**Chisman Mo**

( Born: 1931 )

Index number: MW**OH002**013

**Recorded on:** 23 June 2016 by Anne Weaver and Roger Davis

**Time commenced:** 10.45 **Duration:** 38 minutes **Location:** 30 Windfield, Leatherhead.

Mo starts by telling us that she was born in London but that her family moved out because of the war. They returned after the war and Mo went to work in London. As she married someone from Mickleham she moved to the village where she stayed for 52 years before moving to Leatherhead in 2005. Recalling her earliest memories we hear of the hardship of rationing, both of food and clothing, and of being evacuated to Weston-super Mare where she saw the bombing of convoys. She tells us of the generosity of the many American soldiers stationed there but that there was animosity between the black & white soldiers. Returning to the subject of rationing Mo lists the amounts of basic foods that were permitted and mentions how well rationing was organised. In 1952 Mo married and moved from Ashtead to Mickleham and she registered with Mr Butcher at Rose’s Store to obtain her groceries on ration. We hear that clothing was still rationed at the time and that although she, and her husband John, grew a few vegetables it was also possible to buy them from Lew Bridger in his shed at the back of Burminster House. She did not have a refrigerator until 1958 and prior to this milk was stored in a pottery milk cooler or boiled and skimmed to make cream cheese. Food was ordered and delivered from a grocer in The Crescent, Leatherhead, although bus trips to the shops were made on a Saturday morning. Later Mo would push a pram into Leatherhead, which at the time was a busy town. She tells us that the meals she cooked were the same each week, including a roast on a Sunday. They rarely dined out although all hotels, including The Running Horses and The Savoy, offered a Five Shilling meal. Picnics in Norbury Park however were frequent events with egg or fish paste sandwiches, cake and lemonade or orange squash. She then describes for us the children’s parties in the village hall. Turning to her involvement in helping with the school dinners we hear about the poor food and how initially the meals were cooked in a small kitchen at the village hall but later were delivered from a central kitchen. School milk was also provided but that it was not always well received. Mo then relates how she looked after her children but that she returned to work for two days a week to help at the Post Office in Swanworth Lane which was under threat of closure following the death of the postmistress, Mrs Holder. She describes her involvement in the running of the post office and of the later campaign to save it from closure, which included taking part in a march down Whitehall. Next are told about the cooking of the hams in the village store using an old unreliable boiler. Mo then describes how many people used hay boxes during the war to slow cook food and of how an improvised oven would be made using a tin box over a gas ring. Vegetables were often steamed and we hear about the cooking of Christmas pudding using a WI recipe including grated carrots and apples. Mo explains how people had to improvise, using whatever ingredients were available for cooking. She states, however, that she did not remember going without or feeling hungry although she recalls reusing tea leaves. We hear that Mo’s mother was always sewing and trying to make do and mend, including making a pair of shoes out of leather, lino and a knitted sole. Finally Mo mentions the dirty state of the trains to London, the billeting of troops with families and she reminisces about buying her first dinner service.