

BETTY COONE'S TRIP TO WOKING, ENGLAND

INTERVIEWER: Beth Sheehan

October 28, 1983, at the home of Betty Coone, Woking, Alberta, former Postmistress.

*(Betty Coone (BC) apparently showing pictures to Beth Sheehan (BS) about her trip to England. **This trip and pictures were recorded by Beth in conjunction with the twinning of Woking, England and Woking, Alberta, I believe.**)*

(The following is likely about a picture Betty had taken of her taxi driver.)

BC I don't know how that thing operates because he's got one leg all cocked up here, and he's sitting there, and driving in England is something you never forget, and you don't even want to look, it's horrible. He had his knee way up on the windshield. I don't know how he's operating that thing.

BS Does he do it to show how relaxed he is or what was the idea?

BC I have no idea.

BS Was he pressing anything with it, or was he just comfortable?

BC He was just comfortable? He was sitting there with one hand on the steering wheel and there was traffic going this way and that and his knee was way up on the windshield.

BS Maybe he was too big for the vehicle.

BC And the back seat is yea wide and when you get in the seat you could sit four quite comfortable on the seat here. And then at the back of the seat, that comes down, and you can sit along there and face each another. And they just go, like an anthill.

When we first got there, Freddie, Jane's husband, met me at Gatwick and he took me to their home which was early in the morning, and we had lunch. Jane had to work until noon. She came at noon. So she called and she said, Freddie, make lunch for yourself and Betty whatever you can find. I will be a little late.

Then she was going to take me over to Heathrow Airport to pick up my nephew and his wife. So we got all this organized and got in the car and here Jane was on the wrong side of the car, steering wheel on the wrong side. And anybody on that side when you are driving you got the right-of-way. I'm telling you the cars are coming in like this and they just cut right in and zoom around and away they go. But anyway nothing happened. But anyway Freddie, he started talking and he turned around, and of course he is sitting here where the darn steering wheel should be. And he turned around and said "now look at that yon castle over there." So I yelled, and Jim said, what is the matter, and I said I wish to heck he would put his hand on the steering wheel. And you know several times when he would turn around and start talking it would just give me a ripple on my spin because he should be driving, and then we would realize that Jane is on the other side and she is doing the driving. But I guess if you drive over there you must have nerves of steel.

BS And sidewalks too, don't you?

BC Yes. The streets are all narrow but some are worse than others, except the main streets there is barely room for two cars. And in the midst of that the bicycles are going like this, old grey haired people with baskets full of groceries on bicycles and going, and Jim said, this is my nephew, to drive a car around here is one thing but you would sure never get me on a bicycle.

(another picture)

This was in Chichester, it's an old fashioned, of course they are all old fashioned, brick and cobblestone streets. As we were going up, he said we will just go through here. It is a street but it was only one car wide. And if they want to stop and look at something they just stop, the car in front of you, and they just stop and they sightsee. And here was another car coming. I said, well somebody is going to have to back up because we are not going to be able to get through there. This other guy, he just went up on the sidewalk and went through and then he went down on the road. I wouldn't want to walk up on the sidewalks, but that is what they do, they just pull up on the sidewalks and pass. It was a real nice experience compared to the shoppers. *(just talking to Beth incoherently)*

BS My gosh, I wouldn't want to walk on the sidewalk.

BC My house is no svelte but it is comfortable, but their houses are as cold and as unhomey. At Jane's there wasn't a cushion and there wasn't a doily. It was almost like going into a business office. Everything was plain and bare.

BS I didn't think that was typical of the English. I thought they had things all over the place.

BC Anyone that I was in . . .

BS Mrs. Steve Lazaruk's house she didn't have a doily on anything, not a thing on top of anything, not on top of her china cabinet, not a thing on top of her HiFi, and she had all good furniture but there wasn't a thing on anything.

BC Now Jane's house when we drove into the yard, and everything has got a wall around it, or a fence around it of stone or brick or cement or flintstone. And you can't see in the yards until you get to the gate where the car drives in because the fences are all this high. When we got there here was the big house, you know it looked like quite a big house, but, my gosh, I could put it inside mine and run around it. But I think the walls are all this thick. Because when you got inside the door there wasn't anything there, and they are great for little cubbyholes. I came in the front door and there was a narrow hall and the upstairs went, and then when you got down here in under the stairs was the loo, and that is just a wash basin and a toilet, the bathroom was upstairs. But the loo was downstairs and they don't have the loo and the bathroom together. But you see this plumbing has all been put in lately because they didn't have anything. So you see they made these cubbyholes and they stuck in a loo, as they called it, in these cubbyholes.

BS I heard them talk about that on the show "The Jeffersons" when that Englishman came down and said, "I want to borrow your loo."

BC Well, the loo is strictly the toilet.

BS Don't they have a toilet in the bathroom upstairs?

BC Some of them, they don't. But now at Jane's cottage they did put in a sink and a complete set in the bathroom, but upstairs it was just a loo and a basin. And the tub and the toilet are the brightest orange you ever saw.

BS You're kidding?

BC They are the deepest colours. She must like that colour because in the cottage and in the house it's that orange as in that afghan and the toilet paper matches. The toilet paper was just as orange and everything that was in there was orange. It was cute. Then that morning we were over at the cottage and Jane she was fussing around and then she said the coffee is made so just make yourself at home. And excuse me she said, because I need to leave for a while because I have to "spend a penny" and away she went.

BS Spend a penny?

BC That's when we found out that is what they would say, where we would say "excuse me I have to go to the bathroom," or just "excuse me"; because you have to spend a penny over there because all the blame toilets it takes a penny to get in them.

(Another picture)

That was at the post office. This was the head postmaster in command and these were helpers, and we were having a good time.

(could be another picture)

That is where they wined and dined me, toured me and lunched me and all the rest of it.

BS It sounds like they are working right out here on your house *(I think she is referring to workers outside Betty's house.)*

BC Yes, right there.

(another picture)

And this is of a British Postie, that's what they call them over there, Postie. And his name is McLauren. I got their names on a paper. And then from there they took me to the Town Council office and that's where they presented me with "this."

BS This is a brand new cap too, isn't it? *(laughing)*

BC I thought it was just something they were putting on me, you know, for just having a picture taken of me just for fun. He said oh, no, those are especially for you to take home.

BS That's kind of cute isn't it, nicely made out of wood.

BC He said, I could be very proud of that because everybody doesn't get them and he said you can be assured I am the only one in Canada that has one.

BS Well, that could be the Coat of Arms.

BC Yes, the Coat of Arms of the Council of the Borough of Woking. Every borough, just like our provinces, has a different emblem.

BS Did he tell you what the motto meant?

BC No. Do you mean down at the bottom? I figured it meant the same as the top only in Latin, isn't it?

BS No, I don't think so. I don't know what that was but it looks like diligent, something and diligent, and that's "and" I don't know . . .

BC What language is it?

BS It's probably Latin. They usually do them in Latin.

BC I didn't know and they never said anything, and I just took it for granted that it was probably Woking Borough Council.

BS Maybe when you write Jane next time you could ask her, you know mention the plaque and see what the writing means.

BC Yes, if it has a different meaning than that, I would like to know.

BS I'm sure "et" is "and" and the next word is "diligent." Well, that means faithful or trustworthy, or dependable. Anyway for what it is worth there it is. Jane was so pleased when they gave this to me. She was jiggling all over. She was so thrilled that they gave me one and she kept saying, "That is something that is wonderful."

BS Well it's very nice anyway for you to have them.

BC Now at the Council office she said, well to put in your library of books and things. He gave me this. I suppose they don't use this anymore and it is an extra one that they had, so he said put that in your library and if there is anyone interested in history they might be interested in reading that.

BS 1974, 1975

BC Was that for the first years? Dorothy, I am sure she could do this, she has heard me go through this so many times and I said this is going to be the last. All this stuff is silk.

BS All those papers were heavy for you to pack with those books.

BC Those darn old books, I didn't dare leave them because Jane was so thrilled with everything they gave me that she was packing them in that bag. And she kept saying "you mustn't forget this" and "you mustn't forget that." "You must take this and you must take that."

And the courthouse, the Council office it's just a new building and in fact it isn't all quite finished yet, but they are all very proud of it. It is built much more on the style of our buildings. Along the balcony it's got planters, and plants in them, much more on our style. Where everything there is definitely old stone and old fashioned, so of course, every time they put up a new building it has to be christened and inaugurated into the community by Royalty. So they gave me these pictures.

This is the picture of the old building and this is the new building with steps going into it. Now this is the mayor, and this is the Duchess of Kent.

BS This is the new building?

BC No, you can't see it because they are going up the steps. But this is inside their new building, see you can see what I mean.

BS Oh, yes.

BC And that's the Duke of Gloucester, it's written on the back.

BS His Royal Highness the Duke of Gloucester officially opening Woking Borough Council's new civic offices on April 20, 1983 on his tour of the new 7 million pounds. (*Beth questioning the amount.*) He was accompanied by Mr. Graham Williams, finance director; former mayor Christopher Mitchell; and technical services director, Graham Cartland Glover.

BC Of course this is the same one only . . .

BS That is quite the outfit the Duchess has on, isn't it?

BC And I didn't get to meet the mayor because this party was all planned for the first Monday when I got there. But since my nephew and his wife were with me, well this really didn't include them and as he said to Jane now if you have things that you and Betty want to do just tell us and we will run and get lost. But she said "no" as they were only going to be there for a few days but we could change our plans. But of course during the next week the Mayor had to be away and the Postmaster General had to be away. So I got second in command, and they asked me if I wanted to have a picture of him in his outfit like this. And I didn't get the picture because Jane said she would send it and I haven't got it yet. The picture in the Council office when they gave me "this" with the second in command.

BS How come your nephew happened to be there at the same time? Had you arranged that before you went?

BC Well yes, when they heard I was going, and they were planning on going, he phoned and said how be it if we meet you there? And I said, great, so we had the first week together. So that was one week I didn't have to be alone. Because when you are alone in London it isn't exactly my cup of tea. And of course if you wanted to go on a tour, and I was over in a hotel near the Gatwick Airport, and if you wanted to go on a bus tour you had to go on the train, on the bus over to midtown in downtown London at the bus depot which was called "Victoria" and I wouldn't go over there alone even if they gave me London. I'll tell you, you know what bus depots are like in our country well it's only a drop in the bucket over there. There are millions of people, they are stoned, they are dark, they are under and around, and if you had to go to the bathroom that is absolutely out of it, because you go down to the pit, downstairs as the bathrooms are all downstairs and there are rocks ..

BS Just like the old bus depot in Edmonton.

BC But it's real scary. And I'm telling you there are people there from every nation, and they're thick, there is Chinese, there is Indians, there is Africans, there is everything and it is just like an anthill. I just couldn't, I just couldn't make myself go get in that mess alone. If you knew exactly where you were going and how you were going to do it, but if you get over there and have to ask, half of the time you can't understand what they tell you.

BS It's kind of interesting but these lamp posts that they have here (*probably referring to a picture*) are the kind they have in Tumbler Ridge.

BC Oh!

BS Just like that.

BC Is that Tumbler Ridge supposed to be some kind of a company town?

BS It's a company town.

BC I thought maybe they were building that whole thing up like an old fashion something . . .

BS Well, I think they are trying to coordinate the buildings. There is a lot of housing there now. I didn't find the houses too attractive, most of them, but the public buildings are very nice.

BC I suppose that the housing and so were put up quickly.

BS Not really, I don't think. I just didn't like the plans of them too much from the outside, maybe they are better inside. I thought there were a lot of nicer buildings put up around here than those.

(looking at gift)

BC This was my lace book, this was my gift from the paper, Jane Pierce and her co-workers there. Now that one's interesting.

BS Woking, one of the largest towns in Surrey, is known to many only as a railway junction and might seem to be the archetype of suburban dormitories with no past or any interest.

BC They say ninety thousand but I never saw, unless I wasn't in the right place, but what I saw of Woking when you got off at the railroad station, well the railroad station splits the town, because they started building it this way, and I guess they ran into water or something and they couldn't go any further so this is the old town, and now on the other side they are expanding up the hill and this is the new Woking and this is where the civic centre is going and the new buildings are going and on the other side are real old. But as far as the shopping centre and main street, my gosh, I would say it is only about two blocks. But houses, houses, they are as thick as hair-on-the-dog and there is no room in between. They were this way, this way, this way, and you couldn't hardly put your hand in between the houses. They were just thick.

BS That's why they have to build the walls thick.

BC I guess so, so the neighbors cannot hear you, but there's no space at all.

When you went from Gatwick Airport and over to downtown London, I guess it was about an hour and a half ride on the bus, and you just go past rows and rows and rows, and they are like apartments and they are as old as Methuselah and they are about three or four stories and there are windows just like this and they are all whitewashed and every window has a lace curtain. They are just lace curtains and as you go along you say, "Oh, those are pretty ones" and they are the same ones and you go for miles and it's just like that and you couldn't put your hand in between those, and they got a little front yard, about half the size of this room, but there is a little wall around it. There is an odd rose in there and a little bit of flowers, and then there's a door but it seems as though you go in from each side and you go down in here. Now whether there's an elevator, I don't imagine there's stairs, and then on top of all these things they've got all of these big stovepipes because every room has a fireplace and they have one general chimney and all these things go to it. So there is this one big chimney with seven, eight stovepipes coming out of it. So when you fly over it all you see are these stovepipes. They are just thick.

And as we were driving I would say just look at those lace curtains there are rows and rows of them.

BS It wouldn't do to come home drunk, would it?

BC You couldn't tell one from the other. Well, I said if I was going to go in business in England I think lace curtains would be ideal. So I said something like that to this lady about how I couldn't get over how

many lace curtains there are. She said, you never leave your windows open because we are British and we like our privacy. And I said our privacy was usually out at the end of the sidewalk.

Well anyway it was... They said when I was going over what was I going to do. I said there are only two things I wanted to do and one was go see the Changing of the Guards and the other one was go to a pub. Well, I did both.

BS Did you get soused when you went to the pub? You would have to get soused to finish it off right?

BC No

BS Did it feel like Coronation Street?

BC Yes, yes. And those little pubs they are real, they are dirty, they are smoky and they are little and they are ragged. And I tell you there are more brass pots than you can shake a stick at. Every pub they are hanging. They were hanging at every place you go into eat. The brass pots were hanging every place that had a fireplace. Even in the hotel, Jim said to Jane, you show us where there is a nice hotel because he said I am going to treat us all to supper tonight. She said over here is the best one that there is. She said it is the Spread Eagle. So Jim said, okay, you lead us we'll go. So we went to the Spread Eagle. Well, if that was the best thing I sure wouldn't want to eat in the worst. However, it was as old as the hills. It was all rock. And so when Jim got in there he said, where's the men's' room? Jane said, oh you mean the cloak room. Jim said I don't want to hang up my coat. Where is it – down below you go down to the coal pit. And the coal pit was just a place under the floor. All it was was an old rock basement, cellar, not a basement and that was the pub. And they had chairs made out of old barrels that were cut in half, and seats put in them. And there was mortar on the floor, like cement with rocks in them, and you walked like this most of the time. It had a bar and a counter and brass pots like you wouldn't believe.

BS Did they keep them all polished?

BC Well, yes, they seemed to be all shiny. And the drinks were all served warm.

BS Oh, Wow

BC They don't have refrigeration. Jim said, even that half pint of bitters at room temperature isn't too bad. I said I wouldn't try any of that stuff. I had trouble keeping up as it was so I didn't need anything to hinder me. But there were a lot of little pubs over at Singleton where Jane's cottage was. They are every two blocks. Now you see, and they are just little places. But you see, they have these for the labourers so when they came home they could stop at the pub and have their pint of bitters and they could stagger home. So they only had a two-block radius to go in. So you couldn't get lost on the way home. They were just little dugouts. And you got out on the step and there was an old smoky fireplace there with pots hanging around it and about six metal tables, just big enough to set a glass on and there were little stools that you sat on. And there you sat and had your pint of bitters then you went home.

BS So those pictures on Coronation Street are very true, because all those little shops look like holes in the wall.

BC They are, and you know even in downtown London there are no stores like we know them. There isn't any place where you could get hardware, and dry goods etc. and everything in the same place. And I don't think they have any such thing as a mall. I never heard them mention one. But each store is a

shop. And I know why they call them shops – because there is only one thing sold in them, they are small. If it is shoes, there is nothing but shoes. And I found out another thing those cobblestones are hard on shoes, because every third shop was a shoe shop in downtown London. The ones that intrigued me the most were the china shops. Beautiful china, gorgeous china. And each shop only had one kind of china in it. If it was Royal Dalton that is all it was, the next was all Wedgwood. The prices were great but who could carry dishes along with all these books. And the next shop was English bone china but it's only maybe just two patterns, just two special patterns. And then you go down the street and there is another one of English bone china but it has different patterns in it but only just maybe two. And then there was a Scotch shop and that sold only Scotch wool and Scotch shortbread. That was all that was sold in that shop. But they were all small just a hole in the wall.

So anyway the days we spent over in Woking and at Singleton at the cottage were the most interesting days of all because that was country and you saw country living and quaint things that you could ask questions about because you were with people that you knew, and that was interesting. But you take as far as downtown London that was wall to wall people and you run for your life. When you cross the street you run, and jump up on an island in the middle and you hang on there and when you get a break you run for the other side. And everybody is going at such a fast pace, holy cats, they are going and pushing and every place you go you have to queue up. This lady came to me and said, "Pardon me do we have to queue up?" I said, "Good Lord, don't ask me, I'm a foreigner too." But that means you had to stand in line, and you are standing just like sardines in a can. And if it happens that one person steps ahead that far and you don't step up there right away they are pounding you on the back and saying "get a move on, get a move on".

BS I would get claustrophobia. *(I think someone in the background may have said this.)*

BC Yes, you do. And I found there are three types of English people. There's very nice, very courteous but they are in the minority; then you have the next class who are very indifferent; and then you have your third type who are very rude. And I think they are, the indifferent and the rude, they are in the majority. The rude ones and the indifferent ones. There are not too many who are polite and will put themselves out to guide you or to help you. "Blow me, don't you know where you are going?" And I would say, "I don't really understand around here, so could you tell me again how to get there." Then they would go into a little more detail and show me how to get where I was going. The biggest majority of them just said "over there" and turn and walk away.

BS Isn't that too bad.

BC Well I guess it's because there are so many people there. Right? Every place you go it's like an anthill. And this is why I enjoyed it so much over at Jane's cottage. That was something else. However, that cottage and that property has been in her family's name since 1778. It's been handed down and it's made out of flintstone and slate roof and flintstone walls.

BS Did you take pictures?

BC Yes, but I don't have them. Jim has them, because every time we were taking pictures he said, "I'll take the pictures and you can get them from me because there was no use of us taking the same pictures." So, my sister phoned me and said he had some really good ones. Of course, I am supposed to be going down there so I will get them when I am down. But over there the countryside it's pretty. And every house is a castle over in the country and the castles are huge, just like Buckingham Palace, and there is one castle after another. They are on top of each other. And over at Buckingham Palace which I was

surprised at too; it is right on main street. Now I figured when we went to these places we would have to go in through iron gates and go through a parkland just to get into them. But no, the front of them is right on the street. And you see Buckingham Palace where the Queen comes out on the balcony for weddings etc. That strip that is in front of the Palace is for when they address the public but of course they have living quarters at the back of the Palace. But then there is Buckingham Palace and there is St. James Palace, then there's Charles place and there is Lord Nelson's Palace and they are just like this one right after another, and they go on for miles.

BS Just think of all the money that is wasted on that, when you think of all the people that work there and just for a few people.

BC This is what I thought too, but I got straightened out on that on this trip. Because then we went through Windsor Castle, they got all this beautiful stuff, this valuable stuff. I wouldn't want it, you wouldn't want it. We couldn't afford it. You wouldn't have a house that would hold it but it's been there for thousands of years. It is just as good on display and that is giving them work because they have to hire people to look after it.

BS What do they do, charge for it? Can you go through and see it?

BC Oh yes. There is a small charge. Windsor Castle that is where the Queen lives. They say that this is the one where she likes to live when she is in London, the best. But of course all these places where they have entertainment, I don't think they would have staff there all the time but I don't know.

BS They would have to have people there all the time otherwise they would take stuff out.

BC Oh yes they have caretakers because the stuff in there is worth millions of dollars.

BS Are there lots of guards?

BC And who would want it. Really? There was only one thing I wanted, and I wanted four chairs but they wouldn't give them to me.

BS And what was special about those four chairs?

BC They were gold and pink and I love pink and they were beautiful.

(looking at picture)

Now you see that's Windsor Castle and you see I figured you would have to go into an estate. You see there's a sidewalk here, that's on main street and that's the shops. This is the church and this is all castle. But you see now, this is the Queen's quarters, and this is the back of it. Now this is the front where the public go through, but this is the private. We didn't even get close enough to see this because it goes way up for miles. There's her own race track, and there's her own soccer field for Royalty, but they go in the back doors. The front is just for the public. And this is what I figured we were going to have to go through when they said we were going to the castle – well, we'll have to go through a great big parkland and go through iron gates and all the rest of it. But you don't, it is right on the sidewalk. And Buckingham Palace is the same. But all the rooms in there, I was in, and some aren't even pictured in that. And to show you how big those castles are, you have no idea but the next page will give you an idea of how big they are.

BS This is the grand staircase.

BC Now you see, this fellow here, this is old King Henry the VIII in his armour outfit. Now here is a life-size. So you see how big that statue is above it and these are life-size. Where you look at the mayor and they look like ornaments sitting on but they are life-size. Look at from here up to the roof. I about broke my neck in there because the ceilings are all just gorgeous.

BC Over there, other than this furniture sitting around, they've all got wood floors. Twice a week they have exhibit days when you can go through and then they have ropes that rope off just a path, and then they put down plywood for a path and the carpet is rolled up. The furniture is sitting there and you can go over there and see it from the roped-off area. And then you just go from one room into another, and into another. It is quite a cold place, nothing warm about it at all. So those couches and things in there in the Queen's room must be filled with cement as they have been there all these years and they don't have a dent in them. They are just as puffy as if they were new. Actually I think it is horse hair or something worse. And of course they all have gold arms and gold legs. And they are heavy.

BS It's too bad you couldn't have chipped a little of the gold off.

BC It's not solid gold, they must have awfully good spray paint over there. Because that all can't be gold. I would have pinched a little bit off this mirror if it had been. Now that was one of the castles we went through that was called Ludwick House.

BS I imagine that it has gold topping on it. It's probably not solid gold.

BC Yeah, but not really gold but a good gold spray. Now that mirror was about sixteen to twenty feet high.

BS Well it pretty well would have to be to show off the back here.

BC And that was the other end of that room. And when you walked in through those doors this mirror showed the whole room. The whole room was magnified in that mirror. And that was the room in Ludwick House and that was the outside of it.

BS They didn't have any chairs in there and no place to sit in the ballroom either.

BC No, they were dancing there.

BS Oh, I see you didn't sit there.

BC No, no, you just walked through here. And all the floors were wood and they were all made in pieces. Now these were all made/built by the Romans.

BS Well, people were far more ambitious in those days than they are now.

BC They chose them and made them work because this was all built by slaves.

BS And if they didn't they were beaten?

BC You better believe it.

(another picture)

Oh, I must tell you about this little lady when I got back to stay at Jane's place. Her neighbour couldn't keep me overnight but her neighbour next door had a "cot" as she called it. So she said she had room and she said she lived alone so I could stay overnight with her. This little cottage had a lot of chopped

up rooms and you went in here and this was her little vestibule and of course these here bathrooms were all added recently, and they had them in very odd places, because as soon as you went through the front door there was the bathroom. Wherever they had a little cubbyhole or a little closet then they put the loo in there because with all this stone they didn't want to destroy the cottage. Mainly the walls and of course they were all built out of stone. But of course she had it all redone. They were not like square timber like we would have in the ceiling but they were just trees and they were just slabbed on two sides but here were the knots and all and they were black. And she had it done smooth but she had all these black timbers showing as she wanted to keep its original effect. And then from this little lobby you went into her living room. And all across that wall was a fireplace. And this was the part that really thrilled me was this here great big huge fire pit that filled all that one wall. And over in that corner was an opening and you could see in behind the fireplace and on that wall, which I would say was about four feet of wall, it was just cement with rocks through it. Of course, they were just like this nothing smooth. I don't know whether she had done that or not but the rocks were out and she had wine bottles stuck in there with the necks sticking out. And I said, oh my gosh, you even got your own wine cellar. Well she said, that's what I made it into, or something like that. Do you know what it was originally? And of course it was in behind the fireplace and it was this little room and I would say it was about four feet wide, not much more than that, and the full length of the wall so it may be about twelve feet across the living room. Opposite the fireplace and up here in the corner was an oval window that had iron bars like a jail. Now she said, do you know what that was? No, I said I didn't have a clue. Now she said, that was the torture chamber for the chambermaid that didn't do her work properly. They put her in there and they cooked her. Could you imagine how hot that was in there when the fireplace was going, and they put the chambermaids in there to punish them? I'll bet there was a good many of them got cooked when they went away and forgot them. And all there was is this window with the bars on for air.

BS They were certainly ornery to a lot of them.

BS They were cruel, they were cruel. And she said it was very important that she kept that – she got it opened at one end and that's why she put her wine bottles in there. I'm sure glad I wasn't around then as I surely would have been cooked. If the maid didn't clean the chambers properly and didn't do her work properly she got stuck in there. I said, Wow. But her stairs were about this wide and every one of them and every place we were in that had an upstairs, it went this way and then it turned and then they got those pie-shaped steps and then it went up again. And those stairs going up in Jane's cottage that was a quaint one, about yea wide and the steps about this far apart. Every morning as long as we were there she came up the stairs and knocked on the door with a tray of tea and biscuits.

BS Jane did? No way. *(Beth talking about a house they might have bought except for the small stairways.)*

BC That is exactly the way they are. And there were a lot of places, they called them "Tea Houses" on the main street and downstairs was a little bake shop. And, oh they had crumpets and puff pastry and things like that, and then you could get a coffee, and then you went up one of these little crooked old stairs where they had tables and chairs, so you would go upstairs to eat. But you couldn't carry the doggoned tray up and down those stairs unless you were pretty steady on your feet because they were only about this wide. So one would take the tray with the biscuits on it, and the other one would take the mug of coffee and go up these stairs because you couldn't get around on these pie shaped stairs because you had to get up against the wall while it wasn't enough room for your elbows to carry the

tray so it was a real trick to manoeuvre yourself up and down those stairs. And they are all narrow. A person could get stuck in there for sure.

BS Twenty four? Twenty eight inches?

BC Not any more than that. So when you go down you just got your backside up against the wall and you kinda slid down the wall . . .

BS The walls must have been well polished. *(laughing and talking)*

BC Everything was stone and cement. *(Other people talking about some other place, not quite clear)*

This was another part that I didn't understand, both Jim and I. Now over at the cottage that Jane had, now the last ones to live in it, of course it was a big estate at one time. They drove us around and it covered acres. And in her ancestors' time it was a horse stable where they groomed horses, and they had these little lean-to sheds with stalls like for the horses. And, oh gosh, it covered a great plot of land and then there were cottages here and there. One was for the gardener, one was for the person who polished the carriages, one was for the person who kept the harnesses polished and one kept for putting shoes on the horses, and all these little cottages. But there was the main houses and that was the Lord, and you know they still got that feudal system going whether they want to admit it or not. And I would say, what's that big building over there, and she would say, that's the Lord' house or his manor.

BS An awful lot of them are called Lords anyway, aren't they?

BC Yes, it's Lord this, and Lord that. So you see now, they couldn't afford to keep the property up so as times changed part of the property was sold, this bit was sold and that bit was sold because they couldn't afford to keep it all up. But they maintained the cottage. Now the cottage was joined on to the main house. The Lord's house sits here and the cottage is attached on to it here. But you can't get from the Lord's house to the cottage. Because the cottage that was the maids that lived in the cottage. But her mother and father lived out there during the last years in the cottage until they passed away and then it was left to Jane. Now Jane, they maintain it, they keep up this cottage, they pay the taxes, they do the repairs, and they also pay rent to the landlord. But I figured what it is all about when I got home. I tried to ask, and Jim asked, but she made us feel stupid so we quite asking. I said, if this belongs to you and you pay taxes on it, and you maintain it, why do you pay rent? Well, she said, because he is the landlord. So you see they don't own the land. They just own the buildings. And I didn't figure that one out until after I got home. Because she said, he's the Lord and you have to pay the Lord, the landlord, rent. I didn't ask any more questions. But that didn't make any sense to me because if I paid the taxes and did the upkeep then I don't see why I should pay rent. She said, oh you know it takes a terrific amount of money to keep things up in England.

(further talking and laughing amongst them)

Transcribed by Grace Wallace

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