

My Life and Memories

Extract from Ethel's story

I was born at home in Northam, Southampton on the 4th of February 1906. The house was terraced with a little front garden from which we could watch the electric trams going by.

We only had light in the front room when I was very young. There was a big brass lamp which was filled with paraffin in the centre of the table. Here we used to sit round the table and read, sew, knit or play card games. We had candles to take round the rest of the house. My mum used to know how long I'd been reading in bed by how far the candle had burned down.

We eventually had electricity in all the rooms around 1928.



In the winter we wore dark dresses with a white pinafore over the top. My mum used to spend hours starching and ironing the pinafore and we always had a new ribbon in our hair for Sundays and special occasions.

Ethel celebrating her 100th Birthday

We liked to play with wooden hoops, running beside them with a stick in our hands. We also used to play by the side of the river Itchen. Timber was floated in the river to season it and when the tide was in we used to balance on top of it until we finally fell in the river.

I remember hearing from the newsboy that the Titanic had been lost. My mum's friend had a son on it and I remember him coming in, full of excitement, saying "I'm going on the Titi Auntie Flo". Sadly he never returned.

I left school at 14 and went to work in Woolworths which was in East Street in those days. I wished I could have stayed on at school because I loved learning, but it wasn't the done thing for girls at that time.

I married Harry on 16 March 1935 at St Augustine's Church, Northam. I wore lily of the valley flowers and afterwards we went back to mum and dad's front room for tea, sandwiches and cake.