

CI SHR. 24

**Memories of Shrivenham between the Wars
(Noted in January 1992)**

N 1239

Len Knapp 1911 – 1996

The Barringtons

These are my earliest memories of Lord and Lady Barrington, who lived at Beckett House. They were in a lovely house in a beautiful position, the artificially made lake, beautiful lawns sloping down to it, specially beautiful trees in the lawns and in the grounds. A great deal of wooded area was in the land around and in the large park near the front of the house. Lord and Lady Barrington seemed to me only to have occasionally lived in the house, I can't remember many of the staff who were there. This tends to suggest there were no permanent residents, except one, who was a Keeper with the jurisdiction over the surrounding grounds. An estate which was slightly run down, not in perfect condition, though the lawns were not neglected. Lord Barrington being a very aged person, dressed in tweeds and wore a cap and cloak and he was lame. Lady Barrington, a prim slight person, was a smaller version of Queen Mary, always dressed in black with decorative bonnet and veil. He was the owner of Beckett House, the grounds and every one of the local farms. He was also President of the Cricket and Football clubs. They must have travelled from place to place in a car, the horse and carriage having gone. That really covers all I know of the early days of the Barringtons, except that sometime in the early thirties, Lord Barrington passed away, Lady Barrington actively carried on the affairs of the Estate. For financial reasons, the estate was broken up by selling off the Farms, the estate and parks sold separately. It was on the market for quite a long time because of a lack of buyers.

I must add about Lady Barrington that she was very keen on making something of Shrivenham, marking the sacrifice of people during the war. It might well have been a considered plan for the development of Shrivenham; forming of the Recreation Ground in the position it is, as the centre of the Village, and the building of eight pairs of ex-servicemens' homes. This had a great deal to do with the formation of the Village now, especially since the Memorial Hall which is a massive, beautiful building the like of which is probably not equalled for a village the size of Shrivenham, as a centre of leisure activities.

Beckett House

On the Faringdon Road with to the left Barnacle Lodge, to the right Medlar Cottage. We'll proceed down the drive, gravelled, ten feet wide, on the right Barnacle's Park, about a ten to twelve acre park. On the left a strip of woodland, with oak and yew trees. Going on down about 200 yards, a junction in the drives, one to the left and one straight on down. Straight on down we have woods on each side, and the drive proceeds down to where the lake is narrowing a little bit. The stone bridge leading to Beckett House, this is called the Terrace Bridge. We arrive at Beckett House on the terraces. Going back to the junction, turn left and this goes down still in woodland, in about 200 yds we come to the drive. We meet the small wicket gate through the wall. If we look right here, the drive continues for more than 200 yards. We pass over a bridge, the Servant's Bridge, the reason being that one approaches Beckett House where we turn right to go into a courtyard through an arch way of a quadrangle of buildings. These are ground floor and first floor buildings, with men servants' quarters over, various coachouses in the quadrangle. An entrance through the quadrangle to an area which was the approach area to the front door of the big house. Going back to the bridge, the drive continues to the east, picking up the main drive from the Faringdon Road which approaches the house.

Going up to the Servants Bridge, proceeding to the lake, we have here two locks or sluice gates, the means of blocking up the original stream from the hills. It passes this area on down to meet the River Cole and thence to the Thames. These locks were obviously formed to bay up the stream from the lake, artificially formed by digging to make wider area in the points between the bridges and the woods on up the stream. We would like to make the point that there were not only two sluice gates or locks but a third one, which was just a distance forward from the previously mentioned lock; 30 yards one from the other, forming a basin about 30 yards long and 10 yards wide. It had a stone bottom and sides and was called an Eel Pond, I don't know quite how it functioned but the reason is one could let water in the Lake and trap it in that pond, for some purpose or another or let the water on through the two. I know we found it useful as boys to have a swimming pool. We have a path from here about 50 yards long, on to the main drive to Beckett House.

On the Longcot Road there were stone piers and wrought iron gates for carriages and a single gate for pedestrians. On the right behind a wall was a stone cottage which was once occupied by the Estate Steward. There used to be a thatched cottage on the left standing in Barnacles Park, and on the other side a gardener's cottage. These are now demolished. We go down this drive to a bridge unlike the others; a wooden bridge formed in a nice graceful art form about 4 or 5 feet wide for pedestrian use only. It's called a Cradle Bridge, by going over here, we are on the paths of the lawn. Beckett House stands rather higher here, ahead of us and steps go up from here to get on to this higher level, sweeping lawns on our right, on the south side of Beckett House the gravel path around the bottom edge of it. The lake here is probably 30 yards wide; on our left over the bridge there is the fishing Temple, standing up some ten or twelve feet high, to platform round with yet another storey above. There is a facility to stand and fish from this balcony-like situation. There are arches underneath it in the lower base of it, to get on to anchored boats rowing off from that point. Going up steps to the wide gravelled path around the house, both south and west of the house, was a very large glass Conservatory, well situated to catch the sun. The house was rather beautiful here, the windows collecting much sun and light. We travel round to the fine entrance to the house, and a broad courtyard area; with lawns to each side. The lawns were dotted with beautiful cedar trees. Way ahead, a huge park, with elm trees in clumps here, the usual parkland around such a large house as this. There was a wrought iron parting fence going north and east dividing it from the actual house and lawns area. We reach a drive here about 100 yards from the house to the north and the Faringdon Road, we find a lodge and again another beautiful entrance with wrought iron gates and piers. Wellington Wood comprised about thirty acres. From the house looking directly east, one would just see Home Farm across the park

Streets

The conditions of roads and paths has changed considerably. The High Street was lined with Lime trees, only a few of which still remain. The surface then being a rolled stone, this was the Mendip and a very hard stone, about the size of big walnuts or chestnuts, angular and rolled in with grit by the usual heavy rollers. They flicked out on occasions and it was only in the mid twenties when they started to add a tar coat. Then again some years later, a coat of tarmacadam was laid, on which is the same substance which is used nowadays. I remember that this caused quite stir with the milk carts and those who thought the horses would slip on the new, smoother roads. This did not cause too much trouble. Certainly things moved across and along it better, especially the cars. So there was a new age.

Now to talk about road surfaces and drainage. On the occasion of any violent storm, the whole street would be flooded, indicating out of date drainage. There were drainage gratings at intervals, just stone formed, that is flagstone bases with sides and top not a pipe version of

drain, continuing along the side of the road, going to the low points in perhaps Hazells Lane coming eventually to the Lake, a rather crude idea. **Sewers**

There were two or three phases when the drainage of the village was changed. One, when the road surface was re-laid, new drainpipes were put in, serving both as storm water and sewage. It was further improved in the late sixties a complete new sewage system and a storm water drain. Pavements improved by removing the old stone edging, inserting the new, modern concrete kerbs, tarmac paths and areas which are the wide parking areas of today.

Water mains

In 1946 the first water mains were laid, coinciding with the connections to the main brought to the College, in the late thirties. Shrivenham had relied on wells for the water supply. A certificate would be issued by the Local Authority as to the purity of the well water supply. With new sewers and water mains, the stage was set for possible new development. This was already going with a massive programme of new Council houses, being built just after the war. Planning took on the hint given by Lady Barrington's development of the Recreation Ground, development seeming to centre on that. You can now see where the Council houses were built up into the north-west. Other development carrying on after the second world war, was on the south and south west of the Village. Perhaps I should add that at the bottom of the High Street, the wall of Shrivenham House which is just as it has been for over a century now, was modified and the road is now a little better, although still quite sharp. Fortunately through traffic is reduced by the fact of the by-pass, for the traffic from Oxford to Swindon and the new Motorway. A by-pass of two and a half miles in length, from Watchfield to the Bourton turn. Village traffic is much reduced from previous times, though there is a steady increase in car ownership, and the R.M.C.S. (Cranfield) presence.

Means of travel

Bicycles were the poor man's means of getting about, these were fitted with pneumatic tyres. No doubt, just prior to this, they would have had solid tyres, going out with the Penny Farthing. The bikes then were fairly similar to those of the present day. The tarred roads gave quite a comfortable ride, similar to these days. Not forgetting the in between, the motor cycle, a very popular means of locomotion - also fitted with side-cars, the middle man's means of travel.

The first Motor Cars

For years, of course, the way people got around depended on their wealth, mostly farmers sported a car. The first I ever saw or heard was owned by the agent for Bourton Estate - a Model T Ford - I can see it now chugging up the main street to get to Bourton. Also our Doctor had one and he had a chauffeur Edwin Titcombe to deal with that for him though he, Dr. McNamara could drive himself. Being fore-runners they were soon getting company.

The Railway

Meantime the train was still going well, every village within a mile of the railway route having a station. Not only from main points, such as London and Bristol but many branches to outlying areas. A considerable network of railways gave a massive service of transportation of goods and people. It was only in the early 1960's when through the development of the car and motor lorry that so much trade was taken from the rail network. The railways became almost redundant in some areas, even though there might still have been a certain number of passengers, there was a massive rationalisation carried out by Dr. Beeching. There was a tremendous amount of elimination of railways and bridges This was a marked change. Now moving to the effect of the lorry and the Coach, the coach taking a large amount of the transportation of people from the Railways. The roads became increasingly congested. I should say at this time that the Railways and the trains themselves, the engines have changed

tremendously. I think that they are all steel now, whereas they had wonderful coach work put into them. Now crash resistant, they are protective to the people in the event of a crash. The engines now are not steam engines but diesel electric. Speeds have increased but whether smoother or not? I know there are still very keen steam fans who will do anything to keep a steam line open. In Shrivenham, of course we live near to Swindon, a centre for Railways, the making of the Great Western Railway rolling stock. In later years an employment of about 10,000 in my early days has now almost been totally eliminated. It is true to say that at one time when the station was open, there were many people walking to the Station. There was no bus at that time, at least twenty to thirty people were seen walking to the railway every morning. The question of the signalling system – always a manual one, up to the forties or fifties, at all crossings there would be some one to operate the gates. A chain of continuous signalling. Furthermore, as many roads as possible crossing the lines were either bridged or eliminated, ensuring much faster transport.

Buses

Buses also were getting around, the Shrivenham to Swindon bus was run by the Swindon and Bristol Bus and Tram Company, the first ones having solid tyres. I remember this very well. I can't quite remember how smooth the ride was.

Shrivenham School

I think now I should come to activities at the school. During the time Mr Dance was the headmaster, and that covers most of the time I was at school. He seemed to be a person who was very keen on birds and bird watching and also beekeeping. You can also tie in with this that he was keen on gardening, and therefore he did his best to teach a lot of us how to deal with these things. An area was purchased, I presume by the Education Authorities outside of the enclosed school playground area in what was part of the adjoining small farm for the purpose of making school gardens. This was divided up into I suppose 20 or 30 small plots one for each scholar and these were divided by 2 foot wide pathways. Each boy was allocated this and it was numbered and he had to care for it right through the seasons. In addition there were about 3 demonstration plots. On these seeds were sown for planting out plants so that not only were vegetables grown on each of the boys plots, but there was a border of flowers. This inculcated a knowledge of gardening I suppose that would have served everyone who attended there for years later.

Much to our alarm we were encouraged to help with beekeeping. There were several stocks of bees on the master's garden and of course these quite often swarmed at various points of the villages. Although in beekeeping there is a method whereby you regulate the swarming I think he was keen to encourage a swarm sometimes to take off and we would have to go out with him and collect the swarm and reintroduce it to the hives. To help in our education about bees and the activity within the hives a demonstration hive was set up in the school. I doubt if it is there now but it was set up in the school room nearest to the High Street in the window facing West. A slot was merely cut out for the bees to go in and out of the window on to an alighting platform. They then came into a narrow hive which had glass sides so that one could see by opening and closing doors just what was going on inside during the busy season. Of course in the winter when there are no flowers they are dormant. We learnt about the whole activities of bees and some people might have used the knowledge later in keeping bees themselves. In any case its nice to know and I'm sure everyone benefited from at least knowing what happens in bee keeping.

I now could talk about play other than sports play and this is in regard to play in the streets. One might raise an eyebrow to talk about playing in the streets but one must remember that there was scarcely any traffic at all going up and down. So after the roads were tarmaced and smooth one could spin tops and this was quite a rage at times. We took pride in having tops that would not only spin but fly for yards and there were experts at this who were regarded as really the cat's whisker. Another activity was bowling hoops and not just the wooden hoops but steel ones. It wasn't just a

matter of having just a continuous ring of steel probably half inch diameter with a stick to beat it and send it along. There was a type where a steel stick was used but it was attached to the hoop by an eye and that was held against the rim once it was set in motion and you ran with it. This of course forced it along and it was just a matter of running attached to it rather than tapping it. Then of course many of us had bicycles and we were pretty good at riding them not only with hands on, but hands off and with reins attached quite often imagining that the bike was a horse.

Another thing that comes to mind that was happening at school. I think it was just before I went to school, the Watchfield parish had a small stone school which is still existing but it has been converted into a house. It is about 50 yards up the High Street from the Parish church in Watchfield. I don't know for what reason it was closed but it was decided that the children from Watchfield would have to come to Shrivenham for their education and due to the distance the younger ones were conveyed taking them back in the evening. I presume the older boys at least would make their own way by walking or cycling. Another point about schooling those days was that work other than learning the three "R"s was craft and this was arranged to be done at Bourton. Woodwork was the craft for the boys and cooking for the girls. I think the girls were conveyed again by this horse and cart and the boys again made their own way but most of us had bicycles and we enjoyed the ride and sometimes went across country on our bikes as against going round the road.

School Masters

The schoolmasters were also influential people, and remembering them when one is small, you take a different view of them. Mr. Oliver was called Dickie but he was quite strict – he had something up behind a picture which he could use from time to time! A swishy stick, I saw him use it quite often and didn't want anything to do with that – so I still remember the 'men' who were at the receiving end! I remember better the coming and service of Dickie Dance, he was there in the last years of my schooling (13, 14, 15's) – then later as member of the cricket team. A man who lost his temper rather quickly. I had more to do with Ron Friend in later years, a very good schoolmaster and a friend. He was there almost to the time of the present Head (Peter Causer – Head for approx last sixteen years, taking over from Ken Cole)

Vicars

I remember Vicar Hill, who was in the Vicarage for a long, long time as Vicar of Shrivenham, until the late thirties. He was superseded by Seymour-Metford, being in the village for seven or eight years. He was followed by Reverend Durrant, the Reverend Newman, and now the present vicar, Reverend Rawdon-Mogg. Vicar Hill certainly being so different to the others in that he belonged to an age when the Vicarage extended right down to Hazell's lane. An area of two to three acres of not only pond and orchard and paddock but quite beautiful gardens and the whole of the big house with its front approach to the High Street. He was like a few other professional people, who carried more weight and respect than they seem to have today.

Doctors

We've always had a Doctor in Shrivenham, the first I remember, being Dr. McNamara, he was with us for many, many years. Certainly up until the fifties, and we've always had a nurse. District Nurse was the term used, although I think in the later fifties, with mobilisation, the Ashbury Nurse seemed to be the one who served Shrivenham. Things changed in the medical world, the way the nursing Service covered the area. The Hospital was always the Swindon Victoria. Only for a short period did we have a Chemist in Shrivenham, Chemist's requirements being provided by the Doctor.

Police

I'm not sure how the policing was carried out in Shrivenham, I do remember the building of the first Police House. Now a private house, a large building, near the Village pump. There are four cottages and it is on the Swindon side of that. It must have been built in the Twenties,

housing a Constable and a Sergeant with a cell for their use. The policy changed to house more people, more police in Shrivenham. Two pairs of houses were built, in the late Forties or early Fifties, in the Highworth Road, four more Police added to the complement. Other changes occurring later with more mobile police facilities, encouraging them to own their own houses, providing police houses became redundant.

The College

Now I must talk about the R.M.C.S., built in the first instance for the transfer of the military establishment at Woolwich the Royal Artillery, for an out of city headquarters. The War Dept. came along in 1937 (approx) and bought Beckett House and the estate. Certainly the development of the College, the Military College of Science which was eventually built on the Estate, from 1937 to 1940. Plans did include much more building on the Watchfield area of married quarters. As a consequence, the people employed in the College, became an addition to the population.

As soon as it was ready for occupation the War broke out. Anti-aircraft units were immediately installed, training proceeded, carrying on for two or three years until the searchlights and units were no longer required. It was used for the training of occupational personnel, required for taking over government in captured areas. A little later, the Americans took over all the buildings, using it as a University for their younger, demobilised servicemen. The College has been continuing ever since as a Degree course establishment, for members of the Commonwealth forces, bringing to Shrivenham people from Canada, Australia, South Africa all other former- Commonwealth countries. There is more of a British compliment now.

Tramps and Gypsies

When I was a boy we used to have tramps and gypsies and I was certainly afraid of them. Tramps invariably calling and knocking at the house, asking for a tin of hot water – with which to make some tea. They would be progressing through the Village, from a Workhouse in Faringdon to a Workhouse in Stratton. In those days it was a responsibility of the District Council to provide somewhere for the homeless traveller to sleep. The name Workhouse, suggests to me that they would have to work a few hours at something or other, gardening or some other service to help run the places. They had then to walk from one to the other, probably spending a limited time at each one. Similarly Gypsies, we see them nowadays usually collecting old iron or scrap in their lorries but then they would have travelled in any cart they could, with a covered top. Not the painted and decorated caravans you sometimes see at fairgrounds, travelling through – making clothes and camping on the roadside. They would stay the night and cut withy sticks, going round the village to sell them. If they were clever they would make flowers up, out of sticks, dye them and get and sell flowers; anything to get a few coppers. We gradually got used to them and didn't take too much notice.

Farming Practice

Farm activities were obviously affected by the invention of the internal combustion engine, the tractor superseding the horse. This was evident in the transport of milk, the product of the Dairy Farms to be found around Shrivenham, dealt with in London. I have memories of every morning, horse and milk carts, being driven from the outlying farms of the Watchfield, Longcot area up through the Village to the Station to meet the particular trains early in the morning. They came at very regular times with the milk, to go on trains to London. Effects of tractors were felt on the farms, included ploughing the fields, planting and cropping. Interesting to note that the population of the Village was very much agricultural not only ploughing, sowing and reaping in the summertime but also throughout the winter, for looking after the stock. Dairy cows were brought into buildings from about November to April they had to be cleaned out and fed daily. Hay and straw – cake was an imported article –

mangolds were grown and cleaned, put into clamps and taken out as required through the winter, till the cattle were taken out again into the fields. That, together, with hedging and ditching, and repairs of various sorts, employed the workers throughout the year. Most farms had three or four families living on them.

Aircraft

Just after the ending of the First World War, aircraft was being used in the later stages, balloons being used for spotting, long range artillery use. Aircraft developed for Air fighting. After the war I remember running across fields and hedges, to see any plane that came down and there were occasions when private planes were flying (none too reliable!) – it was most exciting to be able to go and see the plane. In these days not something to become excited about. These being the small bi-planes, trainers seen up to a few years ago.

Men's Institute

The Men's Institute has not really changed at all since days of my youth. At that time they used a Billiards Room, there was a full sized and three-quarter sized table, in use every evening. 6 – 10pm. A fire place to keep the group warm, from October till April. There was a library in the back room, cards being played by various individuals. A pretty smoke filled room but they didn't know what we know today about that.

Garages

Moving on to talk about garages, there was one built in the position of the present one, in Tom Dike's yard as his wheelwright's yard. The Garage did repairs as well as selling petrol, later selling a few cars. Prior to this though I remember that the Pound's Stores near the Cross Trees, did have one petrol pump there, but could hardly be called a Garage. Later at the top of the Village at the –fork in the road, one to Swindon the other to the Station, a garage was built on there, becoming the second Garage for repairs, and served as a Filling Station. Further down the road on Swan Hill, going towards Swindon a Garage built there and started for the same sort of work, erected at about the same time as the other Garage – between the two World Wars.

Shops

At the corner of Hazell's Lane, there was a Mr. Tom Dike and Mrs Nancy Dike who ran the tiny Thatched Shop. He also was the local Undertaker and wheelwright, having a yard and workshop exactly where the present day Vicarage is. Madge, one of their children, was *until recently* recently well known in the Village. *She was Mrs Madeline Dean.*

Talking about shops, right opposite this Blacksmith's shop where at the moment it seems to be a zone for shopping in Shrivenham, there were none at all. In fact this was a garden belonging to a Cottage laying further back, in fact on the Manor lane. It was a garden approached from the main street, May Tree Cottage with a May tree at the gate on the road side.

At the Cross Trees, you would have the Bakehouse, and the Grocer and that was always known as Pound's Store. Originally owned by Pounds who also owned a Mill at Kingston near Ashbury. That was a point where you could smell bread and you bought it. Next to that going down the street is another grocer, another bakery, normal grocery and next door, a Public House 'The Prince of Wales' Its character not changed as I know. Right opposite that grocer, there is a butcher, Butcher Harris; and down at the Thatched Cottage, Dike's shop. I'm calling that a sweet shop, but there were other things sold there as well! Diagonally opposite was The 'Crown' Public House. Also, a sweet shop for a while, about next door to the 'Crown', further down the street on the same side, called Hammond's shop. Coming back up to the present Paper shop, there was an Antiques and a cabinet maker lived there. Opposite Ivy House and garden there is a Butchers shop now and that has continued since the days of

my first memories, although Butcher Yates was the butcher I knew there, there have been three others since.

Post Office

Next to the Men's Institute, in the Swindon direction was the Post Office, which as you know is now moved. It was run by the Misses Lock, for as long as I could remember they were in charge and it was a poky little place, but served the purpose

Blacksmiths

Moving on to Blacksmiths – on the fork of the road just mentioned, there is a small Cottage called West End, alongside that in the Twenties there was a Blacksmith's Shop. This was there for quite a few years, and one other existed in the place where the present Co-op stands. This shop was run by Fred Tucker, quite a normal sound that you heard, the ring of his hammer on the anvil. In those days, things were much quieter than today, of course in the earlier part of my memory, blacksmithing would be the requirement of those owning horses, as well as repair of implements.

Gazetteer of Roads

High Street

At the west end of the village at the parish boundary on the old A420 near the foot of the hill, on the north side is a stone built farmhouse with its collection of buildings. This is a small dairy farm and with the exception of a modern type Dutch barn standing in the first field is unchanged during this period. The owner occupying family were named Tilling with one bachelor son and his father running the farm. Late in the thirties the farm was sold to a Mr Curtis who carried on for a while farming it as a unit for the last time. Since then the house and land have been separated.

Along the road for about 100 yds and through a field gate we follow a track across the field to a pair of cottages. These are farm workers homes belonging to the adjoining farm and built on the same lines as others in the village. At the time I first saw these buildings there were ruins of another row of cottages at the side of the present gardens. It is the norm that farm cottages are used on a service tenancy basis, therefore it would be difficult to remember all of the successive workers. I do however remember one family through school and church association, their names being Bowery, parents and Lesley, Stanley, Marjory & Laura.

Back to the main road and immediately on the opposite side of the road is a red brick house, which, together with surrounding land, constituted a small farm, with most of the land behind the house. A stable with loft over which stood on the roadside to the left of the entrance gate has been demolished. The owner was a Leonard Knapp, my uncle, he and his wife had no family. One of my earliest memories occurred during the first world war of my walking along the then quiet road with a can to get milk for the family. We lived next to the school.

Holcome Farm was sold to Fred Kent who continued in agriculture with the addition of a retail coal merchant. He was then followed by a Jack Cole and family who carried on farming to just prior to the second war and then sold out. From then on the land must have been absorbed into adjoining farms. At this time the purchaser of the Holcome farm house and paddock abutting the road west of the house erected a service station and built a bungalow set back to the rear, the owners of all of this would I think have been the Pridham family.

From Holcome farm we go east again for distance of some 200 yds to a point where, to the south a large home was built by Mr & Mrs Pridham who had a family of three or four children, this I think was in the late nineteen twenties. The house (Wayside) was built on a clearly marked site of an acre or more land, but I have a feeling that the rest of the field to the

station road corner would have also been in their ownership. It will have been noticed that the properties described in the previous paragraph were associated with the same family at a later date.

As we move toward the sweeping bend to the corner leading to the railway station junction the road now goes straight on, This was a road improvement carried out in the late twenties or early thirties. Near the present bus shelter is the site of a demolished cottage known as Reeves cottage after the name of the owner who lived there. The house and land extended as far back north as the present allotments do. This of course caused an island of land and the cottage on it was demolished. At the same time the site on the north side was seen by a petroleum company as an opportunity to set up a filling station which was done. Mr Brickell and family built a garage for car servicing with the necessary hardstand at the side of the new piece of road The reader will recall my walking past here on the way to Holcome farm, it was right on this corner that I was fascinated by the cooing of a dove by the cottage and spent a lot of time peering through the thick hedge trying to see it.

On the west side of the road there stands to this day the same thatched cottage as I first remember. This and the area around is known as Westend. Although many people will have lived here during this length time, I remember just a few, the Clifton parents Arthur, Donald, also a daughter. There was at one time a temporary type of building erected and used as a blacksmith's workshop by a Mr George Knapp. I am not certain if he, with his wife and family lived in the house at, that time.

The thatched cottage on the south side opposite the allotments, is a small building and set low down, it seems to be exactly the same to this day. Until very recently it was occupied by a member of the same family, my earliest memories are of little man leaning on and looking over his paled gate. He had a son James, I think he and his wife raised their family of two sons elsewhere in the village but eventually one of those sons Les (Judd) lived in this cottage until he passed on.

A part of the area referred to as the allotments was taken out for the erection of a police station. Although not used for that purpose now it remains substantially the same in appearance. This building was constructed in the late 1920's, I remember that the builders were Messrs Wheeler.

Passing about 10 acres of allotments on the north side some 150yds down High Street there is a triangular green with tall lime trees on it and a village pump in the centre. This is at a road junction for Highworth, along the left-hand side there are four cottages in a row. Judging by the occupants I remember two or three must have been owned by local farmers, I have it on good authority that the first one (No 8) was where my fathers family were brought up, sad to say I never knew those grand parents. I well remember Bill Tucker and family Bert Les and Alice, he worked as the carter for farmer Snook at Sandshill farm. Then there was Maurice Pope, the groom for Captain College of Stallpits Farm, the family comprised wife, Stan Alan and Gladys. The water supply for these houses would have been by the pump on the green. Crossing the corner of the green to the end of Manor Lane we are by a hedge at what was the corner of a corn field, bounded by the lane on the south side, by Highworth Road on the west side and a public foot path on the north and east sides. Close to us in the corner of this field was a small cottage, this of course was demolished to make way for the Memorial Hall. The only evidence of its existence today are gate posts in the hedge, a filled well by the gate and perhaps the cherry tree by the front door of the hall. It might be worth a mention that the old pound is still in existence on the south side of the road and should be preserved. This is where cattle were impounded if they were straying on the road.

In the tongue of land between us and Manor Lane, there was a garden hedged and walled in and it seemed always very private, I don't know very much more about it. It belonged to

Beckett House owner, Lord Barrington. The two semi-detached ex-servicemen's homes were built with a shop front. One was occupied by Mr and Mrs Scoffield and two daughters, their business was draper and haberdasher. The other Mr and Mrs Collins and I think two sons. The business was a cycle repair and mechanic. It was later expanded to form a company with others in a motor car garage with a school bus facility. We come down further and this is right outside of the Methodist Church which was existing certainly when I remember first. It occupied frontage on the High Street and Manor Lane, with small iron wicket gate at the front and about six steps up. At the back about 12 ft from the edge of the lane was a 3 ft high wall with iron railings set on, also with an iron wicket gate about central. The main chapel was as now but with gravel paths and lawn around. Opposite two buildings have been demolished and they were small thatched cottages, behind them and beyond no buildings at all, clear fields. At this point next to the Chapel there were also two houses that have been demolished. This together with the square piece of land up to the Chapel and away back to the Manor Lane was a small cottage at the back called Maytree Cottage, occupied by Mr and Mrs Foard, Bill, Kathleen, Tom, Maud, Arthur and Betty who moved from across the road. All the garden came down to the High Street, which is now the frontage of Lloyd's Bank the Co-op and the Hardware store. There was a wicket gate and a double gate access where the florist's shop door is now and the ruins of a shed along the wall which is the boundary of the Chapel. I understand this was used in connection with a coal delivery business. Where the Co-op now is was a pair of stone and thatch cottages. One occupied by Bill Margates, a ganger on the railway, his wife and daughter Betty. In the other lived Mr and Mrs Francis and family, violin player and maker, then Tom Moss, his wife, two daughters and two sons. Tom had a wooden leg and worked as railway signaller at Stainswick crossing. Straight opposite those on the south side the cottages still exist, but they were then the Blacksmith's Shop with tile roof, a yard at the back, and double wooden gates. The tile roof was where the horses entered alongside the forge, the source of the ringing sound of the hammer on anvil and the smell of burning hoof. Next to the shop was the home of the smith and his wife (Tom Taylor). His house and the adjoining were low and thatched as to this day, fronting right to the sidewalk. The occupant of the second cottage I seem to think was a nurse. Now turning into a narrow lane on the south side I recall that the occupant of one cottage was Fred Chivers and his wife with a daughter Gwen. Fred had a painting business and dabbled in small scale house repairs. Another cottage was occupied by Jessie Miller who did shoe repairs. He married the daughter of the farmer at Pennyhooks Farm.

At the corner of the High Street and Stainswick Lane stands a large house, tight to the road. The grounds extend to the blacksmiths shop and Chivers house further back. The garden is walled by a 5 ft 6 in high stone wall edging the path. Stainswick Lane bounds the east side of a paddock to the stream and included a pond. The house known as Ivy House remains the same today, although the main part is now office and a one family flat. When I first remember, it was occupied by Maj and Mrs Marshall and daughter Barbara. A servant and gardener were employed. and there were three cottages. Behind were three other cottages approached by a small lane. Other than that, nothing was to be seen in the way of any buildings to the South. We come back to the High Street and right down to the next point we want to stand at which is nearly to the Garage in the centre, we look to the north side and, they are the same buildings and also on the South side.

From Stainswick Lane along the High Street the first is a shop and house with a high walled in garden on the corner. From the outside it appears just the same now as I first remember it. The list of people and their business would be as follows, Mrs Miles and daughter, in drapery. Mr Will Robey wife and two daughters in antique restoring and sales. Mr and Mrs Tom Foard with their family as listed before running a general store, with family changes a daughter and

son-in-law. Next came the Illot family Wally, his wife and three daughters which later became a son-in-law, daughter combination,

Next the taller private house (No 37) has been from my earliest days occupied by school teachers, to begin with in the early days it would have been the teacher of Shrivenham junior school who moved from the school house to there, with his wife and two unmarried daughters. One other daughter and a son were married and lived away from this area. It would have been in the early 1920's that Mr Oliver retired and a Mr R Dance with his wife son and daughter moved into the School House and took over the post of head. A Mr Howard Biggs moved into the house when the Oliver family vacated, his family comprised wife and a daughter. Howard taught at Watchfield Junior School and was later head of Childrey Junior School.

Next to this is a smaller brick and slated house (No 35 Rose Cottage) occupied first in my memory by Mr and Mrs Cousens, they were elderly and lived alone. They were succeeded by a Mr Childs and I think a Miss Childs.

Next to this house was a 2m high stone wall about 40yds long in line with the houses reaching two cottages, in this was a large pair of wooden doors, this all formed the front boundary of a wheelwrights yard with a line of workshops along the back. This was owned and operated by Mr Tom Dike with his son Willie.

The western end of this yard was purchased by a Mr Bert Collins and a Mr David Mortimer who erected a Service Station. This would have been in the early 1930's since when the original building has been replaced by the present structure.

The pair of cottages next to this yard are unchanged. The first (No 31) was always associated with the yard use, I remember first a Mr Reese Kent living there and he certainly worked there, later Stanley Moon and Madge lived in that house. They also ran the small shop to be mentioned later. The other house (No 29) was occupied by various people one of whom was a railway signalman by the name Cousens with his wife and her sister.

The old vicarage entrance gates join these two cottages and set back stands the very attractive building as today. The other side boasted a large paddock with a pond extending to the Vicarage Lane. Great changes took place in the 1970's. The first incumbent I remember was the Rev Edward Hill with his wife who lived there until the late 1930's by then I understand he had been there some 40 years. He was followed by the Rev Seymore Metford with his wife and daughter. Then sometime in the early 1960's the Rev Durrant and family took over before leaving for Ascot.

From Stainswick lane corner there have been no alterations to the houses on the north side. First we have block of four houses, stone fronted with slated roofs. These are taller than other houses in the street since they are three storey. It should be said that these are unchanged except that the first one (No) accommodates shops, one for Hairdressing and the other Drapery, and again the third is now the village Post Office. Surnames of families living in order as near as can be remembered are Belworthy, Hatherall, Brickell in the first. Tucker, Dixon in the second (No), George Knapp, Wells, Ryman in the third (No), and in the fourth (No) my family, Joe Knapp, my mother, a brother and two sisters.

The school and masters house stand on the corner of Manor Lane and is unchanged to the present day with a wall round the house garden on the lane side. At the back to a point where a stone barn stood was a smallholding. In the mid 1920's some of the land from the latter was taken into the school area to form school gardens which was divided into individual lot for boys to work. During the late 1930's considerable improvements were carried out to the school taking in more land. The barn mentioned before was removed and classrooms and

kitchen with dining room, and an assembly hall were built. A car park was formed on the site of the old farmhouse and finally a swimming pool and entrance to Manor Lane. During this time it was occupied by the school masters, Dance (motioned before) followed by Mr Ron Friend his wife and two sons, on to after the war.

Across Manor Lane the high wall on our left encloses the garden of Elm Tree House. Apart from some building on the east side it remains the same today. The rectangle forming the boundary on the other sides are the Church Lane and the burial area itself. The first family living there were named Chandler, followed by Dr Macnamara. This was the beginning of the use of these premises as the local surgery. Dr Dumughn with four other Doctors form the group at present.

Upon reaching the corner of Church Lane we have on the left a shop with a good frontage on the High Street, some shop windows on the side as well a bakehouse. This was known as Pounds Store, a general grocer and bakery. For the majority of this period the family living on the premises and running it in the manner it was set up for was a family by the name of Benford. Mr George and Mrs with Dora, Jack, William, Dot, and Frank. It was very unfortunate that Will lost his life through an accident at the entrance to the RMCS in the late 1930's. Will Hammond was the chief baker and daily deliveries were made.

Next to this on the High Street is another shop just as today. This was another grocery shop run by Mr W J Ilott with his wife and they had a daughter Edith and two sons Edward and Wally. I recall a telegraph worker marrying the daughter whose name was Edwards, also that Ted had a similar job, married and lived in Highworth. Wally was a motor engineer and partnered Arthur Pridham in the Swanhill Garage business. He later moved into the paper shop at the corner of Stainswick Lane with his wife and family of three daughters.

The next two houses are to me a little more obscure as to who lived in them. I do however remember that a family of Underwood lived next to Ilott, there was the father Adam and his wife, he was head gardener at Shrivenham House. I think there was a George, I know there was Fred who lost a leg in the first war then there was Cecil. It is said that the Middlesex and England test cricketer of recent times was a nephew of these three. As for the next house I cannot recall any names of people inhabiting it but the building itself seems much the same as it was.

The Prince of Wales is one of the four public houses in the village counting the Victoria Arms and they seem to thrive to the present. It will be noted that there are wide wooden doors on the right leading to the rear with a walled in yard. This is also the boundary of Shrivenham House. This building appears unchanged and in fact I cannot recall many different Landlords. The first would be Sam Bennett his wife and son Alfred, I remember Sam was very interested in cattle and farming and restricted though he was bought a paddock in Vicarage Lane and rented the adjoining fields and built a cattle shed. Later my company built a bungalow and he moved there. The next landlord was a man very keen on horses and well known by other horsey folk as a good amateur vet. Beyond this I am unable to recall his name.

As a building and a property in general Shrivenham House is distinctive, with its high stone wall enclosing from the Prince of Wales on down the street and Faringdon to the east side of the parish church. Apart from some improvements to the corner involving setting the wall back this is unchanged in all of this time. The house was the Dower house belonging to the Barrington family and built on the lines of Beckett House itself. When I first knew anything about who lived there it was a Miss Milligan or it might have been two sisters, however their graves and tombstones are just inside of the church yard gates nearby. Changes took place when the house was vacated and sold in the late 1930's when a General Bonham Carter bought it and came to live there with his family. In later years the occupants

have been Military officers.

The Barrington Arms Hotel had a drive round to the rear and boundary wall to the Vicarage. The landlords and their families that I recall are first the Edwards, Mr and Mrs two daughters and three sons, later came a Taylor family Mr and Mrs who had two sons. then we mention finally Chambers Mr and Mrs with son Alec.

The next building (No 23) is in line with the latter but lower and just as to day and is clearly a house and a shop. When I first knew it a butcher operated there. His name was Harris with wife and two daughters Joyce and Edna. Then came a period when it probably became difficult to get a living in butchery so that the next occupants ran a Tea shop for a short while followed by a spell when it seemed to be solely a dwelling.

The next house (No 19) it will be seen is still in line with the others but separated by a space of some 40ft with a high stone wall. The owners and occupants here were named Butler, two senior ladies and a son of one of them. He married one of the Edwards family. There were two other changes towards the end of the period we are dealing with; the name of the first escapes me but the second was again a Mr and Mrs Butler, I understand of no relationship with the earlier ones.

The adjoining house is the Post office and was so right up to the end of the second war. Two Miss Locks ran this all through that period, one however married Percy Boroughs. After the war the Post facility was moved to near the school.

The newer building next to this standing on its own and set back is what is known as The Men's Institute. Details of its origin can be obtained, but the purpose I know to which it was put was for the use of men from the ages of fourteen as an alternative to the public house. There were two billiard tables, a full size and a three quarter size, plenty of comfortable chairs and card tables also a good open fire. I recall too that the building was open for the distribution of library books once a week.

A small thatched shop stands on its own next to the Institute on the corner, it is stone built and thatched as today. Mr Tom Dyke, his wife Nancy with Madge, Winny and Willy, lived in this little place and formed a shop in one of the rooms. Tom had his Wheelwright and Undertaking business located up the road. When the old people were unable to run the shop later on it was taken over for a while by Madge and her husband Stan Moon.

The Crown Public house appears the same to this day. The landlady was a Mrs Anne Rowlands. She had a son Charles.

Adjoining the Crown is a tall grey brick and Welsh slate roofed house (No 7) and the first occupants were Mr Harry Fuller, his wife and a son of the same name. Harry was a baker and the house with a shop window was the outlet for bread and cakes. Later Will Hammond and his wife came to live there and a boy was born later and named William. The father continued as baker at the Pounds Store, however, since it was realised that there was not enough business for two. At a time in the late 1930's a front room of the house was leased to Lloyds Bank for a one day a week service until a Bank was built.

Separated from the latter by a narrow path is a pair of thatched cottages (No 5), these I think were part of the adjoining farm. The people living in the first were named Groves, Mr and Mrs Bernard, Harold, Herbert, Gladys and Iris. At a stage mentioned earlier Mrs Reason and family came to live in the second cottage, after this my cousin Harold Knapp married, combined these cottages and took up occupation to run the adjoining farm.

We now come to a small farm, it might be over 50 acres, where Catherine's Close now stands. From these cottages one saw a high stone wall then the end of a stone barn followed by a pair of wide yard doors and then a long cattle shed with a tiled roof. As indicated before Mr Harold Knapp and his wife lived in the nearby cottage. They had one daughter. The land for

this farm was at the rear of the buildings to Vicarage Lane and on down the Longcot Road for about a quarter of a mile on the right hand side only.

2. Faringdon Road

Towards Faringdon, there are two houses (Nos 2 and 4) joined to the previous cottages. Two families I remember living in these during this period, they are Titcombe and Day related, since Reg Day married the daughter of the former. This in no way covers all of the occupants who might have lived here but I am not sure of more.

Beyond the walled gardens of the former and on the same side we come to Medlar Cottage, a property standing on its own square of land back from the road virtually in the Barnacles Park. This house was seldom occupied during the time in question, until it was purchased by the RMCS. It needed repairs to restore it.

Going on down the road we pass an entrance gate and drive to Beckett House and just inside on the left is small stone built lodge still the same to day.

Another 15yds or so on, is a small thatched cottage, like some thirty or so others in the village. It is kept in good condition, as I first recall it looked, Mr Percy Tilling and his wife lived here some years and Elsie was a Miss Judd.

Daisy Ground is on the east as the road turns with a sweep to the right to go on to Faringdon. In Daisy Ground there was a footpath going from the Shrivenham upper corner to the opposite corner. This was gravelled and lined with sycamore trees each side which still stand. There was also a small path going to a point about half way up the east side of Day's Ground. There was an opening with a capping and a revolving wrought iron gate leading through to the drive to the servant's bridge and the entrance to Beckett House.

We go on down the road now for some distance over the bridge on a bend in the road, at this point on the south side the entrance drive to Beckett House meets the road and a lodge stands at the side of the main entrance gates to the house. This lodge as before was more vacant than not, I remember for a short period that a well known man, Tommy Goodman and his family from Watchfield lived there.

Returning over the bridge for some 150yds to an unusual thatched bungalow on the north side. Today it is clearly visible but in the earliest part of this period it was hidden by box bushes and dominated by beech trees. This a picturesque cottage and constructed in the form of a cross as an exact replica of the honeymoon cottage of Lord and Lady Barrington which they used in Switzerland, it is now about 160yrs old.

On the road again and about 50yds on we turn right up a lane and on the right is a modern house built about the beginning of the first World War, some 100 yds from the road. The area between this house and the road was used for estate builders yard complete with a range of workshops and a sawpit. It was said that this house was used by members of the Whitehead family, the inventor of the torpedo, A few yards past the former we come to entrance gates into a formation of red brick building with stone tiled roofs. These are a beautiful brick quadrangle of stables, with a western facing open side with wrought iron gates. The other three sides of the quadrangle formed with buildings which housed the horses and carriages of the Manor. From the gate we pass through we see in front of us three arches in the centre with a door in each, these were coach houses. Left and right of these to the corners were loose horse boxes in total 40yds long, on each of the other two wings of the buildings were again loose boxes and both of the same length reach the line of the brick wall with gate through which we came. All of this was vacant and deserted when I saw it first which was the day my company bought it together with the two previous properties, an orchard and the field along side the stream. It would have been the early 1930's when we made this purchase. Following this over several years

we converted the left hand wing into four cottages, demolished the coach house and the right hand wing and formed two other houses with the remainder. During this same period the modern house and Swiss cottage had several owners including Mr H M Rikard-Bell, Mr Bob Pound, and Mr Cole.

Now we make for Pennyhooks Farm, on to the main road again and travel west for some 200yds. Bear right up a rough lane to the small farm yard and buildings nearly half a mile from the road. My guess is that this would just come into the category of a farm, the first farmer I remember was a Mr and Mrs Embling and I remember one daughter who married Jess Miller and a son named Frank, they were followed by the present farmers.

Back again, towards the village to the turning for the church on the west, here we have a pretty thatched cottage (name) tight on the roadside with a box hedge enclosing the garden. Just as it was, Mr Edwin Titcome his wife with John and Fred lived here. Edwin was gardener for the doctor next door. The next occupant was a Mr Ted Wilson who had moved from Ivy House. His housekeeper Miss Bunce came with him and she succeeds him as owner-occupier.

3. Claypits Lane

First on the right up this lane is a bigger house known as Normanby Cottage, this was occupied by a Dr Macnamara. He continued as the village doctor until well after the second war but moved from this house to Elm Tree House in the mid thirties.

A few yards on is a row of Cottages which were small alms houses. Although they stand intact today some have been merged and it is difficult to know how many units there once where, however my memory is so scant as to who lived in them that it makes little difference. A few names like Page, Hambidge, Ash, Lee, and Mason, come to mind. These were occupied by older people who may have stayed at home more than younger folk which explains in part why I cannot recall many of them.

Round the corner following the churchyard wall immediately on the right was a pretty thatched cottage set tight on the edge of the road. A family by the name of Gealer lived here. There probably were parents but I remember only Albert who was a bachelor, worked as a gardener at Shrivenham House and he played in our cricket side.

Within the next twenty yards on the same side is Yew Tree House. This was the farmhouse for Shrivenham Farm which was mentioned earlier at least until Harold Knapp owned it. The first family I recall well were Mr and Mrs Saunders with Jack, Muriel, Len, Ron, Vie, and Arch. Following these were the Mitcham family, Mr and Mrs with Alfred, Bert, Arch, there might also have been a daughter. After this period the house was detached from the farm and occupied privately.

Directly opposite to Yew Tree house at the side of the church yard is a fairly big house, Church House, which has not been altered as far as can be seen from the outside. The owner occupier from my earliest days to the end of the war was a Mr and Mrs Beasley with son John, and daughter Doris. The senior gentleman was small and disabled and could often be seen walking with sticks in the churchyard and on fine days sitting on the convenient box like stones. John was known for his regularity in walking to and from the railway station for his work which was at the railway works offices in Swindon. He was said to be a brilliant mathematician.

Abutting this property are the last houses and they are in the form of a row of three cottages known as Claypits cottages, again I can only name some of the people who have lived in them during this time, Spriggy Bunce was one, Miley Danson, Fred Titcome, Before leaving the lane I must mention that up to these cottages the road is named Claypits Lane and beyond it becomes The Slade. This the point where the footpath to Watchfield commences, there is also

a gate which leads into the field known as common close and sheds used by the small farmer by the name of Clark mentioned earlier.

4. Station Road

Starting from Westend, travel down Station Road and in about 400yds we find on the east a wooden bungalow (Cherry Bungalow) in a square fenced off area of a large field known as cherry orchard. This was built in the early 30s by a retired farmer Mr Winwood with his son and sister-in-law.

About 200yds further down the road on the same side was an area of land on the roadside triangular in shape which was used in the early 20s as a timber sawmill yard for a few years and then sub divided for the erection of houses. The first (The Cottage) was a two-storey house for a family by the name of Newman.

The next was a bungalow (Green Fields) erected by a relative of Newmans and very close by these two, completely filling the original timber yard site first mentioned at least to the southern boundary.

One more bungalow was built on the northern end of this site by a Mr William Moxham a Canadian who did most of the work himself. The development of this general area was concluded to the present day state during the 30s

On the way to the railway station and the next houses, we cross the old Wilts & Berks Canal which is in a cutting with the road bridge still in good condition. Adjoining this is a cattle yard and shed put to some other use but substantially in the same condition. Proceeding to the station gates we have on our right a public house, the Victoria Tavern, with a yard and buildings behind much the same today. The landlord I remember from the early 20s until the late 30s was Mr Bob Brickell, his wife, four sons and two daughters. I well remember that he bought and sold army surplus vehicles and goods in general in the years following the first war.

At the back of the Victoria Arms yard stands a row of small cottages. These were owned by the railway company and they were occupied by employees. I recall a few of the families, the end one nearest the station a Mr and Mrs Warren lived in with their sons Harry and Fred, the latter married and lived in the village later. At the other end of the row lived a family by the name of Thomas, a signalman, Mr and Mrs two daughters and a son. At some time later there was a family by the name of Weston I recall, he was ganger on the permanent way. Before returning to the High Street again I would like to indicate how busy the station was in those days. There was an active passenger and goods facility, all the milk produced in the area was transported to London daily. Since much of this time was before buses and private cars, dozens of people were seen walking to and from the village morning and evening. We should also remember that coal came by rail so did bricks, cement, hay, corn and farm produce.

5. Stallpits Lane

It was early in the 20s when Lady Barrington felt moved to do something in the village to not only create a memorial to those who lost their lives in war but also to help those who returned disabled. It became clear in the ensuing years that this was in the form of a huge community centre in the form of the Memorial Hall which exists today. It was thought to be the largest in the country in those days, bearing in mind the population concerned. Placed as it is near the road and on the site of the old cottage it can be seen that the whole of the field lies behind to the north and east. Not only did this accommodate the sports areas in about half of the space, the remaining half provided sites for three pairs of ex-servicemen's homes. Yet another field was brought into the scheme on the north side and levelled for a football pitch. All of these buildings are sufficient evidence of the scheme I have described since they have not changed

since completion in about 1927. There are two other ex-servicemen's homes in the High Street. It is said that Lady Barrington was tireless in her effort to raise the money required for all of this. We have a few clues that she persuaded many of the noted actors of the time because one wing of the Hall is named Laddie Cliff wing, one cottage is called George Robey cottage. The cottages are governed by a board of trustees, but the Hall is entirely in the hands of the Parish Council.

A new house (No 1) was built in the late 1920's on the west side of the road where the lane branches off for Stallpits farm. This was in the corner of a field which belonged to a small farmer named Tilling, a son of the Swanhill farm owner. This house was built by a Mr Diment from Swindon.

Mr Tilling with his wife lived in a temporary type of bungalow (No 35) in his field on the left about a 150yds up the Stallpits lane. They lived in part of his small farm, the rest of the land being on the east of the Highworth Road where a cattleyard and shed exists. He set up here I would say, the early 1920's.

Once again we have the name of Tilling cropping up. This time it is Mr Bert Tilling brother of the field owner and member of the Swanhill family. He had a wife and two daughters, and worked at the railway station as head porter all his life. He built a house (No 3) in a strange way, in tandem with the Diment house therefore had an access road along the side fence of Diments.

Still in the same field on the Stallpits Lane and about 150yds from Diments the first of a programme of local authority houses were built (Nos 9-19), these were larger and more elaborate than later types. It was an attempt to alleviate overcrowding. Reflecting on the names of families who took up occupation it affected for instance the household of shop Dance, and the Page family. It should be remembered that in general there were no cottages for letting unless they were in some way tied to the employment as a condition of service. Another point was that all the properties were small and families large.

6. Stainswick Lane

There are four cottages (Nos 1,3,5,7) and the next: building is a substantial looking house standing end on to the road (The Old House). Set back from the road side with what seems like the ruins of a stone building to the edge of the road, this is still the same. This building facing south with its considerable garden and paddock extending to Vicarage Lane was the home of the Pound family, Stephen his wife and five children. I knew of Stephen, Gwen, Kath, Bob, and Pearl. It is nice to know that this property is still in the family.

Over the disused Wilts & Berks Canal is a pair of cottages, being one of a trio which one could confidently assume, together with the farms they belonged to were part of the Barrington Estate some time earlier. Since these placed on the land on the east side of the road within 200yds of Cowleaze Farm it is safe to assume that they are for the use of farm workers employed there. It is, as always not easy to remember the names of any families.

Cowleaze Farmstead only a short distance further on the same side is a compact group of buildings, stone built and slated except the farmhouse which is thatched. The latter is in a good state of repair compared to the farm buildings which at this moment are being dismantled. The railway runs near to the house and forms the boundary on the south of the farm but in other directions reaches to the Station Road and to the village and on the East side follows a brook running north to Becket Lake and the Thames. The occupants of the farm up to the early 1920's are unknown to me. In connection with Holcome Farm at about this time Mr Leonard Knapp and his wife took possession and continued there until the latter part of the war. A Mr Cox followed and farmed in a similar manner after which the house and cottages

were sold off and the land combined into an adjoining farm.

We now proceed over the railway for about 200yds. A track cross two fields leads to a farmhouse with buildings. This is a small dairy farm of some 100 acres with one field on the opposite side of the railway. The first occupants I knew was a Mr Edgar Manners followed by a widow Mrs Sheppard and son. After the mother's death the son married and continued farming.

Carry on south on Stainswick Lane with a wood on our right to the point where we pass the wood and are in the open again. On the east a pair of cottages for workers of the farm and crossing the first field on the west stands the Stainswick Farmhouse and buildings. Since the cottages were on the service tenancy over this period I do not remember any names however it is rather different with the house which was occupied by Mr R Day his wife and son Roy and Madge until they left for the house in Stallpits Lane. A farming family by the name of Thomas followed on with farming here from some time in the mid 1930's until the present. It was convenient to them being a family with a number of sons in adjoining farms.

7. Manor Lane

About 50 yds from the High Street look west up a short lane. This lead to a farmstead, now demolished, known as Manor Farm. The whole area from there to the back of the cottages and up to Manor Lane belonged to the farm except probably a quarter of it taken out as school gardens. I presume from the name that was in the ownership of the Manor which was nearby. It was however occupied until the time of the school development by a Mr Percy Knapp with his wife. The small amount of land worked was located north of the Manor.

On Manor Lane and on our immediate left is Fern Cottage just the same today. This has a walled in garden on the roadside up to and around the corner. Before my day I am told it was a shop. The occupants I have known are Mr and Mrs Frogley followed by Mrs Parsons. Going on up the lane and round the corner, passing the barn and farm entrance on the left we eventually come to a row of four cottages which back on to the school gardens and playground. I can remember only one family named Ballenger who lived there, a son Arthur and daughter Eva.

Return our steps to deal with the properties on the north and east. The first is behind a high stone wall which starts from the recreation ground corner where a footpath starts leading to Sandshill, down to the corner and the entrance to The Manor House. This consisted of two double entrance gates, the pair to the house front were wrought iron and the others wooden to take you to the back of the house and buildings. Slightly before my time the occupants were the Fairthorne family but when I first knew this house from the point of view of remembering who owned and lived there I can name a Major Parsons, his wife and son. They were followed by a family whom I knew much better. They were Mr Colin Smith, his wife and family. In order of eldest first Edward, Joyce, Hugh, Frances, Ethel, Thomas, and Helen, they were members of the Highworth Matting Co Ltd. I spent time with Tom at weekends etc, he was killed in the war. The subsequent owner was a Major Williams his wife and daughter who carried out conversions and adaptations of the house to form flats to let. To conclude, it might be said that following this the house was demolished and a building development followed, now known as Manor Close.

Very near to these entrance gates and on the return to the High Street there are two cottages in a stone walled enclosure quite unchanged. Through a wicket gate we find two small brick cottages, the first was occupied by a Miss Haines and she was followed by Mr Anthony Friend and his wife. Much earlier and in the adjoining cottages lived a family by the name of

Hacker, I knew Senior, Gus, and Frank only. Later Mr and Mrs Coster with son Percy. Percy married Miss Ballinger and continued to live there. In both cases these families were engaged as gardeners at The Manor.

Moving down Manor Lane a short distance on the left is a path leading to the Church yard. This is a narrow passage with high stone walls on each side and a small stone shed at the end. In the wall on the left are what used to be openings for doors and windows that have been blocked in. I have no recollection of the cottages. From the end of the lane there is a beautiful view, perhaps the best in the village. On the left we turn at this point to the small thatched cottage that is unchanged to this day. The occupants I remember living here are first a George Tovey and his wife followed by Ted Adams and his wife who lives there today. Their son Terry emigrated to Canada.

8. Church Lane

From the cross trees, which are three very old hollow trees in focal point in the village, we walk through an avenue of lime trees with a path and high stone walls on each side as well as entrance doors to the back of the buildings on each side, up to the Parish Church. At the gates look to the cottage on the right, again this seems to be from those early times, the first occupant I knew was a small hunch backed cobbler. You could see him working through the window. I am not sure whether I am right in saying that Fred Warren and family lived there,

9. Hazells Lane

The first building round the corner is the small stone and thatch Foresters Hall, this being the meeting place of the friendly society of that ancient order. In recent years I see it has been converted into a dwelling (No 2).

The next cottages down Hazell's Lane were only a few yards on the east side and are now demolished. There were four of these, stone built and thatched standing close to the roadside path. I can be fairly positive about the people who lived in the end ones but because of the frequent changes in the middle two I must be vague. So beginning with the first one, here two maiden ladies lived by the names of Miss Winning and Miss Hill, later on Joe Prince who was the stone mason at the Becket Estate. At the other end of the row lived a Mr Robin Enstone his wife and son Jack, they ran a coal merchants business and in the paddock next to the house there were sheds for the horse and cart as well as grazing. Some of the families living in the other two houses over this period were; the Hicks family previously mentioned as living in the cottages at Sandhill then one of each of two other families mentioned before namely Arthur Cliff ton who married Alice Clark. On the east side of the lane there was a paddock.

Going down the lane and on the west side about twenty yards a single small cottage (No 8) stands behind a low wall. I understand this is where a man by the name of Hazel lived who owned the paddock down to the Vicarage Lane on this side as well as the small building on the corner. I am not clear who lived in this cottage before my own company bought it just after the war.

At Fields Cottage there is a private lane passing to other houses. We proceed up this and immediately on our right there are four red brick cottages which are individually owned. Some of the occupants during this period; the first was a family named Mr and Mrs French and son Bert, followed by a Mr and Mrs Benfield with son and daughter Bert and Betty, both of these were signalmen on the railway. In the next house lived William Judd and his wife with Fred Gwen and Stanley, building workers. Going now to the third house (Cherry Tree) Harold Blewitt a signalman bachelor lived. In the last house (Jubilee) Mr and Mrs Hull lived

and they seemed to have a constant lodger Wilf Morgan, both of these men I think worked on the railway.

Through a pair of gates at the end of this road is Clifton House, a three-story big house facing south with a wide garden extending down as far as builders yard which is on the Vicarage Lane. This house was once the property of my grand parents and at a certain stage was passed on to my father and an uncle. The major part of this was owned by Mr Fred Knapp, his wife and two daughters Gertie and Sally and son Harold. My uncle was a retired police inspector.

A small wing of the latter formed a cottage Clifton Cottage No 16) which through my father became our company property and the tenant here was a ganger on the railway by the name of Mr R Brown with his wife and two daughters Gladys and Dolly. There was a dividing wall between this and Clifton House and a gate from the road outside of the gate.

Just opposite to Browns gate and outside of the Clifton House gates was a small house which is now demolished. This belonged to my father and was demolished as soon as the occupying family were able get more suitable accommodation. This was a large family, a widow Mrs Reason whose husband had been killed on the railway, the family comprised three boys and three girls, sometime in the early 1930's through marriage etc another more suitable cottage turned up and the cottage was duly demolished.

Back on Hazells Lane go down to the Vicarage Lane turn right and at about 50yds on the right is a builders yard with a wooden stable and cart shed on the road side, and through a pair of gates into a yard was a brick two storey workshop at the rear of this a fence defining the boundary to the garden of Clifton House. Throughout the period with which we are concerned this was the builders yard of our company J Knapp & Sons Ltd. Moves were made after 1946 to extend this to incorporate the land to Hazells Lane including Fields Cottage.

10. Longcot Road

On the south side of the High Street and next to the Farm is a large house (Coplw House No 4) close to the pavement in line with the sheds. It is the same to day and the garden is to the rear extending to the Vicarage Lane. The first occupant I remember was a family by the name of Atkinson, they were followed by an eye specialist his wife and daughter. His name was Dr Oliver Pratt his daughter had the school built which is situated halfway down the garden and is approached from the lane. The next family to take up residence here was a Mr Hugh Smith, his wife son and daughter. It will be recalled that this name is connected with The Manor written about earlier.

The next house (Green Gables No 6) joins the former and reaches near to the Longcot corner, the garden reaches to Vicarage Lane as did the neighbours. Dr Bennett and his wife lived here and his duties were at the GWR hospital Swindon.

Facing down the Longcot Road at this corner and on the left is a stone wall some 6ft high which extends down to the corner near Vicarage Lane behind which is a garden which is part of the Beckett Estate. Nearer the corner is a door through the wall giving access to the garden as well as a stone built cottage. At this time it was occupied by a Mr Ferriman. He was a gentleman with a long white beard and was the agent for the owners of Bourton House and I remember him driving up and down the street every day one of the earliest open top model T Ford cars.

Whilst here lets go through the gates to the drive to Becket House and note the site of a demolished house on the south side in 40yds. It was a fairly large house which had a walled garden behind it. This was the house gardeners home. Opposite to this stood a small thatched cottage which was occupied by Mr and Mrs Dark. This man had a few cows and

used various fields nearby including Barnacle Park, Horse Close, Days Ground etc. His Buildings were located at the back of the church near Yew Tree House.

About half a mile down the Longcot Road on the left a drive comes to the road from Beckett House which is behind the woods on the left. There were some unusual ornate gates and stone piers here. Two cottages were set to the side of this drive at about 50yds on the right and a family by the name Painter once lived there and were later housed in one of the new council houses, in the late 1930s

Home Farm came into private hands, the cottages were demolished and a large house built on the same site as well as two more cottages at a point back further near to the existing farm buildings. This was General Marsham, who I think stayed until the mid 1940s and the next owner was a Dr East who later on incorporated the land of Cowleaze Farm.

On the left just opposite the Compton turn a pair of cottages were built in the mid 1930's on the same lines as the cheaper council houses of around that time. I remember that one was occupied by a Mr and Mrs Dickox who later had a house built by our company on the Swanhill estate.

We return now to the Beckett House entrance gates and with our backs to the gates looking up the street, 50yds on our right stands a pretty row of thatched cottages (Nos 1-13), Beehive Cottages. But for some porches which have been added they are the same today. Now as in other cases I may not have been precise as to who lived where I am however sure of the fact that in the first house a Mr and Mrs Barker with their son Martin lived. I think the father had been in the Indian army or civil service. At the other end on the corner lived a Miss Wright also a Mr Stone. Going back now to the second house, I remember a Mr and Mrs Stratton with two sons and a daughter lived there. Next to that lived a family of Judd, David his wife Elsie, and George. Then a family by the name of Ernest Belcher senior, his wife, daughter Irene and son Ernest. The next two cottages are not so certain in my mind but families by the name of Clack and Barrett and Prince come to mind.