

Frederick Claude Pensom – Fred

Recording 161019_39

- 0.26 Family living at Viney Hill, Fir Tree House when he was born
- 1.02 Father miner at New Fancy Colliery, underground; injured his back in an accident in late 1940s
- 1.34 Moved to working at The 'Dump' – American Supply Depot, Lydney with accommodation at Naas Farm, until Yanks went home
- 2.14 Moved to MEB (Midlands Electricity Board) and worked until he died aged 69. People didn't expect to live long after retirement.
- 3.12 Died on a heap of coal in coal shed.
- 3.39 Shop J W (Johnny) Wills on corner of the point at Viney Hill, recharged radio accumulators and repaired radios
- 4.04 Wills coaches- carried Prisoners of War about, football teams, Sunday School trips to Barry Island and Rodley near Westbury on Severn.
- 5.20 Fred sang in choir at Viney Hill church until went in the Forces, aged 21.
- 5.43 Choir coach trip with Brindles of Cinderford - trip to seaside.
- 6.43 Mother housewife, stayed at home. Family; parents, 4 boys and one girl.
- 7.30 Sister worked at Williams and Cotton bakehouse, corner of bream Road, married a Lydney boy when he came out of Navy after the war.
- 8.49 Father had back problems, sciatica, due to accidents at work
- 9.16 His mother 'ironing' his father's back through brown paper to give him some comfort for a few days
- 9.55 Job 'Hodding' chopping off bits of coal lying on his back and side for 8 hours a day
- 10.20 Gave up pit work before new Fancy closed
- 10.40 Many moved from mine work to outside work, better paid, less dangerous, workers paid 6 pence per week hospital benefits.
- 11.20 Factories starting up just after the war, such as Rank – miners saw benefits of working above ground, big temptation for miners.
- 11.56 Viney Hill School till 14 years old.
- 12.00 Passed exam to go to Junior Technical School (JTS) at Gloucester. If failed exam to go to Lydney Grammar School gave second chance of further education.
- 13.40 Technical college taught technical skills rather than academic work, courses for electricians, builders, carpenters. Started Fred on the road to being a motor mechanic.
- 14.40 Five years apprenticeship with Red and White; got his indentures after two years of college

- 15.10 College followed by apprenticeship in skilled work. Apprentices released by employers for one day per week and two evenings to get City and Guilds qualification. Helped to get better wages.
- 16.20 'Improvers' rate of pay after apprenticeship, considerably less than skilled rate - £9 compared with £15
- 16.56 Parent used to pay the firm 7s 6d per week for child to go through apprenticeship Stopped two weeks before he began his apprenticeship, got a wage.
- 17.50 Got his apprenticeship as brother worked for Michelin Tyre company, who had contract with Red and White.
- 19.05 Move from works at Bulwark to Lydney depot.
- 19.30 Enjoyed his working life, can't remember a day when didn't want to go to work.
- 20.11 Apprenticeship lasted 5 years. Finished school 1943, JTS 43-45, started apprenticeship 1946. Finished 1951
- 20.44 Called up for army the day after completing the apprenticeship. Two weeks holiday then left to join the army. Returned to Red and White after two years
- 21.20 Red and white were big company, covered all of the Forest and into Wales. Good company and good training
- 22.25 Types of vehicles; coaches, buses. Numerous models of the Albion, Leylands, Guys
- 23.00 Guys double decker buses with Indian Chief radiator caps, made themselves
- 23.30 Rebuilding chassis on old Guys buses
- 24.00 John and Arthur Watts started the bus company in Lydney, extended to South Wales, depots in Aberdare, Rhondda Valley.
- 24.30 Depot sizes – Rhondda Valley 40 – 50 buses compared with 15-20 in Forest depots, needed to transport miners in Wales.
- 25.30 Wales people worked hard and played hard, couldn't get pint beer in Wales on Sunday so came to the Forest to pubs and tea gardens.
- 26.00 Typical day as an apprentice – started 7.30. Bike to Lydney to get bus at 6.50. Own works bus coming from Lydney, Monmouth and Newport. Finished 5.00 pm
- 27.18 Canteen could buy cooked dinner, or took own sandwiches, cheese, jam or cold toast. for lunch.
- 28.18 Sick pay not available at first; came later in apprenticeship system
- 29.00 Union member – Transport and General Workers Union. Condition of work
- 29.41 Call up papers led to first time away from home apart from holidays with relatives. Felt grown up – a man now.
- 30.32 Joined REME - Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers enabled him to follow own trade and be upgraded. Only 'improver' when started, upgraded to first Class Craftsman
- 31.00 Basic training at Blandford, posted to REME school at Taunton where upgraded to Class 1, then put into the LAD¹ in a regiment- . Battalion of Green Howards.(Kings

¹ A Light Aid Detachment is an attached independent minor unit of the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers or Detachment of Royal Canadian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers operating as a sub-unit of the

- Royal Rifle Regiment). Got own company, looked after all vehicles in that company. Promoted to HO (Head Quarters) company, big step up.
- 34.00 Maintained vehicles of that company; Bedford's, Jeeps, Austin's, Gypsies, Scammels², Bren Gun carriers, 'half-tracks' – rear wheels had tracks on, front wheels were steering wheels with rubber tyres
- 35.00 Responsible for getting vehicles to and from Field workshops. In Germany stationed in Munster, field workshop in Osnabrück. Transported vehicles between them.
- 35.30 In Germany for 6 weeks training and 6 months mechanics school. 18 months in all
- 36.30 Recovery work with the Scammel. Interesting work. Could include recovery from a swamp, isolated area. Left on own work it out yourself. Could involve building a wall to raise it.
- 38.50 Learned how to babysit for the officers.
- 39.10 Moral good, made good mates, stayed friends all your life.
- 40.10 Meeting German civilians, some made friends and kept in touch. Friendly with civilians working with British Army.
- 41.20 Civilian living conditions involved sharing accommodation with cattle for some.
- 42.30 Army mates from all over the Country, only one from the Forest.
- 43.10 Demobbed in 1952. Returned to Lydney Red and White Depot. Encouraged to return.
- 44.20 Worked for 4 years, left to work in private garage, returned to Red and White in 1957 and worked there till 1967 when took over garage in Parkend. Back to Red and White in 1982 in Cinderford, coach driving.
- 45.40 Grade when at Red and White – 'Charge hand' – one under the foreman.
- 46.00 Hierarchy – fitter, Charge Hand, Foreman, Engineer, Top Management.
- 47.00 Enjoyed the job, worthwhile, sense of achievement. Compared to fishing where no finished product so no interest in fishing.

supported unit. These units provide dedicated logistic support to every field unit of the British Army or Canadian Army. REME and RCME were created in October 1942 out of elements of the Royal Army Ordnance Corps, Royal Engineers, Royal Corps of Signals, Royal Army Service Corps and Royal Canadian Ordnance Corps who previously handled functions such as the repair of weapons, optics and vehicles.

In the RCME LADs were divisions of larger units known as Workshops. In the British Army the title Workshop (Wksp) is used both for major REME units (Field for Brigades or Armoured for Divisions) and for those minor units which provide some 2nd Line support to the parent regiment. The term LAD is therefore restricted to only those minor REME units which solely provide 1st Line support, typically this is Armour and Infantry units. REME minor units supporting RA, R Signals, RE, RLC etc. are normally titled as Wksp as they also provide some degree of 2nd line support to the parent unit.

Typically composed of around 60-80 personnel they are attached to a host battalion. Typical field deployment would split the LAD/Wksp into a regimental "B Echelon" contingent of about 30 men and 4 "fitter sections" of about 7-12 men, each of which is attached to a company/squadron. The fitter sections are part of the A Echelon HQ of the company/squadron. This average configuration does, of course, vary widely dependent on the parent unit and their equipment.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Light_Aid_Detachment [accessed 28 May 2017]

² Austin, Bedford, Guy, Scammel – types of WW2 lorries

- Involved fitting and road testing
- 49.20 Vehicles in 1960s included Bristol's, different models, Bristol FS, one they called 'The Sputnik, Bristol SC – smaller bus for routes where big bus not warranted. Only 35 seats compared with 40 or 50.
- 50.45 Now own car, a lot of overtime, start at 6.30 till 2.00, back at 4.00 till 7.00 pm. Good as married with two girls
- 51.47 Starting own garage, rented in Stanford Road, Lydney with his brother
Introduction of MOT³, became testing station
Moved to garage at Parkend, selling petrol supplied by Clevedon, knew local rep.
stopped work with Red and White as too busy. Increased regulations – required both pit and lift inspection facilities; installed electro-hydro four poster lift.
Stopped work at garage 1982
- 56.08 Tested lorries as well as cars. Contracts to service and MOT
- 57.20 Apprenticeship and training with Red and White very valuable, worked to high standard and good records kept. System based on Red and White system.
- 59.36 Customers accepted whether passed or failed generally. Only occasional problems - down to the Ministry requirements.
- 1.00.26 Lorries had to be taken to Gloucester. Small repairs such as light not working allowed them to repair at the station. Bust and couldn't get time for test they wanted, Tried to arrange testing early so could get back in time for it to be used the same day
- 1.00.31 No employers, only brother and himself.
- 1.01.40 Served petrol until 1980, tightened up on tanks. Had two tanks, one was an old sea buoy. Anything that would hold water could be used.
- 1.02.40 Small tank, 250 and other 500
- 1.03.20 Sea buoy cemented in rather than dig out and remove when stopped selling petrol
- 1.03.30 Gave up garage in 1982. Followed visit by VAT inspector who queried VAT on a bill of £8, fitting flexible brake hoses on a foreign car for another VAT inspector in Yorkley. VAT should have been included.
- 1.06.18 Very sad and disappointed by events.
- 1.06.30 VAT returns on monthly basis. A lot of hours work.
- 1.09.14 Driving buses and coaches at Cinderford. Got PSV⁴ and badge to shop a coach driver – no longer badges.
- 1.10.00 Secondary occupations, in thing to have something to drop back to, easier work, if couldn't do first occupation
- 1.11.17 Fall back job is 'Forest' way. Brought up to think – never intended to be out of work.

³ Introduced 1960

⁴ If you want to drive a bus, coach, or minibus for hire or reward in the United Kingdom that has nine or more passenger seats then you will need to apply for your PSV licence (Public Service Vehicle) from the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA). This licence is also known as a PCV (Passenger Carrying Vehicle) licence and also 'Cat D' or 'D1' but they all entitle you to the same thing.

- 1.12.20 Keeping pig as a child, taking sow to Chandlers at Etloe to the boar. Always one hung on wall at home. Killed in garden at home. Basically, for bacon, cured at home, took 3-6 weeks, salted then turned every over day.
- 1.15.10 Picture on pub wall, The Montague⁵, of the man who went around killing pigs- "Pig sticker Smith".
- 1.16.30 Written about in a book by Bernard Kear⁶
- 1.17.12 Cider making. Grandfather had cider mill in Oldcroft, Nedstop. Apples from orchards at home.
- 1.19.10 Stone cider mill, not a wheel and pony to pull it like others had, including Mr Evans. pulled sacking down on different layers of apples to squash the juice out. Apple juice is cider!
- 1.20.27 Put into casks what didn't drink. Only drank a lot of cider once when making cider. Didn't do it a second time! Upset tummy! Put a mug into trough and drank.
- 1.21.20 Types of apples – eating apples, wind falls, no good for storing
- 1.22.06 No connection with fishing, Severn too far away. Knew some poachers, mainly rabbits
- 1.23.00 Driving for Red and White form 1982. Told by his brother who worked for Red and White recruiting. Previous good work with them meant he got the job no problem
- 1.24.50 Drove May 1982 – May 1989. Gave up after accident at Minsterworth. Person who ran into him died. Off work 2 – 3 months. Head office wanted home to go out with a tester before resuming work. Decided to finish work.
- 1.28.10 Union negotiated severance pay because of health.
- 1.29.27 Part time job carrying handicapped children in Forest and to Oakdean in Cinderford and school run for Geoff Willett of Yorkley, already doing some part time work when had the garage
- 1.31.11 Reformed Parkend band. Learned to play an instrument in 1972. Inspired by his daughters playing – Jennifer, Sharon, Carole.
- 1.31.50 Sharing an instrument between two players so Sharon gave up flugel. Later re joined and took up trombone.
- 1.33.05 Taking daughters to practice and around decided to join as well.

⁵ The Montague, Clements End.

⁶ ? Scenes of Childhood: A Forest of Dean Childhood Remembered –two volumes

1.33.20 Became 'New' Parkend Band – old one wrapped up in Christmas 1967, only 5- 6 players

1.34.10 Keith Bowery and Tony Higgins decided to reform the band with kids from the schools.

1.34.50 Rehearsals at first at New Inn – now The Woodman
Started with E flat bass. Recognised music from church choir which had hymnbooks, Ancient and Modern, with music above the words and from his sense of hearing. Learned from Keith as well, played as a team

1.38.00 Rehearsals moved to football changing quarters. Moved from pub because landlord, Dennis Golding, died from heart attack in his car

1.39.30 1977 moved to the hall

1.40.01 His contribution kept the band going. Previously amalgamated 'Two Bridges' and 'Blakeney' to make 'Blakeney and District' – folded. Parkend restarted and then folded in 1967.

1.41.30 Players moved away and didn't comeback – reasons unknown

1.42.20 Took over as Chair when Cliff Cooper died. Took turns in being Chair with Stan Teague.

1.42.20 Made life member 1992. Tony Higgins mother first life member. Board being made with names of life members to be remembered for posterity.

1.44.50 Reputation of bringing on young people in the band. Learners group did 'spot' in concerts. Of original 11 only 1 left ; moved away, gone to college, gave up.

1.46.50 Went to schools and took instruments to encourage children to join – Ellwood, Soudley, and Parkend. Got 16 learners, but didn't stay- some moved to other band or left

1.48.35 Currently 11 players, not enough to go contesting – hope to in the future

1.49.00 Musical legacy. Two grandchildren took up music as result of the band. Gavin took music up as a career, spent two years at Chetham School of Music and then BSc at Royal School of Music, Manchester. Now a composer.

1.51.54 Composer in Residence at Rambert's Ballet Company and Tredegar Town Band. Composed music for the ballet company played by Tredegar band – first time a brass band had played for a ballet company.

1.54.10 Other grandson, Louis, continues, aged 14, playing the euphonium, composing, playing in bands – Parkend, Berry Hill, Cinderford Academy Band and Cinderford Senior band

1.56.20 Daughters still playing. Carole playing since age of 6. Now solo cornet player. Sharon playing trombone. Jennifer plays tenor horn.

1.57.50 Wife, Frances, not player, helped at events with refreshments. Fewer families involved now

1.58.30 Families, trip to Symonds Yat rock, had tea and cake and then back to Beechenhurst. to play rounder's etc

1.59.19 First tour to Cornwall, 1979. Again toured 2002. Played with other bands in mass band event.

2.00.40. Tried to keep things interesting. Today so much going on after school; computers iPhone etc, don't need to leave home. Banding needs parents support. Some see banding as 'no go' – not important.

2.02.20 Banding creates sense of community, especially in the Forest. Brings back enjoyment from years ago when pits and firms had own band

2.03.10 Only one firm band in – Flowers Band⁷ – no longer associated with the firm. Good band but even they have problems keeping players.

2.04.00 Ultimately comes back to family – if supported children will stay.

Ends abruptly

⁷ Flowers Fine Ales . Established 48 years ago and ranked No. 1 in West of England 10th in the world – June 2017.



Back left to right - Diana Hall, Tony Higgins, Mark Jones, Richard Harris, Chris Gwynne, Brian Philips, Pete Bowery, Dean Turley, Heather Lee, Robert Hall, Sharon Teague

Middle row - Geoff Walker, Fred Pensom, Alan Walker, Adrian Ruck (conductor) Sharon Pensom, Jennifer Pensom, Keith Bowery

Front Row - Steve Higgins, Lisa Bowery, Paul Walker & Carole Pensom.

No date given

<https://www.sungreen.co.uk/Parkend-Glos/parkend-silver-band.html>