

Facts of family

- born in 1934. 5years old when war started in 1939, but memory OK from 5 years old.
- 3 persons@ 75 Wyken Ave; father, mother & brother [brother 12 yrs older]
- a suburban terraced house near Ansty Rd on Leicester side of Coventry
- started Stoke Council School in early Sept & travelled by bus

Father Jowet car used for travel to Bradford, Yorkshire. Father drove before the war.
 When the war came the car was put on bricks in the back garden as petrol rationing began.
 After that, train travel was used to get to Bradford.
 He learnt machine tool making at Jowets, a car manufacturer at Idle near Bradford [At Idle there was an 'Idle working men's club!'] He left Bradford for the Coventry car industry when the Jowet factory had a fire in the 1920's.
 In the war by day he worked as a Tool-maker. He took a bus to a car factory in Coventry.
 When WW2 came, his high-strength steel tools were used for making aircraft parts instead of cars
 At night he was Church Deacon, ran the Young Person's Fellowship, organised the dramatic society, was a model engineer [O gauge] and an air-raid warden.
 [once he went out in a raid, but mother would not say where he went, ■ suspect to shield me]

He made me a model armoured car
 He taught me the basics of model engineering
 He later gave me advice on career, "if a job is worth doing, it is worth doing properly"

Brother Frank, studied at technical college by day'
 He taught me to draw in perspective [from biplane drawing in bedroom]
 He made plastic 'frog' model aircraft and kept them in the largest drawer in the chest of drawers.
 He was in the home guard at night, and this gave me much excitement. [told how to kill Germans, for example]
 When he was older, he volunteered for RAF. [Royal Air Force]
 He was sent to South Africa to train for bomber command.
 His letters to home suggested he had a good time. He met a girl called Queeny.
 When he finished his training he came to UK bases in East Anglia
 He was a pathfinder navigator.
 He surprised me occasionally when he was 'on leave' because I would find him in my bed on waking!
 He once showed me;-silk scarf with map, collar stud compass, and a revolver! I thought 'How Exciting!
 He volunteered for a second tour as pathfinder. Each 'tour' had 30 flights in it.
 He once brought home an RAF friend from Norway, and we all went to Kenilworth Castle.
 [The friend used his climbing skills at the castle.] It was even more exiting!
 My brother's DFC was sent in the post after war;- disappointment at being denied a trip to Buckingham Palace, but the local newspaper had a photo of my brother.
 He then married a local girl, [so Ed disappointed at still having no brother to play with.]

Mother was always singing to herself or playing the piano
 As a HOUSEWIFE she spent time in kitchen or pantry trying to make our rations go round.

Food was rationed, on coupons, and we had no frig, TV, central heating etc. Milk was kept cool by standing it in water.

As a COOK food rationing meant all plates had to be totally cleared.

As a PROTECTOR : Mum and I used to go under the stairs when screeching bombs fell and I don't know which I feared most- my mother jumping on me, or the German bombs! [I leant afterwards that some mothers got killed and the child lived, so I should be very grateful really]

She was also a COMFORTER. This became obvious when a neighbour-mother lost her navigator son in bomber command, and my mother and her were locked together.

[I never again wish to witness such a scene.]

She was an ADVISER 'if at first you don't succeed, try try again' and 'third time lucky'.

my expenences

- aged 5-11, no dates as they did not seem important at that age. EVENTS ONLY in my memory.
-at start of war or before, IRA [Irish Republican Army] bomb went off next to a shop in the town centre.

-picked up feelings of resentment against Irish and Jews.

-drew model aircraft, when Frank away, in pages of sketchbook I was given

-listened to radio: 'Workers Playtime'. Music by Eric Cotes "Calling All Workers"

-Tommy Handley comedy show was favourite on radio.

-excitement in everything.

-training aircraft overhead recognised from 'Observer' Magazine. Never any war-planes, much to my disappointment.

-gas-masks had to be taken everywhere as a result of gas being used in the first WW.

-siren drill,- 2 types 'take cover' and 'all clear'. [sirens were on posts with speakers attached]

-town railings were cut for the war-effort

-"this is Fumf speaking" took mic out of Mr Joyce, Irish Nazi supporter, who's propaganda broadcast began "Germany speaking"

-I had to count the number of bags of coal dropped into the coal-house as fuel was rationed

-I climbed over debris and broken glass from a bombed house while walking to a piano lesson.

-Halifax buses and other strange buses were used after the town's own buses had been destroyed.

-walking to cousins to play with but seeing 'land-mine' hanging from a lamp or telegraph pole.

[Luckily it had been made safe by a bomb diposal team]

-asked Mother "how do babies become?". No answer given, so brother asked.

-several primary schools;- initially Stoke Council, then Wyken institute, then Walsgrave village, finally Ravensdale Rd school. [Marbles in gutter on way, and eggs bought at last school for 6d by Head Teacher, Mrs McQueen]

-primary education broken as a result.

-seeing strange vehicles towards end of war;- RAF long trailers, US army lorries [longer than ours], and jeeps. [some towing both limber trailers and field guns]

-at cinema saw troops entering BELSEN. I was shocked and I realised that war was not exciting.

-lastly, news that an Aunt had lost her husband in a submarine.

END of WAR in EUROPE

Peace 1945;- street parties, and Japan surrenders later in 1945 after 2 a-bombs.

Jowet car went for scrap.

Secondary education

11 plus exams, resulted in me being interviewed at 'Council House', [town hall].

"why did you not answer question x?" - 'because I was not taught about that'.

-visited an exhibition;- 'What the new City Centre of Coventry will be like'.

surprise letter, saying that I had been awarded place at King Henry VIII grammar school.

WOW - [parents could not have afforded this before the war]

but no repeat years. [so pressure on me]

the grammar school was the best thing that has ever happened to me.

it made me think;- 'Thought' was rated higher than 'Dogma'.

Joan returned from evacuation in late 1940's.

I wanted to leave after 5th form to take a job, but father said 'NO, BACK TO SCHOOL'.

inter-grammar-school music competition won by a confident Miss Angela James who played

'Moonlight Sonata' by Beethoven on the piano. [GES lost, playing a different Beethoven sonata! Lesson learnt;- first of many:- importance of learning from failures].

I ended up in the maths 6th form, taking four A levels. While at KH VIII a new School Hall was built and inside were pinned up the designs for the competition of the new Cathedral. The eventual winner was Basil Spence. Career of mine was then decided.

Further education, romance and politics

Was privileged to go to Liverpool University to read Architecture and then Planning.

I decided in 1956 that the love of my life was Joan.

my thesis in architecture, in 1957, was a Central Library on a bombed site next to the old & new Cathedrals, [at this stage the new had just started] and to give the background for my design, I cadged drawings from Basil Spence and drew what I thought it would be like when finished.

In MCD course, learnt about Acts of Parliament prepared in WW2, including authorising NEW TOWNS & PLANNING.

MARRIED JOAN 1959

I recently learnt that in WW2 there was coalition in government of all major parties. Stimulated thoughts on political systems, not a particular party.

Career from 1958-1993, in private practice, Peterborough Development Corporation [a central government agency] and Buckinghamshire County Council

We moved to Aylesbury 1974, and then to Weston Turville in 1996 due to Joan's increasing disability. [she was diagnosed with rheumatoid-arthritis in 1987 and died in 2017.]

End of part 2

QUOTE TIMES FEB 1940

Ansty aerodrome [training] was bombed in 1940 first, then 40 raids on Coventry. In all, 1252 people killed. In one early raid, a lone Stuka dive-bombed a factory then machine-gunned two girls. Fortunately it missed, but word got around, so I took the magazine 'Observer' to decide if it was "one of our's or one of their's". In a subsequent early raid, the centre and the Cathedral were hit but the fires were put out .

Later, the biggest raid was 14/15-11-1940, 'Moonlight Sonata', when the centre & Cathedral burned. The raid was from 7pm to 6am. Some 450 to 500 bombers each dropped 1 ton on the centre, factories and homes. There were 1,600 high-explosive and 30,000 incendiary bombs in total. Luckily, commuting had begun as a result of previous raids and the shops were closed, but 568 were killed, 863 seriously injured and 343 slightly. Tramlines were up in the air. The centre was destroyed, gas mains burned, mains for electricity, water and sewerage were cut, so water had to be boiled.

Homes; 2306 wrecked & 42,000 damaged.

Some 71 factories hit ,but some 'shadow factories' were not hit.

MASS OBSERVATION said that Coventry looked like YPRES but added that most residents did not want retribution. Mass graves and many unexploded bombs.

Other towns were hit. Gradually bombers were taken from raids on UK, as secret preparations for invasion of Germany's ally, Russia, went ahead. Raids on Coventry lasted until August 1942.

Europe v Japan

The ALLIES decided to tackle Europe first then Japan. Germany capitulated as a result of conventional means. In Japan, only the total elimination of cities, due to atom bombs, caused the government to cave in; NOT carpet bombing as in Germany and earlier, Coventry and other cities.

Outcome of WW2.

Everybody agrees that if it were not for US, Russia, the Empire, and Bletchley Park, the war may have turned out differently. The allies won, but some 112m service personnel were killed.

Germany had superior weapons apart from the Spitfire. [Story of Ernest Lemon-if time permits]

Battle of Britain

Everybody has heard of this, but have they thought of the consequences? If it had gone in favour of the Germans, my father and brother might have been lost by invasion. As it was won by the RAF, how could the Germans then bring us to our knees? By starvation [U-boats] and by bombing? Hence the bombing of our ports and cities. Water guided them to ports and London, but Plendel and his radio beams then guided them inland to places like Coventry, makers of military hardware.

WW2 NORMALLY features separate acts of heroism and the blockades. These are well known; but my angle is different.

My main conclusions on the bombing of central Coventry -

- 1] Night-fighters came too late
- 2] Chance and Probability decided who lived and who did not.
- 3] Coventry's Cathedral was central.
- 4] Coventry's deaths were insignificant contrasted with the total dead [of some 50m in WW2], therefore why so much publicity? [This question in no way reflects on the sufferings of Coventrians]
- 5] Coventry was the one of the first to be major target inland by intersecting radio beams.

- 6] Coventry demonstrated resilience and continued to make war products.
- 7] The bombing backfired on the Nazis, internationally.
- 8] Conspiracy theories reigned but evacuation was the key issue. Roads might be blocked thus preventing others coming in to help. In any event, we did not know it was to be Coventry until it was too late to plan an evacuation.

Conclusions on WW2

- 1] There is no evidence according to London records, that Germany has apologised to UK for starting 2 world wars, though it has apologised for the holocaust.
- 2] Hitler was elected democratically, and it was a setback for democracy. [Was Hitler's rise to power based on populism? 'Populism' versus 'experts' remains a key issue,]
- 3] Communist Russia was initially on Hitler's side. [no wonder Russia despises the West]
- 4] Successful Britain was governed by a coalition of all major parties, by invitation of the Conservative government.
- 5] The RAF and the US air force bombed German cities, but their populations did not break either.
- 6] There are two different types of war, each requiring different approaches to avoidance : conventional or nuclear.
- 7] The approaches appear to be Churchill Oaw jaw] or" Putin".
- 8] QUOTE: Carl von Clausewitz "war is nothing but a continuation of politics by other means"

Effects on both Joan and me.

Excitement, the Cathedral in more ways than one, learning, the past including family history, no foreign and modern languages, balance in all things especially between theory and practicality, confidence, realism with bias towards optimism. Continuing vacancies. Interest in Political systems. Dislike of war. Career & moves.

Additional effect on Me

Emphasis on probability. How to avoid wars through political methods. [ie how to avoid another Hitler]

Political Implications

Joan said "there are 2 kinds of people; those who like people and those who like things". Most women like people, and most men like things especially those things used in wars. I combined this with my motto 'balance in all things'. Women and men should be treated equally as should anyone with different views. My conclusions are that men and women both have different things to offer, therefore both need to be used in as many situations as possible, including politics.

The democratic system needs improving. Also in politics thoughtful people can come from ANY party, so their talents should be used in the national interest. [better than shouting at the opposite party in Parliament!] Role models are important. This suggests a coalition in times of stress, as in WW2. Is the present time one of these?

Enough of the serious stuff

My HEROS

My family of three

Joan and her family also of three

Those in Coventry who were harmed or became carers

Churchill [everybody's hero by saving Britain, and then won with the help of US, Russia, the declining Empire & Bletchley, Park] He was master of politics, military history, oratory and management. He learned from his mistakes.

He said that democracy is the best form of government yet invented, despite it's drawbacks.

He invented the phrase, [the stuff of diplomacy], JAW JAW, not WAR WAR.

The FEW, [provided this is interpreted widely]

Frederick Taylor of Aylesbury Grammar School who wrote the thick book

The Policemen who when the King visited Coventry asked "will we knock Hitler's block off?" The crowd shouted "Yes".

The Lady who walked from Coventry and her husband asked why it was so heavy? She replied

"Hitler had her windows and her three-piece-suite, but was not having her Christmas Puddings she had saved all those coupons for to get the fruit"!

end

parts. Wickman's manufactured tungsten-carbide-tipped machine tools and, later, also armour-piercing shells.

Not least, there was the VHF (Very High Frequency) Radio Link, equipment developed and made by GEC at its Copsewood telephone and radio works, three miles east of the city centre. Using this advanced airborne communications device, while in flight, commanders could stay in constant touch with their formations as well as with their bases. By the autumn of 1940 this had been introduced widely, though not universally, into Fighter Command. It would be some time before the Luftwaffe could match this, and superior VHF technology remained a crucial British advantage throughout the war.

During the lull that extended through the first winter of the war, *The Times* in London published a series of occasional articles, appearing under the heading, 'Great Britain in War-Time', about how different towns and regions of Britain were contributing to the war effort. The fifth of these was entitled 'Coventry's Task', and appeared on 8 February 1940. 'Coventry,' the article reminded its readers, 'is almost a great part of the machine tool industry, which in war-time might almost be termed a master-key industry. Coventry makes the machines that make the munitions. It is therefore contributing to the production of war supplies not only directly, in its own million factories, but by equipping engineering shops all over the country with precision tools.' Then came the paragraph on the shadow factories:

The principal war task allotted to Coventry is to turn out aeroplanes, aero-engines, and aircraft accessories, besides machine tools. The so-called shadow factories for aircraft construction are to-day things of no great importance; but the factories which are in Coventry will all be in shadow factories.

government circles), this 1,200 word article, highlighting Coventry's rapid and continuing expansion and its crucial importance to British wartime armaments production, reads (certainly with hindsight) practically like an invitation for the Luftwaffe to bomb the city with all its might and main.

In the late spring of 1940, with production dramatically stepped up to cope with the threat from the German successes in the West, the population of Coventry was growing at a rate of a thousand a month. Unemployment afflicted, so *The Times* said, less than 2 per cent of the insured population. There was already a shortage of accommodation for the newcomers, with the city authorities forced to set up a lodgings exchange service, but this did nothing to deter eager job seekers. Operatives in the factories boasted in the *Times* article were working long hours with a lot of overtime, they were also making what was, by normal standards, very good money, and some earning very good wages indeed.

A social research organisation, Mass Observation - best known for its massive collection of individuals who recorded the details of their everyday lives - took the financial pulse of Coventry during the months when the phoney war was turning into a real war. More precisely, in May/June 1940 it carried out a survey on behalf of the National Savings movement, concentrating on two areas of the country. The survey compared income, standards of living and attitudes towards money and saving, first in Coventry (described as 'a town which has seen a very definite boom through the expansion of arms manufacture'), and second in what was then considered a typical working-class area of London: the borough of Islington.

'Apart from rationing,' the report remarked, 'Coventry is maintaining its pre-war standard against the rise in prices... Smart lodges in the streets, prosperous looking homes, busy public houses, crowded shops, long queues outside cinemas, gave an air of vitality

TIMES quote

5 July 2008



BLETCHLEY AREA GROUP

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1ber 2007 Meeting

Life is full of surprises, and the beginning of our first of the session was no exception, at least for me. I gave a talk called 'Transition Period on the LMS', which really meant much, we got a talk entitled 'Sir Ernest OBE - 'The Enigmatic Engineer'. This was a much more fun, and how very interesting it turned out to be. Our speakers were Keith Harcourt and Terry Jenkins. Keith, of course is HMRS and spoke of the subject's railway career, and Terry spoke on Lemon's background and his work outside the LMS during the war years and immediately after.

Most of us know precious little about the man. We know of him as a stop-gap CME between Henry Fowler and

his career after Stanier arrived became rather obscure. Stanier, with a background of carriage and wagon work,

was interesting. Because no shiny new engine classes emerged during his period as CME, literature has rather passed him by. I think Terry showed us that here was a man who achieved a lot for the Midland to start with, and for the LMS to follow. His origins were humble, the youngest son of a farmer in a small Dorset village, born in December 1878. He would have left school in 1896.

His parents must have attracted the attention of a Professor who had married the daughter of the village's rector. In 1896 he appears as an apprentice at North British Locomotive Works, from 1900 to 1905, and then at the loco running works at Inverness, on the Highland Railway. He left the loco works briefly to join Hurst Nelson the wagon builders, but returned to Chesterfield for part of his time, because we know of him as Chief Wagon Inspector for the Midland Railway, in 1911. By 1917 he had become carriage Works Manager at Derby, and carried on the rethinking of the process of carriage design and building started by his predecessor. Here he had to break through many manufacturing customs, and cries of, "Oh no, it can't be done any other way here". He standardised component parts of carriage design and insisted on accurate machining of all parts so that they fitted together properly first time, and of being taken back to the joinery for 'a little bit more to be taken off here, please'. Had he minded he could have gone one into the flat pack furniture business and made a fortune decades before IKEA.

As Divisional C&W Superintendent at Derby his remit included Earlstown and Newton Heath, and he reduced the general repair time for coaches from 59 days to 14. As claimed that a new coach could be assembled in 24 hours. One hour is a desperately short time, and I think that a lot of strategic placing of components and assembly was involved. Didn't Crewe claim to have built one of

could improve anything he cared to look at. No doubt he started a lot of things running during his year as CME. His elevation to one of three vice-presidents put him firmly in the LMS top rank, to promote scientific management across the whole spectrum of the LMS railway - quite some remit.

He found scope for savings in all departments not really surprising in an organisation the size of the LMS, with all sorts of pre-grouping differences still alive and well. He had his own strength of personality to push things through against all manner of entrenched opposition, and had Stamp's backing to keep the worst criticism at bay.

In 1938 he can't call from another aircraft engineer, when he was seconded to the Air Ministry for two years to become a member of the aircraft production committee. He gathered that the Germans were realising that Hitler was a real menace, and that a war with Germany was an almost certainty sooner or

later. The Germans were streets ahead of us both in numbers and quality of aircraft, and something absolutely fundamental had to be done for the RAF to catch up on both counts.

The aircraft building companies were all quite small, and still run by their founders in many cases. Such orders as there were had rather been dished out on a 'one-for-you, one-for-you' basis, with a lot of time being wasted and some quite unsuitable planes being ordered. Even the builders of good planes were in a mess. Lemon went down to Southampton to find that they had lots of hodies of Spitfires, but hardly any Hurricanes: because wings were difficult to make. Lemon charged into this sort of mess; he was largely responsible for the building of 'shadow' factories for line assembly of planes as the expected cries of, "You can't build high performance planes on a production line basis", plus the pernicious system that wants endless modifications to be made to the plane design, stopping production over and over again to incorporate these changes. He insisted that planes be built, and modifications could be done later.

What about coal engines in one working day? Nobody denied that a lot of strategic preparation had taken place.

By now Lemon had been recognised as a future star, and in 1930 the LMS president gave him a remit to study and recommend improvements across the board, over and above his regular duties. It was this rising stardom that led Stamp to name him into the C&W's seat in 1931. He didn't know much locomotive engineering but was a tremendous manager, and

in 1940, when his second son
passed away.
He had
achieved much for the RAF, but
Beaverbrook got most of the credit. The
LMS that he went back to had changed a lot.
Railways were under government control.
Any major expenditure was now out of the
question, but there was plenty of scope for
improving the way of doing things. But the
death of Lord Stamp removed a powerful ally,
and no doubt Lemon found things the more
difficult. He was charged with the task of
framing what should happen to the railway
system after the war, but found the other
railways most difficult to work with. By

December 1942 he was clearly unwell, and the
board told him to retire. He clearly had some sort of
massive nervous and physical breakdown, and was out of
action for a year or two. He undertook a few government
tasks later, but ceased work because of further ill-health in
1950. He died in 1954.

"-- 'This' was a fascinating talk about a railwayman of
whom very little was known until now. He did tremendous
work for both the LMS and the Country, but we have never
heard it all put together until now. Our grateful thanks to Keith
and Terry for letting a lot of light into a dark corner. Any
forthcoming book is bound to be a winner.