

Interview with Miss Annie Prangnell on August 14th, 1990

Mary Cox took a watercolour of Brickfield's house, Elmsworth, and we showed it to Annie. Her response was, *"Oh yeah. That's done 'e, aant?"*

She clearly recognised the house. *"There's the house; that's the back part with the chimney and that's the front part, en it?"* She is rather deaf and many questions had to be repeated twice, sometimes more, so the interview was fairly protracted! The dairy was on the Porchfield side of the house. The brick, (decorative), on the front of the house and on the side of the dairy she remembered the rose bush at the front. *"Only, chimney's down now, en it?"* She was quite with it. *"I 'spect they took that down Yarmouth."*

I asked Annie whether her family made the chimney. *"I 'spect they did; they had the moulds for doing it, you see. They was all fancy bricks, weren't they?"* She can remember when the brickworks was working. Annie substitutes the letter T for C, i.e. says "Towes" for "Cowes", and substitutes the letter J for G, i.e. says "jarden" for "garden".

"They had to stop off for a week when they burn tiln of bricks. Take a week; they had to stoke every so often, you see." In answer to the question, "Did you grow your own vegetables?" she said, *"Yes, did over there."*

A lady of a few words which is what I had heard of the Prangnells, economy being the way of life whether of words or time, or money. *"Big jarden over there"*. She returned many times to the picture that Mary had brought. Peering at the bird on it she said, *"What's that supposed to be? A swallow?"* "No", said Mary, "a linnet". She could remember the nightingales at Brickfields. *"I never heard a nard (another?) tuttoo this summer, did you?"* "Yes" said Mary. *"I never went out enough, I s'pose."*

The barges came from Cowes for the bricks. They were Ripman's or Williams barges. None of the bricks were machine made, all hand-made in those days. *"Had to grind the clay, you see. The horse went round and round. Hand dug the clay; there was red clay and white clay."* (chay). After some prompting she remembers Bernie Hayward who took over the house when they left. Bernie Hayward brought the furniture over to Clatterford when they moved. Normally, transport was by boat. There was no road as such. Nearly everything was moved by boat including livestock. The marshes weren't flooded when they lived there so they would row to the boathouse and come ashore there. *"It got flooded after we left, didn't it? All water, didn't it?"* Annie said yes to the question of the family coming from Belgium but I'm not sure whether she fully understood or heard the question as she tends to say, "Yes" out of politeness. Annie lived at Brickfield house for 55 years or more until she and her brothers and sisters moved to Clatterford. In fact she was born there. All the family were born there. *And now I'm the last of them. We used to do that sting stool."* (Does she mean string weaving the top of stools for sale, maybe at Lymington market?) Maybe her father made the frames from driftwood. All their pleasures and pastimes were of their own making, especially in the winter. Fires of driftwood and coal and cinders raked from the kiln. Dripping toast, their own butter and dairy products like soft cheese, home-made loaves, dough cake and plenty of fish and rabbits. Can you remember Alfred the champion brickmaker? Her father was always making bricks too. Alfred appears to be

the next-generation back, her father's brother or perhaps the first cousin. Definitely on her father's side, that much is clear. The bricks took a week to burn. Her father used to burn them and some of the older children helped him. It took a long time to fill the kiln, which was packed from the back at the top by the barrowload. Annie was in her teens when the brickworks finished, *"They didn't want hand-mades when the machines came in."*

Billy used to mend the old boat that he used to row across the creek in. It is likely that Alfred or even his father made it originally. It was certainly very old in 1953 and just about served them until they left. *"It wasn't very safe when the wind blew. He used to row up Newtown River and it used to go up and down."* She then said that Alfred made the boat and that he was a relation *"of Father's"* She always spoke of *"Father"*. It is known that Alfred had a little sailing boat with a cabin that he used to sail across to Lymington in to visit craft exhibitions and to enter some of the joinery and woodwork classes. He also won prizes. (See photostat) He may have been a boat builder in his youth or even an apprentice. He certainly was a good joiner and was a real craftsman in wood. Mary thinks that Alfred could have been her, Annie's, father's Uncle. Annie's sister, Louie, married a Mr Saunders / Sanders of Heberden farm and she had three children, John who lives at *"Shafl't"* or *"Shaaf'l't"*, Jim and Denise live at Yarmouth and Joan the daughter.

Annie misunderstood the question and thought we were asking who was in her family. There was Harry, Billy, Jim, Marie, (died when 12 years old, that was *"running behind the baker's van and jumping up and down what done it"*.) Louie, Mary, Ned (or Ted), Jim (at Yarmouth), works at Freshwater factory, he is retiring at end of September. John is already retired.

Memories of childhood. *"There's only me left."*

Photographs:- 1. Billy in boat. 2. Annie's dad in front room.

Two photos –

a) Eileen Calloway in front of drying shed and Henry Prangnell, (always eluded to as "Father")

b) ??? Maid Eileen when she was smaller with father. Taken at Brickfields, (the back of house), Elmsworth.

Two County Press photos - One used in 1950s article, the other, a good one of Billy and chimney. (Took copies.)