

# Why!!

By: Phyllis Blewitt

*Recollections of a  
Lifetime of Memories*

Mum is  
Phyllis Blewitt  
recollections

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## 'WHY'

As dictated by mum on the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> May 2008

At the age of 94 and almost blind, I sit in my lonely little house reminiscing over the past years.

My friends, parents and my dear husband have long passed on, and every day I ask myself why am I still here ?

I was born in 1913, the eldest of 3 children, brother and sister. My parents were hardworking people, and we lived in a little modest house on Coultham Street, Lincoln.

We had good neighbours. My parents did everything they could to give us a happy childhood. The children all played together in the street and we shared whatever we had. We all attended St. Andrew's School and made our own friends. I enjoyed reading, writing and talking to people, and at the age of 14 left school and we went our various ways. No 'O' Levels in those days, only reports. Mine was average, with the comment 'could have done better' !

I started work at 14 years old at a Newsagent and Sweet shop on the corner of Canwick Road and Ripon Street, owned by Mr and Mrs Wattam. I served in the shop and did odd jobs. They were very kind and treated me as one of the family.

At 16 I decided I needed more money and worked at several shops in the City. Long hours and hard work, but made many friends. Saturday night was the highlight of the week. We all went to the Drill Hall, and met our various partners. Mine was Corporal Trevor Blewitt from RAF Cranwell. We spent many happy hours together and seemed to get on quite well. He was the proud owner of a little Morris Minor and we went on picnics out in the country and occasional visits to the sea side.

After six months war was once again threatened, and he said he was about to be posted overseas. He proposed marriage, because we might never see each other any more.

After much discussion, we decided to get married on October 3<sup>rd</sup> 1938 at 8 o'clock in the morning, on a month's wages, and with just a few work mates and relatives. We came back home and mum prepared a little lunch for us all and managed to get us a small wedding cake. My friends went back to work and Trevor and I decided to go to the Boots Tea Dance in the afternoon.

We spent our honeymoon with friends because Trevor was only allowed to move so many miles from the camp. During the week he was re-called back to camp, and came back and said he had a month's leave, and he could go down to Wales and visit his parents in the little village of Resolven, South Wales. We enjoyed going up the mountains for long walks.

On November 5<sup>th</sup>, he was posted overseas and finished up in Palastine.

Our first son Rodney was born July 19<sup>th</sup> 1939 and I lived at home with my parents whilst Trevor was abroad.

Trevor was in the Middle East most of the war and returned to England in 1942, and was posted to Bomber Command at RAF Scampton, Lincoln.

In 1943 our second son Paul was born.

In 1944 Trevor was once again posted overseas to the Far East, and in 1946 we were told we were allowed to join him.

The day came when we had to depart for the Far East. We said a tearful farewell to my Mum and my Dad travelled with us on the train to Southampton. Arriving there we boarded the ship. My Dad was allowed to board for a short time. There were several families on board and a few airmen.

The boys made friends with the other children and were allowed to run of the ship. The airmen played games with the children and amused them. My Dad and I sat on the deck and talked until he had to return to shore.

We waved goodbye to him from the ship and watched him walk away looking very sad lonely.

The wives found their cabins which were quite small but they had to be our home for a few weeks.

We set sail in the evening. I was very sea sick and had a restless night. We continued on our journey and called at several ports. We went ashore at Port Said on the Suez Canal and spent a few hours sight seeing and seeing the wonders of a different world. We returned to the ship and continued our journey along the Suez Canal and into the ocean.

We went ashore again in Ceylon and the boys enjoyed rides on the elephants and we saw a bit more of this different world.

After four weeks at sea we landed at Singapore. The air was very hot and humid. Our husbands met us at the boat side and we were taken to our new homes. We went to Seleta, a village a few miles out of Singapore. The house was spacious but had no mod. cons. There was only a primus stove to cook on. I couldn't understand why Trevor had bought so much canned food, but learned that was to be our diet for the time being. We had plenty of fresh fruit and loved on cans supplied by the RAF.

We had Chinese armours to help with the children and the household chores. Our clothes were washed in the river and beaten with stones to get them clean and get the water out. The children ages then 7 and 4 and a half years went to Changi School.

The wives went into Singapore shopping, no modern shops just markets, and we all met up at Raffles the famous hotel for coffee or drinks, and then returned to our homes.

In the afternoon, the wives rested or swam in the pool until the children returned from school and the men from work. The children enjoyed the wild life and played with the monkeys and often brought snakes into the

house and said 'they're all God's creatures you know mum'.

There was always plenty of entertainment in the evenings, music and dancing.

We spent three and a half years in Singapore and then returned to England. We travelled by ship again and had a similar journey calling in at the different ports along the way . This time Trevor was with us.

We were posted to RAF Waddington, RAF Coningsby, and then to RAF Bomber Command at Scampton.

After 3 years as a boy apprentice at RAF Halton and 25 years service all over the world, Trevor decided to leave the Air Force at the age of 43. He found life very different to the RAF but he went to work at Clayton Dewandre in Lincoln in the Experimental Department, as an engineer, finally retiring at 65 years.

We bought the house I now live in in St. Andrews Drive and the boys grew up there. Rodney went to the Technical College and Paul to Lincoln Grammar School . They both did well. Rodney worked at Rustons and Seimans and travelled the world as a Project Manager. In the course of his work he called at Singapore and found it very modern and very clean. Our old house had been demolished and a block of flats built in its place. He felt the old magic had gone out of Singapore and replaced by a very modern city. Paul did well, passed his O levels and A levels and joined the Civil Service.

They are still both working and are now 69 and 65. They are both happily married with families of their own, and are very good to me.

Thanks to a lovely daughter-in-law Shirley who sees me well fed and helps me through the dark days.



I live alone and often feel lonely but have my memories, a good family and helped by good friends and the carers manage to live a reasonable life.

I had a good husband for 68 years and the RAF gave us a good life and a chance to travel and see the world.

Britain is still a good place to live. Good people and lovely places to visit. Please keep it Great.

Thanks to all the people who have helped me through my life. It's a wonderful world but I don't know why there is all this hatred and killing, and each morning I still ask myself 'Why am I still here' ?

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This is mum's story which she dictated to me over two sittings. She found it very emotional and tiring bringing back all the memories, but the above is just as she recounted it to me, I have only had to put in a few full stops and commas here and there. I think it makes us realise just what a wonderful woman she is and what a long and full life she has had.

Shirley  
28t May 2008