

# **The Wheelwright's Apprentice - Arthur Sydney and Lucy Pettifer**

Edited by Pamela Keegan

CROPREDY HISTORY 5 - 2001

Dedicated to the Memory of Lucy Pettifer Born 19 February 1910 Died 14 April 1987

and Arthur Sydney Pettifer Born 23 November 1915 Died 27 January 1991

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**Looking up the High Street.**

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## Introduction

In the late 1970's Lucy Pettifer nee Aris visited Monkeytree House. This was some time before Arthur retired. Having once worked in the house for the Kirkby's she was as pleased as I was to go over the house and discuss her time there.

Lucy Aris first came to Cropredy in 1932 at the age of 22. Her revisit to our home started a long association in which we might have gone on talking forever. Never once on visiting the Pettifers at Cavalier Cottage, Chapel Green was it considered inconvenient. Lucy would say *if you come and we're busy you'll have to take us as we are.*

After Arthur retired he rather took over the conversation! Having been born in Cropredy in 1915 and worked there for many years, Arthur had a great deal to contribute. Lucy would finish her task in hand, perhaps glad of the opportunity to do so, and then take three cups and saucers from the china cupboard under the front living room window, and produce a very welcome cup of tea.

Only once did I use the front door. It was never opened except perhaps on a Sunday. After that if Arthur was not in the garden I wrapped the back door hard with my knuckles to reach over the T.V. Even if Lucy was in the kitchen Arthur answered the door. *Come in. Come in.* If Lucy answered then Arthur was not at his best. Visits were mainly in the wintertime so the fire would be lit and Arthur tending to it.

*Go on in, I'll just finish this;* Lucy would smile and towards the end of my visits add a hug for good measure. Lucy was small in stature, and seemingly determined to be ageless. Certainly she had enough vitality for the pair of them. Most of Lucy's life had been spent looking after others. How often could she call time her own? Arthur even pressed her into accompanying him to the Historical Society and to helping him when he gave his first talk. Not a word of complaint reached our ears. Besides always seeming to be on the go at home, smiling and laughing, Lucy had time to help her neighbours especially Emily and Tom Bradley next door. When another neighbour wanted to know how much she charged, Lucy replied *I do things for friendliness.* Giving away her free time as a gift, possibly the key to her whole life.

Lucy had however known hard physical work without complaining, providing she was treated fairly in return. She remembered all too clearly fetching and carrying water, dealing with primitive sanitary arrangements and other tasks in Cropredy and Bourton long after Banbury had progressed to inside plumbing in many households. On the day Lucy showed the History members round Monkeytree she proved a very alert and interesting guide. Lucy created the atmosphere of starkness, which was apparently the situation in the 1930's in that, house and most likely in many others in the 1930's depression. Her face was so alive with pleasure that I longed for the evening to continue.

Outside we all examined the *coffeepot* as Mrs Louis Lambert described it. This was apparently an improvement on the old privy at the end of the garden under the Yew tree. The second privy was made out of part of the stable using brick walls painted yellow and given a red quarry tile floor. The toilet had a wide wooden bench seat with a good round removable lid to place over the hole when not in use. The huge tank had been to the north under the yard, now filled in. Lucy explained how it was emptied and when Arthur arrived he chipped in. On hearing our future home had no bathroom Lucy and Arthur were horrified, but said nothing at the time.

On one of my last visits Arthur led the way to the cupboard under the stairs by the front door. There in the light of its little window were two zinc baths. Lucy explained *we both brought one to our late marriage in 1965*. In one lay Arthur's dismantled lathe all wrapped up. In the other, the potatoes. The bath was to be cleaned up and the night before we left the treasured possession was carried (under cover of the dark) to join the mound of packed luggage. It was hard to leave but as we did Lucy pressed a little parcel on us. It contained a bath brush, flannel and soap.

Arthur's family history was very sketchy indeed. Together we checked transcripts of the local registers to find his mothers family. He had a few documents and photographs to help. His maternal relations were craftsmen. On his father's, side skilled hedgers and workmen employed on local farms. The vast amount of oral material has had to be edited down and begins with these searches.

Arthur having retired spent a great deal of time gazing out of the front window in winter. *You can see a lot of things from here*. He stood by the china cabinet looking across to the High Street cottages where he was born. To Lyndhurst (Dower House) on the corner and the Methodist church, Arthur always called it the chapel, with the row of cottages and Monkeytree House beyond. From the rear living room and parlour windows he overlooked the church tower, the modern vicarage in the old ones former walled vegetable garden (now no longer the vicarage) and the three thatched cottages in Church Lane. Cropredy church, being the mother church of a wider ecclesiastical parish at the very tip of Oxfordshire. The market town of Banbury five miles to the south, is also on the river Cherwell and was Lucy's hometown.

Arthur's mother a Dunn had collected several photographs into an album. They included the family at Cropredy and Great Bourton. One day as promised Arthur and Lucy helped me take copies of several from the album. Lucy cleared the square dining table under the rear window, and we set up the camera on a stand. Arthur handed them over one by one with a commentary. He sat by the built in pine dresser next to the chimney breast. Lucy used the chair on the other side in front of the silent TV. I was left in the middle but neither Lucy nor I had time to sit. Lucy had it organised very efficiently making lots of little amusing asides. The clock on the sideboard opposite the fire flew round. Usually I tried to limit my visits to an hour. Any longer and it was impossible to recall word for word the new information. Once we did record something and I tested my memory by writing it down before rerunning the tape recorder and apart from some vital Oxfordshire words it could be done, but not ideal. It was very unfortunate that Arthur's brother Albert had been taped by a school visit without his permission, for it forced the development of enormous concentration and left us with out the joy of hearing Arthur and Lucy on tape, except

for Arthur and Albert's talks when special permission was granted. The problem was highlighted one day. Arthur was explaining how to weld any casting and Lucy was asking *is it sugar Mrs Keegan? And again Sorry about the milk round it, you can't help it when you can't keep it can you?* Meanwhile Arthur totally lost his way *and um, and um, fill, up, fill it up* until he began again, only then Lucy passed him a cup of tea. *Ta! Dear!* Shook his head and bounced off the hearth. *Blooming lot you're working over a hot tackle. Does make you sweat. You do your welding...* Unfortunately I had hopelessly lost track and made a terrible blunder *Cast iron gates?* Arthur exploded **Cast Iron Gates. No***I've never seen a cast iron gate. Not Cast Iron!* *Some railings and gates have a lot of cast iron, fancy work on the top, but they're cast onto the bar.* **Yes.** *Cast Iron, cheap sort of stuff. If one of those break you'd have a job to weld it back on. Oh yes.*

On arrival Lucy sent me in and Arthur talked from the hearth, which he used as a platform, jumping off to underline a word, and backing up as he literally warmed to his subject. If Lucy came in she joined me on the settee set at an angle to the fire, but leaving enough room for a walkway to the hall, stairs and parlour. Apparently 855sq ft for three bedroom non-parlour houses was a generous increase in space and the Pettifers had 1,055sq ft with the addition of a parlour and not including the fuel and other store. John Burnett in his book *A Social History of Housing 1815-1970* thought that these post-war Addison Houses were the best of all the interwar houses, with little to complain about. An improvement to have houses designed by an architect. Yet at the turn of the century the Brasenose College had employed an architect to design and replace seven cottages in Cropredy. Arthur though wasn't interested in my research, he knew the facts and he compared the Chapel Green six houses with the old thatch cottage across the road. Space was not everything. Only later were they made more comfortable. Having started the discussion on houses Arthur's thoughts on the matter poured out.

Later the subjects under discussion widened and Arthur might cross to the fourth dining chair by the sideboard to consult one of his precious wheelwright and train books or a small collection of papers to illustrate a point. Unfortunately the subjects were often limited due to lack of direction and trying to increase the quantity on others was impossible for Arthur side tracked with speed. This did have advantages though for he came up with many interesting topics, even though they too were often starved of detail. Lucy seldom had a chance to be drawn out. For example once Lucy said *they used to have big families in small cottages then.* And then nothing else. Sometimes Lucy tells a tale with a different recall from Arthurs, but both softened a harsh comment as many of their generation did. Twice a word he used has changed its meaning, but otherwise I do not interfere with the text. Their opinions or tales may not always be the History Society members or mine, but they were Arthur and Lucy's. They did not set out to hurt others with their talk.

Arthur insisted that the 1930's could be very hard on families and Roland Cherry told me that *in the 1930's men came from ten miles or more begging work for 27s a week. Tradesmen earned £2 a week then.* Arthur told us *Mr Sumner the gaffer was really short of work during the depression. I remember he used to get out his motorbike which he had at that time and ride round the farms to get work. He would ask if they had any carts that wanted mending.*

Arthur would have liked a job with a pension. As a lad he had worked willingly to earn money as most boys did, He commented that more people in the village would do work in their spare time in the 1930's. He also remembered how many children's families were poor.

Another time he went on about dirt. The village looked a bit rough. He had a horror of it instilled into him as a child. The village roads were still used to drive cattle along, though fortunately the blue brick paths were well above the mire. Yet for all that *Cropredy in those days was a little village worth living in because you knew everyone and they knew you. There are not a lot of Cropredy folks left now of the old generation.*

Once while Lucy was in the kitchen Arthur told me in a whisper about his first girl friend, not wishing to hurt Lucy. He was not one for *messing about the kitchen door* at work. Having started going out with Lucy (and they have different memories as to their first date) he waited patiently while first Lucy took care of her parents and then Arthur could not get a cottage in the village. When the Anker Trustees sold the High Street cottage he had to get out or buy it for £400. Mr Sumner's advised against it, because of the cost of thatching. He had two in Red Lion Street which cost him more than he had from the rent. *Arthur wanted to get married.* However their engagement went on for 29 years, until he could rent 3 Chapel Green.

Arthur was always interested in Cropredy and the past. That is why they wished to live there. It is a small village situated in the wide valley of the river Cherwell. Since the railway was opened people moved away to Leamington and on to Birmingham, finding work there if Cropredy or Banbury had nothing to offer. Transport to other towns to the east was not convenient. The Oxfordshire canal brought coal and building materials, lime and slates, but the railway took the milk to London keeping the farms going. Cropredy was always a centre for trade and Arthur and Lucy told me how they were spread around the Green and down Red Lion Street to the canal.

The vestry no longer had charge over the poor and roads after these had moved to other authorities and a Parish Council had come into existence. No landlord dominated Cropredy. Arthur attended church and chapel. The chapel as Arthur said had something on most nights of the week, and for the men in winter there was the village club with a library for everyone.

Arthur looked back on his busy time working in Cropredy. Having nothing to do in the 1980's he commented that *a man who has ever worked in a workshop needs a shed*, and later remarked that *I am no use at all without something to do, hopeless.* Unfortunately his last job that he had to take in Banbury had not been to his liking. *Terrible thing hating your job. My last job I hated, Hated.* If only he could have put a shed up and crafted things for sale, but it was not allowed under the Rules in his Rent Book. His therapy was creating things, mending and repairing, being inventive and useful. He was a craftsman, one of the last apprentices of the old order. It was partly to deflect his thoughts from being useless that we started to talk about the past. He seemed to have almost total recall. Later a diary was produced which helped him to be accurate, something Arthur was very keen on.

When persuaded to give a talk, he decided to describe the making of a wheel. At once he began to plan it and involved his cousin Connie Hollis. She looked out her father Frank's photograph album and her own collection of postcards. On the night Arthur could have gone on all evening, but having run through two tapes a halt was suggested. Connie remarked afterwards *I felt Arthur went on a little about John Shirley, but then he did very well. I didn't expect Arthur could have spoken like that. I didn't know he had it in him.* Another said *Well he always had to get it right.* When later I presented him with a transcript he asked *Err how did you get it from the tape to here?* To which Lucy couldn't stop laughing. After a while he too sat down and appreciated Lucy's and my mirth. *Never mind about typing out the transcripts, I'll write it all down for you from making the hub to the finish.* Lucy looked embarrassed. *She'll never read your tiny writing dear.* I quickly agreed that would be marvellous, but only a tiny portion of the next talk was written down. He was often very serious, always happier when working on something, and yes he was very particular, wheelwrights had to be. Take that away and he appeared lost.

Sometimes I took round a letter from Mabel Durrant nee Cooknell [Book2], or Colin Shirley. Or I'd mention what Cicely nee Baylis had written which started off a spate of comments. In return I sent word to Mabel, or took their tales to Marie Godson [Book 1], and Gertrude Mold nee Pettifer [Book 3] with their permission and received a different aspect and perhaps attitudes to life as they recalled it. Some weeks the information was over whelming, especially as the word spread and interesting conversations halted the trips to and from the shops or post office. It became a family joke. *Better get on you bicycle or you'll never be back for tea!*

Notebooks of material have made it possible to put this together. I just hope no one is offended. After all it was the friendliness and generosity of people in Cropredy who made it possible. Encouraged at the start by Roland Cherry and Dolly Monk whose great interest in Cropredy made it worthwhile researching into the past for information to build on. The Historical Society meetings kept it going brought together by the hospitality of Sue and Martyn Lester. Sue's encouragement and work to put the book together for sale and the updating of material from Sue Lester and Ray Cherry kept the mind concentrated on Cropredy.

The last word will be with Arthur who had developed a habit of repeating words, pausing and starting again. *Pam I am, I am, err I am afraid of dying.*

*Arthur you are afraid of not being here, of not being missed, we all are.*

*We have no children. We are the last of the line.*

*Your book will be yours and Lucy's memorial. Why else have you been telling me all these things?*

He stood there, a handsome sturdy yet gentle man, with a slight smile. He knew so much about creating things yet felt he had not achieved his full potential. A shy man who kept strictly to the old fashioned codes of behaviour. Lucy full of fun and warm

encouragement. They would have made wonderful grandparents. It is impossible to do justice to this special Oxfordshire couple.

As I was about to leave after a short visit to Cropredy, the last time I saw him, he showed me a brown paper parcel, carefully tied with string. It contained his diaries, some mementos and the photographs, some unfortunately not copied for the book. They are for you to do the book, and then they must go to Oxfordshire Archives. Unfortunately only the first and last work diaries came to me. The photographs and mementos and one diary were missing which prevented the material being used as Arthur intended.

Two years after leaving Cropredy we heard that Lucy had been ill for three months and then died. Arthur only wrote once or twice so we had no warning and on the next visit missed her greatly. Arthur could not produce the same atmosphere without her. We recalled the enjoyable afternoons adding little to the corrections needed for this book. Even told me quite seriously how he had written a book. When I couldn't stop laughing he cheered up enough to enjoy the joke. Lucy would have loved it. However he was ill and without Mrs William's Sunday lunch and patience, topped up with visits from members of the History Society, especially Mary, he said he would have been very lonely. Time came when he had to go into hospital and there he died on January 27<sup>th</sup> 1991. This book is dedicated to Lucy and Arthur who by rights are the authors.

Part One with plans, photographs, Who's Who and Index has been kept separate from Part Two and Three: Arthur and Albert's talks and their workbooks.

Pamela Keegan 2001  
The High Street Cottages.

The Anker's row of cottages in the High Street were converted from a sixteenth century stone and thatched house and barn around 1804. The gap between the house and barn was infilled to make a total of eight cottages. Only the four made out of the barn remain.

The Pettifers lived at the south end in number one. There was only one entrance door to the cottage. This was in the south gable end. The others all had a front and rear door. Two brick chimneystacks had been added to provide the four barn cottages with their living room hearths. Their living rooms each had a three light casement window, and their front bedrooms two casement windows all with wooden lintels. The scullery at the back of number one had a small fixed window, a door at the bottom of the newel stairs and a flagstone floor. The rear bedroom was lit by a two light window and was open to the stairs. The south gable window was only made in 1951 (Information from Mr Handley). Number one is now part of number two. Many alterations have been made since Arthur's family lived there.

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## 1. Number One High Street



**1. John, Sally and Raymond Pettifer in front of the cottage. Pre 1914.**

*According to the 1891 census of Cropredy a Raymond and Elizabeth Pettifer, both aged 50, were living in one of the Tom's tide cottages on the Southam to Banbury Road. The pair of cottages had been built on a piece of freehold land opposite Mollington's windmill. Raymond, a shepherd, was a Culworth man and his wife came from Wormleighton Hill. Three off their four children, who had been born at Wormleighton, were at home. The twins Mark E. and John H. were 15 and Sarah (Sally) was 12. The eldest Bill had left home. Some time after this the family moved down to Number one of Anker's High Street cottages.*

*The parish registers and oral history record that Sally eventually married one of George King's sons. Bill lived in Barrow-in-Furness and had twins. The second brother Mark had vanished but the third John Henry Pettifer, known as Jack, remained in the High Street. At the age of 37 Jack married 31-year-old Minnie Harriett Dunn and they lived with Jack's father Raymond. According to his death certificate, signed by Dr. Lionel Bartlett, Raymond died on the 4<sup>th</sup> of January 1916 aged 74.*

*Minnie was the eldest daughter of the Great Bourton stonemason Ernest Levi Dunn and Annie nee England. Minnie had been a good enough scholar at school to become a pupil-teacher, but sadly this was not to continue. In the Bourton School Log Book the Head Mistress wrote that the Doctor had "...ordered Minnie Dunn to go away for her health and to give up teaching." Minnie married John H. Pettifer on the 4<sup>th</sup> of February 1913 at Great Bourton church. Her father and a future brother-in-law, Harry Busby, acted as witnesses. They had three children. Albert William born the 21<sup>st</sup> of February 1914, Arthur Sydney born the 23<sup>rd</sup> of November 1915 and John Leslie on the 27<sup>th</sup> of July 1918. John Henry was buried in October 1945 and Minnie in December 1952.*

*Arthur Sydney Pettifer (1915-1991) tells his story with the help of his wife Lucy (1910-1987).*

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I heard tell my Father came from Eydon, Northamptonshire. Only my relative couldn't get any luck in the Eydon registers. The vicar said there were none of them! Tom Pettifer the medicine man came from Eydon, not one of those here. He was supposed to be a relative of ours.

Grandfather Raymond came to live at the first High Street cottage. One of Anker's. Gramp was a stern looking customer. He came to work at Anker's Farm as a labourer. There were three boys and one girl, Sally, in the family. You see on the old chaps side there's only one of them left now and that's **me**. We are supposed to have some relatives up at Barrow-in-Furness, but they never come and see us...

There's two brothers up that way, *added Lucy.*

During the recession, I don't know, just the age, but during the **bad** times they set off. Bill, Mark and Father. Bill the eldest he was the steadiest out of the three of them. He didn't smoke or drink...

Twins weren't they? Your Dad...

Mark and John, Twins, and his twin was just the opposite, drink, baccer and proper city lad. Well the old chap stuck it for a bit and he didn't like it. He come back. I should say it must have been before they got married, and I don't know what happened to Bill but Mark stuck it and died up there. He didn't have any children. How these other relations come about I'll never know. Bill's married daughter has called on us about three times. He was a furniture driver and one day this furniture van rolled up and it were them. They stopped here one night. Her Dad's dead of course, Bill.

When I was down at the Switch Gear there was a young lad down there, his Mother came from Mollington, she married a Mollington chap, Alistair Smith. This young man testing your work, you see, you got to know him. One day he said, *I understand Arthur you've got some relations at Barrow-in-Furness? Yes. Well, he said, They called on us last night at Banbury, Bath Road. Well, I said, The Devils don't call and see us!* Dad's sister Sally was related to the Smith's of Mollington.

They came here one day when Arthur was at work, *said Lucy*. They told me who they were; in fact I was baking cakes. Well I took them down to Albert and introduced them to him, and then I brought them back. They were going round the village and anyway they came back for tea. Then they were going to spend the night before they went off. That was Saturday...

Then on the Sunday we took them to see our Les.

...They stopped here rather than go anywhere else and I gave them breakfast and we took them up to Appletree to see Leslie. They come once again, but we've not seen them since, but they did send us a Christmas card. She said Les was like her uncle Mark. Arthur's brother got a longer face you see.

I haven't any pictures of Mark or Bill, *Arthur told me*. No. I know this Mark when I were a little kiddie. I know this Mark came down and stayed and I know our Mum didn't care for him actually, because get him and the old man together and they'd be round the pub and they were a couple of blooming nerkers. Yes. Our chap used to like a drink...

But he didn't drink much.

Same as I would be if I was. Bit nasty. Ah! Our Mum were glad when he'd gone back.



**2. and 3.**

**John Henry Pettifer.**



That one (*photo 2*), dapper sort of a kid weren't he? It's my old man...

Connie, Arthur's cousin, pleased him because she gave him a little holder you could put the water in to hold his buttonhole.

He always wore a buttonhole, *Arthur continued*. Did you notice they hadn't got the turn-ups at that time? That chain has a silver box on it and he used that box to hold matches. He usually wore a foxes tooth. He had a high neck shirt then. There a photo of him with a bike years and years ago. Later in life he used to walk. This photograph of him with the bike is at Little Bourton. Beyond, go down a bit, turn right and come to the main road (*photo 3*).

My Father and Dolly's Grandfather, William Pettifer were not related. They walked daily to Cropredy Lawn. They were both good hedgers. We would go up Saturday with a horse and cart and pile up the wood with faggots on top. Ash, oak and hawthorn. That hawthorn best of all. You see our old chap used to be a hedge cutter. I mean the laying of the hedges, not cutting with clippers, but with the axe and billhook and lathe. Oh yes he was good at that job. He used to go in for these hedging matches, oh yes, and after spending probably the winter cutting hedges about, you see, you got plenty of firewood. You could borrow a horse and cart off the farmer and get a load of firewood for winter. Burn better than coal that did. There's nothing beats a piece of hawthorn. Hawthorn beautiful fire that makes, better than coal. Its hard and it burns green and you can see it pushing the moisture out of the end grain and that burns as well. Beautiful stuff. Oh no we were never cold across there.

He was a champion hedger. He had several certificates for it. Les had them; they used to hang up at Appletree. Certificates. When Johnny Bonham mentioned those hedging gloves that his Father used to make, well the old chap used to have some of them. Oh ah! They were up here above the elbow, you had to protect you. Mr Bonham's gloves were cut out of one big piece and folded over and then stitched one side only, so one side was seamless you see. You only got one side to go wrong then. Lovely and soft. They used to go blooming hard if you didn't look after them. Oh ah! Like steel.

#### *Page 4*

Those cottages over there in the High Street. Weren't many folks that went to work that lived in these places, they were all old people, yeah. We were Number One. Chap in the village who did most of the thatching, particularly for Anker's was Elias Gardener. He lived in number 5. An old Cropredy man who smoked a fairly long clay pipe...

My Father did, *said Lucy*.

Four cottages that stood back. He lived in the first one stood back. He was a good thatcher, he were getting on a bit, but he was the bloke who used to do most of the thatching about here. A Bourton chap called Jack Coy who lived on the Green, next to were Albert moved when he married, he was a thatcher.

At the other end of our row there lived an old chap, Samuel Pettipher, used to work for Roberts at the top of the Hill, Hill Farm. Our Dad worked there for years and then he left. I can remember him being up there, because I can remember our Mum used to take him tea, during the hay making and harvest time, I can remember going with Mother taking tea. Sitting amongst the hay and you know having a kip as you call it.

On Hill Farm? Oh cows and corn. Er mangels and so forth. Three or four fellers worked there. Yes there was Reg Roberts's brother to the farmer, the actual farmer. He was the first tenant in Number One here on Chapel Green. Charles Cottage. Yes Reg Roberts here in 1922. He had two children, Reg and Olive. Girl and boy. Reg I believe still lives in Middleton Cheney. He would be over 60 now. Then there was a Rathbone worked up at the top. Bob Rathbone. Then I think there was a chap from Mollington. Rathbone and Reg Roberts later lived in those two cottages on the main road belonging to Hill Farm. Mill Cottages.

Then after Hill Farm Dad was at Cyril Lambert's. Brasenose Manor farm. He was down there quite a number of years. My Dad used to work there on the farm and also on the garden. There used to be a big garden at the front.



#### **4. Tom Boswell.**

Tom Boswell he was a carter at Cyril Lambert's. A very good workman, Tom was. Lived where Ken Cherry lives now, north end of Station Row cottages. Where he originated from I don't know.



Then there was a cowman down there. Good man, but I can't remember his name. He used to milk 25 or 30 cows. The cows used to come across the road where the surgery is now. Em! Morning and night and er... up the road leading to Elm Grove "garidge," that was all, all mud, you couldn't get up there with a car, oh no. You could get up there with a horse and cart, but you couldn't get up there with a car. There was no surgery there then, just a farm track to the fields. Cor blooming muddy across the path and all! And all across the road and when you went by you had to go through to school on tiptoes, to avoid putting your shoes in it, thereby incurring the wrath of the schoolmaster. Oh it was filthy! *laughing*.

Then Dad went to Adam's at Appletree and walked it and back at night, except in hay-making and harvest, when there was overtime, then Mr Adam used to bring him back in the car. But he walked it; it's a long walk up there. When he were a boy he used to have a bliming bike, yeah he had a bike when he was a boy. Well I don't know they went off to the job I suppose and they used to walk it years ago.

Not long after they were married in 1913 Dad went off to the war. That left her coping after his leaves on her own, although her parents lived on the Green at Great Bourton. My niece at Banbury was over and she wanted to know if we had any marriage lines. I found my baptism certificate, which said I was baptised at Bourton. That was the first I knew of it. I expect Mother was up at Bourton while Dad was in the army. Though someone had to look after Grandfather Raymond Pettifer. Albert was born on the 21<sup>st</sup> of February 1914 and he had to go to Great Bourton for his health. Cropredy was too damp for him...

He wasn't very strong, *said Lucy*. Its funny Evelyn, Albert's wife told me that *they said don't you ever let him go back down to Cropredy*. It was the last wish Granny Dunn said to me; *don't let him go down to Cropredy*.

*Arthur*: Albert lived up there from quite a youngster. Well Dr. Bartlett thought he'd get better up there, than he would be in Cropredy, it were too cold and damp. The old boy, Albert, was a grand looking bloke. This is a photograph of the three of us under the elm tree by the well. By Anker's wrought iron railings. Albert in his striped suit. Me on the chair and Leslie (*photo 5*). This photograph is of Leslie and I at the cottage gate. Here's me look. Sulky devil I was there. That's Les my youngest brother and myself (*photo 6*) On this photograph you can see the step up at the gate and another here by the gable corner. Nice wooden gate. My first memory is when my brother tipped me out of the pram. It was when we were at the High Street cottage, the end one and there was those two steps at the front door and the pram tipped out. It was a pram with two large and two small wheels and a wooden turned handle.

The man from Lyndhurst (*Dower House*) made me a four-wheel truck. An old man called Griffin, an old gentleman. That was when I was small, about 1920. It was definitely a craftsman like truck, coach built, mortice and tenon, no nailing and knocking like a cheap old truck...

Arthur, *said Lucy* used to keep pet rabbits and take them into the close, here, to let them run. Where the steps are by Mr Gough's at Charles Cottage, Chapel Green, was a slide the children used.

We used to have metal hoops which we bowled along the roads, *Arthur explained* which when it wanted a new join we took it to the blacksmith on Cropredy Green, and he put it together for us for 6d, which was a lot of money in those days. The blacksmith **shut** it. Then we had these sticks with a hook on the end, blacksmith made, which went round the hoop and you could control it with this as you went along, better than a straight stick. The hoop ran round inside the hook then and couldn't run off course so easy.



**5. Arthur, Albert and Leslie Pettifer.**



**6. Arthur and Leslie by their gate.**

We played cricket on the verge outside the cottage. We cut the grass with sickles. Then in 1926 or 1927 they put the telegraph poles up in the High Street to take the phone to McDougall's in Andrew's Farm. Only person down there to have a phone. When they dug down to put the pole in by our cottage they came to the culvert and had to put it further back. It was a huge brick culvert going up in front of our cottages and so the post was **away** from the hedge, and the one in front of Beech House the same, because of the culvert. We played cricket on the verge and we used it as a stump.

I had a good childhood and things are better that come naturally. Too much greed about nowadays. When I was small I sat in front of the fire and used a stool as my workbench. That's how I started. My father didn't, wasn't meticulous. No I think that all came from my Mother's side. Where my Grandparents' lived, Levi Dunn the mason, you opened a trap door in the kitchen and go down a ladder into the blacksmith's shop below, which had an earth floor. In this workshop Albert and I used to make things. I made a case for my blowlamp in there. Albert lived there and was often called Albert Dunn. He wasn't strong and Mother took him up there. He was a Pettifer of course. I used to cycle up there, once I was eight or nine, and help him in that workshop. He was a very able child. He built a kitchen dresser for my Mother. He also made a fuselage for an aeroplane and he couldn't afford an engine! I always wanted to fly, always. Never been in an aeroplane though.

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Albert also made and invented a muck spreader, which had four arms and scooped out the muck from a cart on Mr Boddingtons field in Townhill Bourton, down past Allitt's. It worked a treat but he couldn't afford to patent it. He certainly was a clever man. He went to work for Uncle Frank Sumner (*at the Woodyard*) when he was fifteen.

Albert's first car was an M.G. He stripped the fabric off and put a wooden one on, in the place below the house at Great Bourton. That house is up for sale (1985). It's advertised as a Post Office. It never was, only Walter's had it as a shop. They used to bring the letters round. Miss Dansdale had it before as a shop. Albert's wife Evelyn used to be a post woman up there.

In the back yard of Grandma Dunn's house there was a large well. A windless well. It went down, getting wider as it went, opening into a large cavern at the bottom. It had rock sides.

I remember in Bourton Mrs Elias Allitt as a small woman with a little wizen face under a white lace cap. She must have been eighty when I first remember going into her shop for sweets. Newton's followed her having the shop. That was where I always bought my sweets as a child and stamps.

Yes. I knew Granny Allitt's shop, *said Lucy*. We, and a relative cycled to Bourton and we went up the steps to the shop which was all sweet jars all round. Newton's had it and the post office afterwards (*In the Bourton register it says Sarah Ann Allitt of Great Bourton died aged 87 in May 1930*).

*Lucy said:* I remember Les when he worked at Will Dunn's. Poplar Farm. As I remember him he was coming up there swinging a can of milk laughing all over his face!.

When he got married he lived up at Appletree, *said Arthur*. Adam's tied cottage at the top of the hill. I had been living at Aunt May Busby's, lodging there with Aunt, but after Leslie married I went to sleep at home then. When I was at Aunt's I didn't go home for breakfast, no. You didn't bother with breakfast in those days.

My brother Leslie died in the surgery. Yes. He worked for Mr and Mrs Adams. Adam's had two sons and he was their head tractor man. He was 56. Married twice, his first wife had already been married and had a son. Their own child died. His second wife and he had a daughter. She had a boyfriend and he was with him when he died. Leslie thought he was suffering from indigestion like his wife had. He had been working that morning already and he came down 9 o'clock to the surgery to see Doctor Yassin. The Doctor was fixing for him to see a specialist and Leslie went to the toilet and collapsed there. Doctor Yassin couldn't revive him. Right there in the surgery. I can never go in there now without thinking about it.

Well I was on this lathe when at 12 o'clock the foreman said, *Arthur you're wanted on the phone*. It was Albert Arthur he said *Its bad news. Is it Lucy? No it's Les, brother, he's dead. No he can't be*, I said. I could not believe it.

*Arthur talked about their High Street cottage on another visit*. You seen it? It's an old place the cottage in the High Street. Mother would stand outside the door in the gable, as it was the only door we had. We'd only got one front door you see, the others got two, back and front. At the back a little window downstairs for a pantry and one at the bedroom. Stairs up to the back bedroom. Stairs on the left hand, turn, then a space under the stairs for your brooms, spuds, firewood and so forth, you see. Brick floors not stone. Next to the "wash-house" was the pantry and the wall between us and Number Two, that wall was brick. It was eaten with salt and damp from the pigs salt up to here. (*About 4'6"*). No amount of cementing would cure that. No you could get through it really. Well only way to cure that is to have it out and start again.

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Bedroom fireplace! No! *laughing* No fireplace! They were warm enough without a fireplace. Stove warmed up there. Oh yes. A ceiling? Oh yes. Plastered. They cottages years ago used to be a barn. Numbers One to Four. Well they turned them; they made a decent job of them actually. Numbers Six to Eight from a house and Number Five was added between. In these High Street cottages there was a hawthorn hedge in front of one to four (but not 5, that was box), then 6 to 8. No hawthorn in front of Elias Gardiner's at 5. Course ours the first and the others 2 to 4 were part of the old barn. Over 2 and 3 is a lintel, which was once over the barn doors. There is another out the back with the bedroom windows put above. Each had a larder window. Mother used to pass tea out of the front window and sit outside. Windows as it is now. Oak frames painted white. Door at the side. A yellow rose grew at the front and came up under the path and up the end of the house. Good plum tree there, look at the side. There were two victorias on the gable end. Another plum in the end of Mr Harris's garden.

The thatch did make the cottage warm but it had its snags. I hate living under thatch. You get rats and all sorts in thatch. Filthy dirty places thatch roofs. Mother was very ill with this complaint and her head all swelled up for about three weeks and Dr. Bartlett blamed the thatch. Then you can't put gutters on a thatch can you? Well some did. The old Post Office (*3 Chapel Row*) and the Bakehouse (*Church Lane*).

We had to burn more wood than coal in those days. Where we lived you see they had a fairly big fireplace, small oven on that side, and there was a tiny place here where you put your irons in, flat irons. This wasn't a range; it was more a fireplace with a range of hobs. You had an iron from across to put your kettle on. You could get a good glow on there. You had to be careful, with the thatch. Yes a brick fireplace, open old-fashioned fireplace. An open hearth. A couple of bars to put the kettle on. This side round corners about that square, and at this side a tiny oven were she put her irons...

Your Mother Arthur, she never said she was going to do her ironing; she was, *going to cool her irons*. I remember her expression.

Yes so Lucy said. I don't, I never took much notice of it...

I never heard it before, *continued Lucy*, but I never forgot it. She always used to say, *I must cool my irons*. Yes. Over there in their cottage, in the grate they had there, you see, the little oven on one side and on the other was an oven to put your irons in. I had two, but they were left behind. I put them on the gas. I had a gas iron but it always used to smell.

You got that iron going all day, *said Arthur*. They used to do a satisfactory job, same as electric. Damn sight cheaper...

You couldn't do a lot in the oven it wasn't that big, *Lucy pointed out*.

You wouldn't get a blooming turkey in it, no. Oven too small. When I was down the Woodyard up to 1952, up to the time Mum died, Mum used to go to Banbury to do the shopping like, and take the dinner down and Connie used to cook it for me. I had my dinner there on a Thursday. My Mum used to take it down. You know I noticed, particularly noticed the difference. Food cooked in the electric oven and food cooked in our old oven at home. Tastes different. Totally different taste.

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Baked bread? No. Came to the door. You used to pop down pretty often actually for some dough. Actually for some dough to make a cake, and some yeast. By the time I got back home half the yeast was gone. I used to eat the darn stuff. Nice *laughing*. On a piece of paper. Nice it is. Used to love it. Our Mum used to make a nice bit of cake better than you get today.

Will Godson would bake it for you if you wanted him to. Bake a Sunday dinner for you if you wanted. Old Sam Pettipher used to bake a Sunday dinner. The oven was in what was termed his Hovel. The others used the washing copper, same chimney, but not the oven, that belonged to that house, number eight. If you wanted your Sunday dinner baked and everyone else wanted a Sunday dinner baked, then he'd get the oven going. They were darn good un all. A dinner cooked in those ovens is beautiful. There's something different in them somehow, than what there is cooking in these electric cookers. Better heat. Yes.

Was yours the only one with a screen? *asked Lucy.*

Ah well that was put up at the end door you see. Gable end. For privacy as much as warmth. The door opened into the inside and swung inward on the left hand. Anyone come to the door could see in your room, see. So someone, before I was born, someone made a nice wooden screen, panelled. When you went in the door the jamb went in 6 or 8 inches, done for a purpose, so you could shut the door. Otherwise you'd have to go in, turn round and shut the door! Stop anyone looking in.

Rents? Paid half yearly or quarterly. Oh no not weekly. It would be quarterly I should think. Not much repairs, as those cottages would be about, what? Eighteen pence a week, two bob? All rents weren't very high those days. Willie Hammond never altered it.

When we were small we never had electricity. That come in to High Street about 1936, and then it wasn't for bedrooms. We had candles, learnt to read by candles up there. Then when we had it over here, not until 1936, and then it wasn't all over the house.

*Cicely Bayliss who was born in 1919 and lived at number Five High Street, the infill cottage, with her aunt and uncle Gardner, added some more about this cottage and the washhouse in a letter. After reading this to the Pettifers it started Arthur on toilets.*

"The communal wash house, *wrote Cicely* had the old type copper with a fire under it and all the occupants of the cottages had to use it in turn. I know there used to be a few arguments which days they wanted it! As I mention the earth toilets I still shudder. I was convinced as a child that I would fall in there and never be seen again. I wonder if the well is still used. I know we lost a few buckets down there at various times.

Auntie's floor was all stones of odd shapes and irregular sizes. Whereas the stones themselves were smooth, the way in which they were placed made the floor most uneven, and judging by the dusty mess they made, I think they were placed in soil. Washing them produced mud. So we covered them with large coconut mats and just swept them rather than ever washing them.

The window of Auntie's was two divisions until I was about 8 or 9 years old. It wasn't built to open, and then the Landlord, S. Anker, said the law was that it must open. So we were given a new window and frame, which opened. We had a window seat, but no shutters. The upstairs was only two divisions, but even smaller than downstairs. I was there from 1919. Uncle Elias was about 60 years old when I was a baby...he did odd jobs for various farmers between the age of 60 years and 75...ditching, hedge cutting, hay-making, harvesting and thatching houses. Cyril Lambert often came for him to do odd jobs."

At the cottages over there, where we lived *said Arthur*, near the hovel which was for pig sties and toilets, we had this building about eight foot by nine foot, and it was two toilets, one seat to each. Well at the back it had this trap door to get to the pit. You had to dig a huge hole in the Ash ground. This was an area as big as my front lawn here. Dig a huge pit and empty the toilet pit into that hole. Leave it to settle and shovel over. You couldn't walk over it for a long while after, or you would fall in. Six foot deep or more they had to be, and big. Oh yes. Well if you only emptied it once or twice a year.

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I had to help Mr Sumner do his at the Woodyard. If you went up that passage to the back garden, the toilet was straight ahead, back of the bake house's barn. Well the opening hatch to the pit was at the side. Planks over mostly. In front stood a box plant to hide it I suppose. The pigsty was in the opposite corner. The furnace in the third corner of that Woodyard garden...

At Monkeytree, *Lucy said*, the pit to the toilet was in the yard; they had one outside near the double doors of the old garage, now gone. The toilet was made in the corner of the stable, made of brick with its own ceiling. When the wind blew it came up the hole and whirled all the paper about. *In 1985 there was still a round lid to fit in the hole when not in use.* The seat was of planks. Mr Cherry came and emptied it.

No you had to do it yourself, Lucy...

They wouldn't do it; they had Cherry's to do it for them. When I was at Goodrest (*on the Green*) I had to empty their bucket lo myself. They didn't have a pit. I had to go and dig the hole in the garden for them and bury it all. Yes!

The bucket toilets came in after the pits, *Arthur went on*. Oh yes. The buckets were modern to the pits. When Aunty first come in here in 1932 (*Chapel Green*), then they had a bucket toilet. A new one. Not the pits. Oh no. Later I had the job of two or three times a week, depending on the number in the household, of emptying that. It had to be done even if you had two foot of snow. Dig a big hole and put it in.

I used to go with a pal in 6 Red Lion Street. Roland. I did their toilet for them. You went out the back door turned to go up the path and they had a good one at the end of the garden. It had a pit. This you got at from the side, but it had this ledge over



to shelter from the rain, and it was a great hindrance when you wanted to empty it. The shovel couldn't be very long handled because of it. Sometimes I had Ben Turford to help me, then we'd go in and get well washed up and cleaned, and I never charged Mr Cave much, and off with Roland for a sit down and cider at the pub.

No hinges to the seats then well they wouldn't would they? Because they would be down to the pit. Not buckets then, with hinged seats...

My friend, *said Lucy*, was related to Louis Lambert and went over to them with her children. Mrs Lambert asked them, *Would you like to go to the Coffee Pot?* The loo!

At Louis Lambert's, *explained Arthur*, the washhouse and toilet were brick and slate roofed, at the bottom of the garden. The garden soil come high up the wall and was good soil. The copper was in the washhouse. Lambert's Cottage in the High Street was just one room basically, with a door on the south end. It had a small scullery just inside the door. A washbowl for washing up. The room was warm and cosy...

Mrs Lambert was a dressmaker, *said Lucy*, they had no children. Her friend was Mrs Pettifer just across the road, Arthur's Mother. Nice jolly person Mrs Lambert, always smiling. Come from Wardington. A Hawkes. We went to tea once with them. She had a lot of relatives.



7. **Pettifer's (L) and Lambert's (R) Cottages in the High Street after 1927.**

I should think, *said Arthur*, she was the hardest workingwoman I've ever known. Mr Louis Lambert he worked for the Council as a length man. It wouldn't pay much, no indeed it didn't. Jack didn't work, he was a hunchback, he could do a bit of light gardening but no lifting or that. Well sometimes the Vicar found him a job or two. He were a different chap altogether to his brother. Anybody could get on with Louis who was the Sexton. He had a book to write the burials in so there **was** a Sexton's register. Mr Buller took it on later.

The cottage, Lambert's, that was a poor old place. Two bedrooms upstairs and a fairly large room down with a small larder (*scullery*). I've sat in the chair by the fire there many a time. The mantle shelf was so low you had to duck. It did have a bread oven, stuck out the back of the Inglenook...

I only went in once I wouldn't remember it. No not "stairs," winders. We call them winders, *said Lucy smiling.*

*Arthur went on* Louis used to sit on the left side and Jack on the right side, and I used to go down there at about 10 to 6 of a morning, have a sit down and Louis would have a smoke and then pop off down and ring the 6 o'clock bell Yes. I used to go down again about 20 to 8, have a sit down, Jack, probably Jack was sat down there then, but otherwise he might nip along to the village hall, club. If he were out I used to sit there, then toddle round and ring the curfew. Oh ah, he were a big pal of mine, Louis was. You see Mrs Lambert, his wife; you see she used to be pally with my Mother...

*Arthur showed us his diary: 25-28 March 1929: Went to ring bells for church 7.15am..... 29<sup>th</sup> Good Friday: 9.45 went to ring bells for church... 20 April, Sat. went to bellringers tea and meeting at the Church Rooms. 21 & 28, Sun. went to chime bells 5 and o'clock ..... 26<sup>th</sup> Dec. Rung curfew(evening)... Jan. 1.1930: 8pm Rung curfew. 2 Jan, Thurs: Rung bell at 12 o'clock (dinner bell)."*

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Louis Lambert was not connected with Sumner, but he was his friend. Louis lived at the cottage next to what we called the **Big gate** which led round the back of the Chapel Green houses Louis died in 1943. Not a lot over 70 I shouldn't think. No. He was the village roadman for the Rural District Council. That little cottage it used to rain in and he had to put baths and lord knows what to stop the rain, but the Council wouldn't do a darn thing. Council owned the land and the cottage. They owned it and wouldn't do a darn thing. They intended to pull it down. I wonder is there anything in the records about what it was used for, because it's a funny thing, it was a cottage once belonging to Mrs Fisher?

*Mrs Fisher inherited it from a relation. She was born Mary Ann Borton and lived on the Green. When her ancestor's purchased it the cottage had been a small market garden. Originally it was built for Sutton the Tailor in the late sixteenth century. Nursery Close was the original name for Sutton's plot that some of the Chapel Green Houses was built on To the west of the High Street the Anker's of Beech House -later Poultry Farm- owned the island of land enclosed by Newscut Lane, Backside and the Green except for the three cottages on the north side of the Green which had descended to the Fisher's after Mary Ann Borton married Henry Fisher see Book 4.*

I can remember all those fields behind the High Street cottages used to be open. Before the poultry sheds. Cattle there then. The Top Orchard, what we called the top orchard had apples in, loads of apple trees in there. There used to be a nice big walnut tree standing where Gerald Gardner built his bungalow in 5 Orchard View. A big tree about thirty feet from the huge

elm next to the cottage's pump. Huge stately elm tree more than two hundred years old. It was a monster. Biggest tree for miles and miles. Took down in 1927.

There were wrought iron railings between the orchard and the High Street cottages. They each had a garden. Our garden was to the side by our door and number Two's beyond that down the side of the road. Of course Dad had an allotment down Oxhey, as you couldn't get enough grown in that garden. Number Two's garden stretched right down to where Plumb's is (*Eastwynds*). Now that was altogether different. All rubbish. Clay. Nothing wouldn't grow. Mind you, we couldn't get onions along there for onion rot, but Two's was poor poverty stricken soil, along there (*an old encroachment*). Now what we call "Old Plumb's," just on the top corner of Number One Red Lion Street, black, black as the night. Old cottage that. It was the stuff they used to put on you see. A lot of people kept pigs. Turn that lot out and on the garden it went. Well you can't do that now. Most villagers kept a pig in those days, that's what they lived on. That's what kept them going isn't it? Not many though were we lived. Only two tenants that had pigs along High Street was Jo Harris, he lived in number Four and Arthur Cherry when he had number Eight at the other end. They had them. Father he had one, oh yes, all the old men, most villagers liked a decent bit of pig meat, they were used to it.

Did Father have an allotment? Our Dad, **Did He?** Oh blimey did he! By gad! Eh when you go over the railway bridge and down the hill, down the bottom there were a field, it were Cyril Lambert's Well the next field up (*Honeypleck/ Glebe*) was the biggish field which stretched up to the field below Oxhey Farm. There was an iron gate. Yes at the top of the allotments, and there was a grass path up them. You could get a horse and cart up there. Allotments each side. There were also some allotments in the next piece up (*Poor's Allotment*), on the other side of the hedge nearest Oxhey Farm.

Altogether down there close on fifty allotments. Now the top piece just under Oxhey Farm is different type of soil altogether from this other. Heavy rubbishy stuff at this end. First lot. There was only one good allotment, easy working up there and that belonged to Charlie Hickman, and that was the first one. Is the gate still there? Gone? You went in the gate and the first one on the right belonged to Charlie Hickman. It started pretty wide this end and it gradually got narrow and narrower until when you swung upright towards the central path it come to a pikey-point. That was the best allotment down there. Easy working for some reason.

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There was an old hovel up there once, tin roof, but it collapsed (*Glebe field yard*). The only water we got there, to use to putting plants out, was just as you opened the gate to the allotments. Just. Gate swung out and at the bottom of the post there was a spring. The gate swung out and the spring was on the left hand side. Yes you had to get down inside the ditch to the water. That was the only source to water the plants in. Yes spring water, came under the road. That was used for all of them.

Father's was third of the way up, both sides. He had three down there. Three. Then he cut it down to two, then down to one. I kept it going several years after he died. Shocking soil.

If you look along the hedge two thirds of the way up you'll see the hedge is damaged, where we were, you'll see the hedge is damaged. That was a Wellington Bomber came through one Sunday morning. Opposite side theres a gate belonging now to Whitaker's of Poplar Farm, and by it a rick and some hay. This allotment on this side was cultivated by Stib Cooknell, Emily's Father. Well this Sunday morning we hadn't, it wasn't ten minutes when we'd gone by on a Midland Red bus to Mollington on Guard, Home Guard duty up at Mollington on a Sunday morning. I hadn't been here many minutes when someone said a Wellington Bomber had come into the allotments and smashed up. Smashed up and all. He were alright, got out. He had to make a false landing. He come tearing across this field of Whitaker's, just missed this rick, sailed through the hedge, across the road, crashed through this other hedge and onto Stephen Cooknell's allotment. Bit boggy. Smashed up, but golly wasn't that allotment in a mess! A devil to put right. They had to take it away see. Hedge never recovered, that hasn't right opposite that gate. Rick on the left of that gate when you come out. Don't think the crew was hurt much. We went down to see in the afternoon, didn't we? Must have been summer time. He must have got a bit for his crops anyway.



**8. Tom and Cyril  
Lambert**

**Jack Pettifer**

**Alf Lambert  
and Tom  
Boswell**

Our allotment. You paid the rent to the farm. Oh ah, our old man worked at Manor farm one time of day. His boss Cyril Lambert he got two half brothers at Claydon Home Farm. The two Lamberts helped each other. Tommy farmed at Claydon. Dad worked for them...

We used to go over to Mr and Mrs Alf Lambert's, *said Lucy*, take Sunday tea.

*Arthur added*, they didn't live at the farm, Alf didn't. Tom did. Alf lived on Wellfield Road on the way up to the Southam Road. There's some cottages end on to the road and you go up some steps. I used to look after his bike for him. Keep his bike in trim. He finished his life, well his lungs grown together. Something to do with his throat. Never had a family. Ever such a nice couple. On that photo I showed you (*photo 8*) Tom were smaller, Alf was wide, well made and Cyril were tall. Alf in the first family (*Arthur did not however identify them on the photograph*).

Really, *said Lucy*, they weren't like brothers, they weren't much alike.

Now, *said Arthur*, back down to the High Street cottage garden! During the hot summer when we run out of water we could go down to the big house. Beech House as it is now. The handle of that had a big cast iron handle to counter balance it. Best water though was Hickman's well in Church Lane. Beautiful water. Never varied in depth and it was a good 60 feet deep. During the hot summer when we ran out of water we had to get it where we could. Hickman's, the Chapel Green well here, or Anker's at Beech House. Er the Council used to come out with a tank on a Bedford lorry. You had two bucketfuls a day, that's all. Course you had it for cooking and washing.

There was a pump. Miss Lesley's bungalow in Newscut Lane stands about on it now. Iron pump, not a jack pump type, not the small jack pumps, not a small one but biggish, about five feet tall. Trouble was that it run out of water in a dry summer. About four to six weeks and it were gone. We had to rely on that, it were our sole drinking water supply for eight cottages. There was another well to the cottages, a soft water well nearer to Newscut Lane. Coming up the ash drive it were back to the left. I once saw down. It was made in the rock and ugly rock it was too!

During the long hot summer we could go down to the big house. That was along, through them gardens. Yes through the wall gates top and bottom, then up, then down the path, right through to the bottom, long path by the side of the tennis court, then turn round that building and opposite the "mixing place" on the back drive, there was the pump. Took a couple of buckets. I should think the old pumps still there, I don't know. Its one of those big deep well pumps. It's got a leakage on the top. Biggish handle. It's a deep well pump you see. Yes a stone one. They had to pump that blooming thing to get water to mix the hen foodstuff up. Mix the grub up for the poultry. The house, I rather think there used to be a pump in their kitchen. A little chop pump by the sink. Pretty sure of that. Some of the old pumps you had to put water in first.

The pump underneath that elm tree I mentioned was drinking water. About fifteen feet deep. That's were we had all our drinking water from. Eight cottages. When the landlord's thought the huge elm next to the pump was taking all the water from the pump, they had Don Braggins of Banbury come to pull it down. The wood stump is there, chopped a lot with an axe and

Keith put a hole in and killed it. The railings were in front of it. They were wrought iron railings and coupled up to the tree and back to the garden. Then the railings started the other side of the tree and went back down to the front of the old garage around the corner and back to the gate. It was like an old estate boundary and followed an ancient property line. By the elm a wooden fence had sort of grown into the tree and next to that was a woodpile. In the 1940's my garage stood near there.

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Well they came up the ash path behind the hovels and spent the best part of one day cutting down branches and sorting out wood for the timber carriage. It was in May 1927 and I was at Chapel Row playing with Reg Gossage. Harold Gossage his father had the Co-op and lived there. He was a very friendly nice fellow and had Reg and a girl. Well I was in Chapel Row when the timber cart came. Mother nipped along to tell me and we sat on the other railings nearer the road to watch. Big steam traction engine. Put down a huge frame to hold it steady while it pulled and the tree was so heavy it tipped this out and dragged the tractor backwards. Lacia timber truck. No good for nothing else, only timber. For loading, for piling up a load and pulling up trees. Fore wheel steering, fore wheel drive. That's it a French model, beautiful job, only model I did see. French.

Used to be a chap down Creampot, Spencer, worked for Braggins. Big business people. Couple of big saws in their yard in Gatteridge Street, Banbury. They had the traction engine ready to pull the bole onto the shanks to go onto the timber waggon. The traction pulled and pulled, but it couldn't move it, and moved backwards towards the tree, it was so large.

Next day Braggins' brought six horses along and connected them to the traction engine and they were almost flat to the ground and pulled and pulled and gradually the bole yanked up onto the timber carriage. Then suddenly all the horses could relax. Never seen the like. Albert would have told you the same. They windlassed, wound it onto the carriage. Something I shall always remember how those horses pulled as one in a team.

Well Braggins got it back to Banbury. It went out by the gate, where David Cherry's gates are now (*Suda*), into Backside and on to Braggins yard in Gatteridge Street. Several tons it weighed. Huge. Had a job getting up the street and into the yard and there it lay for years, too big for their machinery to tackle. Not being small enough to get in the sawmill. Eventually they blew it up. Big timber carriage that. We missed that tree. Spencer had worked for Braggins. He was a nice quiet man. A tree feller who used a cross-saw. An old-fashioned tree feller. A good bloke. In 1956 his son John said, *Come and work at the Morris Arthur and get more money.*

There is a big streak of rock coming under the High Street and up here on Chapel Green. Under that new bungalow on the corner is some rock. They were laying on water to the cottages. Well they were putting in the water for the outside toilets and they had managed to dig a trench fairly well when suddenly they came across solid rock. Not very deep or very thick, but they had to chip and chisel at it to get past.



Now when we used to have the old type of window that rested on a bar outside when open, whenever a goods train come down from Coventry, but not the other way, we could tell at our High Street cottage and here on the Green when it was coming, because the windows began to tremble. It was because of this rock foundation. Anyway it doesn't happen now they have put us in new windows.

At 1, High Street I had a large wireless mast and this had to be moved for the toilet water to be laid on. I had it near the stone they found.

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## 2. My Friend Roland Cave

Mother and I used to go shopping on a Saturday afternoon, and we went down to Cave's in 6 Red Lion Street. Mum used to get a lot of her groceries from their shop. General Provisions and Sweetshop it was.

Old Cave was blinded early at 21. He worked then for Gardener Brothers at 2 Red Lion Street, painters and decorators. Fred Cave my friend's Grandfather was a painter and decorator. He had treatment, which went wrong. The Doctor treated him, he had some trouble with his eyes and the Doctor treated him wrongly, but they tried to get away with it, saying that it was lead poisoning, but it never wasn't lead poisoning. They had a shop. He and his wife set up business in Cropredy, as he was blind. Mr Cave went in a trap delivering with a boy to help.

He had three sons. George, Reginald and Archibald. One was in London and one lived at the corner of Coates Street in Banbury. Archibald went to join up, caught a chill at the army medical and died from pneumonia and was buried here in December of 1915. He left a young wife of only 21 who was expecting their son Roland Archibald Cave (*bap. 16<sup>th</sup> Sept. 1916*).

Archibald's widow remarried a Mr Bissmire, a hotel man from London, and they came up every few months in a huge tourer car. Mrs Bissmire left her son by her first marriage with his grandparents Cave in Red Lion Street.

Fred was a nice old boy he was, who had the shop. He minded the shop. Oh my god you should see him chop sticks, cor! Used to make me feel middling to see him! And he wouldn't let you do it. Oh no. Out their back, in their back place, um, chop sticks on these boards, a little bit of boards about six inches long and then four or five inches wide. Cor they old boy had a billhook! A bill hooks an all. Get it off there and off he'd go, one after the other. I thought, *My god he'll have his blooming finger off one day*, but he never did. They got a sixth sense the blind have.

Fred Cave used to make his way up Red Lion Street along the road through the iron gates, churchyard gates, along that path, though not the concrete path it is now, it was a rough pebbly sort, through the iron gates at the top of Church Lane, along the path, feel the way along with his stick, right along until he got to the corner. He went across, right across to the corner of Sumner's house (*Woodyard*), down the path to near Cherry's and across the road to the post office to draw his pension, to Mrs Harris's. That was his only journey and how he could do that I don't know, but he did. After I had been confirmed I would collect him and take him to church. Once there was two inch of snow, so I collected him and he didn't come to any harm.

Well the grandson Roland had that wasting disease of the muscles. Of course they didn't know what it was then. How I came to know him when he was quite a youngster, he shouldn't, no he hadn't started school and he had scarlet fever. Grandma

said, - er, we asked how Roland was getting on- *Why don't you go in and see him? Well* I said, *I can't do that, he's got scarlet fever.* She said, *You won't get it.* And I went in and I didn't. I didn't get it. No I didn't get it, never had it since. So we went in to see him, see and er we struck up a friendship. We was, we was best of pals up to the day he died. That very cold winter of 1947. When I first knew him he could walk about same as anybody else could. Yes ordinary lad. Then as he grew up he got weaker and couldn't get about so well. The last, I should think the last three years that I was at school, we used to take him down to school on the cross bar of my bike. Then after I left my younger brother took it over. Take him down.

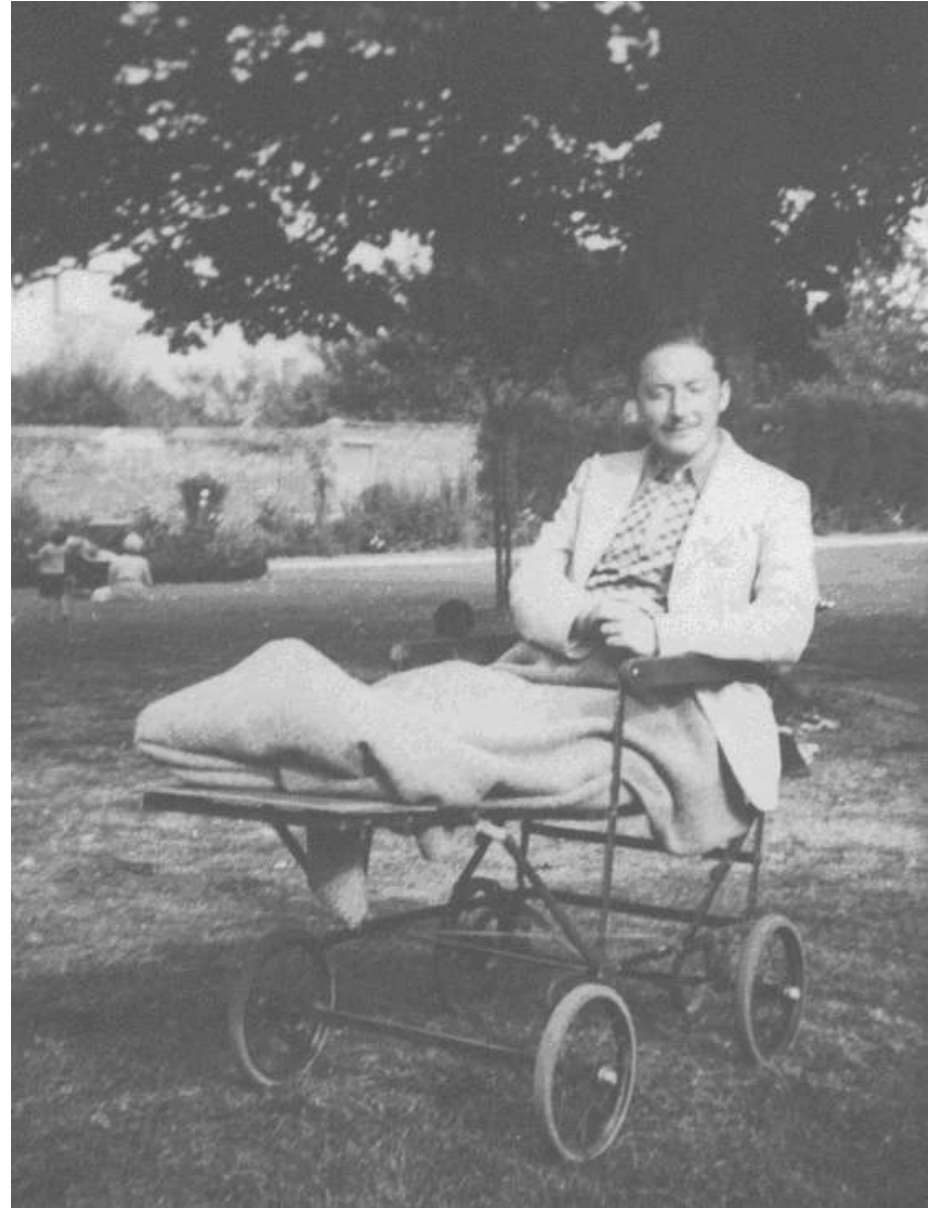
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He never had a job, never done any work. No. He used, I don't know who put him onto it, but years ago they used to make bunches of flowers from bar bola. You know what bar bola is? Paste. I've got some glasses that he put some flowers round. Yes paint them. He used to earn a few shillings like that see. Oh no, no help then.

The old grandfather and grandmother he lived with them. His mother and stepfather, who owned a hotel, lived in London. They rented Bridge House and they used to come down about, well in the summer time, perhaps every month and they had one of the biggest cars you ever saw, Una's father did (*The late Mrs Una Jones nee Bissmire*). What they call a Chaney Walker. French. Whacking great car. Bath Hotel, Eastbourne Terrace, London. Mr Bissmire came up and he would come down to the school at dinnertime and pick up Roland and myself. Pick us up in the car and take us down after dinner. That car had a job to get round that corner at the top of Red Lion Street. Yes. Get right over or else hit the wall. Whacking great brute. Open tourer. Somewhere round about 50-horse power I should think. Yes of course horsepower wasn't very dear then.



**9. Roland Cave**



**10. In Peoples' Park, Banbury**

Roland got worse and worse. He had to go into a wheelchair, go into a wheelchair (*photos 9 & 10*). We had to carry him out, he couldn't walk you see. We used to have it round at our place quite a bit see, and carry him in. Fabric sort of seat, legs on a

board. We would go round to his house and fetch him over to the High Street cottage, and there he would stay. He couldn't wheel himself round, because of his arms getting weak too. Well one day he was round there at home, I was out, but he would get about the house holding onto the backs of chairs and tables, wainscoting and things, but this day he fell and broke his hip or leg and that made it worse for him. Les was there and he had this fall and had to go into hospital after. He never sort of come out again. He landed up at Neithrop. He died in that cold winter, aged 30 years. Somewhere in my diaries I've got the bearers for the funeral. I can't remember I should be one of them and probably Les and I don't know if Albert was or not.

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His grandmother was a real motherly person. She was very good. After she died aged 82 in 1937 it left poor Mr Cave. He went to relations in Banbury and died in 1938.

Roland's parent's (*had*) brought him a nice new cycle. Yes. Thinking that the movements of his legs would help him. I used to take him out and run along the side of him, but no hope. Perhaps a tricycle would have been better. This bicycle and er nice bike too, it unfortunately... (*Long pause*) it was er fate; well fate decreed that I should smash it up. Just as easy as that. They had sold it to a boy from Williamsote. Phil Cherry. They bought this bike off Roland. Cause it hadn't done, darn it, it hadn't done 50 miles. Beautiful bike.

It was on a Saturday night and I'd been down to Father's allotment down Oxhey, down there and about four blackcurrant trees, blackcurrant bushes, used to grow some good blackcurrants down there. Oh ah because of clay. Soils right. And I'd been down there picking blackcurrants for Mum. In those days I used to do a paper round. I used to meet the 20 minutes to 8 train at the station for the *Evening Dispatch*...

*Evening Mail* wasn't it said Lucy?

No. And unless you were down there to meet that train, the last one come at 8 o'clock, well those days there were one at 10. We came back on that on that 10 from Banbury. These papers came from Leamington direction. You got to get down there and I left it a bit late and er (*whispering*) coming down Backside, never stopped with the blackcurrants, went down Backside hell for leather. I didn't half go. And stood on the first corner of Plantations facing Bourton was Dawson's bus. Dawson's bus was going back to Banbury; I dare say it was 8 o'clock. 8 o'clock back to Banbury and er there were several girls on it. I don't know as Harold Jones wasn't one. Jennings, Mervyn Laver were there. Cause they was only youngsters you know. This boy Phillip Cherry had been riding round and round this darn bus. Up there and along, straight across the front you see and round and round. He were told **not** to do it. He were warned not to do it. Of course as I got to the front of this flaming bus out he came. I couldn't stop. No chance to stop and er I hit, I hit him just where the chain... (*Clapped his hands hard*) wheel, back of the chain wheel and that bike doubled up like a letter "V". Over the top I went. Over the top I went. I dare say I landed two

lengths of this room away from my bike quite. Not too hurt no. As I landed I landed on my knee. My knee. I got up and looked back and this boy was underneath these two bikes. Underneath these two bikes. Folks got out the bus you see and had the two bikes off him. Cause when he see his bike, it were all bent, for I had more or less finished it off.

He was about 12 or 13. 12 perhaps. Cause his mum were a widow those days and hadn't got a lot of money see. Mervyn told her it was entirely his own fault, he was told not to do it. Anyway we took him back up Wilscoote. Cause the old gal didn't half go into me and Mervyn told her, *Don't you go onto Mr Pettifer*, and told her how it had happened, entirely his own fault. He was told not to do it and he **did**. And it went at that. Oh! The old gal! *I can't afford the money and he must have another bike*. I used to do a lot of bike work at one time of day and I got wheels. Mervyn said *I've got a frame*. and I said, *I'll give you two wheels*. So he had another one. Oh yes it were finished. Wrote off and all it did was to dent my bike and its down in that garage to day. It just took the dead straight out of the top bar. Just, you can see it slightly but (*laughing*) I was shifting! Speed were doing it. Oh! Ho. Ho!

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I had to walk down, well I didn't walk down I rode down, but I mean you didn't mess about on a bike those days oh no. I had left the blackcurrants down on the allotment for after. Yes. Oh ah went and picked some more.

We took the paper round on before I left school sometime...

His Mum was taking them out, *explained Lucy*.

Morning paper as well as an evening, *said Arthur*. On a Saturday the Sports Argus for Mrs Cotterill at the Brasenose, they used to have them.

*Arthur talks of Dawson's Chocolate brown bus. In London Pirate buses / "The Chocolate Express buses" had exceptionally high standards and were very popular.*

Dawson's buses used to be near Castle Street and Factory Street and on any day but Market day they waited in the Market Square. Chocolate brown, chocolate brown Bedford buses. 26 or 36 seater. You paid 6d (2 5p) a fare return to Cropredy. Left on the hour. On Market day they had to go up the passage to the bus garidge itself and get the bus from there. Midland Red squeezed them out and it was given up. Dawson's son had a meat business further down afterwards and Mr and Mrs Church bought the garidge.



**11. Arthur.**

That picture there (*photo 11*) was taken by Roland Cave. Me on the bridge down Claydon Road. The old people used to call it Moorstone Road. That's the proper name for it. Next to the cricket field on one side and the Watering on the westside. That's me. Yes as a schoolboy. That was at leaving age I should think. Leaving school. That iron rail is about  $7/8^{\text{th}}$  diameter stuff, wrought iron rail. Two good posts support it. All been replaced since with brick. That's a willow tree there. That was quite a watercourse those days.

Our Mum used to do teas down at the cricket field, Moorstone Road. You know that little stream that comes across the road well the cricket field was across on the east side. On cricket afternoons she would take the tea urn down to the cricket field. Mrs Hickman she used to do teas, yes, well she was close to the Church Rooms, she didn't take it down the field like our Mum did.

These pictures and photographs. When we were at home, when I was a kiddy, our Mum used to let us look at that postcard album, when we had croup or measles. When we were ill we were allowed to look at the photographs, but not otherwise.

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### 3. Chapel Sunday School

Arthur's Diary: 5 Jan. 1930 *Sunday School 11am. Went to Chapel to hear Mr Kilby. 2pm went to Sunday School. 5 & 6 went to chime bell for church. Aged 14.*



**12. Cropredy Chapel.**

Funny thing really that is because Mabel Cooknell would be church. During my young days I don't remember any discrimination against chapel and church. Of all things I suppose it was the same in their day as in my day. It was more Wesleyan children than there were church children.

There was no Sunday school at church because they could never get any teachers. So we youngsters used to go to the chapel Sunday school. So you see we all went to chapel. Church people's kiddies and all, at the chapel.

Our Mum was brought up church, but Dad was chapel. Our Mum belonged to the Mother's Union at the church.

Chapel used to do all right always has done. Cropredy, it was always more of a chapel village than church. Church there used to be a lot of us. Some people went to the church, but there were more went to chapel and chapel had more functions than church. At one time of day the church had no Sunday school. As I said I went to the Wesleyan Sunday school in the morning and there were quite a few went there as well.

John Bonham's father was one of the bosses and I can remember Roland Cherry's grandfather. He was there when I first started. Tom Cherry, old gent he was. A genuine bloke. Thomas Cherry and William Pettifer along here, Dolly's grandfather, he was there. Chapel Sunday school in the morning, then chapel. On the left hand side, up as far in that corner, there used to be two seats set at right angles to the other ones, they plonked us boys there. We used to stop for the morning service, you see. Then Sunday school in the afternoon again. Yes! And church at night. Singing and talk on scripture. Oh ah! You had to behave yourself there. Oh yes. There was no larking about. Pettifer and Bonham was very strict. You stayed on to the end when you were 14, then you had a bible. I've still got it yes. I've still got that. Then you leave.

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At Christmas you had a Christmas party and a Christmas tree. Old Mrs Sumner used to get that up. Mrs Richard Sumner. The old lady. I can remember her two daughter's helping her, and that was Mrs Will Dunn and Annie Sumner, they used to help.

When you go in the chapel doors, I don't know what's there now, there used to be a pulpit at the east end. Bottom of the pulpit was a big table, and on this was Christmas gifts, that were, was, good ones I mean, not cheap things, oh no, that was going to be given to the scholars. They call your name out and er you went up and you picked out from either that line, or that line, or the two lines what you wanted. I think my last one was a cash box. A proper cash box about 4 by 2 by 3 inches. Proper cash box only in miniature and I've still got that. Clockwork stuff, dolls for the girls, pens and all manner of stuff. They was good quality stuff, they weren't cheap.

Who financed it? Well I reckon the old lady did, Mrs Sumner, she handled it. Yes. That was round Christmas time, perhaps a week before Christmas. A Christmas tree down there. Then there would be nuts, oranges, apples and dates given out. Oh very classy the old lady. Whole thing those days.

The summer treats to the Dasset hills were before my time. I tell you what they used to do. They used to have the Sunday school treat. You know that field back of Whitaker's (*Poplar Farm House now Eagles*). The paddock. Well there was nothing in that in those days. It was kept tidy and clean when Townsend's there. Big chapel people.

I rather think that the old horse chestnut tree still stands there. Up the drive there's one on the right as you drive up the slope, then you go along a bit and look left and there's another one there. Then as you go towards the house on the same side, on the left there used to be a big fir tree. A bough, a branch had grown out square from the trunk, then turned down again. Have a big swing on there. What they called the Big Swing. Big thick rope and a proper seat and all to sit on. That was for kiddies see.

Then after, that was in the afternoon, have games and so forth, and about 4 o'clock, half past four time, the tables were set out and the forms, forms and doings, chairs. Mr W. Godson and his wife used to get the tea and the cakes were fruit. Fruit and bigish square ones done in the old pan and cut up. The fruitcake and a plain cake, no fancy stuff. Wholesome, nice wholesome tea. Made by William and his wife. Darn good cake that was.

Mrs William Godson's name was Rhoda. She made plain cakes and fruitcakes in big slabs, which were cut up. Good but plain. Nice old gal, though she was a thin person, tough as wire. Oh blimey they had to be. Oh lord they had to be up at 4 o'clock in the morning setting dough. Setting "sponge" they call it. All the old fire places were heated with faggots, you know wood. In oven, get oven hot, then brush it out, then cook. Oh ah work those days. Fetch all the water from that well across the road. No joke, no it darn well wasn't (*see Book One*).

Their cart, two wheel. High one all covered. I rather think in the early days they had a four-wheel bread delivery van, covered up in the front and also at the back with doors. The driver's underneath the canopy sat down but you still get wet in there. Towards the finish they had this two-wheeler. Not so convenient as a four-wheeler I shouldn't think. They took the bread to the door. Come to the door. You used to pop down pretty often actually. Old Mrs Godson used to make a good malt loaf. When we were up in the yard, they used to be sixpence. We used to pop along and get a malt loaf for our lunch. Get a hacksaw and saw it in two. Albert had one half and I'd have the other, and they were beautiful.

She didn't get on at all with Marie her daughter-in-law. Then after Marie and Gardner Godson took it on, Marie made fancy cakes. Gardner had an Austin van 7. He was tall and wide so it was a bit small for him to get into. He ate a lot of meat. He always had a lad to work for him. Len Bonham was one, Brian Boscott another. Gardner's friend was uncle Frank Sumner. Uncle went into the air force and Gardner was in the army of occupation in Cologne after the war.

After that chapel tea there used to be, I don't think it's there now, there used to be a wire fence between that paddock and the ground back of the barn. We had to go through that wire fence, and they had a game of cricket. Cricket match out there. Used to be a fair number of folks. Fair number of folks get there. There used to be an Arthur Smith live along Chapel Row, lived next to the passage, and his mother were a big Wesleyan. There was only his mother and she were a widow, and he worked at the co-op. Well he started at the co-op, when he left school and through him, through Arthur Smith I had my eyebrow cut open. Ha! A cricket ball. I went into bat and Arthur Smith, this Arthur Smith said, *You got the wrong hold*. Well just as though that matters, doesn't matter what hold you got. And meanwhile Roland Plumb, he were a fast bowler was old Roland Plumb, oh blimey yes. Another like they used to be years ago. Couldn't half whack them down and Roland Plumb were bowling. Meanwhile he'd come and loosed the ball see, caught me a socker on the eyebrow, split it open and that finished my cricket days. Never had a doctor, no. Had to come home, bandage it up. Funny thing you know, my youngest brother he got clouted on the side of his face with a bat. Huh! Blow game of cricket. I packed it in. If I had a game at all, if I had a game at all I turned left handed. If I went in now I should go in left-handed.

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## 4. Cropredy Vicarage



**13. Cropredy Vicarage in 1908.**

At the vicarage to the right of the porch was the room where the Revd Sharpley taught them for confirmation. In April 1935 the Bishop of Oxford came and confirmed them, so Sharpley was still here then, because he signed my confirmation book. He went to Burton Latimer, near Kettering, Northamptonshire. Did you say you found the date? 1937. Yes. He swapped pulpits with Revd Edwards and he was a different chap altogether.

Revd Sharpley was a bachelor. Good chap. Well I don't know how to describe the fellow really, a bit on the *silly* side, wasn't he? Never grown up. Very nice chap to get on with, but a lot of ladies after him. Bachelor! Grand looking. Oh ah a nice looking bloke. If he took a liking to you he'd treat you all right. He took me one Saturday afternoon down to Leamington; he took me to the Cadena. Yes. And after that to the Picture House in the main street. Oh dear yes. Had a big organ there anyway. He got a nice Singer car, Sharpley had. Well he left and went to Burton Latimer and after that we had Edwards.

Before them was Revd George Barr. Little short fellow. Proper gent. Mr and Mrs Brown came with him from Gloucestershire, Long Hope. He was the gardener. Their son Winston, *Brownie* we called him, he was the same age as me. Lived at 3 Red Lion Street. Revd Barr he was a real old English country gentleman. Yes. Stand no humbug from nobody. No stand no humbug from no one, but where anything wrong, he'd have that put right.

Barr was a very strict man on time. Twelve o'clock mid-day on Saturday the bells used to chime. I have seen Mr Barr many a time pull out his watch and meet Mr Lambert at the gate and tell him, *Lambert your clock is slow you might get it attended to please (Said very slowly)*. Barr was very strict. Mother kept his wife's funeral card: -*Charlotte Rebecca Barr died 7 November 1924, Vicar's wife. Buried 12 Nov. 1924, aged 71 by George A. Green, Rector of Hainerton, Hants. (The Revd Barr came in 1917 when he was 65. He left in 1928, aged 76. He was finally laid to rest here on the 18<sup>th</sup> of March 1944, aged 92. He left a fund for the care of his tombstone)*. Revd Barr he was well liked. Oh yes. Everything orderly. He could make things go. Good organiser. After him came Sharpley and after him Mr Edwards. Edwards was elderly and his wife ten years older than him, a small wiry person...

She walked into Banbury, *said Lucy*, although she had an ulcer. A small determined person.

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Hard, *muttered Arthur* they didn't leave things very organised. After them came Bennett. H.A.T. Hat Bennett. One of the best vicars you could come by. Our Mum's was the first funeral he took in 1952. Minnie Harriet Pettifer, buried 26 December 1952, aged 71.

He came into the house where we sat at the American range here, having a bit of supper. Came in and had a coffee and biscuits with you. Real nice bloke. Sensible. Left to go to Oxford. They had four daughters.

I remember going to fetes at the vicarage, *said Lucy*, but I never went inside.

I did, oh yes, *said Arthur*. Lovely wooden floors. This photograph of the vicarage. It's the kitchen at the back. There's a bank here pretty sharp bank. They always used to have treasure hunts there. Ring and you stick in crosses, and the prize about five bob.

Now here's the copper beech (*different photo*). Copper beech. Now underneath that copper beech they used to have that er tea and you used to come across here and there's a small window in there, they used to serve tea out there, walk across and sit there under the copper beech and it were beautiful. Lovely grounds, never ought to have been took down. That beautiful setting for a Vicarage Fete, which we used to come to. Church Fete, beautiful and then in the evening, quite often in the evening, late afternoon or in the evening on the rough (well where Lester's place is built now). That was a big paddock, back

of those cottages. We used to have football there. The front entrance was a big wide place. That old winter evergreen still stands there at the bottom, that's the original one. Now that used to stand on the left and the drive was on the right of that. I know that. I used to stand there courting!

The vicarage needed a 60-rung ladder to get up there. 9 inch to each rung. We'd been working at Bourton vicarage. I enjoyed that more, then came down here painting and that. Norman Smith was doing it and John Green and I were borrowed. I didn't stay on that job, the boss called me back to the yard, put elsewhere.

In the vicarage garden front wall was a door onto Church Lane just wide enough for a wheelbarrow. The greenhouse was about thirty feet plus long. Built against the wall at the northeast end. Where there were once air ducts taking the heat from the fireplace along the wall and back up the chimney, are now two rows of blue brick.

The churchyard stable roof was painted green. I painted it. Not been touched since I shouldn't think. The churchyard railings were pinched during the war. That sort of wall has always been there. Railings along the top about six foot high. They separated the public path from the gravestones. The public path. Parish Council had that. The church property came up as far as the railings, or just past. The gates they've always gone in the name of church gates, but I reckon they are parish. This end never did open, they have always dragged. Those two in Red Lion Street, what were they put there for? I suppose they used to be used years ago by people coming to church. One by the pub (*they settled their bills at the inn after vestry meetings, but it was also the manor houses' entrance*) I've never, it opens out towards the road, you see. They've never had a blooming coat of paint since years ago. Our old boy, Albert did several jobs on those gates.

Gaffer Sumner and I set the top, set the top hook in the smaller gate once. That was the top gate to Hell Hole. Lead in, you know. Yes. That was a rum job. Lead out of a bucket into a wall. Yes. Hot lead! You had to, brass pot, you had to get blooming clay and stuff and fill the wall underneath and pour it in. You had to work quick un all, and make sure your walls dry. Spurtles, lead spurtles on wet. Forms small balls and spits them out.

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## 5. Mother was a Dunn

Extracts from Arthur's diary: 29 March 1929 *10 15 went to Bourton and dug the garden for Albert.* 13 April Sat. *went to Banbury with Albert and Gran...* 23 Dec 1930 *went to Bourton and helped him Albert get some holly...* 25<sup>th</sup> Dec 1930 *washed and shaved and went up to Bourton to dinner. In the afternoon we played games and munched nuts, apples, oranges, ...tea 5pm. In the evening looked at Christmas cards and did a competition...came home in my Rolls Royce (bicycle) 10 pm. Had a glass of ginger beer (good health) aged 14.*

Grandpa Levi Dunn was a stonemason. He helped to build the Church Rooms Theres ogee guttering on this picture of the Church Rooms, screwed down to a bargeboard. Ogee most expensive of gutterings. Finials on the end of the gables. Those elm trees behind have rooks nests in them. In a nice summer they built them high. Cropredy was full of trees [Bk 1 p33].

We used to meet upstairs in the church rooms and play the handbells there. Not downstairs, no good down there, but I like upstairs, it's a lot bigger. We met up there for ourselves, no one else. Later Albert joined us and my brother Les. My younger brother. We used to be the bell ringers you see. There was Bassett 2, Norman Smith 6, Miller 4 and John Shirley 1.

Levi Dunn worked for Sumner and Neal. Richard Sumner had the Stone House built and Levi was the stonemason. I passed there one day and they asked, *where are you going lad?* I replied *to get a thin twist of tobacco* only I said *Fin* and they all laughed. I went to the Co-op for an ounce of thin twist for my Father. At that time it was Mr Gossage's.

Come lunch time and my grandfather would come over to come and have lunch with us. He brought his own, that is all wrapped up in a red and white handkerchief. Oh didn't it smell good. He wouldn't touch any bread, but brown bread. He was a stern block. You couldn't fool round with him. He was very strict. *Bumper* Dunn. Blowed if I know how he was called that. He had diabetes. Several in the family did.

He also helped to build Elm Grove. He was borrowed by Cherry's to build, but that was the finish, as he had an accident there, and he never worked after that. When their Father Levi lay a dying asking for his daughter, she couldn't come as she was so ill having *Connie Sumner*. The Doctor said she must have no more. Neither knew the other was so ill. What do the register's have on them?





**14. Levi Dunn and his sons Ernest and Percy.**

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In the Bourton Registers: *Francis Levi Dunn buried 8 October 1924, aged 67. He married Harriet England in 1881. She was buried 28<sup>th</sup> of April 1959 aged 99.* They had four sons. Fred died in 1884 an infant, and Albert Sydney died of scarlet fever, aged two, in May 1902.

Ernest Levi Dunn (1883-1955) was the eldest, *said Arthur*. He married Annie Baylis in 1909. They lived next to Sam Adkins in Great Bourton. He had sharp big eyes and parted his hair in the middle. He had a narrow face, by his picture. Ernie was a stonemason. He was a bossy domineering type, anyone working for him have...oh blimey yes. He put people right. That's a fact. A good many wouldn't work with him. No. If you could work with him you could work with anybody.

Sid, Arthur's cousin, *said Lucy*, didn't like working with him, he didn't.

Percy William (1886-1972) married Mary (1889-1967). Percy he was a thrashing contractor, had his own thrashing machine. He lived next to the Swan at Great Bourton.



**15. Minnie with Leslie and Arthur Pettifer.**



**16. May, Mabel and Albert Sidney Dunn.**

Minnie Harriet was the oldest girl (1881-1952) and married Jack Henry Pettifer in 1913. My Dad and Mum.

May Elizabeth (1889-1965) married 1917 to Harry Hatton Busby (1884- 1940), Sid's parents.

Mabel Ellen (1895-1952) married Frank Sumner (1891- 1962). Connie's parents.

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**17. May and Mabel  
Dunn with bicycles  
1915.**

This photograph of the two youngest sisters. Two Dunn girls with their bikes. May Elizabeth and Mabel Ellen. It was taken in Little Bourton. The two younger sisters. Mother was the eldest, then the two lads. Connie's Father was in the Royal Air Force so this was taken 1915.

The two bikes. They would be from Bakers Stores in Banbury, near the Crown. They were Alsops bikes, a firm like Halford's only better. Bikes, prams and sewing machines. May worked there and that is an Alsop bike. Look silky cords to protect the skirt. Celluloid chain guard. Different brakes on Mabel's, old fashioned, but modern on May's. Back brake on Mabel's was down to a calliper brake on the back wheel. Rubber pedals. Drive chain on near side Mabel's, and May's on off side. All the time Mum had this in a frame up on the wall. I've taken it out and cleaned up the frame. Look oil lamp on May's. Oh she was the gay type. No **not** one for going out to meetings, either of them.

On the 17<sup>th</sup> of December 1917 Mum brought a sewing machine from Charles Baker's shop at 21 to 21 and a half Bridge Street, Banbury. This later became Alsops. On the bill was written: *1 Avenue Sewing Machine £3-15-0, sold to Mrs J. H. Pettifer.*

Occasionally Mum would come and see our May. Mrs Busby. But not much, otherwise to Mrs Sumner's. Yes. They were closer...

She used to go and help make the bed for Gran Dunn and that *said Lucy.*

Aunt Mabel Sumner, came. Aunt May Busby was more of a loner. Dunn's used to come down here. Grandma came down to live at Mrs Sumner's at the yard. Her youngest daughter's. When did Grandma come down to the yard? Mrs Sumner died 7 years before her...

Albert used to go and look after her and he married in 1937, *said Lucy.* She lived with them for some time. She did for a little while.

She came down to live at the yard, I should think before the war.

Well, *continued Lucy,* I went up to Bourton in 1937 before the war. She was up there then, she was in the other place.

Before the war? Yes. Well who were in her house after that then, *Lucy?*

A youngish couple, they were a relation of Neville's. She was 99 when she died in April and if she had lived a bit longer she'd have been 100. She was very much like my Grandmother. She was in the Neithrop on that newspaper (*B.G.4.8.1958*) photo. That was when she was 99, her birthday Tuesdays and Sundays and this Sunday I went in and found the bed empty and no one had said *Lucy went off to make a cup of tea.*

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Her maiden name was Miss England, *said Arthur,* but her half-sister would be different. Different person altogether she was. Well my Grandmother's half sister lived at Hartshill.

That's the stone quarry where the road stone comes from, *Lucy called from the kitchen.*

She married; I don't know what her chap done, I never known him. Ingsly his name was, but he died young. Whether he was a quarry man or not, we never knowed. Three of us, Gran, Albert and myself used to go round to her and stay a week or so with Aunty, because they were half-sisters. I don't know if she was older or younger. She was a smart piece. Victorian type. When Albert were quite young, about 10 or 11, we used to go down to Hartshill for a week of the holiday. She died in 1937 the same year as Albert got married and never a day's illness in her life, she didn't. Big strong fine woman. She was dead and buried in three months. Cancer.

We used to go and have a look at those quarries. Once Bill Bailey and I went to stay. Well I had the cane across me backside and that through another blooming kid. He wasn't too bad, but we used to sit together. Mrs Ross Walker said, *Put pens away.* And I said *Put pens away cos I'm going out to play.* I'll be darned if this kid didn't write it down and take it up to her. Silly little prank like that. She took it in to the blooming gaffer, and we had the cane before dinner, both of us. Cane before dinner, he had the cane and all. I didn't half give him a belting out in that lane, just outside the girl's door. Afterwards we got the best of friends until he was killed. Lived down New Place, first one. Before that down the mill, over the other side of the bridge, two cottages there.

Bill and I went to Hartshill. To Grannies half sister. She invited us down for Easter. She didn't know Bill, but she said, Bring a friend, and we push biked down. Started about 10 o'clock Good Friday morning. On the Sunday, she were a Quaker, we were expected to, not to hers though I have been to the Quaker house, but to the church in Hartshill. Instead we had a walk through the woods. We got back and she had a man friend to supper. She was close on 80! This man friend was a blacksmith from the old colliery. I'd never seen him before. It dawned on us afterwards what he was there for. He asked us if we'd like to go down the colliery. I said *No* Bill said *Yes*. So I was obliged to go.

We arranged to go. He took us round...operated the engine. First took all cigarettes and matches away. Beautiful engine, not a speck of dust. Then down that black hole. Shut the doors, starts to go and my golly, floor under your feet! All of a sudden black as night, falling down, then a slight bump. Then your resting on timbers over the sump. 20 foot of water. Get out and he said, "Look up." The blooming shaft and a tiny speck of light at the top!

Three people had a business in Great Bourton. Nail makers down Crockell. Wiseman's timber-yard at the back of the third house up on the Green, and a Blacksmith's where the shop was later at the bottom of the Green.



**18. Bourton Green.**

**Dunns on the left.**

In the first three houses on that Green, lived Dunns and Nevilles. Then the larger gate where the timber went in. Lambert's bought them from Coys and sold the timber yard to Wiseman's. He had it before moving to Hays Bridge in Wardington. Wiseman went to Douglas's Mill. The concrete beds of his machines are still too big to knock up.

Wiseman had two children, I think *said Lucy*. One married George Watts who had an Insurance shop near the Cross end of Banbury High Street. Wiseman came from Germany.

Opposite the blacksmith shop under Dunn's, *Arthur went on*, across the road was an Upton, who had a grocery business, and he kept his trap and pony in the lean-to shed which blocked the front of the house where my Grandparents lived. Straight opposite he lived. The shed was used as a grocery store. He delivered green grocery around the villages. You couldn't get into Dunn's house that way. It was a three-storey house you know. That lean-to was Tom Upton's. Inside you came to two half doors leading into the blacksmith's shop under Grandma Dunn's living room. There were steps up to the front door, beyond the shed, higher up the Green. A living room and kitchen beyond. One bedroom above. A lighted window to the old shop beneath. Their only access except via Tom's shed was a hatch and ladder at the back of the kitchen. At the end of the garden was a big gate.

That house that Grandma lived in is much older than those other two. Much older. Those two are comparatively new.

*According to the records Lambert rebuilt the fronts using brick window surrounds and signed the chimney with a different brick.*

Neville's lived next to Dunn's. Dunn's at the bottom. What we called *Down below*. That was through a trap door, down a ladder, the old blacksmith's.

Well it was turned into a shop, *said Lucy*.

It was a nice dry place, because the shop was underneath us you see. When we used to go up there at Christmas, Christmas party, there was about 14 of us used to go up there for Christmas tea. And Albert and I used to go down Christmas Eve and put some posts up to the joist to hold the floor. To take the weight see. There was a big ceiling and no centre support to take the weight of us. They were all right. I tell you those Christmas parties, the old lady hadn't got a lot, they always had a dinner and this Christmas party...

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Only one I went to Arthur and his cousin Sidney saw how many cups of tea they could drink.

Fourteen cups of tea. Oh ho! *Arthur laughed* Oh yes my cousin Sidney Busby.

The one that lived here, *said Lucy*. You wouldn't know Sidney of course. You might see him over here, but not very often.

But his Mother, *said Arthur* she was another Dunn, Mother's sister. One of the three girls.

I think, *said Lucy*, I've got the only photo of Connie's Mother. Long time ago, well long before Connie was married. By the corner opposite to the shop. She came past and I said, *wait a minute*. And she let me take it!

Three Dunn girls and two boys lived, two died. I'm named after one. Sidney. We are related to the other Dunn's. They weren't brothers they were cousins. Mrs Ivy Cherry was a Dunn and her Father and my Grandfather were cousins.



**19.**

**Albert and Evelyn  
Pettifer at their  
house on Bourton  
Green.**

Next above Neville's on Bourton Green, over the gap, came Coys. No relation to Cropredy John Coy. Then a house where Albert first lived. They couldn't get married until we had built a toilet. We built it out the back New Year's Eve in the snow. Then we had to put in a stairs and kitchen place. It was darn hard work, every weekend we got, we were doing it up. They were married April 1937.

Then came, I forget, and then the Finch's on the one round the bend. Winnie Finch. Over the Green beyond the big house were two brick cottages with their back to the vicarage wall. They were put up by Amos, I should think.

They couldn't have clear glass in the window, *said Lucy*. They had to have corrugated glass so they couldn't overlook the vicarage garden.

They had the soil from the garden right up their wall. You could have leapt into the bedroom window, if it had been opened *Arthur!*



*Lucy went on,* I remember the people who lived there. Bayliss had the back one, and Gilkes the front one.

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## **6. The Busbys and Cavalier Cottage, Chapel Green**

*Albert and others said Arthur lived with the Busby's until Leslie married, yet in his diary from 13 to 16 years he appears to live at home. In 1940 he moved into Cavalier Cottage. Arthur wrote: 25<sup>th</sup> Dec 1929 11 o'clock went to Chapel. 4 o'clock went to Aunt Mays to tea and stayed there till ten o'clock. Wore long trousers for the first time that day.*

*Harry Busby (1884-1940) was the son of Richard and Jane Busby. They seem to have arrived in Cropredy in 1893. The family already had Harry and Mabel Ettie (or Et as she was called). Five more were in the baptism registers. Joseph 1894, Arthur 1895, Fred 1896, Horace 1898, and Kate 1900. Their Father was a carter. Of the sons Fred became a platelayer, Harry a bricklayer, Horace was killed in the 1914-18 war, Kate worked at Judges before her marriage and Et at 31 married John Austin of West Adderbury.*

*Looking through the registers we found that Harry witnessed the marriage of Arthur's parents in 1913. Four years later he married the youngest Dunn sister Mary Elizabeth. He was 32 and she was 27 Were they courting through the war? According to the 1897 rate book the family of T. Busby's lived next to Pettifers in the High Street.*



**20. Harry Busby.**

Harry was a private in the Oxon and Bucks Light Infantry; you can see the bugle on his hat in this photograph. It was taken at the time of the first battle of the Somme in 1916. He was gassed at the Somme. He died of meningitis, wasn't it?

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He, just after, he was very ill, just after Armistice Day, *said Lucy*. He carried the banner and he collapsed in Cropredy. This register says he was buried 23 December 1940 aged 56. His Father died at Sibford.

Uncle Harry, *said Arthur*, lived here at Cavalier cottage. He used to call me Art.

*Lucy continued to search copies of the registers.* He was on leave from Catterick in Yorkshire in March 1917 when they were married. By licence it says here. Later they had a cottage in Plantations *north side* at the bottom end. When Timms moved out of Chapel Green they moved up here.

They came up here, *said Arthur*, Sid Busby, his Mum and Dad. They used to live in the thatched cottage opposite Mrs Botts. One with the brick kitchen on the end. That's the reason why they left. Back of those houses used to be a dark spinney belonging to the vicarage. Dark spinney. Big hedge. Big ditch back of those houses. Rank old place it was. Stink out there, open ditch and leaves off trees. Couldn't do anything with it.

That building on the end, that kitchen was put up before my time, I don't remember it being put up. That was the kitchen. Then through there it was a big room inside. Two bedrooms. Apparently Tom Timms, the signalman, lived down there, then he moved up here to Chapel Green, and then he went along to Chapel Row from here. Busby's moved from down there in Plantations to here in 1932. Not a relation, no. Tom Timms was a signalman. His son lived next door in 10 Chapel Row at Mrs Neal's. Looked after Mrs Neal. You'd get on all right with Tommy Timms, if he were alive now. Good bloke he was...

Mrs Timms and Mrs Neal, two sisters they were, *explained Lucy*. The Timms had only one in the family. Cyril. Well Cyril, they must have had him young, because when I first remember him he was married to Louie Howe, who lived with Neal's. Cyril Tims lived then with Mrs Neal for quite a while. They were living there when I first went to work at Monkeytree. In fact she wasn't there then, Mrs Neal, not when I first came, I don't know where she was, then she came back. She died 1956 *aged 91*. Tom Timms used to run me with the shaving brush. *Ha!* He used to say *Come on*. I went round for the water.

Timms. *said Arthur* was on that film that Hammond made. Nice old boy, very gentlemanly. Strict sort of a bloke, very tidy. Good for roses. Good bloke.

I used to go round there for water. Old Mr Lambert (*who owned Monkeytree and let it to Kirkby's*) wouldn't have anyone round to look after the pump at Monkeytree House. I had to go round there for water. If he was shaving he'd say, he'd shave me! I had to go round there for every drop of drinking water. Where I went to work in Banbury, he used to do the roses.

Tim's wife, *said Arthur* hopping on and off the hearth trying to get his word in, were related to old Tom Bradley's wife, Emily. They were all born Cooknells. [Book 2].

Cropredy in those days was a little village worth **living in**, because you knew everyone and they knew you, but these days it's totally different. There are not many Cropredy folk left now. The old Cropredy people I'm talking about, the old generation. I'm the only one on this row.

*He went to stand at the window looking across Chapel Green. You can see a lot of things from here. One of those cottages along that Chapel Row was an infill you know. It was of brick. That's where the Boscott's used to live; Number 5 (The barn was made into three cottages 4-6. Number 5 made from the central bay which once had the barn doors).*

Mrs Busby came to live in this house on Chapel Green in 1932. Her husband's sister Kate lived in Chapel Row. They were born in Chapel Row and when Kate left school she went to the High Street in Banbury and got a job at Judges. Judges the best shop in town then. They had a good shop and a cheaper one. You had to be good to get a job in the High Street. Then they had another shop higher up called Pullins.

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Well Kate was at a dinner, my wife and I went to, and Lucy sat opposite me and beside me was this well dressed lady who helped me to veg. She lived out Wallingham way. It was Sid Busby's 25<sup>th</sup>, their wedding anniversary at the football stadium in Banbury. My cousin Sid's 25<sup>th</sup>. I got sat down with this woman on my right. When the food came round, *Is that all right? You don't seem to know me.* She said. *No I don't.* I said. *Oh yes you do. I'm sorry I don't! You do, you're names Arthur, you're a cousin of Sidney Busby. My brother was your uncle Harry. Well I'm his sister Kate.* I said *Ah sorry, you must be Kate Busby!*

*A lot of sisters, said Lucy, one at Adderbury.*

She is 82 now 1982 and wanted to know all about her old friends. Once she went out with Bill Harris on the Green and many others. This Kate Busby was a smart gal. Smart gal. She got married very late in life, married an older man. Cropredy gal. I should think about the only one left of the old Cropredy gals. She worked at Judges in the High Street in those days. You had to be pretty decent, I can tell you; you had to be something like to go to Judges. Smart and efficient...

Mrs Lawson from Bourton, *added Lucy*, she worked there.

That gal had to catch the 10 past 7 train at Cropredy station to get to work at 9 o'clock...

No other then. No bus.

She was telling us about it after dinner, wasn't she? Lived further down near the tunnel in Chapel Row *Number 6*. Her father worked here. Tidy old family of them. Two or three gals. Aunt Kate and Aunt Et they used to come over here, when Aunt Mary was alive see. Especially Et. Kate didn't come over much, so that's why I didn't know her. Then there were several boys. Horace is on the war memorial. There was a fair gang of them they were nearly all born in that house along Chapel Row...

They used to have **big** families in **small** cottages then, *commented Lucy.*

Once as a child, *Arthur continued*, she had a very sore tooth, very painful. *Put on your hat and coat* said her Mother. *I'll take you down to George King*. He was the blacksmith at Bott's yard as now is (*coal wharf on south side of the road*). So down she went and he pulled it out, and he was very quick and she didn't feel a thing...

*I showed Arthur and Lucy Colin Shirley's letter: There were blacksmiths in the village as far back as I can remember. One blacksmiths shop on the Green where the bungalow next to Constone is. Another in what is Bott's coal yard and one by your house Monkeytree, but I can't remember that in use. There was an old blacksmith named George King, I can just remember him as an old man. He used to pull teeth too. His son showed me his instrument. It was about 7 or 8 inch long as far as I can remember, with a T handle at one end and a kind of hook on a pin at the other. He must have put the hook part round the tooth and twisted it out. I think the cure was worse than the disease.*

Harry Busby, *said Arthur*, was a bricklayer, but he could do carpentry. Good chap too. Harry Busby were a darn good workman. Mason, bricklayer and a good one at carpentry. He made a good kitchen cupboard, which stood in the kitchen when he lived here. My younger brother had it. He may have made the cupboard at the Hall. I remember him in the 1920's up the roof, helping Percy R. Alcocks to retile Poplar Cottages with asbestos tiles.

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He had a nice greenhouse, heated with a little coal fire and all. That went across to Lyndhurst. (*Dormers*) I took it across to where a farmer lived there then. A Mr and Mrs Griffin. I dismantled it and took it across. Griffins moved down to Portsmouth way later. They wanted a greenhouse so I stripped it down, took it across there and built it for them. About 1940. A good greenhouse.

Now you see all the years it shelled over here from 1940 to now. I could have done with that greenhouse. Set some stuff in. It was a good one. Stood out this end of the shed. Little bit of grass, then this greenhouse with a path up to the door and a proper little greenhouse heater. Coal and a chimney out the top. The old boy used to grow his own plants and put them out.

Cause when Sid Busby, me cousin, got married and left home in '46, he took the workshop down and put that up at Queens Road. He lived there. Took it down and erected it up there. Good nice shed Uncle's shed. Kept the bikes in there. Had a workbench in there, ladders, ladders to get up to the chimney. Chimney pot had to be swept out periodically, had a pot on this and number 5. Mrs Townsend's and this one.

We got to the stage now when we got **no** blooming buildings at all much. I've got a lathe. Good. Not a cheap affair. Altogether, 1952, nigh on £100. Motor in the cupboard upstairs and all the rest of the parts here. Heavy shafts in garidge. I've got nowhere to set it up. Oh no, Council, you'd hear from the Council, you're not allowed to make profits. Get evicted for that. If you own it yes. Furthermeant of gain. No profit in Council House. Against their law. It's on those rent books. Rules and

regulations on the back. The old tenants as came here first, when these were first put up in 1921; they weren't supposed to **paper** the walls. Oh no!



22. **Chapel Green.**  
**Cavalier Cottage fourth**  
**from the left.**

Poor old Tommy Timms and his wife, the signman, who later moved next to Neal's, they had to sit in here at night looking at bare walls. Walls that were painted daffodil-distemper-daffodil. Some of that stuff as used to rub off. Woodwork creosoted. Cupboard the same. Black creosote. Picture rail, window board, iron sliding window, old cupboard, skirting **all** creosoted and the doors the same. Always a job to get paint to stick on these doors you know, throws it off.

Distemper, wash it off, not oil bound. Wash it off. Ceiling was white washed, wasn't papered, you wasn't allowed to.

Then there was this big black hole here where the kitchen range was. What a blooming crib to sit down to wasn't it? Plus oil lamps, paraffin oil lamp. Lino on the floor. Cold. Oh yes it was.

There was nothing like it is now. There was only the old American range if you wanted hot water. No electric sockets. No boiler behind or inside. American firm. Nothing else bar heat the oven and warm the room, but not much. Cold. A coal burner. The top you slid across to use the oven, or back when you weren't, to shut it over. Good oven. It didn't always cook well; you see the wind used to...

It used to blow down on occasions and full of smoke, *said Lucy.*

Wind in the wrong direction, it blooming well will not go, *Arthur turned to glare at the latest hearth.* Its sulky, its got no go when blooming winds in the wrong direction.

Pictures have what you like. We took a lot down. Used to have a lot. Easy chairs oh ahh buy them second hand. Someone in the village or the next village. Offer a price, a couple of bob and shift it round. Not many made their own, no not in this village. Colin Shirley perhaps only bloke in Cropredy. Uncle used to make a bit of stuff, a corner cupboard that used to be in my coalhouse. Up in the corner, paints and stuff in the top, in bottom sticks for lighting the fire. One day an antique man come round and offered me a good price for that old cupboard. I said, *you can't, that's where I keep my old sticks!* I bought an elm box from the sale of Harry Baisley's effects sold by Flick and Lock the auctioneers in his garden in Church Lane. He was a platelayer. He and his wife had no children. When Selby's were given notice for owing some rent all their furniture was put out on the Green, but that was not for sale.

When Timms was here first they already had a son, Cyril. Then in April 1932 I came over here to help Harry to wallpaper this ceiling. It was allowed by then. Since then I've sized and wallpapered this a lot of times. Never thought I'd be doing it for myself.

They were a bit cold prison like you know when they first moved in. Square cut wooden floor, inside doors creosoted and the steel sliding windows divided into six panes each. They were painted a flat white, the rest distempered. It was a bit rough yes. And **cold**. After that nice warm thatched cottage they were cold. Well coal was cheaper then yes, but they were colder houses.

A parlour cottage they called them then. You don't hear that now do you? They had this parlour, not big mind, to retire to for a bit of peace and quiet, but I don't think they were used much. We did when they changed all these fires about. Small bedroom fireplace in there, but it gets quite hot.



Then they had a big range in here. Black-leaded yes, with a cavern above! A big high mantelpiece. Indicating above his head. The wall projecting out more to here. Cupboards beside it from the start. A back boiler? Oh dear me **No! No!** That was come in two winters ago! Well in 1968 they took out the range. We had stopped using it then. Had the electric. Big old thing it was too. That was taken out and a new fireplace and fire put in. At the same time Smith and Webbers took out the copper from the store, off the kitchen, and put the bath in and an emersion heater beside it. Made it snug and warm that did. Before that, well we used the copper, filled and emptied it by hand, and used the water to fill a six foot galvanised bath. I store the potatoes in that now, under the stairs in the pantry. I used to have a bath in here, after coming from Banbury, you know on a cold frosty night. Old copper in there, old copper, ice all over the window. Cold! Sink? Well we had this big stone sink on brick pillars. No not to a bucket. Oh no, to a sump. Well that went to the sump, everything else had to go into the garden, you know to be buried.

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**22. Lucy and Arthur Pettifer in 1979.**

Water from the well. Yes drinking water and washing, same well. Good water too. Pump. We had to get water from the pump when I first lived here in 1940 with my Aunt, Mrs Busby, after Uncle had died. You went down the garden path and left to the pump at the back of Mrs Hill and Mr Boscott at the top of Red Lion Street. Yes and Pettifers and Bradleys had to go down their

garden and then along to the pump. It had a brick well and it was good enough water. When they built the bungalows they filled it in.

Used buckets. Pump down there, then stand them on the table in the kitchen. Little corner fireplace in the kitchen. Stand them on a table, and when the bucket was empty you had to go down and get more. Yes. If it rained you still had to go. In 1971 we had a washing machine and I've only had to fit a new pipe that's all. Quite easy to look after...

We were the first to have one, *said Lucy* and both sides used to hurry up and get their washing out before me! Course it didn't take me as long. The arthritis in my hands was bad and this helped. Then Margaret bought her Mother one.

We had the electric rewired in 1975/6. He came in with a hammer to the back door and wham, he hit every light switch, nothing could be saved. Wham didn't he Lucy? Two cottages in one day. I've never trusted it since. Before that we had only light switches to each room. If you wanted to boil a kettle you fitted it to the light. We have one plug to each room now. We had a plug for the baby burco in the kitchen.

No we don't use the front door except perhaps on Sunday. Use the back. Different in the old cottage over there as the front lead to the street. They could go round the back past Father's, but their rear exit was the gate into Newscut Lane. Only tradesmen really have got a right of way from one to the other across here.

Going back to the electric. 1936 I think the electric first come in by. The electric to the village come 1932. These houses did not get theirs until 1936. Until then it was all work getting light for lamps.

Our stairs are some of the easiest. They turn round you see. You've only got 7 to go up, then you come to a flat, then a little shallow step, another flat, turn yourself round and up another 6. Then you're on the landing. Upstairs is very cold. You need a couple of hot water bottles in the winter and boil alive in the summer. 1981. I think this winter has been the worst I remember in these houses. No insulation in the rooves. They are that cold upstairs. On Christmas Eve the north windows were solid ice.

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These houses were built for people coming out of the First World War, and to encourage people getting work building them. Same in all the villages around. 1921 they were built.

The Council Houses were built here and I was amazed at the opposition from the Parish Council. From what I heard tell. Mr Sumner had only just finished building his new house and of course he would look over it. Mr Gardner who kept his horse in here, well he would be against it. I disagree that this would have made a good playing field as its too small. Its fine for houses. If they had done them differently they could have put up more houses on here!

There was a large pond in the field here once where the two garidges stand back of the vicarage garden. It had no trees round but was fed by a clay line, which ran across my vegetable patch. You could tell its line by the poor vegetables running across at an angle lining up to the pond. This pond was filled in for building here.

Mr Bradley's (*next door to west*) and half my garden is good soil, but that half on the Red Lion Street side isn't nearly as good, so I expect that nursery you said was once here, didn't stretch that far across?

We had potatoes one year and greens the next out front. You can see where the borders a different shape. What large gardens they are. My garden goes right down to the caravan next to the old wall. Hard as nails there. We share the same drive as Bradleys going out by Mrs Cherry's. The old gate on the High Street. Just along that old wall back of Church Lane gardens there was once a row of elms. There was a vegetable garden where the bungalow was built. Godson's had that. Vegetables this end, lawn the other.

Bradley's weren't the first tenants next door. They moved in 1936. They were married in 1936. Previous tenants to them he was a signalman. Joseph Townsend. He was the first tenant and where he lived before that I don't know, but he was the first tenant. Quite a decent family. Good gardeners. Oh ah. Well they had time to do it in. Shift work see, and they also kept a pig. There was a pigsty there opposite side of my garden see. Old pigsty there. Well Jo Townsend put that up, and those buildings he put up for his horse and gig. He had a blooming horse and gig. Signalman! Yes stables, little stable and he put in there, gig in there. To put the gig in he had to rear it up like. Shafts in the air, wheel it in and gradually let the shafts down. Because where old Ashley Wincott is now, that was a wall, there was no entrance in there. He didn't make it Mr Rose made it Mr Rose did that. It used to be a very very high wall. At the other end it belonged to the Vicarage. That was church wall at one time, that's why it was kept up. That **thing** over there (*The last but one Vicarage*).

Well yes that used to be a darn good garden there. Jo Townsend he had a good garden and the pigsty against that wall. He left and went to Banbury and Tom Bradley had it.

Next door to this lived Pratt. He was the Relieving Officer. He was Registrar and people came to register. They also came to get 2s and 6d a week if poor. It was a lot of money in those days. They had to come to him, he wouldn't go to them. He was a miserable man.

Mr Bartlett came here straight when the Pratt's went. He was quite well off. He had a lawn laid at the front. He was a cheerful man, but his wife wasn't. She didn't work at the co-op. They came from Easington. No children...

John Sabin, *said Lucy*, delivered the bread into the villages on a cart for the co-op, and then they had a motor vehicle. Les Underdown worked for Mr Bartlett.

At the co-op the counter was on your right, under the window was a display. I rather think the block floor was put down by my Grandfather Dunn. I don't know how Trade had a Council House. Must have had some influence somewhere. He had a motorbike, a Quadrant. He went down to the gate, which was one third small and two thirds big gate and he would ride through the gate and right up to the house. He had...a wireless pole at the end of the garden. It had wires to hold it.

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## 7. School



23. **The School House in 1920, when Ross Walker was the headmaster.**

*In 1854 the Cropredy and Bourton National School and School House were built on part of the Reverend Noel's glebe land by Robert Smith. The architect was Henry Hatton.*

The school is in Bourton parish actually. The sow burge that comes under the road, that's the boundary. On the picture of the school this stream that runs through that front garden, through the lawns and you walk over a little bridge, well that joins up along here with the sow burge, and away down to the canal. That ran under Mill Lane, the road, from a pool on the corner. The pool was inside the hedge, partly outside, but biggest inside, for horses and cattle. Belonged to Eriksens, those days to W. J. Lambert, and theres a gully on this side, and the mouth of the gully is an iron grid, which used to fill up with water, with itself. Leaves and rough stuff in stormy weather forced the water out all over the road. It was **Impassable**. It was impassable at times for motor vehicles. When we went to school they had to put forms up along this hedge and walk on forms. Right from this side of the gate, right round till you got to the girl's place, first door and the Infant's entrance. The window its been

altered. Lowered. The girls played out in the lane. There's a gate just opposite leads into that field of Eriksens. The school had a ventilator on the roof. The builder, Robert Smith, was Alfred's Father. Builders in Round Bottom Cropredy.

We always helped; we had to mow that blooming lawn. Oh ah, detailed out to do that lawn. Fridays tidy up. The bell tower. Two wooden sleepers with a top on. Roof on. There's a bell hung in that. That's the one we rung at 10 to 9. Quarter past one. Call them back in. Had to do that. We had to do duty for one week and be there at 10 to 9 to get it rung.

We used to crawl under the road through the brick arch. It wasn't too good if a car came over. Sometimes the sow burge was quite full up as it came over the osier beds then under the road. Once the train spark set fire to the osier beds opposite the school and we were sent across to beat out the flames.

My friends at school were Winston Brown, fortnight older than me. Ron Pargeter, Rodney Cherry, Ron Adkins and we were much of a height. When we were detailed by the master to garden it was, *Pargeter and Pettifer!* or *Pettifer and Brown!* We hand pushed his lawn mower and we weeded his garden and then put all this down in our Garden Books. I still have mine to day...

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I still have my cookery book from Banbury, St Leonard's, Christ Church as it was then, *laughed Lucy*. My Mother went there too.

That field beyond the playground well that field belonged to Lambert's. I don't think there was anyone in occupation at School Farm until Mrs Eriksen got married. I don't know who lived there.

Well right down in the playground, you went through a gate, on the right. It wasn't a field gate, it was something a bit better than a field gate, it was two thirds of a big gate and one third of a little gate that you could get through, walk across that field to the allotments. Because there were seven allotments, I think there were seven plots, they were called plots, belonging to the school you see. And then on the left of the allotments right down to the canal was a straight flat piece of ground, were the sow burge runs along on the left, and that's where they played football. Football pitch, part of the field, yes. When we had a visiting team we played football in Hawks Ground. First field on the right, past the railway bridge going towards Bourton.

Only the school worked them, the allotments. School only. Then when you come back you came through the gates, bottom of the playground and instead of turning left to come up through the Lane and that, you kept straight on and it led you into another door that led you into the bosses garden. What the schoolboys still had to do. You had to do their garden as well. Then turn right in the garden and there were some sheds where they kept tools. Spades. Forks. Each kid was allotted out a spade and a fork and what he got to do. Or a Dutch hoe and they all had to be cleaned and put back in its place.

When you got up in 7 or x7 and you're anything on, you used to be put on that blooming lawn mowing job in the front of the house, where that wooden bridge crosses the stream. A mowing machine, a push mower. That was a nice lawn that was. Nice lawn that, no nettles or that. Push mower, I should rather think it was a Ransom's mower. Oh yes. That was our job.

Ross Walker, my school boss and a good one. Ross Walker was a darn good schoolmaster. There was no blooming thieving at night. Nothing whatever went wrong in the village. You daren't. No. You daren't because you'd know next morning that he'd get to know. He got to know. Ross Walker was strict. If he heard of any misdemeanours out of school you had the strap next day. 9 o'clock whoever done it, *Pettifer, Brown OUT here!* Oh yes. You dare not do anything wrong, because he got to know. Harry he went to school with some cardboard down his pants, he thought he'd got to have the cane! Ross Walker made him take it out and all. He still had the cane. Ross Walker was the only man I ever knew caned a girl. The same as he caned a boy. He had to, this girl from Claydon, she was a thin arrogant sort of girl, cared for no one, she got the cane. Some of them girls were some rum-uns, they really were.

In Charwell, *said Lucy*, one family had six boys and one with three girls and this woman with three girls were more trouble than all those six boys.

There were one or two grubby ones about, *Arthur paused*. Eh they were poor. One or two used to stink. Well they used to have the nit nurse come round. Awkward blooming...she was. Ah that's a fact. She were a nurse, but she worked for the County Council you see. She used to come round and look at the heads to see if they had any blooming nits. Some of them had.

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I went with the Charwell children, *Lucy spoke up*, I only stood in the line next to one girl from Charwell and when I got home I was scratching and Mother said, *What's the matter with you?* And I had only stood in the line. *Yes agreed Arthur* there were some poor families in those days.

Well to get to the lavatories you had to go through the boss's class. Have you been in the school? I expect its been altered now. Well the boss's class was the middle one. Between Miss Tyrrell's (we called Miss Tyrrell "Miss Bosses" that's David Boddington's Mother), and the Bosses class were a curtain. Between the Bosses class and his wife's class at the end section nearer the Mill, was a partition. Glass windows and it folded up. Folded up on a roller. Nice thing that was, you went through a single persons door. Well-constructed thing that was. When you were in the Bosses class the exit was in the opposite wall to the Lane, and you went through the door. First thing you came to was the pump. There was a pump there where you had to wash your paints. Then you went on to the loos. No wash bowls at the pump. We weren't so modern as all that. Girls out there the same.

We had washbowls! *Lucy could wait no longer.* Miss Waters, Middleton Cheney, she taught me at St. Leonard's school, Banbury. But you see actually when she started teaching the Infants, it wasn't St. Leonard's it was Christ Church School. You see what happened St. Leonard's was in Christ Church parish, and there were no marriages there. It was under Christ Church, they used to send curates. Then we had a vicar and he made it a parish on its own and then the school was changed to St Leonard's. It used to be Christ Church, Church of England School. I was at school when it changed, yes, because we used to, I had to knit our little hat, you know the fisherman's type. Navy blue. Well it used to come down to here with a tassel on. They gave you a pattern and I remember doing it. Then they gave us badges with **C.C.C.E. School** on. It was only about twelve months after that it changed. We didn't have new badges. No uniform just that. We didn't have any dress uniform just the hat.

It was a motto of the school *Manners maketh man* until after I left school, long after I left school. The headmaster when I was at school was Mr Hookley [?]. They moved away and the next man that came was a Cambridge man and he didn't like it that the school motto was the same as his college one, so it was changed to *Play the game.* *Lucy laughed* It was changed to *Play the Game* else it had always been *Manners maketh man.*

My brother's name was Jim and Mr Hookley always called him Arthur, and he looked at him sometimes and they used to line up very often and he'd say, *Arthur you didn't clean those shoes this morning. No Mother has!*

We used to share Sunday school with chapel you know. When it was a church festival we had half day and they didn't. We always agreed. You see where I lived in Middleton Road, (were that garage is now), and Duke's Street next, and all the houses up there they've all gone. Most of those at the top of that street, which is the Technical sort of school now, it used to be called the Wesleyan School and most of them at the top, because all they had to do was go through a gate, across the field to the school, so. But the bottom ones used to come to St. Leonard's School. So we parted like that. We always agreed very well.

Swimming? *Arthur exploded* Well if you'd as said the place where **I didn't** err swim a lot! I couldn't swim, I wish I could, but em, if you had seen the bathing place as we used to go to, you'd have thought well I won't go in there. Filthy place. Brook. We used to go to what we called *bathing* years ago on a Friday afternoon. Before they went in the bathing place they had to clear the cows out! Rail? No. Oh No! No railings round it. I mean the cows were coming out; they had a nice turn out before you got in. Yeah! Filthy place it was. Yes Friday afternoon. They couldn't afford to get a bus to Banbury to the baths. Did the Schoolmaster go in? **No!...**

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*We, interrupted Lucy,* used to go down to the baths. We were in Banbury, you see. I was in Banbury. We used to go down to the park, not the little park, and there was quite a good do there. Used to have one end. We used to have a Tuesday



afternoon off in July to go down there, and the last one we had a swimming gala down there. That was taken away and the big one made the other end of town.

I'll give you some idea of where it was *continued Arthur*. You know right down the bottom of Clifford Lambert's field, the Battle of Cropredy Bridge field, well meadow, theres a bridge at the bottom. Well we used to come over the canal bridge you see from the school. First up the Lane, then over the canal bridge, down over that tiny bridge and sharp right and further along you come to a part side brook, it's a side brook and it's a place where a lot of trees grow round an oasis. That's were we used to go, near the cattle hovel.

*Southam pool, which led to the side brook, has been filled in. What about Woodwork and Cookery classes in the Hut?*

Girls went up 1928,1929. We used to go in the mornings, woodwork classes, and the girls in the afternoon, cooking. Later on it got changed to over, to the clubroom down at the pub. From the hut to the clubroom for carpentry. Whether the girls had bigger classes and wanted it all day, I can't remember, but that's how it happened. Someone came out from Banbury.

She taught me, *said Lucy*. We only had, we went when we were eleven, cookery and twenty lessons. We only had a term usually, but I managed to get three terms before I left school.

*Arthur hopped down from the hearth*. When Winston Brown, Pargeter and myself were ready to leave school at fourteen, November 1929; there were no jobs that December at all. So we kept on at school, Winston and I. Pargeter had got one at Cross's farm (*Andrew's farm, Creampot Lane*). By Easter they told us at school, *You've got to leave*. We had been helping out with the younger lads gardening and running errands, but by Easter 1930 they had to give us the *You've got to leave*. (*Arthur produced his diary*): Wed. 16<sup>th</sup> March 1930 *Left School* Meanwhile I had been just about all over for work. In the end MrEriksen took me on for the summer, *Only for the summer, Arthur. I've no winter work for you*.

His birthday is the 23<sup>rd</sup> November *Lucy explained*.

Brown, Pargeter and I are all 65 this month 1980. All 65 this year. Winston Brown, Ron Adkins of Chapel Row, Tom Elkington from a farm in Little Bourton (there were at least three Elkington families), Ron Pargeter, me Arthur, and Rodney Cherry.

It was a depression in the 1930's you know. No jobs about. These people who weren't about in those days will hardly believe you that we had a depression same as we have now. Just as bad, only the population wasn't so big then in those days. No part time jobs round here, unless you went to Banbury. There were more people in the village in those days that could do more spare time work, than what there is now for some reason.

There were odd jobs like gardening. I used to do three. Yes before I left school. There was Mrs R. Sumner, that's the stone house on the corner, Mrs Sumner senior. Goodrest on the Green and Fred Cave's. That was next door to where Mrs Jones lives in 5 Red Lion Street.

At Goodrest lived Mrs Percival and Mrs Roberts. Widows. They weren't sisters, but widows, friends....

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No, *said Lucy*, Mrs Robert's brother married Mrs Percival's sister! Two quite nice ladies you know.

Easy working garden, like Fred Cave's. Dark soil. All these old cottages in Cropredy got easy dark soil. Yes all of them. Those in Hickman's, Baisley's same black soil. Had so much soot, straw, lime on them, that's how it got like that. Ours was like it.

Most nights I was out gardening. At Goodrest, a neat garden, two lawns between a path at the front. House stands on some of it now. Mrs Roberts and Mrs Percival were friends of Mother's and that's how I got to know them. There was a wall, which carried across at the back to Lambert's. Miss Lambert had it waist high in grass, never touched it, so I used to sickle it for her. One day Revd Sharpley asked me if I would send the bill. Her garden went down to where the Antique shop is now 1985. She had an orchard and grass to the back door. I cut it on my hands and knees. Revd Sharpley paid me ten bob a year to keep it down. That was a lot of work for ten bob. When asked to do it another year I still said *Thank-you Sir I will!* Miss Lambert was the sister to Mr William Lambert along here at Home Farm. She had a hard life and ended her days in hospital.

Mr Cave's you could get in through the back gate and turn right. Tradesmen's, but few tradesmen used them, only coal really. Back way along the Red Lion Jitty. Tradesmen used the front doors.

In New Place row, down the Jitty Mother also knew this Mr Jones, exfarmer at New Place (second one from the bottom end). When their daughter went to Banbury, Mum went to see her. Mr Jones, a retired farmer from Warkworth. I did his garden. He gave me an account book, which I used up as a diary. See here 1 April 1929 *Dug Mr Jones garden* and 10 April *William Middleton Jones died aged 81*. The daughter went to 96 Abingdon Road, Banbury, and they kept in touch with Mother.

Every year Mrs F. Sumner sent us down to their field (*in Coxes Butts on the Claydon Rd*). They had two small fields. I don't know what they used them for. Mr Cross sometimes had his horse or some cows in there. In the top corner next to Fenny Lake was a large willow and every year we went down there and cut off all the top growth. I don't know what it was used for. Great big tree it was (*Sumner & Neals once kept their horses in these fields*).

Later I used to mend bikes for friends. A couple in Bourton, few in Claydon. No money in it. I could make a few of the spare parts including a wheel. Mr and Mrs Church bought the Dawson's garage and we used to leave our pedal bicycles there for 2d a time. We were very friendly with Church's, they gave us tea sometimes. Had all sorts of bicycle repairs there.

I saved up over three to four months to buy a dynamo for my bicycle. In 1932 the year they were putting in the electric, well I leaned the bike against this post outside the house and when I come outside to take the bike to the station to pick up the Evening Dispatch, I put my leg over the bike, and went to switch on the light and it was gone! Gone! Four days I had had it and it had gone. The copper he could do nothing, not really interested. But all that saving for four days.

Every Year Mrs Sumner sent us down to their field. It was in the Coxes Butts past Bonham's field on the Claydon Road. They had two small fields. I don't know what they used them for, though sometimes Mr Cross had his horse or some cows in there. In the top corner next to Cross's field (*Fenny Lake*) was a large willow and every year we went down there and cut off all the top growth. I don't know what it was used for. Great big tree it was (*Sumner and Neals according to Brasenose College deeds kept their horses in their Coxes Butts*).

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## 8. Railway Jobs

There is a photograph of the Brasenose and Constone. Station Master lived at Constone. The iron railings were cast iron, not locally made, but factory made. Late Victorian I should think. Became fashionable. The oak post for the sign, which you can see holding the sign up, used to stand on the edge of the path like that. Well it wasn't in the blackout, it wasn't on the path. Now I notice it is well onto the pavement and made of two steel channels welded together.

Vincents cut the driveway into Constone. It used to have a wall right across to the Brasenose Inn. Miller, the old station Master, was a very dapper man with a moustache, which was turned up at the sides. Miller didn't have a car. After him at Constone was Mr Hughes a Welshman.

She came to W.I. and we used to get her to say the name of that long station in Wales. *Lucy laughed*

Hughes was also the stationmaster. I think they were the last stationmasters there. His wife was very friendly with my Mother for a number of years. Mr Hughes suggested I work on the railway, but I didn't take it up. I couldn't get in, because you have to say on the form how many of your relatives work on the railway. Oh no they won't have it.

Denis Hickman went. He worked first at the co-op...

He did go round with the bread *Lucy recalled*.

He worked then on the railway. He filled his time up at the co-op when he left school and then he got a job on the line. He got a job on the railway, because his Dad was on the railway. His Dad was on the railway, but I couldn't go No. Yes the only job they offered me was blooming porter at Snow Hill. If you could get a job as a porter you had to stop at that for years and years. Err the top job of porter is stationmaster, but that takes a long long time to get to.

Ben Turford who lived in High Street, he was the same age as me, when he became working age he had a bliming job on the railways. Goods shed, which led him up to a shunter. I don't know whether it was after a shunter, he became a wheel tapper. Very soon Benny Turford went to Banbury. Then he got transferred down to Claverdon. You can't be sure of it. Not if you refuse it, you can't get a job at all. If you married - a house - but he was single while he was at Claverdon.

There are some jobs as you can work your way up to being a fireman. Three or four years. Next onto freight train, sometime, you may never get on a passenger, before you can get on an express, a man has to be If you were really good and could pass some tests, a driver on a goods train, then to a passenger, then to an express.

Platelayers got to be gangers, not much more really, then they only moved if their ganger was moved to another district.

The trains at the station in the 1920's to the late 1930's. Well 20 past 8 to Leamington and the workers train 10 past 7 each morning.

And it used to be sixpence back from Banbury, then didn't it Arthur?

Yes sixpence return.

It was cheaper than the bus. The bus was eight pence. Yes.

And at night there was two of them *Arthur continued*. Anytime between 20 to 8 and 8 o'clock, and very often they used to pull in together. The porter didn't know which to get away first *laughing*. The 20 to 8 used to bring the papers for me. And that train, that engine *City of Truro*,

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were one used very often to bring them up. Yes. And the ---- *Castle* was another that used to bring them up. No regular drivers or firemen. Just signed on you see, and allotted an engine. Could be *George V* something like that. They couldn't use *King George V* on a stopper, on a local stopper of course, that was an express. That used to bring, *King George V* used to come up at 20 minutes to 4, yes just as we came out of school. That bell on her front. Yes it went to America and had a big brass bell on the front just above the buffers, where it's flat. Oh yes lovely job. That belonged to Bulmers, cider people. Hereford cider people, it belonged to them. Beautiful engine you know. Cor! And Power. I've been on the footplate, yes backed into a siding.

When they were shunting... I lived opposite the garage, *explained Lucy* do you ever go in Grimsbury way to Banbury?

Totally different now my Duck.

Theres a big garage and then there was a co-op stores used to be there and just beyond that theres a yard to go down to a big field called the Cricket Field, behind the public house called *The Cricketers*. I lived opposite where the garage is now. Well

just across there you see the railway and we could hear the shunting backwards and forwards, and they used to blow whistles to one another.

But you'd never think, *Arthur went on*, that when you stand on Oxhey bridge looking down towards Cropredy, you'd never think there used to be a siding along there. Oh yes on from the station to Cropredy bridge. Its all gone, all took up and the bank grown down, narrowed it. There was a siding there. Oh yes. When that siding was used it was always 24 hours a day. A goods train come down and an express behind it and that had to be shunted into it.

There was a cattle yard down there to off load them. Busy. A raised sort of a platform with rails all round and the trucks came back down, open the gate, let the doors and the cattle down there, then a gate to open onto the road. Load them up likewise. Don't remember them auctioning cattle there. Auctions at the Brasenose Inn though. Hounds and all used to come by rail.

Well back in '29 King *George V* was so popular it was put on a jigsaw puzzle. Yes and I got one, 310 pieces. 1929 It was built I think in 1927.

*Lucy began to chuckle* We used to do puzzles. I can remember when I was at Bourton, Hancock's...It was a lodging house then and I worked there. The son and his wife come for a holiday and err Mrs Hancock had got some of these puzzles and Ron and I started to do one, *Lucy was laughing with tears of joy in her eyes* We got stuck into this puzzle and they went to bed and it was 12 o'clock before we finished. She was a bit annoyed.

*Arthur was determined to finish.* Saturday nights we used to go to Banbury on the 10 past 3. When we were courting. 10 past 3 from Cropredy. That spoilt the journey into Banbury on the railway. That walk down to the station and back again when you come off the train at night. t was totally different when the buses brought you into the middle of the village; well you were almost in your home. Especially when it was pouring with rain, and when you'd to go on the 10 past 3 in the afternoon and back on the 10 past 10.

They used to run a rail car back you know. A small bus **on** the line. Beautiful job. Oh lord yes! Diesel engine and it was a bus body on the railway wheels. Cheaper I should think. Oxford to Leamington. I've a picture of that rail car.

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Ever heard of the newspaperman Mr Brown? *Lucy asked* He'd been married twice and his son by his first wife was married. *Lucy laughed* I was coming back with her from Banbury and she'd got an evacuee boy with her. I went down to pay at the station and she waved out of the carriage and said *Comein here, we'll be all right.* I got in with them and when we got to Cropredy we couldn't get out! Because it was the wrong way. We shouldn't have got in that one. Anyway we didn't know. I pulled the chain! Because we'd started off you see. **So I pulled the chain!** Stopped the train and along tapping all the

while...then...they were cross with me. and I said, *we couldn't get out at Cropredy. Well* he said *you'll have to come to the next village.* Arthur is the next stop Farnborough? Fenny Compton? Fenny Compton. We had to go on to Fenny Compton. And I had to give them my name and address and I said.

He liked the look of you and should have married you! *Arthur was laughing now* Oh dear!

Anyway we got out, *said Lucy* we didn't know what to do, but as it happened Mr Plumb, his Father you know, Roland Plumb his Father was there, and he knew. He went and took us down to the butcher. The butcher took us back to the top of Mollington Hill Road and we give him half a crown! Then we had to walk all the way from there. What time was it when I. .12 o'clock wasn't it, Arthur when I got back? We had to walk, but we never heard no more about it. The evacuee from London I think. He was with this girl from Browns of Chapel Row.

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## 9. Work from 1930

*Arthur found an extract in his diary for when he was working at Mr Eriksen's School Farm 17<sup>th</sup> March 1930. Thursday. Went round with milk. Took a load of hay down to Mr Tasker's field and brought a load of clots up to the farm with Bonny Good Friday 18<sup>th</sup>. 8am. Went round with milk. Washed bottles and buckets. Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup>. 8am Went up the allotment to set a row of brussel sprouts. 1.15. Went to set some potatoes in the allotment.*

The year I started work, I remember 1930 that was the year. I started work from school. Same as this year 1985 thunder storms all summer. Wet. There were three of us supposed to have left at Christmas. By Easter we had to leave.

School farm run by Eriksens, had a milk round. Paul took it on and eventually Mr Rolph. Well they had about 15 cows and the milk left over went into the separator. The whey was fed to calves and pigs and the cream left to sour for the making of butter. Mrs Eriksen must have made it, as there was no dairy hand. Her Father at Home Farm had about 10 cows and they made butter and fed calves and pigs. Their milk or skim milk was always collected from the door, they didn't deliver. Mr Lambert didn't deliver milk. No! He had everyone come to the door. He didn't waste time or money. Clifford Lambert's Mother was a clever butter maker. On market day Mr Lambert put on his best dark coat and gaiters and bowler hat. Would put the high stepping horse into the gig and take the produce to market.

Mr Cross of Andrew's farm, Poplar farm, Cyril Lambert of Manor farm, Mr Watkins of Station farm, they all dealt with Wiltshire United Dairies or Co-op, putting their churns afterwards, later on, on a high stand to be collected. Hill farm brought theirs at first to the station like Prescote Manor for Wiltshire United. Once they all went to the station. Cropredy Lawn supplied the co-operative, as it was then a co-op farm.

I had been helping Rodney Cherry with the milk round, weekends, for Eriksens. We went round with a green dray and a pony. Round once a day with pony and float. The co-op they had pasteurised, a lot of people don't like that. The pony knew every stop, no need to tell it anything. Then we came back about eleven or twelve and had to clean the milk bottles. Bottled up? Bottled up about 1927. Long bottle not these short things. Two or three times soap and rinse and then over the copper was a big square lid box into which went the milk bottles when finally rinsed. It lifted up on a pulley. Then the copper was lit and the bottles steamed.

We had coolers at Eriksens. Yes! Why they come out years ago. You poured the milk into the top and it passed through a part which water ran round and round in pipes cooling the milk as it poured through into the churn below.



The surplus milk was put into the separator and the skimmed milk separated from the cream. We had a cup by the cream and ate a lot of it. Put on weight while I was there. Couldn't face cream since, though that was 50 years ago. Not even if you put it on strawberries. Thick cream ugh! They made butter and cheese.

That little pony of theirs, nearly black, knew every stop. No need to say *Come on*. When you came up to the house and so many steps to the next he'd stop. He finished up with a cyst on his shoulder, huge great growth, big and had to have the vet take it off. No better afterwards. The vet had to lance it and it died soon after, or they had to have it destroyed. They had one off George Townsend a white pony used to the fields. It had a nasty nature too and would run off with the trap each time. Never stop, never could get it to stop, never turn the darn thing round. It did eventually learn the job. Mr Eriksen had the round a long time.

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At Eriksens I was mowing mainly with horses. Up at 4am for the job and then if hot the horses in again at 10am. That summer it was all thunder storms all summer.

I spent the other part of the day at jobs and often we had to go over to Mr Lambert's, W.J, to cut his hay all by hand. Home Farm yes. No machines or balers. We forked it up then. He had little rounded haystacks. He had us there till late at night, no extra pay. I then, in October, went to Cropredy Lawn to pick potatoes and swedes. That brought me to November.

Then I was fifteen and could start at the wheelwright's yard. That was Sumner's. Frank Sumner was my uncle. When I began there it was 1930, but before that I had gone up to mind Connie as a small girl, when her parents needed it for she was my cousin. I sometimes pushed her out in her pram.



24. **Connie Sumner by the  
Woodyard pump.**

You work all those years and what do you get? Craftsmen now in the unions are very few; most of them are only craftsmen's labourers and look what a wage they can command. If I could have **chosen** what I wanted to do I would have found something with a good pension. There's nothing to show for all your work.

The diary entry for 10 Nov 1930: *Started work at Uncle Franks. Cleaning, putting and painting at Mr W.J. Lamberts 7 ½ hours*

*The following pages use extracts from Arthur's talk to the Historical Society.*



**25. Mr and Mrs Richard Sumner, Frank's parents, at the Woodyard.**

I was first introduced to what they call the Woodyard where Mr and Mrs Frank Sumner lived and Connie...when I used to go down there Saturday morning, help uncle down there, also afternoons and in the evening. And those days...we had no transport apart from a pony whose name was Tommy.

Now one job I used to do for uncle, I used to take that pony up the field for him and he used to be parked in one of then Mr Lambert's fields. Clifford's Father. Before you could release that pony, take the halter off, you had to tie him to a gate, because on his back leg, on his ankle, you had to strap a log of wood. If you didn't you'd never catch him next morning. A log of wood fairly heavy. A few links of chain and a leather strap. Then go round to his head and take the halter off. Honestly you could not catch him next morning without that on.

Then the vehicles that pony used to draw was a little four wheel, and also a small timber carriage, which my uncle had owned. Those days of course it was a glorious thing to have a ride round in a horse drawn vehicle, I can assure you. We used to go out Saturday visiting different people.

During that time before the war I was introduced to the art of pit sawing. Before I left school and believe me for a young man it was jolly hard work, but I didn't mind and one Saturday morning, actually I must tell you this. My uncle Frank, Frank was top man, my brother Albert was bottom man and during the withdrawal of the saw uphill it always leaves sawdust on the top, and either the top sawyer has to kick it off with his feet, or if he has an assistant on the top, he blows it off. Well anyway my uncle said, *You'd better have this my cap, chap.* So I did and all went well for quite a time then somehow I got into the wrong stroke and instead of knocking the sawdust off on the upward stroke, I did it on the downward stroke! Well of course what happened to that cap it ripped it in half, because those pit saws have got teeth inch deep and anything they grab of course, they **do** grab. But anyway he went indoors and fetched another cap and everything went off o.k.

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I bet Frank never even got angry *said Dolly Monk.*

They always said he was like his uncle William Smith, who would smile and keep a good temper. *commented Frank's daughter Connie.* He could get upset but very seldom.

Wheelwrights were quiet places you know *Arthur continued.* No one said much. All you had was the noise of the chisel or plane, or the gentle tap, tap. No I can't say they were noisy places at all, quite the opposite really. There was no noise there at all. When I first started there was Frank Sumner, John Shirley, Colin Shirley, John Green and Albert my brother.



**26. Cropredy Woodyard.**

Before Sumners and Neals the Lambert family had been there for a hundred years. Carpenters, wheelwrights and blacksmiths, finishing up with James Lambert builder up to the end of the last century. Some of his employees carried on to Sumner and Neal. George Adkins and John Shirley wheelwrights, along with my grandfather Levi Dunn. Later came Ernest Dunn, Harry Busby, Thomas Waddups of 4 Red Lion Street, Sid and Frank Watts. The last remaining employee there was of course John Shirley the wheelwright. Ern Dunn went to Booths, Waddups I think went to Smiths, Grandfather of course passed on in 1924, Harry Busby went to Alcocks. My brother Albert set up on his own in 1948 and I left in 1953 when it was closed.

Colin Shirley he was apprenticed here to William Neal. It's got here on his Indenture *Carpenter and Wheelwright 19 September 1921*, but I don't think Colin was actually apprenticed to be a wheelwright; he was more a carpenter and joiner, and a very good man too.

It was during this time when my brother Albert started there in 1928 with John Shirley, and just before that there was a fellow started by the name of John Green, who lived on Chapel Green, Home Farm end. He was there until around about October, November 1930, that was the time I started there. Hes on several of the photographs taken before I came.

Albert is eighteen months older than me. We were both under John Shirley and learnt the wheelwrighting and other jobs. The firm I worked for was a big firm. Sumner and Neal. Richard Sumner was of course not there by 1930. He died in 1924. He was a shortish man, a carpenter. Mr Neal was the builder.

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Frank Sumner was in the air force at Cramwell and of course he didn't come back until the end of the war. Mr Neal's son Arthur didn't take over the firm, he went away. He would come back to see his mother. He ain't come back to live because he got married away. Now Mrs Neal was one of the most particular persons that ever you could come to know. Phew by golly.

If you could please her *added Lucy*.

I say if you done anything for her it had to be absolutely top class. Yes, because you weren't allowed to drop one spot of paint. Oh no. You had to be very clean and very particular. Very particular. I mean her husband was a builder and whoever worked for him, she expected the same high standard. I can't remember Mr Neal.

When I first remember things the Frank Sumners lived up in 3 Chapel Row, that was before they moved down to the Woodyard. Frank married Mabel Ellen Dunn who was mother's youngest sister. They had Constance Mabel born the 30<sup>th</sup> of September 1924, Connie.

My Father, *said Connie* he was the boss of the business, but of course the older hands they knew their business and could get on without being told. He used to say, *I am only here to pay out!* Mother was never rushed or rattled and my father always relied on mother. After she died he relied on me.

In the winter *continued Arthur* we had to saw wood from the round. My first job as apprentice was to plane wood. On and on planing. In the sawpit I was under man. My brother was the top man and he could issue the commands of when to stop or start. I had to go on whether I was tired or not. There was one thing about it; it was good winter work, especially for the man in the pit. I had to oil the blade. Take off the box, which had two handles. Take it off and use some linseed oil, which was kept, in a can in the sawpit side. The brush was more like a mop, and about so wide (*one and a half inch*), always linseed oil. Yes the top man had the say of when to stop. Then we stacked the wood to dry in the drying sheds.

Sumners had three who were top sawyers, I was bottom sawyer. The pit being stone lined you could kill yourself if you fell into it, that's why I hated being on top. We used to stand on boards There was no drain. No. Never filled up above four inches but the bottom of that bit actually was below the level of the road outside. Yes. That's why it got so wet. It was always wet never dry. It was under cover, for the timber shed, open timber shed over it. No boards over it, nothing above the pit. The bottom part of the timber shed which is still up, that was where they kept the ladders. Those days they didn't have extending ladders. A 30 or 35 rung ladder was along one and had to be slid along the beams from the road end. That was where they were kept.

Then later the boss used to keep his car underneath the open bit of the timber shed. Drive in front of the old stables they pulled down. Long timber shed, built before my time. Just before the war, as it's not on some of the postcards. Albert reckoned about 1912 it was built. That was put up to put timber to dry. They didn't use green timber those days that was a sin. It had to be dried. All that shed (and now they have left half and the pit taken out), was all stacked up with planks with strips between to let the air through you see. Air-dried.

The garage next to the road. Uncle put that up to put the pony in. It was a stable and stall this end. One-third stable two thirds kept for putting the four-wheeler in, or any other vehicle that the pony took. There was a four-wheeler timber carriage belonging to the gaffer that was kept outside.

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Sometimes if there wasn't too much clobber about it used to be slid under where Albert used to keep his car (*1960's onwards, east part of yard*). That timber carriage had a removable top on. with top on to carry builder's bricks, sand and anything like that. Yes it did two jobs. I remember using it as a timber carriage. Yes. We fell several trees, draw it home on. Borrow two horses, load it up and bring it home.

We had to leave a space in the timber shed for a van and a Ford 8. A Morris minor box van, Silcox Co. which Roland Plumb worked for, in one and Drinkwater's car, a Ford 8 in other, his own. He came about 1931. Leave a space for them to get their cars into the hovel at night.

I shall tell you about getting wood for pumps. You had first to go to the hedgerow and fell the tree required. Yes fell the tree, get the farmer who wanted the pump to get his two horses and then I could tell you how we levered that tree onto the timber wagon, and that wagon was Mr Sumner's, but the horses were the farmers. That wagon brought the wood back to the yard. A wagon wheel didn't have its spokes staggered oh no, only a timber carriage wheel.



**27. John Shirley making a Wheel.**

Mr Colin Shirley now he was a carpenter and joiner, his uncle John was the wheelwright. He may have got on well with him, I don't know. You often don't get on with your relations. His father was the mason.



Well John Shirley he didn't appear friendly at all when I first went. He was a stout well-built fellow, very strong too. Now John of course was uncle to Colin and in his younger days he used to tell me, he rode the old penny-farthing cycle. The light in those days of course was oil lamps and used to be hung on the front hub and if they went at any speed and of course started to wobble a bit, that oil it used to catch itself upon the spokes and turn itself over and over and of course used to put it out, or catch fire.

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Sometimes I think John must have smoked a pipe. I only remember him smoking cigarettes, but he must have probably smoked a pipe, because he was always telling me what a good tobacco Westward Ho was. The price of that in those days was fourpence hapenny an onze. He was always on about his Westward Ho.

Now Mr Shirley was a wheelwright, a wagon maker. He also worked amongst pumps along with our boss. He wasn't much of a man for using machinery though. He liked the old fashioned way of doing things. I've been underneath many many a plank, underneath John sawing felloes. He preferred to do it that way than used the band saw, which we did have.

There was a petrol engine to drive the bandsaw This took about a gallon of petrol every one and a half hours and a new sparking plug once a fortnight. B. P. people wanted Mr Sumner to start a garage, but sometimes four hours went by without a car to be seen. Only a few in the village and he didn't want to take men off a job to deal with petrol, nor hire someone just for petrol, so he turned it down.

Now after a while Mr Shirley he began to get more friendly, a little bit more friendly with me. I didn't get on with him when I first started, no one did. They are all the same you know those old craftsmen. You're not allowed to touch his tools, only when spoken to, and you had to look after these tools for him. It came a spot of rain, came a spot of rain all those tools had to be cleaned, dried, put away. The tools he gave me I still have. This wood chisel, a saw which has lost two inches at least off the end, a balance and a spoke shave.

You didn't have any protection from the weather then. In the place (now pulled down) and under the timber loft, was open to the weather. If it snowed on you, you carried right on working.

I remember on one occasion it was a snowy morning, snow laid on the ground, I got to work and he was busy packing two carpenter bags up with tools. A tool in one then a tool in the other. Heavy they were too. *Ai Ai* I thought, *where are we off to?* This would be 8 am. *Where we going then John? Oh" he says "Going to Little Bourton. How are we going to get there then?* He said *Walk it* I said *In this" Oh* he said *oh yes.* So I said *Well what about the tools then? Well we are going to carry them!* He packed these two carpenter bags with tools as much as he could get in. He put an axe through the handle of one and a hammer through the other and said, *Heres yours .He'd say. Carry that.*

Off we'd go by the road usually. Sometimes up to Claydon, or Bourton, or the farm over the main road. Sometimes to Bourton we went up the path through Hawkes Hill, the old footpath. He was a shortish man, but he walked very fast, moved along low and quick. It was hard to keep up with him.

This time away we set off to Great Bourton first. The job was to put a new sill in. Put a new sill in, in the snow! Apparently the snow had been driving underneath. After we finished that we walked to Little Bourton to put a new sill in, in a house where Mr Elkington used to live. It was a house of Mr Lambert's. Then of course walk back. Back late afternoon, and that fellow could walk. He could outpace me, he took very short steps.

We worked together quite a bit. Actually we put up the garages at Cooknell's coal yard. Spent some time with him there. Then the work at the yard involved wagon work and wheelwork until finally the time when he retired.

There's a picture of him on his retirement with the blacksmith. He looked the same then as when I first started with him. That was Mr Shirley and the blacksmith whom Mr Sumner engaged from Bloxham. Now that Mr Phillips had his own business in Bloxham. He was a farrier by trade, having been a farrier in the army, but he could handle some blacksmithing. He used to work for us for three days a week, then as his work piled up at Bloxham, he would borrow me! I used to go over there and help him out. Cycle over, cycle back in the evenings. His blacksmithy was thatched just near the turning to the Barford road. Now its tiled and a private house. He stayed with us I should think till '38, late '38. Albert my brother took his job over.

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They never had electricity at the Woodyard you know. The blacksmith had to work by the light of his fire. Sometimes a lantern was held for important jobs. You worked at dusk by the light of the blacksmith fire. That also meant every tool was **hand** powered. The blacksmith's was on the Green then Sumner's employed Mr Phillips and so the forge fire was lit at the Woodyard.

Mr Mold of Claydon was a farrier mainly. If you went past his house, blacksmithy at 9, 9.30 at night you would still see his fire blazing and perhaps a candle. He would be making shoes for the morrow. He had two sons and one Arthur...

Yes, *said Lucy* and once Arthur Mold hadn't got a light on his bicycle and he borrowed mine. The next day he delivered it back to the house, *Monkeytree House* and Maud Kirkby, she shouted, *Lucy heres your man!* He wasn't my man! I only spoke to him that once. He weren't my man I blushed very badly in those days. She had no call to shout that!

Before he retired, *Arthur went on*, I worked with John Shirley quite a bit. He was a member of the bell ringing team, he was a churchwarden and he used to ring. The bell ringers were John Shirley number 1, Tom Miller, the station master number 2, Harry Baggott, the signal man number 3, Jack Lambert, he was the hunchback, very hard luck on the fellow he had a hard

life, number 4, Norman Smith, he was the boss of the building, Gordan Smith's father number 5. He was the captain and Louis Lambert he had the tenor. He was the sexton, gravedigger and Banbury R.D.C. roadman.

Mr Miller was an Edwardian type of man. Tall and straight Everything just so. *No talking*. Mr Baggott lived in number one New Place. When we played you daresn't talk or go wrong. We had a board to follow and you kept your eyes on that. It's like a musician listening to someone playing the thing wrong, if they aren't played well. We hear too well here. If we'd rung badly in Johnny Lambert's day he'd have had us out. He'd have had a few words to say. No authority but he had to have them rung properly. If the treble didn't set the pace by number 6, the heaviest bell, then it would sound like crash crash. Johnny may have been a hunchback, but he knew about bells.

If you hear Wardington over the hill they sound better, and if you hear Middleton's then its going to rain *said Lucy*.

The reserves to call on *Arthur continued* was Winston Brown, myself, later A.W.Pettifer my eldest brother and my youngest brother Leslie, now no longer with us.

As an apprentice I got five shillings, then seven shillings and sixpence, then ten shillings a week. Well when you got to ten a week you were expected to start buying your own tools, until then uncle had lent me theirs. Saturday 12 o'clock we got paid and that was the end of the week. Some of the very very old tools at the yard used to be stamped with **LAMBERT**. We didn't use them but they were left down there. We carried on with the same types of tools and equipment as was used in those far off days.

Theres a cottage in the corner of the Woodyard called Woodview. Mr John Shirley who was about there in 1881, probably as an apprentice up in the Lambert's attic with William Shakespeare, another apprentice, he said to us there were once stables at the Woodyard where the brick extension to Woodview is. That blocked the stable exit onto Church Lane [see plan].

Next the garage where the lime shop used to be. This had two twin wooden tubs in which one contained lime; one horsehair and another container had the plaster in. It was for making plaster.

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On the other wall were the ladders. There was also a weighing machine to weigh the iron bars on.

In 1938 when Sumner's were repairing Fairview it was discovered that the plaster contained no horsehair. A cheap way of making it. Normally a bunch of horsehair was slapped down against a sharp edge to fray it into small inch long pieces. This mixed into the lime and sand to make the plaster.

Outside this workshop door under seven deal planks was the tiring pit. It had this wood on as a lid. Now its been filled in.

The next shed was the wheelwrights shop. In there you had to turn the wagon base round, which I will come to. Just to the left of the door was the staircase going up to the carpenter's shop. They were awkward stairs they were.

Over the lime shop were two doors and these were opened to let the wood up. The deal planks seven inch wide say. They were put up aloft on the cross beams and stored there. The glass, which came in crates, was stored up there and it came up by putting a plank up and sliding the crates up. I liked working there the best. If I could take my work up there I did. Mr Sumner he sorted out the work allotted to each man. I made two wagon bases up there. You see it was warmer up there than in the wheelwright's shop below, where the door was never shut.

The paint shop was upstairs on the left side, the carpenters on the right. In the paint shop was a fireplace in the far left hand side. Now this was only lit to steam the sides of the coffin and to heat the tar to make the coffins waterproof. You had the paint shop at Underdown's end (*Woodview end*), then the glass, then the carpenter's shop going right over. That had a big planning bench on it. The coffin started on the right-hand side, then outside to have the sides shaped with hot water from kettles poured over them. One end was wedged under something and the middle laid over so that the plank bent when wet. Up to the carpenter's shop on the right-hand side for the bottom piece and then by the fire lit for this purpose only, to steam and heat tar. I liked being there if possible.

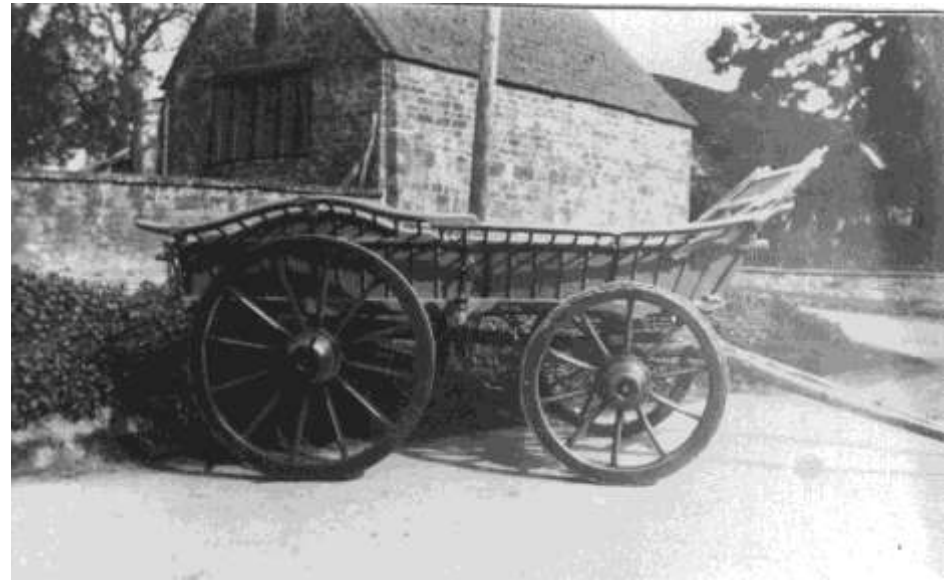
On the paint house door was paint from several generations plastered on it. When they cleaned their brushes they used the door to clean off the paint. I wish I had kept that door when it was altered. The paint shop then only had a barrel or two, linseed oil and turps. Not much as there were no tins of paint. The paint was ground in those days.

Wagons came in to be overhauled, and we used to repaint them, strip them down and repaint them. The paint is an unusual yellow, it is entirely Oxfordshire colour. You can't buy it in a tin. It has to be mixed and it starts off, the base of it is lemon chrome, added a few drops of venetian red, which brings it down to a nice rich yellow colour. The boss was very particular about that colour; it had to be just the Oxfordshire colour! 'Cause we had a colour chart to mix to, for we used to mix our own paints you see.

The wheels are another colour that are never bought, that had to be mixed. Now the wheels, the wheels were painted with a mixture of oxide, signal red and ground red lead, which we had to grind up on a stone before it was used. Ground round and round for hours in linseed oil. We did three or four coats and a lot of that was ground. Red oxide. Red oxide does not affect you, your thinking of red lead. No I don't reckon so, well it is, if you was big fool enough to eat it! But if you, providing you take care of your hands you're all right. Red lead and white lead you did a lot in those days.



**28. Late John Lambert of Claydon's wagon**



**29. Richard Cross's wagon from Andrew's Farm, Creampot Lane.**

Its ground on a stone. Stone about two foot, two foot two by eighteen inches. Seventeen or eighteen inches wide. Two and a half at the corner and hollowed out. Yes, so that the paint didn't run out as you went along. Hollowed out to a depth of about an inch. Well you didn't overload it. You had to use your own discretion as to what you put in, and you had to find out how much oil to put in or else it was too thin.

Then you got another stone, a round stone with a flat bottom and through the years it gets worn down to about your fingers and it's called the **Muller**, a muller.

You tip out some red lead, red lead powder **dry**, on the stone and follow along with some linseed oil. Get your palette knife and spread it over. Get your muller and grind away and grind away for hours. Yes.

You use a palette knife to lift it off the stone and put it in the tin. You don't use a brush to do that. A palette is not straight edged; it's hollowed out one side, straight one side, hollowed out the other. And after you got, after you think you got enough, that lot has to be strained. Oh yes!

Oh yes there's half of that tin that has to be ground up again. A lot of sand and stuff in the bottom. There's not many folks that have experienced the paint shop.

Linseed oil not turps, not then. You **had** turps then. You had turps those days not white spirit. You can hardly get turps now. Turps is a yellow substance, tainted yellow. White spirits is clear. Turps is altogether different from white spirit. You used to buy turps in 10-gallon drums. They used to, Dick Cross used to come down for, very often, for a pint and a quarter of genuine turps and give it to the sheep. A drench for the sheep. You could have a drop or two it didn't hurt you. It's nice actually, nice tasting stuff.

All those wagons and carts, all the paint on those are lead, that's why they weather so well. Weather won't get through lead paint. They lasted yes. These days they are scared stiff of lead. Scared stiff. It takes some believing. Now how do they think those old plumbers went on years ago? They are not plumber's to day. Whether they ever done anything in lead pipe work, I don't know. A plumber years ago he had lead windows, the lead inside, the trough for salting the pigs, they had to be salted, then pumps, lead pumps and lead piping about the buildings. They didn't get any trouble, they don't get any illnesses hows that?

Didn't Mr Gardner, the plumber at 2 Red Lion Street, have his arm affected? *! asked.*

Um! *Arthur was not convinced.* They reckon that **was** lead paint, as did that, but I don't think it was. I think it was a paralysis caused by... well it just come. Fred Cave's blindness was blamed on lead poisoning, but the doctor treated him wrong.

The ironwork of course was finished all in black, but some of the wagons we used to, on a lot of the champhering, pick out in red or white or black and they looked nice. They was given three coats. A coat of priming, a coat of this yellow. and red. and the finishing coat. The finishing coat was a shade darker yellow, a shade darker red and added, we used to add about a quarter pint or so of Copal oak varnish just to give it a shine. You didn't want a high gloss of cause but just a little shine on them.

People would complain the bill was all **paint** and **time** for labour.



**30. T.W.Dunn's cart by the Post Office door.**



**31. Cropredy Lawn wagon by the brick barn.**

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Then it was the job of the sign writer to come along then to put the name on the front. Well this sign writer that used to come to do these wagons and carts, to do these wagons, carts and stuff in those days was a man, the name of Tom Hitchman. I believe his works were up North Bar place. Tommy Hitchman was a very religious fellow, well he was at one time when I knew him. Before or afterwards I couldn't account for that. When I knew him he was because I remember sitting down on the staircase in our old shop where the wagons were built, a staircase, which led up to the top deck. I remember sitting down on that staircase and watching him put that name on. And he was on to me all the time about religion. He used to dish out some little texts with a biblical text on. I have some of these in my possession that he gave me. Tom Hitchman took on an apprentice with the name of Bill Lucas. He did marry; he married a Great Bourton girl, Evelyn Elkington.

During that time when I sat in. *Well* I thought to. I said to myself, *Well I reckon I could do that you know. I could put these names on.* I made up my mind to do so and I did later on. I used to do the names on the front, because I did see how he went on and how he spaced his letters out. I learnt the art of that job straight away! **Because** those letters were roughly spaced out. Now that is a very awkward job when you're sign writing is to space out your letters so that you get an equal space both ends and an equal space between the letters. You'll very often find that when you start you haven't got enough room to finish

off the last letter So now I thought *Now what's that stuff your using?* So I asked him and do you know what it was? It was a bit of soap to draw the letters out and he spaced them out and of course you don't paint over the soap, because that being greasy it wouldn't dry. He paints inside the letters and of course that's one of the secrets of the sign writing. As time went on I used to do the sign writing on the wagons, carts and everything else then.

And he done the name Fernleigh for Neal's, then 10 Chapel Row *said Lucy*.

In winter, *Arthur explained* we would cut out the hubs, 18 inch long, rough it to shape, then sitting down with the hub between your knees and using an auger you would cut out the centre. two inch. And then turn it over and meet it from the other side. It was very hard work. They were stored in the loft, once painted with the year on them, and stacked in a pyramid.

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Then the felloes were made and stacked in fives. The spokes too were stacked in fives. The spinney oak which had grown fast and with no branches was used to make the spokes. This was cut 24 inch into pieces and stacked up until needed. That was a really good job to do in the cold frosty winter mornings. Soon warmed you up.

The timber used has to be dead dry, not used under four years. The longer the better because you start using green timber in those wagons they get loose. Some of those hubs may be 10 years old when you used them and they were hard. Spokes are always oak and they are split not sawn. No sawn spokes used. The felloes are made of ash, elm on wagons and ash and beech on carts.

Some of the old big wagons with heavy loads would be ash but normally the Oxfordshire would use elm and the framework is oak. The small spars down here used to be willow, but willow you can't obtain that very well, so ash was used in the place of it.

The sideboards are elm half inch thick; likewise the front one and the shafts were usually elm on the wagons. Good elm not corky stuff. It had to be good stuff.

Now it doesn't matter which if you are going to build a wagon, which way you go. The bed first, or you can go the wheels and undercarriage first, it doesn't matter. Normally I should say the undercarriages are built first and doesn't matter which one, but the main thing is the wheels. There is more work in the wheels than in anything else. I can state from experience that it takes from 40 hours work to make one front wheel. Altogether a complete wagon would take from three to four months.



The wheelwright's shop used to be in the centre. We were very restricted. Where we worked we hadn't got a lot of room. That was it in the centre with the low ceiling. Well to look at it you wouldn't think it was possible to turn a wagon over in there but it was. With a bit of manovering it used to be done.

A wagon used to be backed in there, backed in shaft taken off. There's a rope pulley block at the back fixed to the floor and a chain pulley at the front end, which went up through the floor. Locked both ends and a big link passed through the floor. Somebody went up then and passed a piece of iron through the link to hold the pulley locked.

Somebody had to get inside and someone underneath the front axle to take the Master pin out. Then of course the undercarriage were wheeled out. That master pin was a blacksmith made one, wide, not a modern cotter sort of pin. Somebody had to get inside and the bloke underneath had to tap this master pin out. The master pin passes through the undercarriage, tail pole, top bolster right inside. Taps it out and the bloke inside pulls it up. You take up your pulley then and just ease it off your fore carriage and wheel that outside. The front of the wagon then is suspended on this pulley.

You go to the back and take two bolts out from the runners. Chap gets underneath, takes the nut off, taps them through, special bolts for that. Just give the pulley a tighten and just lift the body off the back boltster and somebody had to get up the front with a pole, get hold of that, balance that one each side of the big wheels and wheel that out, wheel it outside.

You now bring in two long benches to span the body. They used to stand about two foot high. One one end, one the other. You let the body down on these trestles. Unhook your pulley blocks and so on, get them out the way.

One or two of you on the front, two on the back lift it up and you have to tie the body across, start round it up, another chap has to take these trestles back and front out the way. The bodies stood upright then in **that shop!** Stood upright.

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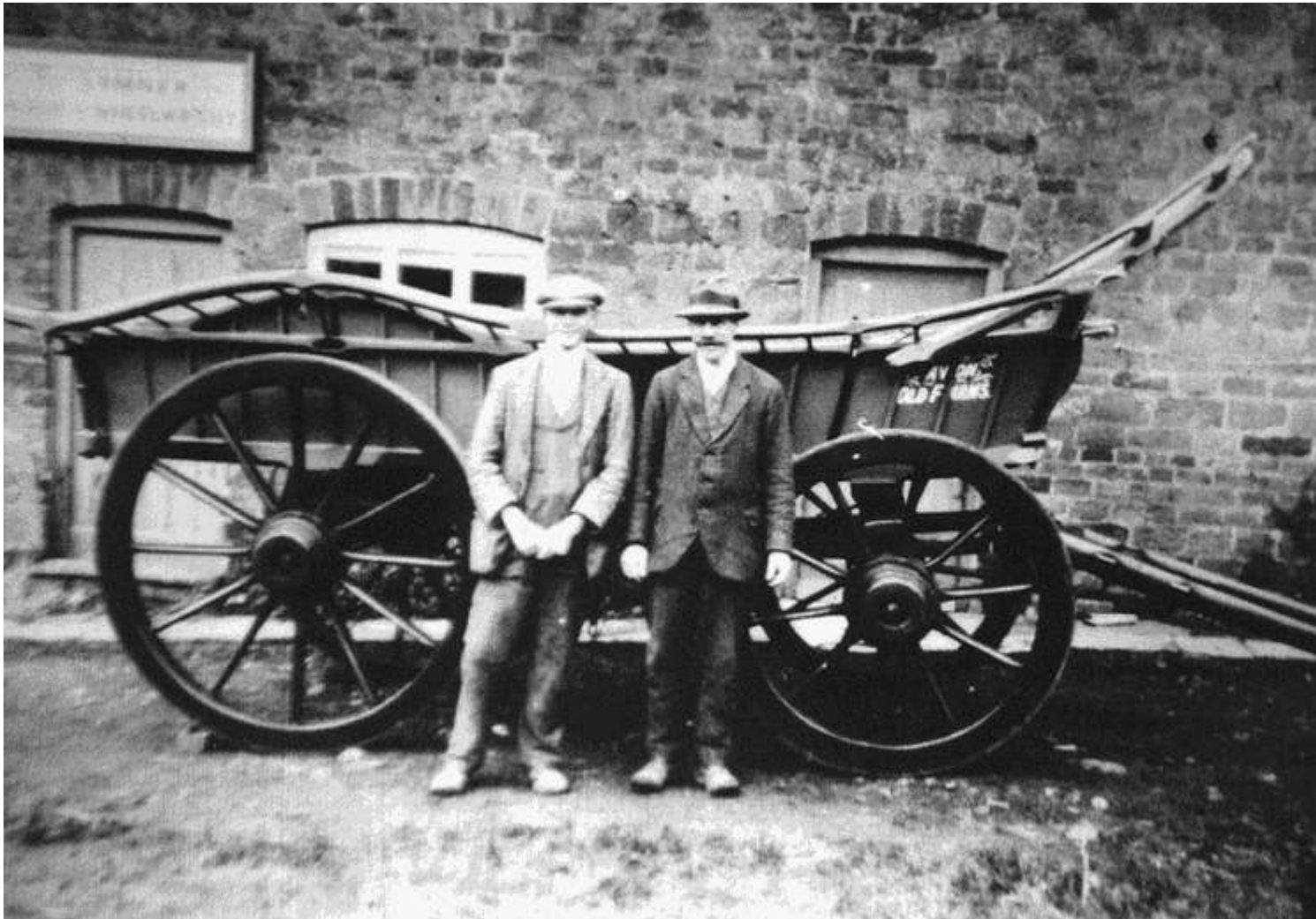
Lift it up and walk it across to the side and then suddenly you got enough, when you've walked it across and you think you've enough room to walk along the sides, start letting it down. When you got it down you, you still have to lift it up again and put it on the trestles! Then you can commence work on the vehicle, whichever, whatever you've got to do to it. We used to do that in our little shop. You wouldn't think so.

Not very wide! No it ain't. On the left hand side when you went in there was your staircase that protruded out 14 inches. Along that side were a workbench. John Shirley's wor'bench, that took up a lot of the width. The other side there was always a stack of bliming wood and the gaffer would never let me move the bliming stuff. No. Wood stacked up, odds and ends that were never used. Never let you move them so you could get more room. But do you know even then you could get round, get

along both sides of that wagon to work, it was amazing and that wagon up there in the photograph was built in there. Bliming masterpiece.

That was about the smallest version, about the smallest version of an Oxfordshire. **No** not an Oxfordshire varying in sizes, no. The Oxfordshire is the same size, but when you cross over to Wiltshire, Wiltshire is a big clumsy awkward one. Yes. Although we've had those in there. Yeh and a Sussex. Cyril Lambert used to have a Sussex wagon, and we used to have one in from Wormleighton. That was a big devil he was. Pasmore's, he were from Wiltshire and he stick to Wiltshire's. Yes. Oh no different sizes, different counties.

Well Northamptonshire and Gloucestershire practically, they are not identical but near enough and this Oxfordshire is midway between the two. It err, it is a super, it's a super Northampton, Gloucestershire...Its em a little bit more graceful than those two, if you know what I mean, altered that little bit. They were nice wagons they were, Oxfordshire's.



**32. 1927 Oxfordshire Wagon  
for Avon Old Farm.**

**John Green and  
Mr Frank Sumner.**

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Ah it does mean a long training yes, because what people can't visualise you don't work to drawings, you work to patterns. No drawings, no plans or blue prints. Everything is built to pattern. Same if you build a wheel or sides, when it comes to sawing the felloes out, if you hadn't got the felloe pattern and there were bliming **hundreds** down there to sort through, then if you hadn't got the correct one, you got to set to work and make one, scribe one out. Red mark, marked in roman numerals, you got used to it.

You got used to it then after you left, *said Lucy...*

When I started, after I left the Woodyard, at Savilles and had this little bliming switchgear for a job, the charge hand bloke set me on some sort of job and they all got to be numbered. Of course I started numbering them in Roman and he came along, *Good god Arthur* he said *You can't do that here* he said *You get a bloke in this damn factory, would understand what Roman numerals are?* I said *What I going to do then?* He said *You do ordinary ones here. No-body down here will understand them.*

I took part in quite a bit of wagon work Sumner's had. We used to serve Mr Adams of Appletree. Mr Adam's wagons used to be done at our place. Mr Cyril Lambert's from Manor Farm, Station Road, Mr R.W.Cross from Andrew's Farm, Mr Sabins, Mr Robert's from Cropredy Hill Farm, Co-op Cropredy Lawn and others. We did have one from Wardington that when we worked on it, it was over 100 years old. They are supposed to last 100 years by careful use and looked after they'll stand a century, because those days they used good timber and no rubbish.



**33. Avon Old Farm's Wagonette  
1927.**

In 1927,'28 a wagon and wagonette were made in the workshops in the Woodyard by John Shirley, my uncle Frank Sumner and I expect John Green had a little to do with it later on. They went to Avon Old Farms Massachusetts. The wagonette has springs on. They travelled down to Broadway the summer of 1928 by Mr T.W.Dunn, a farmer; he was uncle to Connie Sumner.

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That went as far as Broadway to the wood shops Russell's to be crated up to be transferred to Gloucester docks and thence to America. The body was taken off, cause that comes off in one piece and that leaves the hind carriage complete with the pole and the fore carriage shafts and the four wheels and the ladder. Crated up and taken down there.

Apparently George Sturt was speaking on the wireless in those days the crystal sets and the earphones and whether this person from America was in England or she had read his book, she had this wagon and wagonette ordered from Mr Sturt in Farnham in Surrey. Connie's father, Mr Sumner had had an invitation to go down to Farnham and this George Sturt was ailing in health. Ill health and he'd got this order come through... and he didn't know what he was going to do about it, but of course Mr Sumner arranged to carry out the job for him. Which he did and that's how we came to get that job which in those days of course was a bit of an achievement for a little village like Cropredy. We were highly honoured exporting to America!

It was a beautiful job. Well, I do remember wheeling it in, in and out of the shop, put it out in the morning and help in the evening to put it in, wheel it in.

*There is a Plan of the [Woodyard](#) on Page 67.*

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## 10. Trade and Horses

Mr Bonham's Saddler's shop was on the Green. Collar's hung outside. Mostly repair by then. He'd make a new one and set for anyone as required it. Yes, because Saddler's weren't very thick on the ground then. One in Banbury.

Broad Street *said Lucy*.

Another one were over in Chipping Norton. *Arthur told* us they weren't very thick on the ground like carpenters, plumbers, wheelwrights or anything like that.

The canal trade helped here *Lucy pointed out*, because you see all the boats were horse drawn then.

There were quite a few farms here at one time and *Arthur began*....

They would have horses *said Lucy*.

Mr J.W.Bonham, A big man in the co-op.

Oh yes. oh yes. *agreed Lucy*. He was a jovial man wasn't he? Ah oh ah! That was the sort of thing he'd do you see. I was standing there and of course he knew me, as I was working out here, he said to these two men, *Oh* he said *this is a girl from my local part*, he said and he clucked me under the chin and of course I used to blush.

Oh no he was Superintendent of Sunday School *said Arthur*. He was always doing something.

Mr Pargeter was another jovial man wasn't he? *Lucy continued*. He'd always got a joke. He'd got shiny brown eyes.

He lived down the jitty *Arthur nodded*. Sat inside to work. at Bonham's. Got no bench outside you see. You'd got to have a bench to put your tools on. The workshop was twice the length of this room, and about as wide. **Only was restricted** to err working space. All that harness in there. Yes. Thatch roof. No it weren't warm. Oh no be golly it weren't. Johnny said it had a little tortoise stove.

Mrs Bonham *Lucy recalled* she used to collect bone china and had some beautiful things. The barn opposite was full of furniture.

Across the Green from Bonham's was Stib Cooknell's *Arthur went on*. His gate to the ash drive was always stood open. There was a muckheap on one side, a hedge on the other. It was Bonham's yard and apart from the stone barn it was built of brick. There was a double door into it and Bonham's garden in front on the side of the Green. This was about 10 feet wide with a hedge by the roadside and a deep ditch. When that was piped with too small a pipe leading off a larger one it caused the floods. There was a single door into the garden through a wall at the blacksmith's end. You then went through to the yard through a door on your left. Cooknell's yard was a fair size, well sheltered and yes, faced south. Cooknell had horses. Up Cooknell's yard were wooden framed sheds, which we helped to put up with galvanised iron rooves. Half way up the drive was an iron gateway, which led into the field. The drive was made of ashes.



**34. Behind the Hunt Stephen Cooknell's Yard with Bonham's stone barn and garden in front.**



That gateway led into the Cup and Saucer field and was very boggy by the gate, although it was at the highest part of the field. It's now under Goode's woodpile perhaps. The field sloped down to the railway. His horse field was over the railway. When you went over the railway bridge it was the first gate into where Stib Cooknell had his horse. He kept a grey mare. A sly evil mare down in his field. One Sunday he and his sister Emily went to feed it and it got him, right behind the ear. He had to go to hospital. It's a wonder it didn't kill him. Emily was afraid of that horse. He started with a cart, but he had two T model Ford lorries in the end. He would collect the stone from the wharf and deliver it around the roads in heaps to be broken up.

There are not the trees about like there used to be. Up Backside there were many and a spinney ran along round to the Green. There's a ditch run along inside the middle of the spinney, along Backside and came from Poplar Farm originally. When it got to the corner it turned into the verge then back in front of Bonham's shed. There it was piped to give a way into his shed. It crossed the street to join another in front of Cooknell's drive and along the ditch there, now piped. Down to the canal eventually. Norman Smith of Cup and Saucer said he had a map with all the drains on.

In front of Mr Bonham's house was a path. It had a stone bottom and was well used, because it kept clear. It went past Bonham's shed and led to Backside. When the Hunt left there was a real old mess on the Green. The Green wasn't as low as now; the village roadman scythed it. The posts on the Green were put there by the Parish Council in the early 1930's. I helped to paint them. There was always a seat round the tree (*planted 1902. Posts put in 1929, painted 1931*).

Mr Thomas Cooknell had a shop on the Green. Made good shoes....

I still have a pair of shoes made by him *Lucy smiled*. I remember Mrs Cooknell. They lived back of where Gunn's live, just across from the road. (*See Book 2*)

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....Tom used to have that tiny building Bill Harris has as a workshop He had a sewing machine. He made shoes, he was a good workman. The first that I remember was him living where Jones's live in the back endways on cottage (*east side of the Green*). In his shop he had a fire yes. A nice little cabin that built of brick, slated roof. Not too bad. Workbench looking out under the window towards the road. The door in two halves half open. Not much room inside, just about enough room to stand inside about two of you. It was only a short place. The fireplace in the far left corner from the door and the workbench and window on the right. Oh various cupboards put up on the wall. He was a darn good shoemaker he was.

George Pargeter used to be up Chapel Row in the passage. End on the right hand side. Similar place long bench. I can remember Tom Cooknell better than Pargeter. When did he die?

*Mr George Pargeter was buried from Rose Cottage, 9 Chapel Row, on the 11<sup>th</sup> of June 1927, aged 77.*

Pargeter's workshop was on the right hand side *recalled Lucy*, but he lived next to Neal's (*On the left*). Brown's were in the thatched cottage when I came in 1932 (*On the right*).

Horses. *Arthur continued* Mr Godson had a grey. It was fine all day, friendly while delivering bread, but it lived in the orchard where Ray Cherry's house is now and if anyone set foot in that field, it would come over and you had to get out quick! Gardener Godson was a very considerate man. He used to come back sometimes late from delivering and so as not to disturb people he had rubber shoes specially ordered via Frank Sumner. They were good friends those two. You couldn't nail them on, they had to be made, and so he didn't make any noise when he was out or coming back delivering.

Hickson, George Hickson from Claydon, was a coal merchant; they replaced an old horse and cart with their first lorry. Walter Gunn the licensee of the Green Man, Mollington, he had an old mare and an old cart and sometimes on the way to the station, and sometimes on the way back he'd stop. He would rest the shafts; on the shafts were a couple of props. You just slide a [?] on and let the props down and let the weight come on the prop rather than the horse. Horse have a rest! Many, many many a time I've seen that old hus asleep, stood up in that cart asleep. Collecting from the station or from the boats. Some were better with horses than cars. Some were clutch men not horsemen.

Mr Tasker was in the First World War with the Oxfordshire yeomanry and was in the Calvary. When he was the Carrier sometimes his horse come back from Banbury on it's own. Then he stopped at the 'Nose and around 10 pm or 10.30 he would be delivering the parcels. Banbury Guardian at 10 pm! His horse was down past the school.

There used to be a division in the workshops at the Woodyard, a division in there for horses, which was took down in 1939, because you see the horses meant we couldn't use any of the machines while they were there, and this man at Bourton House he had a lot of hunters and the boss got tired of stopping us working every time they came to be shod. It was awkward that partition too. The farrier had to go from the horse round this partition back to the fire, very awkward. In there was a bench with an ancient drill on it, which was moved when the partition came down. We moved the oxyacetylene welder in there once the horses gone. And you know if you laid a spanner on the ground the ammonia in there used to come up and rust it quickly. Always happens where you've had horses, can't get rid of it.

Horses were shod there until the beginning of the war. I didn't do any Albert did. I used to get them ready for him. Every horse is different. Mostly they went to Jim Mold at Claydon. He would have a contract to do horses you see, all the time, but down here no, they came in, a blacksmith eyes the foot up, he knows more or less the width of it see. Tooleys would do them at Banbury in an emergency, I dare say. Jim Mold would do them. Came up from the canal. Poor old Jim he was bit by a horse at times.

At the top lock Claydon there was a workshop there, an old one, there used to be one, two, three chaps worked there. You know the Banbury pub on the Station Road, the Victoria Arms? Well there used to be a tall thin chap, nice bloke, the publican of that. He was a carpenter or a bricklayer on the canal, making new gates. They used to make gates down Claydon there. What was his name?

You know the Sunrising, Claydon, the proprietor of that was a carpenter on the canal. Gilkes. Colin Shirley told me that he was very particular and he made those gates, but I think the other chap was more of a bricklayer. He used to ride a very very old motorbike, a Raleigh. Ever such an old motor bike, but mind you this was years ago. Another there was Bloomfield, he worked there. Family of Bloomfields at one of the locks. Doris used to be in service at St Mary's vicarage, Banbury. On her half day she had to go along that towpath back to Banbury. Devil of a place that, lonely. Porridge Pot House. Bridge went underneath then up that towpath. Verney's Lock. She used to go out with Reg, his girl. Lucy and I used to go with them. We went along to a 21<sup>st</sup> birthday, devil of a place to get to.

Malcolm Smith's father were at Broadmoor, his brother was the last one to be apprenticed under the Bathurst scheme *Apprentice charity*.

Back to horses and mules! Mr McDougall used to have a big nasty thing, a mule. They used to bring it down to catch the 10 past 7 milk train. Milk in churns. Then big Jack mule nasty thing...down in churns and if that mule and milk float had to deliver something to our yard, something, draw up in the yard, you had to unharness the devil, take him up and turn that round and harness him in again. He wouldn't back and you couldn't make him back either. Never reverse. Awkward thing. Mules a nasty animal.

I had to take Arthur Bliss's out. Mules off side rear.. I don't know, I wouldn't do it only... I wouldn't but they were all out down the yard. Pump job I expect. They come up and say, *Do you think you can take this for Arthur Bliss? No. Nothing in it* he said *.Sure, maybe, but I'm not the farrier.*

*Well he said you'll manage that. Poor old devil.. Shoes concave not like horses. They grip on, couldn't shift that, but I said, All right, I'll have to get the tools. I knew how to do the job, I knew how to take a shoe off, but I didn't want the job! He said I'll hold it for you. You will mate!*

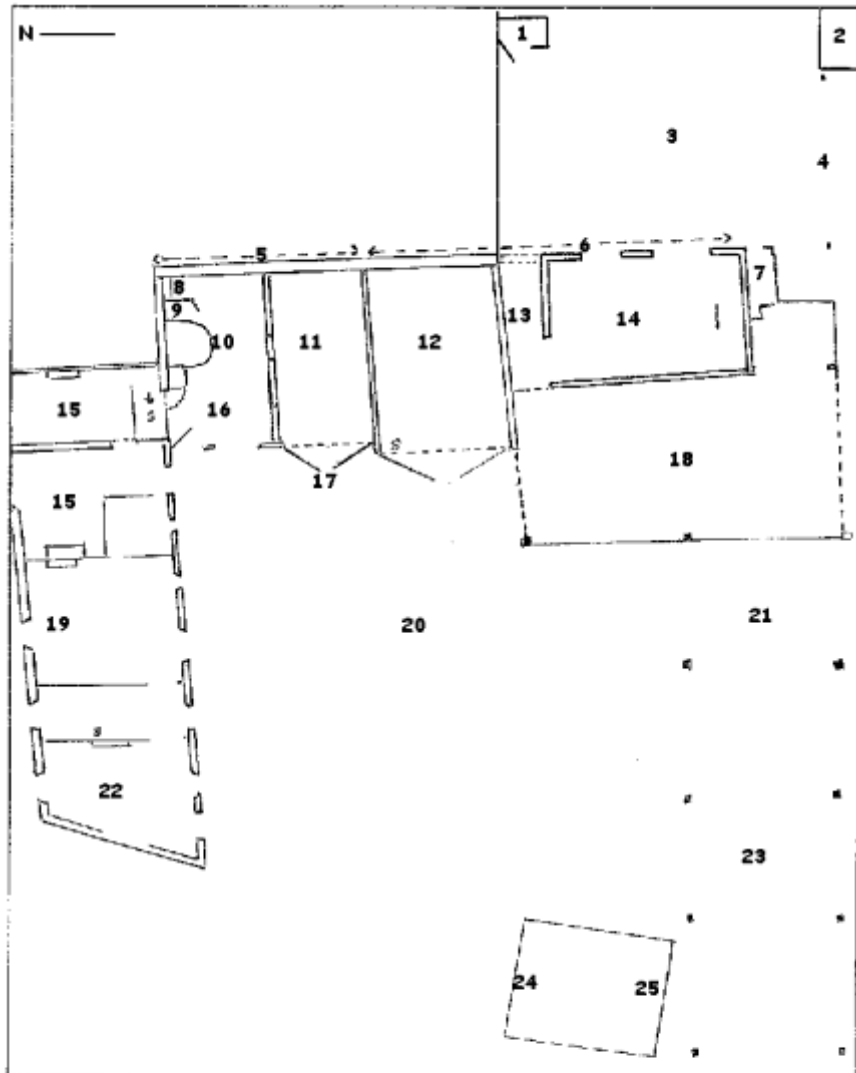
You had to unclench the nails underneath you see and its an awkward position to get when you got the horses leg between your knees, you get the pinchers, pinch them all off, just tap yer nails out and get the pinches and get one out after another. **But** when someone else can't get close enough to get at the nails, and of course as soon as ever you get close enough to the nails, and as soon as ever you get tapping the mule says *That's it! Not half!*The kick! Thin legs you see.

Kick like a mule! *Lucy grinned.*

Half a horse half a donkey *said Arthur* and I did eventually manage to get it off, but I said, *I'm not putting it back on again, I don't want to get under the animal*, and off he went. Later on, Gaffer wanted to know who been, what had been in the yard and what...I told him. He said **YOU WHAT!** I said *I took the shoe off*. He said *Don't you never do that again* he said *You're not insured for that job. Your a machiner, not a farrier*. I never took no more off.

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## Plan of the Woodyard.



Plan of the Woodyard. 1 Toilet, 2 Pigsty, 3 Garden, 4 Wash line, 5 Paintshop above.  
 6 Carpenter's shop above, 7 Wheel furnace, 8 Old stable, 9 Dry toilet, 10 Stone oven,  
 11 Lime shop, 12 Wheelwright's shop, 13 Passage, 14 Blacksmith's shop,  
 15 Woodview, 16 Wash house, 17 Tiring pit, 18 Open shed, woodloft above,  
 19 Sumner's house, 20 Wood Yard, 21 Saw pit, 22 Post Office, 23 Timber shed,  
 open with wood & ladders stored above, 24 Wooden stable, 25 Four wheeler shed.  
 S= stairs.

1 Toilet, 2 Pigsty, 3 Garden.

4 Wash line.

5 Paintshop above.

6 Carpenter's shop above,

7 Wheel furnace, 8 Old stable.

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14 Blacksmith's shop.

15 Woodview.

16 Wash house.

17 Tiring pit.

18 Open shed, woodloft above.

19 Sumner's house.

20 Wood Yard, 21 Saw pit.

22 Post Office.

23 Timber shed, open with wood & ladders stored above.

24 Wooden stable.

25 Four wheeler shed.

S=stairs.

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## 11. Motor Bikes and Cars

Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> June 1932: *Cleaning motorbike and went up as far as the crab tree. Had it fall out in second gear.*

Mr Sumner, the gaffer was really short of work during the depression. I remember he used to get out his motorbike, which he had at that time and ride round the farms to get work. He would ask if they had any carts that wanted mending. Mr Sumner had a bike first, then a motorbike then a car.

I went, *said Connie*, to take the photographs to Arthur for the Woodyard talk. I showed him the one of him sat on my Dad's motorbike. It was a new one. *Yes says Arthur I was sixteen then. Your Father let me clean it for him once a week and look after it. Then one day he was all dressed up in black ready to go to a funeral and he said, 'Try it out then Arthur.'*

*Well said Arthur I knew he really shouldn't have been so kind, I was only sixteen. Well I set off up Mollington Hill. It was a new bike and a good one, but had some teething problems. The thrill was tremendous As he pulled out the throttle to go up the hill. It stopped at the top, something shot off and there he was with no licence and a bike that didn't go! Well this pipe or wire had snapped. I bent down and took my shoelace and tied my hanky round to hold it to get back, all the while watching out in case P.C. caught me. And oh it was lovely riding back down the hill.*

I rode, *Arthur now took over from Connie*, a bike for twenty odd years and never had an accident. I was one of those who ride a bike with feelings! It comes naturally to some who really care about the machine.

The first car I learnt to drive was in 1934, but the Bullnosed Morris were 1927. I learnt to drive it backwards! Yes, learnt to drive it backwards reversing down the yard.

You used to drive round the fields didn't you? *Added Lucy.*

Then I took my licence out in 1936. Mr Eriksen, that's Jane's father, he was down at School Farm, same as Paul is, you see, and he brought one of these Morris bullnosed, the same as, just after the gaffer had his. I painted that for him. We painted cars down there. His car was green and the bosses was royal blue. Eriksen's was green and after I finished the job, he said, *you got a licence Arthur?* I said *No not yet. Well he said don't you have a licence for driving about?* I said *No; no I don't bother about a licence.* I was driving two year. I was driving without a licence 1934 to '36. *Ah, look if you have a licence you can have mine out at anytime. Oh!* I said *thank you sir very much. It's very nice of you.* Which I did. So I sent away for a licence, passed my test, drove a test, there were tests about then you know. First thing old Roby, P.C. Roby the copper

stopped me. Stopped me in the afternoon. He said *What's this?* He said *You're supposed to have L-plates on. Course I blooming well ain't supposed to have L plates on! I know you have.* He replied. I said *I ain't. Well he said I saw you this morning with them on. Ah I said perhaps you did. I said I passed me test since then. Well I'm damned* he said. Ha! old Roby. I used to have Eriksen's car out when ever I wanted it. Yes, ride I was. If there was anything wrong I'd notice you see and look after it for nothing. That was a green one.

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Gaffer didn't have a car until 1933. He didn't have a van, nothing like that. He had a car and trailer. Haul a big trailer behind a car. Our trailer was cut down from the body of a wagonette, close build and put on pneumatic tyres see. Well it would be classed as; it would be classed, as you'd get about a ton on it. As much as the car would pull. And about every quarter, four or five months, top gears, gears would be stripped, and we used to have it in the old wheelwrights shop at night, change those gear boxes over and inside the yard you see. Working till nearly midnight changing those gearboxes over...

He always was a late bird! *laughed Lucy.*

Then the gearboxes changed out, get your parts and take that out and put those all right. Change over again. Always had to keep a spare gearbox. ...

*Always, said Lucy,* had bikes and that.

I've been at it, *Arthur continued,* since the gaffer had a car. Then there was a chap who worked there, as lived in the end house on here, Chapel Green. Johnny Green. He had an old relic of a car, a Rover 10. That used to go wrong and I used to help him do that. Then he had a Clymo and he told me to do that. Clymo saloon and there was something peculiar about that Clymo. If you got the bonnet up and working on the engine, and the engine running you went up and touch something, you got an electric shock.

John was a carpenter. He turned, packed up the carpenter job and became an Insurance Agent. He kept his car in a garidge where the two bungalows were built, where Ted Boscot and Mrs Hills lived at the top of Red Lion Street (*by the north churchyard gate*). The Green's moved into number 6 Chapel Green. He worked on Lambert's Home Farm, being cowman for W.J. and Clifford. He came about 1922. They had two children, John and a handicapped child. I made a coffin for her. She went to Chipping Norton I'm afraid. John he worked at the Woodyard to start with then in Insurance. Later he worked with Smith and Webbers and finally worked at the Alcan. He lived in Monkeytree House and his Father lived there to be looked after. John married Constance Draper whose Mother was a cook. Descended from a butler, a very highly thought of man. They had two children a boy and girl. The Greens left Monkeytree House and went to live in the bungalow their son had built down Creampot Lane. The son left to go down near Oxford somewhere.



Erne Heath was Mrs Brown's brother. He worked at Alcocks as the builders was then. He had a Ford, a Ford Popular and I used to look after that one for him. In Monkeytree garidge close to the road. Double doors. It was occupied by Erne Heath when Charlie Green didn't need it. Browns were there in 1932. Erne Heath, Mrs Brown's brother who come to live with them in Chapel Row, eventually moved to that house past the village hall, Fern Cottage. House you go straight into. He retired along there, he hadn't got a car then. Good chap. Conscientious bloke.

That first lorry, Cherry's first lorry were Morris Commercial. They had an Austin before the war, but this first was a Morris Commercial. Not many lorries around. Hawkins, Leonard Hawkins the coal merchant down at the Wharf, he had one, and there were others about.

Godson's eh not as soon as that. The old man had a horse. Too old to drive a motor vehicle. Well Gardner didn't take it over, because they hadn't got one. Gardner came round with a horse for a while. His first vehicle was an Austin 7 Yes a little one. He used to have a new one about every two years. Well he wanted it you see, it were worn out, worn out, he used to burn his clutch out every five months. Yes. And once, er, once he borrowed the boss's car and took and damn me if he didn't burn the clutch out on that un all. What he used to do was rev up with his clutch. Yes.

That one at Cherry's they got that before I left school, so that was, I left school in 1930. They got it then because I can remember the thing coming out the yard, over the path, as we went by, and painted battleship grey. Yes. They painted it you see. Those Morris Commercials got an aluminium radiator. The casing of the radiator was aluminium, rough cast aluminium with *Morris Commercial* across the top.

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Gardner Godson was driving that for Cherry's before he took over the bakery. Oh yes Godson worked at Cherry's. He were lorry driver. Way back at about the same time he had to go up to Hull to fetch a boiler from Hull in this Morris Commercial and of course that was a big journey in those days for a smallish lorry. Because only about 30 hundred weight and that was a big journey.

Then when his father got too old to do the baking then of course he had to pack up Cherry's and take over. So it must have been early 30's when Gardner took over the baker's business.

The photograph of Gardner and Thomas Cherry with Cherry's lorry well that's at Cropredy station unloading bricks. There was a small crane stored in the shed and a weigh bridge un all. The crane was for lifting parcels, heavy parcels onto lorries. When the oxyacetylene welder for Sumner's came to the station I took a lorry to the station and wound it onto the lorry. At the yard I got the pump lifter and stood it up with the hook high and backed the lorry up to it, took up the welder, drove the lorry

away. Let down the welder onto its wheels, packed up the pump crane and pushed the welder into the forge! Parcels that came to the station were normally delivered. Sometimes a lorry was borrowed from Banbury to deliver them to the district.

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## 12. Hammonds Poultry Farm

Mr Hammond had a Fiat first when he came in 1923, followed by a small Armstrong Sidley, then a larger one and around 1937 a Daimler. So you can tell the business was fairly successful. In the times of the depression, mark you, 1929 to 1935,'36 were hard years, hardly any work around. The Armstrong Sidley had preselector gears. He drove it back on five cylinders for repairs. Then a chap come up from London to repair it and I went along to help. I learnt more in those two hours than I ever learnt. He left the strap off his toolbox and I still have it.

I kept the engine going for him, the plugs etc. Then when he had the Armstrong Sidley, which was too big for the garidge, he added a bit of an extension to it. In the mornings, the garidge was opposite the yard; you'd hear him in there. These cars had big engines and you would hear him on cold mornings trying the starter and it would get lower and lower, then gradually dying back. Then you knew he'd be over and sure enough you'd hear him coming across to the yard and up to the gaffer, my uncle. *Frank* he would say *I need Arthur. Can I borrow him for ten minutes?* *Right* said uncle.

*Send him over and put it on the bill.* So over I went. I had to use the starting handle to crank up that engine. Hard work it was too, while he held the choke. It was a very heavy engine and very hard work to start.

When he had the Daimler he let me drive it round the block up Oxhey Hill. It went up that Mollington Hill 70 miles an hour like a bird. Beautiful car it was. Several times I went in it to Farnham, to the place he went to afterwards.



35.

**Beech House on the High Street, with  
Pettifer's Cottage beyond. 1908.**

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Mr Hammond wasn't a Cockney; he was a Londoner and came to Beech House. *He changed the name to Poultry Farm in 1932.* The farm stretched from the back of Harris's right to Newscut Lane. The farm had chicken sheds, hundreds of the blooming things also on the other side of the road, of Backside, and on the other side of the railway in Dairy Ground.

Yes he ran a very successful business. It was an up to date poultry farm. They had some buff hens, golden coloured and knot hens and his own brand.

His hens, *said Dolly* were called **Cuckoos** he crossed a Wyndot with a black or white Leghorn so getting the heavy meat, but regular laying, of the Leghorn.

*Arthur continued* He came from Viccars, the war artillery factory to Cropredy. He was always dressed well in plus fours and we called him Willie. He wasn't very big. Mrs Hammond was bigger than him. A lot of people didn't. But I got on all right with him. He had a lot of people visit him on the farm. Crossly cars, the owner came once. I've shook hands with him! They used to get

visitors there you know come down a week or so in the summer time, and err carrying the camera around, used to sort of take pictures.

Big house, plenty of visitors, but no children. They were young when they came here. Willie never altered anything to the house. Mrs Hammond she couldn't do much as she had very bad arthritis in her ankles....

Mrs Hammond, *added Dolly*, also had arthritis in her hands very badly, but she played the piano.

He had a shop in London *Arthur went on say* to sell eggs, poultry and butter, which went down by train or car. No the depression did not affect him. He would get all his produce sent down to his shop in Notting Hill. They had over 2,000 eggs a day at one time. *Arthur* he said once *Make me a meat safe and I'll take you to London to fit it up in the shop*. Well he did and we loaded up the Armstrong Sidley and off we went. After fitting the meat safe he drove me round London to see the sights. Buckingham Palace...It was the first time I had been down there.

Sometimes, once a week he would take the things down in the car, sometimes taking Miss Bell down with him. He left me then to turn the incubator eggs. He had a combination lock on them, so many to the right, so many to the left, right, left to turn them the right amount.

They had these heaters in the incubators and they had to be insulated with aluminium cement. You laid it on like plaster mixed with water and laid it on. The beams of the incubator shed were only rough timber you know, nothing trimmed. On a photograph of a cart that loft door of the incubator house shows (*photo 28*). It was once a cowshed with a hayloft entrance. The hay was stored and thrown down to the cows below. When Hammond come that was changed. It still had no street door. After it was made into a hall for dancing. Then a bungalow and now a Vicarage!

Mr Hammond and Mr Field were kind of partners. Field he was the bloke who did the work, Willie did the brains sort of thing. Mr Field was the construction man really, though Willie knew his stuff on that. Field was a good bloke at it. Could turn his hand to anything; make a new poultry house just like that. I believe he died young. He knew a lot about poultry and their houses. He was different altogether from Mr Hammond, though he was from the south too. I preferred Mr Field; he was more of a gentleman. Everyone got on well with him. He was Mrs Hammond's brother.

Miss Bell she was almost top person. She could kill a bird; have it plucked in one and a half minutes flat. Quite a girl. She would also later on cook for Hammonds. She went down to Farnham with them.

At night sometimes Miss Bell would say to me, *Could you help to-night Arthur? Yes* I'd say and we'd move the birds at night after dark. Always move birds then. Sometimes we'd have the car and help. There were little night arks all over the place,

every spare inch, and larger ones, which had to be lifted off and put on a trolley and towed by a pony to the next place. They were moved to stop the rats coming up from underneath.

Hammond bought a car in about 1934/5 a Morris Bullnose. He bought the gaffers old car for them to take the stuff about on. So later I towed the trolley with the car.

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I used to go over to the Poultry Farm perhaps for three months, back then to the Yard. I've been reading it up again in my diary this week. 1932. Oh always new stuff and bits being built and repairs, fencing all the time. I was maintenance man. In that June: *Repairing posts & gates. Bunny started mowing with Tom. Creosoting 13-16<sup>th</sup>. 17<sup>th</sup>: Spraying a Boulton & Paul hen house inside & out. Putting up a stile the other side of Dairy Field. Sat. 18<sup>th</sup>: Repairing a slat. Helping to shift top five hen houses with Clarke. Had our money 2pm. 20-25<sup>th</sup>: Repairing gates & slats & creosoting. Putting some wire round the top five. Putting some new blocks on the taxi. And on June 22<sup>nd</sup>: Big Boy's brother took our photo.*



36.

**Arthur, Percy Cummings, Gilbert Freegard, Tommy the pony and Jesse Gardner in 1932.**

He had at least thirteen people working for him. On this photograph of 1932 you can see that's the stable were the pony used to be kept. Tommy. Have you got the name of the blokes? That's me. That was Mr Cummings. P.C. Cummings, **Parcy** Cummings, I don't know where he came from. College type of bloke. College Walla he used to make his own hair oil. That's Gilbert, Mrs Bott's brother, Freegard. Gilbert Freegard. He came from Chacombe, died young. Gilbert used to pushbike from Chacombe you see. Percy he used to lodge with Miss West in the middle cottage opposite the Bakehouse in Church Lane. Then next to Tommy, now what was his name? Gardner. We called him Bunny Gardner, now what was his name? Jesse! Jesse Gardner, we called him Bunny. He lived down New Place. Gilbert who died was a nice chap. Bunny drove that pony and trolley like a warrior. Percy not a bad bloke to get on with.

The pony lived in the stable behind. That little flat truck we went round moving grub about on and those wheels came off a Ford model T with wooden spokes on and they never buckled. On the house side of the stable there are a few boxes along there, what we used to call the mortuary. You turn the corner there and go along to the egg room. The other way there was the pump next to the granary at the end. The date on the back of that is June 1932.



37.

**Arthur and Titch  
in the Top Orchard of Poultry Farm.**

This one is 1932/33 (*now lost?*). It's a picture of me and Titch. Me standing on a cart, shafts on the ground, hammering in a post. Titch on the ground. The other picture (*photo 37*) was taken in the Top Orchard showing a night shed built in panels with netting underneath as it is raised on pillars. I'm leaning on Titch who has a paint tub and brush. I'm in dungarees and holding a hammer.

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Titch that boy used to come from Banbury, Castle Street. We called him Titch or Tiny. His name was William Nut. That's the top orchard where David Cherry's house is now. Orchard View. That used to be a good orchard. Built on pillars, the sheds, to keep the rats out. I'm strangling him! Not a lot older than Titch I don't think. He had a rough time to start with, he lived along Castle Street, he was more or less a waif wasn't he? He got a sister in Coventry. Eventually they got him down there at



Coventry. I took him half way, on pushbikes, met his brother-in-law and handed him over. We kept up a correspondence for sometime. He went into the cycle works. He retired now of course. He has called round since he went. Twice I think.

Mr Stevens, you know who killed pigs, he cut that hedge from Bonham's Cup and Saucer field, up Backside to the corner and up to the railway hedge. From Newscut Lane down to Harris's all with clippers. Yes clippers. Kept them all trimmed right up the Lane, Backside to the Cup and Saucer. He had it low and beautifully kept. The whole place was very tidy. He did the inside of the hedge as well. The same between the two fields. He scythed the tennis court near as good as a mower and did the rest of the gardening. Will Stevens lived in the stone cottages down Station Road.

I myself wasn't one to mess about round the kitchen door, because Willie would have got to know somehow. You get so many folk working about you've got to be careful. Oh yes. I didn't know much about the kitchen. I wasn't allowed in there, so I'm not sure about that pump in there. I rather think there used to be a pump in the kitchen, a little chop pump by the sink...

They used to be like that *agreed Lucy*.

Some of the old pumps you had to put water in first. I wasn't allowed in there, not when Willie was around. No. If he caught you in there, there would be hell to play.

Two women working in there? *Asked Lucy*.

Miss Guyan, Lillian Guyan and the cook. She were a very nice piece, she were. Miss Nellie Bradbury. Darn nice wench. She had the bedroom over the office. Quick, very nice. One of the fastest workers. No not all that tall no. Lillian Guyan I don't know where she came from but Miss Bell the manager came from London and lived in....

They used to all come to the Women's Institute.

They did have, *Arthur went on*, one or two men living in, rest lodged at Miss West's, or one did lodge at Mrs Harry Dunn's when they lived where Bill Gunn lives on the Green (*gable end on*). Ivy Cherry's Father and Mother. They lived at the one nearest the path, and they had a chap there. Lillian Guyan she married that chap. He was a darn nice chap, he got to go about pretty careful, because he got a plate...back of his head...in his head from a car accident. She married Walter Henry Wiggins. He were a poultry farmer of Drayton, Berkshire by 1936.

Some of the students would pay, some, not all. Some of them worked. I don't think any of them stopped long. A couple of years. The one who followed Gerald, Geoff Norris, married Tate's daughter, publican at the Red Lion. Gerald was under manager. I think he came in 1950. I was in the yard when a man came over, *Are you Arthur?* I got to know most of the people who worked over there because they used to come over to the yard for different jobs. A lot of jobs were soldering jobs

for water fountains for the fowl. One day just before dinnertime, just before knocking off dinnertime, a nice young man came up the yard in an Austin 7 Chumney. An Austin 7 Chumney is a sports car, two seater, and it got a fair bark to it, the silencer had gone, had split.

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He jumped out and err my mate grin at anybody, wherever he goes, gets his way through like that. And he come across and he said, *Good Morning. Are you Arthur* I says *Yes I'm Arthur, yes. Well* he said *Mr, I've just come from Dunstable and I'm going to live across there he says I shalln't be too far away, Mr Hammond's there. I'm coming to work and Mr Hammond sent me over. He said you'd weld my silencer up for me. I said Oh yes, cause I can, that's what I'm here for. So I had a look at it. He said can you do it the s'afternoon do you think? Certainly. So he said Right I'll be back. He got his luggage and all in this little car you see, and he went tearing round and came back in the afternoon. Had this silencer on this exhaust and put it right. We formed a friendship between us just like that. He said what do you do at nights then? What do you do in your spare time? Oh I said various jobs, sometimes I come down here, sometimes I'm on the garden. Well perhaps we could go out one night. Ride round? I said yes of course we can.*

So we used to go out in this Austin 7 Chumley and we used to have him in the Barn, which Mary Corradi had into a house, Barnton. That was then a nice workshop in there. Double doors. You could get a blooming bus in there. Right through. That was an old fashioned barn that was. Loft over part of it. We used to have the car in there and do jobs to it. Oh a beautiful workshop.

Then one weekend: *My fiancé will be coming up this weekend Arthur, so we shall have to take her out.*

Coming up from Somerset. Somerset gal. Anyway she came up, and during that time we were doing something to the car door, a job, and I can see Phyllis now, looking out of that window as, little small window, and do you know she wouldn't come out to the barn. No she wouldn't come over there. Looking over from the house. I can see her now. Bit on the shy side. He got a nice girl and all. First time I saw her was in 1953. They live in Beer.

He was a Somerset boy. That wasn't his first job in Somerset, but when he left school he were off. His Mother and Father lived on the old Ickneild Road, Dunstable. He was an Insurance Inspector. Gerald and Phyllis had a farm in Beer. Lucy and I went down there to help with the hay.

When Hammond's came they got all the poultry houses to build. They didn't buy them all. They built some. Busy on that for twelve months. House One that was the first they put up, that was on the right hand side of the entrance gate as you crossed Backside from the buildings. Rear drive. First one they built, mainly felt, felt and boards. Later we used to put aluminium

sheets on the outside of hen houses. I've sawed up loads of them. Put sheets on the wall for insulation. Then on the roof it was wood and felt.

There were two big ones in the field near the Mollington Road. Top and Bottom Brooder's sheds. All in the top field. They were built up on wooden piers. I know because I had to mend them. They were for eggs those.

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Along the railway side of that field were five large arks in asbestos, the Fives. Then in the other field were a large shed, which was exarmy. Then the Brooder's top shed near the corner of Bonham's field, Cup and Saucer. And another lower down. One was about a hundred and sixty feet long by..?.. wide. They were all that width. The end near Bonham's field was on posts, piers about two feet off the ground and the other end was on the ground where you went in. The smaller ones were about twenty-four feet long. They had food troughs in the middle with a gate to each side and water beyond the food tray.

In the orchard was another two large sheds and lots of arks, night arks and where Corradi's house is were more. It was quite a job at night shutting all those arks up. In the top orchard where Cherry's houses are now, Orchard View, top end, that's where they had all little chicks in it. No not loose, not running around on the floor. They were in a separate house inside. Bottom Brooder were the ones a little older still inside. Opposite the track way to the tennis court. Then by the Bottom Brooder were the hedge up the road then a little bit of flat then the land rises, rises there to a high bank. There was a row of stately elms along there at one time, inside, so that piece was pinched at one time (*That whole strip of land between the hedge and the elms was encroached by the Ankers of Beech House 150 years ago from Backside*).

There were two big army huts that were put up sixty by thirty. Where David Cherry's house is, he's got his own separate gate, on that side was the original field gate. The huts were through the gate, two in a line. On top of the bank. Big army huts, cantilever roofs, rounded. Proper made houses. I think they came from Over Thorpe, from the ammunition works. Good places, solid.

There were five more near what we called **Waltsul's End**. Walt Sewell's garden. You know there's a seat appeared up there. He was a ganger on the railway. That was a nice garden up there at one time, belonged to the railway. (*Village side of the railway bridge on the old road?*). Yes. Walt lived in New Place. When you go down the Jitty you come to the first sharp corner, then turn a bit off and go down again and the first house on your right. The seat on the top Green was made by Walter Sewell, a ganger on the railway. He had two gals and a son. Eric married the Gardner who lived where the post office is now.

The poultry houses had water in them, all supplied from the farm spring. It had to be pumped into tanks in the roof, not once a day, but several times. It had a ratchet handle, back and forth. It then was piped all round the field. It must be still there, the spring.

It came from a spring near Waltsul's garden. There's a seat near and then the hedge and bank, steep drop down into the field. Underneath is this spring somewhere and a culvert to the ... Well we didn't rightly know where it went to. This was lovely water. I sometimes think it came to the well at High Street cottages and across to this one.

Anyway Miss Bell wanted a tap so that she didn't have to keep going to the house for water. So Sid and I went and tried to sort out a place for the tap. We went down, struck this brick culvert and the water shot out! We mended it and put the post nearer the road for the tap.

On those two ex-army huts they had curved roofs with vents rather like huts on top. When we repaired those roofs we had to have a rope round our waist to stop us falling off. I had to tar those with creosote, better than tar, with a six-inch or so brush. I liked doing that.

The feed came in a large van, several hundredweight at a time. It had on the sides S-U- - - **Super**...but I can't remember the others. This was taken to the mixing room on the right by the barn. The Backside entrance. This was before electricity. They had to spend all morning mixing the food. One person turning the handle. In the barn was the hay.

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There was a footpath through the fields, two. You started out at the stile **out** of Bonham's field (*Cup and Saucer*) and turned sharp left, as there was a high wire fence round the poultry field. The path went down the hedge with that on your left and the fence on your right. Then you come to a pond at the bottom and the fence went in a lot here as the footpath skirted the pond. Then to the archway under the railway. You could get through there from one poultry field to the one on the other side in Dairy Ground. You turned into that and across to the stile on the far hedge.

The other path went from Bonham's stile through a big metal gate into the poultry field. It was divided off on your left but you come to another gate into the farther part and yet another gate where the hedge crosses the field. There was one more gate to reach the stile onto the Mollington Road. If you turned round from that stile towards the Cup and Saucer the gates were all in a straight line. The fence was six foot high all-round. Miles of fencing. It was buried in the ground as well. The gates were fastened with "U" shaped fasteners. None about now.

When you went towards Mollington over the railway to the first field, to the first gate where Stib Cooknell had his horses, you went straight across that field to the next gate (*the hedge has gone*), and into Dairy Ground. We put up a fence there to divide the field into two, going from the railway westwards. In the middle of that was a pump put for that field. These oak posts Sid Busby put in by hand, and then we put two strands of barbed wire from the railway arch to the right of the stile. There was a track there, which we used to roar up, but always we caught the car a jolt. Instead of a lazy policeman bump it was a hollow. So we got some stone and filled the hollows, just where the tyres went and we could roar over them!



**38.**

**Air view of Beech House and farmyard about 1963.**

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Godson's had the next small field. They rented it for their horse (*Railogg*). All Dairy Ground was full of arks as well.

On that Air photograph of Connie's it has the Woodyard below left. Cooknell's shoe shop and Harris's post office, then Bonham house and saddlery after our shed taken down. That's the north side of the Green. The Cup & Saucer Cross in Bonham's field at the top left. The spinney once Backside verge right up to the Farm entrance. They kept the muck behind Bonham's and Harris's. Wouldn't be allowed now. They sold it for fertiliser. The big barn for the workshop.

Where the path by the drive goes from Backside to the house, Sid Busby and I laid that. We had Yorkshire white stone which we laid, and used the tennis lawn roller to crush it down.

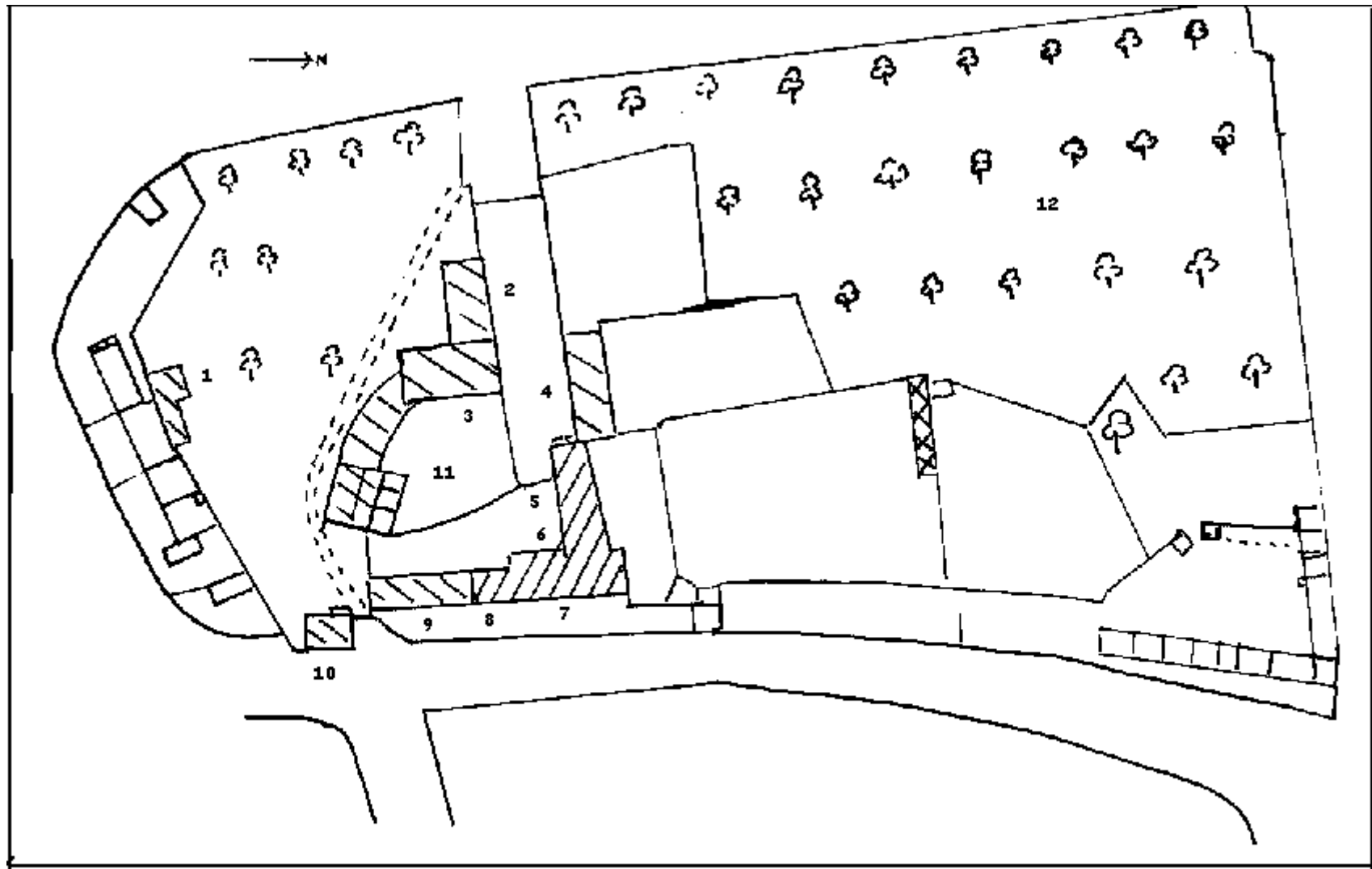
Next to the tennis court was the walled vegetable garden. First one that I remember was Will Stevens. He were a gardener. There used to be a family along Chapel Row, Weller. Bill Weller he was a gardener there. Good garden that, enclosed. Nice job. Big greenhouse as well. Top now of Plumb's garden. That garden ought to produce about ten times what anyone else could, because that garden was the burial ground for fowl, dead fowl. High brick wall inside. Stone by the house, outside. *The original boundary of the property.*

Behind the kitchen in the house was the egg room. Well the rooms still there, then the place they washed the eggs and the paraffin room and all the baskets and things for the eggs. 2,000 a day had all to be washed by hand in there. Dreadful job. Boring. Out in the yard were more chickens in arks, all at different stages. Going towards the road a bit it was set back and the stable was there. An iron ladder inside up to the hayloft. Next to the egg packing room were the place they scorched the feathers off and prepared for the shops.

I should imagine that the young students had the rooms over the egg rooms. The house front door led into a passage with the dining room on your right, sitting room on your left, which had a cupboard desk. The office was through there along the back wall. When you went into the office, you couldn't easily get into his office, there wasn't much room. Fifty-two years this next month since I put that name on that door. **Registered Office.** If you went from the back door along the passage to the right, through the office, you then went into the incubator room. The kitchen? That was beyond the dining room with a window onto the front.

When they went down to Farnham I went to set up various electrical things for them. They had a smaller concern then, well they weren't so young then. They took over a battery shed with cafeteria feeding. Hens all inside. No free range like at Poultry Farm here. Oh no. The food comes past on a conveyer belt. Water and food passes each hen, then goes back again. Beautiful job that. They had a close right down to the main road. It had cows in. They kept cows there. Miss Bell went down as well. At Cropredy they had two house cows, no more, which supplied them with their milk and I think they made their own butter.

After Hammond's Mr Goddard came. He got it for his son, but he was a city bloke, no use in the country and it didn't really work. His father couldn't manage it. They used to come to Cropredy for holidays and Mr Goddard thought it would suit them. The son married Mr Harris's daughter.



**1 Muck House. 2 Mixing Room. 3 Barn. 4 Stable. 5 Egg Room. 6 Kitchen. 7 House.  
8 Office. 9 Incubator House. 10 Garage. 11 Arks. 12 Top Orchard Arks and Sheds.**

**1 Muck House. 2 Mixing Room. 3 Barn. 4 Stable. 5 Egg Room. 6 Kitchen. 7 House. 8 Office. 9 Incubator House. 10 Garage.  
11 Arks. 12 Top Orchard Arks and Sheds.**

*The two fields across Backside and next to the railway had more sheds. Poultry Farm also had two more fields beyond the railway. Access to these was under the railway arch (New House and other Deeds).*

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### **13. Hire a Labourer**

We were borrowed. They borrowed me. Hire-a-labourer, that's me. I was lent to Mr. Smith at their yard and also Mr Hammond. Altogether over the years I did about three and a half years altogether for Mr Hammond in maintenance and repairing. When he went to Farnham I went down for three weeks to do jobs there.

So I did two weeks here, six weeks there and two months perhaps back with Sumner's. I was of course apprenticed to Mr Shirley.

The summer that submarine went down at the mouth of the Mersey on its trials, it were a hot summer. It were hot, and I were round, borrowed round at Smith's painting inside a new caravan he'd made. It was a proper oven. Oh yes he, Norman Smith was a first class tradesman, equal to Colin Shirley actually. Oh yes.

One, err to tour behind a car. Take it off on holiday. Brand new. You remember Malcolm Smith who died twelve months or so ago, well he had a brother Cyril and he was apprenticed to Smith's. He used to live next door to us in the High Street. I was there from the yard to help Johnny Green and other chaps to do the inside, to help Cyril Smith.

Smith's used to employ an old stone mason, George Pettipher. Not a relation but related to others in Cropredy. He lived in the last row towards the school. His brother lived this end of Cope's Cottages, Tom, and another, Harry, at the far end of Cope's Cottages. Harry was an old soldier, a sergeant major of the Boer war. He was a platelayer on the line. Chap had cancer, went away to Birmingham for treatment, came home and lived for years and years. As you went down you'd see him come out, get his bit of coal, there's a coalhouse on the end, he get his bit of coal. You'd see him come out with his broom and do a bit of sweeping. Now he was quite a respectable bloke, a very pally sort of a chap, because he worked with different people on the line. They had a sister Emily who lived opposite Mrs Bott's. The Tom Pettifer had a rough life, he were a big tall fellow, big built and he got awkward feet. Blooming school kids used to tease him.

Now George Pettipher some days he were all right, but others he wasn't. Some days he'd hardly say anything and some days he'd chat all day long. He was a stonemason. He had a son Charles. He never married. They finished up their lives at Chacombe.

George and Charlie with Tommy Waddups helped to build the new stoke hole down the church. Ever been down and looked at it? It was say about 1929, when I was leaving school. I used to see the plumber bending pipes in the churchyard. A Belfast firm, a good one. Those pipes that they put in the church had to be heated up in a furnace and then put in the bender. They

were ever so thick and I can see that chap now, a big hefty feller, Irish, but a first class workman, absolutely top class workman. He had a forge out there, a hand blown forge. We used to climb up the wall opposite Una Bissmire's in Red Lion Street, and go round and have a deck see.

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**39.**

**Saint Mary's Church  
Cropredy and Smith's  
Malt House from the  
Banks Paddock  
between river and  
canal.**

Some of the radiator pipes are still left in the tower. Albert took a lot of the pipes out when they changed over. It was lovely and warm in there. Oh yes, but you couldn't continue with it, the price of coal. That was the early form of heating, hot air. I remember that, yes....

Lovely and hot when you walked over it, *said Lucy*.

Those heaters they got in there now are too high. Heat rises! They put the heating up to the top arch of the windows.

The old bollock used to keep the place warm. Hot air. I just forget where that was, but it must have been down there. Where the one I've been talking about must have been in the same place as the other, and a new one put in.

We used to come round on a Saturday night, midnight, two of us and we took the old hurricane light before the days of street lighting. Stoke up for the Sunday service; shut the damper down a bit. Louis Lambert and me.

When a load of coke about 6 or 7 tons at a time arrived and top it up against the east wall there, and when you walk round the east wall you'll find there's a brick gully all round for water. Well the lorry, well it wasn't a lorry then, it was a horse and cart, coal lorry, they did have one ton lorries then they came up to 15 cwt. I don't know if Bott's supplied or Cooknell's, I can't remember.

I don't know who supplied the coke; anyway it was unloaded opposite Una Bissmire's, carried across and tipped against the east wall. Then in time it. But to get that down to the stoke hole.

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Err one did it better than two. Because two, one used to get in the way. You had to go down and open the door at the bottom right back, get the shovel and shovel it down the steps see, keep shovelling until the heap at the bottom gave you just enough room to crawl between the top of the door and the coke, to get the shovel and this old fellow, Lambert would continue, but it was usually me that did it.

Once you were inside all that which had been shifted onto the heap, you couldn't get a lot in at once. There was this oblong room there see. The stove was stood on the left-hand side, and then a piece left about 4 or 5 foot and you stored your coke in there and you got that up, kept filling up. Meanwhile the other bloke would be throwing more down to you. You'd say *that's enough*. Then you'd clean it all up, clear the steps down, put all away, fasten the door, make it all safe and clean. And he always used to like a little heap on the corner ready to throw straight in.

No, no room to take the coal bags straight in, too high then. You wouldn't get down, catch it on the top of the door, get half way, tip your load off. We found shovelling that was the best way. A Saturday job that was. Yes. Louis Lambert and myself.

That place was flooded. Oh ah yes. It didn't use to put the fire out. It used to flood in winter two or three inches. Pump it out. There was a sump down the bottom of the steps, covered with some boards and carry that out in a bucket. It was deep you see. That was our job Saturday afternoon and as I say each Saturday we used to go round and stoke up.

Many many a time we've had an old owl come down and want to know what we were doing. When we walked through the churchyard they come for your light. Owls do swooping down. I expect I'm the only one whose had experience of that left.

Did you know Bryden's were at Smith's yard? Sumner and Neal made handles and other parts for a Mr Bryden. A Pablo Wilkins and Mr Bryden worked with another man at Samuelson's. Mr Bryden was the manager there. When Samuelson's stopped making Gardner's Turnip cutters, then Bryden had the paten from them and set up at Smith's yard, Round Bottom. He lived at Cope's Cottages. This was in 1930. Pablo Wilkins worked with him until he retired. *Pablo* was his nickname. He was killed at Banbury when the Germans bombed the gas works. He had a fine up standing wife and two or three children.

The turnip cutters were made in a shed in the south part of Smith's yard until one day there was a fire and the business folded up. It was the moulding place that caught fire. I remember watching the work being done. Unfortunately there was not a great demand for them as horses eventually went out.

Sumner's did some work at Station Farm. When I went to school Mr Dealey farmed it. Well he was there probably before I went. Dealey was a little short jolly chap. He had fields over the line and there was a level crossing over there at one time. He would go over, horse and cart, it was wide enough for that. I think they had one or two girls. Emily Dealey went to the school, same school as we did. They were there quite a time, but gone by 1938. Then there was a Czech there, Dr. Haenni. He and his wife wasn't so bad. I worked there for Smiths. Borrowed again. Lambert's (*of Manor Farm who leased both farms*) had a bathroom put in.

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Then when the war came they went off to Canada. He had something to do with the Alley, he wasn't farming, Lambert's had the land then. Haenni's had two servants. One was French Czech and the other a German Czech. The German was blooming awful. She was aggressive. Cor! Now Marie the French one was a nice girl, but t'other one L'aticha, I wouldn't trust her the length of a gooseberry.

Sumner's did some repairs up in Great Bourton. There was a Mr Brodie who travelled for some Liverpool wine company who lived in Rosemead, Great Bourton. Then John Coy's Dad moved down there. Ern Coy. There were three Coys, John, Dorothy (Doll) and Ted. I don't know if that is the right way round or not.

Rosemead was all done up by the Sumners in 1931 for Mr Brodie, and they had to get permission off the Pratts whose garden ran down the back of Rosemead. The wall was rebuilt at the bottom and all the soil dug away and a lot of stuff put on the house and wall to preserve it.

On May the 6th thirteen Bristol Bulldog Fighters from Heyford flew over in a V formation. Two hit and two came down with parachutes. One plane dropped stone dead and the other did the *falling leaf*. Albert and I saw them pass over while at Rosemead. The one that fell made a hole at Wardington seven feet into the ground. In the quarry at the east end near the pub. There's a dip below the pub where the footpath to the church goes by the first field on the right. I wrote *two collided in mid air. Knocked the wing off one. 12 noon went up as far as the White barn, had a talk to Mr Jones about it. He picked one of the pilots up. Never hurt him much (Came down in parachutes). The other pilot landed two fields away. Mr Jones had part of the wing. 6.45 I went up to Warding[ton] and saw them compleatly wrecked. One of them was buried, engine part, seven feet.*

Miss Lambert left her house (*on the green*) to the vicar the Revd Sharpley. He sold it to Mr Taylor who renamed it Fairview and had Sumner's in to repair it. This was 1938 at which time there were railings in front. Johnny Green and I were there working. Mr Taylor came from Scotland and she had children by her first husband. Between them they had seven children. She had two sons called Fowler. One lad went to work for Hinkins and Frewing and did well, a nice lad, the other became ill and was in hospital near Roland Cave. He died in 1947. Roland was very upset by it. It was just before he too died.

We had had a ton of coal delivered by Mr Taylor who was still in Banbury and all that winter we were inside in the warm! The plaster was dreadful, no horsehair in it. Someone had skimped with the rebuild. So it was a job of patching and make do and then decorating it all throughout.

There was a big room either side of the front door and the kitchen behind on the right, the pantry behind on the left. The front door and back door opposite each other along the hall. When we had finished they lived there with their dose of kids calling it Fairview. The Revd Sharpley sold Goodrest next door to Bott's.

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## 14. Sumners – Funeral Directors

Mr.B...’s house is an old one; his parents had it before him. An old thatched house. His father was a big tall man and his wife a small person. One of the old village sort of ladies. Yes. She was a very friendly person. They had sons. One was a big strapping person and went off to work elsewhere. One stayed to help his Dad. Then when she died I went with the coffin, you know at night. The coffin on your shoulder covered with a cloth. Always at night. It was the first time I went in, before that I waited outside with the lantern.

This time uncle said to my brother Albert, *Albert will you be with us to night? No* said Albert. *Pardon?* Said uncle. *No I'm going courting.* Replied Albert. *You mean you would put your courting before your job?* Said uncle. *Yes,* he replied. *You go courting then,* said uncle. Albert was courting his now wife at Middleton Cheney, near the church, and he went over on his bike. Evelyn Seeney her name was.

Uncle said to me, *Arthur do you think you could manage to help me? Your brother Albert has said **No!*** Well I thought and thought about it. I had only ever seen a dead person once back in '24, when my grandfather Dunn died. *Well yes I can.* I said and so uncle and I carried it down after 7 o'clock and into the house. At that time his fiancé, his now wife was visiting them. They chatted downstairs and had a smoke-fag. Then uncle said, *which end do you want top or bottom?* I said *bottom,* so I had to go ahead up the stairs. Halfway up I thought *I can't go up. What's matter?* Said uncle *something the matter? **No! No!*** And up I went.

Mrs was in the first room at the head of the stairs. Only two rooms. When we moved her, oh dear. They do you know. The son's fiance came up. *Oh dear* she said and went down again. We lit a fag each, then up came the girl friend with a bottle of scent and she swung it round and round the room. All round and nearly suffocated us. It was worse you couldn't breathe. Ever since then I've loathed that smell of scent. I always went with uncle after that. Albert was not asked again.

That flu 1934 *said Lucy* was when Miss Kirkby died. She caught it from her friend.

Mr Elkington, *Arthur continued,* who lived in New Place he was a small round-shouldered man, a sawyer. He and another sawyer from Bourton, Jimmy Young, used to help turn hay at hay harvest time. Mr Elkington had one of those old fashioned curved tines, rakes, and he went up that row of hay turning as though his life depended on it. Oh my golly. He worked for Lambert's. It was a W.J.Lambert cottage.

I rather think Sumner's did his funeral, because we were bringing his coffin out and he only had a ladder to the two bedrooms from the pantry and there was no banister above or rail. If you got out of bed at night you'd fall down. Well we had this coffin plus the both of us on the ladder and it gave way and dropped us in the pantry below. No, no one was hurt, but the coffin was up on end.

Mr W.J.Lambert had an English oak coffin. I made his box. He's buried in the churchyard. I also helped to make other relations coffins and many others, then after a last look you had to screw them down.

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My Father *Connie told us*, was an undertaker. Mr Frank Sumner. Often you see when people were in hospital the post office was one of the only telephones and they gave our number for the hospital to ring. Oh manys the time I have had to go out and tell someone their relation has passed away, when the hospital rang me. There was no way round it, and luckily no one made a scene. One and all carefully took the news and didn't make it hard, but mostly the news came as no surprise. Still it wasn't an easy thing to do. No.

Then if there was someone absent and Father had to get a coffin ready, Arthur Pettifer might be called to help, or even Albert, but often I had to hold the boards, help with the varnishing and making the lining. There wasn't much about coffin making that I didn't know.

When coffins were made the fire was lit upstairs in the paint room for the tar to be heated. This was to make them waterproof.

When Father made the coffins they had oak boards for the dear ones and elm for the cheaper. The wood was stored with wedges between to keep them dry and aired. The two sides were made and then bent over to be shaped, with a kettle of hot water at the ready. They were assembled and the lining prepared. This came in rolls of the right width and was white brocade cotton. The whole was tacked with the material over the outside, then after tacking the cotton turned to the inside and finished down. Next a white frill was put round in about six inch pleats. From this at intervals you had a white and sometimes mauve tassels. There was a little heap of shavings at the head covered with material to make a pillow.

The shrouds were always purchased ready made. Some were too poor even to manage those and father would then cover the body in cotton wool to make it decent. They look well set with that. Altogether he made a handsome job of it all.

The coffin had to be pitched before the lining was put in, and the whole at first varnished. Later they waxed polished it. Wintertime made it very awkward to get a good finish and then into the house to get a dry varnish.

For children's, small ones, the coffins were white washed. I remember being bearer for little Ivy Wells. We still have the white cords used for children's in the house now.

For the furniture for the coffins, a traveller would come round and father would order a dozen at a time perhaps.

Louis Lambert was the sexton, but Father had to get the bearers. This was difficult. They were paid 2s 6d each, but it became difficult even when it reached one pound, because they lost a days pay.

*(Sometimes people let Mr Sumner know before they died. **Tell Frank Sumner to get the plank ready and then he won't be disturbed at night.** Such thoughtfulness surely a sign of a community spirit, besides having **had enough** of this life. Connie had the post office at the Woodyard from April 1940 to April 1966. It was a separate business from the wheelwrights and builders. For ten years she nursed her father, the last two of which were a 24-hour task. The post office hours were 6am to 6pm, yet Connie still somehow managed to attend most nights to her father Frank).*

I was said to know everything *continued Connie* yet I didn't know about the leaving present of a gold watch and dinner service.

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Grandfather Richard Sumner married Mary Ann Smith and for a while lived up at Williamscoote as he was estate carpenter. They lived then in a row there of four cottages, recently done up, with a slate roof. They had three children, Elsie, Ann and Frank. Richard died of a heart attack on the 14th of December 1924, not long after he had moved to his new house, Stone Leigh. He was not all the time at the Woodyard.

Father married Mabel Ellen Dunn from Great Bourton and they moved into 3 Chapel Row. Later they came down to the Woodyard.

*I have been doing a small survey on toilets and bathrooms. Might I ask about the Woodyard arrangements?*

At 3 Chapel Row they shared with Mrs Golby next door for the water pump. They each had a chemical loo at the back. In between the toilets was a glass fronted shed where father did the gravestones. They had a kitchen, which was not connected inside, to the house, but to the garden. In there was a small fireplace, a copper and the coal.

At the Woodyard all the fire ashes were heaped up in the small garden out the back. Then a hole was dug and lined with the ashes and the **contents** thrown in. There was no other way. Mrs Cooknell who lived in Woodview had a dry bucket at the back



of the wash house in the old stable area, which of course also had to go into the garden. There was a tiring place in the garden at the back. They saved a few wheels to do at one go and you couldn't put your washing out that day!

The first of the three cottages in the Woodyard was the post office. There is a blocked window *on the west gable*, which was used as a cupboard. The outside faced the telephone kiosk and this was where the post box used to be.

*Talking later to Arthur and Lucy:* Connie said that apparently the Sumner's excelled at cesspits. The one for Richard Sumner's Stone Leigh, next to where Connie's bungalow was recently built, was very efficient. They never had to have it emptied. The overflow went into a culvert, which led into Red Lion Street's culvert. A manhole was made to inspect it. Being a builder meant they had this good cesspit.

Neal's, *said Arthur*, also had one at the back of 10 Chapel Row, with a flush toilet at the end of the garden. This at a time when most houses had bucket loos or still had the old pit from the toilet to be emptied one moonlit night with all the doors and windows shut.

When Connie and Sam Hollis's bungalow was built (*Conifers*) the cess pit for Stoneleigh was filled in as main sewage was available. Not many cess pits in the village.

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## 15. Pumps and Fetching Water

There was a well just above the second door up in the Woodyard and between that and the scullery window was the pump.

When the blacksmiths needed water for tiring the wheels they generally used water from the big water butts, which collected the roof water. They stood their cans of water already to pour on the hot metal in the tiring ring.

Yes on that photograph of Mr and Mrs Richard Sumner (*photo25*), behind there is the pump close to the wall. You worked it left hand. That tank I've painted several times inside and out. Not full of course! The water goes through the wall over the sink. Not hot mind! See that window by the tank that was the scullery. Only a tiny little place, about the size of our front hall. There was a well but it smelt. Washing water only. Mr Sumner went to Hickman's well. That was a good narrow one, sixty feet down.

The Brasenose College water did not supply the Woodyard. There were at least four taps belonging to them that I can think of. One by Steven's Station Road, One in Plantation. One for bottom row in Creampot and one higher up by Spencer's. Oh and one in the Jitty by Mrs Pargeter's. You couldn't touch them if they weren't yours! Mr Steven helped to dig a trench for the college water supply all the way down the fields from Rushford by **hand**! It supplies Elm Grove still and did go to Manor Farm. Mr Norman Smith said it ran under the surgery!

The post office cottage and the middle one were both part of Sumner's house. When you enter the front door at the Woodyard theres a lounge, once the post office, which was approached from a door on the left hand side. Then another door upstairs, straight up stairs, then the pantry door. The pantry was big. The kitchen to the right hand side.

Once Emily Bradley *nee Cooknell* lived there with her father and brother. I rather think they did and then moved up into Woodview in the corner.

Emily *said Lucy*; used to look after Connie and all her life Connie called her **Penn**. She couldn't say Emily and a lot of people called her Penn, even the nurse. Connie always used to come (*next door*). She used to send her birthdays and Christmas.

Emily's aunt Mrs Neal, *Arthur went on*, the wife of Richard Sumner's partner, had the old pump on the wall round the back. Not so much in a box, it was a narrow one at the top, but the linkage wasn't. Not an ordinary barrel pump like the one across at Rolph's the post office now, that blue one. No. It had a big handle and it had some special linkage on, to make it easier

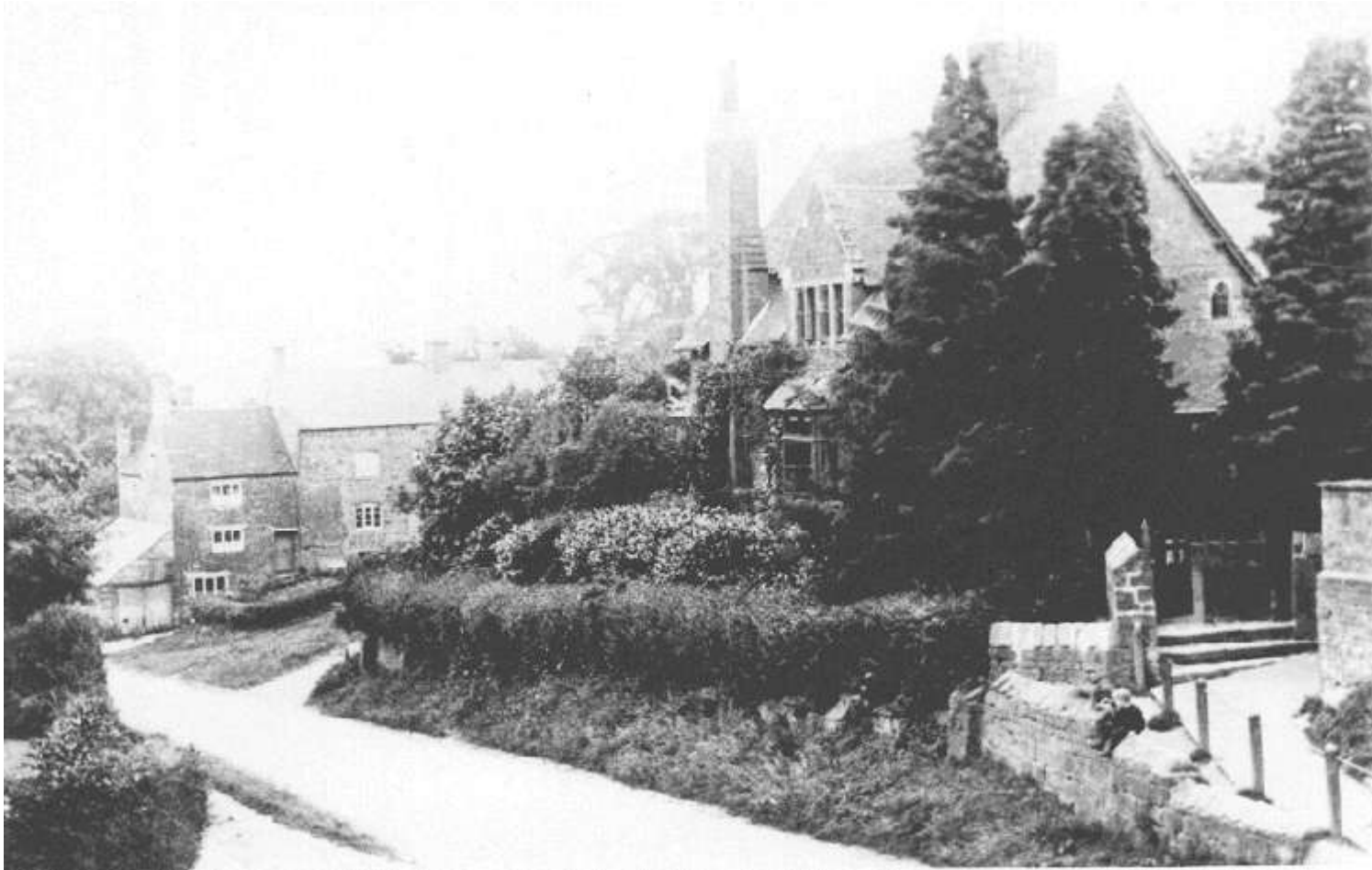
pumping. Yes a heavy job. Same type as was in Great Bourton vicarage. That's special linkage. As you pumped the links sort of...

Don't talk about **that!** *Lucy burst out...*

...eased back and as you pulled the handle down they double linkage sort of awkward.

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It was in a dark corner that, *Lucy continued*. When I was at Bourton Vicarage, I went up to Bourton 1937, every day I had to go and pump 1,000 pumps on the lawn, up the garden, this took the water to a well below the kitchen, then I had to go into the kitchen and do 1,000 there to get it up into the tank. The bath tank. This was all water for washing, not drinking. Then up at the stables they had another pump to pump water into a tank for the stables. This was a soft water tank. The well was by the coach house, but we never used that at the house.



40.

**Hancocks. Formerly Great Bourton Vicarage. Built 1868. Dunn's on the left.**

We had the drinking water from the tap opposite the Bourton post office by the churchyard wall. This was from Springs Close ram. The Parish Council provided it. It didn't cost anything. This tap and another by the Bell came from the ram.

Nearly everyone had pumps or rams, *said Arthur*. There were rams at Bourton which operated of course by the water's own strength, needing no pump. It's a great pity they haven't been kept.

*Lucy continued*, I went and collected the water in a pail and a three-gallon Sten. This was a Welsh jug for Mrs Hancock was Welsh. I carried the two-gallon pail on the left arm. It was hard work if I had to go to the top tap or down to the pump when the other ram ran out. Carrying all that back for drinking water.

Once I washed fifteen pillowcases so you can tell how many were staying there then. They never sent the washing out. It was all done in. They had guests staying and sometimes I slept in the daughter-in-laws room as she wouldn't sleep on her own when her husband was away. In the front room with the bay, or in my own room at the back, if no guest had it, or in a room between which had no window as it was blocked off, or one of the other rooms, even Hancock's once. Sometimes I had a bed in the dining room and once in the kitchen when the house was full.

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I helped pump for you sometimes didn't I? *Arthur turned to Lucy*, and helped do some painting and decorating, because once I was painting the kitchen and you and Mrs Hancock were stood over there behind me. The back door stood open and a terrific thunderstorm blew up. I was down to the concrete skirting. It had imitation wooden scroll on the top, but it was so damp being below the lawns and that, that it had to be cemented. When the rain come on and a bolt of lightening hit the courtyard outside, come through into the kitchen right under my arm! *Ooh!* said Mrs Hancock *did you see that?* I did, it just missed me.

They had a copper and a baker's oven. *Lucy added* Part of that floor was wooden, the old kitchen. We used to have to polish it...

Actually for warmth *interrupted Arthur*. No such thing as concrete in those days when it was built.

...I slept in every room. When I slept in the kitchen and there was a Mr Richard above, and oh how he snored! *Lucy laughed and Arthur quickly took over.*

At Mrs Neal's at Cropredy a lot of her decorations were grained. Grained, oak grained. Their front room floor was wooden below the path level.

Actually their washbasin, the swan-neck underneath the washbasin was the very first one I had to plumbers wipe. Plumbers joint. I well remember doing this S trap on the washbasin. The gaffer took me up. Strain your neck under there to do that. A plumbers joint done not with a soldering you see. A dry moleskin and tallow. A stick of plumbers solder is flat about 7/8th wide by 1/4 thick and it has to be put on like a bit of melten butter and then it has to be wrapt round nice and smooth with this moleskin, but you've got to hold your blow lamp in this hand and eh it's a devil of a job. They had to do some of them jobs years ago. Different positions. Pump outside used to pump it up to the tank.

Yes, *said Lucy*, most had a washbasin in their bedrooms, if no pump outside to pump it up. Basin in the bedroom because a lot had no bathroom, did they? Jug and basin on a washstand.

I don't know what hot water they had, whether they got a Triplex in there, had they Mrs Neal? *Arthur asked Lucy.*

I don't know. I only went in once.

Triplex grate had a boiler you see.

I had that in Banbury, *Lucy remembered*, before I came out here. I came out to Cropredy in 1932 to Monkeytree House. Old Miss Kirkby used to have a cold bath in the morning and a hot bath at night, and we hadn't got no hot water, it had to be done with kettles. She used to have a hipbath in her bedroom. Yes. Then I had to have the hipbath in my bedroom. There was a bathroom there in Banbury and a toilet and all the same as we are now. It wasn't separate. It was in the bathroom.

You'll find, *said Arthur*, that in most places where you have to pump water up to these tanks, you'll find those big pumps installed. Big heavy pumps. Because up at the end of this stroke comes a pipe 8 square and up to the ceiling, then. Difficult stuff un all.

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When we made pumps it took over a day to bore out the wood. The pump boring equipment went to the Halifax museum I believe. You begin by getting 12 to 15 foot of wood bored. It was two inch bore at the bottom and four near the top to take the bucket inside. Mark out the 2-inch and centre it with a compass.

You began to chisel a small piece down then chisel with the long auger, which stretched so far and had a 5-foot handle across for two men to turn. It was 2 inch round chisel without a thread as it was cut without to keep it straight. It was **push** and **turn**. This needed constant sharpening. The wood being elm as it kept in the water. Above ground was oak wood, a metal handle and spout.

There were several different gadgets, which bored the hole wider. The boss, John Shirley and Albert my brother went to set it up, sometimes there were two or three sections to be jointed together and there was a top man above ground who had to watch to see nothing fell in.

A candle was let down first. If this blew out a kettle full of hot water was sent for, if on a farm, the farmer was asked for it, and this was poured down hoping the steam drove out the smell. Kill a man it would, wells like that. Have to get it out first. Then down you went, down the straight ladder and fix the pump joints. Hot linseed and flannel to seal the joints carefully sent down.

They never wore a safety rope any of them and it was up to the top man to see they were safe. To listen and send down a rope, or climb down if anything went wrong.

No matter what the weather on top, you had to go on. Once when putting in a pump at Claydon on a farm opposite the chapel, it came on to snow and we had to stand there, couldn't shelter or anything while a man down the pump.

We made the last pump head for Broughton and Wilkes, the boss there, Mr Sewell, wanted one. His relation was at school with Lucy.

Thickthorn's windmill? There used to be a windmill for pumping up on the main road. That one? One of those made out of angle iron frame. The multi-fan type. Hanbury had one same type. Firms put those up. The manufacturers put them up. There were several. One at Hanbury's, Thickthorn farm. One at Mollington. One at Adam's up there. That one at Hanbury's, boss and I had to go up once. One day the connecting rod broke. Connecting rods are wood and come right down from the top you know, from the crank. Come right down through the guides and right to the bottom. Several joints. But the wood in time rots and breaks and we had to go up there and take a section off, bring it down to the yard and take another one and put it back. Back up at Hanbury's it were. A section of the blooming ladder missing, rusted away. You had to go by that best way you could, and when you got on top of those platforms it were hell of a size you know.

We had to go to Adam's one morning and it were going like the clappers, the blooming brake had gone, it were tearing round. It were icy, all the platform were icy. We had to get up there, crawl along, crawl along this platform best way you could. You had to get the brake on, slow it down, it were icy. Oh ah. Yes it were dangerous. No guardrail round that platform, you know. Trust to luck.

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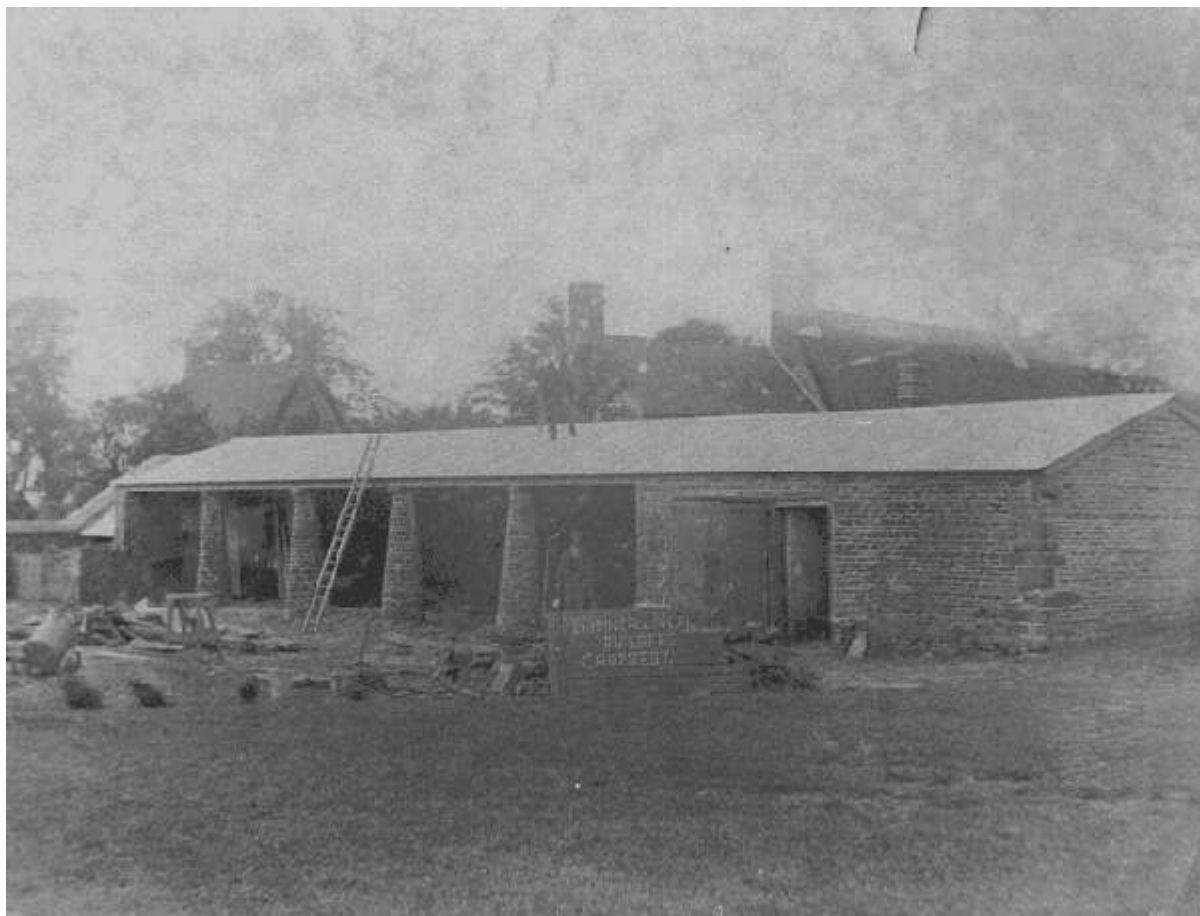
Yes for the farm. The fan goes quick but very slow pumping, steady pull. Well you see farms those days they had to have water as they do now for cooling the milk and it wasn't on the mains then. Private.

I remember putting gutters at Hanbury's. No electric drills then. Only a hand drill to make the screw holes. His daughter lived at home. He did a lot for Bourton.

When I was courting Lucy in 1936/37 we went to a party at the school in Bourton, which was being run by the Hanbury's. We were playing a game in which a parcel went round and on a piece of paper I had the instruction, *Pass me to a lady in **blue**.* And I promptly got up and passed it to Miss Hanbury. When we got outside later Lucy said, *was I **blind**?* And *Didn't I see what she was wearing?* When I looked she was wearing **blue**. Oh dear! What a row!

Mr Hanbury didn't actually farm himself; he must have had private means, I think. Anyway he had a man in. More like a smallholding I suppose.

Sumner's built farm buildings. At Cropredy Lawn they built the new cow parlour in the 1920's for the co-operative farm. Built with factory bricks under a tile roof. It catered for twenty cows.



**41.**

**Sumner and Neal Builders. Cropredy.**

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Connie showed photographs of farm buildings built by Sumner and Neal in about 1912. A cow parlour at Prescote Manor farm. It says the builders were Sumner and Neal and the architect W.J.Langley who had sent the Sumner's the photos. One inside the cow-parlour. One outside with the yard. The third shows the doors and cooling room window. That would need a good water supply (Book 2).



I remember in 1947 there was a bad storm and an old ash fell in the Goggs. Cyril Lambert of Manor Farm, told us to get it. It was so big we needed gun powder to blow it. We made a special tool for it.

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## 16. Wood and Sheds

*A man who has ever worked in a workshop needs a shed. Arthur.*

In 1947 Mr Sumner took me to Mr Mayer's Woodyard at Silverstone. They sold good oak and ash there, for it was good country for oak and ash, all those woods round there.

Oak like the clayey nature of Silverstone area. Nice over there. Trees are like plants in the garden, they won't grow anywhere. Well this is not good ash country round here. Ash country has a drier soil and hedgerow ash they're not a lot of good. No. In a spinney, spinney ash is the best. Spinney oaks are best. You don't get any knots in it. All spokes of wheels are made from spinney oaks. Spinney oak you can get them two foot. They're not long spindly things. Straight and no knots. The branches are all up high.

Coppice not for wheel wrighting, no. Coppice is cut down and used for making charcoal and bean sticks and lesser things. Charcoal for welding and marking out the line to saw wood.

Mr Mayer used a portable steam engine to cut wood in the round. It was stacked with a piece of wood between each plank, until the whole was cut.

We bought what we wanted of cut wood and it was loaded on the trailer and Mr Sumner went to pay. They had some of this lovely brown rare oak in a stack, two boles. The boss asked if it was for sale. *Oh no* said the old man *no that's first class oak, no that's not for sale. How long have you had that? Oh ten or twelve year. You'll be getting the beetle in, if you don't watch it. Could you sell some of it?* Mr Mayer the old man *Well I was saving it.* So they argued and argued, argued and argued and then he said, *well you can.* So I had £20 worth and Mr Sumner the rest to make his furniture with.

Did you? *I asked*

Oh no, no. Two oaks they were. Well I put it in my shed I had at home, then later down at Mrs Bonham's garden. Then in the finish I had to let it go. That oak I bought was kept in my shed where Mrs Eriksen had her garden made, before that it was Mrs Bonham's (*on the north west corner of the Green*). Well she was ill and John *Bonham* told me, *Arthur I am afraid you will have to move the shed soon.* So I had to in 1965 pull the shed down and it went up to my youngest brother Leslie in Appletree and it still stands up there, first house on the top of the hill. How I missed that shed and the lathe. Really missed it. We had a fire in there, a stove.

A man who has ever worked in a workshop needs a shed, where he can go when he wants, even if it's to sort out a tin of nails or sharpen chisels or saws.

I had a workshop up at the back of High Street cottages. A good workshop, we bought it. A Sutcliffe garidge about 14 foot by 8.

He and his mother bought it between you didn't you? *Asked Lucy*

Six pounds in 1936. I was pally with Len Bonham then. We got pally because we were motorcyclists and Len went out with a girl from Banbury same as I did. We used to go out together on these motorbikes. We used to go to Leamington and so forth. When Mum died in December 1952 I had to pull this place down. Pulled it down in 1953 didn't I? At Mum's it stood near were the bungalow stands in Newscut Lane. I had to come out of my home over there when Handley's bought it.

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Yes *agreed Lucy* that's right.

Len said *what are you going to do with it?* I said *I don't know* as I had come across here to live, to lodge with my aunt, and I couldn't take it across there. *I'll tell you what* he said *I'll put it down at our place.* So we cleared all that corner out in his father's place on the Green, bottom of their garden, and put up my garidge. We had a smashing workshop down there. We had a double door on the end. We had a wire to the house and so fluorescent light. We had a brew up in there and a woodturning lathe. We bought a stove and some coke; it was quite cosy in there.

I've a photo inside that workshop, shows the lathe and Len's pictures and the flask of coffee Len brought in for the evening. Lucy's on it with her shopping bag. The lathe is took to bits now, I can't use the thing it's in the pantry. We had a workbench with vice at the back, shelves over the lathe, paint shelves. The old tilly lamp, paint and lord knows what. Here's a couple of pin ups! Chisels. The photo taken with an ordinary camera, time exposure, we didn't know if it would come out or not. This was on the table here that Len bought in to stand the camera on. We didn't hold it. This was your half-day off wasn't it dear? The shelves with paints, nuts, bolts and the stove was here. We used to buy coke between us; it was quite cosy in there. We were as snug as houses in there.

Outside this photograph of Len's bike and my Velacette. You can see Bonham's shed behind. His shed was a big iron one goes back a fair way. Wooden doors, possibly an old gig shed. Corrugated, old as me. There were some iron railings at the back. Hammond's Poultry farm at the back behind them. That old asbestos muck shed was behind Bonham's. When you went up Hammond's back drive there was a division. The gate to the field was on the right hand side, but no gate to the yard. Mr Ward of Mollington drove his tractor round the field to the muck house, which was full of hen muck. What a smell!

When I had that shed on the Green in Bonham's garden I used to look over to the stile to the Cup and Saucer field. The Cup and Saucer *old cross* was to the left of the view. Then after they moved it to its present position, it was to the **right**. So it was moved.

Mr Hammond supported cricket. He wanted to make the Cup and Saucer field into a playing field with a pavilion and a lot of money was collected. Then the Council built the houses on the field. We had the cricket field at one time down the Claydon Road as I said. The area was roped off from the cattle and we had a good pavilion.

In the field next to the cricket was Bonham's shed and the field beyond was Sumner's. They had it in two little fields. I don't know what they used them for. Mr Cross of Andrew's farm sometimes had his horse or some cows in there. In the top corner next to Cross's own field was a large willow and every year I went down there and cut off all the top growth. I don't remember what it was used for. Great big tree it was. Mrs Sumner sent us down.

At the top of the Claydon Road was the village dump. The ditch then wasn't as it is now, but more a great big hollow a good five feet wide and more scooped out. On the bank beside the road was a thicket of hawthorn trees on the rubbish. At the end you could crawl through and down the ditch.

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## 17. The Club

*There used to be more things going on in the village. Arthur.*

The ex-servicemen set up a hall. It was the usual army hut with an almost flat roof, a small apex and felted and tarred over. I know because I put the tar on for uncle Sumner. The outside were creosoted and the doors painted green. There were windows along both sides. I expect it was as big if not bigger than the present hall. The platform was much the same size. No, no toilets, except a bucket one out the back. A passage up between the platform to a door to the back room.

The exservice men ran the hall and were on the men's club committee as well. The Club was a meeting place; you didn't have music or that. We paid 6d a week and if there was anyone else using the hall, that was it, no club that night. There were no drinks or anything like that. No coffee.

We used the Church Rooms only for small meetings once the hall was built so it wasn't used as much.

We younger ones could play billiards but only when the team was at Eydon, Culworth or somewhere, then we had a chance. The older members had it most nights, the team. We sat round and talked and told tales round the tortoise stove. That was half way along the right hand side. It used to get nice and warm.

You didn't pay extra for the billiards; no it was inclusive of your 6d. They always had a member on duty. No rowdyism or anything then. He opened up, saw that everything went all right all evening, fire safe, lights off, doors locked up at the finish. Oil lamps, four or five each side.

We had cards, ping pong, darts and that. On most nights and Saturday too. You could have gone to Banbury, plenty of buses, only no one could afford it. We had socials there, dances, films a man from the Rural Community ran those after the electric came, whist drives and yes lectures. Some were lantern lectures. Well the lantern was lit by an oil lamp with a "chimney." In a box 18 by 18 by 18 inch about. You put these glass plates in it and the lamp threw up the picture. Mr A.H.Griffiths I think it was who came to give those. I met him years after when he came to the blacksmiths as Rural Industries. He went into that later. If you wanted assistance then they would give you a bit of money to buy a few tools. When I saw him I said, *I think I know you? Did you come to Cropredy to give lectures once?* He said he did. Well I remembered him then. He was quite an old man when he came to the yard. He used to come in a car to lecture.

We had some good times in there. It had a better floor than these solid wood blocks, it bounced well. Had some good dances. It was cosy in there, though long and wide.

During the war, the blackout, it still went on. We had a social there during the winter, one of the biggest and finest we ever had, given by R.A.F. Chipping Warden. It was a masterpiece. The R.A.F. brought their own chaps for the artists. One chap, as we knew he played the accordion and by god he could play un all. Community singing you see. Darn good. I shouldn't think we've ever had another like it since. We used to have socials, yes as I said.

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Mr Brown along Chapel Row, the newspaperman, he did sausage and mash suppers, they were very good. Eighteen pence a time. One shilling and sixpence (*7 5p*). They were very good, everyone went to them. Sausage, mash and peas and all that, really good. Mr Brown were a proper Londoner.

You **knew** everyone in the village those days you did. Well there used to be more things going on in the village.

No I don't remember the Mary Smith library. The village hall library that was the County library.

*Lucy said* Other night, Monday night with Tom *Bradley* (*next door to Arthur and Lucy*).

That used to be held at the exservicemen's hall. *Arthur agreed*. Yes on a Monday. Colin Shirley ran that.

Then they had a thrift Club with about four on the committee. Mr Brown, Mr Bernhard Pargeter, Mr Harry Busby and Mr Frank Sumner. They collected the money from you week by week and at Christmas you had your money plus a little interest. I've still got the little booklets, that was entered and it will be in there who ran it.

I remember the Village Hall sports days we had in the field behind. It was suited for that. Coronation day we had a big do and also Jubilee as I have photographs of it all.

One day a friend and I went fishing in the canal field below the village sports field, now Creampot Crescent and Close. It was a meadow by the canal and we were near the old boathouse of Andrew's farm. That was a good building it had these cast iron pillars and all fancy at the top with a boarded roof. The long boat turned in and then two gates shut behind it.

Then while we were fishing a huge R.100 come over from behind us. It was a big thing with passenger lounges, promenades and sleeping accommodation. The first I remember was the ?R38 which I saw when I was young. I was born in 1915. Spectacular that was the R100. I also saw the government one R101.

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## 18. Courting

I used, the girl I used to go out with before I was going with Lucy was a gardener's daughter. Her father was gardener at the Vicarage. First one. Three years. Packed up on the 31st of December 1935 at 10 past 7 and by half past 7, I had Lucy! That was quick wasn't it? That's the truth; we were going to the Women's Institute New Years Eve party. Invitation and I was all dolled up. I went along to Red Lion Street to pick her up, but we had a real good bust up at the top of Red Lion Street and I said *well we are finished*. It was finished, that was that and I'd been going out with her for three and a half years. I walked back home, but on the way... I was on the way back home, got as far as the Chapel here and somebody came round the corner and it were Lucy. I hadn't had much to do with her, I knew her as Lucy had been along our place to see our Mum, because Mum used to go along to Mrs Kirkby's. Lucy said *aren't you going? No. Why not? Finished*. Lucy said *come as my guest*.

Lucy was at the corner with Roland Plumb and his girl friend, so we went along together and people turned their heads, because I had a new girl friend! It was the best thing we ever did. She would not have made such a good wife as Lucy did. Oh no.

At 8 o'clock I had to pop out and do the evening papers and when I got to uncle Frank's, my boss, he said, *who are you with at the party?* I said *Lucy who works for Kirkby's*. He said *well stick by her, as she's a good girl*. He clapped me on the shoulders. *New girl!* He was right.

I was courting twenty-nine years. John Coy's brother he has been courting three weeks longer, at least he never married. I wanted to get married so I asked if I could rent the tied cottage next to Andrew's farm. Mr Cross said he wanted it for a farm worker, not that he ever put one in. Brasenose College said they couldn't let me have it, as Mr Cross would want to put a man in. I wanted to get married. It was hard work getting a cottage to rent. In the finish they put Lewis in who worked for McDougall not Cross.

I was courting Mrs Pettifer twenty-nine years. Well you cannot always do what you want. In 1940 we got engaged. Then Lucy was up at the vicarage at Bourton during the war and I joined the Home Guard at Bourton because she had her night off on the Home Guard night and we could meet afterwards. Then I changed to Cropredy and we were up the top of the Mollington Hill.



We used to go to Banbury on a Saturday night to her people in Grimsbury, then back we'd come on my bike along the Daventry Road. That's how I knew that Kalabargo's stone beside the road there, pushed back when the County Council widened it, then took it away to the B.R.D.C. yard. There was a horse trough opposite.

Yes Lucy had one afternoon off a week. We didn't see much of each other, other than our regular trip. I must have travelled that road more often than most and it used to be a very lonely road too. Far more trees then and two bad turns. A cow once seeing our lights jumped the hedge and ditch right out in front of me!

I never liked holding Lucy's wool so I made her a wool winder out of oak. You can see the flower of the oak coming out clearly on the side. The arms lift upwards at the close and a cap fits the top, which has four pins fitting into the four arms.

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We used to go walking round by the mill when we were courting, across the fields for a walk.

I married Arthur when I was fifty-five at St Leonard's Church in Grimsbury in 1965.

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## 19. Lucy

*Lucy Pettifer nee Aris:* I was born on the 10th of February 1910 in Banbury, Oxfordshire. We lived at number 26 Middleton Road, Grimsbury, later renumbered to 100. My Father came from Chipping Norton. Aris. Grandfather on my Dad's side made shoes. He was a postman at Chipping Norton and he had a garden shed for shoes. So when he was waiting to go back on the post he used to make these shoes and he used to go to the little hut out there and come back with the post later on.

My other grandfather, Mr Tibbets, used to put all the telegraph posts in. He put them in.

My Grandfather was ill when Grandmother one night had a stroke. They couldn't make the neighbours hear as it was across a passage dividing the houses. It was cold and snowing. She fell out of bed. Eventually they got her to the workhouse hospital where she died. Grandfather was so upset at the parting he too died and they were buried together in the hospital. They were too old to be alone really but they wouldn't move and be looked after.

Father was an 'Ostler at the Reindeer and sometime of the Flying Horse, Banbury. He knew Mr Tasker of Cropredy when he left his carrier's cart there. Father was a groom or an Ostler they called them in old days. Once he only passed the horse and it turned round and bit him and he had a great big bruise like that. Oh ages. He liked horses a lot.

My Father only earned 10/- [50p] a week, so my Mother who had been brought up to do laundry work went over the road to a laundry and did work with the ironing, using goffer irons.

When Mother was young they couldn't afford glasses. Then eventually they set her up with a pair and she said, *Oh look at that fly on the table, it's got eyes!* She was amazed at what she could see.

At my parent's house in Middleton Road Banbury, there were three houses in a row and we lived at one end. There was a passage, which the workers went to Lamprey's brickyard. Then they built some more and they closed it as a passage and put bars across the door and left it only for us to get round the back. In Banbury my people had to rely on soft water tanks.

I was the youngest of four children, two girls and two boys. One brother was Jim. My sister was Alice. Alice had to work in an aeroplane factory during the war. She made aeroplane wings in the First World War...near the canal. They wondered if she became afflicted with sleepy sickness, or Parkinsons from those wings. It was after that she got ill. You can see how she's standing on that photograph. She had a tremor. She would go quickly. As soon as she went into the surgery the Doctor knew

she had it. She had strokes as well and an ulcer. She went into Goodrest nursing home and died in Oxford Easter 1968. My brother's son lived near Oxford so he helped to visit her.

Towards the end of my parent's life I was nursing them. For eight years I nursed Mother who was no trouble at all. Father had several strokes and died on Midsummer's day some years ago. While he was in hospital I saw Mervyn Laver's father from Williamscoote. He had been a tall impressive man. He was well known as a butler in the area. He had had a stroke and was very ill.

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**42.**

**The Aris family: Alice, Mother,  
Dad, Lucy, Eldest brother.**

Dad wouldn't have his photo taken, but we have that one of us outside our house in Banbury and he's on that. My sister Alice with the white streak in her hair. Mother, me and my eldest brother. Dad was 69 then.

We had a nephew in New Zealand and a cousin in Canada. My brother had three sons. 1984 was a bad year. Four died in the family.

I went to Banbury to work before I was courting Arthur. I used to come back to the dances here. They had a lot of good dances arranged in the hall. I was working in Banbury before 1932 with Miss Marsh Kirkby, her sister plus their nurse. The nurse and sister died and she came to Monkeytree House and I came to settle her in. I was then 22 years old.

There were quite a few in Marsh Kirkby's family. One who died Billy, then Paul lived up North way, then Marsh, vicar of Wardington, then Kate and Monica who I worked for and another who was a teacher. I forget her name. They came to Banbury from Little Claringdon. Their Father was a clergyman. Kate said their money was **bad** money and from the slave trade.

Paul who lived up North, he was on the way to becoming a Bishop, he went to a conference in London and stopped in a hotel for the night before he came back via Banbury. Dr Kirkby he was. He had slept in a damp bed in the hotel. In the morning we found he had an old coat on his bed, he had a chill. *Oh she said why didn't you say you were cold.* And he told her then this hotel he went to in London, they put him in damp sheets. He was dead the next Friday. He died at home. The youngest sister that I was working for, Monica, died the next Friday and a fortnight afterwards **on** the Friday, Paul's wife died. That was three deaths in three weeks all on a Friday.

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Kate Kirkby, Miss Kirkby, always used to have a cold bath in the morning and a hot bath at night. In Banbury they had hot water from a triplex grate. When they were at Monkeytree we hadn't got no hot water, it had to be done with kettles. Yes. Then I had to have the hipbath in my bedroom. We'd had a bathroom and a toilet in Banbury. It wasn't separate it was in the bathroom. That was in Banbury.

Mrs Kirkby had recently been widowed and was renting Monkeytree house with the three daughters. Mrs Kirkby was married at sixteen. She was then the servant. While Miss Kirkby was alive I was treated as one of the family. She, Kate, was brought up to have manners. I was allowed to eat with them, but after she died Mrs Kirkby didn't like it. She never offered me a chocolate biscuit; they kept those until I was in bed. People born to it are much kinder. When Miss Kirkby was ill Miss West who used to live at Monkeytree came up and sat with her. She used to be a nurse or something.



**43.**

**Chapel Row  
with the  
Monkeytree in  
Kirkby's front  
garden.**

In 1934 Mrs Marsh Kirkby was going to Heyford by train to stay with her second daughter, who had married the widower William Dunn, a farmer from Cropredy. Agatha who was always looking after cows had been helping Mr Dunn. He had two sons by his first marriage to Elsie Sumner and two girls with his second wife.

On the day Mrs Kirkby was off to Heyford Miss Kirkby had been out to the outside toilet and then gone up and collapsed. I found her on the floor when I went to do the bedrooms. She'd had a stroke. I didn't know what to do, but Rodney Cherry who was passing by on Mr Eriksen's milk round, he came and helped me get her on the bed. I then ran down to the telephone at the exchange on the Green and rang for Dr. Wells. He stopped Mrs Marsh Kirkby at the station at Banbury for her to return. Luckily at that time the train to Heyford didn't go for another hour so she had gone round the town a bit. I told the Doctor where she was and he phoned the station and got her stopped and she came out in a tearing hurry and it was Dr Wells, he had said *your daughter* not sister-in-law. She thought it was her that was ill.

Miss Kirkby had caught the 'flu. Her best friend Mrs Bott had gone down with the 'flu the week before and she had gone to see her. Mrs Bott died soon after and Miss Kirkby was very shocked by it. She herself didn't live many days. She was buried in Banbury. There are five graves together. Revd Marsh Kirkby, his wife and a daughter are buried at Wardington.

I once laid out, helped to lay out, Mrs Frank Sumner. I had been helping her sometimes and was asked to help lay her out. A relation of Mrs Sumner's, a Dunn used to do all that.

Mrs Kirkby was the second wife. Two of the daughters were her husbands, her stepdaughters. Her Kate was the youngest. She was a nurse. Agatha married William Dunn and Maud the librarian married Chris Lewis.

One daughter had a parrot. It recited the National Anthem at them, once to the vicar, but changed the last line to *Bugger the King!*

I looked after Miss Kirkby when I first went there, not the rest of the family. Mrs Kirkby was a little woman and used to do a lot of walking about. They had an old auntie living there after and Arthur's Mother helped to nurse her, that's how I knew Mrs Pettifer. When the war started apparently Mrs Kirkby took a policeman's truncheon over to someone in Poplar Cottages in case of invaders. She was very nervous in case she hadn't paid me, and sometimes forgot she had and tried to pay me twice. When her daughter Kate who worked at McDougall's as a land girl was ill Mrs Kirkby was said to say she wouldn't live if Kate died. Kate did die and was buried at Wardington with her father. Mrs Kirkby walked up to the grave and they found her collapsed there.

*In the Wardington registers we found the following: Revd Marsh Kirkby buried 1 June 1929, aged 69, Vicar of Wardington. Kate Mary Gabriele Kirkby buried 17 Dec. 1941, aged 40, of Cropredy. Florence Louise Kirkby buried 2 February 1942, aged 68, of Cropredy.*

*Monkeytree House where Lucy worked for Miss Kirkby had four bedrooms plus an attic. Across the main living room was the parlour, which was also used as a bedroom. The dairy lay behind the front parlour at the bottom of the stairs. The living room was to the right of the front hall A dining room to the left, later the kitchen. Kirkby's scullery kitchen was up a step out of the dining room behind the old surgery entrance hall. The vet's double doors opened out onto an open passage by the stable and toilet. These were in an old barn in front of the house. Beyond the scullery was the cowshed in the old barn. Over the dining room and other main rooms were bedrooms but not over the scullery. That was the hayloft for the barn. In front of the house next to the stable was a coach house formerly a blacksmith's shop. This had been built as a three bay barn in the 1680's. The south bay was removed about 1800.*

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When I worked at Monkeytree House there was a gate first then a passage with the outside privy and then another gate to the yard. The privy had a large sump under the yard, which was emptied twice a year. The vets who lived here (*the Bortons up to 1900*) once had double doors at the main front door and another to the surgery, later made into the scullery or kitchen. It had a large slab all along the wall and the copper. The scullery was divided into two and as you came in there was a mangle where we used to put one dog. Then there was an opening, no door into the room. This great ledge was where they say he cut his animals up. We used it as a preparing place for my vegetables. It was about four inches thick. One dog was under it on his lead and another by the wall. We also fed the cats from there.

There were niches in the walls for lights by the outside doors. The tenant had to do repairs and the Kirkby's put the electricity in. That is the reason the meter was by the vet's door, they had no money to take it further in.

The copper was in the scullery and the chimney went into the dining room chimney. The range in there wasn't used. Mrs Kirkby wanted to have it and the round stove in the living room removed. She offered to pay something towards it, but he wouldn't have it done.

We did all the cooking on a Beatrice stove with three burners in the scullery. She bought it new. There was no heating in there. Different places have different ways! You went down a step into the dining room, which had a stone floor and a draughty back door. Then through the hall past the front double doors to the living room which also had stone floors.

There were once two laurel bushes on either side of the front door and it was called The Laurels. When the dogs killed them off they changed the name to Monkeytree House. Mr Bonham told them that the monkey tree was thirty-seven years old and planted about 1900. Underneath it one of the daughters planted begonias and they did well. It grew so tall that it did not block out the light.

Once a policeman came into the garden because a car outside had no lights on and he stepped inside the double front doors. When someone came to the door the Pekinese went for him and he said he would prosecute. Mrs Kirkby said he should have stayed outside.

Whisky the cat broke a leg and had it splinted by the nurse daughter. The cat had kittens and wanted to take them up the pear tree growing up the house and she did, three legged! Kate said to me once, *I'll take whisky to bed* and I thought she meant drink to start with.

In the living room there was a cupboard in the corner (*Now opened into the inglenook*). It was damp in the corner by the fireplace near the ham cupboard. Yes it was there by the bacon cupboard. They had pigsties on the yard and the pig first hung in the dairy then in the cupboard. There was a salt cupboard in the wall for salting the pig. It made the wood very wet. Salt rots things; I think it does a lot of damage. The inglenook, well that was blocked off. The dogs were never let out and often used the hearth as their toilet and left for me to clean up.

There were rats. We heard them. Only in the room where Kate used to sleep downstairs. It had a wooden floor. No we never saw them but we could hear them, because the dogs slept in there. It was always a bedroom.

There was a small half cupboard under the stairs, which were much steeper then and had a door into the living room at the bottom, next to the dairy door. The dairy had an extra lean-to out the back and inside a shelf under the window.

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Upstairs the first small room was the maid's room where I slept. It was tiny and only big enough for the bed and a chest of drawers. There was a broken pane stuffed with a cloth (*now the bathroom*). There was no bathroom like we had in Banbury.

Maud's room was the end one with the pear tree coming up. Mrs Kirkby's was over the living room. She had a fireplace. I don't remember this door to the attic. It was never opened; it must have been covered over. The last door was where Miss Kirkby slept, the vicar's sister. There was no window at the front then. The landing was always there, as I had to sleep on the landing when Miss Kirkby was ill. After she died I had to sleep in her room. I hated it with all her things there, but I wasn't allowed to make a fuss in case I disturbed the youngest daughter.

The eldest was state registered, but gave up nursing to help the exoccupants of Chacombe priory to breed dogs, setters and Labradors. Some were brought back to Monkeytree. Once we had five including the Pekinese. Maud lived later in Deddington. She married Chris Lewis who lived down the Lane. Agatha married Will Dunn and lived on a farm at Steeple Aston. They had two girls (*baptised at Cropredy in 1934 and 1937*).



Maud, *said Arthur*, was a tall handsome girl.

I always remember, *Lucy continued*, in the Institute they had the usual Christmas party and Maud...they had fancy dresses and the men were dressed up in ladies evening dresses and I can remember her coming back and she said, *I never knew Mr... was so white* she said *he's got a skin like a woman*, laughing. I didn't know that family then. When I knew them they lived at Little Bourton. After they left Cropredy. I didn't know them here. No they didn't come down here after except for one who used to come along. I had a lot to do with her when she was young, when I was at Mrs Kirkby's, because she used to come along.

They didn't have many visitors, because they were grown up. Maud used to work at Leamington in the library. Then she went as chauffeur to the officers and that.

Maud, *Arthur chipped in*, used to go off on the 20 past 8 train to Leamington. Worker's train was 10 past 7.

Mrs Kirkby was exceedingly kind to others, *said Lucy*, but desperately poor. Sometimes she couldn't put a penny on the church plate.

There was no tank at Monkeytree only a pump in the garden. The well had not been used for sometime and fell into disuse. It was not repaired. The water had to be fetched from round next door. I carried it back in two pails that was for all the drinking water. The pump in the yard by the orchard was only used for animals. One day it was very frosty and Mrs Kirkby went out to pump water and she put her hand on the frozen pump handle and it stuck. It could take your skin off your hand that. I generally took a cloth.

Their poultry sheds were by the paddock and there were cows in the field behind. Kate did have goats in the orchard.

Once I was attacking the nettles in the horse paddock with a scythe and a piece of nettle flew up into my eye and stung it and since then it has often been inflamed. I still have drops for it.

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I used to go round and collect the skim milk from Lambert's every morning for them and sometimes take the dogs out for a walk up past Hammond's orchard, full of sheds.

Before they came to Cropredy the Revd Marsh Kirkby had first had a pony and trap, then a motorbike with a sidecar. One of the daughters had a van in the old place in front.

I was never ill, but if I had been sick or unemployed I couldn't have had unemployment pay. I remember when I was sixteen that unemployment pay came in. When I was married at fifty-five I kept paying my stamps so that I wouldn't lose any pension.

When Miss Marsh Kirkby died Miss West laid her out. She had moved to Church Lane, before the Kirkby's came.

Miss West, *said Arthur*, was a small-determined lady. Good old soul, darn fine wench. She was in that house during the First World War. She was one of a lot of ladies who were round the district buying hay for the army. She must have had some private means, although she took in lodgers and did some nursing and laid people out. She kept goats at Monkeytree in the orchard and Mr Townsend as a lad living at Poplar farm had to go across and milk the goats and take the milk into Miss West. One of her lodgers was Ted Stratford a railway man who afterwards went to Church Lane with her. One worked at McDougall's.

Mrs Brown in 3 Red Lion Street, *I added*, complained Ted called out to her lodger to wake him at 6am, and this annoyed Mr Brown very much.

I remember, *Lucy said*, staying with Miss West in Church Lane. The people I worked for at Goodrest had their daughter and son staying, so I had to lodge out. Once I stayed at Connie's Mothers at the Woodyard.

I remember playing cards with Miss West. *Arthur went on*. A small woman, no one got the better of her, I can tell you, yet she was much liked. Percy Cummings he used to lodge with Miss West in that middle cottage in Church Lane.

She even had me there! *Laughed Lucy*. Goodrest had only three bedrooms, so there was no room for me. Two bedrooms really but one was very small and her sister-in-law used to have that. Miss West taught me to make a fire with you know firelighters made with newspapers. Either round or done in a knot.

Like a doll she was. *Arthur hopped down from the hearth to get a word in*. Bit on the frail side, but tough! In 1933 perhaps I might be over at Hammond's for a month and these chaps used to come. One came from Basingstoke, Jack Parfitt. Big fellow and Miss West lodged him and I sort of got pally with this chap. He used to let me go to ride a motorbike...

He would get pally!

...and if it was too bad to go out we played cards with Miss West. Then later Jack said, *Arthur* he said *I'm going to join the army*. I said *is that a fact?* He said *I am. Have a good time then and what you joining?* Well he said *I don't know, something I suppose*. Next thing I knew I had a letter come. He'd joined the army. Queen's own Hussars! I've got a picture of him I'll look it out. One day, across the way, an army lorry rolled up. Right out side our house. Our Mum says, *Whoever's that?* I said *an*

army lorry. Well I don't know if we've anyone in the army have we? No, not from this house. All dressed up in uniform. 'Cause when I went to the door theres Jack Parfitt. Yes. We used to write to one another for sometime, then it dropped off. I haven't heard from him for years.

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It was in 1937, said Lucy that I went to work at Goodrest for Mrs Percival and Mrs Roberts. They paid their rent to Miss Lambert next door. In front it had two neat lawns and iron railings by the path. There was a sidewall with a gate to the back. The front door was on the south wall. They had a small sitting room behind the tiny room with the small front window. Above it Mrs Robert's bedroom. Once she went up to Bourton where Rosemary her daughter lived down Swan Lane and I slept in her room. A football special roared through and I thought it was coming into the house!

Just before the war I went to work up at Bourton Vicarage. It wasn't a Vicarage then, but a lodging house. Mrs Haycock was Welsh, she was really very odd when she came, she didn't know the difference between yes and no. Mr Haycock he worked there, he used to do the garden, you know, or help in the house. The son had it for sometime after. They had a Great Dane. There's a photograph of Arthur and I on the steps there.

We had a Miss Johnson, an old lady with a stick who used to walk up and down the path, which was covered over whenever it rained and she couldn't get out. One day she heard someone behind her and one of the grandchildren was mocking her, walking behind. She moved to Deddington and when their brother needed the room she went to live with some sisters out at Priors Marsden. She walked down to the shop the day before she died and on her last day she had a young girl up from the village to tea. Afterwards one of the sisters came in to collect the tea things; *oh I have enjoyed that tea*. She said. When the sister came for the rest she'd died. Ninety-eight she was. She used to teach Mrs Adam's mother-in-law. She was a teacher and of independent means.

We had a snake once at the Vicarage, then one day Mrs Haycock came to me all screwed up and pale, *Lucy come quick there's a snake in the dining room*. It was a piece of material! I did catch a grass snake once. In Banbury were we lived a snake was round near the water butt and our neighbour on that side she came out with a Pyrex bowl and I hooked it up with a stick. It had its head lifted up off the ground looking this way and that. I put it in the dish and she put the lid on. We took it over the road to some men working on the railway. *It's only a beautiful grass snake!* They said and let it loose in the field.

Once I was out gardening at the Vicarage and one of the C.....'s two boys went by, the young one. *Come and give me a hand* I said. *You ask your boy friend who rides the motorbike to help you!* He used to fetch buckets of water for 2d and one day he fetched a bucket for an old lady who lived in the corner at the top of the yard. She never paid him and he went off shouting, *you owe me tuppence!*

There's always one in the village. Mercy lived in High Street. She had this piece of binder twine and stood there waving it up and down all the time saying, *Hello Arthur*. Or whoever it was.

She didn't know my name. Where did she go?

To Chippy Norton I expect after her grandparents died.

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You used to hear, *said Lucy* the girl on Chapel Green singing as you went past.

When I went to Banbury before I was courting Arthur, I used to come back to the dances here. They had a lot of good dances arranged in the hall.

Then while I was working for Mr Haycock at Bourton I came down to the W.I. on my Tuesday afternoon off, when it was that week. I was on the committee at one time. I used to help with the entertainments. Do you know *A Froggie would a wooing go?* I was in that once.

The best bits were the Christmas parties. Two people would stand at the door and give you a ticket with your partner's name on it. Do you remember Arthur that time when Roland Plumb was wanting to go out with Mrs Jones' daughter Hilda? Well Arthur was Hilda's partner and I was Roland's and he asked us to swop! So we did and that's how we started going out together! We had tea and coffee and all the refreshments. Everyone helped to take it there on the night.

No electric, *Arthur nodded*, only lamps you know. We had a band; I think it was Prewetts of Banbury. Or was it Goodman's? No village band then.

Mrs Bonham and Mrs Hammond were Institute people. I think most went.

No a lot never went *Arthur hopped down from the hearth*. My Mother went to the party, but she didn't belong. The floor was nice and warm, better than the new one. It was wooden and springy, when you danced you felt it swing! I met Lucy at the W.I. Christmas party.

We went on outings and once we went on the canal, *Lucy smiled*, because I remember going with Mary Bonham.

The Hickman's they used to go dancing in the hall and their favourite was the polka. Oh they loved that!

In Mabel Durrant's letter she said the Chapel tried to stop the dances (Book 2).

**The Chapel did!** *Said Arthur.*

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## 20. Ills and Accidents



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**Poplar Farm with the door  
in the wall leading to the  
Surgery.**

When Doctor Bartlett was at Wardington he had his surgery in Cope's cottages next to Pettifers this end. Then he moved to Poplar farm to live, and the surgery was up the path there. At the end door (*front door*), go in the end door and there's a room on the right. I can remember seeing the bottles of medicine in there, in the room itself, yes. Old Lionel Bartlett used to row like the devil himself, they did, oh blimey yes. I used to take him an evening paper, Evening Dispatch, and you could hear them long before you got to the door. Yes. Bashing about and cursing. Put the paper through the door and that was it!

Gardener? Yes undoubtedly he must have had one. But I mean that wasn't a very high paid job, that wasn't, in those days. When you had him for anything he only used to send the bill for half a crown that was all. Oh no they weren't very rich, not like they are now.

Hospitals? Ah yes. You used to pay into the hospital club so much per week, 3d a week perhaps. Paid in for years. That entitled you to treatment at the hospital. You had a membership card. Each family yes. I had, err it must have been in the '30's; I had thirty-two to forty warts on my hand. On my knuckles and they hurt. I don't know where they really came from, never had them before in my life. Goes up to old Bartlett, they wouldn't do it to day, they wouldn't let you have it, he gave me some acid. A little bottle of acid and told me what to do. *You sit down Arthur he said and put a bit of green shavings on each wart, put a little swot on a matchstick and acid on each wart and he said in three weeks they will be burnt out.*

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At the end of three weeks I hadn't got quite enough to one or two dried. I went up to him again and said *I could do with some more acid Sir. Ah he said I don't know he said I will give you another bottle.* I didn't use all of it. It dried them all up. I stuck them with a blooming needle and had them all out. Healed over. No sign of them. It was perhaps something off the poultry. I had been working at Hammond's at the time. Haven't had them since. But they wouldn't let you have acid to day. No fear. Cured them. The rest of the acid I used for soldering. Yes good stuff. Good old boy old Bartlett was.

He had a bike to start with, then a Morris Cowley, two seater.

Family? Lucy would know. Did Bartlett have a family? I think he did have a daughter. He was a surgeon you know Bartlett was. If you wanted your darn leg off he'd take it off! Oh yes he was a surgeon, one of these old type of surgeon. The last one we had that people went to then was Dr. Morton.

He weren't my Doctor actually, *said Lucy*, but I went across to him once when I was working at Kirkby's and I had a dreadful cold. They sent me over to him. They thought I'd got whooping cough and he said *Do you a-whoop-a-whoop-a-whoop-a?* No. I said. *You haven't got whooping cough then!* Oh he was a lad!

Then when we were in home, *Arthur took over*, as young boys, we used to have what you used to call croup. It's a bark you know, it isn't whooping cough, and it's different. You don't whoop. But it's a blooming bark, croupy bark. You always had it in springtime, under these east winds. Of course you used to have a sort of cough mixture for it then. When you go to have a visit from the old Doctor, you never went to the door; you never went to the door. Oh no, he'd just knock the door, knock the door, open the door, *May I come in? May I come up?* . *Arthur and Lucy speaking at once and laughing.* He was a rare old boy and Doctor Morton, good bloke he was. He lived down here didn't he Duck? Yes until he had the new house built up at Bourton, then he went up there.

Albert had measles, when they lived at Bourton. Morton was it? I know Albert had an Alsatian dog; it was the last one wasn't it? Ah the Doctor didn't like him.

I know, *said Lucy*, he went to see Albert and the dog looked at him and he said, *Get that damn dog out the way*, he said.

Mrs Kirkby had this old basket chair by the (*inglenook*) cupboard and one evening she went straight through! Well I brushed up all this fine dust it left and Maud and Chris Lewis they carried it down the garden and burnt it. Caught the pear tree alight as well. Next morning my face was covered in a nasty rash. They got Dr. Bartlett over and he thought it was scarlet fever, so I had to stay in bed. As he wasn't my own Doctor they called in my Doctor next morning. That night Maud and her sister slept out. One at the post office and one elsewhere. Next day the rash had gone. The Doctor said *you may as well get up*. Dr. Bartlett came over to check as well. In the end they decided it was a similar rash to a case when they took the skirtings out at Wardington and they got covered with dust. When I swept up the dust from the chair, the cane was soft and powdery and it got all over my face.

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Dr. Morton was a damn fine bloke. *Arthur took over*. I can see him now. He carried out two jobs on me they wouldn't do to day. When I was down in the Yard about twelve months before the gaffer packed up, Cyril Lambert dropped one of them long finger mowers in. Well they are some awkward blooming things, and in this piece were several bent teeth. He wanted them straightened. You have to warm them with the tip, well you say the tip, a gas tip, put them in a vice, warm them and give them a chance to sort them out. First one I did and they vary in the quality of the steel, these teeth. And the second one was a bit tough, a bit tough and I had to shook it a bit over, and it flew into my eye un all. Oh Ah! Flew into my left eye and err red-hot and of course it made me . I walked across to Connie and told her what I had done. She rang up Dr. Morton and told him. *Aye*, he said, *bring him down straight away*. So the gaffer took me up and he sat me down in a chair and got some little tools and he scraped all that burnt skin off my eyeball. Ah he did. That one. Go to Banbury or Oxford now. Good bloke and he cured it.

Second time at Saville's. Hot molten metal rolled down the side of my leg. I couldn't get my shoe off and it went wrong. I used to go round to Lucy's sometimes on Tuesday or Wednesday night and have my tea there and come back on the bus. It was gathering and eventually I had to go and see the Doctor. *How did you do this Arthur?* Then. *Come and sit down here then*. Put me here, another chair there, hunked my leg up on his lap and sorted the blooming tools out. *You all right? Hold on now. Nasty*. These old surgeons! He got my blooming leg! He had a tool like an apple corer and he dived into the side of my foot. Choo! *laughing*. *It You all right Arthur?* I said *Yes Sir I'm all right!* He said *now look* he said *you've got to be careful with this or you'll have an ulcer and it will never heal up*. So **I did** and a blooming hard growth grew on it.



Those days you went to the Doctor, you went to the Doctor to see what he could do for you, if he could do anything for you he would. And if he could see you were going to make a job, he'd get his tools out and do it, do a darn good job.

Of course, *added Lucy*, years ago they hadn't the things like they have these days.

All employees have to be insured, *Arthur again hopped up and down from the hearth*, and I was insured as a machiner. I started in 1930 and was fifteen. Man came in, *You Mr Sumner? No Sir*. To Mr Sumner *could you flatten this machine end a bit then after a bit you're operator pass a medical? No. Oh he must*.

I had to go up Middleton Road to this Doctor bloke. Irish bloke. I never understood a word he said. Anyway I had a medical in them days. Pass a medical. What we done the same time we called at Jack and picked up those turned legs. This was before I went out with Lucy. He lived near her we were going to Trench's electrical people. We were making an oak gate legged table, twisted legs, and I don't know how the gaffer got to know Jack, but he had a lathe. We took him the materials all planed up and he turned some beautiful legs. Two, four eight of them legs. Turned in rope. And that same morning I had to go for this medical we picked them up from him.

I used to go and watch him. *Lucy said*.

Never thought I go out with the girl next door! Cause when I used to go out with Lucy later on, I used to go next door (*to Jack*).

I've got a chair he made. *Lucy told me* He never married. Had a cousin at West Barr.

Turned hubs for wheels, and old fashioned mangle rollers. *Said Arthur*.

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He used, *added Lucy*, to get the shavings, put them in bags and get a shilling. Mother did his washing for him. Grandfather made us a little three cornered table and chair and a doll's chair.

We had to pay eighteen pence for Insurance as well as unemployment. Two schemes, two cards to pay on.

Dr Bartlett used Allitts little room in Copes Cottages for his surgery, on the left of the front door. *Arthur paused*. There was never I remember any standing about waiting for surgery and that, you went for a bottle of medicine and that. I can remember few folks waiting outside for the Doctor. You just went in, perhaps there might be one or two, but never many there. Dr Bartlett moved the surgery across the road to Plantation cottages before having it at The Poplars.

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## 21. The Woodyard Post Office and the End of Sumner and Neals

Connie and Sam Hollis, *said Arthur*, took on the house in Red Lion Street, number 3. They were going to be married in September 1952. They started getting the house ready for when they'd be married. Well meanwhile Connie's Mother died in July 1952. They couldn't go round there she had to stay round the yard to look after her Dad (Frank Sumner) and the Post Office.

In December my Mother fell ill and she died a few days before Christmas. That was the reason I came over here to Cavalier Cottage (*Chapel Green*), because my Aunt May lost her husband in 1940 and I came over to live permanently in 1953 and I've been here ever since.

Life and me would have been entirely different if, because, even if my Mother hadn't died in 1952 and my Aunt didn't, I should have come down there (*the Woodyard*) to live. Gone down there to live see, and live on the job. I shouldn't be there to day I suppose, but on the other hand I might have done. I should have gone down there to live. This wasn't much of a place, years ago not like here to day. Not with that range. It didn't cook very well you see the wind used to make it awkward. It would blow down and fill the room with smoke.

Anyway, *Arthur finished*, Connie's Father gave up the business and Sam did not take it on. Albert had already gone over the bridge and set up on his own. While he was gone the yard stood more or less empty. When Albert came back he was on his own. His own firm. I went to work with Saville's. Cherry's took on some of Sumner and Neal's business when they finished and some of the men during the gap went to Cherry's.

Connie Hollis nee Sumner and Dolly Monk nee Pettifer were talking together after Arthur's first talk and explaining things to the rest of us gathered around Sue Lester's table. More was added at various times and has had to be slotted in to avoid repetition. It was not taped so I apologise for any errors, which must be laid at my door and not the late Connie Hollis. Frank Sumner took on the post office in April 1940 and they kept it as a separate business from the Woodyard. Connie finished in May 1966. The conversation began with Bourton Post office.

Mrs Newton had the post office at Great Bourton and of course you had to keep open for Sunday telegrams, and try and deliver them. So she waited until she came down to chapel at Cropredy. She was related to Cropredy Cherry's. Well she was a Cherry before she was married. She sang contralto in the chapel choir.

The post office paid by units and if you sold more stamps over a three or four year period the London office decided what your salary was. Now if that had been a salary fair and good, but it had to cover overheads, heat and lighting, equipment, wear and tear on the lino, cleaning and what with one thing and another when you had paid your bills you were left with fat all! When I first started I doubt if I earned £5 a week. For example the rates made it into a business premise so that meant higher rates. Electric fire on from early in the morning to night when cold. 6am to 6 pm. I used to get chilblains on my first fingers and little finger from the cold counter! The rates man came and measured the room. No it wasn't by the end of the day much of a salary. Telegrams and Christmas could make it hectic, but the extra work didn't mean you could afford an assistant. If you wanted a holiday you had to pay someone to come in, but you were responsible for that person. It wasn't an employment to make ends meet when you think of the number of hours put in. If I had had a store it might have paid better. I sold a little stationary and postcards but little else.

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You were up early emptying the letterbox, and it could be full up on Christmas day. Then sorting out the mail into areas and using a Cropredy postmark to stamp on the letters. The parcels can still have a Cropredy postmark (1981). The post van brought the mail in sealed sacks and you gave him a sack of letters on which you, tied it up, put the seal on and then stamped it with the Cropredy stamp. Many times I've burnt my fingers holding the wax over a flame to let it drop. The post had to be ready to be delivered by 7am, as Cherry's liked to deal with their mail from 7 onwards. The postman cycled in about 7 took them round and delivered them. He went off as far as Cropredy Lawn, Clattercote and the Bourtons. When he was on holiday a man came out from Banbury, but of course he didn't know the places, so I sketched out a map of Cropredy and one for Claydon putting on the peoples name and address. Or part of, or a number, with a little bit of how to get there. Some were not very straightforward. Of course I knew everybody's handwriting better than I knew their faces. I wouldn't know now where everybody lived. The postmen came from Banbury on their bikes. Will Young and Tommy Curtis. They used to call the red headed Will the whistling postman. On Christmas day there was more mail than ever to be delivered. Christmas cards were for Christmas day. When it snowed the postal round wasn't finished until 2 o'clock. The box had to be emptied in the afternoon and sorted. I enjoyed my time as a postmistress, but I wouldn't want it back now.

Telegrams were 3d in the village delivered and more for Cropredy Lawn. Telegrams had to be delivered in the dinner hour, if no one could be found to deliver them. At weddings came all the greeting telegrams and they had to be got out. They came over the phone. Licences for guns, wireless etc were sold and some pensions done. Child pensions on a Tuesday. No I would not go back, but the post was reliable and if you sent off in the morning the rural post had it the second post, more rarely the next day.

We started up in 1940 and for 26 years had the post office. At first I helped father run it and later on in my own name. Yes children loved to come in and see Connie. I was Connie to everyone. Strangers to the village said *but we can't be so rude as*

*to call you Connie, can we? You see we don't know your surname.* So they called me Connie. No end of folk have come to see me.

Mrs Cooknell always took a bunch of snowdrops to Connie in the post office *someone added*. Mrs Cooknell had so many in her garden and she always brought her some of the first each year. On her grave the family planted lots of snowdrops.

Eleven of her twenty-six years in the post office Connie was the postmistress. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May 1966 *The Oxford Mail* did an article about her retirement on page 7. Under her photograph was the caption *Mrs Connie Hollis with the wristwatch presented to her on her retirement.* They also presented Mrs Hollis with a 22-piece dinner service from a door-to-door collection.

*On another occasion Connie spoke about her family.*

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My mother was a Dunn and brought up church. They were all baptised at Great Bourton, then when she married my father Frank Sumner, then she went to the chapel. Sumners were chapel, so was grandfather Smith of course.

When the chapel stone was laid in 1881 aunt Sarah or Sally, as she was always known, was given a silver trowel to commemorate the occasion and it was given to her by J.S. John Smith I presume. I have the silver trowel. It has a long bone handle and is about 18inches long. The trowel came to my grandmother Mary Ann nee Smith. It's been up in the attic for years.

Aunt Sally became Mrs Hopkins and they moved to Adderbury near the Cheshire Homes. There is a road to Twyford near Adderbury House which has a house built by Sumner and Neal. Sally's brother was a surveyor's clerk (In 1871 census he was 15). Her father was George Smith of Springfield Farm and at one time also Manor Farm. A staunch chapel man and a liberal. Her mother was Elizabeth. Sally was a big woman in the chapel at Adderbury all the years she was there.

My father Frank married Mabel Ellen Dunn whose brother Percy was a thrashing machine contractor. Another sister married Harry Busby a bricklayer, parents of Sidney who had a Bathurst apprenticeship like Colin Shirley. Frank's sister Elsie also married a Dunn, Ivy Cherry's brother. Far back they were distant cousins. Sumners were chapel but Busbys weren't attending any church.

Your mother was never rushed or rattled *said Dolly*. Well she could get upset but very seldom flustered *Connie replied*. My father could get upset but very seldom. They say I'm like him. Mr Welford (not Cropredy Welford but Bird Club member) told us at a committee meeting, which I attended as treasurer and Sam because he was a keen birdman, *that the atmosphere was*

*always pleasant because Connie kept smiling!* Sam kept his birds in the Woodyard garden as well as the pig in the sty next to fathers.

When I was little my aunt sent a parcel for me at Christmas and it was put up in the pantry for Christmas. I was warned not to peep. One night mother said to father *Will you carry the buckets and I'll take the lamp to collect the water?* They went over to Charlie Hickman's for the water from his well. While they were gone I crept to the parcel and had just undone it and seen it contained a wickerwork basket with a draw string material top, when I heard them coming back. No time to do it up! I waited. Mother was very angry that time and said *you should not have done it and you don't deserve a present.* I still have that basket up in the attic to this day.

I worked hard at the post office and at that time had to nurse Grandma Dunn in her 90's as well as help with the business as well. I was getting married and had done up 4 Red Lion Street to our satisfaction. Sam's father was also getting married. Then mother fell ill and I had to stay down the Woodyard to help. Father-in-law moved into Red Lion Street cottage. After mother died and we stayed to look after father. Mother died on the 24<sup>th</sup> July 1952. Sometime before she had been carrying a carpet in from brushing it outside and with the brush tucked under her arm went into the house. The door caught the handle of the brush jabbing her right breast, taking a bad blow at it. She was in great pain, but didn't consult a doctor. Later she noticed a lump and eventually had to have an operation. Not long after they found a second lump and there followed another operation to the other breast. The doctor remarked *well you can't have that done again.* So she presumed all was well.

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However the left arm grew enormous and she had to make her sleeves huge on that side. The doctor recommended physio and heat treatment but the lymph gland was in trouble. Twice a week she went by bus or father took her. Failing that she went by taxi, so convinced was she it was doing her good.

Then it became too much. On arrival home she would be puffed out and collapsed into a chair where upon she would toss her hat across the room. She did not go anymore. The doctor was seen. She kept seeing him, but on May the 13<sup>th</sup> he did not say *I'll see you again* and this worried her a great deal. I told her *he must have forgotten.* The truth was he could do no more. However no one was told except father and Sam. They kept going with the work and shop and remained bright and cheerful. Then after spending three nights downstairs complaining of a lump in her chest, which meant food would not go down, I made her a fruit jelly. She died about 12 o'clock. She had upset father when she said *I would be better off in the cemetery.* She had had so much pain. My father always relied on mother and after she died he relied on me. Sam liked my father, got on with him very well, but just sometimes he would say *I feel like the lodger in my own house.* It is very difficult keeping the peace.

I had to be hard in the post office, I often felt ill, but it was no use complaining. Other folk's ills were a difficulty, but they could at least stay in bed. For ten years I had the post office from 6 until I closed at 6. I looked forward to that. Some nights I

felt I should never get through the night. I would sleep an hour then have to attend to father, but I managed to go on. (*Connie had diabetes*). I nursed father for ten years the last two were a twenty-four hour job. We let Stone Leigh for the last five years after father came back to live with us. When at last we did live there I was often ill and later we built Conifers in the garden.

Connie never joined in any of the village activities unless really asked. Yet she was marvellous at acting quickly if anyone in the family was ill. This did not come up in conversation with Connie, but others told me about her. Connie did however mention that Sumner's like all builders bought up cottages to rent out.

My parents lived at 3 Chapel Row. They owned the first three cottages. Father was an undertaker which may explain why some gravestones were found in the shed behind their house (*Golbys who had lived in that row before had been stonemasons. A Mrs Golby lived in No 2*). Father's sister Elsie Dunn had number one. After she died he sold the three cottages to Elijah Adkins (*who by then was living at No1*). My parents went down to live in the Woodyard before I was born. When my grandmother (*Mrs R. Sumner*) had the 3 Chapel Row cottages she had the back kitchen built on at No1 for when her daughter Elsie married William Dunn. The pump was then included in the kitchen. Before that it was only one room with the stairs off.

In 3 Chapel Row father shared the back with Mrs Golby. They each had a chemical lo at the back. In between the toilets was a glass fronted shed. They had a kitchen which was not open to the house but to the garden. In there was a small fireplace, a copper and the coal. Once Richard Sumner moved to Stone Leigh my parents could move to the Woodyard and let no 3. They put the bathroom in at their own expense. The Woodyard belonged to the Lamberts. While we were at the Woodyard I used to long to live in Stone Leigh. Eventually they went there, modernizing it a little and repapering the walls. Mother had a washroom and outside toilet at the back and they had a ladder up from the washroom to her small apple loft.

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Mary Robinson the blacksmith's daughter married and went to Coventry. Her brother also moved there and he lives near Geoff Adkins whose father Samuel lives in Great Bourton, or did until he was ill. They never knew until recently that they both came from Bourton! Mr Robinson then lived in Swan lane. He is now 70 years old [13/29]

Grandfather had cottages in Bourton. I collected the rent for her relations. The cottage passed to her Ann and then to their son John and daughter Ann. Sam Adkins died in 1979 and Mrs Adkins was in Orchard House unable to go back to Bourton. The son come down to tell me and pay a quarter's rent up to March 1981.

The rent had not changed since aunt Ann put in the bathroom. £8 a quarter. John asked me *do you know how much the fire insurance of the place is auntie? About £29 a year*. So he only had £4 or so rent a year from that place! The Adkins paid the rates. The place belonged to my grandfather Richard Sumner and he left the four cottages to Ernest. Two were sold but Rhoda

and Sam Adkins had the two left. Well after Ern left it to auntie Ann his wife She decided to put in the two bathrooms. She applied for a grant but this involved getting all sorts of other improvements done and that meant they would bear more expense in the long run, which they never would recover from the rent. Now they put in Sam Adkins bathroom and they never did get their investment back. They had to put the rent up to £8 a quarter, but that is how it's been ever since. Many builders had property about the villages, which paid low rents. Many were glad to get rid of them, but sold just before the 1980's rise in prices.

They all made wills. *Said Dolly*. Your grandfather put a Quinea down for you didn't he Connie with you birthday year on it.

Yes all wrapped up in a chamois leather piece. It was often the custom to do that when people were born, then when they married it was given to them to keep.

Sumner and Neal did many a farmhouse and building and I must sort out the photographs to see if you can recognise any of the buildings.

The album of wagons was generously lent to me by Connie for copying and some are in this book. Others of Prescote farm buildings were used in Book2. The unknown wagon hovel on page 91. with a man on the roof resembles Cropredy Lawn's as it has round brick pillars, but the buildings behind do not fit. We were very fortunate to be allowed access to them as well as Arthur's. Other people in Cropredy have lent their postcards. Frank Smallpage has kindly allowed us to use a photograph of Albert for Part 2 which is still being typed up.

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## Who's Who

*G = Cropredy Grave. Gt.Bt.G. = Great Bourton Grave. C = Cemetary Grave. P.C. = Parish Council. CC&RR = Cropredy Club & Reading Room.*

### **1928 List of some Cropredy residents [using various sources: B.N.C. records, Directories, oral information]**

Barr G. Vicar. Vicarage. to 1929 then Sharpley R.W. to 1937

Hammond William Robert, Poultry Farm T.N.10.

Hanbury Caryl Edgar Thickthorn Farm.

Hawkins Leonard, Wharf House.

McDougall Alexander R., Prescote Manor T.N.8.

Thompson Charles, Lyndhurst,

Banbury Co-op 9 Red Lion St.

Industrial Banbury co-op Farm, Cropredy Lawn.

Bonham James William, saddler. N.side of Green.

Bott Walter, coal dealer, Lamprey's Wharf.

Cave Frederick Isaac, shopkeeper 6 Red Lion St.

Cherry Thomas & Sons The Green T.N.9

Cherry Henry W. farmer.

Cooknell Stephen, coaldealer. S. side of Green.

Cooknell Thomas, shoemaker. N.side of Green.

Cotterill Hy. E., publican. Brasenose.

Gardner F.E. & C.W., plumbers & painters, 2 Red Lion St.

Gasson Thomas, farmer, Bridge House.

Godson William, baker, Bakehose, Church Lane.

Hadland & son, millers Cropredy Mill.

Hadland William, publican Red Lion

Hammond William Robert Morris, Poultry Farm, High St.

Hawkins Leonard coal & coke merchant, cartage contractor, canal carrier, canal wharf.

Lambert Cyril, farmer, Brasenose Manor Farm.

Lambert William James, farmer, Home Farm.

Palmer & sons coal dealer Station wharf.

Roberts Rupert H., farmer, Hill Farm formerly Jn.Payne Roberts.

Robinson Edward, blacksmith. S. side of Green.

Smith & son., building contractors, decorators & undertakers (1929 Smith Bros.).

Sumner Frank, undertaker, wheelwright, house decorator & carpenter. The Green.

Watkins Hy, farmer. Station Farm (followed by Deeley in 1931).

Mrs William Harris sub P.O. N. side of Green.

Louis Lambert, Parish clerk. High st.

Ross Walker headmaster. Mrs Ross Walker, teacher, Miss W.M.Tyrrell, teacher, & Miss Cripps, teacher.

Edmund Tasker, carrier.

In 1931 six clubs joined together for the Fete: British Legion, Cricket Club, Ex-service mens, J. F. Club, Village Club and W I.

*Sources from: Parish Council, Village Club, & CC&RR mins. Parish Chest & B.N.College & Census records.*

**William Adkins** m ?**Ann** (d2.11.1781 in Cropredy) son **Charles** (1775-1846) m 1806 **Elizabeth** Chelcher (c1782-1860) 6 chd: 1) **Ann** (1807-1824), 2) **George** (1808-1879) m ?**Lucy** (c1810-1884), 3) **Joseph** (1811-1867), m **Ann** Abbot (1810-1883), 4) **John** (1816-1884) m **Ann** Elimore (1824), 5) **Hannah** (1819), 6) **Mark** (1822) m **Elizabeth**.

**John Adkins** (1816-1884) worked on Anker's farm. m **Ann** Elmore of Tadmarton. 6 cld: 1) **Caroline** (1844), 2) **George** (1845) m 16.10.67 **Sarah** Wells (1843), 3) **Sophia** (1848-1861), 4) **Ann** (1851), 5) **Ellen** (1854-58), 6) **Elijah** (1857).

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**George Adkins** (1845), wheelwright m **Sarah** Wells (1843) Lived in High St cottages,. Chd:1) **Rhoda Clara** (bp 18.9.1868 d at Kineton) m George Pollard a gardener, kept shop 2) **Emily Sophia** (1870 died) 3) **Thomas Arthur** (b1872 bp25.8.73-1924), canal carpenter @ Claydon m26.10.05 **Lilian May Robinson** Hall (d aged 80).[ c6 chd i) **Phyllis E.** (1905) at Kings Sutton, ii) **Violet E.** (1907) at Cropredy, iii) **Edward A.** (1909) at Claydon moved to Long Hanborough, Oxon, no sons. iv) **Thomas Albert** (1910-1963) to Long Itchington, chd: Tom, John, Douglas, Tony & daug.), v) **Gladys May** (1913) m Wyatt of Adderbury, vi) **John George** (1915) no chd.]. 4 **Elijah G. Wm** (c 1880-1952) C66.

**Elijah George William Adkins** (c 1880). m widow **Lizzie Bertha** Bradley nee Claridge (d 30.10.1960, aged 80) (3 Bradley chd: Thomas, Elizabeth & Arthur Bradley) and 1) **Ronald George Adkins** who m. **Jessie** They had son **Michael** & a daughter.. 2) **Rhoda Ellen** (1919 bp Meth ch 1920) who lived in Banbury. 3) **Olive Sarah** (b.29.4.1921-1975) m – Buzzard of Gt. B. Elijah G.W at Lock cottage, lived 1 Chapel Row. Bought 1 3 Chapel Row. Ron G. & Jesse lived at 3 Chapel Row.

**Edward Bathurst** a Royalist academic. Vicar of Cropredy 1642-1654. Followed absentee vicar Brounker. Bathurst followed by puritan Revd Maunder. Bathurst was at Trinity College Oxford and left land in College whose rent every third year was used to apprentice a poor boy or girl out of either Cropredy, Hothorp, Chipping Warden or Gazington. The **Bathurst Charity** was established in 1668.

**Lionel Jasper Bartlet** M.R.C.S. L.R.C.P. London, Physician & Surgeon. Medical Officer & Public vaccinator. Middleton Cheney & Cropredy district. Banbury area Guardians Comm. Lived at Wardington then by 1931 at The Poplars T.N.6. H.W.Jones was farming the land. Dr.Bartlet moved the surgery from Cope's Cottages to Poplars. Married with children.

**James William Bonham** (1868-1960), C74, saddler & harnessmaker. m. 1) **Elizabeth** Smith (1869-1909) G.152 m. 2) **Flossie May** (1887-1965) C.74. James Wm. Born in Middleton Cheney. Started in Cropredy aged 21. Saddlers on Cropredy Green. Methodist. Singer. Sunday School. P.C. 1897-1925 & 1937-1949. Several times chairman. Rural District Council for 43 yrs. On School Board. Special Constable 1914. Poores Land comm. & Northend Charity. Co-op comm. Smallholding. Hort. Soc. comm. Had a pony & trap. Friend of John Shirley. Chd: **Hilda May** (1895-1928), **Harold J.** (1899) headmaster, **John H.** (1913), **Edith M.** (1915), **Daisy E.** (1919), **Violet A.** (1919), **Brenda J.** (1920), **Una J.**(1922).

**Walter Frank Bott** (1882-1933) G.506 m **Edith Maria** Chesters (1882-bur 23 Oct.1934) Policeman, blacksmith, coal merchant. Born Northampton, wife born Wappenham. Mrs Botts a friend of Miss Monica Kirkby. Both died of flu 1934.*Ernest Frank Botts house was an old one, parents had it before him. His father Walter was a big tall man, the blacksmith and his wife a small person, one of the old village sort of ladies. Oh yes she was a very friendly person. Eldest son went off to be a policeman but Frank stayed.* Chd:1) **Norman**, 2)**Charlie** & 3)**Ernest Frank** (d.Nov 1991) a coal merchant.Frank m **Irene May** Freegard of Chacombe. They had 2 sons. Frank carried on coal business at College wharf and lived south side of Plantations at The Nook.

The **Busby** family:parents **Richard** (1858-1917) & **Jane** (1856-1920), carter living in Chapel Row. 4 sons members of C.C. & R.R. comm. **Wallace**(1907) **Percy** (1908) & **Fred** a singer. **Horace Hatton**(1897 on war memorial), **Harry Hatton** (1884-1940) soldier m **May Elizabeth** Dunn (Dec 1889-1965) and lived on Chapel Green., **Mabel Ettie** (1891) m 1922 Jn.S.Austin, **Joseph Hatton** (1894 died) **Arthur Willie**(1895) **Ernest Frederick**(1896) and **Constance Kate** (1900). Harry Hatton was a member ex-servicemen's comm. Built a cubd for hall. Thrift club. Member of the pig club.

**Frederick Isaac Cave** (1862-1938) born Culworth. G.313a, son of **Richard Hawkins** Cave. m **Mary Ann** Hawkins of maidenhead (1855-1937). A mechanic, moved to Cropredy, plumber & painter. Went blind and ran a shop in Red Lion St. 2 daughters died. Sons: **Reginold H**, **George Frederick**(1887) & **Archibald John** (1889-1915) G.273.m **Daisy** Hawkins.A son **Archibald Roland** (1916-1947) Fred (1887) on CC & RR.comm 1888-1893. Reg.on same comm. 1902/3. Fred a member of the pig club. Arch. On CC&RR comm in 1907 when 18. Widow Daisy remarried **Frederick John Bissmire** a London hotelier. Daug **Una Bissmire** m H.Jones and lived at 5 Red Lion St.

**Thomas Cherry** (1845-1935) stone mason (3<sup>rd</sup> son of **William & Charlotte** G.327), m.**Mary Ann** Pettipher. Chd: **Alban T.** (1873-1956), **Ernest E.** (1876-1949), **Herbert W** (1879-1953),**William A.** (1881-). **Gertrude May** (1884-) m T.Taylor.. Thomas Cherry. a lay preacher. Helped to build 1881 chapel. Employed 3 men & 3 sons & lived in Old chapel moved to the Green. Widow in chapel. P.C.1894.

**Alban T Cherry** (1873-1956) m **Florence Mary** Gardner (1875-1964) C21. Building trade. Chd: **Elsie May**. (1898), **Herbert Alban Gardner**. (1900-1995), **Arthur Thos.** (1903-1973) m **Ruth** Hancock Oxhey farm **Jn. Marlow** (1907), **Albert Leslie**. (1910-1995), **Allen Rodney** (1914) m Rosemary, **Kathleen Mary**. (1920). m Ronald Upton.

**Herbert Wesley Cherry** (1879-1953) m i) **Emma Kate** Stiles (d 1917 age 43) G 311. builder & farmer Parish clerk. Member of Village Club comm 4 chd 1) **Sidney Roland** (1901-) m **Ivy S. Dunn**, 2) **E. May** (1903), **Thomas** Minister, **William G.** (1906-1981), m ii) Mabel Leman.

**Sidney Roland** (1901-) m **Ivy S** Dunn lived on The Green, builder Cherry & Sons. On P.C. Cropredy fire service ARP. 5 chd: **Raymond T.** on P.C. m **Audrey M.**, **Margaret A.** m L. Tustian, **Donald L.** m **Gillian**, **Roger H.** m **Gillian A. Coy**, **David R.** on P.C. m **Susan** Wincott.

**Stephen Cooknell** (1873-1954) C57. [cf Book2]. Coal merchant. In 1902 m **Emily** Hawkes (1875-1908). 2 chd: **Emily** (1903-1985) m Thomas Bradley. **Harry** (1907-1955) C56. Lived Plantations, 10 Red Lion St. then Plantation Cottage & Woodview. Coal & haulage yard south side of Green. Member CC&RR. Member of pig club.

**William Cooknell** (1798-1858) born Appletree [cf Bk.2], m **Jane** (1790-1836). Parents of **Elizabeth**, **James**, **Sarah**, **Stephen** (1829-1847), **John** (1831), **Thomas** (1834-1913) carter, coal merchant, m **Mary Ann** Checkley (1843-1925) Lived Plantation cottage. chd: 1) **Thomas** (1862-1946) G.68. 2) **Ellen** (1864-1956) m William Neal, Builder, lived 10 Chapel Row. One son Arthur Neal. Brought up Louie Howes. 3) **Elizabeth** (1868-1933) G.67 m Thomas Timms (d1944 aged 74) G.67. 1 son Cyril Timms. Lived Plantation cottages, Chapel Green & 9 Chapel Row. 4) **Stephen** (1873-1954) [see above]

**Francis Levi Dunn** (1856-1924) a mason son of Job and Hannah of Gt. Bourton. M **Harriet** England (1860-1959) of Gt. B. 7 chd: 1) **Ernest Levi** (180-1955) m 1909 **Annie** Baylis (1882-1956). 2) **Minnie Harriet** (1881-Dec 1952) m 1913 John H. Pettifer (1875-1945), 3) **Fred** d. inf. 4) **Percy William** (July 1886-1972) m **Mary** (1889-1967) Gt. Bt G..12. 5) **May Elizabeth** (Dec 1889-1965) m 1917 Henry Busby (1884-1940), 6) **Mabel Ellen** (Aug 1895-1952) m Frank Sumner (1891-1962), 7) **Albert Sydney** (July 1899-May 1902) Scarlet Fever according to school log book 9 May 1902 *A case of scarlet Fever has broken out in Mr Levi Dunn's family. May Dunn the only child who attends here came to say so this morning, and to say Dr. had told her not to attend school for 6 weeks.* Mabel would still be at Gt. B. infant school. Harriet just missed her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday, She came down to Sumner's at the Woodyard, then up to Albert's on Bourton Green & finally Neithrop. Levi worked for Sumners & Neal, For his last job he was borrowed to build Elm Grove. May Elizabeth Busby buried N. side of Church tower.

**Charles William Gardner** (1869-) (son of **John F.** (1833-1900) & **Ann** G 108). m **Maud Bessie** Bailey (1866-1914) G.111 of Stocklinch. Daug. **Florence Ann** (1901) m Eric Sewell. Plumbers, painters & glaziers at 2 Red Lion St.. Charles moved to Old

Chapel. On P.C. 1913-1919 & 1922-24. Overseer 1904-6. On CC&RR comm aged 21-33, Treasurer. Partnered with **Frederick Edward Gardner** (1875-)(Eddie) Brother of Charles lived in & owned 2 Red Lion St. In 1910 occupier of Nursery Close on which Chapel Green houses were built after the war. P.C. 1913-24. On CC&RR comm aged 18-27. Eddie m **Marie** Teagle (1880-1924) banns 1907. 2 chd: **Frederick Keith** (1914-15) G107 & **Yvonne Marie** (1919). 4 years after Marie died Eddie sold up and moved to L/Spa. nr St. Mark's Ch., up till then the Gardner Bros had carried on their parents business. **John F. & Ann** had had 9 children and 4 are buried in Gardner's corner east of the vicar's stable. John F. apprenticed to John Lambert, former glazier of 2 Red Lion St. took over the business. Once choir master, & until a long & painful illness, never failed to be at two Sunday services.

**Elias Gardner** (1857-1940) railway platelayer in 1881. Thatcher. M Annie. Mowed the churchyard by scythe for £1. As a young man lost an eye after being accidentally shot. Lived 5 High St. Son of **Joseph & Catherine**. Gdson of **Joseph & Mary**. Gt.Gdson of **William & Hannah** of Cropredy. His siblings were: **William** (1850) went to Wormleighton, **James** (1853), **Mary** (1855), **Mercy** (1860-1941), m J. Bayliss & lived in 2 High St., **Ruth** (1862) m Thos Castle lived High Wycombe, **Jessie** (1864 d inf.), **George** (1866) to Barford St. Michael.

**William Griffin** (1830-1921) born Butlers Marsden, commission agent, known as *Gent Griffin*, walked about the village with a stick talking to people (photo 21 ). Arrived about 1883 until he died. Lived at Lyndhurst (*Dower House*) m **Ann** Whately (1828-1909) G.472, born Burton Dassett. Parents of 1) **Harry** who went to Texas. 2) **Mary Whately** (c1857) m in 1886 Thos Parnell Parnell. 3) **William** went to Texas, returned and m -

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Jarvis. 4) **George Jeffkyns** (c1859) m Margaret Eagles (1856) of Poplar Farm . George J. farmed 3 College farms: Manor, Station & Thickthorn up to 1903. On P.C. Went to Radstone. 5) **Elizabeth** m H. Weddell?, had at least 4 chd. In 1891: Harry W. Weddell 10, Mary F. 9, Elizabeth G. 7 all born Burton Dassett, Catherine 6 born Bromwich. All scholars and a visiting teacher at Lyndhurst,. Elizabeth M. Jones aged 29. One Weddell left a post card album (in parish chest archive). The Weddells provided the Daily Mail & Titbits to Reading Room 1898/99.

**William Rt Morris Hammond** a London accountant, arriving in Cropredy in 1923. He leased from Anker's Trustees Beech House & farm, renaming it Poultry Farm. After 26 yrs purchased the property & remained until 1953. Moved to Farnham. Repurchased in 1958 & sold off in plots. Mr Hammond's brother-in-law Mr F. Field did the physical construction work. The farm employed up to 13 people and having an outlet for produce prospered. He and his wife had no children. Mrs Hammond in spite of severe arthritis played the piona and was involved in W.I. from the start. Hammond's chapel members. Mrs helped with the Sunday school. Miss Mable Bell who lived in, was highly qualified with poultry. She too W.I. member. William on Village Club comm 1926-c1937: lecture sec. Mr Field retired from V. Club from ill health.

**John William Harris** m **Alice Legge**. (1879-1937) G.453, Lived at Stonecott, Church lane when Vicar's coachman. Moved to North side of Green about 1911 Alice Harris ran the P.O by 1915. and in 1920's the telephone exchange. Chd: **Thomas William (Bill)** (1901-) grocer, m Winifred Mary Anne sub P.O. 1928, 3 girls. 2) **Basil Horace (1901)**. John William on CC&RR comm. 1901-1906.

**Charles Hickman** (18—1967), platelayer. M **Mary Ann** Cooknell (1886-1918). Lived north side of Church Lane. 3 chd: **Clara Lily** m Cyril C. Creed, **Denis Charles** (1911) m1933 **Gladys May** Harris, **Alwyn May** (1914). I school log book: 25 Oct. 1918 *42 cases of Inflenza and school closed for 3 weeks* Nov 11 & 18<sup>th</sup> *Mrs Grubb and Mrs Hickman died aged 31 & 32 years* old. Charles Hickman second marriage to **Agnes**

**Revd Marsh Kirkby** (bur Wardington 1 6.1927 aged 69) born ? Little Clarington son of Rev Kirkby. Brother of **Billy**, Revd Dr **Paul & wife** both died 1932. **Kate** died 1932 bur Banbury An unnamed sister a teacher, **Monica** d 1934 at Cropredy, bur at Banbury. **Marsh** m first ----? two chd:1) **Maud**S.R.N. m Chris Lewis and went to Deddington 2) **Jane Agatha** m widower with 2 sons (daug died), William T.Dunn (They had 2 daughters Rachel & Judith. Moved toButtermilk farm at Steeple Aston). **Marsh** m 16 year old **Florence Louise** (bur at Wardington 2.2.1942 aged 68 of Cropredy). 1 child:**Kate Mary Gabridle** bur 17 12.1941 aged 40. Revd Kirkby's widow rented Monkeytree House, Creampot lane, Cropredy from about 1927 to 1942. She was a W.I member.In 1932 gave them a demo.on glove making, offering to help members getting skins or cutting out. Miss kirkby in 1934 gave them a talk on Home Remedies.

**William Lambert** (1787-1843) eldest son of John, publican of Red Lion, was a wheelwright at Woodyard. 8chd. Eldest **Thomas** & 7<sup>th</sup> **James** (1834-1916) lived in 1 & 2 Woodyard. **Thomas** had 9 chd of which Thomas was a blacksmith in 1881. Brothers Louis & John lived in Lambert's Cottage High St..

**James Lambert** (Jim) (1834-1916) wheelwright, builder and contractor. In 1881 employed 4 men & 2 sons at the Woodyard In attic two apprentices John Shirley & Wm Shakespeare. In 1858 Jim m **Margaret M.**Allitt (1833-1867) G.200. Moved to Home Farm after 1909. 5 chd: 1) **Mary Ann** (1859-1934) G 201. Lived on the Green. 2) **William James** (1861-1947) carpenter in 1881. 3) **John** (1863-1922) carpenter in 1881 went to Home Farm Claydon. 4) **Samuel** & 5) **Sarah** who died G.200. James owned property in several villages including Fairview & Goodrest on the east side of theGreen. Lived for a time in Bourton. C.W. there. P.C. 1894. Built Tower at Gt.B. Held twice weekly carpenter classes @ 6.30pm in 1901/2. Son John father of Alf, Tom & Cyril (to Cropredy Manor Farm) by 1<sup>st</sup> m.

**William James Lambert** (1861-1947) (son of **James & Margaret**), carpenter & builder, coal merchant m 1) 1892 **Louise E.**Bonner (1862-1915) G.257.5 chd: **Margaret** (1893-1968) C51. **Leonard J.B.** (1894-1917) Killed in Palastine. **Harold W.** died. **Hilda Louise** (1899-1978) m 1921 Jens Peter Eriksen(d1965 aged 71) C59.They had 4 chd. Farmed School Farm and then to a new house on N/W corner of Green. **William J** m 2) **Gertrude A.** Rayson (1882-1956) in 1920. son **Clifford**. William Parish clerk in 1900. P.C.1907. At 27 on CC&RR comm. Lived at Wharf then Home Farm.

**Louis Lambert** (1866-1943) son of **Thomas**. Louis m **Elizabeth** Hawkes (1867-1946) of Wardington. No Children. Louis lived in a Cottage east side of High Street opposite beech House's walled garden. Brother **Jack Lambert**(1868-1938) lived with them. He was disabled but he open the hall for the Village Club most evenings. Louis worked for S. Cooknell and later Rural District Council on the roads. Village sexton. Kept church &

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churchyard with his wife. Member of pig club. Also CC&RR comm when 36. Louis & Jack bellringers. Elizabeth a dressmaker "Sextons, parish clerks they called them then. I remember Lois he dug all the graves. I always remember how jealous these sextons were of each other. Old Jack Pratt he was clerk up at Bourton and he *Old Jack's had another funeral and I havn't had one for weeks*" Roland Cherry.

**Alexander Patrick McDougall** (1881-1959)m Muriel (1889-1947) teacher. They purchased Prescote Manor in 1919. A Perthshire farmer very concerned with market selling conditions. With a syndicate he introduced sales in Banbury on a good well conducted site near the railway. Midland Marts began 1924 & became the largest market in England. In 1922 moved to Little Prescote (Andrews Farm).BNC Bursar remarks in 1921 *Earth privy at bottom of garden. Asks for a bathroom B.3a.52*. President of Village Club. Muriel of W.I. Later moved back to Prescote Manor. One daughter Anne m Richard Crossman M.P.

**Thomas Miller** stationmaster, lived at Constone. Bellringer. P.C.1925-1931.Member of pig club. *Dapper man with a waxed moustache. Edwardian type of a man. Everything just so. Kept kids out of the station. Went to Aynho.*

**William Neal** (1859-1923) (son of **James** (1825-1900) & **Ann** (1829-1895) G.467) *apprenticed to Thomas Cherry. He was a really good craftsman.* partner to Richard Sumner as wheelwrights & builders at the Woodyard taking over Lambert's building trade. He m **Ellen** Cooknell (1864-1956). One son Arthur who moved to Retford. Neals brought up Louie Howe. Owned 4-10 Chapel Row. & charged 1s-6d a week rent for a cottage. *William a great chapel man.* Played in Wesleyan band. P.C.1898-1910, 1913-1919. William's brother **George** Neal a Claydon farmer also played in the band and CC&RR member in 1895.Ellen very austere. She wore a blacklace piece at her collar.(Quotes from S.R.C). *Neals had musical evenings. It was an organ and only hymns were allowed to be played, Sundays & weekdays.[Bk.2]*. Neals had relations who went to Mixbury from Red Lion St. to farm.

**Bernard Pargeter** (1883-1966) C23 (In 1891 Parents **Richard**,37, & **Hannah**,36, with 3 chd **Gertrude** 8, **Bernard** 7 & **Eva** 2 all born in Cropredy),saddler and served in first World War, gassed which left him chesty. Worked for J.W.Bonham.On ex-servicemens Hall comm. Member of the pig club. Lived in the Jitty, m **Ellen** (1881-1976). 3 chd:1)**Gertrude Ellen** (1910) m W.H.Lewis, 2)**Florence May** (1914) m R.Wheeler, their son Geoff apprenticed to Albert Pettifer and now owner of business on Woodyard site. He had water laid on. **Ronald Wm** (1915) m Mildred.



**George Pargeter** (1850-1927) m **Sarah** (1852-), a shoemaker living in 9 Chapel Row with shop behind no. 8 and a store down Creampot lane next to Mrs R.King. George was born down Creampot, son of **Thomas & Sarah**. His sister **Sophia** m. Daniel Wells George & Sarah's chd in 1891 were **Ada C.15** (**Charlotte** 3 in 1881 missing) & **Grace E.9** Grace looked her father after their mother died. A short man known as *Lofty*.

**William Albert Shirley** (13.7.1867-28.3.1936) born Cropredy, stonemason (son of **William Edward & Sarah** Wilson) m 1900 to **Elizabeth** McGillivray (1865-1949) born at Kilchoan, Inverie, Knoydart, Invernesshire. G530. Lived at Old Yard, Creampot Lane (Hollies). on CC&RR comm. Brother to **John Shirley** who was his partner on CC&RR. Chd: **Christina** (7.4.1902) m Alexander Murray Taylor & **William Colin** (15.2.1906-23.7.1986) m **Helen** E. Matheson & **Harry John** (1908 died).

**John Shirley** (1864-1942) wheelwright apprenticed to Lamberts at Woodyard (Son of Wm and Sarah). Worked for Sumner & Neals. C of E. Bellringer, singer, member of CC&RR comm. Friend of J.W. Bonham, whose son John used to visit his uncle at Woodyard a lot as a child. *John Shirley would always talk to me, I always liked him.* Allotment comm & member of pig club. Lived at new Tide Cottage in Creampot lane, m **Elizabeth (Bessie)** Cox (1866-1935) G 527 born Bishops Itchington. Son **Arthur William** (1891-1947) an apprentice to John's widow Jane Godson, baker, sister of Bessie. Arthur went to Dunchurch. Jane Godson's daughter Gertrude m. Norman Smith of Holmleigh, Round Bottom. *Jane moved to the cottage next to her sister Bessie Shirley and nursed John when he was ill. No-one but the Dr. knew she herself was ill until after her death they found the Dr's bills.* Mrs Gertie Smith.

**Alfred Smith** (1841-1926) carpenter, builder & farmer of Glebe & Manor but let the house, m 1871 **Elizabeth** Page (1843-1920) G271. (Son of **Robert** carp. & joiner 1815-1895 who built Cropredy & Bourton School. Came to Holmleigh c1850). Owned several properties in Red Lion St. P.C 1907. C.of E. A smallish gentle old man. Retired from Holmleigh to 12 then 11 Red Lion St. with youngest daughter **Elizabeth Mary** (1883-1944) G.305.

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Eldest son **Robert J.** (1873-1933), **Albert William** (1875) & **Kate Margaret** (1881-1920, teacher. She m 1909 J.H. Watkins farmer of Station Farm G.306 (2 Watkins chd. Emily M. 1917 & Kate 1919).

**Robert Jn. Page Smith (Bertie)** (1873-1933), carpenter & builder partner with Willie. Lived at Holmleigh up to 1928 then 12 Red Lion St. C.of E., on various charities, bellringer, CC&RR comm aged 20-34 partnered with brother. M in 1902 **Louisa Mary** Burbridge (Polly) (1875-1960) teacher, niece of Mr Bonner, headmaster. 3 chd: **Norman** (1903-1961) m **Gertrude** Godson (d.1981) teacher. **Evelyn Marjorie** (1909) m S.S. Pigolt in 1933 and **Kathleen Mary** (1912) m Charles -.

**Alfred William Smith (Willie)** (1875-), carpenter & builder with Bertie m1905 to **Lizzie Gardner** Claridge (d of Uriah & E.Gardner) 2 chd survived **Stella Margaret** (1910), **Kenneth William** (1914), a son G.255. Partner with Bertie until death of father. Left 12 Red Lion St. for L/Spa. On CC&RR com 18-32. C.of E. Singer.

**Richard Sumner** (1853-1924) wheelwright & building business with William Neal. Bought up several properties in Bourton. He loved to visit wife's Istock relations *He did, he loved it* [Marie Godson Bk 1] Richard m **Mary Ann** Smith (1862-1943) of 3 Red Lion St. 3 chd: **Frank Sumner** (1891-1962) C75 In R.A.F. m **Mabel Ellen** Dunn (1895-1952), **Elsie** (1893-1930 ) G.531 m Thomas William Dunn & lived at 1 Chapel Row. (At that time Sumner's owned 1-3 and Neals 4-10 Chapel Row). **Annie** (c1896-) m Ted.Cherry from Oathill, farmed Oxhey, farm in Bourton then Wiggington. Richard began work as an estate capenter in Williamscoote. Moved to the Woodyard. Had Stone Leigh built in garden of 3 Red Lion St. P.C 1913-24. Methodist. Mary Ann's father George a stone mason who m cousin Hannah Smith. Mary's sister Elizabeth m J.W.Bonham [Bk 1]. Another sister's chd came to stay with Bonhams. The cousins used to meet in the Woodyard. Elsie had a watch from school for *Never Absent Never Late*. [Bk.3] Also in school log bk 22 Aug 1902 *F.Sumner one of St.5 boys has taken fever of course none of the family (3) attend school*.

**Frank Sumner** (1891-1962) m **Mabel Ellen** Dunn (1895-1952 ) C.75. Carried on Wheelwrights business, builders, decorators and undertakers. Lived at 3 Chapel Row, then moved to Woodyard. where their daughter **Constance Mabel was** born 30 Sept 1924 bp at Methodist church. m Sam Hollis. Ran the post office a separate business at the Woodyard. (Connie postmistress the last 11 of the. 26 years. Moved to Stone Leigh then build Conifers) Frank sold 1-3 Chapel Row, after Elsie his sister died in 1930, to Elijah Adkins. Had a pig at Woodyard. Frank made & gave the seat at the west end of the cemetery.

**Thomas W.Y.Timms** (1869-1933) railway signal man, singer, In 2 concerts @ Church rooms 1906/7. Known for his roses. Allotment & member of pig club comm. Gran had a shop in Chapel Row. Lived Plantations, 3 Chapel Green then 9 Chapel Row. *Mrs Timms had crocheted blinds hanging from the windows*. Suffered from diabetes. P.C. 1925-37. m **Elizabeth** Cooknell (1870-1944) son **Cyril** (1894) m **Louie** Howe & moved to Eastview, Harbury. **Evelyn May** born Aug 1923 & bp at Cropredy chapel. Cyril member of St.Johns Ambulance with Denis Hickman & Colin Shirley.

**Ben Turford** (1877-1947) G525, plate layer on railway, lay preacher. Lived High St.Cottages. m I) -? Son Ben also on railway 2) 1939 when 62 **Daisy** aged 55 a sp.died 1960 aged 75. C38. Ben moved to Daisy's cottage.

**Frank Ross Walker** (1875-1941) Gt.G58.Schoolmaster m **Bertha** (1876-1937) teacher. No Chd. At Cropredy & Bourton School from 6.2.1911- 1930's. Mr Walker encouraged football & horticulture. C. of E. He died in Rochester hospital. Mrs was in the Red Cross.

**Sidney Watts** was a Wardington man, but I think he lived at Williamscoote (c1924). He afterwards moved to Chalcombe. He was a very nice man. He spent some years in Australia. I used to like to hear him talk about it. Colin Shirley 1980

**Minnie Eleanor West** buried 23 Feb.1952 spinster. A nurse? In land army? Lived at Monkeytree House then North side of Church lane. Had lodgers Member of W.I.

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