

“Once upon a time”
Wembury Memories

By Peter Lugar

Knighton

Watergate

Traine

Mewstone Avenue

WEMBURY MEMORIES

Foreword

These books, which now number ten, started about five years ago when I decided that photographs which were scattered all over the house should be brought together in one place. I then decided that each photograph should have a little written account of the scene or event. After filling one quite large photograph album I decided that the system needed to be more flexible where pages could be added and the categories altered as the system expanded. The A4 clip folders and punched pockets proved to be absolutely ideal for this purpose. As more and more memories came flooding back the written work was beginning to far outstrip the photographic work. I also realised that there were now very few of us left in Wembury who had been born here and grew up in the village in the 1940s and 1950s and that really a record needed to be made of what life was like in those days just after the war when we were going through our 'austere period'.

Quite a lot of the photographs were in my parents' collection and I have accumulated a lot more. Some have been lent to me to copy by friends, some have come from the internet. I have augmented these with quite a lot of new photographs. The 'Memories' are now interspersed with 'Snippets of History' and in some places my own observations and ideas. I don't think that I would have attempted this project without my 'I Mac' computer which has proved to be a godsend, although I always had it in mind to write an account of what it was like to be an eight year old in Wembury right in the middle of the twentieth century.

Peter Lugar

November 2005

**“Once upon a time when the bird shit lime
and the monkey chewed tobacco**”

**These books are dedicated to Elsie,
and many others like her, who have
gone before us in this place.**

(The story of Elsie may be found in books 2 and 9)

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KNIGHTON HILL EARLY 1900s

Shown here as a country lane, the road has been much widened, and extra residential development has taken place since.

We are told that the two people shown are Granny Avent and her daughter-in-law .

No.5 Knighton Hill, (the first cottage in the second block, going down the hill) is without the wood and corrugated iron porch, which appears in a later photograph of the 1920s, with the occupants standing in the doorway.

The old village hall is not in evidence, which comprised of two ex-army huts from the First World War, and was put in place in 1922. There are also no electric or telegraph poles, which first made an appearance in the 1920s.

One must therefore assume that the photograph predates the 1920s.

There were, at one time, cottages on the left-hand side of the road, at least two of them, further down



opposite the lower block of four. The front foundations of them formed part of the wall and were there up until the early 1960s when the road was widened. As children we climbed over them to gain access to the field, there were well worn hand and foot holds for this purpose. This saved having to go up to the top road to enter by the field gate. The gateway to the field just above Acacia wasn't cut through until the mid 1960s.

KNIGHTON HILL LATE 1930s

The photograph below was taken in 1939 just after the beginning of the Second World War, although the tranquil scene does not exactly give the impression of a nation at war! The only giveaway being the white patches painted on the walls at the road junction, put there for the guidance of drivers, as all vehicles had to have shielded headlights during the blackout.



In the late 1930s, the cottages were still mainly inhabited by people employed on the farms and large estates in the parish. Many were tied cottages and had to be vacated on cessation of employment. It was not unusual for people to have moved two or three times within the village as their employment took them from farm to farm, maybe ending up as a foreman on one of the estates. It wasn't until the late 1940s that the cottages started to accumulate the motley collection of porches and ghastly imitation shutters that serve no purpose, and of course the ubiquitous UPVC windows, that are in evidence today



KNIGHTON HILL - 1950s/1970s

The upper photograph dates from the late 1940s/early 1950s. The glazed porches on the two nearest cottages are both post war additions. Electricity was laid on to the village in 1927/28 and the street lamp (which incidentally was the only one on Knighton Hill) remained in place until the road was widened in the 1960s. The pair of pebble dashed semi detached houses (of 1930s style) off the road to the east of 'Four Corners' are in place, as are the other two pairs of semis (originally known as 'Knighton Villas') to the west of the blacksmith's. Also above them the old village hall can be clearly seen, and beyond it, the Jubilee Inn.



The lower photograph, of the 1970s, shows the cottages after even more 'tarting up' had taken place. I regret that I am not a fan of shutters that serve no purpose. As with everywhere else, the ubiquitous UPVC windows are also very much in evidence.



KNIGHTON HILL 1960

This photograph looking down Knighton Hill, was taken by Kenneth O'Connor in April 1960. Over on the left, the Mushroom Farm behind Four corners is in production, the six Cornish Unit council houses can be clearly seen. In the mid ground the old Village Hall still looks the same, with its black roofing felt cladding, although has been a chapel since it was sold in 1956. The white roof of the new Village Hall can be seen peeping over the hedge just above. The School has yet to be built on the field opposite the Jubilee Inn, and the small field in front of Watergate Cottages has not yet been developed. The road has not yet been widened, and the only lamp post on the hill can clearly be seen opposite the end cottage of the first block of four. The next light was opposite Tap Cottage at the bottom of the hill.



KNIGHTON HILL 1978

This view of Knighton Hill was taken by Christopher Drew in 1978. It was originally a coloured slide which I have converted to a photograph, so any lack of clarity is attributable to me rather than Christopher! The road has not yet been widened on the left-hand side but the top corner on the right has been removed. Back in the 1950s Knighton Hill was a narrow country lane leading down into Knighton proper and West Wembury, and so on through to Church Road and the Beach.



KNIGHTON HILL EARLY 1995

This photograph was taken in March 1995 and should be compared to the earlier black and white photographs.

The comparatively recent developments in the village are quite evident. The 'new' village hall being predominant in the centre middle ground, and the old mushroom farm buildings to the left of the photograph, which are now light industrial units, or 'lock ups'.

Back in the 1950s Knighton Hill was a narrow country lane leading down into Knighton proper and West Wembury, and so on through to Church Road and the Beach. The hedge bank on the field side was quite high as the field level was about five or six feet above the road level and came in to just about where the central white line is in the photograph. On the side where the cottages are, the garden levels were even higher which probably made the road seem a lot narrower than it was. On the actual hill there are two blocks of four cottages whose front doors opened straight onto the road as there was no pavement. This did not present a great problem in the early 1950s as there were very few cars in the village, apart from that it was farm traffic, both horse drawn and tractor drawn. The only outside traffic were the busses, delivery vehicles, the doctor, and the occasional visitor.

Wembury did not achieve popularity as a seaside place for the masses until the mid 1950s, when most of the visitors came from Plymouth by bus. There used to be huge queues at the bottom of Church Road in the evening for the busses back into town, in fact Western National often had to lay on extra busses in the evening to get them all home.



KNIGHTON HILL - MAY 2004

The photograph below was taken in May 2004.

The only addition since the 1995 photograph is the house which has been built in what was part of the garden of No.4 (71 Knighton Road).

Back in the 1950s Knighton Hill was a narrow country lane leading down into Knighton proper and West Wembury, and so on through to Church Road and the Beach. The hedge bank on the field side was quite high as the field level was about five or six feet above the road level and came in to just about where the central white line is in the photograph. On the side where the cottages are, the garden levels were even higher which probably made the road seem a lot narrower than it was. On the actual hill there are two blocks of four cottages whose front doors opened straight onto the road, as there was no pavement. This did not present a great problem in the early 1950s as there were very few cars in the village, apart from that it was farm traffic, both horse drawn and tractor drawn. The only outside traffic were delivery vehicles, the bus, the doctor, and the occasional visitor.

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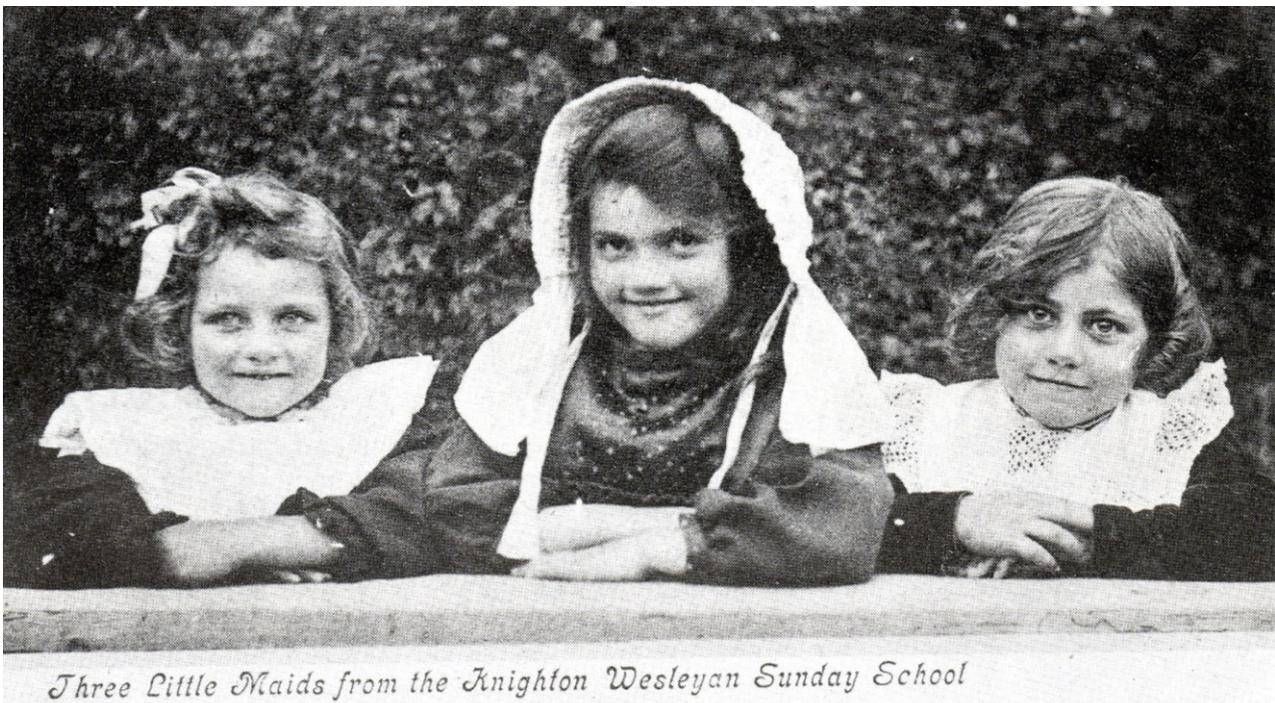
SHOWMAN'S CARAVAN AT THE TOP OF KNIGHTON HILL (FAIRVIEW)

There was a showman's caravan permanently sited in the back garden of No.1 Knighton Hill and which was there right up until the 1970s. There was also a hut alongside which served to augment the cramped accommodation of the caravan. This along with a portion of the garden was collectively known as "Fairview" and in the 1950s, was occupied by Mr Fred Dummett, and his wife Violet.

I seem to remember something about Fred being a steamroller driver, there always used to be one parked in the lane at the top of Knighton Hill. Violet worked on and off, at Wembury House. I don't remember there being any children. Fred was actually Violet's second husband, her first husband, Percy Atwill died in 1930 aged 29 years. Violet died in 1966 aged 66 years and is interred with Percy.

Violet's parents, Mr and Mrs Axworthy, lived in No.1 Knighton Hill. Violet had two sisters, Florence and Rosie. Florence was the infants' teacher at Wembury School, who in the early 1950s married Sam Algate, who lived in "Acacia" at the bottom of Knighton Hill. She must have been about fifty at the time. Rosie was married to Mr Jim Taylor, Jim was a gardener at Wembury House and he and Rosie lived in one of the Lodge houses. They had a daughter called Margaret who married Bob Adams, a carpenter. Bob and Margaret moved into No.1 Knighton Hill when Mr and Mrs Axworthy died. When we were in the infants at school, it must have been in 1947 or 48, I remember Miss Axworthy coming into school and telling us all that her niece (Margaret) had just had a little baby boy who was "no bigger than my thumb", this was Paul would be about the same age my sister Angela.

In the photograph below, taken in the early 1900s, the girl in the centre is thought to be Rosie Axworthy, It would be very tempting to say that all three are the Axworthy girls except that the one on the right definitely has a Milden face. The Sunday School referred to was at the Wesleyan Chapel which is now Thorn Cottage, on the lane behind Old Barton Farm. It was opened in 1871 and was recorded as having 91 seats. It was closed in 1913 probably due to its remote position.



RESIDENTS OF KNIGHTON HILL - 1912

This Photograph was taken in about 1912 showing Mrs Jane Walke with her grand daughter Lydia Cawse, Mrs Emily Walke is on the right.

The three of them lived in the cottage, No.4 Knighton Hill (now known as 71 Knighton Road)



COTTAGE ON KNIGHTON HILL - 2004

This Photograph taken in May 2004 is the same cottage as depicted in the photograph of 1912 showing Mrs Jane Walke with her grand daughter Lydia Cawse.

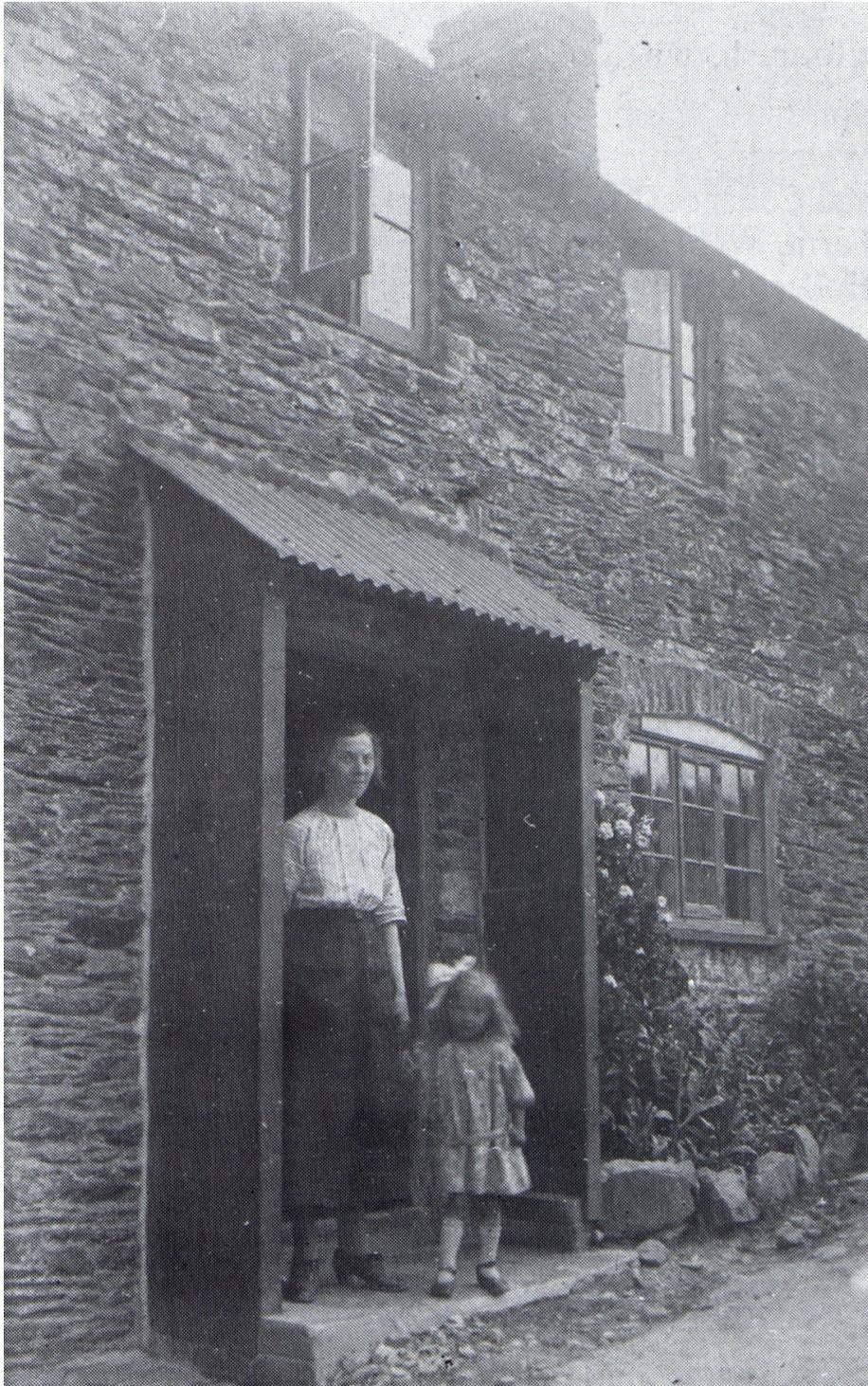
The cottage which was back then known as No.4 Knighton Hill (now known as 71 Knighton Road), is now called 'Wisteria Cottage'



RESIDENTS OF KNIGHTON HILL - 1920s

This Photograph was taken in the early 1920s showing Mrs Amy Walke with her daughter Iris Walke.

The cottage is No.5 Knighton Hill (now part of 61 Knighton Road)



COTTAGE ON KNIGHTON HILL - 2004

This Photograph taken in May 2004 is the same cottage as depicted in the photograph of the 1920s showing Mrs Amy Walke with her daughter Iris Walke.

The cottage, which back then was known as No.5 Knighton Hill, is now part of 61 Knighton Road.



RESIDENTS OF KNIGHTON HILL - 1922

This Photograph was taken in about 1922 showing Mrs Elizabeth Cawse with her daughter in law, Edith Cawse.

The cottage is No.4 Knighton Hill (now known as 71 Knighton Road)



COTTAGE ON KNIGHTON HILL - 2004

This Photograph taken in May 2004 is the same cottage as depicted in the photograph of 1922 showing Mrs Elizabeth Cawse with her daughter in law, Edith Cawse.

The cottage which back then, was No.4 Knighton Hill is now known as 71 Knighton Road.



No's 1 TO 4 KNIGHTON HILL 1995

The photograph below was taken in March 1995

In the 1950s the cottages were numbered 1 to 4 Knighton Hill, coming down the hill. Now they are numbered 71, 73, 75, and 77 Knighton Road, going up the hill

No.1: Back then was occupied by Mr and Mrs Axworthy who were the parents of our teacher, Miss Florence Axworthy, at the village school. When the Axworthy's died, their granddaughter, Mrs Margaret Adams moved in with her husband Bob, and round about this time their son, Paul, was born.

No.2: I seem to remember a Mr Storey living here but did not know much about him at all. Later on Mr and Mrs Urscott moved in from Wembury House Lodge when he retired as head gardener. Mrs Urscott was the sister of Mr Archie Nelder who lived in Boat House Cottage at Thorn. I seem to remember there being a family connection with the "Brocks" firework people.

No.3: Mr and Mrs Pope moved in at about this time, we didn't really know very much about them, I do not ever recall seeing him, but she was quite a familiar sight about the village and on the Plymouth Bus

No.4: Occupied by Mr (Bill) and Mrs Fone, he had a vegetable round but died at quite an early age, leaving her to bring up their two young sons. Bill for some reason was always the target (or one of them) of the firework night banger throwing brigade. I think that it was only because he used to retaliate by throwing spuds and buckets of water, and chasing them down Knighton Hill. One of the two street lamps on Knighton Hill were opposite this cottage, the other one being at the bottom of the hill opposite Tap Cottages. The sons did very well for themselves, both got passes to Oxbridge universities and are now high fliers in academia.



No's 5 TO 8 KNIGHTON HILL 1995

This photograph was taken in March 1995

In the 1950s the cottages were numbered 5 to 8 Knighton Hill, coming down the hill. Now they are numbered 57, 59, and 61 Knighton Road, going up the hill (No's 4 and 5 were made into a single dwelling in the 1950s).

No 5 Now part of No.61 Knighton Road. was occupied by Mr and Mrs Bubear, Granny and Grandad Bubear were the grandparents of my best friend David (Joe) Haimes. They were a lovely old couple, and I felt mildly envious of David as I had never known my own grandparents.

No.6 Also now part of No.61 Knighton Road. was occupied by Mr and Mrs Morris (Bill and Doreen) they had two children Keith and Lesley. Bill always seemed to be concerned with cars and motor bikes. They later moved into 4 Uplands, one of the council houses, when the Haimes's bought "Greenbank" at the top of Church Road. Doreen's Parents, Mr & Mrs Pitts, lived at the bottom of Knighton Hill in the cottage named "Desiree".

No.7 Was occupied by Mr (Joe) and Mrs Frood. They had three children. Roland, Rosemary (Rosie) and Michael. There was a fourth child, Colin, who died in infancy in 1946. Joe worked at Knighton Farm for Ben Clifton, and No.7 was the tied cottage. When the Cliftons moved to Egg Buckland in 1953, Joe had to move out. Ken and Eve Knight moved in when Stevensons took over the farm, and were there until the late 1990s.

No 8 Was occupied by Mr and Mrs Bannaford (George and Rosemary) George was a lovely man and worked at Spirewell Farm for many years. In his younger days he worked for the Corys at Langdon Court. Rosemary (nee Walters) was brought up by her grandmother and lived in "Escalonia" as a child. She worked at "Four Corners" for Captain and Mrs Ayre in the 1940s, and for all the subsequent owners until she retired in the 1980s. She and George were uncle and auntie to my best friend, David Haimes, and I always felt quite privileged to be able to call her Auntie Rose.



KNIGHTON HILL, FROM THE BOTTOM - 1961

This view looking up Knighton Hill was taken in 1961. This was before any road widening had taken place. This part of the road by the entrance to Knighton Farm and the cottages on the other side was the widest point of the road. Note the two large pieces of granite on the corner at ground level to protect the wall from damage from cartwheels as they turned into the lane.



KNIGHTON HILL, FROM THE BOTTOM - 2009

This is the same view taken some 48 years later on 14th March 2009. Compared to the earlier photograph, it can be seen that the road has been widened, Acacia and Desiree cottages on the left now almost front on to the road whereas they used to be set back. The corner site, along with the old farmyard has been developed into “Cory Court”.



KNIGHTON HILL THEN AND NOW - 1939 - 2016



The top photograph was taken in about 1930 and depicts a very tranquil village scene



Fast forward about 86 years to 2016 to the same scene. The road has been very much widened, a certain amount of additional development has taken place on the right hand side of the road, and much more further down in the village, but obscured by the mature trees. On the left side of the road is the first phase of the new development of 26 houses to be built. The next phase will fill the remainder of the space towards the top of the hill.

KNIGHTON HILL THEN AND NOW - 1960s - 2016

The top photograph was taken in the early 1960s and presents a very bucolic scene with the cows coming out of the gate onto Knighton Hill on their way to Knighton Farm for milking. The gateway had only recently cut through just above "Acacia" as hitherto the only access to the field had been via a gate on the top road. This obviated the need for the cows to be taken up and down the hill to pasture, much to the relief of the growing number of car owners!



Fast forward about 55 years to 2016 to the same scene. The previous occupants of the field have now given way to concrete and tarmac as the field is in the process of being developed into a complex of 26 houses.

LONG TREK BY FARM BOY

CYCLED 200 MILES TO FIND MOTHER

WEMBURY TO PORTSMOUTH IN TWO DAYS

FIFTEEN - YEARS - OLD Charles Sowden, of 3, Knighton-hill, Wembury, hitherto employed as a farmer's boy, and the son of an able-seaman serving in H.M.S. Furious, has a remarkable cycling record to his credit.

A fortnight ago his mother set out from Wembury with the idea of visiting Portsmouth to see her husband, who was reported to be sick. Hearing further news, however, she changed her plans, and instead went to London to see the King's funeral and to visit friends.

But Charles did not know of the change of plans, and not hearing from his mother for a week, decided he would go and see her and his father at Portsmouth. So on the Saturday morning, with two shillings jingling in his pocket, he mounted his old fixed-wheel push bicycle and set out on the long trek.

He had never been to Portsmouth before, but he plotted his course correctly, and after leaving Exeter he decided to take the coast road. Saturday evening found him at Bridport, where he spent most of his money in securing accommodation for the night.

ABOUT 200 MILES.

Next morning he set out again on his machine, and five o'clock Sunday evening found him in Portsmouth, having that day passed through the New Forest and Southampton. Altogether on the two-days journey from Plymouth to Portsmouth he covered about 200 miles.

But, alas, for his hopes, when



CHARLES SOWDEN.

he got to Portsmouth he found no mother or father; not even an uncle on whom he hoped to call. But he managed to procure a little more assistance, and after staying the night at a hostel, next day went to the Royal Naval Barracks. There a kindly interest was taken in him, and he was sent to another hostel, where he was cared for while inquiries were made.

The irony of the whole journey was that had Charles delayed his start from home another quarter of an hour the postman would have brought him a letter from his mother.

She in due course returned home, and was alarmed to find he was missing, with no indication as to where he had gone.

Eventually by means of telegrams and telephone he was traced to Portsmouth.

HOME AGAIN.

"And did you cycle home again?" inquired "The Western Morning News" representative to whom he told his story.

"No," he replied, to which his mother quickly added, "It cost me 30s. to find him and bring him home again."

"I enjoyed the trip," he said, "but I was disappointed not to find mother there. The only place I had food was at Bridport, where I stopped the Saturday night. The weather was fine except for the last few miles."

And now Charles is back again at Wembury, shyly proud of his achievement—particularly proud of his bike with its fixed wheel, and the heavy hob-nail boots with which he pedalled the whole journey. *W.M.N.* 11.2.36.

FORMER RESIDENTS OF KNIGHTON HILL

Upper Left – Photograph taken in about 1912 showing Mrs Jane Walke with her grand daughter Lydia Cawse, Mrs Emily Walke is on the right. The three of them along with several other family members lived in the cottage, No.4 Knighton Hill, is now known as No.71 Knighton Road.



Lower Left – Photograph taken in about 1922 showing Mrs Elizabeth Cawse with her daughter in law, Edith Cawse. The cottage No.4 Knighton Hill, is now known as No.71 Knighton Road.

Lower Right – Photograph taken in the 1950s showing Granny and Grandad Bubear (Gertie and James), grandparents of my best friend David Haines. The cottage No.5 Knighton Hill is now part of No.61 Knighton Road.

ACACIA , DESIREE AND KINGSTON - 1995

The Photograph below was taken in March 1995.

‘ACACIA’ - The cottage on the extreme left of the photograph, now numbered as 52 Knighton Road, was in the 1950s, occupied by Mr and Mrs Algate (Sam and Florence). Sam’s father had bought the cottage when the Langdon Estate was broken up in 1927. Sam and Florrie (nee Axworthy) got married rather late in life, we rather got the impression that her parents were not entirely happy with the match, so with great patience Sam waited until Florrie was free to marry, which was round about 1950. Florrie was the infants’ teacher at the village school, and from the village School we bought them a Westminster chiming mantle clock as a wedding present. The range of its chiming capabilities were demonstrated to us in the school by Florrie ably assisted the Headmistress, Miss Wyn Maynard. Sadly their wedded happiness was to be cut short by Florrie’s early death about 12 years later. Sam outlived Florrie by 21 years dying in 1983, thus bringing to an end the Algates in Wembury, one of the oldest families. There are more than of forty of them buried in the graveyard.

‘DESIREE’ - in the centre of the block is now numbered 50 Knighton Road, for many years I didn’t realise that this cottage had a name. In the 1950s we always referred to it as “Pitts’ s” as it was occupied by Ernie Pitts, his wife Beatrice, and their son Mervyn. Their eldest daughter, Doreen was married (Mrs Morris) and lived at No.6 Knighton Hill (as mentioned above). There was another daughter called Edna who was also married with a young son but did not live in the village. Mervyn later married Joan Hendy (3 Knighton Villas) and lived for a short time in “Escalonia”, and then later emigrated to Canada. Ernie, I was led to believe, was the coachman at Langdon Court, as was his forebears. He was also for many years captain of the ringers at Wembury Church, and worked very hard towards the purchase of the sixth bell as a Memorial to the Village War Dead. In fact all of the family were ringers, Mervyn always rings on his occasional visits from Canada, and Doreen rang right up to her untimely death in the early 1990s.

‘KINGSTON’ - The right hand cottage- now numbered No.48 Knighton Road. The front door shown was in fact a communal front door for two cottages. Behind the door there was a passage, which ran from front to back, on the left hand side was ‘Desiree’ occupied the Pitts’ family and on the right hand side, ‘Kingston’ which, in the 1950s, was occupied by an old lady who we only knew as “Auntie Ada”. This cottage jutted further out into the road than the rest of the block, and had a French window, which I think was a more recent embellishment!



EVERYTHING DELIVERED

In the late 1940s and early 50s there were very few cars in the village in fact the car owners between the top of Knighton Hill and the Old School, could be counted on two hands

They were:

Ben Clifton at Knighton Farm
Captain Ayre at Four Corners
Eileen Drake at May Cottage
Henry Lugar at Watergate Cottages
Raymond Brown at Watergate Cottages
Captain Poyngun at "Osmia"
Jack Smallridge at West Wembury Farm,
Vic Smith at the Post Office
Robert Moon at West Wembury Cottage

Generally people had to carry home whatever shopping they could on the bus. There were no supermarkets, the shopping centre in Plymouth comprised of shops in Ebrington Street (which in those days ran right in to the city centre), and the big stores in temporary premises up Tavistock Road and North Hill, and around Drake Circus. Many businesses were in Nissen Huts on bomb sites, and in Westwell Gardens, (now occupied by the Civic Centre). Also the old Pannier market which occupied the area at the top of New George Street, provided temporary premises for Woolworths, Marks and Spencers and Timothy Whites. Dingles was the first big store to be rebuilt and reopened in 1951 "Built for, and inspired by, the people of Plymouth and the Westcountry, September 1951" so said the inscription inside the Armada Way entrance. Dingles also had the distinction of being the first department store to be built in the country after the war. Woolworths in New George Street had also been rebuilt, but was half the size of the present building. as Cornwall Street as we know it, did not then exist.

It was a strange sight, the massive blitzed area of the city centre with the remnants of the Co-op building still standing, and in operation, The Western Morning News Offices, the Odeon Cinema, the half built Woolworths, many other buildings, patched up and in use temporarily, the gleaming white Dingles building, with the newly laid Royal Parade cutting a swathe right through it all, and apart from that little else but bomb sites and building sites.

Most things that we needed in the village were delivered:

Milk came daily from the Wembury Dairy or the Co-op. There were two sizes of bottle, pint and half pint, they were of very thick glass with a wide top with a small ledge inside upon which rested a round cardboard disc which served to seal the contents. These discs had a perforated centre piece which could be pushed, in enabling one to insert a little finger to pull it out. The School milk bottles were one third of a pint and the perforation in the disc enabled one to insert a straw. Later the narrower topped lighter weight bottles came in which were sealed by the tinfoil caps more familiar to us today. It was found that birds were able to peck through the tinfoil so a lot of people had their own deterrent devices which one had to activate on leaving the milk on the doorstep. These varied from small baked bean tins or cups with broken handles which were put over the tops of the bottles, to more sophisticated devices in which the bottles were totally enclosed!

Bread came from the Co-op, Goodbodys, Uglows, or Medlands of Plymstock which was a small family bakery. They usually delivered at twice a week. The bread vans used to deliver to the door, and in every van there was a broom handle with a long nail through one end of it. If the loaf that one desired was beyond the reach of the van man, he would spike it with the nail and drag it to within reach. This piece of equipment was standard on all bread vans and nobody gave it a second thought! Ready sliced bread did not make an appearance until the 1950s, up until then a loaf of bread would be wrapped in a piece of tissue paper and put into a brown paper bag. As soon as sliced bread appeared, a way of wrapping it had to be devised in order to keep it together, and to keep it fresh. Waxed paper was used, this had the brand name of the bread on it, and the loaf once wrapped, was sealed in by the application of heat to the joins in the waxed paper, to weld them together. In the summer the paper was saved and re-used to wrap one's picnic sandwiches in for the beach. The vans also carried a

selection of cakes and fancies, which were treated with a certain amount of disdain by my mother, who was an extremely good cook.

Groceries were delivered by Dingles, and The Co-op, who came weekly. Wembury Stores would also deliver by arrangement. We always had ours from Dingles, My mother would telephone the order in a few days in advance and Mr Russell would deliver it in the black Dingles van, with E Dingle & Co proudly emblazoned on the sides in gold lettering. There was the ritual played out each week of going through the list on the dining room table with Mr Russell and extracting the requisite number of coupons from the ration books, these were clipped to the bill and sent in at the end of each month with a cheque in settlement.

For Greengroceries, Mr Kitts came from Elburton, and would ring a handbell when ready for business George Smale, who lived in Brownhill Lane also ran a greengrocery round, I think he had an old bulb horn that he used to announce his arrival!

Coal was delivered weekly by Westcotts, W E Harveys, or Folland & Yeo, and of course, The Co-op, We always used W E Harveys and used to order the coal half a ton at a time, which meant ten one hundredweight sacks had to be tipped into the coal bunker. One of us always had to be there to count the number of sacks as they were tipped to ensure that the correct amount was delivered.

Laundry was collected and delivered weekly by Millbay or the Co-op. This was before the days of washing machines so most people used the laundry service. We always used Millbay.

Meat was delivered twice weekly by Jack Kirby of Pomphlet (who was known to us as 'Uncle Jack' as he was my father's first cousin), and also by the Co-op. The meat was always in open trays in the back of the van, the individual joints on pieces of greaseproof paper with the bill pinned to the top of each. Upon reaching the customer's house the joint would be transferred to a small white enamel tray and carried to the door of the customer where it would be transferred on to a plate, and in most cases put into a meatsafe which most houses had on the north side of the outside of the house. Very few people had fridges, in fact the Jubilee Inn didn't even have a fridge.

At one time Corona Lemonade used to come around weekly from their depot in Cattedown

All of the big stores in Plymouth had their delivery days to country areas and the vans of Dingles, Spooners, Costers, John Yeo, Pophams, or the Co-op were often seen going down through the village.

Much food was grown in the village, the Blacksmith's Shop used to sell vegetables, and most of the farms sold fresh eggs, fruit and vegetables in season, and of course, clotted cream. Mr Bickford in Cross Park Road was a beekeeper, and sold honey. People were always making jam which was sold at the various bazaars in aid of the Church or the Village Hall, or some other worthy cause. Many of the farms sold poultry, and of course rabbits were very plentiful.

KNIGHTON HILL THEN AND NOW - 1939 - 2016



The top photograph was taken in about 1930 and depicts a very tranquil village scene



Fast forward about 86 years to 2016 to the same scene. The road has been very much widened, a certain amount of additional development has taken place on the right hand side of the road, and much more further down in the village, but obscured by the mature trees. On the left side of the road is the first phase of the new development of 26 houses to be built. The next phase will fill the remainder of the space towards the top of the hill.

KNIGHTON HILL THEN AND NOW - 1960s - 2016

The top photograph was taken in the early 1960s and presents a very bucolic scene with the cows coming out of the gate onto Knighton Hill on their way to Knighton Farm for milking. The gateway had only recently cut through just above "Acacia" as hitherto the only access to the field had been via a gate on the top road. This obviated the need for the cows to be taken up and down the hill to pasture, much to the relief of the growing number of car owners!



Fast forward about 55 years to 2016 to the same scene. The previous occupants of the field have now given way to concrete and tarmac as the field is in the process of being developed into a complex of 26 houses.

STREETLIGHTS AND TELEPHONES

In the late 1940s and 1950s Streetlights were literally few and far between.

Between the top of Knighton Hill and Old School there were nine lights and they were sited as follows:

1. Opposite No.4 Knighton Hill
2. Opposite Tap Cottage
3. Opposite Rose Villa
4. Opposite No.1 Knighton Villas
5. Opposite the Jubilee Inn
6. On the brow of the hill before West Wembury
7. By the gateway to West Wembury Farm
8. The Square
9. Opposite the Parish Room

There was an additional one at the bottom of Jubilee Hill, at the end of Watergate Cottages

They continued on down through Church road at about the same gap intervals, the last one was at the Cliff Road Junction. There were none in Beach View Crescent, or Cross Park Road. They were just ordinary 100 watt lamps under a white enamel reflector, they were fixed to the wooden post by an inverted 'U' shaped bracket with an ornamental spike at its crown. They came on at dusk and went off at 11.00 pm.

Telephones were just as sparsely distributed, and coincided almost with the list of those with cars.

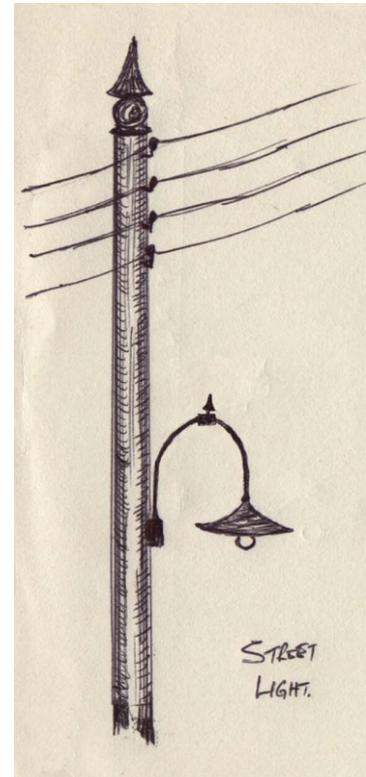
There were twelve between the top of Knighton Hill and the Old School, and were as follows:

1. Ben Clifton at Knighton Farm
2. Captain Ayre at Four Corners
3. Mr & Mrs Paltridge at Rose Villa
4. Henry Lugar at 3 Watergate Cottages
5. Raymond Brown at 5 Watergate Cottages
6. Telephone Kiosk opposite the Jubilee Inn
7. Captain Poyngun at 'Osmia'
8. Mr & Mrs Toogood at 'The Cottage'
9. Jack Smallridge at West Wembury Farm
10. Vic Smith at the Post Office
11. Robert Moon at West Wembury Cottage
12. Mrs Nicholas at 'Willowhayes'

It would seem quite amazing to us today that the Jubilee Inn was not on the telephone, neither was the School.

There were of course there were other people with telephones in Church Road, Brownhill Lane, Cross Park Road, Beach View Crescent and Cliff Road.

To make telephone call to Plymouth, one had to call the operator at Plymstock, tell her the number required, and hang up. She would then phone you back when a line was available, and put you through.



KNIGHTON FARM - MID 1980s

The photograph taken in the mid 1980s shows the farmhouse just before the end of Mr Stevenson's time as tenant.

The Farmhouse now known as No.47 Knighton Road, was occupied in the early 1940s by Mr and Mrs Clifton (Ben and Gwen). There were three Clifton daughters, Jennifer, Christine, and Dinah. In 1953 Ben assumed ownership of a farm at Egg Buckland and so Knighton Farm was sold. It was bought by Mr Studholme (later to become Sir Henry), who put in a farm manager, Mr Stevenson, who remained there until the late 1980s.

In the 1950s we used to enjoy going to Knighton Farm to watch the sheep dipping as Ben Clifton had a proper purpose built dip, and so sheep were brought from around the area to be 'done'.

On the first occasion that the dip was used Mr Clifton wanted to make sure that the consistency was correct, as he didn't want any fatalities with somebody else's sheep! Mrs Algate who was the infants' teacher at Wembury School, and who lived opposite the farm, in Acacia Cottage, was called in to work out the capacity of the dip, so that the right amount of dipping solution could be added. This must have been quite an awesome task for someone whose only experience in teaching maths was to teach infants their tables by rote, and some minor sums in pounds, shillings and pence. Anyway she rose to the occasion and worked out the cubic capacity in gallons. It must have been correct as the requisite amount of solution was added, and there were no problems.

However, we were always given dire warnings about death being immediate should we fall into the dip. What always amazed us was how the sheep managed to survive, as they were pushed right under!



KNIGHTON FARMHOUSE - 1995

The photograph taken in July 1995 shows the farmhouse undergoing refurbishment after many years of neglect, almost reaching dereliction.

Mr Stevenson retired in the mid 1980s when the farm along with the rest of the Wembury Estate was sold following the death of Sir Henry Studholme. The person who bought the farm had no use for the farmhouse or farm buildings and so they were left to go to ruin. Eventually they were sold off along with the adjacent field, to a building firm who developed the field and farm yard into the small estate of detached and semi detached houses. The farmhouse was sold off separately to an enthusiast prepared to spend a lot of time and money sympathetically restoring it,

The photograph was taken part way through this project and shows the newly slated roof and the new sash cord windows which have been put in, totally in character with the house.

Some of the new houses that were built on the field can be seen nearing completion, the little estate was named Cory Court.



KNIGHTON FARMHOUSE - 2004

The photograph taken in May 2004 shows the completed farmhouse refurbishment, which has all been carried out totally in keeping with the character of the building.

It is always very nice to see a lovely old house rescued, and being cared for once again.



TAP COTTAGE

The Photograph was taken in March 1995. The cottage was so called because in the wall opposite was the tap, which at one time was the water supply for all of the residents of Knighton Hill down so far as the Blacksmith's shop. The wall was mainly of dry-stone construction and about ten feet high, being the retaining wall for the garden of 'Claremont'. The tap was set into a low alcove at ground level. Before the road was widened, the wall came out almost to where the central white line is on the road.

Tap Cottage (now numbered, 45 Knighton Road), was in the 1950s, occupied by Mrs Mary Ridgewell. She was a widow who came originally from Southern Ireland, she was a wonderful warm hearted lady who loved to have us in her house. She must have been, at that, time in her sixties. The downstairs of the cottage was one large room with a stone sink and a black lead range where she did all of her cooking. There was a door out into the back yard where there was an outside lavatory. On the wall by the sink was a large dresser, which she always insisted was an Irish dresser as the top was enclosed behind glass doors instead of just open shelves like the Welsh variety! In the centre of the room was a large table with an oil cloth covering for working, and a green chenille cloth for not working! and on high days and holidays a linen tablecloth would be spread over the chenille one. There was a very ancient piano, and a tall chest of drawers, which contained all of her treasures. She had her cat and a large old wooden radio, and with her many young visitors, seemed blissfully happy. Her sister Kate (Mrs Somerville) lived in 'Escalonia' further down the road.

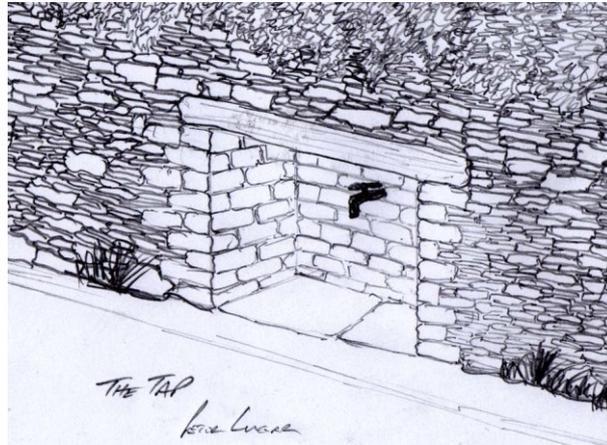
The other cottage, 'Knighton Cottage' now known as 'Dove Cottage', (No.43 Knighton Road) seemed to be on a series of short lets, mainly to service families.

Next to the tap was the 'other' streetlight on Knighton Hill.



THE TAP

The sketch below is one that I did many years ago of the tap in its little recess. The recess was only about 3'6" high and about as wide. Very often there would be one bucket under the tap filling, and two or three others in a queue, and sometimes a variety of containers - buckets, watering cans, small churns etc.



Below is a photograph of 'Tap cottage' and 'Dove Cottage' taken in 2005. Not a lot of change in Tap Cottage from the photograph of 1995 apart from a coat of paint and new windows.



MARY RIDGEWELL

Mary Ridgewell was a much loved character, an Irish Widow, she lived in Tap Cottage at the bottom of Knighton Hill. Her sister Kate (Somerville) lived in 'Escalonia' further down on the other side of the road, nearer the Jubilee Inn. I believe that they came across from Ireland in the 1930s, "to escape the troubles".

"Ridgie" was loved by all of the village children, all of whom went to visit her and were always made welcome. All the bus drivers would give her a 'toot' as they went past, and if she was at her front door, she would give them a wave.

She hardly ever left the village, her only trips out, she being a staunch Roman Catholic, were to the Roman Catholic Church of Holy Cross, in Ebrington Street, in Plymouth. That was the nearest one in those days, and Mr and Mrs Dutton from Church Road used to take her with them in their car.

One day whilst out alone walking she fell and broke her leg, she was somewhere down at Thorn at the time, and had to crawl for about three quarters of a mile before being able to get help. She made a full recovery, but complained bitterly about having to have her bed moved downstairs for the convalescence period!

This photograph is taken from a coloured slide that I took in 1961. It shows Mary with two of her many small visitors. The two little girls are the daughters of Farmer Des Stevenson who was at that time the tenant of Knighton Farm

"Tap Cottage" is to the left of the gateway to Knighton Farmhouse. It was so called because opposite it, up until the road was widened in the late 1960s, was the tap, set into a niche, from which all the cottages on Knighton Hill down so far as the Blacksmith's, used to draw their water. This tap was still in regular use up until the road was widened, in spite of all the properties on Knighton Hill by then being connected to the mains water supply.



OLD MOTHER RILEY
(MARY RIDGEWELL)

Mary Ridgewell had a wonderful sense of fun, and loved young people

This Photograph of Mary, standing in the doorway of Tap Cottage, dressed up as 'Old Mother Riley' was taken in the early 1950s by Christine Clifton who lived next door in Knighton Farm.



CLAREMONT AND SUNDALE - 1995

This photograph was taken in March 1995. These are now known as No.s 44 and 46 Knighton Road. The one nearest the road was called 'Claremont', and the other one 'Sundale'.

They were built in the late 1930s and must have been amongst the first houses to be built in Knighton with electricity and bathrooms installed as standard. They were pebble dashed, and I think it was originally intended that another pair should be built alongside of them to occupy the rest of the site. The Second World War it would seem, put paid to that plan reaching fruition.

Sundale (No.46), was occupied by Mr (Alf) and Mrs Full, they had a son called Gerald who for some reason we all called "Johnnie". He was in our immediate gang of friends and one who we played with on a regular basis. Gerald's father Alf was very much involved as Honorary Treasurer, with the Wembury United Football Team.

The empty site next to the semis, stretching right up to the field hedge, had by this time become completely overgrown with brambles. Starting out from the Full's back garden, we used to hack our way through the brambles as far as the hedge where we had a secret den and where we used to light fires and bake potatoes. This seemed to be a tremendous distance from Gerald's house but this impression was given by the circuitous path which we had cut, and was in reality, no more than 50 yards as the crow flies! There were plenty of places in the hedge where we could get amongst the small trees and saplings and carve out hidey-holes. In our games they all served as bridges of battleships, or cockpits of tanks or aircraft. The war had only ended a few years earlier and so such themes were still high on the 'play agenda' although the 'Wild West' did feature on some occasions. This usually depended on what was showing at the Odeon, Gaumont, Royal or Plaza, which were the main cinemas in Plymouth.

The one nearest the road, "Claremont", (No.44), I cannot recall who lived in it at that time. Later in the early 1950s it was bought by Mr Studholme for Mrs Gibson (Maisie) and her family to live in, She worked at Wembury House and lived at Hollacombe but had to vacate the rented accommodation there. So she and Mr Gibson and their two children Brian and Ivy moved into "Claremont". Mrs Gibson remained there as a widow, after the Studholmes left Wembury House, until she died in the 1990s. The Studholme family allowed her to remain in the house rent free as a pension benefit in recognition of her many years of service to the family. After she died the house was sold.



CLAREMONT AND SUNDALE – 2005

This photograph was taken in December 2005. 'Sundale' looks very much the same as it did in the 1995 photograph, except that the front porch is now predominantly white in colour. 'Claremont', on the other hand, has had a lot of work carried out, new windows, new rendering, new porch and a substantial extension to the side incorporating an integral garage and extra bedrooms above.



FOUR CORNERS

This photograph was taken in March 1995. Originally called “Knighton Villa”, it was built in the early 1800s as a Dower House to Langdon Court. The house remained in the possession of the Calmady family up until the death of Laura Calmady in 1894, some 20 years after the rest of the estate had been bought by Richard Cory. It has been known as “Four Corners” since about the 1930s, and is now also numbered “42 Knighton Road”.

In the 1940s and early 1950s it was occupied by Captain and Mrs Leslie Ayre. He was a Paymaster Captain in the Royal Navy, I think that he retired in the late 1940s. His wife ‘Dolly’ was a sweet lady, who seemed at the time to be quite dotty, but when one looks back, one realises that she never really got over the loss of their son, Anthony during the war. Their daughter married a Naval Officer with the most unforgettable surname of ‘Covey-Crump’ and their children used to come and stay with their grandparents in the holidays, there was a boy called Peter and a younger sister. Captain Ayre was chairman of the village hall committee, and did much hard work in getting the old hall refurbished even though it would only be a stop gap measure until the new hall was built. The new hall was also to be a War Memorial to the dead from the two world wars, a cause very close to Captain Ayre’s heart. The Ayres moved in the late 1950s, to Ely in Cambridgeshire, to be nearer their daughter, and also to be in a smaller and more easily manageable house.

Back then the gates were not set back, but were flush with the road. They were wooden, not of solid wood, but constructed in a grating form. When the Kearneys moved in, George Bannaford, who was an excellent dry stone waller, rebuilt the wall so that the gates could be set back to form a new entrance.



FOUR CORNERS - 2004

The photograph below was taken in May 2004.

Since the earlier photograph of 1995, some of the conifers have been cleared right hand side of the gate opening up and improving the whole aspect. The white posts and chains have been removed from the beds flanking the gateway, and an evergreen hedge now tops the wall.

Originally this was the back way into the house and what you see is actually the back of the house. There used to be a long driveway down from the top road to the other side of the house where the front door is. This fell into disuse as it proved to be a lot more convenient to access the house from Knighton Road.

The driveway remained in place up until the late 1960s but gradually became filled in and incorporated into the field system. It can still be seen on the older Ordnance Survey maps.



FOUR CORNERS - SOUTH FRONT

This photograph was taken in May 2009.

The house, it is believed, was originally built as a 'dower' house to Langdon Hall. It is of the late Georgian period. Originally known as 'Knighton Villa' it was occupied in the 1880s by Miss Laura Calmady. She was one of the of the little girls depicted in the picture "The Calmady Children" painted by Sir Thomas Lawrence in the 1820s, and which now hangs in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. For many years, in the nineteenth century, the picture was depicted on chocolate boxes throughout the world. She lived in the house with her youngest sister Gertrude, both spinster daughters of Charles Biggs Calmady.

In the 1940s and 50s the house was known as "Four Corners", and so it has remained ever since. It is thought that this change of name took place sometime in the 1930s. Quite a fitting name for a very neat and compact Georgian house.

In 1926 a Colonel Rundle is listed as a private resident living in Knighton in "The Cottage", so it could be that the house changed its name a couple of times.

I don't know when the name was changed to "Four Corners",



FOUR CORNERS – SOUTH FRONT 1927

This photograph was taken in 1927 when the house was offered for sale with the rest of the Langdon Estate following the death of Richard Cory in December 1926.

The house, dating from the late Georgian period, is shown here with a glass conservatory on the front and a large lean to greenhouse against the service wing to the left. These have been removed in subsequent alterations.

Standing in just over an acre of ground, it made £170 at the sale.

It is believed to have been built as a Dower House to Langdon Court especially for Pollexfen, the widow of Admiral Charles Holmes Everitt Calmady, after his death in 1807. Later in the century, the house, known at that time as “Knighton Villa”, was occupied by the Misses Gertrude and Laura Calmady, spinster daughters of Charles Biggs Calmady.



ROSE COTTAGE (THE COB COTTAGE)

This cottage built of Devon cob is still easily recognisable at the bottom of Knighton Hill. In the 1910s the thatched roof was removed and replaced with asbestos tiles laid lozenge wise. At the same time the angle of the roof slope was reduced and the hipped roof ends replaced by gables. The upper storey on the south and west sides were clad in corrugated iron, which actually served to protect the cob walls.

The wooden porch remained exactly as shown in the photograph until it was rebuilt in the early 1950s, when Mrs Bird and her son Bertie moved in. The previous occupant, Mr Johnnie Keane moved into one of the Almshouses.

Recently the cottage has been given yet another transformation and has been concrete rendered under a new slate roof

The lane can clearly be seen to bend to the right as it passes the Smithy, the little building in the distance is the stable which belonged to the Smithy and which was demolished when the road was widened in the 1960s

The photograph dates from the early 1900s and we are told that the boy shown is Jimmy Milden. We remember him many years later, when we were children and he was an old age pensioner,



ROSE COTTAGE (THE COB COTTAGE) 1970s

This photograph taken in the 1970s is exactly how the cottage had always looked from as far back as I can remember. The little porch was rebuilt when the Birds moved in, up until then it still had the old wooden porch as shown in the photograph of the early 1900s. Another little innovation was the black and white chequering on the edge of the building presumably as a warning to high sided vehicles drivers.

The upper cladding of corrugated iron can clearly be seen, painted blue in this instance. This cladding went right around the front (west) of the cottage covering the upper part of the wall right up to the apex, punctuated of course, by the bedroom window on that side.



ROSE COTTAGE
(COB COTTAGE AT THE BOTTOM OF KNIGHTON HILL)

This cob cottage “Rose Cottage” at the bottom of Knighton Hill, is still easily recognisable from the earlier photographs. This photograph was taken in March 1995.

Now known as 35 Knighton Road. It is a genuine Devon cob cottage and at one time was thatched, but for many years the upper part had been clad in corrugated iron, painted grey and the roof gabled and re-roofed in square asbestos tiles, red in colour, and laid lozenge wise.

In the 1940s and the early part of the 1950s the cottage was occupied by Johnnie Keane, who, in the 1920s was one of Bill Newtons bus drivers who operated the first bus service, based in Down Thomas, that ran between Wembury and Plymouth. It was a Model ‘T’ Ford body, open sided, with 14 seats and canvas curtains that could be drawn in inclement weather. Later in the 1940s he worked at Thorn as a gardener.

The cottage was never called by its proper name, we always called it “Johnnie Keane’s” and in later years when Mrs Bird and Bertie lived there, “Bertie Bird’s”. There was no electricity laid on to the cottage until the Birds moved in. Johnnie was an Irishman who had seen service in the First World War and had lived in the Wembury since. For some obscure reason his War medals were kept on show in the Jubilee Inn. In the early 1950s he was rehoused in one of the Almshouses (No.6), which in those days was like jumping from the frying pan into the fire as they did not have mains water, electricity or proper sanitation. He still managed to walk down to the Post Office each week with his haversack to collect his pension and pick up his meagre supplies. We used to visit him up at the Almshouses and take him logs for the fire.



Just to the left of the cottage can clearly be seen a pair of the old council houses (Cornish Units), which were built in 1951 and demolished in 1998.

ROSE COTTAGE (COB COTTAGE)
FROM THE EAST

The photograph below was taken in May 2004, and easily recognisable from the early 1900s photograph.

A far cry from the thatch of the earlier years, but nice to see it being well cared for.

A thick chimney, which develops into a much thinner one at the top, is always a good sign of a building, at onetime having been thatched. We know that in this instance this was the case. The chimney had to be extra thick where it went through the thatch as a fire preventative measure. The thatch could be up to six feet thick (or more in some cases) at the apex, tapering down to two feet at the eaves.



COB COTTAGE AT THE BOTTOM OF KNIGHTON HILL (ROSE COTTAGE)

The cob cottage the bottom of Knighton Hill, is still easily recognisable from the earlier photograph. This photograph was taken in March 1995.

In the earlier photograph the building with the green corrugated roof opposite the cottage is shown to have a thatched roof, so could possibly have been a cottage when the photograph was taken.

The width of the road in the photograph shows as it was in the 1950s, from the top of Knighton Hill to the Post Office.

DEVON COB

Devon Cob is a very resilient building medium, all a cob wall needs is a firm foundation and a good capping and it will last for years (“a decent ‘at and a good pair of shoes, and e’ll last forever”, is what they used to say). Cob building is a summer activity, as the drying process needs plenty of good weather, traditionally “whilst the sparrows are still with us”. A cob mix is made from good sub soil, straw to bind it together, and water. Horsehair or cowhair was often used as a binding agent, this gave a smoother finish and was suitable for internal surfaces. Sometimes small pebbles or stones were added to give substance to the cob. It can be mixed in an ordinary cement mixer but only in small quantities. Traditionally it used to be mixed in a shallow pit by treading, either by men or animals, usually bullocks (which is why there is often cow dung in the older constructions). Nowadays, for large quantities, a tractor can be used for mixing by driving through it and turning it with the front bucket. It can only be built up in layers, of two feet (60 cm) at a time. It will not mould, and each layer has to dry, usually for seven days, before the next one can be applied. So building a wall can be quite a slow task. It is a very versatile medium in that it can be shaped, curved and carved, arches and windows can easily be created, and when finished can be treated with limewash or pigments. It is completely recyclable in that it can be demolished, remixed and used again.

It is estimated that there are some 40,000 cob buildings in Devon, ranging from dwellings, through to farm buildings, and even some garden follies!



ROSE COTTAGE (COB COTTAGE)
(WEST ELEVATION)

This photograph is believed to have been taken in 1903.

The cottage is still easily recognisable at the bottom of Knighton Hill, although it has long since lost its thatch. The upper storey was for many years clad in corrugated iron, which actually served to protect the cob walls, and the roofs were tiled in asbestos tiles laid lozenge wise. The hipped roof end was replaced by a gable, and the upper window was enlarged. further on, on the left Tap Cottage can clearly be seen, and on the right just in front of the cart, the entrance to "Four Corners". The thatched building on the right, was also at that time, a cottage, but has long since been put to other uses, and now has a corrugated iron roof and gable end.

Recently the cottage has been given yet another transformation and has been rendered and colourwashed pink under a new slate roof.



ROSE COTTAGE (COB COTTAGE)
WEST ELEVATION

The photograph below was taken in May 2004.

This view hasn't really changed a lot from the one taken 100 years earlier in almost the same spot.

Tap cottages can still be seen further up on the left, the houses of 'Cory Court' now occupy the corner site further on.

On the right side of the picture the buildings are still intact, except the one that was previously thatched now has a modern corrugated roof.



THE INDIANS ARE COMING

Back in the early 1950s two Indian gentlemen in long black coats and white turbans would sometimes get off the bus at the top of Knighton Hill. Each of them would be carrying a large brown suitcase and they would call door to door at all of the houses in the village trying to sell their wares.

Their stock mostly comprised of small household linen items usually of damask or Indian cotton, some fancy goods all highly embroidered, and some small brass ornaments. With a great flourish they would fully open up a table cloth in front of a prospective customer wielding it like a matador's cape!

Quite a lot of the ladies treated them with great suspicion, and many would not answer the door to them. In those days many of the ladies were at home all day being housewives, the days of the full-time working mother were far in the future.

We children were most intrigued by them, we had never seen such a thing before, I suppose it must have been our first encounter with people of a different skin colour. The girls were mostly frightened by them but the boys used to follow them around watching their every move. I think that they were more wary of us than we were of them. We used to think that it was incredible that they had come all the way from India to sell us things in Wembury!

ROSE VILLA – LATE 1800s

Rose Villa, is a double fronted, detached cottage set back from the road, with a large front garden, and seems slightly more superior than the other cottages

At one time it was the Telegraph Office for the village. The photograph below is thought to date from the 1890s. We know that James Drake was the postmaster in 1899. He was the grandfather of Miss Eileen Drake, the last of the Drakes who lived all of her life at May Cottage dying in 1994, aged 87 years. James Drake is on the left of the photograph holding the watering can. With him is his granddaughter, Flossie Hutchins and in the doorway, two of his daughters, Ann Drake, (later to become Mrs R Thomas) and Louisa Drake, (later to become Mrs R Halestrap).

James was born at Newton Ferrers in 1842, by the late 1850s he was at Wembury House as a groom. He married Ann Coleman, Daughter of Philip Coleman, Blacksmith at Ermington, and niece of John Symons Coleman of the Smithy at Knighton.

The cottage was built by Nicholas Coleman in 1841 who was variously listed as, Blacksmith in 1841, Licensee of the Jubilee Inn in 1881, and Farmer at Spirewell Farm in 1891. The link with the Jubilee Inn was through his wife, Georgina who was a daughter of Henry Collier, the Licensee. Henry died sometime before 1870 as his widow, Ann is listed as the licensee in that year. It would appear that on her death, her son-in-law Nicholas Coleman became licensee, combining it with his normal trade of Blacksmith.

The Telegraph Office was run from Rose Villa in conjunction with the Post Office at Watergate Cottages, which was run by the Perrings. In 1889 Alfred Perring is recorded as being the Postmaster but later became licensee of the Jubilee Inn, His wife Maria, was another daughter of Henry Collier late of the Jubilee Inn. His daughter Miss Minnie Perring became the Postmistress, and ran the Post Office until it moved to West Wembury in 1926.



THE DRAKES AT ROSE VILLA



The photograph above shows members of the Drake Family at Rose Villa in the 1890s.

In the back row, from the left, William Drake, father of Miss Eileen Drake who was a well known character in the village right up to her death in 1994 at 87 years of age,

Next to William is his sister, Mary Margaret "Polly" (Mrs Hutchings at the time of the photograph), and next to her, another sister, Ann "Annie" (Mrs Robert Thomas at the time of the photograph, visiting from Taunton, they later emigrated to Canada).

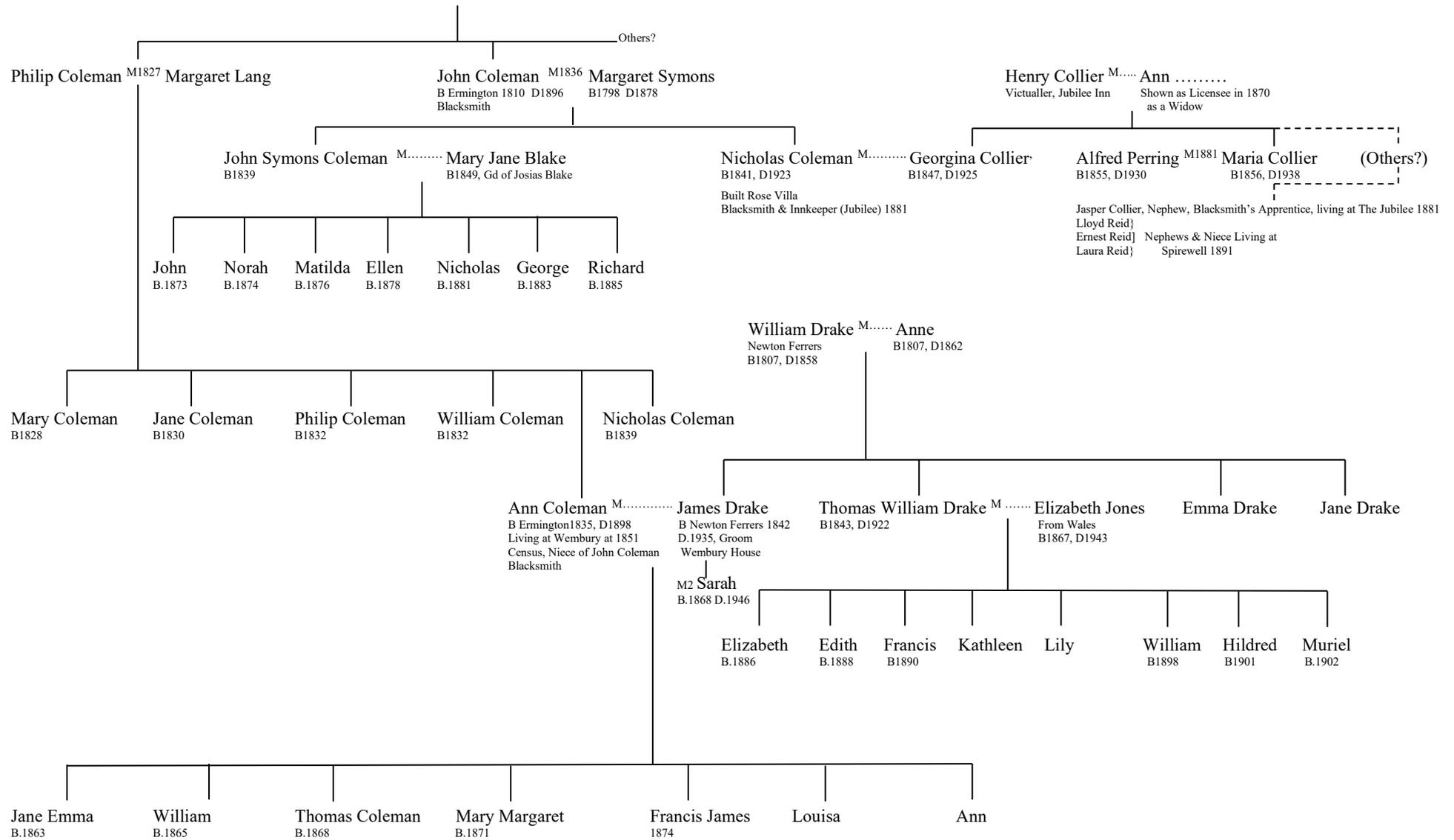
In the front row, James Drake and Ann his wife, Parents of the above, and between them, Flossie, daughter of Polly. We know that the photograph must have been taken some time prior to 1898 as Ann Drake died on the 6th of April of that year. Later James Drake took a second wife, Sarah, 27 years his junior, who was born in 1868 and died in 1946. James died in 1935, aged 94 years.

James Drake came originally from Newton Ferrers, and was known to be at Wembury House as a groom in the late 1850s. He married Ann Coleman, Daughter of Philip Coleman, Blacksmith at Ermington, and niece of John Symons Coleman of the Smithy at Knighton.

They were four other children than those pictured above, Thomas Coleman Drake, who died in infancy, Francis James Drake who also died in infancy, Louisa Drake who married Robert Halestrap, and Jane Emma Drake who married Albert Thornton

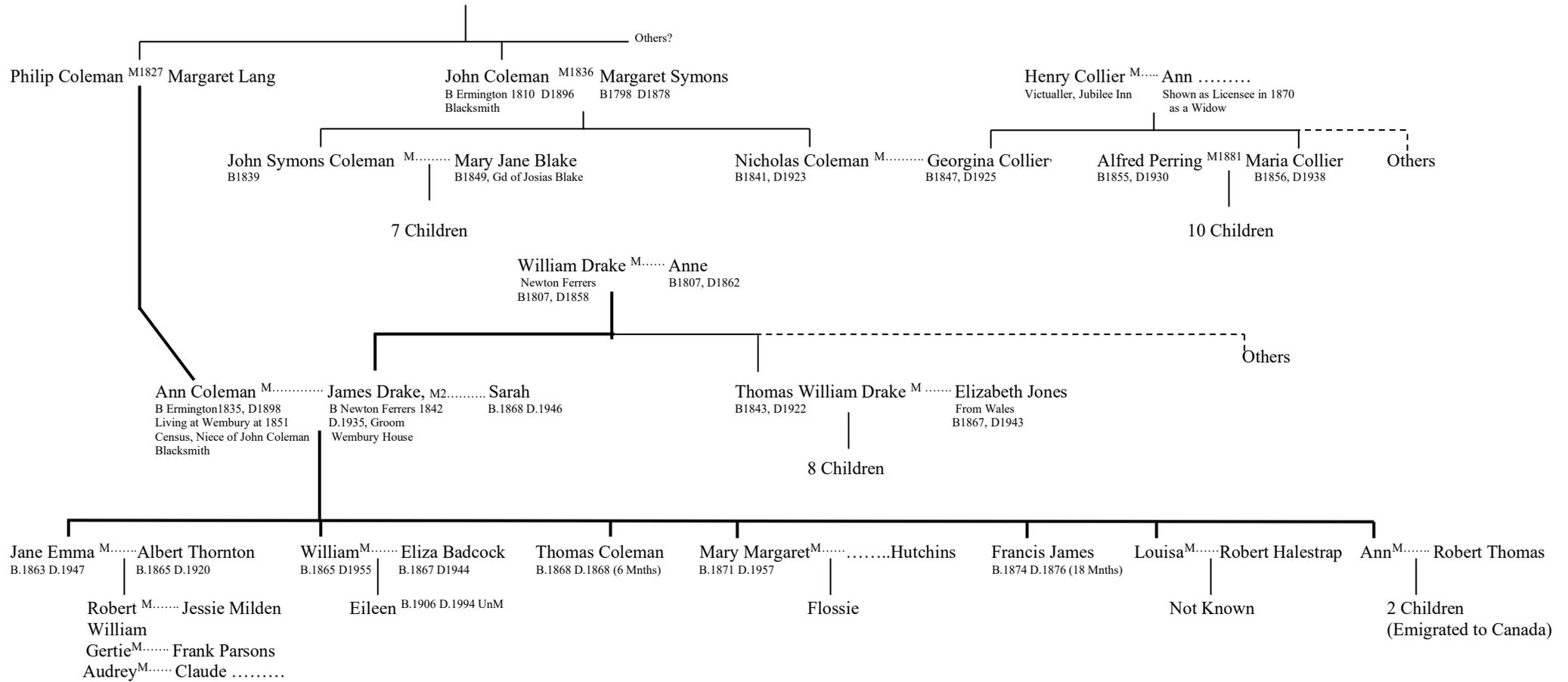
N.B. The above is based on facts known at the time of writing in 2009, research is still ongoing.

Coleman, Drake Link (3)



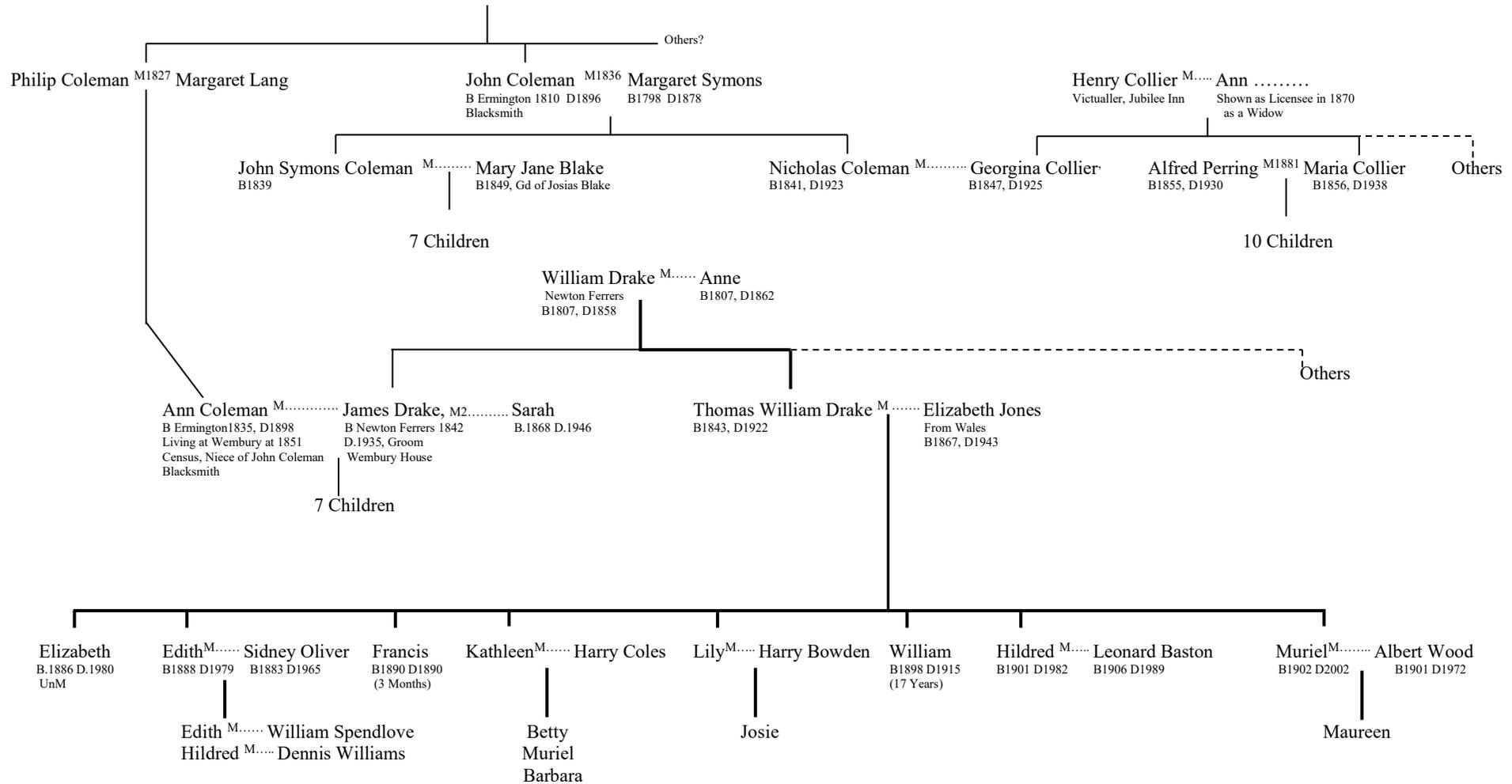
Key: B = Born, M = Married, D = Died, Dau = Daughter, Gd = Granddaughter, UnM = Unmarried, Dv = Divorced.

Coleman, Drake Link (4) – Ann Coleman/James Drake



Key: B = Born, M = Married, D = Died, Dau = Daughter, Gd = Granddaughter, UnM = Unmarried, Dv = Divorced.

Coleman, Drake Link (5) – Elizabeth Jones/Thomas William Drake



Key: B = Born, M = Married, D = Died, Dau = Daughter, Gd = Granddaughter, UnM = Unmarried, Dv = Divorced.

ROSE VILLA - 1995

Now known as No.29 Knighton Road. In the 1940s and 1950s Rose Villa was occupied by Mr and Mrs Paltridge (Len and Marion), and their daughter Ann. They didn't get involved in a lot in the village, they kept themselves to themselves and gave all the indications of being a loving and devoted family.

He was a Lieutenant Commander in the Royal Navy, his wife was a very sweet but timid little thing, the daughter Ann, was a chronic asthma sufferer, and was seldom seen without her 'puffer' (which in those days was quite a substantial piece of equipment). She was what one would have called, back then, a 'delicate child'. Quite mysteriously, in the early 1950s, Mr Paltridge, apparently in his sleep, attacked his wife with a hatchet, from which she sustained very serious head injuries. The gory details were kept from us children in the village, but much information was gleaned from unguarded conversations in our various homes, and pooled together by us, so that we had a very good idea of what had happened! It came to court and was referred to as one of the 'sleepwalking crimes'. His wife stood by him throughout the trial, and I think that due to this he was given a minimal sentence. It was hoped that it would be kept as quiet as possible but the Daily Express (I think it was) got hold of it and gave the full front page treatment.

They eventually returned to the village, and he resumed his duties with the Royal Navy, but was never allowed to go back to sea. Things never seemed to be quite the same, and about ten years later Marion died, after being rushed to Frenchey Hospital in Bristol. Although nothing was ever said it is generally believed that her early death was a direct consequence of her injuries all those years before. Marion had been a founder member of the Women's Institute, and had served on the committee as Honorary Secretary, and was well loved by all. Everyone was quite saddened that her remains were not brought back to Wembury to be interred here where she had lots of friends, but that she was cremated in Bristol and her ashes scattered there.

Len (or Hamish as he preferred to be known as) lived on in the cottage until his death in the 1980s. In the end he cut quite a pathetic figure shuffling to and from the pub each day, where he would sit alone in the bar drinking and smoking his pipe, always on the periphery but never involved in what was going on. After his death the cottage was sold and given a long overdue refurbishment.



THE BIN MAN COMETH

On Thursdays the dustcart came to the village. It was green and the back part was of semi circular cross section with curved sliding doors on each side, a bit like a fryer in a fish and chip shop! There was usually a garden rake and a couple of tin baths hanging off the back of it

There were no plastic dustbins and bin bags were totally unheard of. Dustbins were made of galvanised iron and had vertical corrugations to give added strength. The lids were also of galvanised iron and the corrugations fanned out from the centre. There were two stout carrying handles.

All that ever went into the dustbin was tins, bottles, bones and ash. Everything that came into the house was either wrapped in paper or enclosed in a cardboard box. All houses had open fires and anything that could be burnt, was burnt in the household grate or in a lot of cases, the cooking range.

Coal was very expensive, and for quite a lot of the time, still on ration, so people had to look for other alternatives for fuel. Many people went to the beach picking up driftwood, and a lot of others picked up fallen wood and fir cones in the woods, also the field hedges were quite a good source of pieces of decaying wood. Those who were not into gardening and the manufacture of compost, would burn their vegetable peelings on the household fire after first wrapping them in newspaper.

The dustman came round to each house and emptied the contents of the bin into a tin bath which he would carry away over his shoulder and tip into the back of the cart. They usually wore a black shiny cap and a sort of black cape over the shoulder on which they rested the tin bath.

The lorry could go through the whole village in a morning and still have room for more. Even in our house where there were five children, and my mother cooked every single thing which we ate, the bin was only ever half filled.

N.B. In the 1950s Wembury was still a part of the Plympton Rural District and we were ruled from the "Treverbin", the District Council Offices in Plymbridge Road, Plympton. The Rural District basically covered the whole area between Plymouth and Modbury. Modbury was the start of the South Hams in those days. At Midnight on New Years Eve in 1967 all of this changed when Plympton and Plymstock became part of the City of Plymouth, and Wembury along with Newton and Noss, Brixton, Yealmpton, Holbeton, Ermington, and Ivybridge were taken under the South Hams Umbrella.

THE SYMONS AND COLEMAN FAMILIES - BLACKSMITHS OF KNIGHTON

The Symons and Coleman families lived in the Smithy in Knighton from at least 1729 until January 1971, when the last Blacksmith, and the last of the family, John Symons Blake Coleman died aged 98 years. He had never married, and so the Smithy, which by then had ceased to operate for some considerable time, passed on to his niece Mrs Edith Kitto who lived in it up to her own death in January 2004. Mrs Kitto was the only surviving daughter of John Coleman's Sister Ellen,



John was born on 4th August 1872 and was the oldest of seven children, and ironically he was the last one to die. The photograph on the left was taken in 1892 when he was 20 years old. His father was John Symons Coleman who had married Mary Jane Blake in the 1860s, she was the granddaughter of Josias Blake, one of those who tragically drowned in the Breakwater pinnacle disaster in November 1838. His grandfather, John Coleman, a blacksmith from Ermington, married Margaret Symons in 1836, whose father, John Symons, and grandfather, also John Symons, and great grandfather Arthur Symons had been the Blacksmiths at Knighton since 1729.

John's next eldest sibling was a sister Norah Margaret, who was born in 1873. She never left the village and never married, preferring to remain at home looking after her other siblings and elderly parents. She died in 1960 aged, 87 years. She did work for a time in the early 1900s in domestic service for the Revd Charles and Mrs Burgess at the Vicarage.

The next eldest was Matilda Elizabeth, who was born in 1876. She became a nurse and by 1897 was working at the Fulham Infirmary in London. She was very highly thought of by the Medical Superintendent of the hospital, which is borne out by the letter of reference he wrote for her in 1905, where he thoroughly recommended her as a well trained Midwife, and a skilled and conscientious nurse. She eventually returned to her Devon roots working as a nurse in Plymouth. On retirement she continued her Midwifery duties in Wembury and was also called upon as the 'layer out' of corpses. She also never married and died at the Smithy in 1954, aged 78 years.

Next came Ellen who was born in 1877. In February of 1893 she became a Pupil-teacher at Wembury School, this was to be for a period of five years at a wage of £5 per annum for the first year, increasing by £1 in each subsequent year. In 1901 she married a Mr Lewis Chalice who hailed from Rilla Mill in Cornwall, he was a science master, and eventually became Headmaster of St Neots School in Cornwall, from where he retired in 1924. They had three daughters, one who died in infancy, another called Louise who never married, and Edith who became Mrs Kitto and inherited the Smithy in 1971. Lewis Chalice died in 1936 and was buried at Cornwood. Ellen died in January 1949, aged 72, and is interred with him at Cornwood.

The next child was a second son, Nicholas, born in 1880, which meant that there was an eight year gap between John and the next eldest brother. Nicholas had an unfortunate accident when he was a young man, some say it was a fight, some say they were larking about in the forge. He got hit on the side of the head by a large brass buckle, presumably from the girthing strap of a carthorse, and sustained damage to his right eye. From that time on, he constantly suffered from headaches, and was prone to irrational behaviour. He spent long periods away at the mental hospital at Moorhaven, but was allowed come home from time to time. He never married and died in 1952, aged 71 years.

Next was another brother, George Henry, born in 1882, He never left the village, and never married, he worked for a time in the gardens at Wembury House, but eventually shared in the blacksmithing work at the Forge. He died in 1957, aged 74 years.

The last child was Richard, who was born in 1885, hardly anything is known about him. In the census of 1911 he listed as living at the Smithy with his siblings, his employment is given as Farm Labourer assisting his Father. He, like his other brothers, never married. In total juxtaposition to his eldest sibling John, who was the first born and the last to die, he was the last born and was the first to die, dying in July 1942 aged 57 years



In the photograph above which dates from the 1890s, we are told that the third person from the left in the back row is John Symons Blake Coleman, the second person from the right, with the beard, is marked as “Father” followed by a question mark, the three young men in front sitting cross legged, are from the left, Richard Coleman, Nicholas Coleman, and George Coleman.

It always seems quite amazing to me that I grew up in the 1950s knowing John, Nora and Matilda, whose names appeared in the 1881 Census. We used to hear all sorts of stories from them, first hand, about the village, going back to turn of the century, and second hand stories of things going back almost to Queen Victoria’s Coronation!

MATILDA COLEMAN – LETTER OF REFERENCE

Fulham Infirmary
St. Dunstan's Rd
Hammersmith
20/1/03

Dr. C. T. Parsons
Medical Superintendent
Tel No (Par Office)
Worm 939.

I have much pleasure in testifying to the high opinion I have formed of the nursing capabilities of Miss Matilda E. Coleman.

She was trained in this Infirmary and was here, in all, from Dec 12th 1897 till

Sept 30th 1903. In addition to her training in ordinary Medical & Surgical work Nursing she received special training in Midwifery and passed the examination of the London Obstetrical Society.

She was painstaking thorough in her work and most kind and attentive towards her patients, by whom she was universally liked.

She was accurate in her

observations and intelligent and careful in carrying out instructions. She has had a great deal of experience in Medical Surgical and Obstetric Nursing. I can thoroughly recommend her as a well trained midwife and a skilled and conscientious nurse.

C T Parsons M.D. London
Med. Capt. Fulham Infirmary
W



The letter of reference for Matilda Coleman (Pictured) written by Dr C T Parsons, Medical Officer of Health, London; and Medical Superintendent of the Fulham Infirmary, where she was trained and worked from 1897 to 1903.

FROM THE COLEMAN FAMILY ALBUM



The Family outside of the cottage pre 1896



Ellen with bike in the orchard 1899



Matilda Coleman 1896



John Symons Coleman & Mary Jane Coleman (née Blake) outside the cottage in 1912. John died 5th July 1913 aged 73 years. Mary outlived him by 18 years, dying on the same date in 1931



The Coleman sisters in 1893, from left to right Matilda, Norah and Ellen.
The gentleman is probably Lewis Chalice who married Ellen in 1901, 14 years her senior.



John Symons Blake Coleman 1892



Matilda Coleman 1900s

ELLEN COLEMAN - AGREEMENT 1893

Below is a copy of the agreement of 11th March 1893, made between the Wembury School board and John Symons Coleman, to engage his daughter Ellen as a Pupil Teacher. This was to be for a period of four years and for a salary of £5 per year, which would be increased by £1 on each subsequent year of the engagement.

11. 3. 93
ENGLAND AND WALES.

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT between the School Board of¹ Wembury hereinafter called the

1. Name of the School Board. Wembury hereinafter called the

2. Name in full of the pupil-teacher. Ellen Coleman hereinafter

3. Name, description, and address in full, of father or other person who is to be the surety of the pupil-teacher. John Symons Coleman

4. Father, or other relation or friend of the pupil-teacher as the case may be. of Houghton, Wembury, Blacksmith. hereinafter called the surety, the father of the pupil teacher.

5. His or her. The Board, for themselves and their successors, covenant with the pupil-teacher, and with the surety, his as executors and administrators and assigns, and the pupil-teacher and the surety for himself, his executors, administrators, and assigns, covenant with the Board and their successors, as follows:—

6. Name of the School. Wembury Board school

7. The month defined by Article 20, or January. of the said Board, but so that the said pupil-teacher shall not serve therein less than three or more than six hours upon any one day, nor more than 25 hours in any one week. Sunday is expressly excluded from this engagement.

8. Preceding month. February

9. Four full years; or any less number of years, not under two, provided (a) that the candidate has passed for admission the examination fixed for a later year in proportion to the reduced term of service; and provided also (b) that the end of the reduced term of service fall beyond the candidate's 18th year (completed). 2. This engagement shall begin on the first day of February 1893 and, subject to the proviso in paragraph 4, shall end on the last day of January 1897, but if the pupil-teacher shall, with the consent of the other parties hereto, enter a Training College as a Queen's Scholar before the last-mentioned date, or such later date as shall be fixed by an extension of the engagement under paragraph 4, this engagement shall thereupon end.

10. The wages may be weekly, or as the parties agree: they should be fixed at the discretion of the parties, having in view the local rate of wages, and the advantages of the school as a place wherein to learn the business of a teacher. 3. The Board shall pay to the pupil-teacher as wages¹⁰ the sum of five Pounds per annum, and this sum shall be increased by one Pound in each subsequent year of the engagement.

The agreement may be in the following form:—

—per—in the first year, and this sum shall be increased by—per—in each subsequent year of the engagement, but such increase may be stopped at the discretion of the Managers of the said School for the time being for the unexpired remainder of any year after receipt of notice from the Education Department that the pupil-teacher has failed to pass the examination, or to fulfil the other conditions of a pupil-teacher according to the standard of the preceding year as prescribed in the Articles of the Code of the said Department applicable to the case.

11. One year less than the second date in paragraph 2. 4. Provided always, that (1) if the pupil-teacher fails to pass the examination prescribed by the Code for any year, this engagement shall, with the consent of the Board and the Education Department, be extended so as to end on the last day of January 1898; and (2) if the pupil-teacher defers the Queen's Scholarship Examination for a year in accordance with the Code, this engagement shall, with the consent of the Managers, be extended so as to end on the last day of the month in which such deferred examination takes place.

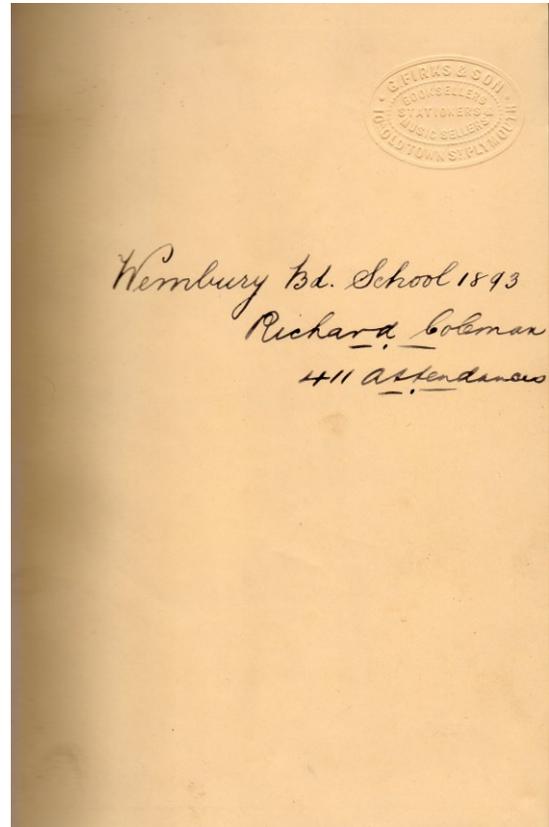
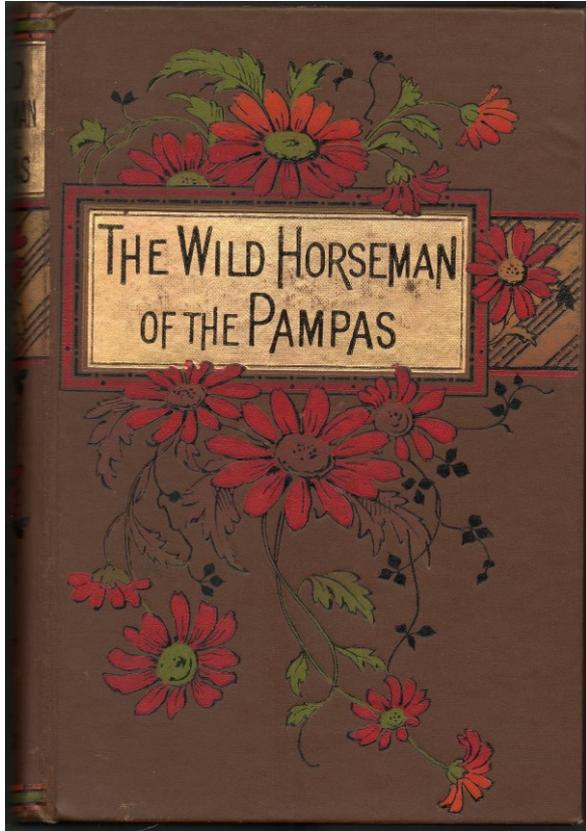
When this engagement is so extended, the course of study of the pupil-teacher in the remainder of the year succeeding that in respect of which the pupil-teacher failed shall be the same as in the last-mentioned year; and that year shall not be reckoned in calculating any payment to be made under paragraph 6 of this agreement.

A. B. 7.

W B & L (5037)—26732—3000-6-92

RICHARD COLEMAN – AWARD FOR GOOD ATTENDANCE

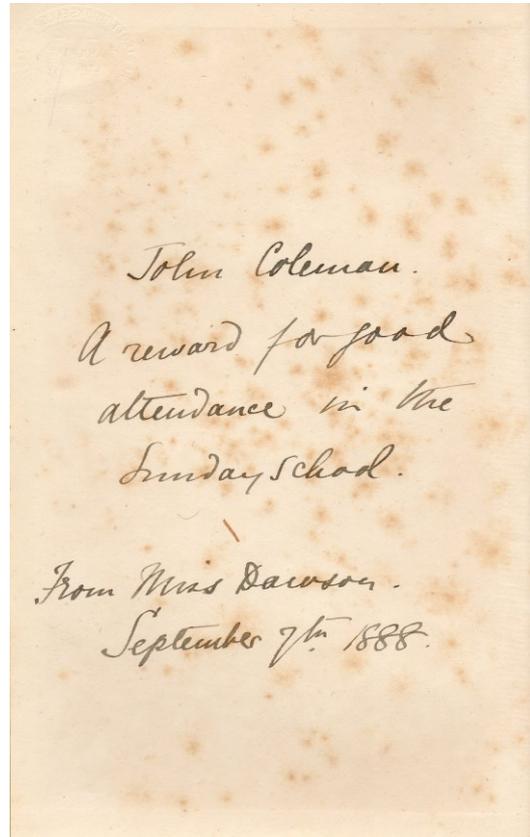
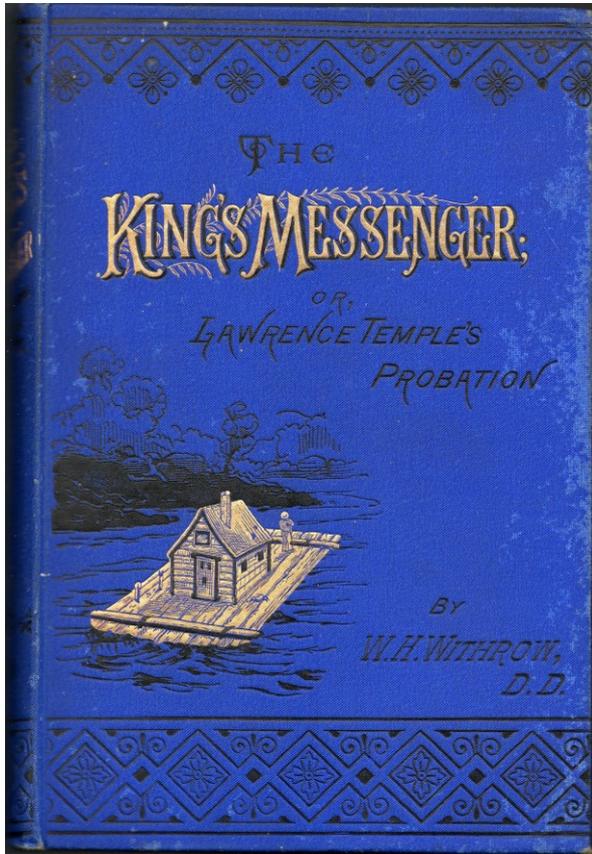
This book was presented to Richard Coleman in 1893, for good attendance at the Board School. Richard was born in 1885, so was only eight years old when he got this award for 411 attendances.



Richard's family were the Blacksmiths in Knighton and had been so for several generations. His Grandfather, John Coleman, an Ermington man, married Margaret Symons in 1836. The Symons family had been the Blacksmiths since before 1729.

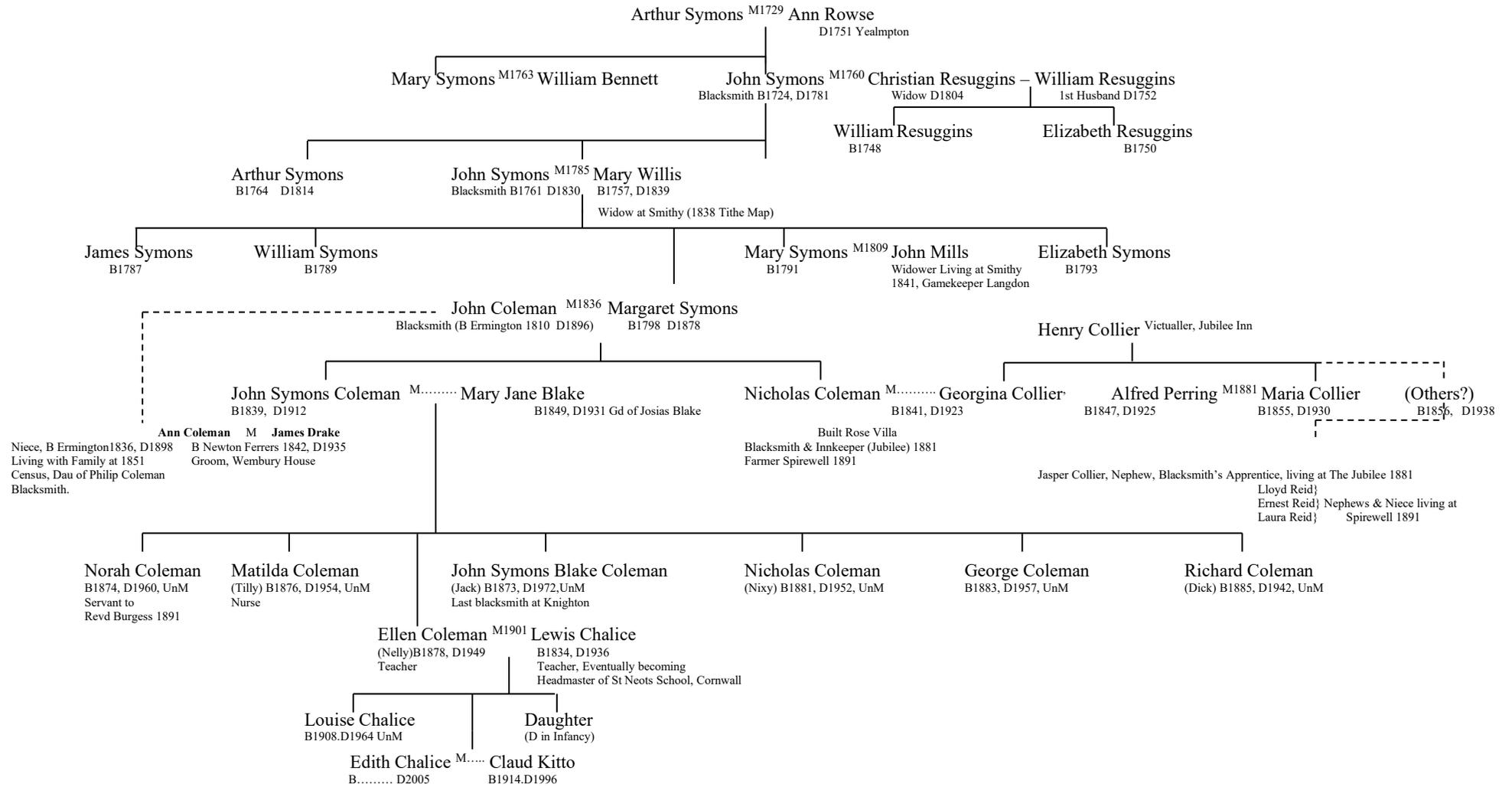
JOHN COLEMAN – AWARD FOR GOOD SUNDAY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

This book was presented to John Coleman in 1888, by Miss Dawson (of Wembury House) for good attendance at the Sunday School. John was born in 1873, so was fifteen years old when he got this award.



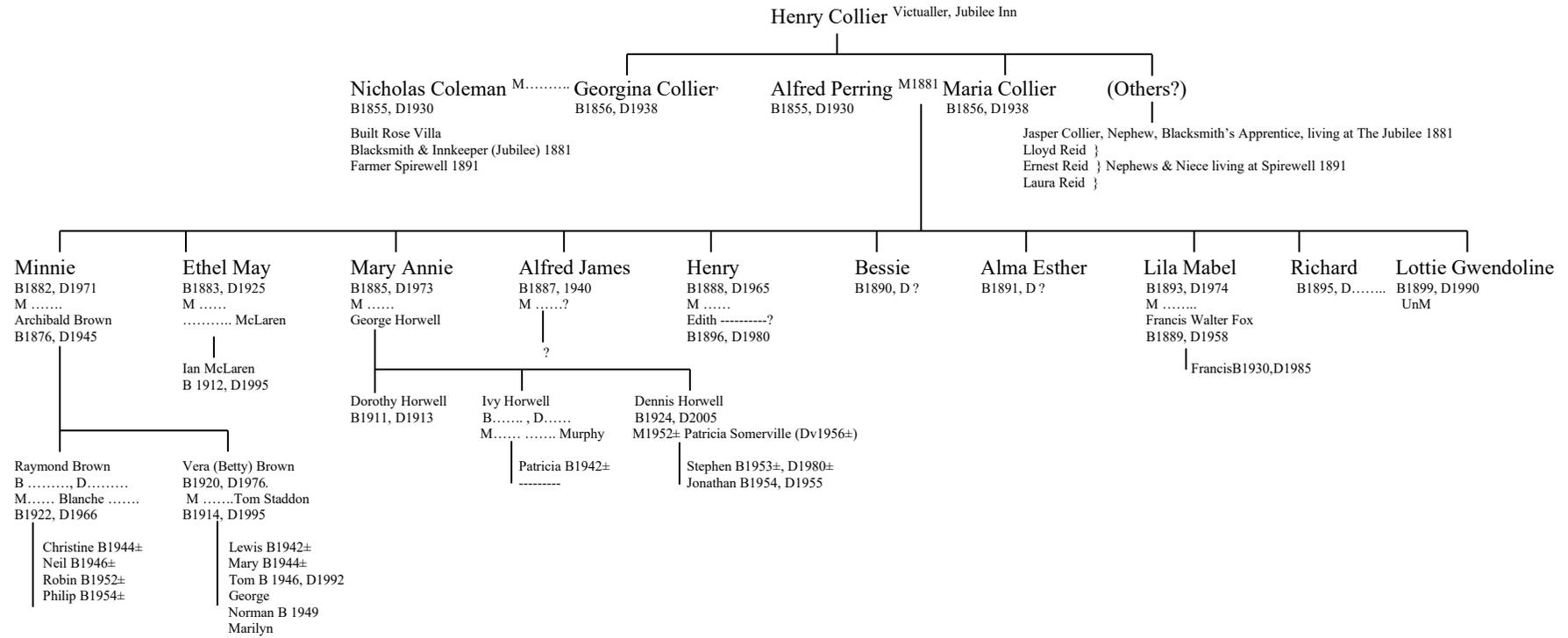
John's family were the Blacksmiths in Knighton and had been so for several generations. His Grandfather, John Coleman, an Ermington man, married Margaret Symons in 1836. The Symons family had been the Blacksmiths since before 1729.

SYMONS and COLEMAN Blacksmiths of Knighton



Key:
 B = Born
 M = Married
 D = Died
 Dv = Divorced
 Dau = Daughter
 Gd = Granddaughter
 UnM = Unmarried

Coleman, Collier, Perring link



Key:
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THE BLACKSMITH'S FIELD

This picture was taken from a photocopy of an original photograph so regrettably has lost a certain amount of clarity.

The blacksmith's field was the one on the immediate left going into the lane at the top of Knighton Hill. The photograph is thought to have been taken in the 1930s and shows the gathering in of the hay harvest with George and Jack Coleman and one of the sisters, probably Norah (Matilda did work away, in London, for quite sometime as a nurse).

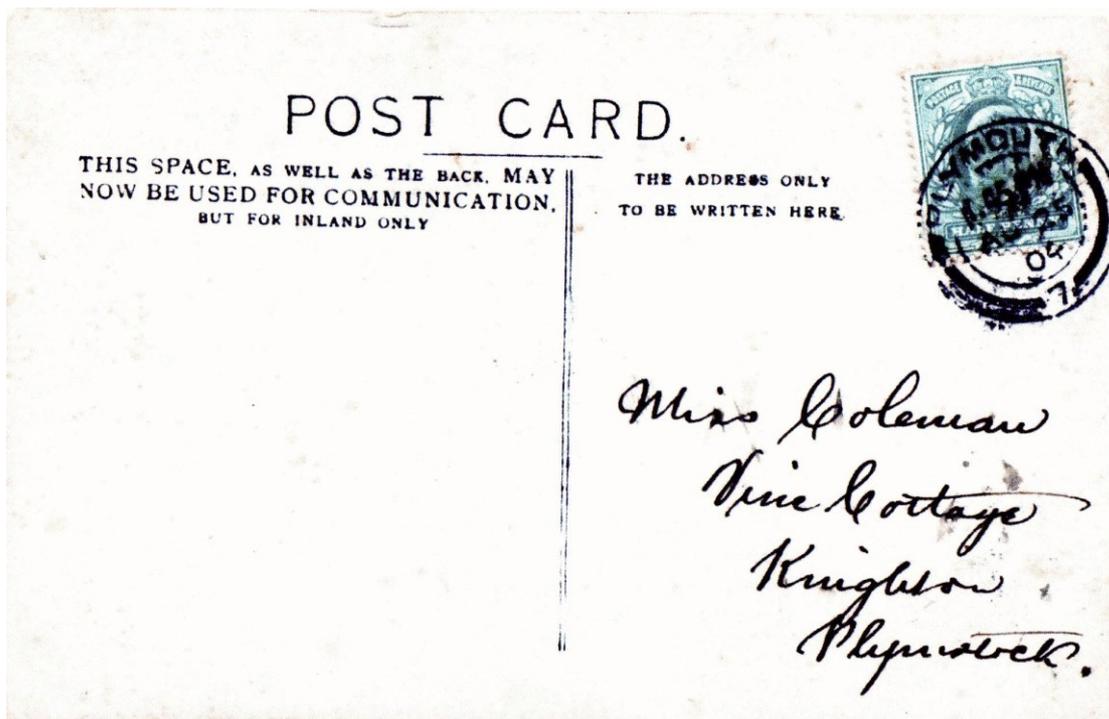


BLACKSMITH'S COTTAGE FROM THE EAST- EARLY 20TH CENTURY

This photograph is thought to have been taken in the first quarter of the twentieth century. The absence of electric posts would indicate sometime before 1928 as that is when electricity was brought to the village. The cottage, which was known as "Vine Cottage" was thatched, and remained so until the mid 1950s. The roof of the forge was of slate, and was replaced with corrugated iron in the early 1930s. May and Escalonia cottages can be seen in the distance. The field on the left, which is now occupied by Uplands Gardens, at that time, belonged to the Blacksmith. I used to walk through it everyday on my way to and from the village school in the 1940s, when we lived at Old Barton Farm.



Postcard Addressed to Miss Coleman at "Vine Cottage"



BLACKSMITH'S COTTAGE FROM THE EAST- 1995

This photograph was taken in March 1995. Back in the 1950s when the cottage was thatched the eaves came down quite a bit lower than with the present roof. In fact they came down to, and extended out over the ivy on the upper storey, level with the tops of the windows

There was also a large central chimney, which hopefully still exists under the present roof, and the end chimney was more substantial than the one presently in place. The corrugated roofed lean to has always been there whether it was thatched or slated at one time is not known, but it probably would have been.

The old forge remains completely unchanged but the road is now considerably wider. In the 1950s it came in almost to where the central white line is and opposite the forge just about where the 'SLOW' sign is, was the blacksmith's stable. The field on the left where the Council Houses were built was also the Blacksmith's and was compulsorily purchased to build the six houses in 1951. These stood until 1998 when they were pulled down to make way for the present development. The cottage in the distance is May Cottage, and the gable just visible over the edge of the roof of the forge, is that of the Olive Tree Chapel, which used to be the old village hall, now greatly reduced in size and completely altered.



BLACKSMITH'S COTTAGE - EARLY 1900s

This view of the bottom of Knighton Hill dates from the early 1900s. The thatched cottage on the right is still in place, but the one opposite has lost its hipped thatched roof and has a gable end and tiled roof. The upper window has also been enlarged. Not discernible in the photograph, the upper portion was clad in corrugated iron.

The Blacksmith's cottage has a thatched roof and was in fact the last thatched cottage in Knighton and West Wembury. It was also, in the mid 1950s, the only cottage in Knighton without electricity. The forge (in the left foreground), has a slate roof which was replaced in the 1930s by corrugated iron.

In the mid 1950s the thatch on the cottage had got into such a bad state that it had to be removed. It was replaced with corrugated asbestos, and at about same time, electricity was put in. Thankfully the asbestos roof has now been removed from the cottage and replaced with simulated slates, this is a great improvement, but still a far cry from the thatch.

The forge was run by the Colemans, three brothers Jack, George, and Nicholas, there were also two sisters, Norah and Matilda. Matilda had spent most of her working life away from Wembury, working as a nurse, for very much of the time in London. In retirement she became involved in midwifery, and also in the laying out of people who has passed away.

Nicholas, had a mental condition which unfortunately necessitated him being away for long periods of time. It seemed so very nice, a family of brothers and sisters all living and working happily together, but as Jack confided to my mother, it was very nice, but wouldn't be for the one who would be left behind at the end. I often wonder if he had some premonition that he would be that one.



BLACKSMITH'S COTTAGE - 1995

This photograph was taken in March 1995. Many things are recognisable from the early 1900s photograph.

What was a thatched cottage further up on the right now has a green corrugated iron roof and is no longer a dwelling. The gable end of the old cob cottage can just be made out although it is largely obscured by shrubs and the telegraph pole. The gables in view further on belong to the new development on Knighton Hill. The front garden wall of Rose Villa has been moved back. Apart from different roofs, the old forge and the blacksmith's cottage are largely the same. The bay tree has been cut down although the lower part still remains as part of the hedge.

On the opposite side of the road is a row of modern houses occupying what was one of the blacksmith's kitchen garden and part of the garden of Four Corners. The retaining bank for these gardens came out to beyond the edge of the present pavement. The gate into the blacksmith's garden was directly opposite the front door of the cottage. Also opposite the cottage was the third street lamp from the top of Knighton Hill.

In the mid 1950s the thatch on the cottage had got into such a bad state that it had to be removed. It was replaced with corrugated asbestos, and at about the same time, electricity was put in. Thankfully the asbestos roof has now been removed from the cottage and replaced with simulated slates, this is a great improvement, but still a far cry from the thatch.



THE FORGE - 1930s

This picture was taken from a photocopy of an original photograph so regrettably has lost a certain amount of clarity.

The photograph was thought to have been taken in the 1930s and shows George and Jack Coleman with their carthorse, and behind them, unfortunately almost out of view, their two sisters Norah and Matilda. The forge has a new corrugated iron roof which puts the photograph into the 1930s. The electric post towards the left of the picture would indicate a date later than 1928. The road was wider at this point to allow for the parking of carts whilst horses were taken in to be re-shod. The chimney in the distance is that of "Escalonia Cottage"

The little shippen to the extreme left of the picture was demolished in the early 1970s as part of a road widening scheme. There used to be a great ritual which took place daily when the cow was brought into the shippen for milking. Sometimes the cow had to be fetched from the field at the top of Knighton Hill, or sometimes from the field behind the shippen which also belonged to the blacksmiths, or other times from the orchard behind the forge. It always involved one brother in front of the cow and another behind, and God help anybody who tried to get in between!

One day in the 1950s the brothers brought a cart load of mangolds down from the field at the top of Knighton Hill to be made in a mangold cave behind the smithy. By some fluke or other the cart managed to shed its load in the road by the shippen. The mound was about four feet high and completely blocked the road. The bus had just come down into the village and had to wait by the smithy, until the cart had been reloaded and taken into the yard. This was mid morning and apart from the bus, no other traffic was involved. Can you imagine the chaos and frayed tempers that would ensue if such a thing were to happen today (2005)?

The field behind the shippen was bought by Plympton Rural District Council in 1951 to build the six council houses "Uplands" which were 'Cornish Units' (and not the most beautiful of houses!). In 1998 these were demolished as having outlived their useful life, and were replaced by the complex of sixteen dwellings now named "Upland Gardens".



THE FORGE - 2005

This Photograph was taken on Monday 15 August 2005, from slightly further back than the one taken in the 1930s.

The Forge building looks very much as it always has done. The corrugated iron roof which has been in place for about 70 years is showing signs of its age. May and Escalonia Cottages can still be seen in the background, but the whole of the left hand side of the road has now changed with road widening and housing developments.



THE FORGE - 1920s

This picture was taken from a photocopy of an original photograph so regrettably has lost a certain amount of clarity.

The photograph was taken in the late 1920s and shows one of the Coleman brothers as quite a young man stood in the doorway of the blacksmith's shop. The roof is still of slate but has been rendered with a thin coat of concrete in order to prolong its life as was the custom. Apart from now having a corrugated iron roof, the building has changed little and is easily recognisable.

The thatch on the cottage has now given way to simulated slates, and the large central chimney has unfortunately been removed.



THE FORGE - 2009

This photograph was taken 14th March 2009 and shows the forge little changed from how it looked in the photograph of the 1920s.

The thatched roof of the cottage was replaced in the early 1950s with corrugated asbestos which has in turn been replaced with simulated slate, it has also lost it's central chimney.

The roof of the forge was changed from slate to corrugated iron in the 1930s, so at the time of this photograph had been in place for about 70 years.



THE BLACKSMITH'S GARDEN 1930s

This picture was taken from a photocopy of an original photograph so regrettably has lost a certain amount of clarity.

The photograph is thought to have been taken in the late 1930s. Electricity was laid on to the village in 1927/28, the presence of the electricity pole in the centre mid ground would indicate that the photograph dates after that time. That pole carried the third street light counting from the top of Knighton Hill! Ironically, notwithstanding the close proximity of the electricity supply, the blacksmith's cottage did not go on to mains electricity until the mid 1950s and was the last house in Knighton to do so. Even then the forge building was not connected.

The photograph shows the blacksmith's garden which was on a high bank opposite the cottage and the blacksmith's shop. This regrettable was all swept away in the 1970s to build the row of ghastly modern houses that now occupy the site. Jack Coleman is shown holding two bunches of flowers which he grew in great abundance. I never really did figure out why, as they never had cut flowers in the house, although they used to exhibit flowers in the annual garden show, and do quite well with them. The only person I know to have bought flowers off them was my mother. One of us would be sent off to the blacksmith's with a shilling to ask for "A shillings worth of flowers please". We would have to follow him round the garden as he cut the flowers and would end up going home with a bunch that we could hardly get our arms around. Part of the ritual was that having got the flowers we had to go to the door of the cottage to say hello to the two sisters Norah and Matilda, having done that that Jack would send us on our way with words "Take they 'ome to yer mother boy, and tell 'er to put 'em in a VAZE". My mother also bought vegetables from him. This followed the same ritual as the flowers, following him around the garden as he cut and picked the vegetables requested, and paying our respects to the two sisters as well! Of course the vegetables being so fresh were always in the most marvellous condition, the new potatoes especially had a flavour all of their own, one that I have never come across since.

The part of the garden in which Jack is standing was where the root crop vegetables were grown. The other part, on the other side of the hedge behind him, was given over to flowers and green vegetables. There was a huge apple tree and winding paths through the shrubs and different groups of flowers. I remember there being the most marvellous shows of Dahlias, Sweet Williams, Canterbury Bells, Hollyhocks, and many other of the old cottage garden flowers that one doesn't see a lot of now.



KISSING GATES AND FENCING



Churchyard Kissing Gate

This is one of several kissing gates made for the footpaths in the parish over 100 years ago. They were made of wrought iron, and made by the village Blacksmith, John Symons Coleman, in the forge at Knighton, probably assisted by his sons, John, George, Richard and Nicholas.

There were also kissing gates going out towards the Warren, and also at each end of the footpath down the side of Upland Gardens (site of the old council houses).

There were sections of fencing made as well which were mostly used on the big field behind Wembury House which was divided up into three paddocks, as shown (green) on the attached map. The fencing is shown in red, which as well as delineating the paddocks kept the footpaths permanently positioned. The fences remained in place up until the beginning of the 1970s, why they were ever taken away always remains a mystery to me. There were kissing gates on the footpath at each end of Paddock 3.

The fencing was made up in six foot sections and comprised of three uprights of $1\frac{1}{2}$ " x $\frac{3}{8}$ " flat wrought iron bar, and five horizontal rails of $\frac{3}{4}$ " diameter round wrought iron bar. The fencing, when erected, had an overall height of 3'6", the uprights being extended downwards into the ground to secure good footings. The bottom rail was set just above ground level, the next rail 9" above and the remainder at 11" intervals

The yellow area on the map is now the site of Monckswood, but up until the 1920s, was in fact the site of the old stables and exercise yard for Wembury House. The purpose of the gate at the back of Monckswood, which is still there, was for access to the paddocks from the exercise yard.



John Symons Coleman and Mary his wife outside the Forge Cottage at Knighton in 1912.

Only a small part of the fencing now remains, at the north end of Paddock 3, and the kissing gate from the south end of the paddock was moved to provide a termination at the south end of this section, as can be seen in the photograph below. The whole gate assembly has got very distorted and the gate hanging post on the right is only secured to the wall at the top end



The gate at the other end of this section is in much better condition, see below.



The fencing was made in sections of six feet and they were bolted together on site. The photograph below shows a complete section. On this length of fencing some of it is very shaky especially where the uprights have become rusted right through at ground level.



The fence used to continue onwards from this point (photograph below), right up to the granite steps that lead down onto the road on the other side of Monckswood.



THE FORGE - 1997

This photograph was taken in October 1997, shows the forge completely unchanged with the passing of the years. The corrugated iron roof, which is now showing signs of age, has been there as far back as anybody can remember, although it did replace a much earlier slated roof. Since the early 1950s the cottage has gone from thatch, to corrugated asbestos, to simulated slate, and has now lost its large central chimney, although I expect that the main part of it is still inside!

The road was much narrower back then and came almost in to where the central white line is now. Opposite the gate in the left foreground there was a small shippen/stable which belonged to the forge. They had one cow which used to be kept in the field on the left at the top of Knighton Hill. The cow used to be brought down the hill each day for milking, and taken back again afterwards, it was a very serious business with one of the Coleman brothers at the front and one at the rear, and nobody was allowed to get between either of them and the cow!

The Forge didn't so much close, as peter out, after the death of their father, John Symons Coleman, who inherited it from his father John Coleman, (who by all accounts had a great ginger beard!), it had been run by the three Coleman Brothers, George, Jack, and Nicholas (although Nicholas spent much of his time away) ably assisted by their two sisters, Norah and Matilda. There was another brother, Richard, but not a lot is known about him he was the youngest, and died in 1942 aged 57.

Dwindling business due to the phasing out of horses, and members of the family dying, finally left one brother (Jack) and one sister (Norah) when they decided to call it a day. Norah then died and Jack lived on for many years on his own in the cottage, finally dying in 1971 aged 98.

People who were children in the village in the 1940s and 1950s can remember what a great treat it was to be allowed to pump the bellows in the forge, and well remember the warning from George Coleman that if we ventured around to the other side of the forge where the other set of bellows were, we would fall down a bottomless pit, never to be seen again! We used to wonder what there was around there that he was so desperate for us not to see!



THE OLD SMITHY 2009

Early in 2009 The Old Smithy was sold after a very long time of standing empty and unloved. It was bought by Tony and Pamela Bowring from Rayleigh in Essex. Pamela grew up in Wembury, her parents, Cyril and Nancy Soppet lived in Brownshill Lane in "Sunningdale", now renamed "Redcroft

Her Father, Cyril, with his brother Clive, started the development of the field behind Bay Cottage, which they named "Mewbury Mount". At the same time Southland Park Road was being developed curving around behind Beach View Crescent. Eventually the two met up and joined together, and the whole became Southland Park Road.

The following series of photographs give some idea of the undertaking they have before them.



Front of the Cottage - 14th March 2009



Back of the Cottage – 25th February 2009



Front Entrance to the Cottage, inside and outside – 25th February 2009



Staircase and Landing – 25th February 2009



Left – Electric meters Right – West Bedroom 25th February 2009



Living Room, East – 25th February 2009



Back of the forge – 25th February 2009



Back door to the Forge - 30th November 2009



Left – The Forge - Right The Bellows, all still intact after more than 50 years – 25th February 2009



Window of the Forge – 25th February 2009



The Cottage – 30th November 2009



Left - Entrance to the Forge Right – Shuttered Window – 20th June 2009

THE OLD SMITHY – 2011

We fast forward now to July 2011 when the refurbishment work is nearing completion. The new owners have restored the cottage and the forge to a very high standard creating a comfortable modern home within the constraints of the Listed Buildings Controls. It is always nice to see lovely old buildings brought back to life after years of neglect.





KNIGHTON VILLAS -1995

The photograph below was taken in March 1995. Now numbered as 15, 17, 19 and 21 Knighton Road, These were the first semi-detached houses to be built in Knighton, and were built by Bill Joce in 1933. Heating was by open fire, as is evident by the number of chimneys. They were also the first houses in Wembury to be built with bathrooms, and although not on mains water, each house had a hand pump which was used to fill a header tank on the roof of the outside toilet (another first!), from an underground spring which fed the 'shoot' at Watergate. Each house comprised an entrance hall and staircase, a sitting room in the front, and at the back a Kitchen cum dining room, in which there was a black lead range for cooking. Next to the this room was a scullery which had a sink, a boiling copper for the washing, and the back door out to the side of the house, also off the scullery was a larder. Upstairs there were two large bedrooms each with a fireplace, a box room (over the front door), and a bathroom at the back. Around the back of each house there was a coal shed and the outdoor toilet. The houses were built on part of what was Watergate Orchard. Next to them, on the site now occupied by Knighton Stores, Bill Folland had opened up his garage and filling station in the late 1920s. This was a motley collection of huts and corrugated iron structures and a single petrol pump, which remained until the outbreak of war in 1939. The huts were removed but the pump stayed in place until the early 1950s, and was used by the children, as a climbing frame. One day some men with a lorry came and dismantled the pump and dug up the big holding tank underneath and took it all away, much to the fascination of the children, who were amazed at the size of the tank which emerged from the ground!

The houses numbered 1 to 4 from the right and in the early 1950s were occupied by:

No.4. Mrs Jessie Thornton, a widow, she had a son, Dennis who lived at home until he got married in the early 1950s and moved into "Shirley", a tiny wood and asbestos bungalow in Church Road. There was an elder son called Ronald who was married, There was also a daughter, Doris, who was married to Roy Harvey, and they lived with Jessie until they were able to move into one of the council houses. Doris and Roy had a little boy called Robert, who very sadly, died in infancy. They later went on to have another son, Michael. Jessie was a 'Milden', which was the predominant old village family back then. Many years earlier, Jessie's father, Daniel, was the Village Carrier, and lived in No.1 Watergate Cottages. Jessie was actually born in No.3 Watergate Cottages. In the late 1940s Jessie had her mother come to live with her so that she could care for her in old age, I remember seeing her in bed in the front room of the house where she remained for quite a long time before she died. Jessie remarried in the mid 1950s, a Mr Danny Goldstone, who had four sons, she outlived him and continued living in the house until she died in the early 1990s.



No.3 Mrs Harris who I did not know very well, I can't remember whether there was a Mr Harris but there was a son who was nicknamed 'Titch' and who was much older than us. They moved out in the early 1950s, and the Stansbys moved in. they had a son who we only knew as 'Buzz' he was much older than us, so was out of our league! There was another son who I think was called Roger who was our age and with whom we got on quite well. The Stansbys took my elder brother and myself and Roger to see 'The Three Musketeers' at the Royal Cinema in Plymouth, one Saturday afternoon. We came back to their house and had baked beans on toast for our tea, which was a rare treat in those days! They had their back garden laid to lawn, which was almost scandalous back then, as back gardens were for the growing of vegetables, most people grew their own, with much competition and rivalry. I remember seeing runner beans pinned to a board in the Jubilee Inn with a name alongside each in order to determine the grower of the longest one!

No.2 The Hendy family lived here, there was Mr and Mrs Hendy and they had two sons George and Peter who were a lot older than I. There was also a daughter, Joan, who had the most beautiful deep auburn hair, she later married Mervyn Pitts who lived in 'Desiree' at the bottom of Knighton Hill. They lived in 'Escalonia' for a while and later emigrated to Canada. For some reason I didn't like Peter Hendy and I remember, one day, throwing a stone at him, as he was getting on the school bus. It caught him on the cheek and he bled profusely. I think that he had to have stitches. I seem to remember that there were some high level parental meetings, and punishment meted out as a result!

No.1 Mr and Mrs Milden, they were a lovely old couple and were the grandparents of the Mildens who we went to school with. I don't really remember what happened to them, I think that they just faded away. I can remember their house being the last of the four to be connected to mains water, this must have been in about 1949. As children, we all went to watch the hole being dug in the road outside, and the trench being dug all the way in to the house to lay in the pipe. All done with picks and shovels!

Below are more photographs of the houses taken in 2009.



“GUNPOWDER, TREASON AND PLOT”

Starting in October each year there was always great deal of activity taking place in anticipation of ‘Firework Night’ which we all knew would come on November 5th.

We had been told at the village school of the significance of this this great annual celebration of how in 1605 Guy Fawkes and his group had plotted to blow up the Houses of Parliament along with King James I and his government, and that the plot had been foiled.

We had to draw our own pictures of how we imagined the event to have taken place, and I remember that most of us elected to draw the barrels of gunpowder piled up in the undercroft of the Houses of Parliament, ready to be ignited.

For the children of Knighton the Guy Fawkes bonfire was always sited on the empty plot where the Knighton Stores now stand. The procurement of the materials and the building of the fire was done solely by the children.

Come the first week of October we would start collecting combustible materials with which we would build the bonfire. For the core we would get two or three old tyres, usually from Noah Goad who lived in ‘Shirley’ which was a little asbestos and corrugated iron shack in the field behind Cross Park Road. Noah was what one would call a ‘rough diamond’ there was always always parts of cars and lorries in the field and plenty of old tyres, and he was always pleased to let us have a couple of them. These we would roll from Noah’s place up to the bonfire site. Trying not to let them crash into the shop window in the square as they hurtled down the hill! Brushwood was quite plentiful as this was in the days when between the harvest and the ploughing, the farmers would be cutting back hedges, especially those that gave onto public roads. More substantial wooden items were usually donated in the form of redundant items of furniture, I hate to think of what we burned back then that would probably be worth decent money today! There were usually other pieces of miscellaneous timber, picked up in the highways and byways, also bits of old garden sheds, broken doors and the odd window frame. It was not unusual to include pieces of roofing felt and linoleum (I don’t think that the burning of rubber tyres and roofing felt in the middle of the village would go down too well these days!). Newspaper was collected and stored in the air raid shelter at West Wembury Farm to keep it dry. I don’t know whether Mr Smallridge knew that we used it! In the week working up to the 5th November the proper construction of the bonfire took place. It usually finished up so high that the bigger boys would be standing on top of it having materials thrown up to them to pack into place. On the day before the fire was to be lit we would bring the paper up from the air raid shelter and work it in all around the base of the fire, keeping some back in case it rained on the day, so that we would have enough dry paper to re-prime the fire if necessary. Some of the adults brought cans of paraffin with them on the night to assist with the ignition should the fire have got wet. Sometimes one of the adults would make a proper Guy which would be hoisted up to the top of the fire.

On the night the fire would be lit at about 6.30pm and when going nicely everybody would start letting off their fireworks taking turns so that the display would last! At about 8.00pm, when all of the fireworks had been lit, most of the adults used to wander off to the Jubilee Inn, and that would be them for the rest of the evening. The older boys, and some of the girls as well, would go off with pockets full of squibs and bangers to terrorise those who had been selected for ‘special treatment’. It is something that I am not particularly proud of, but we all did it, and our parents knew that we did it, and it would be wrong to omit it from this account. It was the same ones each year, and they were selected normally because they were particularly nasty to us children, or as in one particular case, used to retaliate with buckets of water and spuds, and usually ended up by chasing us down Knighton Hill, which we all thought was great fun.

The younger children would stay at the bonfire site with the remaining adults to watch the fire burn right down and then go off to their homes. Very often on the following day we would revive the fire and bake potatoes in the hot embers.

The whole event was great fun. Nothing was actually organised, it just happened, I cannot recall there ever being any accidents. There were no Government guidelines that had to be followed, just good old common sense prevailed, a commodity that nobody seems to be credited with having these days.

KNIGHTON STORES -1995

The photograph below was taken in July 1995

The adjacent houses, which were known as Knighton Villas were built by Bill Joce in 1933 on part of what was Watergate Orchard. At the time the end plot, which now contains Knighton Stores, was occupied by Bill Folland's garage and petrol pump. The garage comprised of a wooden hut and a couple of other corrugated iron structures, a bit of a motley collection! Mr Folland owned the rest of the field, and also the old Carrier's building at Watergate (the stable with the loft over). The provision of a petrol pump proved to be a great hit with the few motorists and motor bike enthusiasts in the village at that time. At the outbreak of war, the garage closed, and the buildings were removed. The pump though, decommissioned, remained like a sentry, in the centre of the site, and was used as a climbing frame by the children of the village. In the early 1950s somebody came along with a lorry and removed it, and dug up the huge tank that was buried beneath,

The site was used for many years for the Knighton Guy Fawkes Bonfire,

The old field hedge still came right out to the edge of the road and there was a gap at each end of the plot. The site extended right around the back the back of the houses taking in the area now occupied by the modern bungalow 'Watergate Orchard'. The area was used quite extensively as an unofficial rubbish dump and was mostly covered in brambles.

In the late 1960s Mr Folland sold the ground to Mr Horne who built the two shops which he leased out, one as a Butchers, and the other a General Store. Over the years with the change of fortunes etc., they have both now been combined as one General Store. In the late 1970s the bungalow was built on the lower part of the plot and sold off.

The split level bungalows on the left of the photograph were built in the late 1960s on the small field in front of Watergate Cottages.



KNIGHTON STORES 2009

This series of photographs were taken in September 2009. The Londis store run by Ray and his team is a much needed and appreciated facility in the village.





THE COUNCIL HOUSES

The six Council Houses, 'Cornish Units' which were latterly known as 14 to 24 Knighton Road, were built on the Blacksmith's field in 1951, and were amongst the first houses to be built in the village after the war. They were never the most beautiful of houses, with their depressing grey finish they never did seem to fit into the landscape all that well. They were though, a Godsend to the people who moved into them in 1951, with their bathrooms, outside toilets, and all mod cons' (including the 'new' 13 amp square pin plug sockets!).

They were called 'Uplands' and were numbered 1 to 6 from the right. and in the 1950s were occupied by;

No.1. Mr and Mrs Harold Hobbs, They lived over at Down Thomas. She was a war widow whose first husband Arthur Spreat is remembered on the war memorial tablet in the church, and she had a son called David. from that marriage. She married Harold whose wife had left him during the war, and he had a daughter called Kate from that marriage. Later on in the 1950s they went on to have a little girl called Verina. It seems strange now, and rather inhuman, but back then she was refused membership of the Mother's Union because her husband was a divorcee, even though he was the innocent party. Harold owned a terraced house in Elburton, next to the Methodist Church, which had been left to him, but which he could not move into until the sitting tenants moved out. This happened towards the end of the 1950s and then the Jewell Family moved into No.1. They had until then lived in a wooden chalet type dwelling called 'Beauna Vista' at Hollacombe Brake. There was Mr Jewell (Ernie) and Mrs Jewell (she was, called Dorothy but was known as Dolly) and four children Margaret, Leonard, Stephen and Leslie. After the children flew the nest Ernie and Dolly remained. After Ernie died in 1983 Dolly remained there until her own death in 1991.

No.2 I can't remember the name of the people who first moved into No.2. I think that she was a widow with a grown up son, anyway they were not there for very long, and then Raymond and Blanche Brown moved in from Watergate Cottages with their children Christine, Neil and Robin, they had another child, Philip whilst living in No.2 and later in the decade Raymond had a house ('Jenyspark') built on his field at the top of Knighton Hill. Doris and Roy Harvey then moved in from No.1 Knighton Villas, where they had been living with Doris' mother, they had by this time a son called Michael, sadly their first child ,Robert, died in infancy. Doris stayed on to the bitter end in widowhood, and moved into one of the new bungalows which were built as part of the project to replace the houses in 1997



No.3 Mr and Mrs Spencer (Herby and Ruby) They moved in from a wooden chalet 'Homleigh', which was off Church Road accessible only by a footpath across a field (Hawthorn Park Road now passes the front door!). They had three children, Peter, Jenny and Clemmy, later on whilst at No.3 they went on to have Frances and Sally. The marriage later broke up and Herby continued to live there with one or other of the younger daughters, and for while his friend Johnny Gallagher, 'a Devonport Boy' stayed there to keep him company. Herby stayed on until he died in the early 1990s, when the house was sold back to the council who were wanting to replace them.

No.4 Mr and Mrs Haimes (Pat and Joe). Pat was actually short for 'Patience', Joe was a Chief Petty Officer in the Royal Navy (Submarine Service). They had two children, David, (who we all called Joe) who was my age, and Peter, a few years younger. They moved into No.4 from 'Aberdulais' (the left hand one of the two), where there was only one bedroom, no bathroom and an outside toilet, water had to be drawn from a tap in the other cottage, and cooking was all done on the black lead range in the living room. They lived in No.4 until they bought 'Greenbank' at the top of Church Road by Brownhill Lane, so that Granny and Grandad Bubear could, move in with them, in the annexe on the side (which, at one time, was the cobbler's shop). Mr and Mrs Morris (Bill and Doreen) moved in from No.6 Knighton Hill, and it was at this time that No's 5 and 6 Knighton Hill were made into one dwelling (now No.61 Knighton Road). Bill and Doreen had two children Keith and Lesley. Once again as the family grew and moved away Doreen eventually lived there on her own in widowhood. She herself died very suddenly in the early 1990s, and the house then remained empty until it was eventually demolished.

No.5 Mr and Mrs Carn (Stan and Dolly). They had three children, Victor, Ivor and Colin, and had been living in a chalet called 'Gorselands' in Roper's Field at the bottom of Church Road. These chalets were without electricity, mains water, or proper sanitation. At No.5 they thought that they were in heaven! they went on to have four more children, all boys, Andrew, Trevor and twins Glynn and Gary. Gradually they all flew the nest and Stan eventually died in 1993 leaving Dolly on her own in widowhood, she like Doris in No.2, hung on to the bitter end and moved into one of the new bungalows which were built in 1997. Sadly she didn't have too long to enjoy her new found luxury, as she died in February 1999.

No.6 Mr and Mrs Milden (Ted and Frances), they had three children, Edward, Jeanette, and Maureen. They moved down from Hollacombe where they had been living in inadequate rented accommodation. At No.6 they went on to have two more children, Martin and Timothy. Eventually the children all grew up and moved away. Ted and Frances had the house to themselves, and Frances died quite unexpectedly in the early 1980s. It is said that Ted would not allow anything of hers to be removed, and he lived on there until his own death in the early 1990s

The old houses have now gone, and those that lived in them are mostly scattered. In the forty years that they were there, many children were born in them, and many grew up in them, there were sad times, but a lot of happy times, and in spite of their lack of beauty, many people will think of them with great fondness.

THE HOUSING TRUST - 1997

These photographs were taken in July and October 1997

The six Council Houses, 'Cornish Units' had been bought up by the Housing trust by the mid 1990s. It was decided that due to their bad insulation properties, concrete cancer, and enormous front and back gardens, it would be much more worthwhile to demolish them and built three times as many new dwellings on the site! The project started by lowering and levelling the area in front of the old houses and building the new bungalows, which would rehouse the remaining tenants, Mrs Doris Harvey from No.2, and Mrs Dolly Carn from No.5. The top photograph shows the old houses in isolation perched up on a bank whilst the footings for the new bungalows are laid on the newly excavated lower level. The lower photograph shows work well on the way to completion on the bungalows, which the two ladies were able to move into before Christmas of 1997.



THE COUNCIL HOUSES 1998

The photographs below, taken from the footpath looking across the backs of the old council houses, shows them being demolished in January 1998,



THE HOUSING TRUST - 1998

The photograph was taken in July 1998 from the footpath in just about the same position as the earlier photographs of the demolition of the old houses. The new layout is of a 'crescent' or 'close' formation and it is nice to see that the old name of 'Uplands' has been brought back into use.



UPLAND GARDENS

This photograph taken in 2009 shows the completed housing scheme “Upland Gardens”, a complex of sixteen houses and bungalows built to replace the six old Cornish Unit council houses.

The old houses, built in 1951, were not the most beautiful of buildings, and their passing was not really mourned.

The new complex with the different levels and roof shapes fit more pleasingly into the village environment.



WATERGATE AND KNIGHTON IN THE SNOW 1961

This photograph was taken in the winter of 1961/62. My two sisters Angela and Nichola are on their way to Spirewell Farm, with a snow covered Watergate and Knighton behind them.

As it can be seen there had been hardly any development in this part of the village at that time.

The Old Village Hall although now put to a different use, still looks very much as it always had done.

Escalonia Cottage and May Cottage are there to the left of the old village hall.

The Cornish Unit council houses built in 1951 are there but there has been no development in the Old Smithy vegetable garden to the left of them.

The two pairs of semi detached houses, Knighton Villas, are there but no shops on the end site. The roof of the old smithy can just be made out to the left.

There are no bungalows in front of Watergate Cottages.

Watergate Cottages with the Village Carrier's stable and loft to the left, are there.

Aberdulais, facing on to Train Road is there, which at that time, was two cottages.

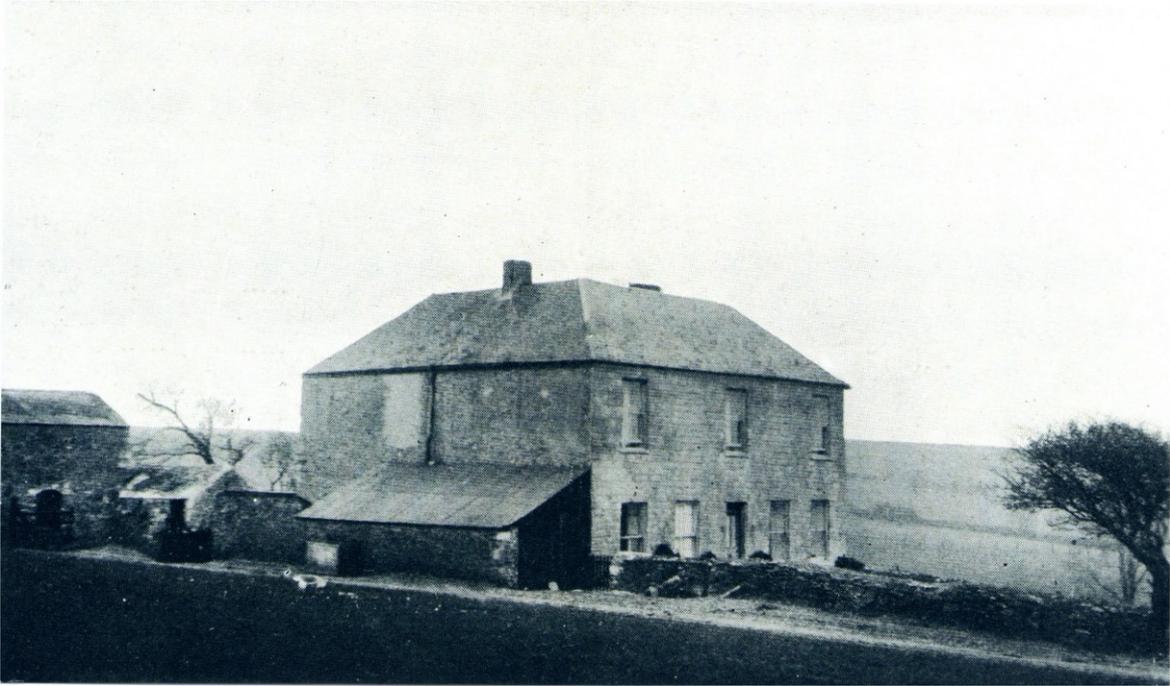


TRAINE FARM THEN AND NOW

Just over 80 years separates the two photographs below. The upper one was taken in 1927 for the catalogue for the sale of the Langdon Estate which took place after the death of Richard Cory in 1926. His only son and heir, George Wallis Cory who was a Captain in the Royal Artillery, tragically died in 1907, aged 23, he was unmarried. Therefore on Richard Cory's death, the Cory dynasty in Wembury came to an end.

The tenant of Traine at the time was Martin Bridgeman.

The lower photograph was taken in 2008.



HARVEST AT TRAINER – 1942

This photograph taken in 1942 during the loading of a hay wagon. The group includes Ken Wood, Bob Penwill, Ralph Avent, Doris Congdon, Sam and Bill Gibson, John Moses, Charlie Brook and Bert Wood. The horse 'Lion' belongs to Fred Rowland, Farmer at Traine, who is directing the work. The hay would later be hand pitched to form a rick for feeding the cattle through the winter.



HARVEST AT TRAIINE – C1944

The workers taking a well earned break during the Harvest at Traine Farm in about 1944. The rick has been built using a hay grabber which is in the centre of the picture. The hay would have been brought to the site by a tractor fitted with a hay sweep. As children we used to love jumping in the pile of hay on the sweep and being carried along with it, a practice that would undoubtedly be very much frowned upon in these days of safety awareness!

Recognisable in the picture are, Charlie Brooks, Bob Penwill, Ralph Avent, Arch Treleven, Sam Gibson (a Plymouth butcher) and Fred Rowland (over on the left) holding his young daughter Susan. Marjorie Rowland is on the right of the picture serving the food, which usually consisted of sandwiches and home made cakes. The tea was usually served from a huge black metal teapot, which had been brought to the field in a hay box to keep it hot. Every farm seemed to have one! The tea was already made up with milk and sugar added. China cups were used, cardboard or plastic cups were a long way off in the future!



TRAINE FARM – 1956

The year is believed to be 1956, the month is August, Fred Rowland (on the right) and Bob Penwill (left) are about to set out to collect the sacks of barley left in the field by the combine harvester. There is no shortage of helpers. Identified in the photograph are Susan, Jackie and Robert Rowland, Angela and Roger Grant, Adrian Pate and Keith Fretsome.

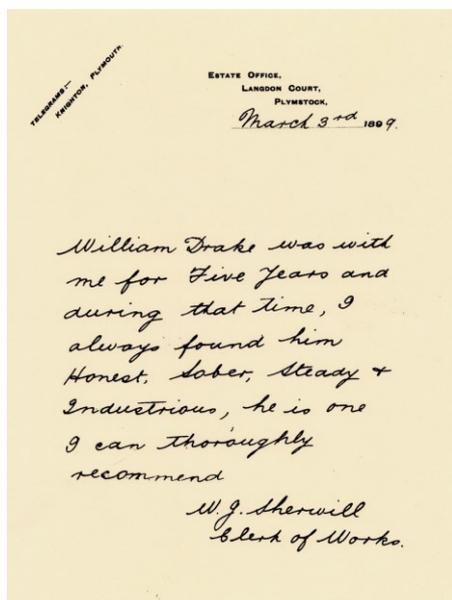


MAY COTTAGE

The Photograph below was taken in the late 1980s.

May Cottage is the left hand one of the pair of cottages. They were, at one time, one dwelling. Their internal layout certainly bears this out, especially as the split between the two is not vertical. Up until the early 1950s the two cottages were unrendered, the concrete rendering being applied, I am led to believe, as a dampproofing measure.

The cottage is now numbered, 12 Knighton Road. Since the early part of the 20th century it had been occupied by the Drakes. By the 1950s there was only Mr William Drake and his daughter Eileen living there. Eileen was a schoolteacher at Sparkwell School and looked after her father in his retirement until he died in 1955, her mother had died some 11 years before in 1944, it was on her mother's side that she was related to the Mildens. Her cousin Robert Thornton married Jessie Milden in the 1920s which then provided a link on her father's side with the Mildens, but that's the way it was in those days.



Her father had been coachman to the Corys at Langdon Court in the latter part of the 19th Century, and after his death she continued to live on the in the cottage on her own. Eileen retired from teaching in the early 1960s. Born in 1906, she lived in May Cottage all of her life, except for a short period before she died in 1994, when she had to be taken in to care.

After she died the cottage was bought by a cousin, Michael Harvey, who is a grandson of Robert Thornton.

The photograph below was taken in July 1995.



May Cottage in 2004



May Cottage in 2009



MAY & ESCALONIA 1920s

This photograph of May & Escalonia is from a small photograph which was amongst the effects of Rosemary Bannaford who died in 1996.

Rosemary was born in Escalonia (the right hand one of the pair) in 1911, and spent her childhood years there, she always had a great fondness for the old house and had written on the back of the photograph:-

“The dear old house, there’s gladness in remembrance of some bright and happy days”.

Originally one house, it was split into two sometime in the late nineteenth century. The split is not vertical, as one looks at the house the two upstairs windows on the right are in Escalonia, and the one on the left in May Cottage. Downstairs however, the two windows on the left are in May Cottage and the one on the right in Escalonia. Still easily recognisable from the photograph, which is thought to have been taken in the early years of the twentieth century, certain alterations have taken place. In the late 1940s the pair were rendered in smooth concrete, presumably as a damp proofing measure. An additional window upstairs and a soil pipe, on the Escalonia side, indicates the subsequent addition of a bathroom! In May Cottage two additional windows have been cut into the side wall, and of course, all of the windows have been replaced with the ubiquitous UPVC!

It is nice to see that the old chimney on the end gable is still the same, the extra thick base of which indicates that the cottage was at one time thatched.



VIEW ACROSS KNIGHTON FROM ESCALONIA - C1930

This photograph is thought to date from the about 1930. It was taken in the front garden of Escalonia, and all we know about the gentleman in the photograph is that he was called 'Jim'.

Going up on the right of the picture is, very clearly, Knighton Hill and the farm buildings of Knighton Farm are clearly visible in the mid ground. These now have been replaced with the 'Cory Court' development of the 1990s. The group of buildings directly to the right of 'Jim', a bit of a hotch-potch are on the plot now occupied by the Knighton Stores and was Mr Follands 'Garage and Filling Station'.

The garage folded at the outbreak of the Second World War and the buildings were removed but the petrol pump remained in place up until the late 1940s, where it served as a climbing frame for the children of the village in the absence of proper facilities! Eventually it too was removed and a massive hole was dug to locate and remove the petrol storage tank.

Since the time of the photograph the front garden of Escalonia has largely been removed, firstly to provide a garage at the much lower road level, and later when the garage fell into disrepair and was demolished, just a parking space. Rather a pity as it was a lovely garden. Yet another sacrifice that has had to be made to the Motor Car God.



ESCALONIA COTTAGE

The Photograph below was taken in January 2004

Escalonia Cottage is the Right hand one of the pair of cottages. Rosemary Bannaford (nee Walters) spent her childhood years in this cottage.

Escalonia, is now numbered, 10 Knighton Road. In the early 1950s it was occupied by Mrs Kate Somerville, a widow, and her daughter Patsy. There was also a son, Oliver Somerville, who owned an Ironmongers shop at the end of Peverell Park Road in Plymouth. Kate was Irish, from the Republic, and was sister to Mrs Mary Ridgewell who lived in Tap Cottage at the bottom of Knighton Hill. She was a lovely lady, and I remember that one year she made us a wonderfully realistic 'Guy' for the Guy Fawkes bonfire. She became ill and died in May 1951, I seem to remember that there was a lot of RAF activity over the village at that time.

After her mother's death, Patsy became engaged to Dennis Horwell who lived in the Jubilee Inn. His mother, Annie, a widow, assisted her sister Miss Lottie Perring in the running of the pub. Quite a lot of concern was expressed over the fact that she was a Roman Catholic of the Irish tradition, and he was Church of England. People back then were not quite as enlightened as we are today in these things, and also religion and churchgoing figured much larger in people's lives. The wedding took place in 1952 and very soon they had a son who they named Stephen, and shortly afterwards, another little boy called Jonathan who was a spina bifida case, and who died in infancy. After his death, sadly the marriage broke up, and Patsy moved away. Dennis and Stephen went to live with Dennis's sister Ivy in Plymstock. Mervyn Pitts from 'Desiree' had just married Joan Hendy from No,3 Knighton Villas and they moved into Escalonia, they eventually emigrated to Canada, after which the cottage was sold and has had a few different owners since. In later years the very nice walled front garden was sacrificed to the motor car god, which was a great pity.

Just to the right of Escalonia, can still be made out, behind the undergrowth, the old concrete steps which were the only access to the Old Village Hall



THE OLIVE BRANCH CHAPEL

The Olive branch Chapel occupies two thirds of the footprint of the old village Hall. When the new Village Hall opened in 1956, the old hall was sold to the Elim Church who had for many years used it for their Sunday Services. At first it was only accessible via steep flight of steps at the other end (west) of the building by the gate to “Escalonia” which had served as the only access to the village hall in its 30 years of existence. In about 1960 the chapel authorities decided to make a new ramped entrance at the east end of the site, but in order to accommodate it the old hall would have to shortenend by about one third. This was not considered to be a problem as the building was larger than they required anyway. Over the years the building gradually evolved from being a wooden hut clad in roofing felt, with a corrugated iron roof, to the building that occupies the site today, and is now known as the Olive Branch Chapel.



Photograph - August 2009

SHOOT HILL

The photograph was taken in January 2004. Shoot Hill is the little hill which runs from Knighton Road, just to the left of Knighton Stores, down to Watergate Cottages.

The 'shoot' used to be at the bottom of the hill on the right, just about where the lamp post is now positioned. It was a concrete holding tank for collecting the waters that flowed underground from the higher fields and surfaced there. Out of the front of the tank was an iron pipe through which the water flowed, there was no tap. From the pipe, the water ran into a square brick trough at ground level. The trough, when cleared out, was deep enough to be able to accommodate a bucket under the pipe for filling. There was also another underground stream that fed into the trough from another direction. From the trough the water ran out through an overshoot and formed into a stream which ran along in front of the old carrier's stable and down the side of Watergate Cottages. It went underground again behind the cottages, finally emerging at the far end of the Jubilee Orchard.

The water ran constantly and was never known to run dry. It was always crystal clear, and freezing cold. For many years it was the main water supply for the occupants of Watergate, Aberdulais, May and Escalonia Cottages. It was also used quite a lot for events in the Village Hall, as there was no mains water supply laid on. It was a great attraction for children, we spent many hours playing there with model boats, some times building dams and harbours. Other times having water fights and getting soaking wet in the process.

The building at the bottom of the hill was many years ago the Village Carrier's stable and store. The building has been extended outwards quite a bit. Originally there was a set of double wooden doors flanked on each side by a stone pillar and a single door, Above, in the centre, was a door giving access to the loft which had a pulley arrangement over for hoisting or lowering goods. The Carrier lived in No.1 Watergate Cottages. As his title suggests he was able carry bulky goods between Wembury and Plymouth, Plympton or Yealmpton.

There was a set time table which usually appeared in the local papers and periodicals such as Doidge's Westcountry Annual. Of course he was sometimes able to carry passengers, if room on the wagon permitted it. The passengers were carried on the proviso that they would get off and walk up the hills, so a trip from Wembury to Plymouth and back would still entail quite a bit of walking.

Some people in the village used to walk up to Hollacombe Brake, then down to Cofflete Creek, cross over and catch the train into Plymouth from Steer Point.

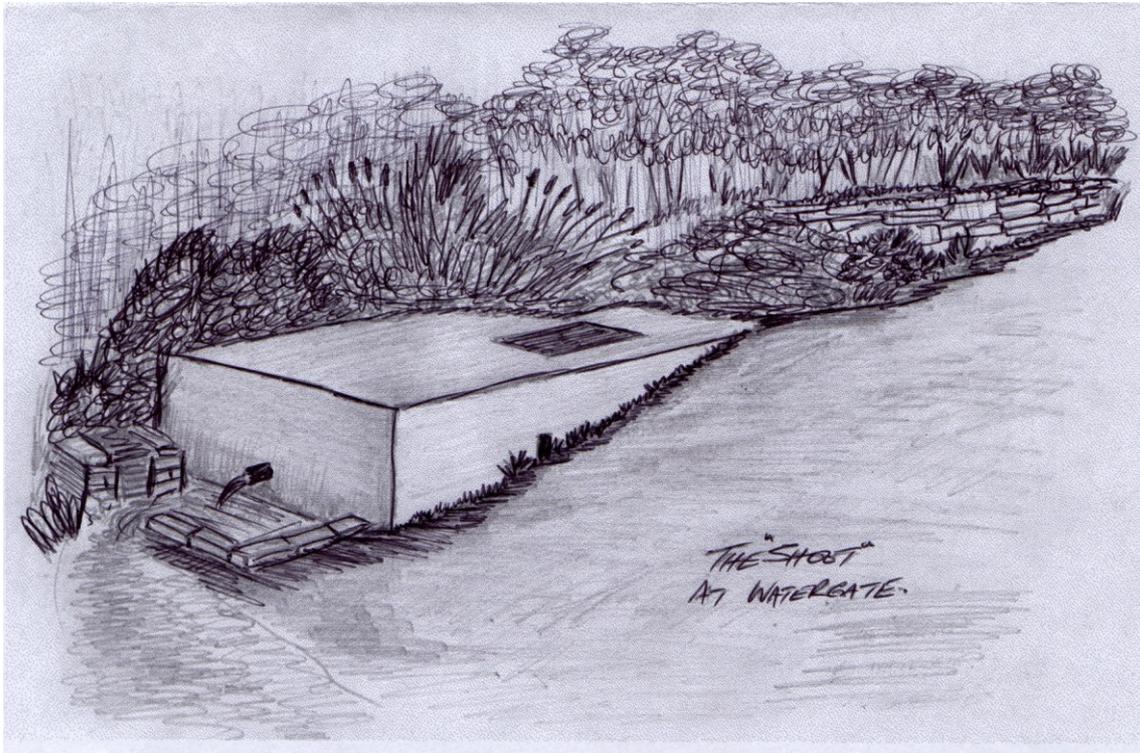


As he was in and out of the town every week, whereas most people in the village were lucky to make such a trip twice a year, the Carrier was able to bring home dry goods to sell, such as tobacco and cigarettes, tea, coffee, and sugar etc., and so quite unofficially, ran a little shop from the cottage.

The Carrier at the beginning of the 20th Century was Daniel Milden, whose grand daughter Doris Harvey still lives in the village (2005).

I have not been able to track down any photographs of the 'shoot' so have had to resort a sketch that I made some time ago. I don't think that too much artist licence has been employed, at least somebody was able to recognise it without prompting! Shoot Hill goes up off to the right of the picture, and Watergate Lane off to the bottom right.

The shoot was removed when the mains drainage was put through the village, so all of that lovely water just runs to waste through the sewage system. It seems rather a shame, another link with the past just swept away.



WATERGATE COTTAGES - EARLY 1900s

The cottages were built in the mid to late 19th century for Mr Ralph Dawson of Wembury House, to house estate workers. They were built on what was a part of Watergate Orchard which was owned by the Blacksmith, and who was "persuaded" to part with the plot of ground under a veiled threat of all the estate's blacksmithing work being taken elsewhere! The cottages number 1 to 6, No.6 being in the foreground of the photograph. When the cottages were first built they were known as "Dawson's Buildings", Watergate Cottages were actually what we now know as "Aberdulais" which were two cottages fronting on to Train Road.

By the 1940s the cottages were all privately owned, and in the 1950s porches were gradually added to the fronts, which then progressed to different windows being fitted, and different kinds of rendering applied, so that they have now very much lost their uniform appearance.

The nearest cottage, (No.6) was run for many years as the Knighton Post Office, by Miss Minnie Perring daughter of Alfred Perring, Licensee of the Jubilee Inn. Alfred was the Postmaster when the Post Office was in Rose Villa next to the Blacksmith's Cottage (Trade Directory 1889). In 1899 James Drake is recorded as the Postmaster by which time Alfred had become licensee of the Jubilee Inn. It was at the time when his daughter Minnie became the postmistress that the Post Office moved to No.6 Watergate Cottages. Minnie later married becoming Mrs Brown (she is still listed as Miss Perring in the 1914 Trade Directory). In 1926 the business transferred to "The Square" (an unofficial name) where Mrs McMenemy had bought the farm buildings and had them converted into a shop with living accommodation, and where the Post Office has remained ever since.

People always wondered how Mrs Brown managed to run the Post Office from the cottage, which was only two up and two down, with an outside lavatory, and bring up two children as well. The Post Office was run from the living room, although this also contained the black lead range for cooking. The back room contained the kitchen and walk in larder. The kitchen had to double up as a dining room as well. The front bedroom upstairs with the fireplace was made into a parlour, and Mr and Mrs Brown slept in the back bedroom. The children, Raymond and Betty (whose actual name was Vera), slept in a wooden hut in the corner of the field in front of the cottages which was also owned by the Browns. This was accessed by a small flight of steps, which are still there, opposite the gate to the cottage. The hut was painted maroon and I can still remember it being there in the 1950s, but by then was being used as a chicken house.



At one time No.1 was run as shop by the Carrier, Mr Daniel Milden and also by Mr and Mrs Walke. It sold dry goods and tobacco which the carrier would bring back from his weekly visits to Plymouth.

There was a cobbler operating out of No.3 in the 1880/90s

Mr Fred Toms who lived in Aberdulais in the late 1950s told me that he used to have to run errands to both of these shops as a child in the 1880s

The photograph below was taken in March 1995, and shows that the cottages are still very easily recognisable from the early 1900s photograph. In spite of losing their original windows and gaining front porches, and different renderings, they look a lot better cared for.



WATERGATE AND ABERDULAIS -1978

These photographs were taken by Christopher Drew in 1978. The top one of Watergate Cottages, and the bottom one taken looking down Jubilee Hill towards the Cottages and also Aberdulais, which had recently been saved from demolition and sympathetically refurbished.



WATERGATE COTTAGES & ABERDULAIS

Watergate Cottages can clearly be seen from the top road as can “Aberdulais” which faces onto Train Road. Watergate Cottages were originally built in the 1860s for Mr Ralph Dawson of Wembury House for his estate workers. By the time of the photograph (1920s) most had individual private owners, and No.6 (on the extreme left of the row) was the Knighton Post Office.



“Aberdulais” was named as such in the early 1930s, in 1885 Thomas William Drake married a young lady called Elizabeth Jones who was from the place in Wales of the same name. He was a butler and his work had taken him to a large house in Wales. There he met Elizabeth who was also in domestic Service. She was more than 20 years younger than him. They got married and their first child (Elizabeth) was born in Wales (in 1886). Eventually he moved back to Wembury. Bringing his young family with him, by this time there was a second child (Edith). They rented West Wembury Cottage from the Pursleys who were farmers at West Wembury Farm. There they went on to have six more children. In the 1930s the Pursleys sold the farm and the family had to leave West Wembury Cottage. By this time Elizabeth was a widow, Thomas having died in 1922.



They bought the two cottages at Watergate fronting on to Train Road. Originally a single farmhouse they were divided into two cottages in the 1800s, and were referred in the 1841 census as ‘Cottages at Watergate’. They had them made back into a single dwelling which they renamed “Aberdulais”, and lived there until the 1970s by which Elizabeth the eldest daughter, who never married, lived there alone. By this time they had been converted back into two cottages and one was let to provide some income for Elizabeth. In the 1970s Elizabeth moved in with her youngest sister, Muriel (Wood) in Colliers Close and Aberdulais was sold. The plan was to demolish them and build 4 houses on the site. Fortunately permission was not forthcoming, due to some timely intervention by a local conservation society, for this to happen, so they were made back into one dwelling once again and refurbished to a high quality and sold. A subsequent owner has added a large extension to the rear completely sympathetic to the rest of the building.

Left - Elizabeth Drake (Neé Jones) 1867 – 1943

ABERDULAIS

The Photograph below was taken in July 2004

Back in the 1950s Aberdulais was two cottages, the right hand one with the front door as shown. To the right of the front door there was just a single storey lean to extension with another door where the downstairs window now is. This door led into a kitchen where there was the water tap that served both cottages! Upstairs at the front there were only two windows, which were not dormers, but came up to just below the guttering, which meant that on the inside of the cottages, the bottoms of the windows were at floor level. The front door for the left-hand cottage was to extreme left where there is now a window, partially obscured in the photograph by the hanging geranium. There were no windows in the backs of the cottages.

The left-hand cottage was just one living room with a staircase on the back wall going up to the one bedroom. All the cooking was done on a black lead range in the living room. There was quite a large walk in storage space under the stairs. There was also evidence of an open fire of some sort in the north wall, the remains of the old chimney can clearly be seen on the outside. On the inside, it was a large cupboard, but in the refurbishment of the 1970s has been opened up as a feature. The lavatory was in the back garden just about where the garage now stands, and was of the chemical variety!

Mr and Mrs Haimes (Pat and Joe) lived in this cottage, with their son David. In the late 1940s Peter had also been born so it was a certain amount of relief when their application to move into one of the new Council Houses in 1951 was granted. David was my best friend, and it was always fun to go around to their cottage, his mother Pat used cook the most marvellous things on that old range, I especially remember the 'marble cake' that she did one year for David's birthday.



After they moved out, David's Auntie Eva (Mrs Baxter), a widow, moved in. After she had been there a few years she met up with an old childhood friend, Fred Toms, and they got married. Regrettably, the married bliss didn't last for long, they found that they weren't really made for each other and she moved out, literally without any warning whatsoever, taking all the furniture with her. and leaving poor old Fred without even a

bed to sleep in! Anyway it was all sorted out eventually, and Fred lived there on his own up until he was too old to look after himself, when he moved into Plymouth to live with his daughter, Vera.

Fred lived in Knighton as a boy in the 1880s, he remembered the Cobbler working out of No.3, Watergate Cottages and the Carrier, Daniel Milden, who lived in No.1 and who ran a small general shop from the cottage, as he was able to bring things out from Plymouth. It was mostly dry grocery items that he sold, but very importantly he did stock clay pipes, tobacco and cigarettes. I would imagine that this was before it was necessary to have a licence to sell such goods.

The right-hand cottage was occupied by Miss Elizabeth Drake (Lizzy), she was a cousin to Eileen Drake who lived in May Cottage, although quite a few years older. She had been there for many years and continued there until she was too old to live alone, (Early 1970s) when she moved down to Colliers Close to live with a sister, Mrs Muriel Wood. It was Lizzy's father, Thomas Drake in the early 1920s, who named the cottages Aberdulais, in honour of his young wife, Elizabeth who he brought back to the village from Aberdulais in Wales, and the name has remained ever since.

Lizzy's cottage was quite a bit more grander than the other one, for a start it had an entrance hall and staircase, it had a separate quite spacious kitchen (in the lean to), with running water, which was a great advantage, even though somebody else also had access to it! There was a living room with a proper fireplace, and upstairs two bedrooms. Like the other cottage, it had an outside lavatory.

In the 1841 census they were referred to as 'cottages at Watergate' the terrace of six cottages had not at that time been built. so in fact they were the only cottages at Watergate. I was told as a child that at one time many years previously when they were originally one house that it was a farm house (albeit a small one). Further up Train Road, on the same side, there is a blocked up gateway the other side of which, now hardly perceptible, are what could easily be the foundations of some old buildings. Would this have been the 'Yard and Buildings' off Train road, Plan No.465, and in the occupation of John Willson, referred to in the 1840 Wembury Tithe Apportionment? If so could what is now Aberdulais could have been the farmhouse for which was a total holding of some 59 Acres.

It has the makings of an original Devon Longhouse in that there would have been no central chimney and fireplaces, but the one big open space. The only fire would have been at the north end of the building where the blocked up chimney is, and where the people would have lived. Livestock would have lived at the other end, with maybe lofts going up into the roof space for fodder etc. The central chimney and dividing floor would have come at a much later date. The position of the dividing floor would have been determined by the headroom needed on the lower floor, hence the upstairs window sills were put at floor level to save breaking into the roof.

In the mid 1970s Both cottages had become vacant and the owner had hoped to have them demolished and have about three pairs of modern semi detached houses put up on the site. Fortunately the application was refused after much action by a local conservation society, I do believe that it was a quoin on the north east corner of the house depicting a ship which helped to save the day. They were instead, very sympathetically, converted back into a single dwelling.

Watergate - Was this in fact a ford, before the roads were metalled? I rather think that it could well have been, the word 'gate' merely indicating that it was the 'way in' to the village as the road at the top of Knighton Hill to Hollacombe was not put through until the late 18th or early 19th century. Evidently there was at one time a sluice gate to control the waters from the pond which was at once at Traine Farm. Although this was nothing to do with the waters which were brought together in the "shoot" at the east end of Watergate Cottages and formed the water supply for the vicinity.

WATERGATE AND ABERDULAIS -1995

This photograph of Watergate Cottages and Aberdulais was taken from the top of Jubilee Hill in March 1995.

Jubilee Hill taking its name from the Jubilee Inn was actually a part of Train Road.



This photograph should be compared to the earlier one of the 1920s where it will be seen that basically there is very little difference. It could not be taken from exactly the same position as the earlier one, as bungalows have now been built on the field in front of Watergate Cottages and the trees have been allowed to grow much larger.

ABERDULAIS 2004

These photographs were taken on 26th March 2004



In the 1950s this was two cottages, the nearer one having its front door where the window is on the left hand side of the photograph. On the upper floor there were no dormer windows, instead the tops of the windows came under the guttering so that on the inside the window sills were at floor level. This was thought to be because when it was converted from a long house into a proper dwelling the position of the upper windows governed by the position of the dividing floor and also that they should not break into the roof, thereby incurring extra cost.



In the photograph above the front door is the same door with the same door furniture as when Miss Lizzy Drake was in occupation. The canopy over is also the same one. To the right of the door was a single storey lean to which contained the kitchen. The outside door of the kitchen was where the window now is, and had to be accessible by the occupants of the other cottage for access to the water tap.



In the 1970s conversion the lean to extension was built up to the full height of the cottage to provide another bedroom.



This photograph shows the cottage being extended out to the west in a style sympathetic to the existing structure.

WATERGATE COTTAGES IN THE LATE 1940s AND 1950s

The photograph below was taken in March 1995. In spite of losing their uniform appearance, the cottages look a lot better cared for than in the photographs of the early 1900s.



In the late 1940s and early 1950s they looked no different then they had from the day that they were built. They were then occupied by:

No.1 Mr and Mrs Avent (Ralph and Ethel), They rented it from Mr Edward Smith. Their nephew, Roy Booth, also lived with them. Ralph had worked locally on the land all of his life, and Ethel, before marriage, worked in the millinery department of Spooners of Plymouth. They had one child who died in infancy. Ethel spent most of her time leaning out of the front bedroom window, usually with a cigarette on the go, making a mental note of everybody who went by on the top road, she could tell you who went down the village, and up the village, and the times, also who was on the bus coming in, and going out! Ralph wore brown leather boots and gaiters that came almost up to his knees, these were always most immaculately polished. The nephew, Roy, Brother of Harry Booth of Ford Farm, who lived with them, was a very sad and lonely person, being of blatantly homosexual orientation at a time when it was both illegal, and socially unacceptable. In those days there was no person, or professional body, that he could turn to, and on the occasions when his 'slips' made the local papers, he was ostracised, and quite often publicly ridiculed. As a consequence of this he was very introverted, and often out of work. During the war, he was considered not eligible for military service (for obvious reasons) but considered eligible for service in the Home Guard and so became a part of my father's squad, talk about 'Dad's Army'!

Back then the 'shoot' was still in place at the bottom of Shoot Hill, this was one of the main water supplies for the village. The water used to be gathered in a large concrete holding tank, the underground springs ran into it from two or three directions. Out of the front of the tank there was an iron pipe over a brick built trough which was deep enough to get a bucket under the pipe, and the top of which was at ground level. The water ran permanently and was always crystal clear, and ice cold. From the trough it overflowed and formed a stream which ran along the front of the hardstanding of the Carriers stable and store, and down the side of No 1 leaving a 3 feet wide pathway down the side of the cottage. Watercress grew here in great abundance, and also 'mind-your-own-business' which grew in profusion over all the stonework. Of course it was a great

attraction for children and we spent many hours playing there. The Avents would sometimes get worried when we used to dam the stream, especially if we got too ambitious in our efforts, and they imagined being deluged should the dam break! With the advent of mains drainage, all of this was swept away and replaced with concrete and tarmac, which seems a rather a pity.

No.2 Mr Blackmore the Postman lived here in the 1940s, I can remember him coming to Old Barton Farm on his bike to deliver the post, I know nothing else about him except that he lost two members of his family in the First World War and whose names are recorded on the memorial in the church. I think that he was a widower and the cottage was vacated in the late 1940s, so can only presume that he had died. Mrs Marjorie Rossitter, then bought the cottage when she became widowed in the mid 1940s. Her brother was 'Dickie' Dobell a prominent Plymouth solicitor with whom my father played rugby for Plymouth Argam. She was a tester for the Three Towns Dairies, and worked in their laboratories in Plymouth. She was a keen gardener and kept the little front garden in an immaculate condition. When she moved out in about 1955 my parents (Henry and Beryl Lugar), bought the cottage as they needed some extra room for our growing family. One of the bedrooms was taken into No.3 and the remainder of the cottage let furnished, mostly to Navy families, as in those days there was a shortage of married quarters in the Plymouth area.

No.3 When we were at Old Barton Farm, this cottage was the Farm Cottage. Mrs Gibson (Fanny) lived there, and she was employed in the farmhouse as the cleaning lady. She had a son living at Hollacombe whose wife Maisie worked at Wembury House, first for Mrs Walker, and then for the Studholmes, with whom she stayed until the very end. Fanny died very peacefully and quietly one evening, in her chair, after she had come home from work at the farmhouse. My parents then let the cottage to a single man called Donald Wilder who I think used to consider himself a bit of a 'man about town'. He painted all of the outside woodwork fire engine red, I think that this was his idea of 'painting the town red'. The paint must have been 'knocked off' as one could not get paint for love nor money in the mid 1940s. So pleased was he with his efforts on the outside of the cottage that he carried on with the same colour scheme on the inside. My parents were rather shocked, I remember going there with them when I was a child, and after the dark browns, greens and cream that we had become used to, it was a bit of a culture shock, to my parents at least. I thought it was all a bit of fun, and I remember many years later when we were living there, that whenever the paint got chipped in the sitting room or dining room, the fire engine red would come peeping through! We moved in, from Old Barton Farm in 1948, this was supposed to be a temporary arrangement until a farmhouse could be built on our land at Thorn. At the time there were four children James (Jim), myself Peter, Thomas (Tiny) and Angela, who was just a baby, so things were a little cramped in the cottage! The house never got built at Thorn, I think that that we were at loggerheads with the National Trust, the Local Authority and other interested parties living in the area, as to exactly where it should be sited. Later in the 1950s we bought No 2 when it became vacant and had the whole lot extended and modernised. This was much needed, as by this time my youngest sister Nichola, had come along and joined the clan! In the 1960s my father bought a butchery business at Plympton St Maurice, and they moved there for a few years. At the end of the 1970s Henry and Beryl with Tiny, moved back to live in the cottage in their retirement. Tiny still lives there.

No.4 This was owned by Mrs Minnie Brown (who used to run the Post Office when it was at No.6 Watergate) and was on a series of short lets. When we moved into No.3 the Turners lived there they had a son called Paul who was the same age as my younger brother. They moved out in 1949, and the cottage was then occupied by the McLory family. Joe, an Irishman with a ginger beard and a temper to match was a Teacher. She was quite a timid thing and was excellent classical pianist. They brought a piano with them and she used to spend hours practising, which meant that there was not a lot of time for housework or washing, which showed! There were two children that I remember one a girl called Allison and a younger one who I think was also a girl. Joe was involved in the Wembury Amateur Dramatics Society, I think that she might have been a teacher as well. Being Irish, they were, of course, Roman Catholics, which in those days was eyed with great suspicion in the village! The Drews also lived there for a while after Mrs Drew left Wembury House, this was fine as her children were all about the same age as us, and we had many good times together. They eventually moved to Beer Ferrers when Mrs Drew secured a position there. Later on in the 1950s the cottage got itself a name as a house of 'ill repute' but perhaps the less said about that the better, as the lady concerned moved on to a neighbouring village and became a pillar of the establishment!. In the 1970s it was occupied by Henry Booth (Ford Farm) who bought it when he married Christine Steyn, daughter of Clifford and Dot who lived next door in No.5. They had both of their children (Karen and Tracey) whilst there, before moving to Elburton in the 1980s.

No.5 Was also owned by Mrs Minnie Brown, and had been empty for some time. When her son Raymond, who was a Teacher in Exeter took up a new post at Plympton, he and his wife, Blanche, and their two children Christine and Neil moved in. Later, after Blanche had another child, Robin, they moved up to the Council Houses (No.2), until they managed to get the house (Jenys Park), built at the top of Knighton Hill. At one point in the mid 1950s, the cottage was let to some quite flashy people from London, who it later turned out were on the run from the Metropolitan Police, and whose story eventually made it into the News of the World, which we all thought was very exciting. It turned out that they were part of the 'Brighton Gang' who had achieved notoriety at that time. In the late 1950s Dot and Clifford Steyn moved in with their daughter Christine, Cliff was in the Navy at the time, and they remained there long after Cliff left the Navy. Christine later married Henry Booth from Ford Farm. Dot remained at the cottage on her own for some time as a widow, and eventually moved to Yealmpton in the 1980s

No.6 Used to be owned by Minnie Brown who ran the Post Office from there for many years up till about 1926. In about 1949 she sold it to a Doctor Boucher who only used it as a holiday retreat, although I do remember Donald Wilder, who we had displaced from No.3 in 1948, living there, luckily the cottage wasn't given the 'fire engine red' treatment! Later on Jimmy and Lily Milden whose bungalow in Cross Park Road burnt down in about 1950 lived there temporarily. In the 1950s it was sold to Mr and Mrs Lakey (Jack and Ivy), they had three grown up children, two daughters (I don't remember their names), and a son called David. When Mrs Brown sold the cottage to Dr Boucher in 1949, she had not stipulated that the right of way should be maintained for occupants of the other two cottages to gain access to their back doors, it had always been taken for granted. On realising this the Lakeys closed the right of way off and extended out over the back. There was quite a bit of animosity at the time, especially as Mrs Brown still owned the other two cottages, but nothing could be done and so the situation persists. Ivy Lakey ended up living there alone in widowhood until she died in the mid 1980s.

When the Browns bought No.s 4,5 & 6 they tried to rename them 'Brown's Cottages' numbering 1, 2 & 3 from the other end, the villagers steadfastly refused to accept it and so it never caught on.

The photograph below is a more up to date view of the cottages taken in 2004



No.3 WATERGATE COTTAGES - 1958

I took this photograph in 1958 with a Brownie Box camera, by this time we had been living at Watergate for almost ten years.

The photograph shows the front porch which was built on in 1950, the first one to be added to any of the cottages. In 1959 the glass roof was removed and replaced with tiles, and a ceiling put up inside. This made it more like a proper room rather than just a glasshouse.



No.3 WATERGATE COTTAGES 1950s

The photograph was taken in the garden of No.3 Watergate Cottage in the about 1953. The little girl is Nichola, my youngest sister, and the youngest of my parents five children

Also clearly shown is the recently added front porch (the first of the cottages to have such an addition). and the cottage windows which had all been re-glazed in single panes of glass instead of four in each panel. I rather liked the windows as they were myself, but of course back at that time I was not part of the decision making organisation!

The photograph was taken by my Mother, Beryl Lugar, with a "Brownie Box" camera.



THE LUGAR CHILDREN IN THE 1950s

This photograph was taken by my Mother, Beryl Lugar with a “Brownie Box” camera in about 1953 or 1954 in the lane in front of Watergate Cottages.

In the back, from left to right, are:

James Lugar
Peter Lugar
Thomas Lugar

and in the front:

Nichola Lugar
Angela Lugar

Just visible in the left foreground in the Lugar dog “Nipper”.



JIM LUGAR AND HIS FRIENDS IN 1953

This photograph was taken in 1953, in front of No.3 Watergate Cottages, by my Mother, Beryl Lugar with a “Brownie Box” camera,

In the back, from left to right, are Raymond Vincent, Ann McArdle, Tom Murch and my eldest brother Jim in the front.

Raymond Vincent who was known as ‘Rip’ and his elder brother Jim lived in “Marconi House” at the top of Church Road, which their mother, Beatty, ran as a guest house, and which a short time later, became the Vicarage.

Ann Mcardle was the niece of Sam and Ivy Rodgers who lived in “Seacrofters” at the bottom of Cliff Road. She came from Stoke on Trent and used to come down to stay every summer.

Tom Murch, I believe came from Plymouth, and was in Wembury working with the lumberjacks who were at that time tree felling in Langdon Woods, on behalf of Plymouth Hospitals, to whom the woods belonged at that time.



THE LUGAR CHILDREN AT WATERGATE IN THE 1950s

This photograph was taken by Beryl Lugar with a “Brownie Box” camera in about 1953 or 1954 in the garden of No.3 Watergate Cottages.

From left to right:

Angela with the cat “Baby”, Nichola, Peter.

In front, the Lugar dog “Nipper”.

The cat, “Baby” originally belonged to the Haines family when they lived at Aberdulais, but when they moved up to the new council houses in 1951, she refused to go. She stayed at Aberdulais with Mrs Eva Baxter, a widow, when she moved in (she was actually an Aunt of Mrs Haines).

Later Eva married Mr Fred Toms, who was an old Wembury boy, but unfortunately it didn't work out, and Eva moved out. The cat then decided to move in with us, she had a kitten at fourteen years old, and stayed with us until she died at the grand old age of eighteen.



WATERGATE COTTAGES 1950s

The photograph was taken in the garden of No.3 Watergate Cottage in the early 1950s, showing the recently added front porch. In the photograph (slightly out of focus) are Nina Densun and Angela Lugar, standing, and Nichola Lugar in the doll's pram.

At that time No.1 belonged to Mr Ed Smith and was occupied by Mr and Mrs Avent (Ralph and Ethel) and their nephew Mr Roy Booth. No.2 belonged to and was occupied by Mrs Marjorie Rossitter, who worked for the "Three Towns' Dairies", in their laboratories, as a milk tester.

This photograph was taken by my Mother, Beryl Lugar with a "Brownie Box" camera.



No.3 WATERGATE COTTAGES 1960

The photograph was taken in the garden of No.3 Watergate Cottage in 1960.

The little girl is Nichola, the youngest of the five Lugar children.

The two kittens in the big plant pot were 'rescued' by my Father, Henry, and brought home to be looked after. One was a most beautiful smokey grey colour, and was of course, called 'Smokey', and the other, a silver grey tabby, who we called 'Baby' after a previous similar looking cat. Regrettably Smokey died at quite an early age of cat enteritis, and the other one survived only another couple of years before she was found dead, for no apparent reason, it was suspected that she might have eaten rat poison.



No.3 WATERGATE COTTAGES 1960s

The photograph was taken from a coloured slide that I took in 1961

The cottage, since the late 1940s, had been colourwashed cream and the woodwork painted in cream and green. In 1958 my father decided that he wanted a break with this tradition and go for pink, so he had this one and No.2 which also belonged to us, colourwashed pink and the woodwork painted in cherry red and turquoise.

They did look quite pretty, but I was rather relieved when in the mid 1960s, they were repainted in black and white!



No.3 WATERGATE COTTAGES 1960s

“NIPPER”

The photograph was taken from a coloured slide that I took in 1961

Nipper was our dog and went everywhere with us when we were children. The beach, the cliffs, fields, woods, jaunts to the tithe barn, the village hall, sometimes even to church, wherever we went he felt that he was also allowed to go. He was wonderful with children, I suppose that growing up in a house with five of them he felt as though he was one!

His nocturnal habits became legendary, and if any black and white puppy was seen in the village it was usually pretty certain that Nipper was the father.

The two cottages in the background are No.s 1 and 2 Watergate Cottages which were still at that time almost exactly as they were when they were built about one hundred years earlier. The roof of No.1 was in a particularly bad condition.



WATERGATE COTTAGES 1977

These photographs were taken in 1977 and show No.s 2 and 3 Watergate Cottages decorated for the Silver Jubilee of Her Majesty the Queen.



THE OLD PLAYING FIELD

Photograph taken in January 2004

In the 1950s this part of Mewstone Avenue shown in the photograph, and the major part of Barton Close, was the public playing field for the village . It was acquired in 1954 and very soon afterwards, a proper entrance with double gates was made onto the road, and which sloped upwards to in front of where the Village Hall now stands.

One day swings appeared in the middle of the field and a see-saw over to one side. The queues to have a go on these were absolutely massive on the first evening, but of course the novelty soon wore off! In 1956 the New Village Hall was built in the corner of the field and stood there in grand isolation for about fourteen years. In about 1957 the Scout Hut was procured and erected on the opposite side of the field, against the hedge, just about where the large van is parked in the photograph. It was a wooden building with a corrugated iron roof which I think was ex Ministry of Defence. The swings and seesaw had, by this time, been joined by a roundabout and a four seater rocking horse.

This is the way it stayed until it was decided in about 1969 that an alternative route should be made to the beach, and so Mewstone Avenue came into being. Part of the deal was that the new playing field at the end of Barton Close was procured, to compensate for the one now given over to the new development. The Scouts also had to find a new site for their hut. This they found in the corner of what is now the school field, behind the old village hall, right where the bomb crater was, so this had to be filled in before the hut could be resited. The hut was not the same one as the one which was recently burnt down, that one was ex HMS Raleigh, excess to requirements due to the rebuilding of the establishment. Whether the old hut was just disposed of and the newly procured hut put straight on to the site, I do not know, but it seems like the most feasible thing to have happened.

Up until there was a proper playing field the football team had used Ben Clifton's field by the pathfield behind Wembury House. Although at first when the team was reformed after the war, they played on my father's field on the higher side of the Almshouses. As a field it was absolutely ideal as it was lovely and flat, the disadvantage being that it was too far away from the village hall (the old one that is) where the teams had to change.



THE OLD PLAYING FIELD

The upper photograph was taken in 1960 from the swings in the old playing field looking north over Church Road and to the fields of Train Farm towards Spirewell in the distance. The two boys in the photograph are Martin and Steven Harris, grandchildren of Mrs Toogood.



The lower photograph was taken in March of 2007 from a position as near as possible to the earlier photograph. The section of stone wall to the left of the early photograph is the same piece that fronts the two houses “Osmia” and “Saffron Park” to the left of this photograph.



THE OLD PLAYING FIELD

The upper photograph was taken in May 1959 from the swings in the old playing field looking towards the recently built Village Hall in the corner of the field. The two boys in the photograph are Martin and Steven Harris, grandchildren of Mrs Toogood. The lady on the swing is Mrs Smallridge of West Wembury Farm



The lower photograph was taken in March of 2007 from a position as near as possible to the earlier one. Since 1959 the swings have long gone, and the Village Hall has been extended outwards to incorporate a new kitchen, toilets and foyer, which meant losing the imposing front portico



BUILDING OF MEWSTONE AVENUE - 1970

This photograph was taken in 1970 and shows the field which is now occupied by the top corner of Mewstone Avenue and Leyford Close.

The large mound of earth to the left was the spoil from where the new road had been excavated and was later redistributed. Up in the top part of the picture can be seen where Brownhill Lane has been breached and the already completed part of Mewstone Avenue constructed down through what was Bill Towill's field and Jack Smallridge's field lower down.



BUILDING OF MEWSTONE AVENUE - 1970

The upper photograph was taken in 1970 and shows where Brownhill Lane has been breached and the already completed part of Mewstone Avenue constructed down through what was Bill Towill's field and Jack Smallridge's field further down.

The upper part of the road which runs from Brownhill Lane back to the junction near the Village Hall is still blocked off by the sections of concrete pipe. The road surface has been laid but the pavements have yet to be done. The whole area is a building site, and actual building of the bungalows has yet to be started.

The lower photograph was taken in April 2006 and shows the road as it is today,.. the Mewstone has almost disappeared in the morning sea mist. A notable feature still in place is the telephone pole at the Brownhill Lane junction, and still at a somewhat jaunty angle!



BUILDING OF No. 85 MEWSTONE AVENUE - 1971

The photographs below were taken in 1971 and provide a step by step record of the building of No.85 Mewstone Avenue.



No.85 MEWSTONE AVENUE – COMPARISON PHOTOGRAPHS – 1971 AND 2006

The garage of no.85 reaches roof height in 1971. Driveways, paths and gardens are yet to be defined and laid out.



The same view in 2006



No. 85 MEWSTONE AVENUE – COMPARISON PHOTOGRAPHS – 2006 AND 2009



SITE OF LEYFORD CLOSE 1970

The top photograph was taken in 1970 and shows the field which is now occupied by Leyford Close.

In the photograph Ron Titmus is standing in the north east corner of the field on the site where their bungalow, No.15 would be built.

Ron and Jan, his wife, still live in the bungalow (2006).



The photograph below shows the bungalow as completed in 1971



This pair of bungalows, No's 15 & 17 were built with the front elevation facing the playing field, and the back (the bedroom side) facing towards the road.

The gable end on the right of the photograph is that of No.13.

AERIAL VIEW OF LEYFORD CLOSE - 1990s

This aerial photograph of Leyford Close was taken sometime in the late 1990s.

In the top right hand corner, the highest point of Mewstone Avenue can be seen bending around to the right before dropping down to eventually meet up with Church Road.

The Close is entered from the right, from Mewstone Avenue, and divides into two smaller areas. The bungalows are neatly arranged and the occupiers show a high degree in pride of ownership. Many have had dormer extensions put into their roofs and some have had front porches added on, but the uniform neatness is still maintained.

