

SATURDAY 24 JUNE 2000

Hawksmoor Close,
Whitchurch,
Bristol.

ALTHOUGH I live in the South West I still maintain very strong with Yorkshire, Luddenden in particular.

On a recent visit to Luddenden to visit my sisters, Mrs Irene Cowan, of Kershaw estate, and Mrs Dorothy Pettengell, wife of the late councillor Allan Pettengell, who lives in Midgley, my eyes rested on a letter by Mr Ron Thrower in "Mailbag" ("Such wonderful village people", May 9).

I am the Violette (Violet) mentioned in the letter and how delightfully Ron paid tribute to our late parents, Violet and Jack Donnelly. They really were quite a remarkable couple, loved and respected by so many.

Our parents brought us to Luddenden from Newcastle in 1935 as work in the North East was difficult to find, and from the day we arrived we were taken in to the bosom of that wonderful village and never looked back.

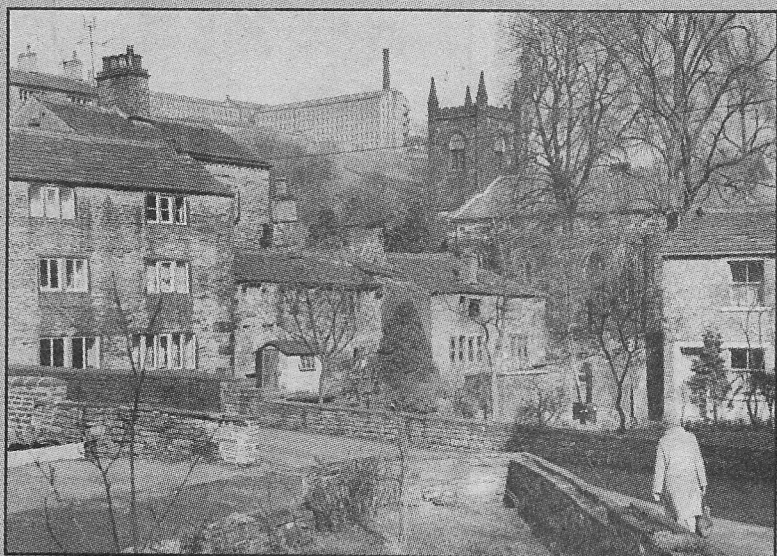
The friendship that developed during the years that I lived on Brook Terrace from 1935 to 1951 will be forever etched on my memory and during a recent week in Blackpool with members of fellowship from the Kershaw estate I was able to meet once again a lot of those friends.

I wonder if Ron remembers that at the age of 17 I was one of the bridesmaids who attended him and his ex-wife, Marion, at a church in Kettering, Northants.

The war years in that idyllic village passed by almost unnoticed, apart from the evacuees scattered at homes around the district. I am sure that when the time came for them to depart they must have felt very sad.

Growing up was a wonderful experience. Vicar and Mrs King's ran all the church events, Guides and Brownies, Miss Hebblethwaite and Miss Campbell ran the Gleaners Concert Party, Mr Branwell and Mrs Gaukroger ran the schools, and it was a pleasure to be ill under the superb care of Dr Cameron.

Saturday night was ballroom dancing at either Hebden Bridge Co-op or the Queen's Hall, King



Luddenden village in 1974, with St Mary's Church and, behind, Murgatroyd's Oates Royd Mill, long before the fire that wrecked a large part of the complex. . . "We were so happy and free — no muggers and no drugs, no fears of walking alone. Everyone helped each other."

Cross. Walking home over Warley, before dropping down to Luddenden and walking by St Mary's Church we'd have the old lamplighter for company, waiting as he turned off each gaslight in turn, and warming our hands over the Cockie Watchman's brazier as he sat outside Peel House Mill, owned by Arthur Eastwood.

Such wonderful memories, of family weddings, when the whole village turned out in force; also

to be every Armistice Day, when I stood at the village cenotaph with my father, he sporting his medals from both world wars and me in my Girl Guide or Brownie uniform gazing as the tears rolled down his cheeks at the sounding of the "Last Post", followed by a wonderful treat, a bottle of Dandelion and Burdock and a packet of salted crisps, sitting on a hard, cold slab outside the Lord Nelson.

We were so happy and so free in Luddenden — no muggers and no drugs, no fears of walking alone or of having our bags snatched. Everyone helped each other; comradeship was truly the in thing.

All that seems light years away, yet, as I approach 70, it all just seems like yesterday. Thank you to Luddenden on behalf of my sisters and brother, Jim Donnelly, who lives in Gosport, for making their wonderful village part of our family history.

VIOLET A. FRASER
(nee Donnelly)

VILLAGE BECAME PART OF OUR LIVES

when our brother returned from the Japanese PoW camp in 1945, even though he had never seen the village before as he was already in the regular army when we moved to Luddenden, serving in Singapore. The flags, bunting and beer flowed at the Lord Nelson on that happy day.

I think my proudest memory has