

## AUNT AGNES ON MOUSEHOLE : 1

Interview with Mrs. Oates of Hutchens House, Paul on 25<sup>th</sup> November 1986

Subject: Mousehole

Interviewer: Anne Radford for Penwith Community Archives

*Q: What year were you born?*

A: 1901.

*Q: What were your first memories?*

A: I'll have to think now.

*Q: Anyway, you were born in Mousehole.*

A: Mousehole, yes. In a little fisherman's cottage.

*Q: Where in Mousehole?*

A: Down in Chapel Street. That's where the Wesleyan Chapel is. And then you go down a little road leading to the car park, and there was a little row of houses each side, and that was in one of them.

*Q: And you had brothers and sisters?*

A: Oh, I was the fifth one out of ten. And they had five more after me.

*Q: Goodness. And what did your father do?*

A: Well, he was a fisherman part of the time, and the other part of the year he'd go yachting. That's go away with these big boats they do call 'em, but they were yachts and then they used to have a crew for the summer, and he'd go away different places, you know, for the cruising around, that's all. And that's what he done part of the time, then the other part he was fishing, and when he gave up fishing he went down to the ice works down there, in Newlyn, and his shirt button was undone, he never give it a thought, that was just undone, and he was oiling the engines, and that caught in the engine, and he was put to the hospital and he had his arm, up above here, cut off. Well, he thought he'd lost his leg, but they saved his leg. He lived then until he was 75 or 77. He were a fine man. I'm a little midget to him!

*Q: What did he do after that, after he lost his arm in the ice works?*

A: Oh, he used to go around selling fish. He bought a little pony – a little donkey – first, and that little donkey was brought over from the Scilly Isles. A lovely little thing, it was. Polly. And then he went and bought a little cart, and he used to go to Newlyn on the fish market, he had boxes then, to put his fish in, and he'd go around Penzance in different streets, not in the town, because it was too much, you know, for the little donkey, he would go in the back streets. And always lots of people used to... well, even our insurance man, that used to come around, he was coming round for years at our place, and that's father come in. He say, "Aren't you Mr. Gruzelier?" So Dad said, "Yes." He said, "Do you remember me?" So Father was thinking. He said, "We used to live down the bottom of Alexandra Road, and you used to call with fish." And he said, "I was a little small boy, and I used to say, 'can I have a ride up on your cart?' And you used to give me a ride, just up till the street," and Father would turn the cart again and bring him down, see he was safe home. And he said, "I remember that." "Well, well, well," my father said, "now I'd forgotten that, I remember now you're talking." And he said, "you would turn the little donkey and cart to bring me back to

my home, see I was safe.” And he was ever so nice young man.

*Q: What insurance company was that, do you remember?*

A: The Pearl, I believe it was. I think it was the Pearl. Of course my father didn't believe in insurance. He said “Save your own money”. So I said, “No, I shall put it in here and I shall be borrowing from it!” But that was... and then he got rid of the little donkey, because some man said to him, “Here's a little pony, pretty little pony”, and Dad was called Richard, “a pretty little pony for sale, Richard, which would suit your cart lovely, quicker than the donkey”, because the donkey was getting old. So the poor old donkey was sold again and sent over to Scilly. And then Father had this little pony now. But he was nasty, because if you went in the stable, and you didn't speak as you opened the door, he'd kick, throw that back leg out. I didn't like it very much. But after that, that's what Father done for years.

*Q: Can you remember what his wages were? What money he earned in his life?*

A: A pound a week. When he was away yachting, my mother thought our fortune was made. A pound a week send him home. So that was no money, was it? No. And he used to be just in, as we'd say, the teens of shillings down the ice works. Wasn't a pound. Oh, it was hard times, then, bringing up families.

*Q: Who managed the money in the family?*

A: My mother. Yes. And then when my mother died, they all brought the money in to me. I was cashier then!

*Q: What did your grandparents do? Were they Mousehole?*

A: They were Mousehole. They were fishermen. Granny used to beat the nets for the fishermen.

*Q: Women helped men with their work, did they? In wartime?*

A: With their husband? Oh yes. Any chaps down on the cliff, if they was coming in with a lot of fish in, any chap would go down and – well they used to say – what was the word they used to say? – and maist 'em. That's taken out to shake the net. Yes, we'd go down sometimes, little boats would come in, you know, full of it, pilchards then. And these chaps would say, “Oh, I'll give you a hand”. And my dad would – two or three shillings for doing of it – that's all. That's all, couldn't afford no more, because it wouldn't bring in money.

*Q: Did the women ever help?*

A: Oh, the women used to work in the fish cellars. I think I had a card here of one crowd in the fish cellar. And they used to have the barrels, round barrels, and they used to wash the pilchards in a tank in there, and press all these fish in the barrel, and it used to be sent to Italy. Oh, loads, loads of them. Because there was three, I think there was three in Mousehole then sending away pilchards. With ...?

I remember one year I...

there was the family home then, and mother was gone, I thought...

I used to pay a club into Mrs... (now what in the world was she called?) There was a butcher's shop there, near Whites, the opposite side, mind, they're dead years ago now. And she used to have a club. And I used to be in the end of the week for a bit of tongue or ham or something, bring home for supper, and she said, “Would you like to join the club, Miss Gruzelier?” I said, “I don't mind.” My father was against it. He said, “Save your own money and spend your own money!” But I done it. And when it come day, Christmas, week before Christmas, I had a lovely big ham, and a tongue. So I thought, I'll boil that tongue. And I'll ask Mr. Matthews – he was the boss there for

the fish cellar – and he put that under the press. I put 'en in a tin, and it come out: and not one little bit was out of place. Oh, it was beautiful. That's what people used to do. Ask anyone in the fish cellar, would Mr. Matthews put 'en under the press for them. So it's surprising what we used to do, then, isn't it?

*Q: How did you get on with baking?*

A: Oh, we used to have one, two, three bakehouse – public bakehouse, in the village. And of course I made everything, I don't ever remember buying a cake. And I used to make me twenty pound of flour in bread Monday nights, put 'en to rise and all, and then Tuesday morning, go out to the public bakehouse. Then I got this great big pan full of dough. Then a basin with flour in it. You'd have your little piece now, because there used to be a string of women there. Sometimes one woman, she was a big woman, she'd give me a little bit of a ?... like that!

Then you would turn out your dough, sprinkle your thing, turn out your dough there, and as we'd say, mungle it, they no say that, it's ....?....

Well, put 'en all together, then take a knife and cut off a piece, and then you weigh that, that'd be so much, and if it's too much, cut off a bit or put on a little bit, and then put them like little round loaves like that, then the baker's man, he used to putten flour on a long handle shovel, put that there, and put the cover on; they were iron kettles, like a man's ..?..

I used to say, like they'd put 'en on that and slide 'en in the oven. So I used to have six of them and a little else, we call 'em mansion, little bits, you know, left over, just popped in and done. And I used to do that twice a week, Mondays and Fridays. And then Friday I used to make five pound of flour in saffron cake alone, leaving out the ingredients, and that used to make a nice big cake like that, and a sheath of buns. And ours used to dearly love them warm. And Saturdays after dinner, they used to say, "Oh, come on, let's finish up with a warm saffron bun!" So that was my baking, then, through the week. 'E'd be powder buns, or rock buns, tarts of all description, used to have a good platter like that, I can see now. Top and bottom crust, a tart, and special when blackberries: there was no buying then, go out and pick them. And they'd finish up a great big pieces like that, and they'd go on a dinner plate. Open it up, and put your sugar on, and we used to have custard then with it, couldn't afford cream. So it's surprising what you'd done, you know, with a family.

*Q: Where were the bakehouses?*

A: One is out Keigwin Arms; and another was up there beside the paper-shop on the cliff, up through there, that was two; now where was the third one? Oh, Newlyn, that'd be, Angwyns, there in the bottom of Church Street.

*Q: Did they charge you for taking your bread to the bakehouse?*

A: Oh yes. A penny. Whether it was a penny or three halfpence, for a big loaf being baked. And then the mansion would give over, because that wasn't doing a little bit like that. And ours used to love for me now to cut that top crust off and smother 'en in butter. ...?...

*Q: What about wash days at home?*

A: Oh my dear! Get up before the crows Monday mornings! Yes, see, I had a big crowd to wash for. Then my sister died when she was twenty-nine and left – twenty-nine she was when she died, and she left four children, and then we had all them to look after. And I used to go down – and then my aunt, the aunt Lizzie that's the single one, she said, "I'll go down and keep house for them, and you can give me a hand, Aggie." Well, I used to do all the washing. I'd got a flasket full up to my chin nearly, coming up carrying that, seven o'clock, or before seven in Monday mornings. Then my aunt she had one of these boilers, you know, the firing under. And I used to go up Sunday nights, I never went chapel then, used to go up and fill up the boiler, fill up the tray, fill up the two baths, and the three or four buckets, while people was in chapel, because it's only a little pipe with a

drop of water coming down up where we used to wash, up top of Cherry Garden Street, it was. And you'd be up there ages. I said, "My gosh, the people were coming out chapel, me a-carrying water!" Course, they wouldn't do things like that then. My granny wouldn't even have a cup washed of a Sunday. She had a big earthenware pan, and she'd put all the dirty things in that what she used on a Sunday. And the Monday she'd soapen her clothes, and while they were soaking she'd wash up all these dishes. Tell ye how hard life was then for them. So that was our baking part. Oh and then the washing. I should go up then seven o'clock, put a match to the... because I'd leave the fire in Sundays, put a match to the boiler and put my clothes in. And while I'm down giving our three men breakfast, my two sisters, they'd be on the bird, when I'd go up there, boiling steam going handsome. Pick up them... I couldn't tell you how many boilers I had to have. Because they was mostly white things then people would wear, and the children all in white.

*Q: It was hard in those days...*

A: Hard? My gosh. They don't know what work is now. Because I can see you can put your things in the electric thing, and you can do anything, but you couldn't then, because you had to go there if he's boiling over or putting the fire out with the water going over. No, it's quite different now.

*Q: How did you get on with drying?*

A: We had two long lines at the back of our house, that we had plenty room for drying down there, and where I used to wash up to my aunt's house, she had a big garden, and we had four or five lines up there. But I done well for drying. Only thing is when it's winter weather, running, every drop of rain, picking of 'em in. But there, we got through. And I aren't dead yet!

*Q: Your drinking water, that was outside as well, wasn't it?*

A: Oh yes. In taps. There was no water indoors then.

*Q: Where was the drinking water tap?*

A: Well, that was one put at the corner of our house. That was there for a long time. And then a lorry come back and back and broke 'en off, and they said there was no place for it then. Then we had to go up for drinking water, we'd go up Raginnis Hill part-way, and bring a churn of drinking water, and I used to say that like gold dust! But for using water we had a big pipe just up top the road, just past our house, well, in Chapel Street, not very far. Mind, that's taken away, I see now. That was a big pipe and that was full of water. Sometimes it would be browny, coming down, you know, when it was dirty weather. But we'd wait, and leave 'en settle, we done all right.

*Q: What childhood diseases were there in those days?*

A: Well, we used to have – when I was 14, 13, 12, I had diphtheria. I always think I was nervous, because I went up to the post office that day and the man was there 'phoning, and there was a young woman around my age died with it. And he was 'phoning, he said, "You can come out at once to fumigate the room." And I was there, I was struck, I said, "My gosh, if I have ...? ... fumigate our room" – we had two beds in our room, and these two sisters slept in one bed and I slept in the other. And that worried me. And the next day I had a sore throat! "Oh my," I said, "I'd better send for the doctor!" Send for Doctor Lesley, the old man. And he come out, and he said, "It's diphtheria." "Oh", I said, "I shan't be put away, will I?", I crying up to the doctor. He said, "Well, I don't know, whether you'll have to go." I said "I'll do anything rather go away". Well, they kept me in that room, and isolated me for a month up there. And my father, he had a long curtain inside the door, with a big bucket of distinfectan; when he used to open the door, he'd take the bucket from the bottom, like that, and put 'en up to the top like that, and make that wet through with distinfectan. Then he said, "There's no germs being carried out from here." He was the only

one that tended me because my mother had a little baby then, that was Harold, a little baby, in the other room. She couldn't come in to do nothing for me, and my father had but one hand, and he used to wash out that floor every morning, for one hand. I can see him now, taking up the floor cloth and rubbing up, squeezing it up agin the bucket like that. And he would wash out under the bed now every day. So the doctor said he'd done wonderful, he said, because he said she was bad enough to be put away. "If it was anybody else, I shouldn't have thought about anymore." But Ma pleaded with him and I cried!

Then when I got sixteen I had rheumatic fever. And that was six months, I never opened our door, I had it that bad.

*Q: What treatment did you have for that?*

A: Well, just medicine and tablets. I had to stay in the bed for weeks. I had my arms all bandaged up and my legs all bandaged up. I used to cry for anyone that touched me to turn me. Yes, I had it pretty bad. There's no killing of me yet!

*Q: Did many people get rheumatic fever and diphtheria?*

A: No. We were just one in and out. But see, now's a common thing, people with arthritis, isn't it? Most everybody when they get old, they got some sort of arthritis, legs or arms or body or something.

*Q: What about Christmas? How did you celebrate Christmas?*

A: Oh, we used to have good times, Christmas. I remember one Christmas, this man that took over the bakehouse, took from the one he'd been there for many years, and he was too old, and he retired, and this other man took it over just before Christmas. Well, we was the family, and I used to make six big black cakes like that. I would almond one and ice 'en for Christmas Day and decorate 'en, and the second one would be saved for New Year's Day, and the others would be eaten. Well, I'd count out these six cakes, six like that, count them out, and I'd say "Here we are Mr. Ash. You put these well in the back." "All right," he said, "Aggie." But instead of he going up there to put them in, he started down there. Of course, mine was out to the door. And he said "Come out about six o'clock, Aggie. He'll be ready and out by then." When I went out there, I said, "Here, what's the matter with my cakes?" "My God," he said, "Aggie. I'm afraid to look at you." I said, "They aren't ready!" I said, "You never put them in the back!" "No," he said, "Aggie, I started down there instead of up there, and yours was up agin the door." And all these six cakes, I carried them in. I said, "No good to think about it, Aggie." I tipped them all in the old bucket and threwed them away, washed out everything, and done six more! And I said, "Mind you will put these well in the back. As if not, you'll have 'em, my tongue!" "All right, my cock," he said, "all right." And by the time they come out, I don't know whether it was nine or ten o'clock that night I went out, and they come out like copper plate. I said, "They're looking rich." He said, "I won't charge you for they that you throwed away." I said, "I wouldn't pay ye anyway, because they throwed away!" So that was our Christmas. Then we used to be Christmas night making ginger wine, one and two o'clock in the morning, to have them all ready for Christmas Day. Because we never used to drink then. People have wines now, but no-one never used to heard tell of wines then, only ginger wine. I go my ... about that last week, and then we should be up the carol-singers. The choirs used to go around the village Christmas Eve, twelve and one o'clock in the night. Then they used to go in different houses for ginger wine and cake. Handsome bit of singing, we used to have, lovely singing. Then all the villagers would crowd in and follow them round. And then it would be Christmas Day. People would go in Chapel then, Christmas morning. And then in the afternoon, you would see little girls – I was one of them – going up the hill. There was a little well in the wall, and we always called that the Christening Well. And of course my mother couldn't afford a nice doll for me, mine was a wood doll, with a little bit of red painted on

her face. But my aunt, she was a dressmaker, and she said, "Well, you shan't be left out, Agnes. I'll stay up, if I got to stay up till three o'clock, and make a little dress for the doll." And she did stay up, because she was finishing other clothes for the other children, and she made this lovely little dress for this doll, and a little bonnet. And I went up with two other girls, and they had handsome dolls, you know, cloam dolls, and me had a wood doll, it perhaps never cost more than sixpence if it cost that, that you pull its leg and arms up and down! Well, they put their hand in, and they was christened their doll. Now, it come to me, putting in... all the red went down all the doll's frock, oh it was awful. I cried when I went home. I said, "Mine is an awful doll, Mum." She said, "Well, I couldn't afford no other, and I thought, you shan't be left out, you shall have your doll." Then I had to take off that little frock and wash 'en because it was all the red paint from the doll's face. And that used to be our Christmas afternoon. And then the evening part, you know, you would go to friend's houses, or have friends coming in. Our house was always open house, down there. Oh, we had lovely Christmases.

*Q: Did you have a Christmas tree?*

A: Oh, yes, yes. Christmas tree and all the balls on them and the fancy papers. Oh, my mother would make sure that the children should have like other children. If it wasn't so good she would have it up for you. Then we hang up our stockings, the Christmas Eve. And I couldn't sleep, feeling of 'en. And it only used to be a long stocking then, no pillowcases. Long stocking. I said, "That's a orange, that's a penny I can feel down there!" I can see myself now, feeling of it! Oh, we used to have – much happier than they are now. Because you know, children don't know, they're having things, toys. It amused me when I have people come in and say they's up in the teens of pounds give them for a toy for a child. They aren't no happier. No, they're not a bit no happier.

*Q: When you were young, and you went to school, what jobs did you have to do around the home after school?*

A: Oh, I had to do it before going to school and after school. Yes, Mother say, "Now, clear the table. Wash up all them dishes before you go to school." And then Mondays, I used to always be kept home Mondays, and as we called the man the whipper-in, that's the man that'll go round to see whether he was – you're right that you're poorly or not, that you stayed home from school, and I used say, "Oh, ma, the whipper-in's coming!" "Sit down", I used to be sitting down making I'm very poorly. And soon as he's gone I have to go then and help Mother to make dinner. And the first I can remember, and one of our neighbours told me, years after, "Aggie, you wasn't high enough to reach the table. Your mother used to put a little footstool there for you to stand at the table and give you the meat-board," (we used to always have a board to cut up your beef on), she said "you had the meat-board, and a knife put in front of you, and the meat, to cut the meat small, formed a ...? in stew." Now that's the times I used to always be kept home Mondays, because Ma could hardly stay to stop midday to do dinner, and the children was coming home from school, and she used to keep me home. I was forced to be very poorly Mondays!

*Q: Did you like school?*

A: No, hated 'en. I was a proper dunce up there! I never went half the time.

*Q: What punishments did you have at school, or did any of the children have?*

A: Oh, some used to have the cane. But I remember one time, there was a young woman, but poor soul, she been up St Lawrence now fifty years if it's a day, and she was in my class next to me, and two of us was dunces really. And – no, we was parted that day. We had a boy put between us. And I used to say, "Ambrose, what's on her – copy her sum for me!" And he used to say that, and he'd say, "Let me see what you're... that's wrong there, Aggie." "Oh, darn ye." And I said "Copy hers!" and then he used to copy from her and tell me and I'd put 'en down. And then sometimes I

used to be wrong. And this day I wanted Gertrude, was parted from me, and I wanted something, I went “P p p!” (not spitting) and our teacher see me doing of it. “What are you doing, Agnes Gruzelier? Spitting?” I said, “Sir, ....?...I didn’t spit, I went ‘P p p’ just to draw her attention”. And my dear, he took me by the shoulders and pushed me out in the other room. And that was the master’s room. And I thought, my gosh, I’m in for it this time. So he said, “Agnes Gruzelier? Come here. Sit down there. Do fifty words.” Oh, I thought, I can do that all right. Done them lovely. They’re waiting now, four o’clock, all the class went. Now, this is the headmaster, he always had a cane. “Now,” he said, “Agnes Gruzelier, come forward.” I went forward. “Hold out your hand.” I hold ’en out. I seen that cane coming down. I aren’t going to do it. “Hand again”. And he put ’en... and he had big teeth, I can see them now, and these big teeth were showing! And then I put and I says, suppose I got off, I put ’en out the third, and I thought he’d cut my hand off with the sting he gave me with this cane. Because I got him mad, pulling my hand away so often. So I had my caning for being... he said, “What have you been doing, Agnes Gruzelier?” I said, “Spitting, Sir!” I thought, take that! But I suffered for it!

*Q: What were the names of the teachers at school?*

A: Mr. Birch. That was the master. John Birch. And Nellie Richards was a teacher of mine, and then we had another sewing teacher, she was called Beatrice Richards. And I was always a good scholar – a good sewer at school. That’s all I was good for, at school. A good sewer. And we was making pinafores for ourselves with yokes here, and frills over the tops. Well, I done mine, and she said, “It’s perfect, Agnes. Your sewing is perfect. Go around and show it to all the girls in the class.” And I had to go and then, somebody was finding fault on me, they would say, “Look, she, she’s the ..?.., she’s the favourite kid this week.” Now, we had this yoke, and we had to put two button-holes to the back. “Gosh,” they said, “which way do we do it, putting on now?” But I thought not, so I said, “Please do try it on, and I shall do a button-hole.” She said, “You’ve done the rest and you’ve got to do that.” “All right,” I thought to myself. But I took them up like that, and cut the piece out of them. “Oh gosh”, she said, “What’s happened?” Oh my God! Well, she come up, she took the end of that scissors, she cracked it on my poor hand. She knocked ’em dead almost. “You silly girl,” she said. “The best sewer in this class, and now you ruined ’en.” She knew I didn’t know how to fill in that great hole. She was brim mad. And it was more than – yes, more than twenty years after, when I was married and living up Gurnick, Mr. Batten lived opposite, and we was very friendly up there, Arthur and him, and he said, “I’m having a friend to tea today, Aggie.” “Oh,” I said. “Mrs. Someone”. “Oh,” I said, “I don’t know her.” He said, “She was a teacher in Mousehole School.” I said, “What’s she called?” He said, “Fatty Richards, that’s her nick-name.” He started to laugh, he said, “That’s what she used to be called.” “So my dear,” I said, “I’m going to watch out for she.” Well she went down for tea and he looked up agen the window and seen me and went like that. So I went down to the garage gate and he said, “Now, this is Agnes Gruzelier, as she was.” And I said, “Yes, I remember you. I can feel that crack with the scissors now on my knuckles, for cutting the...” and she roared laughing. She said, “What was that for, Agnes?” So I said, “For me cutting the button-hole in pinny. I cut the piece of it instead of just snipping of it!” So that was our schooldays.

*Q: What other lessons did you have?*

A: Well, reading and writing and sums. But I was never a good scholar. I say, I never went to school hardly, because every week or two, well, every week, Ma’d say, “Look, I’m going to say, paper a bedroom this week. Well, you’d better stay home, Aggie.” And I was proud as pussy to stay home. I didn’t care about work. But we gone through. I haven’t been... I aren’t like some, going write a page after page of letters, but I get on all right with my two friends I got for letters.

*Q: What games did you play at school in the playground?*

A: Oh, we used to have sometimes kissing rings, or chasing one another around, and some boys used to bring up marbles, and they'd make a thing, and then there'd be girls say come on, and they'd say, "Here's a tow", that was a big round marble, putting in... then we should fire, you know, have a game with the boys.

*Q: How did you play kissing ring?*

A: Oh, catch hold one another's arms, and one would be outside, and they'd go around and give someone a hit on the back, and then they'd run, and then you would have your kiss and come back, and the one that kissed you, they would go round then and pick you out. We used to have a nice bit of fun.

*Q: Did you have school treats?*

A: Yes. Once in the summer, and we used to have a band out. That was the Sunday School treat. And we should generally be dressed in little white dresses, and then we used to have to have the band out from Penzance, and the flags from the Sunday School. Oh, it used to be well, longer than this garden, much more. All schoolchildren, the boys and the girls, all marching with the band. And then they'd go through the village, then they'd go down on the pier, and "Hip hip hooray!" you'd hear that all over Mousehole. "God save the Queen!" And then we should march from there up to Paul here, in a field, and there used to be stalls there: ice cream stalls, and fancy stalls and the big tent for – go in there and have cream teas then, you had to pay for them, but the schoolchildren, they would have a bun, saffron bun, and a bottle of pop. That was handsome. Then you used to play games up there, kissing rings, and chasing one another, then you would have a chap and go away for a bit of a walk with 'en. Oh, it was handsome, really.

Now, this is proper Cornish, you've had today.

*Q: What about funerals ? Were they different in those days? A lot different?*

A: Well, when my father died, see, there wasn't no Chapel of Rest then. Nothing like that, in here nor Penzance. You'd have to keep them in the house until the day of the burial. So my father was kept there for three days. So we shut the bedroom door. We had to pass because we was two bedrooms then using. There was three bedrooms, but he was in the one and we turned the key of that, just go in to have a look at 'en, and the undertaker go upstairs to look and all. And he was kept there for three days, then he was taken out from there and put to chapel, and put up here and buried. My mother too.

*Q: Did you ever go geese dancing?*

A: Oh yes. I remember one time a friend of mine, she was called Annie Wright. She said, "Here, we'll go geese-dancing. You dress up as a man." Well, I went out in proper trousers on, and this jumper, and blacked my face, and had a net over my face, and I carried a little saw, like that, a little child's saw. And we went in one house, and the man and woman was there. I didn't like the man very much. And he said, "I'll see whether she's a boy or no, before she go out of this house." And I was frightened that, I thought he was going to pull my trousers down! And we started singing, "If I catch you bending, I'll saw your leg off!" And I was pretending to saw Anna's leg off! Oh, we had a bit of fun that year. But then it was – all the village would go geese-dancing, in different rigs. Some you could find out and some you couldn't. Some would be lovely rigs. Yes, we'd go from house to house. Then they would ask you to have ginger wine. Now you couldn't drink the ginger wine because they'd see who you were! Yes, and then some would go round carol singing, when they were dressed up. Just perhaps three or four, you know, going in people's houses and getting a bit of a sing-song. Oh, they were happy times.

*Q: Did you celebrate Allentide?*

A: Oh, used to have apples under our pillow! Yes, there wasn't a lot of that celebrated, but all the children used to have a big apple. You had to put that under your pillow in the night.

*Q: Why did you put it under your pillow?*

A: Good luck!

*Q: Did you celebrate Mayday?*

A: Well, Mayday, I remember one Mayday especially. I got up just after five. I said to my father, I said, "Call 'em early, Dad. I'm going Newlyn." Well, there was a long string of us, down in the cliff waiting for one another to come. We all walked to Newlyn with our little May whistles. Mine was made, couldn't afford to afford to buy my own, my brother made mine out of a bit of May branch, he made my whistle. And we went to Newlyn, and when we got – as we was entering Newlyn, there was an old couple there that they used to make fun of, and of course all we crowd, some went and banged their door. And I said, "My gosh!" Well, we went right through Newlyn, to the slip, and turned and come back. And this old man and woman was out. She had a something – whether it was a knife or what, something in her hand, she was going to do to us. Well, part of them runned that side of her, and me and two or three others were left behind. So I thought, "My gosh! We got to go to school!" So a man came along, and I said, "Oh, mister, will you put me past these people, we're afraid of them!" And he took my hand, he said, "Come on, me old – me little dear," he said, "come on, my little dear," he said, "I'll put 'ee past!" So of course we passed where she was; we ran then to catch up the others, because we had to be home to go to school that day.

*Q: Did you go to feast days?*

A: Feast, well, we would have feast in the village. It wasn't... well, you would always have extra food brought in for feast, and anybody come, they was always welcome to have something, a meal, with you. And then you'd be a lot out the chapel, cantatas and one thing or the other out there. Because that was the main thing, really, then. Go chapel for the evening.

*Q: You went to chapel on Sundays?*

A: Well, not very often! I suppose I was for... I should think twenty years I never went inside the chapel, because I used to be home washing, working ... Yes, because I used to be home now with all these clothes sorting out to wash, and I've been washing while people in chapel, and people have come out of chapel and all gone, and I've been still there washing twelve o'clock. So I thought I got a brer day tomorrow, I'm going to do part of them there.

*Well, that's lovely, thank you very much indeed, Mrs. Oates, that's very interesting.*

## AUNT AGNES ON MOUSEHOLE : 2

**Interview with Mrs. Oates of Hutchens House, Paul, on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1986**

**Subject: Mousehole**

**Interviewer: Anne Radford for Penwith Community Archives**

*Q: Can you tell me about roguery?*

A: Now roguery now – we used to be five girls, generally four or five of we crowd of girls. And there was a certain time of the year that they used to go out to do roguery. Well, we girls went out and we said, “What can we do tonight?” And there was a woman, she used to have a long – well, longer than this room, a piece of white canvas that they used to – the men used to have it when they went yachting, would bring that home, and she used to scrub it, and to keep her canvas clean, she would put that all the length of her room. Well, this day, she washed that, and put ’en over her steps there, the rail going around the steps, to leak, all the water go out of it. So we girls said, “Here, we’ll have that tonight”. And we girls went up, crept up her steps, took this long piece, dipped it in a lot of muddy water, after that poor soul’s scrubbing. And we said, “Now, what can we do now?” “Oh, there’s a woman up Legion Street, she’s very, very clean.” My dear, she wouldn’t leave you go in over her step, hardly. “Well,” we said, “we’ll open her front door and throw ’en in.” And all this mud and water, we three maidens, one opened the door and others throw ’en in through her front door. Well, her husband came out; we ran up Legion Street, some went that way, some went that way. They didn’t catch any of us that night. We were all running in the village, five of us. We met and went in someone’s cellar to hide away for him to pass down. But he couldn’t catch us. Now that was a night that we used to have...

And then when the little young apples used to be on the trees, it used to be the Mousehole boys, three or four of them; and I was nearly always in the roguery, and they said, “Aggie, come on, we’ll go up Uncle Dick Trembath’s tonight. Little green apples is on their tree. We’ll get up in the tree, you stop down under and catch ’en.” So that’s what we do another day. And we went up there. Well, we couldn’t eat them, they was that small, and you know what young apples are. And we went up there and we had nearly all that was on that tree that night. And we wasn’t caught. And it was quite near the house, that’ll tell you how quiet we were. And we had all these apples. Now we said, “What are we going to do with them?” Throw them away, you couldn’t eat them, throwed them all away. Now I said all them could have been a lovely lot of apples on that tree. But, you see, it was a bit of fun, girls and boys....

*Q: Did you ever get caught?*

A: Only once I was caught. And that was a time – well, it wasn’t roguery then, you was going about after Christmas. Geese dancing, as we called it. Dressed up – I was dressed up as a man, or a boy, and my friend, she was the girl. And we had a little bag going around from house to house, and I had a little tiny baby saw, and we used to sing, “If I catch you bending, I’ll saw your leg off.” And we went in this woman’s house, and the man was there, the husband. And they said, “I’ll see whether she’s the boy or a girl before she went out.” Frightened me to death! I said, “My God, she’s going to pull my trousers down!” So he said, “I’ll see whether she’s a girl or boy.” So we thought he was going out. Instead of that, he turned the key in the door, and there we were in. So of course I had to pull my mask off and he said, “Well, well, I never thought that was Aggie. Thought you was a boy!” So that’s what we used to do here in the Geese Dancing, go round to each other’s houses and have a drop of ginger wine, and a bit of chat, and some used to be dancing around, they that could whizz around would dance around the room. That used to be our geese dancing after Christmas. Lovely.

*Q: With Christmas presents, what did you give each other?*

A: Well, all depends. If you had money enough, some would have a new pinafore. Some would have socks, or stockings, or underwear. But then, if – with a big family, you couldn't afford all that much. You would have – well, you'd had my stocking. I can see now, a long stocking hanging on the head of the bed, and the feeling of them. That's a orange, and that's a apple, there are nuts, and that's sweets. Oh, there's a penny down the toe. You thought the penny was more than anything. And then we used to have a present, you had a little doll, and of course, I think I told you of that, that the Christmas we had these dolls, there was three or four girls, and they had handsome dolls, the others did, ..?. and a handsome little round face. Course, my mother couldn't afford more than eh – sixpence, I think they were, or whether it was fourpence, a long wood doll. And then you painted faces, you know. And I went up and I was christening my doll, and all that runned all over the little doll's dress. I was some disappointed. With the other girls, had them, you know, done up handsome.

*Q: The two ends of the village: upalong and downalong?*

A: Yes, up on the Parade, and down the Gurnick.

*Q: Was there a division between the two, with the people that lived up and the people that lived at the bottom?*

A: No, no, no. There was only up on the Parade. That's where the Coastguards Hotel is now. That's the Parade. And then you go right through the village and go right out to the end, that's the Gurnick.

*Q: Can you remember the families that lived there?*

A: In the Hotel?

*Q: Yes.*

A: Oh, the Rawles, they were called. A whole family of them. And then after they had died out, one after another, they sold that, and then it was all redone for the hotel, it was bought.

*Q: What about the shops in Mousehole?*

A: Oh, we had quite a few shops there. We had Hawkins shop, and Mrs. Halse's shop, and Mr. Rawles's shop, Miss Harberry's shop, Mrs. Pomeroy's shop, Mrs. Eddy's shop. Quite a number of shops we had in Mousehole.

*Q: What did they used to sell?*

A: Well, some had vegetables. Well, they mostly all had vegetables selling. And fancy stuff, you know, well, not a lot of fancy stuff, you wouldn't see hardly fancy cakes then baked. Well, then they had boxes and lard and currants and jams, all that sort of stuff, they'd have in. Biscuits, and then the bread man used to come, the van used to come every day with the fresh bread. And then there used to be the milkman going around with a can with a dipper. Ha'porth of milk, one dipper for the three halfpenny. And they used to have the man going around selling vegetables with a little small wagon, potatoes, and you know, greens. With turnip like that for a penny! And of course we was a family, and he used to shout to me when he would come on top of the road, I was just down one of the first shops, at the first house, and that was there, the Lobster Pot is there, if you've been to Mousehole, have you? And then you come around, and you'll come around now to go up this little street there, well, it isn't very big, and there's this little low house in the corner, and that's Mill House. And we lived there for oh, my gosh, some years. Lovely that was. Mill House. And then this man used to come with the little wagon, shouting, "Come on Aggie, bring your bucket up".

And I used to carry up a pail, to have the turnips put in. Three great big turnips would almost fill that pail. And I used to go home with turnips, and come up then to have my vegetables. I used to have two buckets. They used to be shouting up to me, the people, "Come on, Aggie, up you go with the bucket for your other vegetables." And that man used to go round twice a week through Mousehole. "Taters, cabbage!" Can hear him now. Emmanuel, he was called.

*Q: Did your mother ever talk about the old mill?*

A: Mill? Well, we was in the Mill House living. And that was the Mill House, but the mill itself was there in the Millpool, just up above. But the wheel was there. And our step, when we were there, was always a round one, round step like that. Now whether that's taken away, because it's been sold two or three times over. I've often wondered whether that step was taken away.

*Q: Your family always lived there, did they?*

A: No, we lived there for I suppose age 40 years, and then the landlord, he was getting old and he wanted to sell to share up the money with his sons, and then my father, he bought another house out – he bought that house, then, out in Chapel Street. So a good many of ours was gone then, dead and married, so there was only three of us then to go in this house. So then, when my sister, the nurse one, she lived down to Trewennack, Helston. That was her district, when she went there, and she finished there, all them years she put in one district. And when I went down, well, she was taken ill, and her mind went. She was a strong nurse, but her mind went, and she wanted to go home, and home was Helston. And when she was down Helston, she used to tell everybody that come in, she said, "This is my home. I've always lived here." And I went down to see her one day, and I said to the nurse, "Is there any lady here by the name of..." I forget the name, but that's my friend, she had a gardener, and the gardener's wife was put down there, and she would like to know how she was getting on. Well, I said, "Daisy, I'm going down see Emmy. I'll find her, if there's any finding, I'll find her." So I asked the nurse, and she said, "Oh, yes, go through here and through there..." I said, "My dear nurse, I shall lose my way, come on with me." "All right", she said. So she came along. She said, "Who you come to see?" I said, "Miss Gruzelier". "Nurse Gruzelier? My God," she said, "she brought me in the world, she brought my husband in the world, and brought my children in the world. She'll always go by Nurse Gruzelier down here." Yes, and all the little kids used to be going up, looking in the window, "Morning, Nurse! Morning, Nurse!" In the country, see? Lovely, they were. Then many, many times she have gone home and found milk and cream and butter and stuff on the doorstep, or a broccoli, or a turnip, anything that was going. Then she said, "Oh, I thought them poor souls could do with them, with a little family, so I gave 'em to them." Too much for her.

*Q: Can you remember who you rented the Mill House from?*

A: Yes. Charlie Tregenza.

*Q: Can you remember how much rent you paid?*

A: Two pound a quarter. He was a chapel-going man, a little short man, not much taller than me, but big, big as that. He was the Mayor at one time. And he used to go to chapel, and he used to pass up our way, and I thought, "My gosh, the rent is due, and he hadn't been here again." And I've gone out for Sunday, and I've said "You! Coming in are you a minute?" "Not today", he said, "Not today." He knew. I said, "That rent is nearly half a year's rent. I shall be spending of'en very soon." "I know, it's all right", he said. And he would come of a Saturday evening very often then, and I had my little niece, she died at 11 years old, she had TB. And she used to come up to our home Saturday nights and wait for all the boys and all of them to go out, you know, they'd go Penzance or go out with a crowd. And she would say, "Agnes! Can we have something nice for supper now?" I said, "What do you call nice?" She said, "I tell you what I do like." And she was

dying, really, poor little thing. "I'd like that jelly that Mrs. Pomeroy has." Mrs. Pomeroy had a shop, and she used to sell corned meat, and you used to have the big tins like that of corned meat then. Oh, bit huge, 14 pound, I think used to be in them, big tins like that. And when they was cutting of them, all the jelly used to come pouring out. And she wanted that jelly. Didn't want the corned beef, only the jelly. "Very well," I said, "come on." I had to carry her then, and she was nearly as tall as I was, with long legs, thin... And I went up, and I said "Mrs. Pomeroy, Julia want a quarter pound of the jelly from the corned meat." "Bless her heart," she said. I can see her now. "Bless her heart," she said, "she shall have all that's there." Well, she give her a – well, a plate up like that. And I said, "Look, she only want a quarter." So she said, "She isn't going to pay for this, Aggie, whenever she want a bit of jelly from that corned meat, she's going to have it." And how many times I've had to go up there, to say, "I'm arrived, Mrs. Pomeroy, for the jelly from the corned meat!"

*Q: Did many people have TB?*

A: No. At that time, my eldest sister, she had a little boy, two year old, then she had little Julia. And this child – they lived near the sea in Mousehole, down near the front, and this child went out, and went down the beach, and was in the water. And this man ran and took the child out of the water. He was dripping. Everything dripping wet. And this was the first day that my sister got out of bed after having the other baby. And she went then and took all these wet things off, and strained them, and put them there in the pan for someone to put outside. And a day or two after she started coughing. And that cough, we had to have a doctor, and he said it was from her lung. She died 29, left four children. Good looking girl she was. So... little Julia, she lived then until she was 11, and she died. But it wasn't a lot of TB. There was three of them in Mousehole at the time. There was a friend of ours that just lived around the corner from where my sister – my sister's called Angelina – where she lived, and she was in the bed with it. And there wasn't more than a few weeks' difference; they died almost together. Then there was another young woman in Mousehole had it. But we don't hear of that now. There's all cancers, that's all you can hear now. But at that time, there was three of them. And it was like just a week or two between them afore they died.

*Q: Were they kept isolated?*

A: Well, they were kept in their own bedroom. Because Gina wasn't able to come out of the bed after she was taken. Yes and before then, my gosh, people used to go following the coffin, you know, when anyone die. Well, before that we had to carry the coffins from Mousehole up here to be buried. Yes, I remember one of our schoolteachers, Sunday schoolteachers, he was a old man, he died, and then we was asked all the children to come each side to the bottom of this lane going down to Mousehole. That used to be our school down there. And we had to go each side of the road. And I remember as they came opposite we girls, the men had to drop the coffin at the stools and drop the coffin on, resting. And then they started singing. "Now we gather at the river." I always remember that, and I wasn't no age. "Now we gather at the river, the beautiful, the beautiful river." And carrying that all that way from Mousehole up here. You see, there used to be two lots of bearers, what they call, to take turns.

*Q: It's changed a lot, hasn't it?*

A: Yes. And now ..?..

*Q: When people were poorly with minor things, did you have your own home remedies?*

A: Yes, plenty would. Yes, I remember if I had a bit of a cold, snively cold, they used to say, with your head running, my mother used to say, "Now, I'm going to put your feet in mustard water." She'd have a big bowl and mix the mustard we'd have on the table, mix that up, and pour boiling

water on it, and now she'd say "Hold your head over, and put a towel over your head, and breathe all that mustard steam in." And that was for a cold we should have. And then we used to have a lemon. Mother would buy a lemon and roll it out, roll it until it gets soft, and then chop it up and put hot water on it, and sugar, and let it steep for a while, then have a drink last thing going to bed. Hot lemon. Soak your feet in hot water, she'd say, mustard water, and have a hot lemon to go to bed.

*Q: Were there any other little remedies for things?*

A: Well then, sometimes if you have a cold on your chest, my mother would have a piece of brown paper and warm it, ...?..., and have a bit of lard that you would put in cakes, and rub that over until it had melt and get that warm, and put that up on your chest. I can see her now, two safety pins, one each side, to keep it on your chest, if you had a bit of a cold on your chest.

*Q: Did you feel it did you any good?*

A: Yes. The heat would go through. I suppose the lard, you know, would soften through your skin.

*Q: Were there any other little remedies for things?*

A: And then we used to have Vick. Vick came on the market. And we used to have Vick if we had a headache. Vick to go round there. And I always thought I must have a red and white handkerchief to go round my head, and put a knot at the back, to keep that warm, the Vick. That was very good. I remember that, the Vick. And soaking our feet. And if I had my hair washed, I wasn't allowed to go to the door, then. I had to stay in, down on my knees in front of the fire, drying my hair. My mother now, shaking my hair up, I can see her now. (.....?.....)

*Q: How did you get on for bathing?*

A: Oh, we used to have a big bath, not like they are now, nothing near, what we used to wash in. And we had that brought in the kitchen, and then had the boiler put on, with the hot water. Had plenty of water. Cleaner than we are now, I think. And we used to get in this bath in front of the fire, Friday nights.

*Q: You all bathed then, did you?*

A: Yes. Mmm. Hair done up in wigs. That used to be like paper rolled up, strips, and Mother used to roll them all up.

*Q: Did the Mousehole and the Newlyn people like each other?*

A: Well, many, many years ago, they used to say they was like English and Germans. And where the war memorial is now, the youngsters used to say, "If they up-and-towners come this side of the war memorial, we'll have them." And they used to be down there squabbling on the beach, because that crowd have come past their limit. I can see them now. I said, well, talk about war, they're like Germans and English down there. They go past that war memorial, and we'll have them.

*Q: What did you use for transport?*

A: There used to be a wagonette in Mousehole. Used to be two of them: with a Mr. Eddy and Mr. Matthews. I think there was only two of them, that started. And that would hold six people. And of course, when the war was, people used to go up Penzance, a crew of them. Now three of them used to be like the ladies of Mousehole dressed up, and they would book their seat from one Thursday to the other. And I remember when George was down here, he had the flu down here, and he was demobbed then, he came down here for a fortnight to stay, and he had the flu, and this the first day out. And I said, "Oh well, George, we'll go out and jump in the wagonette". We two

jumped in the wagonette and sat down lonesome. At last the driver come. "Have you booked this, m'dear?" "No", says I. "Get out", he said, "because there's people have booked this ever since last Thursday". See, it wouldn't hold but six people. And we had to get out, and had to walk to Penzance. Now that was the wagonettes, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, they runned 'em from Mousehole. I remember one day with Mr. Eddy's son, he started driving the wagonettes. And this crowd of boys that we used to mix with, Mousehole boys, our own age, said, "Here, we're all going Penzance today." "So we are, we're going Penzance." "We're going to ask Dick Eddy, will he give us a cheap ride in." So these old boys, six of them, they got in the wagonette, and we four girls, now, had to walk as we thought. I thought, I'm going to ask Dick. I said, "Dick, can we come up beside you?" "If you come up beside me," he said, "you can come." So the maidens said, "I aren't going 'side Dick." He had, what shall I say, his hands was all right for driving, but they all was stiff. And they said, "I couldn't feel he put their hand on me." I said, "I'll give him a whaup," I said, "if he touch me!" So I had to go up besides of Dick, and there was four of us sitting up in front. Well, he drove us to Penzance handsome. These old boys now was putting their hand under the canvas pinching we at the back. And I thought I don't care how much you pinch here, I'm sitting down all right. And now to come home, we said we would see him, I think it was 8 o'clock. See, winter-time. All right, well we all got up beside St John's Hall, and the boys too, they jumped in the wagonette and we had to climb up on the wheel up beside Dick. When we got to Newlyn Slip, after you passed the ice works, coming this way, there's that bit of hill there before you get on the plat (?) to go through Newlyn. The old horse was slipping. So Dick said to the boys, "Get out, boys," he said, "the horse can't pull us all up." "No, we aren't going to get out", they said, "All the maidens got to get out." Well, we jumped off, and then when they got up top the slip, the old boys said, "Go on, Dick, leave them behind!" We was left behind, and they was right through Newlyn. And they were screeching laughing, the old boys, and when we got out the other end of Newlyn, Dick said, "I'll leave the maidens have a ride through the cliff." So I was the first one to climb up the wheel up beside Dick, and the other three, we pulled each other up. So that was our bit of fun we used to have with wagonettes. If we could catch Dick Eddy, he was about our own age, a bit older, but – and he was working under his father, and his father was home, so we had free (?toleration?) for the wagonette!

*Q: How much would it cost you?*

A: Sixpence, to go Penzance. But we never paid nothing that night, none of us. Free trip we had.

*Q: What did you do for enjoyment when you were a teenager?*

A: Well, you could only go out on the cliff for a bit of a walk, and then Newlyn boys used to come to Mousehole, and Mousehole boys would go up Newlyn, and mix in with the girls over there. Well, we used to be all in a crowd out there, and then of a Sunday evening, we used to go up Top Lane, that's right where Sheffield is, and go straight across then, that was our Top Lane, instead of going in on the Prom, we should walk up and down there, until we had a chap, and then we should come home with them!

*Q: Did you have to be in by a certain time?*

A: Oh yes. We wasn't allowed out late. Just nine o'clock, I would say. "Mind you're in here by nine, Agnes, all right?" Yes, we wasn't allowed out late.

*Q: How old were you when you first started having boyfriends?*

A: Fourteen, when we started up there. (...?...?) But we always kept, you know, a crowd of us, girls and boys.

*Q: Did you ever go to any dances?*

A: Well, there used to be a dance here when the British Legion was open first. They used to have Sixpenny Opera or something of a Friday night. Well, it used to be full up there, and I used to go up there, and I couldn't dance, I couldn't lift my feet to dance. And there was one man in Mousehole, married he was, and he said, "Come on, ..... come on, get on the floor." I said, "My feet's no good for dancing." He said, "Come on, I'll pull you out." And he was a great tall fellow. And of course I was stepping on his feet, I couldn't get around. Well, I said, "Oh, gosh, Mr. Edmunds, I'm ..... anything. I can hardly see to get back to my chair." So we got back to the chair, and he had a good old laugh. And then there was another man, he was a postman here, little short man, they were married men, and he had two or three children, and he had a little belly on him, I can see now, so he come up, he said, "Come on, Aggie, let we see can we do it!" He couldn't dance more 'n I could. And we made all of them laugh up there, because we were stepping in his toe, and he stepping on mine, and turning around. But, well, all the crowd was laughing. I said, "Well we go ..... up here Mr. – I forget his name now. Nice old man he was. I said "Your belly's in the way, we can't dance like this." So he said, "Oh, we'll go round, Aggie". So we was just walking around like that. It made the others have a good bit of laugh at us, but we didn't mind. I was never no dancer. I had my brother, that's Alan that came here, that's her first husband, he was my brother, he could dance as light as anything on his feet. Well, in fact, Eileen in Penzance, she was a very good dancer, and my sister, nurse one. I said, "I could never stay to go dancing, I have a ..... looking after the family."

*Q: What music did you have at the dances?*

A: A gramophone. ... with a great big horn on it. That was the first one we started with. Then as time went on somebody gave them I think an old piano that wasn't no worse than the music.

*Q: Do you remember ever seeing any of the artists?*

A: I was under a artist for nearly twenty years.

*Q: Were you? Who was that?*

A: H E Crockett. He's dead many many years now. From London. He used to come down here and lodge here in Mousehole, and I remember all the boats, small boats was out pilchard-driving then, out to catch pilchards, and they used to have big boxes, bigger than this, down on the beach, when the men come, they had to salt the fish. See, taking of them up in baskets to put up to the fish-cellar, used to put in a load then sprinkle them with this coarse salt. And these used to be down on the beach ready for them too. Well, this man was there painting the harbour, and I don't know whether it was one or two of us went down looked at him; well, always painting, because he was in Mousehole for years lodging. And he turned around looked at me, this day, and I turned my head away like that. Then I looked at his picture again and he was looking at me again, and I went behind his back as I thought but he caught me. So he said, "Would you like to be painted?" I said, "No, I've no time to be painted, I have to help my mother." He said, "Where does your mother live?" I said, "Just up the street." He said, "Will you take me up there?" I said, "Yes". We went up, and he said, "Now, go in and ask your mother can I speak to her." So I went in, I said, "Ma, there's a man out here wants to speak to you." So she went out. He said, "I wonder, I don't know your name." She said, "Gruzelier." He said, "I wonder would you let your daughter be painted?" "Oh," she said, "I haven't got no time for her to be painted," she said, "because when she come home from school, she got to have to get the tea, and wash the tea things away and do different jobs". So he said, "If it was only one hour a night after school?" "Well," Ma said "If it's only one hour, I don't mind her going." Well, I was for years under him, years. He was always put with the Royal Academy in London. And then he used to have another friend of his come down. She was a lady, Miss Dawn, a lovely old lady she was, I can see her now. And she come in, and she knocked our door one day, and she said, "Is Agnes in?" So my mother said, "Yes, come in." She said,

“Now I want to make a sketch of you, Agnes. Mr. Crockett is painting, and I want to make a sketch.” And she sat down in the kitchen, like you, and she sketched me. She said, “I’m pleased over this, now I can do her own paints on it.” But I was under Mr. Crockett for years and years, until I was gone fourteen, and mother said “I can’t spare her no longer.” Threepence an hour. I always had a silver threepenny bit. And mother used to say, “Now, you give me that money, and I give you a penny a week out of that.” And I used to go up post office and have a form, and put a penny on that form, and when you get a pound, you can have a post office book. And that’s how I started saving my pennies. Each week my mother’d give me a penny, when I would go out being painted. I couldn’t have a penny if I wasn’t being painted.

*Q: Can you remember any of the pictures you were in?*

A: Yes. One was “Sunny Corner”. That was took up on the Parade, in a garden with sweet peas. And I had a lovely little basket, go up like that. Now Mr. Crockett said, “You’re going up through...” He was always full of sweet peas. He said, “You’re going up through this pathway in the garden, and don’t smile. You’re thinking, ‘Now, which ones can I pick first?’ And then you got your basket so much up that way and so much that way. Now you’ve turned and coming down through, and you’re all smiles.” He said, “You’ve got now what you wanted, and you’re pleased with your basket.” And that was called “Sunny Corner.” Oh, I couldn’t tell you the names. Another one I had taken with a round sailor hat on. That was my father’s hat he used to go yachting with. And I had a check dress with a pinafore on with a yoke in it. I can see it now. And a hoop. You know, you used to go with hoops and a stick to roll your hoop. And I had my hoop and stick and I’m coming out of this house, all smiles, my hair about down here, and my little round hat on. And I had all they pictures before I left up Gurnick. And that was... he had that more than ten years. He used to put it in the Royal Academy. He could have sold it again and again. His mother was living. She was an old lady. She said, “No, you’re not going to sell Agnes while I’m living.” And that had to be brought home, he said, to go in my mother’s room until the next Academy is open, you know, for the pictures. But he sold a lot of pictures of me. And all I used to have was a threepenny bit a hour, and I’ve got one or two of his threepenny bits here now somewhere saving. And my mother say, give me that, she said, and then when we broke up for school, you’d have a new pair of boots to go to school after that. And they two pence that she had from that, she would buy a new pair of boots for me to go to school, or a new pinafore, something like that, to go to school after our holidays.

*Q: Can you remember any Mousehole nicknames?*

A: Oh yes. One man, he do go Apostolic. And we always call him “Apostolic Ned”. And then there was another boy, used to call he “White Rabbit”. And Dicky Pinch, another boy. All the boys had nicknames in Mousehole.

*Q: Can you remember any more?*

A: Dicky Pinch, White Rabbit, Apostolic Ned... Donah (?) Wright, that was his real name... They’ve gone from me now, but I knew all of them at the time. We wouldn’t call them the right name.

*Q: How did you get on for the toilet?*

A: Oh, we used to have a dry toilet. Nobody had water then in Mousehole. But ours was a box as big as this. And that was the cover, but it was a round cover to do the centre, but he was... you had to lift all that up to take your bucket out. Then we used to throw it in the river behind the house, and then he’d wash down.

*Q: What did you do with your washing water?*

A: We had a sink outside. Sometimes we'd scrub all the steps with the washing water, then we had clean water to wash 'en down after.

*Q: Weren't there little gutters?*

A: Well, ours was in front of the door, and there was the front door there, and down the bottom there was a square sink. And then we should just there and tip our water down.

*Q: What is an addle gutter?*

A: Adder gutter, I think that's... the sink, that they do lift that up and clean it out, and I said that's like addle gutter in the bottom, muddy, you know, slurry. People would have to clean that out, you know, wash it and put it in again. But ours was right through, because the river was right behind our place, that we could ..... with that.

*Q: Can you tell me what flips were?*

A: Oh, I had a flip. Used to put my boiler on the flip to boil clothes.

*Q: What was it then?*

A: That was like an open chimney. It wasn't an open chimney. Ours was a chimney up the top there and down here was wide part, and he was built up with bricks, and then you used to have two higher bricks and put your washing boiler on top of that. Then you put your water and your powders in your clothes, then you would punch and punch them down. Then you had your clean bucket and pull them up like that with your puncher and put them in the bucket, taking out the cellar and putting in your tray. That's a big wood tray with two handles to it. You used to put it in that. Then you would have a drop of clean hot water go in then, and cold water. Then you'd strain them. Then you'd be another zinc bath there with a drop of bluing water in, just to tint it blue, make them whiter when the sun is on them.

*Q: Did you have any local characters? Perhaps someone that sticks in your mind?*

A: No, can't think of any just now. No, gone.

*Q: Did you ever have magic lantern shows?*

A: Oh yes, up in the Salvation Army. Halfpenny to go in. Crowded out, crowded. Magic Lantern show up Salvation Army tonight, halfpenny. Some would push in, never had a halfpenny; some would bundle in with the rest.

*Q: What sort of slides did you watch?*

A: Some would be funny, some would be sometimes about what good the Salvation Army had done. They used to be nice, I used to like them.

*Q: Did you ever go to the Salvation Army services?*

A: Yes, I loved the Salvation Army. When my sister died, she had that little boy, two years old, I told you, and he was soon as he'd hear the Salvation Army, he'd want to go. Well they used to be out there under the War Memorial in Mousehole. They used to be there Sunday mornings in a ring. Well, you could hardly pass. And they used to have a service there and six o'clock in the evening. And then they would turn and bid the band up, would go up to the Salvation Army Hall. And he being a little boy, I used to put he all that summer up there, and the hall used to be that full. A real army woman she was, Mrs. Eddy. She say, "Look, my handsome, you bring the child up, Aggie. I'll spread my legs out," she said, like that. Instead of having one bit for herself she would have two bits to save that little bit for me near the door, because I said, "He'll cry, he'll want to go out, I

can whip out quick.” And I done that all that summer. And he would be delighted to hear streets going with the band going.

*Q: A lot of people went in those days.*

A: Oh, it used to be packed full, packed full the Salvation Army was. Lovely. I used to dear love Salvation Army.

*Q: Were there many in the band?*

A: Quite a number. Now I had the picture of that for years and years here. And when we was up – when my husband was living – up the Gurnick, Dr. Richards used to come up, and he is in the family but not near to my husband, but he was connected up somehow, and he used to sit down and have a talk. And we was here talking; he brought up about Mousehole Salvation Army. He said, “I used to love to go in Mousehole with my mother, just to hear the Salvation Army.” And I said, “Here, wait a minute.” I went and took out this great box of photos I had, and I said, “Now have a look at that”. “Well, well”, he said, “Aggie, that’s the Salvation Army: I know that one, that’s Mr. Eddy, and that’s his son and that’s his daughter.” I said, “You’re right!” He said, “I’d dearly love to have this”. Well, I said, “you have it.” So he took it home with him. He was delighted to have it, Salvation Army. All the men playing the thingybobs, the man beating the drum..

*Thank you very much, Mrs. Oates.*