

## Jean

I was born in Leeds in 1930 on the 20th December. We lived in a back-to-back house, which was a scullery house\* – we had a tin bath in front of the fire. Before the war my Mum used to make lovely food in our black leaded oven that was part of the fire in our living room. I remember us having meat and potato pie. I went to Armley Park school, there were two schools, one with a clock on it, one without – I went to the one without. I didn't mind it there; I didn't get in any bother. I remember the nursery school, and they had little beds for you to sleep on in an afternoon. I didn't do any exams or get any qualifications because I was poorly with rheumatic fever at the time.

After school each day I used to play out and skip with my friends out on the street and I went to a youth club with my sister that was on Oxford Place, that was fun. A few of us went camping near Harlech Castle in Wales. I remember one year we had so much snow, it went past our knees, and we had to make a path down the street to get down it. Not long after that, because of the war we were evacuated from school to a home in Gainsborough near Lincoln. My sister and I were waiting for quite a while to get taken because we were waiting for a place together.

After I finished school I went for a job in the office of the Ministry of Pensions hospital, but I was only thirteen, so I wasn't old enough until the December, so I didn't get it. So, I went with my Mum to Montague Burtons, and I ended up working in the office, doing accounts and wages. There was a huge factory in Harehills near the clock cinema. That's where I went when I left school. There were other factories, one in Farnham and one in Bradford. One made vests, and trousers, one made coats and I did the wages for both. I learned how to use a comptometer – one of the first kinds of mechanical calculator. I worked there for a long time.

I had a brother and a sister. My sister was the youngest, but she was the bossiest. She used to boss us all about. Even my brother who was older than her never retaliated, we just let her get on with it. My mum died when my brother was eight years old. My father brought another woman home, and I can understand this, because I think men can struggle to bring children up alone. But she was awful, and I had to bring my siblings up. Once I left home my Dad left them and my siblings ended up in a home on Street Lane. I don't know if it's still there. They lived there for a good while. Because they lived in a children's home, it meant they had to get a job once they were sixteen. My sister got a job in a chemist's shop and a flat near Headingley Cricket ground. My brother Gordon got a job at Waddington's, who made games. He got to board with a lady after he left the children's home, but she got poorly so my husband said he could live with us. We were living with my grandma at that time, and she had a scullery house too, so we made the attic into a room for Gordon.

Wages then were nothing compared to now. I remember when I got married to Terry, he got a £3 rise, and we thought it was the world. We had two children, Andrew, and Ann. They were very different as children – she was like my little sister, she always wanted to be in charge.

I remember being at the swimming pool at Blackpool, they were all in the swimming pool, and Ann was trying to persuade Andrew in, he was just stood at the edge, shivering away. We used to go there on holiday quite a bit. Terry didn't want to go abroad, he thought that there were so many nice places to go on holiday here, so we did that. I never learned to swim, and never learned to drive. My son Andrew always worked with machinery, he had gone to college to study engineering, but after the first year he came home and decided he didn't want to continue. So, he stayed at home and went and found a job at a factory. Ann didn't really know what she wanted to do. By then we lived in Boroughbridge, and the children had gone to school there.

My brother-in-law owned a garage in Boroughbridge, and he wasn't much good with numbers himself. He needed an accountant, so Terry went to work there, and we moved there. We bought a new bungalow, when we first moved in, we had to be careful walking over the floorboards! We had dormer windows rooms put in for the children, we wanted them to have one each as we had a boy and a girl. I have four grandchildren. My daughter has two boys, and my son has a boy and a girl. They come to visit me regularly. I talk to them on the phone too.

I like the other residents here, some of them have been here nearly thirty years. Some of them are very clever, they can spell anything. One lady Olive just made hundred years old, and she got a birthday card from King Charles. I came here because I fell a few times and it turns out I needed a pacemaker. I had severe arthritis, and it has affected my mobility.

One of my happiest memories is the day Terry and I got married in 1948 at Oxford Place chapel in Leeds, near the Town Hall. It was a bit damp, but it was a lovely day. I'm not sure it's still a chapel now. We ended up being married forty-eight years.

\*A scullery house was the most common type of back-to-back house in Leeds between 1880 and 1950's. It was a four-room house which had a living-kitchen and scullery on the ground floor, two bedrooms on the first floor, and a third in the attic. The basement contained the coal cellar and wash-kitchen often with an outside toilet shared between two houses, although some had one each.

### James Jefferies

I was born and brought up in Liverpool. I was there through the war, and I can recall one day I was leaning against our house, and I looked up and watched a German bomber going overhead. I can still remember the noise it made. I loved growing up there and I felt very connected to the city. School wasn't that great, it was a very old building, and we had old teachers. Some of them lost their enthusiasm after they came back from the war.

After school I did an apprenticeship at ICI in Engineering, but when I was 21, I joined the army for 2 years and after that I broke my ties with home and my lifestyle changed. I moved to Rugby and got a job there as a draftsman. It was very hard to get work because there was a shortage of employment and lots of competition. I stayed there for 12 months, but then I left and moved down to Swindon. I did 3 or 4 years down there in an engineering post and I grew my knowledge and improved my position. Once I got married, we went back to Rugby, and I kept moving jobs to try to better myself and to earn more money. I took whatever training I was offered and tried to improve my skills and to learn from other people. At one point, we moved to Widnes, which was an expanding town at the time. We made friends there and people were very welcoming. Eventually we moved towards Birmingham and the Midlands for a better job, moving around but always in that area. It was always about Engineering, but we went wherever the opportunities were. I worked for 4 or 5 major companies in the end. One in the motor industry, one was in the electric industry. I was quite proud of what I had done, and what I had achieved. I always tried to pass my knowledge back on to other people too. I try to help, especially with young people. I went back to schools and gave lectures to pupils about Engineering. I like to read a lot and that way you keep your mind lively and pick up new knowledge and information. My brother was also an Engineer. He had more qualifications than me and was very clever. We used to talk for hours about what we did at work and share our stories.

I have one son. He has a law degree, and he works for British Rail in Manchester. I was always keen on the railways, and I think he got that from me. My father, my grandfather and even my great-grandfather were all railwaymen, so it runs in our blood. My dad's knowledge of the railways was fantastic. He could have been a guide as he knew all the routes and could tell people which they needed to take to go anywhere. I had a dog and I liked him a lot. He was a funny dog, he lived until he was 15. When he went, he went quickly so at least he didn't suffer.

I retired at 65 when I thought, that's enough. After that I wanted to sit back and relax more and we had some nice holidays, and we went around the world a couple of times. I started working as a consultant then and I would visit companies and try to understand their challenges and help them. I enjoyed that but eventually I gave that up too. My friend advised me to take it easier and I decided that they were right. I had a stroke a few years ago, and I was quite ill for a while. I didn't drive after that.

I wouldn't change much in my life but sometimes I wonder what will happen next, and then I realise I'm 80 now. I know that at some point the 'axe' will come down.

That will be when I am demobbed for good. But I've had a good life.

### Patricia

My name is Patricia, and I was born in Africa, in Zaire, in what was known as the Belgian Congo. It was a Belgian colony in Central Africa from 1908 until its independence in 1960. My parents were missionaries there and I was brought up as a 'missionary child' with my siblings – Stacey, Sylvia, Wendy, and Mary. The role of missionaries was to spread the teachings of Christianity and to help to teach local children. It was wonderful, and I loved it there. It was very hot, but you got used to that quite quickly. You had special huts to live in which were designed to help keep you cool. In those days you were allowed to stay there until you were of school age, and then you had to think about moving back to Britain for your education.

I moved to Worthing and went to the Mount School there. Then we moved to Scarborough, and I went to the High School. You soon learned what you could and couldn't do in England and changed your habits from those you had picked up in Africa. The schoolmistresses soon put you right and taught you how to behave as a British schoolchild should. Later I took a photographic course on Regent Street in London. I was a photographer for the London Illustrated Magazine, and I also took portraits of my friends' children.

After that, I became the first female photographer for the Yorkshire Post, after the war.

I married Douglas and he was a wonderful man and family doctor. We had two daughters – Elizabeth and Jeannie. We used to open our home to visiting missionaries, and host prayer meetings and I tried to help our elderly Jewish friends in Leeds. I was involved in opening the Holocaust Museum in Huddersfield. I have always been passionate about faith, and I have thought about the early days in Africa more and more as time has gone on.

I still remember some of the local African language, such as how to ask someone how old they are. When you are young, you can learn and absorb new things. You needed to be able to speak the local language so that you can communicate and get around to meet and get to know people.

Missionaries should be channels of grace. The Bible says that anything we do or say should be loving and understanding. We should always be thinking of others, and how we can be kind.

Love should be generous and yielding – that’s the right sort of love. We should try not to worry what other people think of us and just know that Jesus is our saviour, and if we trust in that, then things will work out ok in the end. It is important to try to go to church. I am not going now, because I am too old. But if I don’t get to a meeting, there are lots of wonderful books and magazines that I can read. Some of the religious books are very instructive and reading them can bring you close to God.

Congolese teaching asks whether you are focused on the inside or the outside. This is about being pure and clean in your actions, and how that is more important than superficial matters. It refers to 1 Samuel 16: 7; “The Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.” I try to live like that.

Emmaus House is based on Christian values, and I am happy to be here and part of that.

### Molly

My name is Mary Smith, but I’m known as Molly. I was born at Fellbeck, between Ripon and Pateley Bridge. I lived the early part of my life higher up the Dale, near Lofthouse. I enjoyed school, but when I was ten, we moved to a farm called Top Farm at Pateley Bridge, near the Moors.

This is still in our family now. I went to Lofthouse primary, then to Pateley Bridge school which in 1948, changed into a high school, and became known as Pateley Bridge secondary modern. But unfortunately, I couldn’t take my 11 plus exams, because of the snows of 1946 and 1947 and I just wasn’t able to get there. It never worried me that I hadn’t been able to do that, and after that I just worked on the farm.

But I’ve always been a bookworm and I still am. I helped my mother, who cared for her parents, my grandparents, and her great-aunt and great-uncle. We were always kept busy, and we were quite content. I had two brothers, who I used to bicker with, like all siblings do. But overall, they looked out for me, and we got on. In summer we had quite a bit of fun with kids from the village visiting. On a farm you have space, so we played football and cricket. When our boys were at school age, I was thankful that we didn’t live in the village. Because the kids there would trail around with nothing much to do. I think they got bored with that. Some of our boys’ friends would ring up to see if they could come over. It was a little later those girls came onto the scene!

My working life had always been on the farm and at home. General work like milking, helping with the sheep and poultry to start, then later, helping my mother with the housework and the older relatives. Farming was hard work, but it made me the strong woman I am today. In 1956 I married another farmer, who I met through the Young Farmers Association, and we had three sons. The first in 1958, the second in 1960 and the youngest in 1962. We lived near Brimham Rocks then on a small complete farm, with a few sheep, quite a few cows and poultry.

So, farming has always been in the family and still is. One son married a farmer’s daughter, and the other is a farmer. But farming is a dead loss now, it’s tough and there are so many people who want to make their bit of money out of it before it gets to the consumer.

I have four grandchildren. One from my second son, and three from my third. My eldest son had slight learning difficulties. He couldn't have the sort of education that is available nowadays. So, he lived at home and went to a day centre which kept him occupied, and which he loved doing. But in 2006 he developed cancer, and after wonderful care and treatment he died in 2016.

When someone is very ill, when they go, you are just very thankful that they haven't gone on suffering, and I was glad Michael didn't. The hardest time was when my husband died only about six months later in 2017.

It was a big shock but him going quickly was also a blessing because he would have been miserable if he had been too ill and not able to go to the farm.

My 60-year marriage to David is the great achievement of my life. It was love at first sight when we met, and once I agreed to go out with him, we were inseparable. After David died, my health started to fail. During the pandemic, I was having lots of falls, and not feeling very well, so I came to Emmaus House, and I'm very happy here. We don't get time to feel bored, well at least I don't!

It's fun to look out of the window and see the kids playing in the Valley Gardens, going on their scooters, and skateboarding. You see them scooting down the concrete.