

This interview with George Robinson took place at 10.30am on 3rd December 2009 at the home of the interviewer, Dennis Tyerman.

Transcribed by Yvonne Bentley

Good morning George.

Good morning.

Were you born in Great Ayton?

No, I wasn't born in Great Ayton.

Where was the family home?

The family home was in Great Ayton. We have lived in Great Ayton, well all my life. Between the ages of, I think, 2 and 5, 2 and 6, I lived at Gribdale Terrace but the rest of the time I lived in the village, from about 1947 onwards. I don't know the exact date but round about that time. Just after 1947, after the bad winter.

Can you remember much about the house you first lived in?

Yes, well actually I lived in Cliffe Cottage but I don't remember much about that. We left that when I was about 2. But Gribdale Terrace was a place was a place where, how can I put it, now it is a place that people like to go to live because you have all the facilities and roads and telephones and water, everything like that. In them days, in the late 40's there was nothing. The water came from a stream into a gathering strip from a stream and it was pumped out. There was no electricity, no telephone; the nearest telephone was Powel's farm at the end of the road. There wasn't even a public telephone in them days. There was no sewerage. That was collected in the normal old way which they did in those days by men in carts. **(Dennis interjecting – the 'night soil' men).** The 'night soil men', absolutely. We went go to school by taxi. A man called Percy Dunning used to come up, pick us up and take us down to the school, many years ago. And he was quite a well known character. I'm sure a lot of people will remember him.

Did you have any brother and sisters?

No, not living in Ayton.

Can you tell me about your home life? What typical meals did you have in the old days?

The typical meals were Yorkshire pudding, vegetables and meat; well cooked, and that's how it was. Fried eggs, nothing fancy, just generally basic good food. A lot of vegetables seem to be grown by ourselves.

Did you have an allotment or a garden? What were the water supplies like?

The water supply in them days was what you would call very basic. In fact there was three of us; we got a germ and we ended up in West Lane Hospital with Scarlet Fever. There was three of us. Another one lives in the village – I won't give you his name. But all at the same time we were in West Lane Hospital for six weeks. I think there was a rat or something got into the collection tank in the water supply because I remember them baling it out and it was just a pump and it used to serve everybody. So that was how it was like really.

So it was Scarlet Fever you had? Yes. You don't hear about it nowadays. No. Not with antibiotics. That's right. How long were you in hospital? Six weeks we were in West Lane. And your parent's came to visit you? Yes, we used to get plenty of visitors. A very basic hospital as well. It certainly wasn't like it is today. It was just like one great big room; and that's it. Everybody's cup was hung on a nail at the end of the ward, and that was it. As many as possibly a dozen people in the ward. Six, seven, eight beds down each side. Something like that I remember.

When you were younger, did you ever get away for holidays?

No. Holidays – nobody had holidays. One holiday we did have was a club trip. The Great Ayton Working Men's Club trip, and that was the biggest event of the year, as far as holidays go. **Where did you get to?** We either used to go to Redcar or Whitby, and a train used to be commissioned and probably several carriages long, and everybody used to meet up at the station when we would go to Redcar for the day and lunch would be laid on somewhere and committee members used to give out rock and sweets on the way back. **(Dennis – Excellent!)** And that was it for many years when we were kids. I think on some occasions we used to go to Whitby but that was it – Redcar, that was our holidays. **Train from Great Ayton Station?** Yes, train from Great Ayton.

Were you registered with a doctor in the village?

Yes. **Who was the doctor?** The well known doctor at the time was Dr Waldie. And then along came Dr Dodd. Before him was Dr Murray and they were on the High Green. They were on the High Green until the 70's when the Health Centre was built. Just like a normal house, it used to be, everybody used to wait in one great big room with a fireplace; belting logs and all the rest out.

When you were at home was there any television?

No, no television. **Radio?** Radio, yes we used to have a radio, a battery radio. And the lights were the big oil lights which used to have glass funnels up the centre. That was our lighting arrangements. What else do you want to know?

We will move on to school days. Which particular school did you go to?

I came down from Gribdale when I first started, we went to the British School. Everybody went to the British School and we were there for two years. I think you had to be five to go, none of this going at four. So you could start in the summer term, Christmas term or whatever term. You had to be five years old to go to the British School and you went for two years. And depending which end of the village you lived at you went to either the top end school which was the Edward Kitching School or the bottom end school which was the Marwood Kitching School. Now I managed to get into the bottom end of the village because I had relatives there. **So there was a bit of letter writing went on at that time?** Yes. So we went to Marwood School and we were there until eleven. And then at eleven we went up to the Edward Kitching School.

Can you remember any of your teachers from your Marwood School?

The Marwood School yes, the headmaster was a Mr Bell, a Mr Bell and a Miss Grant. Both quite well known characters. Mr Bell retired and a Miss Woods came along and she was the headmistress for a while. So they were the teachers we had at the Marwood School. At the British School I can't tell you who we had because I can't remember any of them. At the Edward Kitching School there was a Bert Wilson, he was a well known character, and there was a Malcolm Bennett, he was another quite well known character; they were the two main ones. A Mr Milburn was the headmaster but before him, before I got there, there was a Mr Sharp there. Now there was also, because Stokesley School was supposed to have being completed which it wasn't, there was a bit of an overflow in our school. So what they did with our class, we all had to troupe up to the Ambulance Hall. So from about fourteen years old we all had to go up there and were taught by Mr Potter. Mr Potter was an art teacher and he used to take us for everything but about every two weeks Dorothy Harbottle would come up and give us a lesson. **What was her subject then?** I can't remember but it was quite an undisciplined going on. It was just the way it was in them days. They wouldn't allow it now but we used to carry crates of milk up there; two of us would get a crate of milk, one on each side and carry it up on a morning. And then we were kicked out at half past eleven because Mrs Bradley would be getting ready for the lunch times because the schools used to go up there for their lunch. And then we wouldn't be let back in until half-past one. That was our schooling up there.

I was going to ask you about discipline and you said "not very disciplined".

I mean not unruly disciplined. But certainly disciplined in a sense there was a lot of talking in class going on. I don't think there was any fighting going on, or anything like that. That was in the Ambulance Hall. In the Edward Kitching School, if there was any fighting we would be hawked in front of the teacher to the headmaster's room and we did get the cane. To get the cane was the accepted thing.

Did you have a visit from the school nurse?

Yes, we did get a visit from the school nurse. I used to have two paper-rounds in the village. I was always doing some work – I was always working. I used to have a problem with runny ears. The school nurse examined me and said I wasn't fit enough to do a job, so they had to sack me from my paper rounds. I was an unlucky soul wasn't I. Yes, so that was the school nurse.

Did you go to Sunday School George?

Yes, there was plenty of Sunday schools in the village. There was the church; they had a Sunday school, and there was the Methodists, they had a Sunday school. Miss Buckton was a big member of the Sunday school at the Methodists, and there was the Rosehill Chapel, there used to be a Sunday school there. So I mean as far as religious input in the village it was pretty good really. The Vicar was the Reverend Bradshaw and he was there for years and years. **And you were C of E?** Church of England, yes. And the Marwood School was Church of England and we used to get regular visits from the vicar, as we do today.

We will move over to your childhood generally. Did you have any particular friends?

Well yes, yes I was quite a mischievous child really, I won't bring my friends into it but we were all very much of a likeness. We used to make our own entertainment. Sometimes not so good and sometimes ok. **Any particular games that you played?** Well, we used to do quite a lot of fishing in the river. We used to be always swimming in the river. The river was quite a big part. Before Ayton Angling Club took over, and they took over about 1957/58 there used to be quiet a lot of trout in the river and it was a regular thing to see people with a fishing rod, fishing. They used to fish right away up past Little Ayton and up that way, and of course, Ayton Angling Club took over right up to the waterfall. So from the waterfall right down to the waterfall in Low Green that was like, anybody could fish it. You had to get a licence and you had to go to Everett's the cobblers to get the fishing licence. He must have had the franchise for it; that's where we used to go. So there was fishing and swimming. A lot of people used to have a bike, not a brand new one, but an old one, so there was quite a lot of cycling done around the area, and a lot of going around the hills. **So country pursuits really?** Yes, all sorts of things use to go on.

Did you make much of Bonfire Night?

Yes, there was always a big bonfire on the Low Green, a massive one, and where the Council houses are, like Central Way, that was a campsite, and there was always a big bonfire in there. And a lot of people had bonfires in the garden which was always an excuse to get rid of the rubbish. So, yes there was always some really big bonfires. Low Green was a very big one. The grass was scarred and never really got covered over because it was scarred from year to year. I think that they abandoned the bonfires, I don't know what year. They used to hold it in Les Martin's farm. Low Green bonfire was held up there. But I mean, us as kids used to go around collecting stuff for the bonfire. We would go to Laurie Byle's garage and Mayfield's garage and get redundant tyres and put them on. They used to give us rubbish to put on. All the kids had trailers and bogies and they used to fill it right up, and that was the way it was. **You mentioned the word bogies, you will have to explain what bogies are.** Well bogies is what we used to make ourselves. We would get a couple of pairs of pram wheels, and piece of board between. The two front wheels would move on a spindle in the second, like a bolt. Our feet would sit on them and we would have a piece of string on and somebody would push us, and we used to drag it or we used to go up towards the Station and we would race down to Great Ayton. I mean there were very few cars around and we would see who would get the furthest. **(George and Dennis have a good laugh).** If you got to, say the Friend's School Sanatorium where the little mini-roundabout is, you were doing well. **That's a good run.** Another big thing, we had colder winters then, was the sledging bank. A lot of people will know where Nanny Bean is. Its up towards the Monument. There is a big sledging bank there. When there was any snow people used to go up there in the hundreds because there was a big, long slope, all the way down towards Nanny Bean and there were little slopes that used to go down to where the point-to-point field used to be.

How did you do for pocket-money in early days? You didn't get any. You had to go out and earn some. **Excellent!** George and Dennis have a laugh together.

Can you remember any striking news events at the time that made an impact?

Striking news! Well there would be! I can't recall any at the moment. When Wilfred Pickles came to the village, I was about 15 or something like that then, that was a big impact. It was held in the Parochial Hall and that would only hold so many people. They knew they couldn't get everybody in so they had a ballot, a lottery, so that you had to put your name and address on a postcard and it went into one of these drum things and you turn the handle. It went into the Post Office and Hodgson's had the Post Office then. So everybody went in and they turned the wheel and so many names were drawn out. And of course there were so many VIP's which would guarantee a place, usually the gentry of the village. I won't mention their names but they were guaranteed a seat. But when you went to the actual show as I did go, all it was, it was a stage, a microphone on it, Mabel on the piano and Wilfred Pickles. And there was another guy but I can't remember his name. **Barney Colehan?** He used to be moving people around on the stage near the microphone. You know what I mean – if they were getting a bit too far away from the microphone he used to move them back. I can remember the people that ran it. There's only Len Heavisides now that I can remember; he's a little bit younger than me, he sings in the Apollo Choir. He's quite a well known pal of mine, I often talk to him. He actually sang on the show. Then there was cowboy which a lot of people will know. There was Hodgson – he was a part-time barber and full-time gravedigger. There was Mrs Stockdale. There was Mrs Stone, or something, she was the oldest person in the village. There were six of them. I can't remember who else was on, but that's who was on. They were quite a mixed bunch of characters. **And the Wilfred Pickles show was on National radio?** Yes, and all there was was a light, a red light, and when that red light was on they were transmitting, and then it went off. That's all there was. No big fancy equipment or anything like that. **And there were cash prizes for some of the contestants?** Yes, there was, there was cash money: "Give them the money Barney". Yes there was.

Can you remember any bad winters in your early days?

1947 was a pretty bad winter. It probably didn't go on for a long time but it was bad and I do remember a lot of snow. Travelling down from Gribdale down to school there was no traffic movement for a long while. There was some big walls of snow; maybe ten or fifteen foot high, and just a narrow track walking through them. The next really bad winter would be 1963 and although that was not a lot of snow there was a lot of frost and that seemed to go on right up 'til March. They were really the worst winters that I can remember. But we always used to get snow maybe for two or three days at a time, and we don't seem to get snow now.

Any memories of flooding in the village?

Yes, we used to get quiet a lot of floods. Not too high but certainly we used to get it breaking its banks. Certainly what they did at Stokesley, at the bottom end of Stokesley they straightened some bends out which helped a little bit but it still flooded. And then, round about the 60's I think it was, they put in a flood relief scheme. Just, sort of half way between Great Ayton and Stokesley and that has relieved a lot of the flooding. But it still floods. Only the other night I noticed it flooding at the quiz. I went down and just over where the bridges are to Holly Garth it had broken its banks there. But it did flood about five or six years ago. It was a Thursday night. It was a really bad, a lot of rain, and it did actually come up to the first step on the chapel steps. But that's the worst I have seen it for a long while. We used to get some floods at times when we weren't expecting floods when somebody used to let the water out at the Friends School. I remember one day we were down playing in the beck down by the stone bridge and all of a sudden the water came up about a foot high and we were in the middle of the river. What had happened, somebody had released water at the Friends School and it had come down. I mean we were ok, we were quite safe. It was summer time. There was no rain. All of a sudden the water came up and that was it.

Can you tell me about your first job that you took after leaving school?

Well, my first job was at Cockerill's shop. Now Cockerill's shop was where Tally's is in Station Road and that was really, I would say, the hub of the village. because two well known character's owned it. A lot of the old timers

will know who they were. They were brilliant people, and you could liken me to “Granville of Open All Hours”. I was the errand boy, and it was just a shop like that where you could buy everything, anything. There was no supermarkets in the village and if Walter Wilson’s at the bottom of the village ran out of stuff or Baurgh’s shop at the top ran out of stuff, we would all borrow between one another, to service our customers. There was a lot of cooperation. There was no animosity. If one shop wanted some cornflakes or we didn’t have any to give to our customers, we would go to Walter Wilson’s and borrow half a dozen, and as soon as our supply came in we would return them. We all used to work like that; the three shops. Not so much the very small shops. There were a lot of small shops. But that is how we used to go on. It was a brilliant relationship with everybody.

We will move on to leisure and hobbies. Did you have any hobbies as a young man?

Well, my hobby – I went into the building trade when I was seventeen. I always felt that I was gifted at it and that was what I wanted to do. I have always enjoyed the building industry, even though I have been in and out of it. For quiet a long time I worked at ICI and then left and went out of it and then back into it. I always wanted to be creating something and building. I remember as a child at Gribdale putting bricks together and building a little porch in the yard, and no training at all. And that is all I wanted to do, so I never had any fixed hobbies. I did dabble in short-wave radio for a while. I did read up on that. But I never went for an exam to transmit or anything like that but I certainly had a big radio and I used to listen to the short-wave people talking to one another and fine tuning. You used to get a guy in a car going round like a mobile short-wave enthusiast. I did do that at one time. **Were you interested in football or cricket?** In the village all the clubs and the pubs, and other establishments, used to have cricket teams, and there used to be a knock-out competition. So you used to have the Cons Club, the Working Men’s Club, The Royal Oak, and various other bodies would have a cricket team, and they would knock one another out. I mean that a team that always used to win was either the Royal Oak or the Great Ayton Working Men’s Club because they had the biggest catchment of people to play cricket. So that used to run every year and that used to be quite interesting and a big thing.

How about going to the pictures?

Were there any picture shows in Great Ayton? Ah, yes, now that’s an interesting one that. Every Friday evening there used to be a guy come up, and he used to go in the big room above the Con. Chapel. You know where the Con. Chapel is; right by the riverside. There was a big room up there and this guy used to come from the town, and from about 13, 14, 15, something like that I used to go up there – black and white movies. Some movies weren’t really suitable for kids but we used to watch ‘em. (giggles from George and Dennis). **Does any come to mind?** Well, I remember one day there was this bloke, I don’t know what they were going to do but they had him on a rope, and they had a fire under the rope, burning the rope, and when the fire burnt the rope he was going to fall, so it was like a slow death. I can’t remember much about it, but that type of thing. And then they used to advertise what was coming on next week. I mean we didn’t used to pay a lot of money but it used to be packed with people, and that was where it used to be. Then, of course, there used to be Stokesley cinema; that was in the Square. That was quite a big cinema at one time. That was more or less round about the 50’s I would say; 55/56 something like that **You say you didn’t pay very much for the entrance to the pictures. Can you remember how much it would be?** No I can’t but it would probably be 3d or something like that; three old pence.

Could you tell me about the village in the early days?

The village in the early days! Well, there wasn’t much traffic on it. There wasn’t a great deal of traffic at all. There was a few horses and a few trailers, and things like that. There was a fish-man from Guisborough used to come up. Rosie Good they used to call him, and he came up for many years. He used to sell fish off a horse-drawn cart. That was one but there used to be a few, I think, around, but there was that one in particular.

Can you tell me about the shops in the village?

Shops – right. Well I’m going to start at the bottom end of the village. I am talking about the Low Green; I’ll take you as far down as that. I can’t remember the shop at Guinea Pig Inn; that must have been before my time. There was, and it’s still there, but its been renewed, it’s a little cabin on the waterside and that used to be a café and a little bit of a sweet shop there. Several people have had it but I can’t recall their names. But that would be the lowest one that I can remember. Coming up there was a shop. There was Tweddle’s shop; Miss Tweddle she had

a sweet shop but its not there now. Across from the Con's Club, across the road, there's a footbridge and where the footbridge comes onto the Stokesley Road, the main Stokesley road, there was a little shop on the gable end of a house there, and that was Miss Tweddle's sweet shop. It was there for many years. It wasn't very big but that was all she seemed to sell. And as I say, it's a sad loss that that's gone. In Bridge Street was Colebeck's. That was a bike shop later on. It was a grocer's shop for a long while, and it belonged to a guy called Colebeck. In the corner where the bed and breakfast is now a few people have had that, but that was Monkman's, the greengrocers. That used to be quiet a hive of a shop really; quite a well known little shop was that. Basically they were the main ones down the bottom end. There was Fred Parker's butchers but that was more or less in Race Terrace which was round the corner. He had his own clients who went into the shop which was in his yard. Then there was Walter Wilson's shop on the corner, now called the Alternative Shop, I think. That was actually built by Dobson's the builders of Stokesley who I used to work for a short while. I can remember them talking about it many years ago – how they had to get the shape of the building, because its shaped a bit like a three-penny bit on that corner – and that was Walter Wilson's shop. It was quite the main shop in the area. Coming up the street there was a barber's shop as well, Brian Hodgson's barber's shop. That was right on the corner of the archway there, just opposite the square where the Cons. Chapel is. **Could you explain the Cons. Chapel?** That's the Congregational Church. Then there was up through the archway Fred Bottomley's joiner's shop. He was quite a character – I worked with him many years, and he was one of the undertakers of the village. Then next to him there was there was a little millinery shop, Miss Grayson's and that was really going back many years, I would think the 1910's/1920's and it never altered, and that was a quaint old shop. She was the type of person who used to sell everything and probably had it in stock for years. Any pins, ribbons, hats, whatever you wanted you could get there. **Was there anywhere where you could get men's clothing, for example?** Well there was but I'll come to that later. Then there was a butcher's shop – Joe Lowther's. Then we come up to where Dan O'Sullivan's place is. There were two shops there, various uses, like grocers shops and all sorts of things, I don't know much about them but there was two shops there. Where Saturdays is, the hairdressers, that wasn't a shop. When you come up on the left there's a dress shop now, that was Rowland's shop, and that was all boarded up for many years. And the little computer shop at the end wasn't there and the book shop at the other end wasn't there. They were later additions to the village. So there was just the Rowland's shop that was all boarded up. I never remember that being open in the early days. Joplin's wasn't there. There was Kitty's sweet shop on the other side of the road, and that was there for many years; Kitty Sanderson. Later on, down the back side, somebody turned part of it into a bit of a night club. **Can you explain "down the back side"?** Yes, down by the river, and it was called the Omeba. Although I never went in it – I was never old enough to go in it – it was some guy that had it, and they used to have flashing lights outside, and they used to sell drinks and one thing and another. It didn't go on for long. We've got to Beech Close now. Beech Close was not there it was just a row of terraced houses; stone cottages, but where the wine shop is that used to be Eddy Siggworth's butcher's shop and it later became Robert's the butchers. And that was a butcher's shop until it was turned into a wine shop. Ace Joinery over the road – that's had various uses. The earliest one I can remember, there was a guy call Pearson had it and he used to do all these fence panels and it was like a joiners shop, and things like that. He made quite a good business out of that until he actually moved on to somewhere else. Then coming up the village, we come to where Lowther's the butchers new shop is and that was two shops. One of them was Everett's the cobblers. I can't remember what the other one was but it was one of the cobbler's shops and they were well established business and they had a son called Alan Everett which was a big pal of mine, and he was well known by a lot of people, called Torchy Everett; that was his nickname. A lot of people my age will remember him. You are then coming up to the next house next to the village hall was where a guy used to have the Halifax Building Society. He had an agency so if you wanted to save money you used to go there to save it because that was the Halifax. We used to call it the Halifax house. They had a little plaque outside saying Halifax Building Society, and that's going back to my very early school days, but that's always been there. Then there is a new shop which is the Grayson's Paints it became, but that wasn't a shop. It was a florist but now it's a book shop but I'm not sure. But that wasn't a shop, it was Grayson's Paints. Then you've got Suggitt's which doubled in size in the 60's. They built the café extension on in the 60's. And just for interest sake that was done by Spencer's a well known builder in the area, who did a lot. Then we come up and we've got where the Museum is where there is the antique shop at the bottom. That was a bank – the Yorkshire Penny Bank, and one day a week you used to save your pennies there. There was also a little office which the water board; the Tees Valley Water Board used to take over. And that was taken over, I think, for one afternoon, or one day a year, or something like that when you could go and pay the 5/- a year water rates. That was like that for a lot of years. We've then got the Post Office on the corner; which was a Post Office for many years. Just a little poky shop, always busy, nothing else but a Post Office. Certainly some characters used to run that for many years. Then we come on to, in the 70's all that shop front was altered, and

there were quite a lot of little shops there. There was Miss Bow's had a little grocery shop there. And then there was Stowbart lived in there. He had a second-hand shop which was at the bottom end of the village – I'll come back to that later. Then there was Porky Bennison's the butchers – that's where McColl's is. Then we've got the Co-op, now you asked the question could you buy men's clothes anywhere – well, where Thompson's shop is now, that was the Co-op drapery side and that was run by Mr Brown. Next door was the co-op grocery side. All them buildings belonged to the Co-op. Then we've got Petch's shop; Petch's the butchers. Then, the other side of the Royal Oak where the Nat West Bank is, just in the corner there, there was Harold Petch's grocer's shop. He had a little grocer's shop in there. And where the Nat West Bank is, used to be where Worthy Pearson was, and that was a shop that you went in by a little gated entrance. Now, Harold Petch's shop, before that belonged to people called Dobson. Then there was the chemist at the end which belonged to Williamson and then a guy call Dilcock went in with him, and it was Williamson and Dilcock, and then it was just Dilcock after that for a while. Many years after Worthy Pearson moved over to Well Cottage where it is now. Before I go any further I just want to mention where the gas house is – Stowbart's second-hand shop. It's where the actual mill stream used to run under it. It's not there now but the actual stream which used to come up from the waterfall used to run through the second-hand shop which was turned into a house and there was a guy there called Stowbart and he used to have it full of second-hand furniture; good stuff. He used to buy it out of anywhere and it was in there for years. People used to go in and have a look around but people didn't have any money in them days; they were all poor. So that covers all the shops on the High Street virtually. There was no shop round the corner in Park Square. I believe years ago it was a barber's but I don't remember it as a barbers. It's like a dress shop now – that wasn't there. Going further round the corner, the café wasn't there, that is there now. The little Cooper's shop was there then. There were no shops in that area at all. You have to go further down to where the fish shop was; Mary Johnson's fish shop, and that was the end one next to where the barber's is now. The barber's wasn't there; that was just cowsheds. But later on after Mary left the fish shop it was a coffee bar. So in the late 50's early 60's it was turned into a coffee bar which all us young lads used to go there. It was quite a melting pot of young people with quite a few fights taking place outside. (George and Dennis have a laugh). We used to get motor bike lads and all sorts in them days. We've then got Cockerills shop up Station Road which you could buy (I don't think men's clothes) groceries, blankets and sheets and stuff like that. They did have a drapery side as well. Further up Station Road there was Harbottle's joiner's shop, and they were funeral undertakers and have been for lots of years. That's been there for as long as I remember. Coming up the street, where Sam's the bakery is, that was Tessie Ridswell's shop and she used to sell sweets and stuff and all sorts. She also had a little café there as well. Tessie Ridswell was a character. She was the goal keeper for the ladies football team. (Dennis) – **You haven't told me about the ladies football team.** I don't know much about it but she was the goal keeper. Oh, before Tessie's shop, there is like a little redundant place. That was a bike shop and later became a laundrette. But it was a bike shop called Nobbie Ingram's bike shop and he used to sell the odd bike and he used to repair them. Because if you had a puncture or anything like that, you used to take it there and you would get repaired. It was always busy. A busy little shop was that. So you've got Tess's and you are coming up the street to Hubbard's shop. I think its now a beauty shop, or something like that. That was Allenby's shop That would be Hubbard's in the 50's. His daughter, everybody was friendly with her, simply because she could bring a few sweets to school. We never had sweets but she would bring the odd one now and again. Then you've got Harbottle's shop which used to serve petrol across the footpath and that was knocked on the head when legislation came in which meant that petrol couldn't be sold across the footpath. And that was like a hardware shop where you could buy a bike in there which I bought myself. You could get paint and all sorts of stuff. Then when you come to the crossroads, the garage wasn't there, that was a garage put up in the 60's but its not there now. On the corner there was Norman Wilson's shop which was like a little grocer's shop. Then it later became a launderette. Then on the other side of the road where there are some flats there was Thomas's shop; another little grocer's shop, not very big but they used to sell sweets and loaves of bread and things like that. Then you come up the street and there was the fish shop and its still there. I always remember Frank Cook's fish shop. He was quite a well known character. His wife was Girly Cook, she lived in Romany Road for a while, I think she must have passed away now. Going down Arthur Street there is a little shop and they have re-opened it as a store, and that was Geoff's the grocers, and you go further on to the corner shop which has shut down, that was another cobbler's shop; Russell's the cobblers. That was the corner of John Street and Arthur Street. Then going over into John Street there was another little grocer's shop called Chapman's, that was about half-way down on the right hand side; not there now. Then they put up another shop about late 50's early 60's and that was on the corner of Lindon Grove/Captain Cook's Way, and that was Richardson's store which was a brand new shop, Richardson's of Stokesley. Another chap that ran that was Ernie Jackson who later became Steward of the Conservative Club. He was there for many years running that shop. Then you've got up from the fish shop in Newton Road, Baurgh's

stores. I used to live opposite there when I first got married. After Baurgh's stores, which is not there now, it is a dwelling, you come right the way up to where there is the garage there on the corner; and that was Laurie Byle's garage. That has been re-organised and made into a petrol station. But that was like a proper garage and used to take on one apprentice each year and used to serve petrol and also maintained cars. So really that has covered all the businesses, I think, in the village, round about the late 50's/60's. The only shop that I can't remember is the Guinea Pig Inn shop. I know there was one there but I can't remember it.

Fine, that's a very good, comprehensive, list of all the shops in Great Ayton.

What would you say were the biggest changes from that time to the present day?

The changes – there are hardly any businesses in the village now. Business in the village – there was Robson's the joiners. That was quite a big business now turned into dwellings now. There were Pearson's, now I've got down here times three because there were Pearson's the painters, Pearson's the builder, and Pearson's the haulage people; that was opposite the Edward Kitching School in Cliffe Terrace. They have gone. There was Steven's, a big garage company, opposite the Women's Institute, that's all disappeared and turned into dwellings. Moody's, the Council turned that into Council dwellings, and what have ya. So they are all massive changes. There are no businesses in the village at all now. They have all gone – Fred Bottomley's shop has gone. All of them have gone. Milk businesses. There used to be three milk businesses in the village. There was Laurie Smith, I think they called him Laurie Smith. There were Tate's at the top end of the village, and Petch's. Such a lot of changes.

Can we move on to transport, George? Can you remember any horse-drawn vehicles in your early days?

What, like horse-drawn buses? No, I can't remember any horse-drawn buses.

No, I mean were there any horse-drawn carts in your days?

Well the main one was Rosy Good, the fishmonger, who used to come in from Guisborough. I'm not sure if he came once or twice a week but he had a big business. Levis Peart's father Tom, he had a horse and cart, and he used to sell wood round the village, and kindling sticks, and stuff like that.

If you were wanting to get to work, how would you travel?

If I were travelling to Middlesbrough or out of the village you mean? Well, there were trains which were more frequent than what they are now. I mean you could probably go up to the station and get a train within an hour; that's the way it was. Steam trains, not diesel trains. Buses – there were always plenty of buses into Middlesbrough – every half hour there used to be a bus to Middlesbrough. In fact, at five o'clock and later on they used to put duplicates on. The duplicates used to run up from Middlesbrough and come up to Langbaugh corner and he would do a right and come down to the bottom end of the village and out. The other bus used to go the other way round the village and down to Stokesley. So there was always plenty of buses. There wasn't that many cars but quite a lot of people used to cycle to work, even to Middlesbrough. Quite a few people used to go down to the steel works on the bikes. One guy did it for many years. I don't think he's around now but that was the main mode of transport. There was only two people I can remember who had taxis. That was Percy Dunning had one and Sid Whitwell. Oh, yes there was Sid Whitwell's garage, and there was a potato merchant as well – Hoggart. I forgot about them. There was Whitwell and Hoggart right at the end of Cliffe Terrace. They were two businesses, and Whitwell used to have a taxi, I think, as well. There was also another business – buses where the Catholic Church is now. That was called Green Line Buses and they used to run from Stokesley to Saltburn, a regular thing. And there was always quite a few buses in there. I mean that's a big change. That being altered and the church being put there. When you look back the village has been tidied up a lot. Where the gas house was that was a right redundant area where the entrance into Marwood Drive is. Opposite the Buck there was two cottages there that were knocked down and made parking for the Buck. Next to there was George Ingledew's builder's yard. The tennis courts – I remember them going in. Only vaguely, but I remember them being put in. Football used to be played on the piece of grass, just in Mill Terrace, there.

Such a lot of changes – we will take a pause now George.