

Sheila Llewellyn

Time	Topic / Event
0.00	May not know 'Sheila' – Llew.
0.10	<i>Where were you born?</i> Not in FoD – sometimes taken as Norfolk, sometimes as Suffolk as boundary moves - Thetford. Both parents were from Ross-on-Wye but at marriage father's job was in Thetford – Local government job but a different name, possibly Poor Law.
0.56	Parents were musical. Joined Bury St Edmunds Operatic Society. Father – sang tenor solos. When he left was given picture of Norwich Cathedral. Mother was always on the stage.
1.22	<i>Was your first schooling there?</i> No, came back to live in Dursley. First school was Cotswold Preparatory School in Dursley – a Montessori school. Learnt French. The head was a German – a Miss Hurd. An excellent grounding. There until aged 8. Selected to be a dwarf in the Grammar School part – chose small girls.
2.26	On moving to Cinderford mother looked for a private school. Went to Hillside school on Abbey Street. The building is now flats – opposite (former) Catholic manse. There until aged 10, then took entrance exam for Grammar School but head said, while able to go straight to three classes above age for English was about 14 below for maths! The Head suggested SL went to Bilson School, for a year. After this half passed for the Grammar School – on the cusp. It was the first year you couldn't pay to go to the Grammar School if didn't make it but luckily did make it. So went to East Dean Grammar School.
3.50	<i>You were eleven then?</i> Yes.
3.52	<i>Had your father found a job in Cinderford?</i> He came to organise the ARP and the wardens – based at and the Report Centre under the top building at St Annals Institute – it has since been a drug rehab centre <i>So he came to do war work really?</i> Yes, Lance Crawley – Boevy from Flaxley Abbey was involved in getting him the job. When the war finished the civil defence stopped, so he got a job in treasury department at Shire Hall and travelled every day. <i>How did he travel?</i> On the bus.
5.05	<i>Do you have any recollections of the war years?</i> Remember being wrapped in a duvet and sitting under the dining room table. That was in Dursley. Father showed me a red glow in the sky which must have been Bristol burning. Can remember the noise of the German planes. Luckily Cinderford did quite well – planes went up Wye and won Severn, with Cinderford in a little ...
5.53	<i>So what are your recollections of the Grammar School?</i> Loved it – lots of people didn't. Maths was a complete non-event and still is! <i>Do you remember any of the teachers?</i> Oh yes I do! Mrs Hazel taught English – best thing since sliced bread. Lived near a lot of the teachers, on the top of the hill. Bungalows, not council houses.
6.44	<i>Was Cinderford a bit stratified like that?</i> Yes. Mr Allott the History master, Mr Howell, Mr Veale the Music teacher, Mr Butcher the Maths teacher, said 'I hope I never get you in my class Sheila!' The French teacher Mr Jones lived opposite, Mr Avastone the Latin teacher, lived just along the way. Surrounded by the teaching brigade.

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7.18	<i>What social activities did you do in schooldays?</i> Always did Guiding. Became a guide a year early - friendly with doctor's daughter – Dion Patterson. She had a handbook about guiding – pestered Miss Dawson who taught at Double View. Bit old for Brownies, aged about 10. Friendship – the daughter had bad asthma, asked by doctor to go and sit with her – got friendly – acted out camping and guiding in their garden at top of Belle Vue Road near Flaxley Street. Fairmead it was called. The dog was tied to the bivouac, and saw a cat in the night and the girls were submerged in the tent! Kept pestering to join until she gave in – joined aged 10. Now you go from Brownies when you are ready – more flexible but then it was rigid. But she was fed up with girls asking.
9.19	Couldn't do any badges until aged 11. Been in Cinderford Guides ever since, even when lived away for five years. Every holiday came back and went to guide camp. Made parents book holidays around camp!
9.53	Also did a lot of cycling, and walking back. Went to Popes Hill a lot – uphill on the way back!
10.08	Went Youth Hostelling when older. Came down a hill in Tewkesbury of Evesham on an old Enfield bike, with inferior brakes. <i>You crashed?</i> Yes. And ended up in hospital. Lovely times really. Going into Abbots Wood without worrying about people lurking. <i>Did you spend a lot of time in the woods?</i> Yes.
10.50	<i>Was guiding very much an outdoor activity?</i> Every Friday in the summer went up to Lees Lookout. Early warning system for nuclear attacks supposed to be there. There was a cottage underneath it, under the fire tower. It belonged to Beryl Evans auntie and Uncle (Lees family). Had permission to light fires and cook tea. Freedom children today sadly don't have – parents now would be frightened to let them go on their own.
11.59	<i>Did you do well at school?</i> No, a plodder – a trier – not brilliant. Had no idea what wanted to do after school. Not a shop (due to maths). Didn't want to nurse, and couldn't use maths or science. <i>Were there any expectations of you?</i> Liked idea of domestic science, but science – chemistry- not good enough. Had interview with the headmaster – suggestion re teaching small children. Would have been when choosing A level subjects. Told the guide leader about choice – she didn't think it would happen! Maybe she was a good psychologist because then decided to go for this career. Did A level Art, French and English. Just about passed French. Took School Certificate – but after this there was a change of systems to O and A levels. Must have been born around the time education act was changing around every 7 years. Did School Certificate and A levels. Art and English got good results.
14.50	<i>Where did this take you?</i> Applied with a friend in the 6 th form - came from Ruardean, but lives in Canada now – to study at teacher training college at City of Birmingham – went to interview in the same day. Stayed in dreadful place on main street in Birmingham – maybe YWCA on Corporation Street. The curtains fell down and window practically fell out – terrified to go to sleep. Holidays had been Weymouth or Weston super Mare. Neither had ever been to a city. Had to catch a tram to the interview – by the time of actually going to college there were no trams. <i>They disappeared in that period?</i> Yes.
16.11	<i>Where was the college?</i> A prefabricated building in front of the University, in front of King Edwards Grammar School for Boys – in the grounds of. Now rebuilt near some tropical gardens. It was opposite Pebble Mill studios – the television be all and end all.

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16.52	<i>Where did you live at college?</i> In Hall. <i>How long were you there?</i> It was only a two year course. Told not to do the same main subjects that had been done at A level, but SL chose to take English and Art again. Did well in those. Also got an A for practical teaching – amazed by this.
17.41	<i>How did you feel about living in Birmingham?</i> Loved it, went to the theatre, up in the gods – no money. Front row of cinema, out to Joe Lyons for beans on toast.
18.02	When course finished, was offered a third year at Goldsmith's to do art. Would have been lovely, but not useful if going to teach infants. Know that now it would be useful – can now be an art specialist in a big primary school. Not like that then – said no. Automatically got a job in Birmingham through training there – desperate for teachers. First job was at Marston Green – had to say where going to live and would be posted to a school near it. Close as crow flies, but meant three buses. Out near Elmdon airport on a concrete 'ghetto'. A brand new school. First day was horrendous. Five staff new from college. Poor headmistress must have gone white with terror – hadn't a clue about registers, dinner money etc. Head went up and down trying to sort new staff out. No playground. Desks hadn't arrived. Each class had fifty in class. Had to sit on floor. When 50 desks did arrive, they were jam-packed in classes to accommodate thirty.
20.48	<i>How long did you teach there?</i> Three years, then had a nervous breakdown. Came home for occasional weekends. Digs were £3 a week all found – paid £36 a week. Was at college 52-54, so this was 55 onwards.
21.32	One Sunday while home felt unable to go back. Father was concerned SL had stolen money but SL didn't know what was wrong. Gone full circle, felt same the other night. Told to 'pull self together'. Taken by mother to see Dr Booth, given a week off. Prescribed iron tablets or medicine, but no treatment. On sixth week SL asked if she could go back – bored – GP said yes could go back but advised to look for a job nearer home. Felt she was burning candle both ends and not eating properly. This was true – landlady did breakfast and evening meal, but didn't bother with dinner and were out till all hours. .
23.28	Idea of coming home was a bit of a shock, so chose to go to Gloucester City – there were 2 separate authorities then – County and City. Forest schools weren't very good at the time. Went to Coney Hill school for 9 years. Loved it there. Kids had nothing so appreciated everything. Lived at home and travelled every day.
24.34	<i>Was Coney Hill school near the hospital?</i> It is an area. <i>It was a poor area?</i> They lived on benefits – all had free dinners. Mums went down the local pub, the Walnut, by fire station on Eastern Avenue. School sometimes had to dress the children in clothing the School had. They had lovely little houses. Knew a man who built them who said new toilets had to be put in due to theft each weekend. If a child was taken home ill someone would take them in if mother was out. School gave kids stability.
26.00	Mr Cecil Woodman had a daughter in SL's guide company – still involved with guides and Sunday school. <i>When did you start doing Sunday School?</i> Vicar asked SL to help someone who couldn't control there class. Initially sat in and when the lady got pregnant took over the class. Eventually became superintendent. Did it until aged 57, then had another nervous do. Couldn't go in shops etc. Dr advise giving up some activities so gave up Sunday School and Guides. .
27.32	<i>Going back to Coney Hill, what happened next?</i> Cecil Woodman lived up Belle Vue Road, asked Llew to consider teaching locally. SL was happy at Coney Hill. Applied for and got the post at Walmer Hill village school. Was worried school would close – asked Chairman of Governors – Dr Wright's wife - about this at interview. Now only

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	30 children. There were 101 and SL became deputy head. Had all the infants – around 30 - where because it was all ages it should have been around 20.
29.21	<i>Asked about Cecil Woodman?</i> He was headmaster. He had a sabbatical in the Bahamas. When he came back he went on Supply, in Abenhall – Dene Magna now and at St Peters in Gloucester. Eventually he had to have a little school. <i>He was a brilliant musician wasn't he?</i> Absolutely brilliant, could sit down and play. 'Prayers' in school could go on for half a morning with him playing. 101 children singing their hearts out! <i>He sang on the BBC?</i> Yes. White and Woodman it was. SL never heard him. On day he left, SL organised the retirement do, and Mr Woodman made up song 'Thanks for the Memory' – not a dry eye! Everyone was upset. He put his own words to it.
31.15	<i>Must have been very different to Coney Hill?</i> Yes. These kids lived on farms. SL didn't understand farms. (Illustrated child lolling) Told them to sit up and not loll. Another teacher told SL child had been up working on farm – they were worn out with half a day's work before arriving at school. Even five year olds had their own chickens. Did social training – e.g. looking at fingernails. Mothers said the children were terrified. Did shoes – there were no pavements, only ditches around Rodley. Children were walking through slurry, to get on bus – terrified because 'Miss LL is going to do shoes!' "I had no idea". Once we had double summer time – little children 'coming to school in the night'. It was awful. They came crying in the mornings – it was all dark. Mothers asked SL not to do shoes – hadn't entered SL's head.
33.40	<i>Did you have much contact with parents?</i> Not at Coney Hill. Miss Hedge. The head there, who was mayoress of Gloucester three times (always in Citizen at time of Fred West), wouldn't allow parents over the threshold. She knew her parents. Walmer Hill had lovely parents. Most supportive. One mum brought pony up and children went down to see it being shod – exciting for children and for SL. One lady brought duck eggs to hatch them. Brought the ducklings back – Aylesbury's which changed colour from yellow to white. A big Aylesbury pooped over the floor and then brought it killed and dressed. Offered to SL to eat – she couldn't!
35.57	Took children from Walmer Hill on holiday. First camped on school field. Mr Woodman took the boys one week, but he slept in the woodwork shed! SL took girls the next week – they loved it. Westbury Guides started from this. Was a flourishing guide company – it is gone now. Later took both boys and girls to Severn Springs camping – site run by Education Committee. Also went to other places. Also places in the FoD – Bracelands, the Wesley Hall in a room done up for pack holidays. This was a mistake – club at the cinema, and Swan Pub and rugby club and sheep all nearby – windows open because hot – noisy! Started a trend for leavers
38.31	Mr Eric Radley, chair of Governors, taught at the tech, was a writer and poet. Should be a seat dedicated in his memory at end of last Soudley pond. He came to see a project SL had done on trees. They were outdoor kids. Cowley Manor was a mistake – went to see Cotswold Hunt hounds at feeding time – children were ok but staff thought it was awful – fed small hounds to the other hounds – survival of the fittest. Never again! Kids said their still-born calves were sent there.
40.43	<i>How long did you teach there?</i> Numbers went down so had to lose somebody. Been retired 30 something years now. Left school when aged 50.
41.14	The school has recently been in special measures. SL wrote to the school when it came out of special measures – to say delighted about this. The man who helped on visit to the hounds is now a teacher, said he didn't think SL would get a reply. Did get a reply but not from head, who has three schools, but a child wrote. Must have taken hours. They only have 30 pupils now. Involved in a migration project.

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42.25	After finishing teaching went back, doing voluntary work one day a week for 7 years. Then gave it up at a winter - another new head by then, so best to give up. Have been invited back, but haven't been, after writing the letter which explained how many staff there had been etc. a parent also wrote back – SL remembered her children!
43.32	<i>Asked re involvement in the cultural life of Cinderford?</i> Wesley Players mostly. WI a bit, when Elsie was doing it. Also gave up Wesley Players when Elsie gave up. Was in charge of the children at the end. Only ever threw two out, one for swearing and one for complete disobedience. Elsie would support decisions, but others were less supportive of decisions. This was around 42 years ago.
44.38	<i>Tell me about Elsie?</i> Through the WI – mother was a member – and through the Wesley Players. Put up displays together for both, also for guiding. Worked on a scrapbook for the WI, about Cinderford at a certain time. Elsie did the research, SL did the calligraphy and Annie Phelps did watercolour illustrations. She lives nearby – the Bailey. The book was in Cinderford Library for many years. Think it has recently been transferred to microfilm. Worked together for Wesley Players for over 40 years. SL acted, Elsie was scriptwriter, designer and maker of costumes.
45.50	When Dean Heritage Centre set up Elsie interviewed elderly people for their memories, which SL catalogued. Elsie was on BBC and ITV on matters around history of FoD.
46.07	What was her background? When SL first knew her, she worked in Parkers Cleaners, a drycleaners. Then became a secretary at Bilson Infant School for many years. Not sure (why she was interested in local history) – she was extremely well read. First port of call if looking up a quotation etc.
47.03	<i>You were both involved in the Dean Heritage Centre when it was first founded?</i> Elsie got SL involved – both went on the original committee. There was no roof on the place. SL followed Elsie's lead. <i>What was involved in getting it set up?</i> Elsie was a trustee, Basil Johnson (lived in SLs house) was another. Not much money, may have had a grant from somewhere. Always problems with money – same again now. Terrible place then – a dump. Had been Burke's Scrapyard. Elsie was the main one who did the research. <i>She saw the value of recording people?</i> She was interested in people's memories.
48.55	Three used to be an Oak Leaves magazine at the East Dean Grammar School. She was involved in setting up the old scholars association and setting Oak Leaves up again. She was the editor. SL has loads of them. SL went on that committee too.
49.35	<i>Asked re carrying out interviews?</i> No never did that. <i>But you helped with a film she made?</i> Elsie wrote the commentary, SL went to her house to record it, to accompany slides. It was mostly Cinderford. Don't know what happened to it. She worked voluntary one day a week at Dean Heritage. <i>She did that for the rest of her life?</i> Yes. Toward the end someone picked her up.
50.28	Everything Elsie did was done meticulously e.g. clothes for the theatre company. Wesley Players still going today – Lynn in charge now. She started as a child – a fairy in panto – has produced for last five years. Not what it was but mustn't be too critical.
51.16	<i>How many productions did you do a year?</i> Only one. Colin Evans would have liked to have done more. It was chapel based – aim was to raise money for the chapel. .
51.49	Wesley Sunday School children had first dibs. Once the Sunday school stopped, St Stephen children took part. Later this Sunday school also closed. It went from 80 but down to 25 when SL left, then dropped to 4-5. How things have gone – children now have too much choice.

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52.42	<i>Asked if still involved with the Sunday school?</i> No. involved with church still. After last illness thought about giving up, while able to explain e.g. the flower list. Not as easy as it sounds – e.g. lent date changes. Told PCC of intent to stop. Still distribute and deliver church magazines. .
53.42	<i>Interested in literary figures at church – asked re Leonard Clark?</i> Didn't know him, met him once at a dinner. Saw him, and always knew of him. He wouldn't have been around – would have left by time SL became involved with the church.
54.34	That lady on the photograph, Eileen Witts, still alive, must be 89. Her dad, Tom Witts, was a non-stipendiary curate, also treasurer of the coop. SL asked her recently re an Alan George who had a good looking son who went to live in Devon. Visited and took communion. Alan had arthritis, carried balls of plasticene. SLs dad helped him in church. SL was away for five years and went to visit friends in holidays or at guide camp – so was often away.
56.24	<i>Asked if wanted a break before continuing?</i> Fine to carry on, talking about Harry Beddington. Lived next door to him for 40 years. Lived in a semi-detached council house, attached to the Beddington family from 1942 – 1971, at top of Belle Vue Road. (Reading from a paper). Mr Beddington wrote sketch for mother and his wife, Mildred, called 'over the garden hedge.' It had a part for a posh visitor, Iris Mason. She was Janet Butt's mother. It was brilliant.
57.28	SL acted in a 3 act play called The Hayling Report for WI – Harry was the producer. (That's all I've written about him – pointed out a picture behind interviewer which Harry gave to SL) Taken at the bottom of Soudley Pond - the trees are now ginormous. He only ever used pencil.
58.17	<i>Asked re when HB started writing?</i> No. Did read his work especially the forest ones. Before the estate was built, from the council house could see all the Welsh hills. He had a picture window put in, with a mirror, and could name every hill. <i>What about his humorous works?</i> He used to dress up as Jolter, with the cap and pipe. Someone wrote in the Oldie magazine, all about Mr Beddington living at Newnham, leaning over his garden fence, smoking his pipe! Elsie rang, it was absolute rubbish! Roy, the eldest son, did write to complain. <i>Why did they make that up?</i> There was a great hoo- hah about it. He was well spoke, put on the forest dialect – didn't actually have that accent at all!
1.00.28	<i>Where did the Jolter character come from?</i> Had been around before – maybe to do with mines? Not HB's own creation – but not sure of that. Dialect books were the best he wrote e.g. 'Thic mon in white'
1.00.57	Had concerts in the war at Miners' Hall – in aid of things. People performed. Had an orchestra led by Mr Pope – Ian Pope's grandfather - they played for the pantomime. There was a local singer – Maisie Griffiths / Burnett, who also sang on the radio. She once forgot words at a concert in Cinderford, and HB was master of ceremonies and said it was a good job it had happened here! Had tremendous voice – e.g. 'the fishermen of England'. SL only knew Maisie after she was married – then was Maisie Burnett.
1.03.02	<i>Growing up next door, did HB have a sense of humour?</i> He did yes. He grew mature trees. He once build an enormous dinosaur behind the council house, for Cinderford Carnival. It was on a wire frame. John Beddington, now a professor, aged four, told his friends 'my father is building a saurus' – and SLs mother called him 'professor' – little knowing he would become one!! He was showing off.
1.04.23	Those who were friends with HB's daughter Eileen had to paint the dinosaur's scales. There was a slight snag – couldn't get it out from the garden! The mature trees got in the way – had to chop at least eight of them down. SL's father was tickled to death!

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1.05.28	<i>Why did he grow trees?</i> Don't know. Always was writing (about forest). He had quite a responsible job. Didn't have a garden (other than the trees)
1.06.05	<i>What was his relationship to Leonard Clark?</i> He wasn't very happy with him. Nor was Joe Diamond, who was the choirmaster. Apparently Leonard would write and ask them to look things up – maybe were contemporaries – then did not acknowledge their help.
1.06.52	According to recent verger, <i>Section redacted at interviewee's request (1min 41 duration)</i>
1.07.22	<i>Asked re memories of HB's last days?</i> SL had moved to present home by then. Once Mildred died he was lonely. Mrs B was in the WI, Mother's Union, involved with acting and singing. He was lost, couldn't cook – SL's father was the same. SL's mum died at 67. Father moved to house with SL at that time, but didn't like it, no views, didn't know people. SL out at work and again in the evenings – advised not to give up own interests.
1.09.12	<i>What number was house on Belle Vue Road?</i> They changed. It was 121 so Harry would have been an odd one as well – 119? They used to be a. b and c. Don't think it is now 121. Bus stop has also moved from beside the house, at the Barn, which was handy. Not sure where the stop is now.
1.10.05	<i>Query - where did HB collect his stories from?</i> Don't know. <i>His book almost laments changes in education In Cinderford – are you sympathetic with that?</i> Husbands and wives were often on the same staff. At St Whites, anything said in staffroom would go straight back as head and (another teacher) were married. That is stopped now – unless it has been permitted again. <i>Mentioned a Mr Emery?</i> Didn't know him. <i>His wife worked at same school..?</i> Yes. There was also Mr and Mrs Morgan, at St Whites.
1.11.12	SL was interviewed at Drybrook School, at suggestion of a teacher who said a piano player was needed. Three members of a Brain family worked there. One applicant from away told the other applicants that she would have the job – before the interviews had happened – because she was buying a Mrs Brain's son's house. Husband had already got a job at Abenhall, so would get the job as buying the house! SL was fuming – didn't want job but sorry for other girl who had travelled for the interview. In the interview, Mt Yeatman was the Head, had primed SL on what was needed – as was normal then – and asked some sensible questions. Chair of governors hardly looked up - asked how SL 'how would you learn 'em to read'. Neither SL nor other girl, who had travelled from Liverpool, got the job. SL knew chair of governors at a second school with a vacancy, possibly Steam Mills, and secured this girl an interview there – she got this job. The girl appointed to the Drybrook job got pregnant almost immediately. Mr Yeatman then asked SL if she would work there – said no! It wasn't his fault. That was what Forest Governors used to be like.
1.15.11	HB must have been to do with getting (that sort of thing) sorted. Father was with HB when SL came home from this interview – having wasted a whole evening. HB knew who it would have been asked about 'learning 'em to read'. <i>Were father and HB friendly?</i> Yes, because both were in same building as education side when father did ARP management. Father worked in both the bottom (Riola) and top (St Anil's) buildings. They used to walk up and down the road together. .
1.16.19	SL was lucky because Mr Yeatman was later had up for touching up children. If had worked there, SL would have had to go to court. The girls who accused him had moved on to Abenhall. Cecil Woodman at Walmer Hill was terrified after that – he

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	was upset about 'Dusty' Yeatman, didn't believe it of him. He did get sent to prison. Don't know if he was guilty or not. .
1.17.56	Cecil had a story about someone at Mitcheldean, who ran a black market operation in the war. Can't recall his name.
1.18.30	<i>Winding up and close (and request for redaction).</i>

Interview redacted at 1.06.52 at interviewees request.