



Kenneth Price

Ken's Story – written up by Patricia Curry, October 2023

I came to Cambridge at the outbreak of the Second World War in September 1939 as a six-year-old boy, from New North Road, London, with my junior school from Islington.



We walked around Cherry Hinton looking for people to take children into their houses.

I ended up at a large house next to the Rosemary pub on Coldham's Lane.

My school was in Cherry Hinton at the green tin hut near the railway crossing.

After a while, my lessons were moved into the school classroom from the hut.

My playground places were the Spinney in Cherry Hinton and the chalk pits at Coldham's Lane.

One night during an air raid a high explosive, bomb hit Riche's scrap yard killing the guard dog at the nearby cement works.

I was standing in the road at the time when a bomb hit the cement works but didn't explode.

On another occasion, I was on Coldham's Lane by the Rosemary pub when a German Dornier flew low over me on its way over Marshall's airport.

When America entered the war, many Americans came to Cambridge. They always had sweets to give to us children and the cement works road in Coldham's Lane had conveyors of trucks getting cement for their airfield runways.

As the convoys were going into the cement works, I climbed in alongside the driver at the beginning of the cement works road, travelling with them whilst they collected the cement, and when the vehicle got back to Coldham's Lane I got out. I always asked,

"Have you got any gum chum?" They always had!

When I was about nine years old, I joined the choir of Great St Mary's Church in Cambridge, walking there and back for morning and evening services.

One end of Marshall's airfield was near to a field in Rosemary Lane. On a few occasions, my friend and I crawled through the barbed wire fencing to go up to the bombers to have a close look at them. After a few times of this, we were chased off by one of the guards, but it was good fun at the time.

I spent a lot of days at Coldham's swimming pool where I learned to swim.

Coldham's Common was covered in stone pillars to prevent German gliders or aircraft from landing.

At the end of the war, I was eleven years old, and the children that I knew went back to London. When I saw my father and asked him about me going home, I was told he had no place to take me to. I then had to go to Cherry Hinton's children's home in Cherry Hinton Hall with other evacuees and attended Coleridge School.

Cherry Hinton Hall was a grand old building with a stream running underneath the building and into the lake on the grounds of the Hall. It

was a good place for boys as there were plenty of trees to climb and conkers to collect.



Cherry Hinton Hall



The brook at Cherry Hinton Hall

There were five other boys of various ages, and I was the oldest. It was run by Miss Johnson. She was a very good lady at running the boy's home. She treated us as her own.

It had a bad reputation owing to older streetwise boys living in the hall and the headmaster of the secondary school would come to help Miss Johnson.

On Coldham's Lane, where the sweet shop used to be opposite Queen's Meadow, I was with a young lad who had gone into the shop to get some sweets.

An older, big boy, known to be a bully came over and hit my friend for no reason at all, and made him cry. I was having none of this, so I turned round and hit him on the chin knocking one of his teeth out. Being a typical bully, he ran home crying.

He got his brothers to come after me on their way to school but I used to go around other ways to avoid them and they had to make sure they were not late for school, so they never got me.

The village boys didn't realise how streetwise we London boys were.

Next to the Hall was an Italian prisoner-of-war camp, on Walpole Road. I spent a lot of time in their camp talking to them as some could speak a little English and they made toys for us.

After about two years of being at Cherry Hinton Hall, we were told it was going to close as a children's home and the boys were told we would be going to the Red House children's home at Little Shelford. This was a sad day for the boys who had nowhere else to live.

On the day we left Cherry Hinton, I, being the eldest, took the boys to the pictures in Cambridge. Then we had to catch the bus to Shelford and then to the children's home.

It was a large house with many rooms and a very large garden with a brook running down one side.

The bad reputation of the boys from Cherry Hinton Hall during the war had reached the children's home in Shelford.

One day, when my friend David and I were talking to two of the village girls who were on the other side of the stream, a man called out to them.

"You don't want to talk to them. They go round with a ball and chain on their feet".

So, the bad reputation of Cherry Hinton Hall during wartime had preceded us.



But we changed their minds when they got to know us. I even played football for Shelford.

Having moved to Shelford I still went to Coleridge School, until I left at the age of fifteen. The council then found me lodgings in Cambridge. I was then working as a printer in Cambridge.

The third lodgings the council found me turned out to be two doors away from my future wife Doreen.

She was fourteen at the time and I was sixteen. We were together for seventy-two years, until her death in January 2022.

When I was eighteen, I was called up for the army. After several weeks of intense training, I became a paratrooper and joined Two Para serving in Egypt, Cyprus, and Transjordan.



Ken at the Suez Canal 1953



When I left the army, I went back to my job as a printer. Doreen and I got married, I was twenty-two and she was twenty. We had three children, all boys. Two were twins and an older brother by three years.

I later joined the Royal British Legion at Waterbeach and, after a few years of training, became their Standard bearer. I entered competitions and became the county Standard bearer a position I held for a number of years.

It was when my wife and I went to a function on The Green at Waterbeach that I noticed there were several ex-paras there with a stall selling various items including military badges and other items of interest. They asked me if I would join the Cambridge branch of the Para Association, which I did.

It was a very active branch which organized trips to Arnhem every other year. I eventually carried the branch Standard to the events at Arnhem and other places in the U.K.

At the age of seventy-two, I became the Para Association National Standard bearer. The Standard is the only Standard of the Para Association that has a Union Jack in the top corner.

Ken in Arnhem 2013



About a year later the Standard was being 'laid up' and I was to receive the honour of carrying the new one, at the event where it was to be dedicated at a church in Normandy.

At one of the Normandy events, a bust of Major Jack Watson was to be unveiled by Prince Charles (as he was before becoming King). I asked him if he was doing the unveiling as I had the National Standard with me. He told me to bring it over and when telling my superiors of this they replied that they couldn't overrule his wishes.



In my seventeen years as the National Standard bearer, I carried the Standard every year to the Ardens, Rhine Crossing, Belgium, Normandy, and Arnhem.

Ken at the Menin Gate, Ypres, Belgium





Ardennes Germany

I would like to pay a special tribute to my wife Doreen who accompanied me on all my duties, at home and abroad. Without her support, I am sure I would not have carried on for as long as I did.



I would also like to thank the Watson family, the Zannette family whose father was a Normandy veteran, Ralph, who organised all the trips, and Barry our bugler of many years.

Jane and Elaine Zannette are still very much in contact with me. I go to Kent to stay with them for a few days and they come up to stay with me. They also ring me to make sure I am okay.





I came to Cambridge at the start of the war in September 1939 as a six-year-old boy. I came with my junior school from Islington in London, where I lived on New North Road for many years.

At the end of the war, as an eleven-year-old, I was told by my father that there was no place for me back in London.

I was then sent to Cherry Hinton Hall with other London evacuees.

Cherry Hinton Hall had a bad reputation owing to older streetwise boys living in the hall during the war.

When I went to Cherry Hinton Hall there were five other boys of various ages. I was the oldest by a few months.

Cherry Hinton Hall was a grand old building with a stream running underneath the building and into the lake on the grounds of the Hall,

It was a good place for boys as there were plenty of trees to climb and conkers to collect.

It was a children's home run by Miss Johnson. She was a very good lady at running the boy's home. She treated us as her own.

Next to us was an Italian prisoner-of-war camp, on Walpole Road. I spent a lot of time in their camp, talking to them as some could speak a little English and they made toys for us.

Cherry Hinton Hall was a great place for us boys to live and play and it was a sad day when it closed as a children's home for those who had nowhere else to go.

Ken Price 2023