When we were Young

I met my husband at school - he was five years older than me. He used to take his horses in, feed them, then brush them down and put them down in the field. Well, when he came back to see to the horses I was coming out of school. They used to have some lovely apples down there; they used to keep them, Blenheims and all that. When they were ripe they were real lovely to eat. And the old chap - his father - used to have an apple house out at the back. Cyril used to go round and get me an apple every day. Temptation! He used to bring this apple up and I used to sit on the bar of his bike and he used to give me a ride, say, from Avon Meadows to the bottom of the hill, where he went into the stables. He was going like mad up there and I was sat on the bar of the bike. He give me an apple every day. That's how we met.
Barbara Portnall (nee Merritt)



Barbara Merritt with Suzy. 1938



Cyril Portnall. 1938



Maude, Lucy and Margery Grinter. 1920's

There was an apple orchard just out of the village in Great Durnford and on the way to school we used to go into the apple orchard, my sister and me. There were one or two that wouldn't go in – they were afraid. Then one would shout, "Quick the postman's just coming!" Because he came round on a bike then. So we either hid or scrambled out. Then on the way home from school we used to call in where the farmer lived in the village here. "Please Mr Green, can we have an apple?" And we'd already pinched one on the way to school. We thought we were clever.
Margery Truckle (nee Grinter)

We used to do real naughty things. The farmer used to grow cabbages, big cabbages - they were called cow cabbages - in the field above the school. We used to go there after school, cut off a cabbage and roll it down the hill into the road in Great Durnford. As the cabbage went down the hill it would shed its leaves like a wheel. Oh dear, we used to get lots of lines for that!
Monty Hazzard