

..... and continuing our journey forwards in our Time Machine, here are some first-hand impressions, stories and anecdotes "by an old resident", Mr Pat Long of Newton Road, of

LITTLE SHELFORD FROM 1923 ONWARDS

In sixty-two years residence I have of course seen many changes in this charming, friendly village, (a population census of 1924, trusting to memory, gave the total of 498; it is now slightly in excess of 1000, thus having doubled.) New housing estates have arisen and not a few derelict cottages demolished, piped water, mains drainage, gas, street lamps, electricity, raised pavements, all these beneficial things we now take for granted were not existent then - "beneficial" is the operative word. What a shambles of inhabited buildings there was around the "Prince Regent" area Picturesque? Yes, but certainly nothing else. In fact it has been slow but steady progress all the time and the certainty is CONTINUITY.

Agriculture is still the dominant feature. In 1923 it was absolute, the farmers at that time being Joseph Fordham (Jack's father), William Meadows, and the Litchfield brothers, Frank and Reuben, who also ran a thriving milk round, a coal business, and in addition, owned a gravel pit, long ago filled in; part of Courtyards estate now replaces it. Horse drawn ploughs and self binders, stackyards full of well thatched ricks; an acre a day was the accepted standard for the ploughman with his two horses and single plough - nowadays it's nearer fifty for the multi-furrow pulling crawler-track tractor. Wages then were around thirty shillings a week. We are incomparably much BETTER OFF today.

Characters? Little Shelford then had its fair share of them, some of them surviving until quite recently. Who could ever forget BILLY WISBEY, a wiry little man whose every speech was interspersed at about every half dozen words with the very mild expletive "bleedun" ; TEDDY MOORE, landlord of "The Plough" for forty years, renowned and remembered for his "I'll heap it up next time owd partner," if a customer complained of his pint mug being a little short of full; and dear old VICTOR DICKERSON, that highly skilled man in the now forgotten crafts of hurdle making and thatching? I write with authority on the latter, for did I not act as his labourer in at least two very busy harvest periods just prior to World War 2? "Boonch", he would call out when ready to lay another strip, and up the ladder went me with another "boonch" of a half dozen "YELLUMS". Who knows what a "YELLUM" is today?

But to deviate from nostalgia to one or two examples of that lovely type of unrehearsed humour - humour only to the true villager. Mr Bert Moore, for many years captain of the village cricket club, met Rupert Rogers a few hours prior to the start of an important cup match. Rupert enjoyed a strong reputation for his cricket knowledge, quite unmatched by his ability with bat and ball. Says Rupert, "Get your spinners out Bertie; that wicket is made for them." Says Bertie, "Well, if you can tell me who they are I'll certainly put 'em on."

Incidentally, the cricket club must be just about the oldest in the whole of this administrative County. Trusting to memory again and hoping I have got the date near the mark, it was formed around 1878. And we must not forget the splendid football team this village once enjoyed. Believe it or not they once won a cup final in a junior Cambridge League. Mr Horace Marsh, now living in Garden Fields, was one of the players. He will remember that thrilling final when Little Shelford licked Teversham 2 - 1. Not so long ago there hung in "The Plough" two handsome shields the cricket club won in competitive matches, bearing also the players' names. I wonder "where are they now?"

World War 2 and the memories it evokes! That crack cavalry regiment, the 17th/21st Lancers, being transformed into an armoured unit, were deposited on the recreation ground and other open spaces. The officers made the "Prince Regent" more or less their secondary headquarters; the real one being "The Lodge". The landlord of "The Prince" at that time was George Townsend who never seemed short of a bottle of scotch whilst the Lancers were with us. Along with many others I wondered if one of their officers, Captain BUCHANAN, was in any way influencing the supply of a commodity in Little Shelford that was almost unobtainable elsewhere. The Lancers left many of us with very happy memories.

During the same period, old Arthur Scott, a London evacuee, was in occupation of "The Plough". Long after closing time one night in 1942 I was one of a little card party there when three taps rattled on the window. We all looked at each other and winked. We all knew who it was and what would happen next. Scott bawled out, "You'll find it in the usual place."

No sooner spoken when up jumps George Baker, the "Kings Farm" gardener, with this observation, "Not tonight he won't! Here's yer twelve and a tanner!" - that being the price of a bottle of scotch in those days, (62^{5p} today). We all knew who was the intended recipient but prudence forbids disclosure. The reader must guess.

Finally, I am not one of the very small minority of "oldies" resentful of new faces, new ideas. Things must progress and that spells change. We are now blessed with a well balanced, progressive community that will ensure continuance of our long established qualities described in my opening paragraph - FRIENDLY, CHARMING. Comparative "newcomers" have indeed been the very essence of kindness to me in many respects, and not only to me. This sketchy record reflects but a fragment of life here as it has unfolded over a long period of time. It has been pretty to watch, pleasant to put on record.

COVER PICTURE : All Saints Church, Little Shelford,
(from end of Manor Road)

Drawn November 1984 by David Hindley

PICTURE of THE OBELISK on page 11

Drawn March 1985 by Ron Westbrook

MAP of the Parish of Little Shelford, showing the new boundaries, on page 18

Detailed by David Hindley