. 871 9343 00

CHAIRMAN OLIVER CROSTHWAITE-EYRE CHIEF EXECUTIVE ALISON BARNES

*And then the other document you've got there relates to the Home Guard there. Can you tell me more about the Home Guard one?*

Yes. The Home Guard one was presented, I would assume, to all who served. It has, I believe, the crest on the top is the ... I'm not really sure what crest that is actually. It probably the Home Guard's own crest, I expect. But it's basically (reads), "In the years when our country was in mortal danger Wilfred Ernest Henry Cox, who served 4 years, 211 days, gave generously of his time and powers to make himself ready for her defence by force of arms and with his life if need be" and signed George R.I., the Home Guard.

*That's lovely. And you have another document here. Can you tell me about this one?*

Yes. This one, this is Component Munitions Ltd, contractors to the Government in Tyseley, Birmingham and was issued to him this letter on July 23, 1918 and it says (reads) "To whom it may concern. This is to confirm that Wilfred Cox entered our employ on 6 January 1918 as an improver and has since attained the position of an assistant electrician under the direct supervision of our chief electrician. He has given the latter every satisfaction and we can recommend him as a competent wireman on AC and DC lighting and telephones. He leaves us for service with the colours and with our best wishes for his future." Signed by the Components Munitions Ltd Works Manager.

*Lovely.*

**Ends:00:14:11**

### **Key Words**

1942  
Southbourne  
Garage  
7<sup>th</sup> Home Guard  
Setley  
Prisoner of war

File name	M-B	001	0002	Interview date: 11.10.13
<b>00:00:00</b>				
<i>So you were talking about learning to drive, or having experiences of driving, at Holmsley South, the old airfield. Can you remember what you recall about driving at Holmsley South?</i>				
Well yes, because it was the place where a lot of people learned to drive because there				

© 2018

**New Forest National Park Authority**

Lymington Town Hall, Avenue Road, Lymington, Hampshire SO41 9ZG

Email [archaeology@newforestnpa.gov.uk](mailto:archaeology@newforestnpa.gov.uk)

[www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/wwii](http://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/wwii)

VAT Reg No. 871 9343 00

were the runways that were there, very wide, so if you were a little bit wayward you had plenty of time without running into trouble. Yes, I can remember driving down through there, it was a bit bumpy and lots of weeds growing up between the cracks of the old airfield because it had been quite some time that it hadn't been, hadn't been used. And in fact I taught both my daughters to drive up through there. But sadly you can't use it anymore because it's now, part of it's a proper road and it's also a holiday site up there. But, oh Holmsley was a very busy place. Mostly people learning to drive and a few cars tucked around in the quieter corners because it was that kind of an area. But oh yes, I think all my friends learnt to drive up there as well.

*Were there any buildings left when you were learning to drive there?*

There was - on the left I seem to recall, I seem to recall a couple of old building there - sort of like prefabricated buildings which I'd assumed would be something to do with the old airport, or airfield rather. Because there's now a memorial down there to that effect, for its use. But I don't remember seeing very much else there. Whether those buildings are still there or not I'm not sure.

*Brilliant.*

**Ends 00:02:13**

**Key Words**

Holmsley South

**All material is © 2018 New Forest National Park Authority**

© 2018

**New Forest National Park Authority**

Lymington Town Hall, Avenue Road, Lymington, Hampshire SO41 9ZG

Email [archaeology@newforestnpa.gov.uk](mailto:archaeology@newforestnpa.gov.uk)

[www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/wwii](http://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/wwii)

VAT Reg No. 871 9343 00

CHAIRMAN OLIVER CROSTHWAITE-EYRE CHIEF EXECUTIVE ALISON BARNES