LATEST MEMORIES OF OLD WELLINGTON

Edited by Audrey Smith and George Evans

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The fourth book in the series 'Memories of Old Wellington'.

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This is the latest of the series Memories of Old Wellington but by no means the end of the stories we have found. We hope those who have read the previous three books have enjoyed them — we certainly have enjoyed researching in our own and other people's memories. There are lots more memories in Wellington; we did not realise how much work we were making for ourselves six years ago when Audrey said, “There’s history up in the air above these shop fronts,” when we met in New Street and the books were born from a conversation.

In writing this book we have tried to bring to life the stories of past times, perhaps even the ghosts who pass through the pages. Yet this is an optimistic view. Wellington was a happy place in most of these memories; of course there were problems but we do not dwell on them. We are fond of OUT to WIl.

We are very grateful to everyone who contributed to the books and hope they give as much pleasure to all who read them. Most of the text is autobiographical; some of the contributors are still very much alive. We have tried to keep it as factual as possible but cannot be responsible if some of the memories have faded or changed over the years.

Our intention is to preserve the memories we have set down so that they will be available to everyone who is interested; not just old people but young ones too. This book could just as easily be a present for Granny or the basic information for a Junior School project, GCSE assignment or a thesis for a degree.

In many ways this is Audrey Smith's book; hers is by far the largest contribution and she has been working with the whole project for six years, asking the questions and editing the resulting answers. Until this year I have been on the sidelines, encouraging occasionally, but not doing too much work. When we came to edit this final volume I learned how much effort it all was and came to appreciate more than ever the contributions.

There are two things I sometimes regret; that I did not listen enough to my grandfathers, and that my grandchildren do not listen enough to me. This must be a common view of 'senior citizens' everywhere. By setting down at least some of the memories of Old Wellington we have tried to do something to put things right. But there are many more stories in this town; what about them? One answer is the Local Studies Library in Walker Street, where written memories, documents and photographs can be effectively preserved and made available for study. Too many historical documents end in the dustbin; this small library is there to serve Wellington. There are already many fascinating items there which are well worth study.
Introduction

Our book is a collection of memories as they were told to us. Most of the stories are of the days before the second World War, though some are told before the 'Great War to end all wars' as it was called. So our time scale is from about 1910 at the earliest to 1940 at the latest; thirty years of Wellington.

We must remember that Wellington was already an old town when our story began; well over 1,000 years old. There had been a market here before the 1244 charter. King Charles I had declared the Civil War in Wellington in the 1640s which had caused many troubles. There had been cloth processing industries in Walker Street and Tenter (Ten Tree) Croft, tanning, bell founding, furniture making, nail making; many industries which no longer take place in Wellington. The market riots were already behind us as well as fights on the Wrekin between the colliers and the yeomen. Slums like Nailors' Row had been demolished and the Urban District Council had rehoused many people.

The railway was at its height, Wellington Junction being a very important passenger station, linking with Stafford, Market Drayton, Much Wenlock and all the coalfield towns and villages as well as Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton. There was also a goods station which handled a lot of freight, especially animals from the Smithfield, the largest fatstock market in the West Midlands and Grooms', the country's largest timber buyers.

These were the days when the iron bridge was 'near Wellington', as were Lilleshall Abbey, Much Wenlock and especially The Wrekin. The Wellington Journal was the paper to read all over Shropshire and the surrounding counties. Wellington was the main shopping, commercial and administrative town for eastern Shropshire. It was the principal banking and legal centre, with its Magistrates' Court, police headquarters, solicitors and several banks, building societies, insurance companies, accountants and any other professional service that was needed.

Modern Wellington is, in spite of many changes, much the same friendly town it was between 1910 and 1940. No town can stand still or it will rapidly deteriorate; we have had to change with the times. Telford, as Michael Raven says in his Shropshire Gazetteer, 'has done Wellington no favours.' It is a pity TDC kept referring to 'district centres' and not realised that Wellington is a market town in its own right, not just for historical reasons but in fact, and at this moment.

All the contributors to Latest Memories of Old Wellington have one thing in common — we are very fond of our town. I am sure I speak for us when I say we have great faith in our people; we hope our younger readers will learn about the past and build Wellington a happy future.
Two hundred and twenty-nine Holyhead Road, Hollybush Farm, is a small complex consisting of house, stable block and large garden, dating back to 1726 at the latest.

The house is built on the long plan, comprising hall, dining room, lounge and kitchen. The old dairy is now a walk-in pantry. The tap supplying water for washing the milk churns also remains. The small room leading from this is now a sort of hobbies room; originally it was for cutting up and dressing the pigs which were slaughtered on the premises. The slab for this is still there; it can never be painted as the saltpetre keeps seeping through the bricks.

Upstairs are three bedrooms, two with little Coalbrookdale firegrates. The small bedroom has a treetrunk as a beam. These beams were not allowed after the eighteenth century; a law was passed to that effect, so this could pre-date the house. The bathroom is quite large and was once a bedroom.

At its best it was farmhouse/inn. The stage coach stopped here, also the Royal Mail. The old mounting block remains in front of the house, hidden now by an encroaching rosebush. One or two people said that Oliver Cromwell stayed here at one stage of his life. I have been unable to find anything about this but it could quite well be as he visited Shifnal, but I prefer a question mark.

The stables have the original doors and windows. The loose box is let to a riding school. There are two pigsties, also a boiler for the pigs’ food which has a grate — I suppose one could use small logs for this.

Behind the Victorian mantelpiece in the dining room is the old fashioned cooking range, so there could well be an ingle-nook.

The east end of the house still has a loft door opening in the gable end. Above the door is a pulley on a bracket which was used for pulling up sacks of grain for the animals. On the ground floor is the remains of the old harness room. There is also a cellar with a setlass and niches for lamps. When the building was an inn the cellar was used for storing beer in barrels.

This is an ancient and fascinating group of buildings which has had many uses. It is not a ‘listed building’ but there are many good reasons why it should be.
Top: The Watteau Suite by Dudley and Reece.
Left: Carved chair by Teece of St. John Street.
Everyone who has written their memories of Wellington seems to have been up and down New Street etc., so I thought I would begin at the house where I was born. After some thought I decided to put down what I remembered as the memories came back. With this in mind, where there is an (L) means left-hand side and (R) the right-hand side of Church Street.

I was born at No. 1 Plough Road, then the Shrewsbury and Wem Brewery Company, of which my father was manager. I do not think I noticed much until the Great war, when I remember father holding me in his arms to see some Belgian refugees arriving late at night. This sight has remained with me to this day, making a deep impression.

What a lovely town Wellington was in those years of growing up; busy on Smithfield day, which was a Monday, and market days. The pubs did a roaring trade, gin was a penny a nip. On bitterly cold days Slaney’s was packed. The hot whiskey in which lump sugar was crushed with an article called a “mauncher” — a long steel stick with a sort of round disc on the end.

We must now commence walking. Opposite to No. 1 Plough Road lived Johnnie Crane or Cranne the lawyer at Tyrone House (R). He was a short, tubby little man and had a habit of playing about with his gold watch and chain, which he seemed to be very proud of. He was looked after by a housekeeper called Miss McDermott, a very tall stately lady. Of course Tyrone House was at this time in its glory and very beautiful. Sad to see it now.

Next to Tyrone House was a row of little cottages. Nurse Evans, Bennett, the librarian of that era, Hinks and Harley also. These cottages were quite a nice size with gardens at the back.

Crossing to the (L) came the police station. Those I remember were Sergeant Whitby, a great big burly man, Inspector Evans, Constable Ashworth and I must not forget Superintendent Fulcher, six feet tall and as straight as a guardsman, very handsome, also a gentleman.

Next was a house in which lived a Miss Cooper, a school teacher. Then came Mr. Dan Newill’s solicitors office, followed by the Charlton Hotel. If you turned into the Charlton yard you would have found some more little cottages with lovely little window boxes full of cottage flowers, pansies and violets etc. A tiny cobbled pavement ran under the windows — a priceless sight today.

Still (L) was a shop on the opposite side of the turn to the Charlton yard. Tucked in the corner was another cottage in which lived Miss Probert, a dainty little lady. Long skirts were worn, trousers were unheard of and ladies never used to stride. Continuing, we come to what used to be the original police station — in my time the Conservative Party rooms. Next door was Mr. Newman’s shop, painter and decorator.

Coming along to the Village Green, which is still common land, was another row of houses where people also carried on business; Mr. Bert Richards gentlemen’s hairdresser, Davies the tailor and Mr. Bailey an estate agent. Mr. Bailey’s place later became the home of Nurse
Elson, maternity and district nurse. A little brook used to run over the cobbled pavement alongside the cottages. So we leave them at All Saints Gates. Today on the Village Green stands the Nat West Bank and a car park.

Back to the (R), Harley's completes the row of cottages I mentioned before, so we pick up the threads and come to a very nice house where I think the Prudential Insurance used to have their office. The agent also lived there. Today, I think someone dealing in jewellery has it. Bacon's the cycle shop was next door. At this time cycling was a very popular form of travel. Mr. Bacon used to stock very popular cycles called Raleigh and Sunbeam. The latter had an improved gearbox. Father had one — it was almost a Rolls Royce of cycles!

There is a break now which leads to Darrell's carpentry yard, then two cottages, now a solicitor's office so we come to the Medical Hall run by Miss Heretage, a charming little lady, always very pleasant; if you had a sore throat and asked her to give you something for it, sulphur tablets — ugh! and a most horrible gargle. Gripe water for babies was also stocked, Woodward's being the most popular. If you were unable to afford this, cinders (hot) were put into a mug and hot water poured over, a teaspoonful being given to the baby. This was poor man’s gripe water. I never remember any baby suffering from side effects. Miss Heretage sold cough sweets, 'Paragoric' they were called, syrup of figs, Beecham's pills and 'Shades of the Devil' castor oil, some mothers being under the impression that a purge gave a good clear out. Can anyone imagine a child of today accepting this? For feet, one would get Golden Corn Plasters, foot powders and a popular ointment for the eyes called Golden Eye Ointment. The chemist was consulted quite a lot in those days as the NHS was unknown. A few more reminders — Scott's Emulsion if children had a weak chest, also you got yourself rubbed back and front with goose and cod liver oil.

Enough of the glimpse of health; we are now at Barclay's Bank, a very different building from today. There was a beautiful dome on top of the building. I do not know if it was bronze, I remember it always had a greenish tinge. Bank managers always lived on the premises. The only bank manager I remember was Mr. Randall. I cannot remember much about the system, being too young to understand.

We cross Queen Street, to the Wellington Journal office, owned at this time by Leakes. People used to queue outside during the Great War, notices being posted on the notice board of ships sunk and missing soldiers etc. Next shop was Mr. Jones, newsagents and stationers and artists' materials. Then came the Post Office. This was always very busy. Sorting letters, parcels etc. was carried on round the back. How change has spoiled the old building.

Mr. Bloomfield kept the next shop selling china etc., later Mr. Arnold the saddler had his business there, expanding his leather goods, toys and sports goods. This closed on his death. We have now arrived at Lloyd's Bank. This has a modern facelift but has not lost as much character as Barclay's. We pass the opening to Ten Tree Croft and come now to Mr. Brisbourne the tailor. He made gentlemen's suits, breeches and ladies' costumes. Tweeds were much in fashion, also gabardine. Materials were gracefully draped in the windows and the customer entered the shop and was able from stock to make his or her choice.

We are now at the Bacchus, originally known as Ye Old Smith's Liquor Vaults, owned at this time by Mr. Clegg-Smith. He lived in a private house in Roslyn Road. The vaults was managed for him by Mr. Sid Tart who lived with his family on the premises. Mr. Clegg-Smith was regarded by many people as something of an eccentric. One thing for sure he was a very wealthy man. He never seemed to dine at the vaults, but about 1 pm. could be seen almost running past No. 1 Plough Road for lunch. This was his usual way of walking. Smith’s Liquor Vaults, like all the pubs on Monday did a roaring trade.

Looking back, one wonders where all the people came from. And if one might just pause for a moment and reflect on the number of pubs now missing from Wellington, perhaps it would come as a big surprise to this generation that people must have been industrious, hard-
working, hard drinking, also many following the sports. Most of the pubs had spittoons filled with sawdust. These, like the firegrates, had to be blackleaded after being emptied. Their use was, of course, to spit in. Many men chewed a tobacco called ‘twist’, they would cut off a bit, and chew. This tobacco was hard. After a while the spittoon came into use. I have no doubt twist was the forerunner to the present day chewing gum.

Clay pipes were also used. Children used these for blowing bubbles, but the men who smoked pipes vied with each other as regards shape and size. I remember Meerschaum pipes were very popular but the art of making them beautiful was puffing away until the tobacco was heated to a certain requirement to colour the pipe to the owner’s liking, usually a deep peachy colour round the bowl fading to creamy lemon towards the stem. St. Bruno was a great favourite among pipe smokers; the fragrance was lovely. Cigars were for the more wealthy. Woodbine Willy cigarettes were very popular, also Craven A. I think people smoked more than they do today.

But we must now press on. We are still on the (R) and come to J.L. & E.T. Morgan’s. This would be called an emporium and was quite high class. One went into the shop; the shelves were stocked with a large assortment of materials, satins, muslins, voiles, gabardines, velvets, cottons, linens and many more. Cotton prints came from Lancashire, satins from France — the satin of that day is something this generation would not recognise. It was of heavy quality and dresses for evening wear were really something. Velvet was another product of France; muslin and voiles British.

Morgan’s also sold household linen further down the shop; best Lancashire cotton sheets etc., also cretonne which made loose covers for chairs. The millinery department was at the back of the shop. Here, girls were taught how to make and trim hats from blocking, wiring etc. to making artificial flowers. The finished hats were a joy to wear. No woman in those days would ever go out without wearing a hat. Still farther down was the dressmaking department. Girls made dresses for sale in the shop. Many ladies chose the material and patterns and this would also be made in the workrooms. The machines were the kind that had to be treadled so it was hard work. Quite a few girls served their apprenticeship at this shop and on leaving many became a little dressmaker at home.

I must digress a little here. The Morgans lived in Crescent Road. I think they must have been quite wealthy. Mr. Morgan was a portly man with a rather ruddy complexion. He would come to the entrance of the shop, look up and down the street, twirl the fob on his watch chain, turn on his heel and proceed with a stately walk back into the shop. His daughter, Nora, married a naval officer. It was a big wedding; officers in full naval uniform, All Saints packed from the gallery to the nave and the streets were crowded with people. The dresses of the lady guests were marvellous, some even coming from Paris. Of course, they all wore hats. These were creations in themselves and a joy to behold. So, with the naval uniforms, carriages and horses, it was a very colourful sight.

From Morgan’s shop we go to Barber’s the auctioneers. Mr. Arthur Barber was an extremely nice man. I remember he wore glasses called pince-nez, clipped on his nose, very fashionable in those days. All the Barber family had red hair. They lived at Chapel House, Plough Road, now Portway House. There were three children, a son and two daughters. I think the son was killed in the war. Alice married Mr. Pearce who was employed at Barber’s. This wedding was an army one, again a packed church. The bride’s dress was of ivory satin, cut on princess lines and somehow I remember she wore a gold cross and chain. These sort of weddings gave Wellington quite a lift in many ways. Businesswise the shops did well. Gloves were worn so sales of these alone would be brisk. Millinery also got an extra lift.

Barber’s have always had a good name as auctioneers. Mr. Barber commenced selling pigs, sheep and cattle on The Green which is common land and should belong to the people of Wellington. Sadly it is now a mini-car-park. The Green auction was really the commencement of Wellington Smithfield. The personal attention given to the business made it the largest
fatstock market in Shropshire.

Noblett’s came next to the railway bridge. This was a high class sweet shop. The manageress as I remember being Miss Sybil Murrell. The windows were always beautifully arranged and one could buy the real French bon-bons, chocolates etc. Their boxes of chocolates were always bought for special occasions.

The next shop to this was at one time kept by the Misses Shepherd and was a hat shop called La Chapeau (the hat) but went out of business and Mr. Bert Richards took this over, opening as a gentlemen’s and ladies’ hairdresser. Marcel waving was just becoming fashionable. He also began in fancy goods and cosmetics. He did quite a good trade for some years, then closed down — why I do not know.

Now we come to Carrier’s confectioners and cafe. Mr. and Mrs. Carrier were Italians. Mrs Carrier always dressed in a black bombazine dress. Theirs was a thriving trade. They made all sorts of fancy cakes, breads etc. Later, this was taken over by Brittain’s.

Slaney’s Liquor Vaults came next. On Smithfield and market days this pub would be packed. Sawdust was put on the floor and of course the spittoons were in view. I don’t think anyone today would like the idea of spitting, but at the time of which I write about it was quite common.

Brittain’s was the next shop. I would call this the grocers of Wellington. All the assistants were very polite. Mr. Lowndes, Mr. Howman and Mr. Duncalf were some I remember. Brittain’s in those days ground their own coffee, sliced their own bacon and blended teas. They stocked about everything in the grocery and provision line, also delivered orders to various houses in town and country. I remember chairs being put for the customer to sit down. Sometimes one had to wait to be served. They were so busy and the assistants had very few idle moments. It was a shop with delightful smells. The different blends of coffee beans were fragrant. The children of today miss out on a lot of things. When you paid your bill they had one of those systems whereby the assistant put the money in a sort of jar which was clipped into a lid hung on wires. A chain was then pulled and off went the jar to the cash desk. Change came back the same way. One could spend quite a time as a child watching this. I don’t think many people were bored in shops in those days; far too much was going on. It was a very sad day for Wellington when Brittain’s closed.

By the side of Brittain’s was a short entry leading to Mr. R.A. Clarke’s Solicitors chambers. I think at some time or other this may have been the private entrance to Brittain’s living accommodation. The interior was very nice. I do not remember a great deal about the Clarkes but the members I knew were all very nice people.

The next shop was on the corner of Market Street, proprietor Mr. Drouett, known as Drewett. This was managed by Mrs. Harris. Fruit such as oranges and bananas came from abroad in barrels, delivered from the railway by horse and dray. The railway horses were shires and always well-looked after. I suspect they knew their way about town as well as some of the people.

I feel I must at this point return to the cottages adjoining the Charlton, one of which was the office of Mr. Newill, then the leading solicitor in Wellington. His clerk was ‘Wee Georgie Weaver’, whose mother kept the New Inn at the bottom of Roslyn Road. He was a character, short, dark and quite a ‘wow’ with the girls. No chasing the girls for Wee Georgie, they chased him. Poor man, I have seen him really running to get through the office door. On asking my mother one day why Wee Georgie was always in a hurry she said, “He is being chased.” He certainly had the Ivor Novello touch. He never married. How he escaped would best be known to himself.

Station Road — this is not a great deal altered. Mrs. Heatherington’s music shop is no longer there. She also taught music. Later she was joined by her son Headley. He was a
brilliant musician. Everything seemed to be going for him, but he contracted meningitis and died at a very early age. This was a terrible blow to his father and mother, who never seemed to recover.

The Station Hotel has hardly altered outside but the inside has been modernised. Again in the old days you would have seen sawdust on the floor and the spittoons; very good spitters Wellington had in those days. I suspect few missed the spittoons; if they did the sawdust on the floor would soak it up. I suppose it would be a health hazard, but it was swept up quickly and mopped.

At the time of which I write, you would meet a delightful character down Station Road, Blind Bill (William Smith) and his spaniel dog. He sat on a little stool and his dog lay beside him; also an old hat which people put money in. There was no Social Security and life was hard for people like Bill. I don't think anyone heard him complain. He always had a cheerful word for people. Bill also worked the bellows for Christ Church organ, and has a window in the memorial chapel to his memory.

We now take a break and go back to No. 1 Plough Road. It was quite a spacious house, upstairs four bedrooms, downstairs dining room, opening on to quite a large hall which led to a passage leading into the kitchen. This had an old-fashioned cooking range which had to be blackleaded every morning, using Zebo. It was arm-aching work. There was also a gas stove. The whole of the house was lit by gas, as electric lighting had not been perfected. As was usual in those days there was no bathroom so a long zinc bath was used. The boiler was heated (no washing machines). A huge fire was made up in what was called the store-room next to the kitchen; the bath was then filled to a certain depth with cold water and then in went the hot water, so the fire roasting one side of you and you froze on the other. It was hard work filling and emptying but afterwards to sit with a hot drink before that fire was a delight no longer felt.

The family consisted of father, mother, myself, sister Sally and brother Jim and my Aunt Lily, mother's sister. Family life was simple. We had pets; my first dog was an Airedale named Paddy. Joining us a bit later were two Yorkies — Spider and Goffery — three cats, Mons, Haig and Fosch, half-bred Persians, the offspring of a pure-bred cat given my mother by Mr. Littlewood the solicitor. A tabby fell madly in love with cat and she with him. Those kittens were really lovely. They had blue eyes and long hair with tabby stripes. All our pets were loved and cared for, a strict rule of Father's being, 'You may have any pet you like, but it must be looked after'. We also had some pigeons. One day we forgot to feed them; next day they had been removed. It was a lesson the three of us never forgot.

There was a lot of spare room; two large warehouses, a big loft, stable, coach-house, harness room. A shire horse called Sally pulled the float which took the beer out to town and country. There was also a retail where people would bring their jugs; beer threepence a pint. We had huge hogsheads (barrels) on the stills, also did bottling on the premises — Guinness etc. One of the Shrewsbury and Wem specials was Golden Pippin Cider — there is no cider on the market today to beat it.

Sir Thomas Meyrick would come into the office, which was right on the corner, and ask for a firkin (small barrel) of bitter beer and one of cider to be sent to Apley Castle. Sir Thomas was a gentleman, everyone liked him, Lady Meyrick was the same. Their daughter Honor was a great rider to hounds. Later she married Captain Eade. It was sad to see Apley Castle go. It is Wellington's loss.

Now back to my story, pets. We had a great many rabbits. I had a Dutch one which was always getting out. Sister had a Belgian hare and brother a brown rabbit. Somehow my Dutch and the Belgian hare mated. The result was Niger, half hare, half rabbit. He used to come in and share the hearth with the cats, stamping his paws if we didn't hear him. People would only believe this if they saw him so we had quite a bit of fun. His colouring was a
Snooks — An old character of Wellington.
silvery black. He was very intelligent and could nip quite hard at times. Sadly he got out into the neighbour's garden and ate something which killed him. He was missed by all of us.

Reading this you will know the Great War was here and we were closed. This was a blow. Father went book-keeping to Shuker and Adams' garage (where Saverite now is), my aunt to the Post Office as a clerk. It was a terrible time, the food shortage was dreadful, long queues, the weather bitterly cold and we had very severe winters. As the men were called up the women began to take over their work.

I remember the day the Cheshire Yeomanry came. The regiment was billeted at the barracks, King Street. Of course it was too small to accommodate all so we had four soldiers. My mother said, "I am going to give these men the best meal I can manage." So she set to work and gave them her best. The table was perfectly laid with napkins etc. Don't ask me how, but they had soup, juggled hare in port wine with dumplings, followed by whiskey trifle. Did those men enjoy it! Corporal Norris managed to sprain his ankle, treated at the Cottage Hospital and left behind. May I remind readers that this regiment was nearly all farmers' sons. As I look back I can still hear the jingle of harness and clatter of hooves, the call of the men to their horses "Oop, oop". They went over to France and the whole regiment was wiped out except Corporal Norris, whose life was saved. No, he did not marry my aunt. I never knew what happened to him. I like to think that those men had at least one happy memory of Wellington before they went over.

On with my story. We were of course growing up. My brother, on Smithfield day, was always AWOL (absent without leave) with my mother looking for him about lunch time. Mr. Barber, coming home to his meal, "You looking for Wandering Adam, Mrs. Wheatley? He's gone with one of the drovers down Apley Road" (now Whitchurch Road). She threatened Jim with everything she could think of, to no avail. Come Smithfield day, away he'd go, to come back 'whacked'.

Now, before we go back to the Square, a few people who lived in Church Street. The cottages housing these people were opposite the Charlton. There were Nurse Evans, Mr. Bennett the librarian and his family, Mrs. Hinks, who kept a little shop and the Harleys.

Mr. Bennett was a very tall dark man who ruled the library in Walker Street with a rod of iron. The entrance was at the left-hand side of the building. The reading room was on the ground floor; daily papers were clipped to lecterns which people had to stand up to read. It was used a great deal by the ordinary folk. Upstairs were the books. Mr. Bennett had a sort of office. One window held all the tickets, something like the old railway ticket office. After you had chosen the book you wished to read you then went up to an open space with a counter and gave the book to Mr. B. He marked it; that is if he approved the reading matter chosen by yourself. I remember on one occasion I chose It by Elinor Glyn. Mr. B. was horrified. He said, "Young ladies do not read books like this," and refused to allow me to have it. He fetched David Copperfield and I was forced to be content. Needless to say I told my mother. She backed him up - to my disgust. Elinor Glyn was considered to be beyond the pale in those days. Goodness knows what he would do if he had to deal with Mills and Boon books today. Shed his skin?

Mrs. Bennett was an accomplished musician, playing the piano and violin, which she taught. The son, Eddy, inherited her talents and formed his own band. He could also compose. I don't think he had much of a childhood. He was not allowed to play with other children and made to practice four hours daily from an early age. Needless to say, he made up for this suppression in his teens. He used to climb down the drainpipe by his bedroom and would join some of the boys, including my brother, at a dance, climbing back about 1 am., his mum and dad still blissfully sleeping. I must tell of the night when the lads went to a barn dance at Atcham. Eddy had acquired a motor bike, but the other lads were all walking back. They hatched a plot. As soon as Eddy appeared one of them had to lie in the middle of the road to stop him. To everyone's horror Eddy did no such thing. He accelerated and jumped the bike
over the one on the road, roaring off shouting, "That'll teach you." The unlucky lad who lay on
the road walked home in a dirty pair of trousers. Readers should remember that the A5 was
quiet in those days, you couldn't do it today.

Hinks' kept a little shop which sold sweets; bulls-eyes (1d), sticks of liquorice, toffee from
the tin, a small hammer being used to break this; liquorice allsorts, ice cream (cornets were
1d). They also sold groceries. She made enough money to buy No. 1 Plough Road and open up
as a grocer etc. later selling out to Mr. Tart.

Harleys lived in the cottage next to Mr. Hinks. The family consisted of Mum, Dad, Edgar
and Ivy. I don't remember what Mr Harley did. We used to play games with Edgar and Ivy,
skipping, hop scotch, marbles etc.

I must tell the story of Rowland Meyrick of Apley Castle. He was one of Wellington's
magistrates, very autocratic, a bully and a snob. No-one liked him. Before cars came in he
drove into Wellington and would sit outside a shop cracking his whip until some frightened
assistant arrived. However, progress had brought the car so Rowland now came into town and
sat in the car and honked his horn. Up comes a young new constable who did not know who
he was; promptly booked him, to the great delight of his fellow magistrates. They all turned
up to the court and were even more delighted when he was fined. The young constable shortly
afterwards was moved.

Mr. Shepherd was also a magistrate; a very tall dark man, olive skinned, with a jet black
beard. His daughters took after their father, dressed very smartly and wore marvellous hats.
They were the ones who kept 'La Chapeau'.

Mr. and Mrs. Deakin were the forerunners of the Roly Polies. Mr. D. was clerk to Mr.
Littlewood. They were delightful people who lived in Albert Road. Mr. Littlewood was also a
distinctive character. He reminded me of a Roman emperor because he had a true Roman
nose.

Sergeant Major (retired) Boucher was commonly called Bosh-er. I am sure he wore a corset;
his back was so straight and his clothes fitted him like a glove. He also had a very military
moustache, carried his baton under his arm and walked with a slow military march. He lived
with his daughter, Mrs. Downes, in Park Street. The Downes' later left Wellington to keep the
Bell at Tong. Bosh-er was something to do with the pub trade. I do not know how he received
his nick-name, but suppose it might have had something to do with the parade ground.

Before we return to the shops and streets we visit Wellington market. This is claimed to be
the best market in England. A visit is a 'must' for anyone touring England. The present
market has completely changed its appearance. So now we go back in time. Stalls were sort of
tables with iron framework. The inside consisted of an assortment of goods. Peacock's Penny
Bazaar was a child's delight. For a penny you could buy a wooden doll — Grooms made some
of these. Tin carts, soldiers, trains etc. were made in Germany. Peacock's assistants did not
like me because I took so long to make up my mind. Little did they know that I was so
fascinated with all the things they had that I could spend hours there. The farmers' wives
brought farm butter and eggs (free range). The butter had various markings so you knew
which was Mrs. B. or Mrs. C. The stalls were covered with snow white cloths, eggs in large
farm baskets; the butter was laid on rhubarb leaves which helped to keep it cool. Chickens
were always beautifully dressed. A boiling fowl was two shillings, and five shillings for a
roaster, cockerels a little more.

There was a certain lady in Wellington who always tried to barter the farmers' wives down.
They were quickly on to this and word would go round, "The old bitch is here." Up went the
prices, the price was reduced, the sellers got their price, the lady got her way, and everyone
was happy.

Mrs. Gordas, a Jewish lady, had a marvellous stall of materials. This occupied quite a
space. It was right in front of Price's pet shop, taking in at least five of the stalls now there. Mrs. Gordas sold Shantung silk in various colours. The most popular was a deep cream. There was also Thai silk, unusual at this period of time, lots of broderie anglais. This was used for trimming knickers, then made in white lawn. Trade was very good, money was made and the customers very satisfied. The satins were out of this world, a shimmering stuff called slipper satin.

Mrs. Parr had a greengrocery stall; everything home grown. She lived down Leegomery Road and the house is still there, I hope the garden is too. In those days vegetables were grown by natural means, horse manure. Now if people see this in the street they won't even get it up to put on their rose trees, yet it is liquid gold.

The Teees had a sweet stall. A penny would buy quite a lot of sweets. The toffee was lovely, also the honey and butter sweets. A speciality of theirs was bulls-eyes, they were made specially for them. These were round, with a reddish and white stripe sort of swirling. We are still with the pure stuff. They also sold liquorice allsorts.

The butchers also kept good meat. Topside was a shilling a pound, breast of mutton fourpence a pound, stewing beef tenpence, scrag-end of mutton sixpence, pork sausage a shilling and beef sausage sevenpence. Our butcher was Mr. James.

Mr. Beard of High Street had a tripe stall. Tripe was sold at eightpence a pound and was considered to be very nourishing. The stalls have been extended, no space wasted, and the variety of goods increased. Owens was the pork butcher of the market, selling the various cuts of pork, sausage, faggots, liver and hearts to name a few.

There was also an excellent fresh fruit stall. I think Mr. Smith kept this. He also had a shop at the top of New Street. He met the ‘fish train’ at three in the morning. Fish came in boxes packed in ice. It was always nice and tasted better than it does today.

I must not fail to remember Ken Maddocks. He is still with us and is one of Wellington market’s oldest characters. Greengrocery is his selling point, also, ever since I have known him he never stops talking, but he is a delightful spice of old Wellington.

It would take too long to recall everyone I remember. I have to say something about the outside stalls. The old potato market now houses china, household linen and many other things. The farmers used to bring the fowl in live. Their legs were tied together and they lay on the ground in their feathers until they were sold. You could also buy rabbits, hares, pheasants and guinea fowl. These last are rarely seen today. There was no overhead shelter as we see today so winters were most unwelcome. Crockery was laid out on the ground.

A colourful figure was Johnnie Burrows. He used a tea chest and would put a quantity of china on display. He then began to sell, commencing at sixpence and working up to the price he wanted. If no bids came up to expectation, bang would go his stick on the china. Yes, he smashed it! Another set would be put on the tea chest and the same procedure gone through. He did a good trade, always had a crowd round him and believe it or not you were able to buy half a tea service for ten shillings. Seconds were five shillings. I can assure you he kept the crowd entertained with his patter.

Mrs. Dean was another character. She sold antique jewellery and second hand clothes. She must have been the first to bring these goods to Wellington market. My Aunt Lily bought a beautiful antique brooch in jade and silver for ten shillings. The clothes came from wealthy people outside Wellington.

There was also a man who sold sewing needles and kept on chanting this ditty:

“All sorts of needles—oh!
Isn't that a many—oh!
One for the Daddy,
One for the Mammy,
Left: History of building in New Street, all in one wall, now hidden.

Below: The old Post Office building at 14 New Street became Thompson's Pawnbrokers and Jewellers.
One for the Babby,  
All sorts of needles—oh!”  
He kept up this refrain on and off all day. Everyone knew where the needle man was. Sorry, I never knew his name.

Another character was a man who sold patent medicines. Some of these were made from herbs, others from stuff best left to the reader’s imagination, but he was never without customers.

There is a long tradition of herbal remedies. Spiders’ webs were used to stop bleeding, comfrey was used for chest complaints such as bronchitis, also sprains and broken limbs. It was sometimes known as knit-bone. One no longer sees this sort of thing in the market these days. Long ago there was an old countrywoman in Wellington market who had a remedy for heart disease made from foxgloves. She sold some to a local doctor called Withering. He analysed it and is now very famous as the discoverer of digitalis.

Here we leave the market but I would like to congratulate the Market Company on the layout and architecture of the present market. We are now back in Wellington Square to pay a visit to Mr. Baxter. This shop was on the site now occupied by Olivers. It was quite a large one. The left window displayed corsets etc. These were boned and shaped to the figure, the front at the top on an outward curve to support the bust — no bras in those days! Colours were white, trimmed with white lace, pink trimmed cream and an awful bluey grey trimmed with black, all laced at the back and sort of buckled down the front. The ladies used to hang on the bed rail while the maids laced them up. No doubt readers will have read books where ladies had ‘the vapours’ — now you know why!

The entrance to the shop had bales of material each side. Cretonnes were all the fashion and a good selection was always available. The right-hand side window was given to changeable displays. Sometimes household linen, dress materials or garments. Inside the shop was quite large, the middle being occupied by a coke stove, the pipe running through the ceiling right to the roof top. I would think this was the first form of central heating in Wellington. Baxters, like everyone else in those days, lived over the shop. Coke was a cheap form of heating, sixpence a hundredweight. In winter the shop was always warm. I assume the pipe did the same sort of job for the upstairs rooms on its way to the roof. Lighting was gas. Here again trade was good and Mr. Baxter brought up his family. I do not remember how many children there were. I remember Frances, also the son. I think there were four in all. The son wrote a history of Wellington which was not published, though there is a copy in the library.

Another shop of interest was Cook’s, now David Cheshire. There was always a lot of home-cured ham hanging up outside the shop. These were wrapped in cheese muslin. I never remember any getting fly-blown. The flavour was marvellous. Ham and eggs then was something to remember. Another thing Cook’s were noted for was their cheeses. There was a varied selection: Lancashire, Gloucester, Old English Cheshire to name just a few. Mr. Cook presided over all this, wearing a spotless white apron.

Into New Street to visit the Maypole; what a shop! It was tiled from top to bottom in pale green, with a large brown cow, all in tiles to make a sort of picture. This can be seen at Maw’s museum at Jackfield. The floor was in coloured mosaic. Butter was shown in the window beautifully sculptured; it came in tubs. There were swans, flowers etc., very life-like. It was wonderful to watch the butter platters (sculptors) working and the marvellous shapes produced. When you arrived home you discovered perhaps a little spray of flowers imprinted on your butter.

Next door was the Sayers shop. Mrs. S. was a buxom lady, always very smartly dressed with immaculately coiffeured dark auburn hair. Mr. Sayers was a gentleman’s hairdresser. He also sold tobacco, cigarettes etc. It was a nice little shop; both were characters. Mr. S. died
and Mrs. remarried — a policeman named Morrison — but the business was never the same. I don't know what the end was. It was the commencement of the change coming to Wellington.

On we go to the top of New Street, another little sweet shop, kept by Miss Dabbs. Steps led up into the shop. Miss Dabbs was a little person, very polite to the customers, and enjoyed a little chat. Remember, these sort of shops were the small shopkeepers earning a living and working very hard to do so. They lived over the shop.

Miss Hayward had a shop at the top right-hand side of New Street; the like of which is never seen today. At least six steps led up to this. Inside were huge balls of string about three feet high, of all thicknesses; also ropes hung down the walls. This shop supplied all the farmers' requirements; no tractors then. Lots of binder twine were used for tying up the stooks of wheat etc. Miss Hayward herself was a tall slender person. She used to frizz her hair. Usually she dressed in blouse and skirt with a belt round her waist but she knew all about selling the products in her shop; no one could cheat her.

Into High Street now. An interesting little shop was called The Little Dust Pan, kept by a Mrs. Smith, a very happy rosy cheeked little body, getting on in years. Outside the shop she used to hang dustpans and brushes, all sizes and colours. Inside one could buy various articles such as kettles, bowls, saucepans etc. I make no apologies for drawing readers' attention to how small shopkeepers earned their living.

I must not leave out Dudley and Reece's furniture shop. They sold high class furniture made by them at their Tan Bank workshop. I loved the reproduction antique stuff. It was very expensive and considered exclusive. People were able to choose the style they liked and this furniture was made in the best materials of the day.

We are still in New Street, stopping at Miss Keay's. The windows of this shop were bow fronted; two narrow panels forming the door. So in we go. The shop was a treasure of books, texts, bibles, pencils, rulers, pens, foreign stamps etc. At this time you could buy lovely children's story books: *Teddy's Button* by Amy Lefevre, *Basket of Flowers* and *Jessica's First Prayer* by Hesba Stretton. I still have my book of *Teddy's Button*, also *Basket of Flowers*. Miss Keay herself was a miniature Queen Mary, always dressed in pastel colours, pale mauve and white, blouses of lace with usually a lace cravat and hair dressed in the style of Queen Mary. She was a deeply religious woman. I still have a book marker bought in her shop in the form of a cross in my own bible. She did a good trade, especially with children, striking a rapport with her young customers. Wellington is in need of a shop like this today. Miss Keay also did printing. The premises were somewhere round the back. Sadly on the death of Miss Keay the shop closed down, modern shops taking its place.

Whilst still in New Street we turn to the Post Office. I think it commenced life as a sub-office to Shrewsbury. I do not know who ran this, but 1851 saw the beginning of the Post Office in Wellington as we know it today. This was opposite to Woolworths. Wellingtonians will remember this as Thompson's the Pawn Brokers. Hesba Stretton's father, Mr. Smith was the Post Master. In 1863, the P.O. moved next door to the Bull's Head, opposite Sidoli's. This hotel has long since gone. In 1884 the P.O. again moved, this time to Walker Street, the site now occupied by Trustee Savings Bank. 1886 once again found it in New Street; 1895 it moved to Church Street, later Agnews now Ransome's solicitor. It had quite a long stay here but in 1927 it was moved to its present site in Walker Street, leaving a large pillar-box behind. Note the Ten Commandments of the Post Office, which could have had some connection with the Bull's Head.

Now back to the top of High Street. On the right-hand side, near the top was an alley. This led into a rotunda. The houses were 'one up, one down'. Doors opened at the half-way mark, like stable doors. Tiny windows only gave light and no air, so the importance of the top half door opening is now apparent. Quite large families were brought up here. The cold water tap
was in the middle of the yard; all hot water was heated in the small range — a sort of boiler fitted to the inside, filled by fetching two buckets from the tap. Think of the pouring rain, snow etc. and the privy — loo to us — in a corner. This was earth. When full up the council cart emptied it at midnight. The smell was dreadful, vile. This part of High Street was known as Little Ireland. When the railway came in 1849 I think the Irishmen were housed here. Sometimes they had fights among themselves — no wonder in these conditions. Their amusements were drinking, cards, housey-housey, dice etc.

While we are still in High Street, a few more of the old characters — Snooks and Joker, twin brothers. The story is that a circus came to Wellington and their mother left them behind. How old they would be I do not know. Some kindly neighbours brought them up. Both became cattle drovers. Snooks was on the fat side; I think he must have been lazy; Joker was thin and wiry, his movements quick and lively. Both had ginger hair. Of their Christian names no-one ever knew. They addressed each other as Snooks and Joker. Both drank. They were well known to everyone.

Kissmag was another character. At some time in her life she had been a vaudeville artiste, a tiny little woman, bent with age, she had very red cheeks. I think she used some form of make-up. She also wore very cheeky little hats. It seemed to me that Wellington at this period attracted quite a few colourful people. They came, looked and stayed. There was also a little hunchback called ‘Oh-ar’ Charlie. This was all he would say although he could understand everything that was said to him. One leg was shorter than the other. You could see him pushing his truck made from orange boxes fetching coke. Coke was used by the lesser-off mortals as it was the cheapest form of fuel.

Now more characters; Miss Candlin lived in Alma Terrace, Vineyard Road. She resided in London for part of the year, teaching many debs deportment; how to curtsey or pick up a handkerchief from the floor without bending and showing your bottom. As soon as the courts were over Miss Candlin came home to enjoy the peace of Wellington. She was then ready for the next season. Miss Ellen Bailey was another character, very ‘mannah’. She was a great skater. Winters were bad in those days. Skating took place on Apley pool. Miss Bailey always had a crowd watching her. She was a keen golfer and good at all sports. Whist drives were in vogue in those days and I always remember one evening the MC said ‘Ladies change please’, suddenly a booming voice called ‘Ladies! I prefer women!’. Mrs. Harry Davies, wife of the ironmonger, was a great character. She was a keen Tory and did a lot of work for them. They were exciting days when an election was on. The poll always used to be declared in Wellington, either at the Wrekin Hotel or the YMCA. On this occasion it was the YMCA. I am unable to remember the name of the Tory MP who won, but Mrs. H. Davies I will never forget. The miners had all come from Oakengates, and the crowd was packed solid. Suddenly a cry went up from some wit, “’Ere lads, ’ere comes the bloody bluebird!” Yes, Mrs. Harry Davies came out from the shop, dressed in a blue costume, blue hat, large blue parasol with red bobbins round it. She also had a white cravat. It tickled those miners. Instead of booing her they fell to cheering. She went among them and all you could see was the big parasol bobbing up and down. They were very rough in those days, but these men took the bluebird to their hearts. I believe her husband was very angry, more through fear I would think, but the nickname stuck. Ever after, Mrs. H. was known as ‘The Bluebird.’ Strangers could never understand when someone would say, “Here comes The Bluebird.”

Wellington was also a very musical place at this time, but I will allow the two small posters to speak for themselves. Wellington Amateur Athletic Society sports were held in the grounds of the Bayley College (now Wrekin) on bank holiday Monday. In 1914 competitors’ stewards included Mr. J. Wheatley. The KSLI gave a gymnastic exhibition and drew crowds of people.

Now for someone we have not heard about before. Mr William Wilkes was born at Wombridge, where the vicarage now stands. He regarded himself as a proud Salopian. Mr. Wilkes became a pupil of Mr. Hausey. The school was on The Green at Wellington. Later Mr.
Bert Richards commenced his hairdressing there. He remembered the Wombridge furnaces being blown and he remembered the first train that came through Wellington station. In 1861 he opened his cabinet — an undertaker’s business — at the bottom of New Street. 1862 saw him married, and 1912 was their Golden Wedding. Mr. Wilkes saw the great fire at Groom’s Yard, also another one at Mrs. Turner’s shop in Market Street. He also remembers Captain Charlton returning from the Crimean War. He was the eldest son of Sir John Charlton. Mr. Wilkes was a member of the old Wellington Volunteers under Captain Eyton. He attended the Congregational Church, Tan Bank (now Comet) for thirty years. He was also present at the coming of age of Captain Eyton’s son. Mrs. Wilkes passed away in 1914 and Mr. Wilkes never recovered from the loss of his wife. Ten months later, in 1915 he followed her. At the time of which I speak he was Wellington’s oldest tradesman and one of the most respected. Mr. Wilkes’ father was employed in the office at Wombridge furnace. Later he became cashier at Kety office.

Groom’s Yard, Bridge Road was a very large timber yard. Mr. Groom was a very nice man and was the proud possessor of a beard. Quite a few men in those days grew them. Apart from supplying the builders with wood they made things, such as bread boards, peggies, dollies, wooden rubbing boards. These were the tools housewives used for washing clothes. First the dolly tub was filled with water, the clothes put in; the peggie was then used to bash the washing round. Peggies were something like the old fashioned milking stool, with three short legs, a long strong stave with handle at the top. Dollies were more solid, the base was like the old round loaf, otherwise the method was the same as the peggie. Rubbing boards were ridged across. The board somehow gripped the top of the tub; the clothes etc. rubbed up and down, very hard work. Bread boards were also made — I have one of Groom’s myself, and I do know another one is in New South Wales, Australia, with Groom’s carved round it. This was a wedding present by request. Wooden bowls also came from Groom’s, and I do know clappers were made there. Mr. Sellers and Mr. Galloway were employed there, later becoming directors.

I now come to The Raven, Walker Street. About 1839 indenture of lease and release were made between Edward Cludde of Orleton Hall of the first part and William Taylor and William Pinches, co-partners of the second part both of Wellington, maltsters. William Webb, grocer, became a trustee for William Taylor and William Pinches, which was the third part. The Raven was then described as a messuage or tenament, being on the south side of Walster Street (Walker), together with the malt house. (Messuage — dwelling house and adjoining land.) On the death of William Taylor in 1850 by his will he appointed William Pinches and Thomas Webb (ironmonger) as trustee of his half share, William Pinches being the owner of the other half, in trust for his wife Jane. Later by a codicil Richard Garbett, a land agent, was appointed in the place of William Pinches. Jayne Taylor died August 5th and the following year, 1866, also on 5th August, William Pinches, Thomas Webb, and Richard Garbett sold the property to my grandfather, Charles Frederick Wheatley, an innkeeper.

The deeds record that he had been married since 1833, and so my grandparents began life at The Raven. They had five children; Frederick, Charles, Joseph, Jenny and James (Jim). Staff consisted of Ben, who appeared to be able to do any job requested. At this period in time The Raven had stables. There was also a sort of paddock, so apart from all his duties the horses were looked after by him. I understand he taught the boys to ride. Ella Thomas was the indoor help, acting as nursemaid to the children. When she came to Granny she was unable to read or write, so the boys used to sit down and teach her the three Rs. On leaving my grandmother’s service she became lady’s maid to some Duchess. Years later when I was about eight I met her. She was beautifully dressed, spoke English perfectly and her voice was modulated and very musical. She took my sister and myself to see if we could find the cottage where she was born. We found the ruins in the Steeraway woods. A few fruit trees remained of what I suppose would have been a cottage garden. After this visit Ella Thomas returned to her job and we never heard from her again.
Top left: Charles Fredrick Wheatley.
Top right: Sarah Wheatley and her daughter Jennie.
Left: Ben the stable boy.
Now back to the Raven. My grandmother was a special cook. The Raven at that time catered for dinners, a speciality of hers being jugged hare. A frequent customer to the hotel gave a dinner for his friends; the menu jugged hare, and the sweet was whiskey trifle. This person was so impressed, and enjoyed his dinner so much he left Granny a sum of money in his will. At the end of this story I will give the recipe for the hare, taken from Granny's own book of recipes, dating back to 1875. We are coming to the end of the Raven story; thirty-two years later Granny sold the Raven to Horace Lionel Potter and Alexander Cockburn. They resold it in 1912 to W. Butler & Co. and they have held it ever since.

My grandmother on her retirement bought The Laurels at Admaston. She died in 1910. By this time all the boys had married. I was a baby when Granny passed away, so the information I have received is from my late cousin, Miss Gladys Wheatley. Here follows the recipe for jugged hare.

To jug a hare, cut the hare in pieces, put in a stew jar with salt, pepper and medium sized onion, tie up in a little muslin, a sprig of thyme and a little sweet marjoram, a piece or two of mace, five or six cloves, wine glass full or port, teaspoon full of Worcester sauce, half a pound of lean beef or a beef bone or two, thicken with flour sufficient to make gravy a proper thickness, add the port wine and Worcester sauce to taste.

I have written this recipe exactly as in Granny's book. A word on the Whiskey trifle; I have not given this because even people today know how to make a Victorian trifle. In Granny's day the custard would be made from eggs, not powder, flavoured with a bay leaf; no fruit or jelly.

My aunt Jenny never married; she was engaged to Mr. Millington, an ironmonger. The shop was where Mitchell's is now. Mr. M. was too fond of raising his glass. I have been given to understand my grandmother 'put her foot down'. Girls in those days did what they were told — perhaps obeyed was a better word. I understand she was an accomplished pianist, an artist in painting. I have a Meissen plate on which she painted a country scene of cows grazing in the meadow and drinking from a pool, also two Coalport plates on which she modelled in clay the Prodigal daughter (not son) and the willow pattern of the two lovers crossing the bridge. She was educated at Hiatt's Ladies College. I am still trying to find out where the boys and sister went to school to learn the three Rs. The only clue I have is hearing Father talk about Warner's.

All the family held down good jobs. Uncle Fred died quite young after a broken love affair. Charles married and had five boys and one girl. Joe had an ironmonger's shop, where Dewhurst's is now. He moved on to BSA Birmingham and had two children, one girl and one boy. My father by trade was an ironmonger, but disliked it so much he reverted to innkeeper. Father had three children; myself, sister Sally and brother James. The Raven is still going strong and has been refurbished; sadly the interior has been spoiled by too much modernisation.
The first Methodist Church (or Chapel as it is called) in Wellington was in Chapel Lane, by where the health Centre now is. It was built at the end of the eighteenth or beginning of the nineteenth century. It lasted until 1836, when a new chapel was built which later became the Chad Valley toy factory and is now an antique centre. That chapel was opened on Good Friday, 1836. It held 560 seats. There was a gallery and a lower part. Some of the building was used for the Sunday School and the other part was the church.

In January 1882 there was a very important Trustees' meeting because this church could not accommodate all the people who wanted to come. It was agreed, because of the increase in the Sunday School, that the existing chapel was too small, so they would build another one. There were two suggestions: one was to pull down and rebuild on the same site, and the other one was to buy land and build a new chapel and alter the old one as a Sunday School only. It was agreed to do this (the latter) and begin to raise the money which would be needed. The ground on which the present chapel stands was bought from Mr. H. Bennett for £400. Plans for the chapel were drawn up by Messrs. Herbert Hyett of Bradford and accepted. The cost was estimated at £4,000. I can tell you now that the insurance value of the building is over half a million pounds.

On July 11th. 1882, stones were laid for the foundation for the building. These stones had well-known initials upon them, such as Grooms and Austins of Allscott. The cost of the stone laying was £347.12s.4d. The work then commenced. The chief contractors were Messrs. Paterson and Sons of Wellington for woodwork, Halroyd and Sons, plastering, F. Thompson, slating and T.H. Lloyd and Co. plumbing.

When completed it had accommodation for 850 people with its large galleries. Downstairs there were 407 seats to let, 20 for the choir and 11 free seats. Upstairs there were 128 seats to let, 126 free seats and 150 for the Sunday School.

The opening was on Good Friday, 23rd March 1883. Dr. George Osborne, who had twice been president of the Methodist Conference preached in the morning and Rev. Charles Garnett, President of the Conference that year, presided in the evening. Total collection on that day was £153.9s.1½d. The opening services continued for the next three Sundays, the preachers being well known Methodists. By the close of this period the total raised was £2,942.16s.9d. The Chapel Committee sent £100, the Extension Fund contributed another £100. This left the church in debit to the tune of £700 which was gradually paid off over the next few years.

Mr. P.G. Newman used to attend. He told me that he had to be there half an hour before the service started, but even if he did he might have to sit on a window-sill. Families had reserved pews, that was the idea in those days, you paid a pew rent and had your name on the pew. Other people were not supposed to sit in your pew. If you were not there they might but you had priority. That was a bone of contention, if some visitors came along they might sit in your seat and the pew owner would say, "What are you doing, sitting in my seat?" That was about 1940 I suppose.

I am talking about the Wesleyan Methodist Church; there was the Primitive Methodist Church up Tan bank. They had two sites there, one where the Mosque is now and the other
before that was on the opposite side. The Sunday School building next to the chapel is now used by the West Indian community. These were built about 1898-1900.

The Primitive Methodists were more evangelical than the Wesleyans. They were called the ranters and would stand up and shout and all that business. The Wesleyans were the followers of John Wesley. They came together in 1932 and it has been one church ever since then. I think there was a great Methodist push in those days. They were much better attended than they are now.

**Early days**

I was born in Albert Road, at No. 1 Stewart Place; my father lived there. We lived there for the first two or three years of my life and then we moved to Highfield House, which is now a young people’s home. It was a very nice house, with fine gardens. They have built on it a lot, and all the Highfields land as you go up the Wrekin Road, right the way up to the top on the left-hand side were fields belonging to the house. There were cows in these fields. Mr. Birch of Hollybush Farm used to keep his cows there. My father sold the fields off in 1916 to Mr. Adams who lived mostly in South Africa. Mr. Adams sold it to Mr Lander in 1919 or 1920. Mr. Lander sold most of it off for building; his father lived at Sunncroft.

I went to the kindergarten of the Ladies’ College but fortunately we did not have to go so early in those days. I was within three weeks of being seven when I first went to school, that is why I am so uneducated now you see. Miss Daniels and Miss Pedley were the Principals of the Ladies’ College. Miss Daniels was a very forbidding figure with long black skirts right down to her ankles, white hair brushed right up. She used to take us in club drill. Then there were things you had to do with a ball; you had to get the ball around and throw it and catch it. She was doing this and I never had a ball before and I could never catch it. I was always frightened to death of her.

It was a private school, the fees were £1.50 per term. When Miss Pedley retired Miss Daniels ran it; she was a very nice person. Previous to that Mrs. Hiatt ran it. That is why it was called Hiatt’s Ladies’ College and why it is Hiatt Avenue there.

When I was a tiny boy living in Stewart Place the grounds, playing fields, were across Albert Road. Well the girls had to go past our house and I used to watch them and wave to them and I have never stopped waving since.

I went there for just a term and then my father was opening a branch of the business in Wolverhampton for a year; then he got someone else to look after this business and we came back and lived in a place called Burleigh in Vineyard Road, almost on the corner with Bridge Road. Owen Steventon, the County Councillor, lived next door. I went back to kindergarten from 1917 to the spring of 1919 then went to High School. After four years I went to a boarding school in Cambridge.

The High School was a state school, where New College now is. We were at the top end and the girls were in the bottom end. If you weren’t going to pay you sat a scholarship. If you were going to pay you just went and paid; it was about £2 a term. The schools were both very good, of a high standard. The masters were all university men with their degrees.

There was a choice of schools; there were Wrekin Road School, Constitution Hill and Princes Street, those were the only state schools as far as I can remember. There was a number of private schools; Hiatt’s Ladies’ College, Miss Gardener, who ran a private school, The Grove, Mrs. Smith ran a school on the corner of Albert Road and Roslyn Road, Sunfield. Mr. Webb ran the Grammar School, where Kwik-Save is now. I wouldn’t say they were all of a high standard but they were quite adequate. Then there was the Old Hall School. There was also Wrekin College, which John Bayley started. He was a master at Constitution Hill School and he decided he would like to start on his own. My father was one of the boys the first term it opened.
The people who went to these private schools were rather better off, I suppose you could say middle-class. In those days a lot of people were so poor there was very little they could get. If they were out of work or ill they hardly got anything at all. You would go up Wrekin Road, past the school and there were lots of little cottages and you could say that quite a large proportion of the children there had rickets; they were all in irons. That was due to malnutrition. Up High Street, that was really a slum up there. Those were the sort of people who went to Wrekin Road School, called the Board School.

The Business

My father was Wellington born and bred. The business was started in 1840 by my great-grandfather, Daniel Corbett, who was a country blacksmith. I think he ran a pub there too, because many years later, when we were redecorating the place, we stripped off a lot of old wallpaper and there was a big sign on the wall; it was called The Travellers’ Rest. That is where Mr. Davis lived, on the corner of The Lawns and Park Street.

Great-grandfather was a blacksmith and he started making ploughs. He made steam engines and grinding mills — they were for grinding the corn. The firm’s name was on the side. If you wanted to see one you could ask Mr. A.J. Edwards of Childs Ercall, and I believe they also have one at Blists Hill.

My great-grandfather invented these grinding mills and then his son William went in with him. In those days that was a cheap way of feeding livestock by grinding up your own corn. At the Royal Show at Plymouth in 1892, there was a great competition for grinding mills, to see who had the best. All the makers from the country came to it and Corbetts won the first prize. We then called ours ‘The World’s Best Grinding Mill.’

By 1892 old Samuel Corbett had died and his son William took over the business with another son, George. When William died my father took over with his Uncle George. When George died my father became the proprietor and when he retired I took over.

The business was in the same premises in Park Street, Wellington, all the time but it had its ramifications. One of the sons was Thomas Corbett and he founded an iron works in Shrewsbury; another of my father’s brothers founded Corbett and Williams, all making the same sort of things. As I say, they used to make steam engines and ploughs, even the old horse gear, used particularly for threshing. The old horse had to go round and round and he turned a great big wheel which set the threshing going. They made a vertical steam engine for use on a farm for threshing or to drive these grinding mills. Mr. Jimmy Clay, who was Trevor Clay’s father, was a fitter with us; he used to go out to set all these steam engines and grinding engines up. Later he had a partner and they formed a rival foundry in Foundry Road. Later on still they went up to Ketley and eventually became the Aga works.

During my father’s time we employed about forty or fifty people and during my time about the same. That is when you could get them. It was very difficult to get labour during the war; it was very scarce. We employed a lot of women then; we had about fifteen or sixteen women.

Apart from any other business we had to produce a thousand grinding mills in, I think it was, eight months. We made everything, starting from the big iron right up to the finished article in the foundry there. They were for the United Nations Rehabilitation Organisation. We never knew where they went, we had to pack them all ready for shipment. They would average at fifty or sixty pounds apiece. In the late nineteenth century one of our steam engines would cost about seventy or eighty pounds.

When I started I got a pound a week, which was quite good for a boy straight from school. We are talking now about 1928-30. A labourer’s wage was 38 shillings and a skilled turner was on 55 shillings a week. I had very little preferential treatment going into the family business. These were considered reasonable wages; it was in accord with what everyone else was paid.
Before the First World War they used to start at 6.30 and work until 5.30 with a break for an hour for dinner and they used to get 25 shillings a week. By the time I went, in 1927, we did not work so long; we started at eight in the morning, had a break from 12.30 to 1.30 for lunch and on to 5.30. On Saturdays we finished at 12.30.

Before the war you would have skilled men coming round week after week asking if there was any chance of a job. They just had not got a job at all. We had quite a few fathers and sons in the same business. Most of the employees had been with us for many years.

Here are some examples:
Griffiths, New Church Road. Boy, 12s. per week.
E. Forrester. Fitter. 1900 and he left in 1950.
Albert Morton, 1883, left 1930.

There was a chap in the office who started a book off in 1918. He was called Harold Davies, his father was a tailor. This was after the First World War. The rate for a moulder was 38 shillings. The book goes on to 1972. He filled in all those that were there when he started and the dates when they began.

The boy left without notice and paid one week’s wages. He left to go to the Maypole. There was a man called Millman of Lawley Furnaces who started in 1887 for 45 shillings a week and retired in 1942. Jim Morton, the pattern maker was there for years and years until he
died in 1972. We mainly employed local people but during the war there were Belgians — anybody we could get hold of.

The business went on from 1840 to 1974. I was pleased in the end because things had become so very difficult with the men and that the pleasure that used to be in it was taken out. You couldn't say anything to the men, they would say, "We'll go on strike." It was totally changed with the war and that. We had very good relations before, but then they did not care so long as they got their money at the end of the week.

The equipment and machinery we made was marketed through agents which we had all over the country; in almost every town there was an agent. We used to have agents going around. I used to go sometimes but not very often because I do not like doing that sort of thing. I used to attend the big shows. I attended Smithfield Show in London. They had a big Christmas show every year, except the war years, from 1927 to 1972. We would see all the agents at these shows and some farmers as well — you could sell direct to the farmers if we did not have an agent in the area. Bromley's here were the agents and H. Burgess — they are all over the country now. They bought it from us and then they sold it. If we had not an agent in the area we would sell direct, but it was mostly through agents.

The floor area of the factory was about 20,000 square feet, so it was quite big. There were two storeys in some parts of it. The offices were in the factory as well. We employed three or four people in the offices; they mostly worked the same hours as the people on the shop floor.

Wartime

During the war the company's products did not change much. In fact we had to produce more of what we had been producing because it was food preparing machinery, so we had to make as much as we could. We had then a few women working for us, about sixteen, doing less skilled jobs, labouring jobs and drilling, that sort of thing. After the war we only kept one or two of them for painting — that sort of thing.

I was on the A.R.P. Report centre and we used to get called out in 1940. We were called out a lot at night but as the war went on it got less and less.

There was not much bombing near Wellington during the war, only the bombs on Cluddley and the beet factory, those were the two bombs. But everything was in short supply, food and clothes. Our children were little and in those days there was not a toy made with any metal in it. The best toys we could get were wooden toys made by German prisoners. There were some at a prison camp on Prees Heath and some at Cluddley. There were Italian prisoners too. Quite a few of the prisoners stayed behind after the war. There were also Polish people who stayed behind.

Wellington Characters

Some parts of Wellington have improved, obviously High Street for instance. It was terrible before. The slum part has improved but I do not like seeing so many empty shops all over the place. We used to have regular street cleaners in the old days, they kept the streets nice and tidy, but nowadays you have only to go down on a Sunday morning to see what it is like.

There were a lot of well-known characters, mostly cattle drovers. Snooks was one, a little chap with ten days' growth of beard always on his face and 'boss eyed'. He used to go around driving the cattle. Cattle day was always on a Monday and if you left your gate open on a Monday you were asking for trouble. You would find cattle had all come in your garden. There were no places without gates in those days.

Snooks had a brother called Joker. Snooks was little and quite plump, Joker was tall and thin. They used to get their money for driving the cattle and then they would go to the Smithfield pub and spend it. Tommy Turner was another and then there was a chap called 'Oh Arr', a little hunchback.
When I was small if my mother ever said, “Well, now we will go for a walk. Where would you like to go?” it was always one place, and that was up Spring Hill. There was a little alleyway with a little footbridge over the railway. Of course in those days there were a lot of trains and a lot of shunting there, and the London Express and the Birkenhead, and I used to love to watch those. A further joy was a rubbish heap. It was a terrific great mound. They did not tip it down a hole, they just tipped it, and there was this great mound of rubbish. You could see all the old women with their bags scratching around in the rubbish for anything of value, and the rats running around. I used to love going there. Another delight, a little bit further on was the gas works and all the men working there, the coal coming in and the coke going out. Those were the three interesting things on that walk, one of my favourite walks that I used to go on.

There were not a tremendous lot of rich people, but there were some. The Grooms of Dothill were rich, and the Landers of Sunnycroft were rich and the Herberts of Orleton Hall. But I would say that the majority of people were middle class persons, but there were some very poor people as well.

**Housing**

Nothing much seemed to happen about the slums in High Street and other places for years and years; that was the normal way of going on. It was not until the 1930s that they started to clean them up. It was nothing unusual to see those poor kids with irons on their legs through malnutrition. Apart from High Street there were slums in Wrekin Road, anywhere where there were cottages; there were some up Princes Street; Chapel Lane was very bad, where the health centre is today.

All these were very poor cottages, and up at the top of Park Street, it was awful there, this was up to the time of the war. These cottages were so close to each other that you could hang out of the window and touch the other window opposite. They were built so close so that they could jam as many people as possible into a small place. The landlords, I suppose, built them; they were not council houses, they were privately owned. They were obviously a very small rent because they could not afford to pay so much so they had to be jammed together and they had as many people in them as they could. I think they probably had jobs — cattle droving or labouring or that sort of thing.

In the early days, just after the First World War, there were quite a few jobs because a lot of the men had been killed in the war. It got bad towards the 1930s, but there was a reasonable amount of employment in the early days. Cattle droving was quite big because all the cattle had to come from out in the country and they used to have to fetch them up. There were plenty of labouring jobs about. There were quite a few working in factories. There was Ketley and Sankey’s, W. Corbett and Co., the tank people, and Groom’s timber yard, they employed quite a few.

All those council estates have been built in my lifetime. When I first remember there were no council houses at all. The first ones they built were in New Road, which is now called Regent Street. They were built about 1920. Then they built Millfields estate. Afterwards they built up Orleton Lane area, and Hollies Road. After the war they built the Arleston estate.

Most people did not buy their houses in the early days, they mostly rented. I suppose there were building societies but I think here it was mostly the Co-op. All the houses on the Priory Estate were built by Fletcher’s — they were about £500 each. Those people who were earning forty-five shillings a week, I would say that they were in rented accommodation. It was very unusual for what I call a working man to buy his own house. Many people had large families; my father was one of twelve but a lot of them died in infancy or as small children with diphtheria and that sort of thing.
Before I came to Wellington my family and I lived in Wales. We used to do the milking by hand, haymaking by hand — well everything really. We had about twenty cattle but they would not be all in milk at the same time.

They were cross-breds, shorthorns mainly, and some Herefords; not what you would call dairy stock. When I got married we went to live near Bucknell, a farm up the hill. It was a lot of hard work there. We even made a road. My husband got some help and cut this road through part of the rock and we did work very hard. That was all horses. We had a lot of sheep there. He was one of the early ones in the Clun Forest breeds; he used to take a few prizes. Then in 1938 we came here. That was quite a big thing for us.

This farm was Duncote Farm. We came from Great Hagley, near Bucknell. Duncote Farm was 320 acres. It was a dairy farm before we had it but we did not have a dairy. It was rabbit burrows, gorse bushes and all that sort of thing which my husband cleared and made it all very productive. We had horses when we came and I think we had one tractor. We used the horses for a time and then we went to all mechanical.

The crops we grew were mainly corn. We did not grow potatoes in the early days but we do now. The corn was cut with a binder and made into sheaves, then we used to stock them to ripen, then we would form the old hay ricks. We had quite a lot of poultry, turkeys, geese and chickens and that sort of thing.

I made my own butter and cheese; I used to keep house on what I could make. Every week I used to sell my eggs and the butter. I used to take it all down to Wellington Smithfield. I made about twenty pounds of butter a week and three or four cases of eggs. It was sold to the wholesaler in Wellington Smithfield; it went under the hammer. There was an auction every Thursday. The butter used to fetch about one and six and the eggs about half a crown a dozen. We used to churn the cream once a week. We had big milk pans and we skimmed the cream off the top and then we had a separator.

As a farmer's wife you always seemed to be working; you never seemed to have any spare time. Everybody was so happy. We had people that we employed and they mainly lived in. In the farm house they ate with us and they slept in the house as well. When we came down here the same people came with us. Frank was the waggoner and he came with us. He came to us in 1926. Another person that came with us was Miss Louise Bradley that was; she was my helper.

There was also casual labour. When we came here there was Ivor, the cowman and Frank the waggoner and old Roberts, the home brewer. We used to make our own cider. Roberts used to visit other farms. They had a ring with a horse where you put the apples in a trough and the horse kept going round and round.

When I got married I had a cart horse and a driving horse as part of my dowry and some cows and sheep.

The waggoner looked after the horses; he did all the ploughing and working the land. He had to get up in the morning at 4.30 to get the horses ready for working. You had two teams of horses, the same team did not work all day long. They were shire horses, ours were the grey shires; they did the ploughing and the pulling. It was in the 1940s, about 1945 I should think, when we finally sold the horses. We got rid of the horses because the tractor was more
Above: Duncote Farm.

Right: Housekeeper’s cupboard at Duncote Farm.

Below: Mr. Griffiths with Shires.
economical and more productive. They were sold at Shrewsbury market when it was in the
town — down by the river side. They used to trot them up and down and then they sold them
under the hammer.

The first tractor we bought was a Ford. It was very reliable; they still are the most popular
ones. The baling equipment was International, the corn row was from the Panification Works
in Foundry Road, and we had a Corbett root pulper — that was made in Wellington too.

The vet. was Mr. Martin. He came on horseback when we had got a sick horse, so that
must have been in 1938. He was retired but they must have been very busy and he came out.
They are still vets, Martin, Simpson and Reid.

I bought a kitchen piece down at the farm. It is in light oak. I bought it from Pierce's sale
at what is now the Priory Nursing Home. They were related to Barber and Son. Miss Barber
married a Pierce. I think this furniture was locally made.

Living on the farm you were busy most of the time, but you had to make your own
entertainment. During the winter we used to have fairly big parties. We killed our own sheep
and pigs; Dad was a butcher. My husband used to kill our own sheep and pigs. I used to cure
the pigs. It was salted and left on a cold slab in the cellar. The bacon was just cured longer. It
would keep for twelve months. We used to salt it down because there were no fridges in those
days. We killed the pigs in the winter; you see you cannot cure it in the summer. You would
not kill a pig after April; it would not keep, the weather would be too hot. You are not allowed
to do it now, everything has to go to the abattoir. I do not think it is so hard on a farm today,
there is not so much hard work, everything is done by machinery.

I used to make my own bread. I never bought a loaf of bread. I could not bake here because
the person who was here before had the oven taken away. I used to deal with Morris's; they
used to deliver for me, and I was able to sell them dressed poultry and that sort of thing to
pay for the groceries.

There was oil lighting in the house for a long time and then we finally invested in a
generator for some electric light. My husband was a wonderful man, he would tackle
anything. He built this wall all around the house. We used to burn mainly timber on the fire,
but the coalman would call to bring you coal or you could go and collect it.

Before we came here I used to do my own baking and it was our own flour. My husband
used to take the wheat down to the local miller and he used to mill the wheat and then we
had the flour back for baking our own bread. The flour did not keep long because we had such
a big family. There were eleven of us when we moved here.

I used to do the washing in an old boiler. I used to get up at 4.30 to start it and I would be
pegging it out by the time the men came in for their breakfasts at 8.00. The men used to get
up at 6.30 and do all the work before breakfast. You see the horses had to be fed; you can put
some petrol in an engine and off you go.

In the evenings and weekends the men did not go down to the pub, they used to go to
Chapel. They did not drink, you see. Well, some of them did but I suppose we were just lucky.
My husband did not drink you see.

We used to get our fertilisers from Austin's — it is Fisons now. They used to make it there.
You would put a lot of manure on the ground for root crops. You had to grow everything that
you wanted, swedes and mangolds. They were for fattening the cattle. You would also use the
mangolds for the ewes and lambs; it was a milk-producing thing. The sugar beet was grown
under contract. We usually had two sheep dogs; they were very well trained, but my husband
did not go in for any trials.

We always had some shooting; he was always out to reduce the rabbits, get rid of them.
They did terrible damage, they would eat anything. If there was a field of growing grain they
would bite it off as well as the mangolds and swedes, they would eat them off as well. They
were a terrible pest here. We would sell them at Wellington market or eat some if we wanted to. They were a valuable source of food. They made quite a lot of money in wartime.

I do not really know how effective scarecrows were. You think they help but the crows get used to them and you have to move them about a bit. We never employed a boy with a pair of clappers. We used to get the children to do it occasionally, but they did not like to do it. We always had a scarecrow and the men would go out in the evening with a gun.

I left school at fifteen. I was the eldest of the family so I was very much in demand at home. I met my husband first at Sunday School and at the Sunday School parties. They did not have farmers’ clubs in those days, nothing like that. I think Ruth would be fifteen or sixteen when they started Wrockwardine Young Farmers and she joined that. There was nothing like that when I was a girl; people just went to church or chapel and that was the main thing.

When there was a fair we took the horses all dressed up in their brasses but only if it was a show. You did dress them up for sale. We had horse brasses, they do not look much if you have not got them, do they? I was down at my old home a few weeks ago and I saw the old horse brasses hanging up there, and I did so want to take them. I used to have to clean them when I was a girl.

Everybody has water laid on today. We did not have that. You had to carry the water. We got it from the well. I had to carry water and do everything, churning, bread making and things like that. The well was usually in the orchard or in a field not too far off. When we came to Duncote there was only a pump in the back yard, and that was hard work. If you had a big family you used a lot of water. It did not freeze up very often, it was a spring and it was always running, but very occasionally it froze.

I think people were happier than they are today. They did not have time to be miserable; there was not time, you had to get on with the jobs. I do not think people worried so much about money as they do today. With having a farm we were sort of self sufficient; we used to produce everything we wanted.

We had fruit trees so there was plenty of fruit. We had good laying hens. We ate our own hens even though we had fed them. It was no use making pets of anything.

The farm house is about eight hundred years old. They are going to knock it down, the motorway is coming right through the buildings at the back. It is a National Trust house, a listed building. They came and inspected it years and years ago when we lived there. They had got to make a decision, it had to be repaired or it had to come down. People from the National Trust Headquarters came and said they did not want it to be taken down so we had some repairs done. These are genuine timbers, it is original.
MR. HARPER:

A Farmer's View of Wellington

I never lived in Wellington but for more than forty years I lived in the parish of Wrockwardine. I came to live by Wellington in March 1933 but had known a little of the town since 1922 or 1923, having attended the annual sheep sales at the Smithfield. Not much has been said about the Smithfield and that great man Arthur Barber.

Wellington Smithfield must have been one of the best in the country in the 1920s and 1930s for fat cattle, sheep and pigs. I have seen, I think it would be Mr. Barber himself, selling fat cattle up until nearly six o'clock in the evening under the old swinging gas lamps. They were the finest well finished fat cattle in the country. Butchers would attend and buy from Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Walsall and all the Black Country towns, Stafford and the Potteries — and the locals of course.

There was a dairy auction too. Mr. Hubert Pearce sold cows and calves. I do not remember who sold fat pigs. Malcolm Paterson's father sold store pigs and a man, I think he was a farmer, called Calor Powell sold sheep — hundreds every Monday.

There was an annual wool sale too, probably in September. It was held in the field called the Woolfield just across the road from the auction yard, to the back of The Vineyard big house. It was by the house where the Barbers lived, now called the Priory Nursing Home. The Woolfield was part of Barbers' small farm, now North Road. Mr. Pearce lived there until his death when he had the firm after Mr. Barber's death. After Mr. Hubert Pearce died Mr. Harold Taylor took over the firm. He lived at Admaston until his death, when Barber and Son was taken over by Mr. Cecil McMorran, a Cheshire man.

1948 was Barber and Son's centenary year and my wife and I with other clients of the firm had a cordial invitation to a dinner and dance at the Palais de Danse, Wellington on Wednesday, 15th December, 1948. There were cocktails at seven, dinner at seven thirty and dancing from eight thirty to one and everyone had a splendid evening's entertainment. I have invitations to the next centenary to be held in December 2048.

Mr. McMorran died quite recently. He had lived at Market Drayton for many years. He had been articulated by Henry Manley & Co. of Crewe.

Most of the fat cattle bought at Wellington in the 1920s and early 1930s went by rail. They were loaded on trucks just across the road in front of the Smithfield Inn which was run by Reg Povey and his wife, who must have been very rich people.

Just over the railway bridge where today is Hall, Wateridge & Owen was John Bromley & Co., for many years a thriving business, where one could get almost anything from a pin to a parish church. If they had not got it they would get it for you. Opposite Bromley's, by the GWR goods yard, was Groom's Timber Merchants, one could get almost anything in British wood.

If you turned left into Market Street there was Arthur Pearce's premises. They were builders' merchants. Opposite was the Wrekin Brewery, also a blacksmith's and wheelwright business. There was York's in New Street; they were water engineers, plumbers and decorators.

We must not forget Ossie Pointon and his sons of Crown Street who were plumbers and
painters and decorators. Ossie was that great man of The Forest Glen. There was Percy Roper's yard on the corner of Wrekin Road and Walker Street. Carvers were builders too.

There were also two thriving railway goods yards, three cinemas and much more. All those businesses must have been the life-blood of Wellington years ago. Now I think they have all gone and the great little town is becoming a town of supermarkets, great monstrosities, draining the life out of small business.

There were several doctors in the town and in the little Cottage Hospital in Haygate Road operations were done up to around 1960. That hospital and the Recreation ground were given to the town by the late Mr. and Mrs. Bowring of the big house they call Bradley Moor standing opposite 'The Rec'. The Bowrings were business people in the town. The late Misses Webb of Queen Street and Mrs. Chidley, late of Walker Street were nieces of the Bowrings.

Following the death of Mr. Tom Morris of Hobson's, Miss F. Webb took over Hobson's, stationers and printers of The Square, and owned the business until her death in December 1975. How the Council, or the Markets Company became owners of the printing works on the left entering the market from The Square is a mystery.

Wellington Market has always attracted much custom and on Saturdays in the days gone by it would be open until eight thirty or nine o'clock in the evening. In the 1920s and 1930s one could have a day's trip return to London for one pound.

Farming around 1940.
MR. E.W. MOORE (born 1904):

As a small boy I recall sitting on the doorstep of one of two cottages next to the Cock Hotel and watching the swallows skimming along the road surface, twittering as they flew. In the yard at the back Jack Freeman used to kill cattle and we kids used to watch him. It was also the place where menageries or Wild West Shows were held, with dancing bears, Red Indians etc.

Where the garage (Reades) is now was the Rockery, a lot of small slums, where John the salt man lived. He used to make a living selling salt from door to door, sawing a piece off a block for 2d.

I recall cows being driven from the Priory (now a housing estate) to be milked in an offshoot of Walker Street. Then Walker Street had a blacksmith’s and cycle shop and the Fire Station.

Two characters in those days were Snooks and Joker, who was I believe, in his young days a clown with Sanger’s Circus. He was a great swimmer and diver, as I saw him performing in the canal. How they lived was cattle droving and anything else they could pick up.

Groom’s Yard had a steam crane to lift the timber; a sight it was, held up by great baulks of timber. The whole contraption moved when it was working. It was driven by an old man and his little dog. Their timber carriages used to leave the yard at six o’clock in the morning. The horses were a sight, so beautifully kept.

On Tan Bank was a skating rink, where the Grand Theatre is now. Opposite was a pinafore factory, where my mother worked as a girl. I remember as a boy going along the Salop Road to meet the Wild Beast Shows, coming by road from Shrewsbury, and seeing the balloons from Shrewsbury Show.

The Fire Brigade was pulled by two horses. It seemed one galloped while the other one ran. The Golf House had a fire which the brigade could not put out because they could not find the fire hydrant. They had pulled the engine over it!

At the back of the market was the Artillery Depot. I stood in Market Street to watch the guns come out to go to the 1914 war. The Remount Depot was in Admaston.

On August Holiday at The Wrekin there was always a fair, with hobby horses, swings and so on. At Easter we used to have Molly Dances by the Cock Hotel.

There used to be a covered wagon which brought flour from Allscott mill to the town, pulled by two white mules. Our Sunday School treats were in brakes (two horses) to Haughmond Hill.

At the top of Golf Links Lane was the ruin of an old tythe barn where my mother as a girl used to go to pay the rent of a cottage in Ercall Lane, one of two. Lord Forester’s agent used to collect the money for the cottage.

My grandfather told me where the clinic is now used to be Nailors Row that ran from High Street and ended at the side of a little shop that used to be known as Top Espleys. It was a row of small cottages where people made nails on a little hearth outside the door.

Where the cricket ground is now was the old Shropshire Volunteers training ground and Powder Lane was where they kept the ammunition etc. in a shed.

The old barn at the bottom of Limekiln Lane was where they held old-time prize fights.
(opposite the Old Hall). I believe one of my ancestors lost an eye fighting there. He also said the Catholic Church should have had a tall spire but they found out it would not carry it.

The field at the top of New Church Road was used to burn cattle that had died of anthrax.

After the 1914 war we had as MP a General Townsend who surrendered to the Turks and was relieved of his command. Horatio Bottomley spoke for him in The Square. He was elected. (’nuff said!).

I was once told by an old engineer off the railway that the churchyard used to run across the station road as far as New Street and the soil that was dug out formed the embankment between Wellington and Admaston.

My grandad said one market at Wellington was a ‘Gorby market’ where farmers and people with money could get workers for themselves.

Grandad helped to build the Wesleyan chapel. He fell off and broke his hip and never worked again. He went to school with John Bayley, the founder of Wrekin College; they both sold papers on the street as lads.

On the second bend going up Ercall Lane there used to be two cottages — it’s one house now. In front of it stood the weighbridge for the gravel from the Ercall. It belonged to A. Pearce, Timber Merchant.

In those days the Salop Road was known as Street Lane and I was working on some alterations at a house that had once been two cottages and was owned by Mr. Thornton (Industrial Bearings). I found in the garden part of a tombstone with the date 1766 and it marked “W. Davies, painter of Street Lane”. Up to 1940 the Davies family lived there.

I believe the town pump stood in The Square. At the top of Station Road was an iron trough with a tap in it for horses to get a drink by pressing their noses on a round knob.

On the Salop Road was a stone wall which was demolished when the houses on the Priory were built. In the middle of the wall was a stone about 5 ft. square with the Salop coat of arms on it. I wonder what happened to that.

In the Golf Links Lane by the entrance to the old club house was a huge stone at least 4'6" in diameter, unlike any local stone. Mr. Smith, my schoolmaster, said it had been brought there by a glacier years ago. I wonder what happened to it.

The Meyricks of Apley Castle were, I believe, a branch of the Percy family, or so I was told by my mother seventy years ago. One of them lost his life trying to swim his horse across Apley Pool. Another was killed in the Zulu wars. His stone is in the Parish Church. One married an actress in London and shocked the family when found out. She was low class according to them. At one time they were wealthy because among other places they owned Pembroke Docks. My mother said that one of her ancestors was a groom for one of them. He was in the charge of the Light Brigade. The groom who was in charge was hit in the head, his horse was killed and years later died in Bicton Asylum.

Before the Trade Unions there was what was called the Trade Guilds who used to have a procession each year in Shrewsbury. My grandad, who was a bricklayer, like me, was carrying the one pole of the banner up Wyle Cop when one of his mates got a hot pork pie and put it under his top hat while a gale of wind was blowing. The poles of the banner were on the wall over his fireplace for years.

In a short time I have tried to help with your book. Please excuse the writing as my eyes are not as good or my hands as steady as I would like. I hope you will find it of some use.
PAUL WOODHALL:

The Cetti Family

Paul and Alexandra Cetti came to Wellington from near Lake Como in Italy in the early nineteenth century. I have the naturalisation papers which say that Paul Cetti had lived in Wellington since 1836 and was an Italian citizen. He had sworn to uphold Queen Victoria and, although a good catholic, support the protestant succession. The certificate was enrolled in the High Court of Chancery. They started business as jewellers and antique dealers at 49 New Street.

They had four children. The eldest, John Charles, carried on the business and was also one of the first directors of Wellington Markets Company. He had three children: Paul, the eldest died in South Africa during the Boer war. His eldest daughter, Maria, married a farmer, Jim Goodall and they kept Steeraway Farm. Jim died quite young but Maria continued farming until about 1950 when she sold the farm to Bob Bebb of Haygate Farm, now The Falcon.

The youngest daughter, Beatrice, married Sidney Woodhall, who came from West Bromwich. He was a veterinary operator and show jumper. In fact he was one of the founders of the British Show Jumping Association. They had four children, Warwick, Mary, Margaret and Paul.

The boys carried on the business and won at nearly all the major shows, including Harringay, White City etc. The eldest daughter, Mary, married John Jones, who became the senior partner in Barber and Sons, the auctioneers. Margaret married Clement Alexander and lived in Malaya, where she was a Q.A. nurse and he was Chief of Malayan Police.

Saint Patrick's Church

The Roman Catholic Church was started in Wellington on Mill Bank and a school was built next to it. In 1906 a new church was built called Saint Patrick's. The priest who built the new church was Fr. Jones. The longest serving priest was Fr. Charles O'Reilly who, because he raised the money to pay the debt off the church, was told by the bishop that he could stay in Wellington until he died, which he did. He was renowned for his fund-raising. When the Irishmen came over to the beet factory for seasonal work he used to walk to the beet factory and pass his collecting box around the catholics who were there.

The priest in charge now is Fr. Brendan Hoban who was born in Whitchurch, where his father, who was a vet., died when he was eleven. The family moved back to Ireland, but he has now completed a full circle and is parish priest in Shropshire.
MRS. NAOMI EVANS:

_Wrekin Mineral Works_

My father started work at O.D. Murphy & Sons Ltd. in 1928, the year I was born. He and my mother moved from their home in Ironbridge. My mother’s home was Coalbrookdale, where some years earlier Mr. and Mrs. O.D. Murphy had been tenants of my grandmother, Mrs. Dorsett.

I grew up at Crystal House, which was built into the mineral water works on the Holyhead Road, opposite the Old Hall School. I well remember the days when the Smith’s Crisps lorry arrived and large tins of crisps were thrown from one man to another — finally being stacked in the crisp room. Chocolate coated sponge cakes, pink and yellow, were stored there too and they were a special treat.

The bottling plant was fascinating to watch and from this noisy building you crossed a yard to a pretty, quiet, walled garden at the rear of The Uplands which had once been the home of Mr. and Mrs. Murphy and their sons, Ronald and Graham. The upstairs flat was occupied by Miss Gowing, Mr. Murphy’s private secretary from the brewery in Market Street and downstairs was her kitchen and pantry and the board room. I remember a large oil painting of Mr. Murphy in his Wenlock mayoral robes hanging over the fireplace in the board room. I held many a birthday party in the garden. The well from which the crystal pure water came for the ‘pop’ is still there. There was also the pump room which throbbed night and day and where a giant wheel revolved. This was a ‘no-go’ area for me.

We had a small back yard at the rear of my home surrounded with corrugated tins. Beyond those tins lorries passed, girls in clogs from the cellar clattered by and when all was quiet it was a fascinating playground.

My father spent many long hours in the office waiting to ‘cash up’ with the lorry drivers who had been delivering pop all over the county and into Wales. Those drivers were great characters and some often came home rather inebriated after having visited so many pubs during the day.

I well remember sitting in a high old Vulcan lorry and being driven round the yard. On the bend I fell out — grazing my little finger. Quite an escape!

Across the main yard was a large brick building. Beer was bottled in the cellar and Mr. Hay kept a hot fire burning all day in the boiler house. One day we were given an eel and I stood by this huge boiler while he skinned it for me. It was always an adventure to climb this building to the very top which was finally reached by a ladder and inhabited by pigeons. The massive chimney was quite a landmark.

My mother, who was an trained nurse, was often called upon to render first aid when an accident occurred in the works or on the busy A5, which always seemed to happen on a wet Sunday afternoon.

I have a photograph of myself at about four or five sitting astride one of the shire horses which were used originally to pull carts of pop. These were eventually replaced.

The bottle washing plant fascinated me and I was occasionally allowed to use the foot operated pedal to put the tops on the bottles.
We played table tennis on Sundays in the mess room. During the war we had Army Catering Officers based at Sinclair's — now Glynwed — staying with us. They enjoyed playing table tennis. On a nice day Dad and I would scramble through the mess room window and walk on the roofs overlooking the laundry, Princes Street School and Woodhall's stables.

A little further along the road was the malt house. Land was cleared in front of it and Mr. Ronald Murphy offered it to my father for a garden. It became a pretty garden with rockeries, rose-covered arches and an iron-framed garden seat from one of the pubs which is now on our patio today. My little dog was killed on the busy road outside our front door and buried in this garden.

Dad used to do his turn at 'fire watching' during the war but had been known to sleep on the seat on warm summer evenings to be awakened by the friendly local policeman walking by.

I only had to walk round the corner to Princes Street School. It was strange when my husband taught there for some twelve years. The Headmaster, Mr. Cliff Buttrey, allowed me to run home and tell my mother when I had passed the scholarship for the Girls' High School. I started there as war broke out. We had two little girls from Smethwick living with us as evacuees and later on an older girl from Holly Lodge who drew very well indeed and had a 'crush' on Kenny Baker who was starring in The Mikado. She eventually worked at the radar establishment at Malvern. I wonder where they are today?

All the buildings are demolished now but memories last for ever don't they?
The Panification Works

These works were in Foundry Road — now extinct and part of the swimming pool car park. Edward Smith bought these works just before the Great War. He came from Kells of Gloucester, agricultural implement makers. When the Depression came (in the 1920s) he sold out to Clay's, who later moved to Ketley; their factory became the Aga. Edward Smith was the son of the Gloucester artist Edward Smith, who was famous for his trees. Until Edward Smith took over, the works made tools for bakeries. The word panification means process of bread making. I think Perkins was the name of the people before it was turned over to agricultural tools. The firm was originally Pfeuder, Werner and Perkins; the first two returned to Germany just before the Great War started. I believe Perkins are still in business somewhere up North. I do not remember how many men were employed but the works was quite a large size and exhibits were shown at the Royal Agricultural Show. Edward Smith also gave Wellington its first dog show. He himself bred pugs. Sadly things did not go well for him and he went to Wolverhampton.

A.S.

Music and Drama

I have tried to give readers a glimpse of Wellington past. It was a thriving market town with many attractions including Wellington Operatic Society and Orchestra. Mr. John Wesley was responsible for these events which took place at the Grand Theatre. Here again Wellington attracted people to the various musical shows and dramas. Quite a few professional companies used the theatre, including D'Oyly Carte. I saw Il Travatore, Faust, Maid of the Mountains etc. at about twelve years of age, but my aunt always took me to see the shows. There was also lots of Gilbert and Sullivan, The Mikado etc.

A.S.
UGO BASSINI:
Sidoli's

My grandfather, Tranquillo Sidoli, came from Italy at the age of fourteen years to work for his sister at the shop in Shrewsbury situated in Princess Street. He arrived in Wellington in 1912, and bought the Shakespeare Inn, at this time kept by Mr. Challenor. There was stabling at the rear in which horses were kept. Some of the stables are still standing. The inn was actually bought from Margaret Keay.

Tranquillo actually changed the business from inn to cafe, and so was born Sidoli's. He commenced with a bag of tea and coffee, helped by a crate of pop. The tea and coffee were a penny each.

I must digress a little here to give readers some idea how hard my grandfather worked to attain in life what he wanted. Before my grandfather bought Wellington and Shrewsbury shops he had a fish and chip cart, actually pushing this himself from Wellington to Dawley and then on to Oakengates. Can you imagine anyone doing this today? At this period in his life he stayed at The Oddfellows in High Street. In 1920 he became the first importer of Espresso coffee machines, buying 500, which, I conclude, he must have sold. He was a very far-sighted businessman.

1936 saw Frank and Angelina Bassini arriving from Borth, South Wales to take over the business; Maurice, Frank's brother, joining them. In 1968 came the retirement of the older generation and into the business came Remo, Ugo and Adriano his sister. There was more change in 1976, when my wife Rosanna and I took over. We continued the high quality cake, pastry and bread etc.

Specialities of Sidoli and Bassini were their ice creams, made from fresh dairy cream, eggs and salt. This was all made by hand and frozen with blocks of ice.

Ice cream carts were horse drawn by two beautiful white horses. These cost five pounds each. They were called Mary and Nancy. Bert Tiley looked after them; he was employed by Mr. Johnson the blacksmith of Walker Street, now the site of the Post Office.

Up to the year 1940 opening hours were 7 am. to 12 midnight, seven days a week, including Christmas Day. War years were very hard going, what with the blackout and food rationing. During this period the café saw many different nationalities: Americans, Poles, Russians, Italians etc. Tea was 2d, coffee 4d and 2d bought five Woodbines; ice cream cornets were 1d.

Many famous people over the years have eaten at the restaurant; all the big bands from the Palais de Danse, later the Majestic Ballroom; also many from the music hall and stage including Jimmy Jewell.

Randolph (Randy) Turpin, the boxer, married in Wellington, at New Street register office. The reception was held on Sunday in the café in New Street.

One last thing which must not be forgotten is something very rare. Grandfather was one of the first people in Shropshire to show films in a pub. This pub is in Shrewsbury, still standing. I am unable to remember its name, but for readers who are interested, as you leave the station continue on the left-hand side, you will then see where Grandfather showed his
films, opposite the Granada. The Wellington café also enjoyed this privilege; at this time the cinema not having come into its own. One can imagine the interest taken by people, also the attraction for customers. Again how astute my grandfather’s business sense was. These were the days of the silent films.

Although my grandfather worked so hard he was basically a very happy man. He also enjoyed having his family around him. He was always ready to help others less fortunate than himself and always gave to the various charities.

*Left:* Early picture of Sidoli Café.

*Below:* Early model of Sidoli ice cream van.

*Bottom:* The Bassini family — Grandson (Ugo) and great-grandson of Tranquillo Sidoli.
Few people have mentioned Reade's, but I think as my father commenced the business, its history is worth telling. It was opened during the Great War by Creed’s of Horsehay, hauliers for tractors. Later the business was taken over by Father, Herbert Reade and so began Reade’s Garage. In no time it became known for quality workmanship and straight dealing with the customers. I feel sure some cars were quite able to find their way on their own and came back recharged, ready for the road.

On Father’s retirement I took over the business and was able to expand it. When the time came for me to retire my son Guy did not wish to take on the responsibility, so the garage was sold.

The new owner has further expanded and the business is still going strong.

The sign on the photograph below was painted by Manders Fairground, who held a fair at the back of the garage every year. The people on the photograph are: RAC man on the right, next to him Mr. Herbert Reade, doorway Ernie Evans (mechanic), next to him Charlie Goode.
AUDREY SMITH (née Wheatley):

The Misses Garbett Preparatory School for Young Ladies and Gentlemen

The school was founded by Miss Hilda Garbett at 14 Wrekin Road (the house is still there). Her first pupils were her niece, Nora Nunnerley, and nephew Gerald Burgess. So great was the demand for places that when the Express and Star moved to the opposite side of Tan Bank, Miss Garbett moved her school to the larger premises. (The Express and Star office was the original Rechabite Hall. It is now a shop for tots' requirements.)

The school was a great success. Fees, I think, were £1.5s. per term; music, dancing, embroidery etc. 7/6 extra. The school always opened with prayers and the March of Flambeaux, or in other words 'morning drill'. On the closure of the pinafore factory, formerly the Congregational chapel and now Comet, the school once again moved to larger premises. Britain was at this time at war with Germany. During this period numbers kept growing.

We had a marvellous loo. It was a huge room with a red bricked tiled floor. The loos were made of mahogany, like a bench. There was a space for Dad's bottom, Mom's, sister's and a little one. So although it was a long bench each had its own cistern with a chain — great fun for children to pull all the chains at the same time! If you were caught you had 100 lines; hands used to ache.

I remember one day Gerald Burgess said, "Auntie Hilda is having a visitor this morning, just watch me." So when Miss Garbett was called out he tiptoed to the door to reveal Auntie Hilda in the arms of a Canadian soldier, being soundly kissed. All of us had a good laugh, but she was mad! We all giggled for the rest of the day.

Miss Muriel had joined the school on its move to the Express and Star; she was a model of decorum, very different to her sister. During dancing lessons we were all taught deportment, girls and boys alike; boys how to ask a lady to dance, girls to respond. If anything was dropped the knee was bent and the object gracefully swept up by your hand.

Nearly all the Wellington tradesmen's sons and daughters attended here. Of course at this time we were a thriving community. Among the pupils I remember: Ron Barlow, Reg Bofley, Mary Wellings, Mollie Gallier, Olga and Bernard Hickman, Betty Gwynne, Audrey and Sally Wheatley, Olga and Eunice Barnes, the brothers Rawlings (Wrekin Road), Lucy Watson, Nora Shoebottom, Joan Lawrence, John and Billy Phillips, Kathleen Smith and many more.

Now came the end of the Great War and the beginning of the depression. Belts were tightened. The Tan Bank premises closed and the school once again moved, this time to Crescent House. The pupil ratio was falling badly. Later an aunt (Mrs. Bratton) died and left The Grove to Miss Garbett, so we moved again. The Grove was a large villa and some pupils were able to board. Once again the school prospered. Now the name was changed from Miss Garbetts to The Grove School.

It continued for quite a time until Miss Muriel found the school too much for her but it was sold to Rev. Dutton. Before closing it passed through several different people's hands. The Grove is no longer with us and where it stood are several new houses.

While on the subject of schools I would like to say that Wellington has always been well
served. There was another private school in Wellington at this time called St Christopher’s. The headmistress was Miss Dawson. The school was off Wrekin Road, somewhere by Appledore Gardens. Miss Dawson only took six or seven pupils. Among them were Pat Reade, Alf and George Gough, Marjorie Passant, Marigold Blake, John Flint and Gertrude Matichek.

Miss Watson taught the three Rs and taught well. She is still alive and living in Worcester.

Mrs Owen, Mill Bank, had a kindergarten. The house is now occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Jones.

Lower down Mill Bank are some large houses with bay windows. Here a Captain Gibbs held his school — a shilling a week. One of his pupils was Edna Dunn (née Bacon). This house also remains.

We now come to Watling Street. Opposite the Cock Hotel was a good school run by the Misses Sugden for boys and girls. This school also took boarders. The premises were later bought by Mr. and Mrs. Sutch.

Wellington, I think you will agree, was well served by the various teachers of the time. Captain Webb’s Grammar School for Boys, at the top of New Street was also going strong. This school prospered under Captain Webb, later it was taken over by Captain Froom, which brought about a decline and the school eventually closed.

I have only specifically mentioned those schools which have been left out of the history books such as the Victoria County History. There were many other good private, church and Board schools which are included in other books.

I would draw readers’ attention to the loss in trade as these schools began to close. There were winter and summer uniforms, so imagine how hard hit were the traders who supplied these.

Miss Garbett’s School, a dancing display.
Jack Twinney and High Street

My husband, Jack Twinney, carried out his boot and shoe repairing business in High Street, Wellington for 40 years. He was not a cobbler and he hated being called that. His mother paid 2/6 a week for 3 years for him to be taught boot and shoe making and repairing. He had left school at 14 years and was apprenticed to Mr. Billy Gwynne who had his shop in Crown Street. Jack finished his apprenticeship with Mr. Gwynne when he was 17 years old and started up his own business in High Street. His shop was demolished in later years to make way for Lowe Court and he moved to another building higher up, nearer to Mill Bank. The antique shop opposite his first shop was a grocery shop, where the bacon was sliced on the bacon slicer while you waited and large oriental looking canisters stood high on the shelves containing sugar, tea, coffee (which was a luxury then) and so on, ready to be weighed out as needed. At one time there was a water pump outside this shop.

Joined on to the grocery shop was a public house called the Red Lion Inn which was taken down to widen the corner from High Street to Glebe Street. At that time there were 5 public houses within a few yards of each other, namely The Kings Head and Shelton Oak on one side and the Coach and Horses, Hand and Heart and the Red Lion on the other side. At the end of High Street where it meets with King Street and Mill Bank, there was a large free standing lamp in the middle of the road. We loved to watch the man going on his rounds on his bike when dusk came, to light them. He did this from a lighter on the end of a long pole.

My husband was champion swimmer in Wellington for 5 years and was the first to have his name on the silver perpetual cup. He only gave up entering for the Challenge when the organisers put a handicap of the full length of the baths on him. He taught quite a few boys to swim but said his own father taught him by throwing him in.

All the shops in Wellington closed on a Wednesday afternoon and most owners and assistants belonging to what was called the Half Holiday Football team. They played home and away matches but not too far away. Jack was one of the players. He also enjoyed fishing in the Tern and Severn at Atcham. Usually two of his nephews and their friends went along as did our dog. They had to cycle with all their tackle. The dog always rode on the carrier at the front of my husband's bicycle. In the summer they sometimes went on Saturday night and
stayed until Sunday morning, taking plenty of food with them. One evening Jack went to a quiet spot to put down the lines to catch some eels. When he went back to the boys they were roaring with laughter, the dog was eating a pork chop. Jack joined in with the laughter until he realised it was his chop the dog was enjoying.

Lower down High Street towards the town centre were two bakeries. The owners of the first one were Mr. and Mrs. Waite, and Mr. and Mrs. Frost had the other. Mrs. Waite used to weigh the loaves and if one was too light she would cut a piece of bread from another loaf and put it to make weight. My sister and I always, when Mother sent us for a loaf, went there so that we could break the extra piece in two and eat half each on our way back home. Bread never tasted so good!

Jack also did quite a lot of gardening and he always liked to bring in the first crops of each vegetable and rhubarb with pride. He did not mind who brought in the next lot. His favourite flower was the wallflower which he always grew from seed.

I could go on and on about the old Wellington but will stop now. Perhaps leave the rest for another time.

What a shame the old Wellington with all its characters and characteristics had to vanish over the years.
The Wrekin

A forest is a lovely place
In which to take a meal,
And then to sit and look around
At everything that's real.

People come from near and far,
Take a cup and then
Gaze around the old time walls
Of Wellington's Forest Glen.

Behind it stands the Ercall,
Strong and dark and bold.
And in front of the Wrekin
Whose beauty does not grow old.

Maybe you come from Ireland
And love the wearing of the Green,
From Cluddley's winding roadway
Every shade you will have seen.

And near the end of Ercall Lane
A really lovely sight you'll see.
Nestling mid trees so beautiful
Is well known Buckatree.

Or if you come down Willowmoor Bank,
And by chance you should look up,
You'll see our Wrekin's Needle Eye
And its Cuckoo Cup.

Along a little leafy lane
Mid shaded dell and sunshine patch,
There is another lovely spot,
And this called The Hatch.

And not only in the Summer,
A forest glory is achieved.
For the beauty of trees snow sprinkled
Is beauty rich indeed.

So all who need a change of scene
For a day, now and then
Come visit our old Wrekin,
And its Forest Glen.

FLORENCE M. TWINNEY
Return to Yesterday

My idea of Heaven was 1937,
Dear old Wellington was a wonderful town.
The fine old lamp post in the centre of the road at the top of King Street,
Mrs. Magness close by with her shop full of sweets,
Everything grand, everything swell,
With sounds from the car horn and the old Church bell,
Then in between the King's Head and The Hand and Heart—
Owen's Pork Butchers were playing their part.
Mr. Purcell for biscuits, Miss Phillips more sweets,
And Mr. Twinney — your shoe repairs would meet.
Johnsons the oil shop and Mr. Rollason too,
The Tinsleys and Briscoes with plenty of everything all waiting for you.
The firm of Harry Edwards all come into view,
Mr. and Mrs. Austin for papers and mags,
Lovely thick twist and cards in your fags.
Mrs. Jervis another nice little shop,
And you could pop in next door to Mr. Clayton for a shave and a crop.
Yes, back in '37 life seemed so grand,
And everyone was proud of The Double Star Jazz Band.

Hesketh's the fish shop,
And old Madame Davie,
Noah Frost for grand bread,
And toys from Chad Valley.
Mr. Herring for a football, Mr. Giles for a prize,
Mr. and Mrs. Ward — like Mr. and Mrs. Chaplin for the comics,
Mr. and Mrs. Kearton for your shirts and ties,
Astons and Reece and Jeweller Ward,
All full of good things that you could afford.
Dear Mrs. Osbourne was always a treat,
I really enjoyed her Sela-Cough Sweets.
Mrs. Barlow's grand shop so immaculately neat —
The displays in the windows were always a treat.
Curry's with a manager all ready to answer your plea,
Yes, a real grand chap was Gordon Lee.
And another fine gentleman with whom you could talk —
A real businessman named Mr. York.
And even if too young to know of romance,
You'd glance at the ladies going to the Palais de Danse.
Sidoli's for ice-cream and the beautiful aroma when entering its shop.
Bata for shoes so perfect consist,
Heath's and Jeffries the perfect confectionists.
Mr. Rose and Espleys and Mr. Onions too, the butchers for sure,
Turkeys and eggs and pork pies galore,
Once they'd been tasted — we all wanted more,
Woolworths in those days, it hardly makes sense,
Yet you could get all you wanted for three or sixpence.
Maypole for butter served with a bat —
Or pop in Mr. Bean's for a grand trilby hat.
Old Mr. Blakeley wouldn't let you down,
A grand pair of grey flannels for just half-a-crown.
And just up the road a grand little shop owned by Mr. Dunne,
All boxes of chocolates tied up with sweet ribbon.
Signs to behold and I'm not really kiddin',
Dear Mr. Morgan the wineman,
And the sweet gentle Cooks,
MacFisheries and Croft and Smiths for your fish,
Or call at Boyles or Miss Pritchard's for your vegetable wish,
Miss Phillips for cakes and I'm not telling tales,
I used to pop in her shop — just to see the picture of the Young Prince of Wales.

Bromley's for Wellingtons,
And Sadlers for a nice box of dominoes,
Bradleys, Jellymans, Hepworths and Agnews for most of your clothes,
Bromleys for farm help,
And Murphy's for beer,
Groom's Yard for the firewood —
Way down at the rear.
Bates and Hunt, Boots and Burtons too —
Always the best of service for you.
The Markets, Grand Market.
The best in the land —
I'd sooner be there than to walk round the Strand.
Grand old ladies and wonderful book stalls,
All my spare money was spent on their spoils.
I'm sure they had more books there than were ever at Foyles.
Peacock for shirts and blouses for all,
The best paper and pencils at the One Penny Stall.
Mr. Perry, a butcher close to one door,
And whole hosts of others all selling more.
People so friendly dressed in clothes all so cute,
Stalls filled with cakes,
And stalls filled with fruit.

And of all the Cinemas on earth —
I'm sure there's none sweeter —
The dear Old Town Hall, the Clifton and Mr. Walter Wright's beloved Grand Theatre.
It was there that the moment all hearts started glowing,
Maytime with Jeanette MacDonald and Nelson Eddy was showing.

Goodbye Golden Moments, Goodbye Golden Years,
Millions of Laughters and a few little tears,
Goodbye Little Children of Prince's Street School,
Farewell '37 — it's long you've been gone.
Goodbye penny scallops and dear sweet Mary Ann,
Goodbye to the moments that in our hearts will always live on.

NORMAN WILLIAMS
# Food Prices and Housekeeping
(Circa 1914-18)

## MEAT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>s.</th>
<th>d.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3½ lbs topside @ 1s per lb</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 lb tripe</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 lbs middle neck and scrag end @ 7d lb</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## FISH etc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>s.</th>
<th>d.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 lb cod @ 8d per lb</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 prs kippers @ 5d per pair</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 lb cod's roe or fillets of fish</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1¼ lbs pork sausages @ 1s per lb</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1¼ lbs beef sausages @ 7d per lb</td>
<td>10⅔</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## MILK

1¼ pints every day — except porridge days — when a quart is allowed (5 pints extra for cooking) @ 3½d per pint

## VEGETABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>s.</th>
<th>d.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14 lbs potatoes @ 1d per lb</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onions, turnips, carrots, cabbage etc. (4d per day allowed)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 lb cooking apples</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1¼ lbs tomatoes @ 4d per lb</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit for the week (fresh)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## GROCERIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>s.</th>
<th>d.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>¼ lb corn flour @ 6d per lb</td>
<td>1½</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 lb jam @ 6d per lb</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>¼ lb dried figs @ 6d per lb</td>
<td>4½</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>¼ lb suet @ 8d per lb</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 oz sultanas</td>
<td>1½</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 oz currants</td>
<td>1½</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 lb flour @ 2½d per lb</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 lb sugar @ 2½p per lb</td>
<td>1½</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 lb tea</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>¼ lb cocoa @ 1s 4d per lb</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>½ lb oatmeal @ 3d per lb</td>
<td>1½</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>½ lb cheese @ 7d per lb</td>
<td>3½</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 lb rice</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 lb butter @ 11d per lb</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 eggs @ 1½d each</td>
<td>1½</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 lb marmalade @ 5d per lb</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1½ lbs bacon @ 1s per lb</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 lb corned beef</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 lb syrup</td>
<td>5½</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## BREAD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>s.</th>
<th>d.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 2-lb loaves @ 3½ each; 2 brown loaves @ 2nd each</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## TOTAL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>s.</th>
<th>d.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>£1</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### A WEEK'S HOUSEKEEPING @ 10 shillings a head for husband, wife and two children of school age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BREAKFAST</th>
<th>DINNER</th>
<th>EVENING MEAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sunday:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pork sausages 1½ lbs</td>
<td>Topside and Yorkshire Pudding (½ pt. milk, 1 egg, 4 oz flour).</td>
<td>Corned beef and tomatoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bread and butter</td>
<td>Potatoes</td>
<td>Bread and butter, jam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marmalade</td>
<td>Vegetables</td>
<td>Cocoa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tea</td>
<td>Stewed figs and custard (½ pt. milk, 1 egg)</td>
<td>Fruit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Monday:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bacon ½ lb and fried bread</td>
<td>Cold meat</td>
<td>Rice (6 oz) and cheese (¼ lb)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bread and butter</td>
<td>Potatoes</td>
<td>Bread and butter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marmalade</td>
<td>Salad</td>
<td>Cocoa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tea</td>
<td>Apple pudding (6 oz flour, 3 oz suet, 1 lb apples)</td>
<td>Fruit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tuesday:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kippers</td>
<td>Made-up dish</td>
<td>Vegetable pie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bread and butter</td>
<td>Potatoes</td>
<td>Bread and butter, jam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marmalade</td>
<td>Vegetables</td>
<td>Tea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tea</td>
<td>Jam tart (6 oz flour, 3 oz lard)</td>
<td>Fruit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wednesday:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Porridge (4 oz)</td>
<td>Tripe and onions (½ pt milk)</td>
<td>Poached eggs (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bacon (½ lb)</td>
<td>Potatoes</td>
<td>Bread and butter, jam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bread and butter</td>
<td>Suet roll (6 oz flour, 3 oz suet, 3 oz sultanas, 3 oz currants)</td>
<td>Cocoa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marmalade</td>
<td></td>
<td>Fruit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tea</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thursday:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bacon (½ lb) and potatoes</td>
<td>Cod and white sauce (½ pt milk)</td>
<td>Potatoes and cheese (¼ cheese)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bread and butter</td>
<td>Potatoes</td>
<td>Bread and butter, jam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marmalade</td>
<td>Boiled rice (6 oz) and treacle</td>
<td>Tea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tea</td>
<td></td>
<td>Fruit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Friday:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scrambled eggs (4)</td>
<td>Hot pot and vegetables and potatoes</td>
<td>Fish pie (rems. of cod), bread and butter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bread and butter</td>
<td>Bread and butter pudding (½ pt milk, 1 egg)</td>
<td>Tea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marmalade</td>
<td></td>
<td>Fruit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tea</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Saturday:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Porridge (4 oz)</td>
<td>Toad in the hole</td>
<td>Cod's roe on toast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 boiled eggs</td>
<td>Potatoes and vegetables</td>
<td>Bread and butter, jam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bread and butter, marmalade</td>
<td>Cornflour blancmange</td>
<td>Cocoa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tea</td>
<td></td>
<td>Fruit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Wedding of Doctor Cranage's Daughter

The newspaper report reproduced here was sent to me from Australia by Mrs. Ann Beck who is a descendant of Dr. Cranage.

Wellington, although enjoying many large weddings in the past had never seen one as grand as this. I know that every woman reading this report will marvel at the 'Good Old Days.'

Children's Gospel Hall where Dr. Cranage preached.
MARRIAGE OF MR. W. M. PARKIN AND MISS CRAGANRE AT WESTBURY.

There was a very large and interested congregation at the church of St. Mary the Virgin, Westbury, on Wednesday last, to witness the marriage of Mr. William Parkin, one of the last of the family of Major Parkin, of the 40th Regiment, with Miss Laura Josephine Craganre, of Westbury. A former visit to the town by Miss Craganre, under the name of Miss Queen, caused much excitement. She was known as "Queen's weather" prevailing, and long before the hour at which the church was to be opened, she was seen making her way to the church, accompanied by a large number of friends who were much interested as to the result of her visit. The church was crowded to the doors, and many were disappointed in not being admitted. The church was beautifully decorated, and banners and crests for the several villages and towns were placed on the church gates. At the back of the communion table was a splendid floral display. The church was a beautiful building, with double doors in full bloom, and right and left was a panorama of loveliness. The pulpit was surrounded by a fringe of green, and the pews were decorated with flowers. The choir was composed of the principal male voices of the town, and the music was furnished by the organist and choir. The church was beautifully filled, and the church gates were thronged with people, and the sight was truly magnificent. The service was conducted by Mr. Charles Butcher, and Mr. George Butcher, of the Vineyard Camden, Wimborne, by whom the service was so admirably conducted.

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The marriage of Mr. W. M. Parkin and Miss Craganre

The wedding took place on Wednesday last, at the church of St. Mary the Virgin, Westbury. The bride and groom were Mr. W. M. Parkin and Miss Craganre. The congregation was very large, and the church was beautifully decorated with flowers. The service was conducted by the Rev. Mr. T. L. Butler, and the choir sang "The Rose That Blooms," written by the Rev. Mr. T. L. Butler, and the words of the hymn were used by the Rev. Mr. T. L. Butler. The church was beautifully filled, and the church gates were thronged with people, and the sight was truly magnificent. The service was conducted by Mr. Charles Butcher, and Mr. George Butcher, of the Vineyard Camden, Wimborne, by whom the service was so admirably conducted. The bride and groom were Mr. W. M. Parkin and Miss Craganre. The congregation was very large, and the church was beautifully decorated with flowers. The service was conducted by the Rev. Mr. T. L. Butler, and the choir sang "The Rose That Blooms," written by the Rev. Mr. T. L. Butler, and the words of the hymn were used by the Rev. Mr. T. L. Butler. The church was beautifully filled, and the church gates were thronged with people, and the sight was truly magnificent. The service was conducted by Mr. Charles Butcher, and Mr. George Butcher, of the Vineyard Camden, Wimborne, by whom the service was so admirably conducted. The bride and groom were Mr. W. M. Parkin and Miss Craganre. The congregation was very large, and the church was beautifully decorated with flowers. The service was conducted by the Rev. Mr. T. L. Butler, and the choir sang "The Rose That Blooms," written by the Rev. Mr. T. L. Butler, and the words of the hymn were used by the Rev. Mr. T. L. Butler. The church was beautifully filled, and the church gates were thronged with people, and the sight was truly magnificent. The service was conducted by Mr. Charles Butcher, and Mr. George Butcher, of the Vineyard Camden, Wimborne, by whom the service was so admirably conducted.
The Marriage of Mr. Parkin and Miss Cranage of Wellington

The marriage of Mr. Parkin and Miss Cranage of Wellington was held at the Old Hall yesterday. The bridegroom is a son of Mr. Parkin, the late Mr. Walter Cranage of Wellington, and the bride is a daughter of Mr. Walter Cranage of Wellington. The ceremony was performed by the Rev. Mr. Parkin, and the wedding breakfast was given at the Old Hall. The bride was dressed in a wedding gown and veil, and the groom wore a suit of black. They were accompanied by their parents and a few close friends. The wedding party included the bride's brother, who was the best man, and the bride's sister, who was the maid of honor. The wedding breakfast was a magnificent event, with a band playing in the background. The newlyweds were very happy and spent the night together in the old hall.

The Wellington Hotel

The Wellington Hotel is located in the heart of Wellington, New Zealand. The hotel has been a staple of Wellington's social scene for many years, hosting numerous events and celebrations. The hotel is known for its elegant decor and fine dining. The hotel's history stretches back to the 19th century, and it has been a popular destination for visitors and locals alike. Today, the hotel continues to be a hub of social activity, hosting events ranging from weddings to business meetings.

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A Powerful Wellington Preacher

Wondering down memory lane recently I met a Wellingtonian of almost forgotten glory, one who 70 to 80 years ago was as widely known in the county and further afield as the communications of that day would allow. My companion who led me down the years was 85 years-old Mr. Thomas Smith of Admaston Road, Wellington, who introduced me to the old gentleman as Dr. Cranage, one of the greatest men who have lived in Wellington.

Dr. Cranage lived at the Old Hall and founded the Old Hall School there many years ago, when his scholars included Crown Princes of India.

But the founding of the Old Hall School was not Dr. Cranage’s chief claim to fame. Not that he ever claimed any fame, Mr. Smith hastens to add, he was just a generous, big hearted man.

Dr. Cranage was a lay preacher of distinction and founded a mission hall in New Hall Road. The Hall is now used as a school’s canteen for local school children. Dr. Cranage’s fame lay in the fact that he had, what is called today a gimmick to illustrate his point. And the ingenuity and beauty of his gimmicks filled the mission hall with over 500 people every Sunday.

Mr. Smith remembers, in particular, a sermon Dr. Cranage gave about 70 years ago when his subject was Noah’s ark. With the assistance of the local cabinet maker, a certain Fred Leek, the Doctor had built to scale as perfect a replica of the ark as could be ascertained from reading the Bible.

The ark was ten feet long and about four feet high and was divided into many and varied compartments for the animals. Miniature bales of straw and hay were strategically placed about the ark, together with sacks of grain and corn. Even the small windows from which flew the doves to search for dry land were not forgotten. Leading up to one of the ark’s two doors was a board and on it and along the floor stretched a long line of miniature wooden animals. Heading the grand parade, two by two, into the ark, were the biggest of animals, the elephant and the bear. They were followed by animals of every description and at the end of the procession came two thrushes and two robins.

Dr. Cranage and the cabinet maker completed many other beautiful biblical scenes with which to illustrate the sermons, including the Ark of the Covenant, but as far as Mr. Smith knows, nobody knows what became of them.

On another occasion, to illustrate his text of the miracle of the two fishes and five barley loaves he had on the platform with him a barrel of herrings and 500 loaves which he afterwards distributed to anyone who wanted them.

A big problem, Mr. Smith remembers, was the parking of all the horses and carriages which brought the owners and families from far afield to hear the doctor speak. A field at the side of the hall, which is now Victoria Avenue, was eventually acquired as a waggon park.

Dr. Cranage was a unique man in many ways and gave the first real fireworks display to be seen in Wellington. That was in 1887 and the cost of the fireworks was £100.
It was, therefore, not surprising to learn that, with his habit of giving the people something different, Dr. Cranage, in conjunction with his sermons, introduced the first magic lantern to be seen in Wellington, which spectacle was viewed with awe and admiration by his congregation.

Dr. Cranage died some 65 years ago and his son later became Dean of Norwich Cathedral. The above article is taken from the Wellington Journal of April 13th, 1957.
Ann Culley and Her Little Book

Who was Ann Culley? Ann was a woman of great simplicity, with a very great faith in God. She became a protégée of Dr. Cranage (the Old Hall School). On her death Dr. Cranage paid for her funeral and was himself laid to rest near her in Christ Church burial ground.

The cottage where Ann lived is now the site of a bungalow, 296 Holyhead Road. It was known as the 'Loaves of Bread', built of stone and thatch. You went down steps to it and came upon a beautiful cottage garden. One could only see the chimney tops from the road so the main A5 must have been built up a great deal even in those days.

Ann, in her little book Loaves of Bread will tell her own story.
MOUNTAINS OF BREAD;

or,

THE COTTAGE BY THE WREKIN.

"Trust in the Lord and do good, as shall thy right hand lead thee."—Psalm xix. 5.

In the days long since, before railways had stretched their iron length up and down our land—those days when a mail coach, coming out from the busy yards of the "Lion," or "Raven" Hotels, Shrewsbury, as the guard sounded his horn, went proudly down the Wyle Cop,—over the English Bridge,—past the old Abbey,—the Abbey Foregate, and away on, on, until the rattling sounding horn are changed to the shrill whistle of the iron steed, as this re-echoes round the Ewart and the Wrekin, which alone, among all the things about them, remain unchanged, to remind us that the truth of God is firm as "the everlasting hills." New and modern cottages stand by the roadside, and a new generation inhabits them. One, however, with its pointed roof of thatch remains pretty much the same, I suppose, as in the time when those of our forefathers, who were away from the home country, were wont, at their festive gatherings, to send good wishes "to all friends round the Wrekin," including a large circuit truly in their kindly greeting for, from its summit 20 counties can be seen.

Dear Reader, will you enter with me the old thatched cottage before us, the door of which, as we go down a step or two from the road, stands open? There is but one room, so you see at once the bed,—the leaning old oak dresser,—and the three-legged little round stand or table; on the wall hangs a card, on which is inscribed, "God is Love." In the chair by the fire sits an old woman. Age and weakness prevent her rising; she scarcely lifts up her head to look at you; but a bright, sparkling pair of eyes are turned on us as we enter, and with a beaming smile on her face, you hear a sweet-toned, though feeble voice say, in the Shropshire dialect, "Well, my dear lady, an' how bin ye? It ina long sin I was thinking on ye. Tak a sent, won ye?" Then, in reply to enquires about herself, mercy will be all her song. "The Lord is very good to me. I bless Him, I dumna suffer much pain now, tho' I wanna much strength left." This, my friends, is Ann,—the once active young Christian who lived here in the days gone by.

It is a great refreshment of spirit to me, I assure you, to go and see my dear old friend. I like to sit and listen to her wise counsel, for she is a woman of much good common sense, as well as of sterling piety. The years of her life have lengthened out to beyond fourscore, and with but a short period intervening, have been spent about the foot of the lonely Wrekin. Her mother, she tells us, used to hear the sainted John Fletcher, of Madeley, preach; and in her father and mother's cottage, for many years, there was a weekly prayer meeting and preaching held; now, in the little room we are in, there is, every Saturday evening, a prayer meeting still.

Ann's father died many years ago; she will tell you how she
liked to read to him, and how, on Saturdays, it was her custom to have all her work done, and the cottage cleaned up early, so as to have a little time as a preparation for the Sabbath, which was a high day to many at that time, a day, when those who loved their Saviour were glad to meet in His name, and bear His reproach for His sake. After the father's death, the widowed mother and daughter lived on for many years very happily together. When the latter was unable to work herself, Ann deemed it her high privilege to maintain her dear mother by her straw work, and a deep and tender love existed between them. At length, a heavy trial came, in the removal of that beloved mother, leaving the daughter alone in the world and prostrated by sickness. And now, a vision rose before the bereaved one,—a vision, enough to make her feel sad,—a dark vision of quitting the poor old cottage, with all its dear associations, its sunny door-way—its varying views of old father Wrench, clothed in his summer surtout, or clad in his wintery covering of snow. What and must all this be parted from, and the rest of her days be passed amid the unconnected and contending elements of the Parish Poor-house? Had she lived, worked hard, farol hard, and, as a loving child, helped her parents—made light of her own interests, in order that she might add to her mother's comforts, and more, is there only the workhouse shelter for herself? Oh, how busy the enemy was; how, how he was permitted to sift the poor stricken one, even as wheat! But I will rather let my old friend tell you herself of all the Lord's goodness to her.

"Well, yo' seen, my dear lady, this old cottage as we are in won to be sow'd, and the neighbours all come telling me as such a one had said as he meant to buy it—and that then I'd have to go into the "house," there was no where else, for he wouldn't let me stop in it; an' yo' seen, my dear, this couldn't help but trouble me a deal; for I know'd it was quite true, if that man bought it, he wouldn't let me stop. I thought a deal, and I prayed, and at times I cried a deal too—and yet, with it all, I couldn't help thinking how that the Lord would make a way for me somehow, tho' I didn't see how it could be. Well, my dear, I thought one day, the Lord knows all about my case; He don't need that I shall tell Him—but He says, 'I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them; so I just, there and then, laid my case out afore Him, an' I told Him, that if

it was His will and for His glory that I should go to the workhouse, I believed that He would help me, and comfort me there, and strengthen me to say, 'Thy will be done.' Tho' I couldn't do this of myself, and then I took to the Lord, as He had the hearts of all men in His hand, he could, I know'd, put it into the heart of somebody to buy this old cottage, as would let me stay in it, I spread all my case out, like Hezekiah did with the letter he got—and how I had been helped by the Lord to live and walk, as a witness for Him afore my neighbours; and now as I couldn't help myself, would He appear for me, so that I might, if it was His will, end my days in His fear in their midst? So then, my dear lady, I felt I had done all as I could do, and I left it with the Lord to bring it all about, and settle it just as He saw best. Well, the day of the sale

could, and the neighbours, some on en, wanted to talk about it, but I told 'em it was no good telling me this an' the tother, for I had put the whole into my Heavenly Father's hands, and whatever others did He would do reet, I know'd; so I wasn't troubling myself about it; an' I didn't want them wi' their talk, to turn my mind back to thinking on it again.

"Well, Ann, and who bought the house?"

"Oh, my dear, it was just all of the Lord's own doing, for He put it into the heart of another man to buy it, as had no thoughts of doing so afore the sale; and when he know'd about it, he said, I was just to side here as long as I lived, and could pay him so much a week rent. Bless the Lord! 't is better to trust in Him than to put confidence in princes;" king David proved

that, and when we do the same we shan't be disappointed.

We ask, "You were able then to make your own living by the straw work?"

"No, my dear lady, I wanna, but I man tell you how good the Lord was to me. I was so bad I had to keep my bed, and the neighbours all thought I shouldn't live, but I felt 'this sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God.' Yo' seen, my love, I had lost the use of this side; I couldn't heap up my feet arm of myself; I couldn't even nothing in that hand now. Well, I thought then, I have got the promise that I needna quit the old cottage while I can pay the rent, but how shall I, a poor helpless thing ever be able to pay the rent, and mak a living when the few shillin's I have got is a done? An' so you seen, my dear, if I'd let him, the devil would ha' made bad work of
me, wi' his, how this, and the othe'r, for it wan't but likely that I should think about this, as it didna seem as I should ever have the proper use of that side again. But oh, how good the Lord is I for whether I was in the body or no, I canna say, or whether it was a vision. I only know it was true, as I have proved for many years. Well, as I was going to tell ye, I dreamt when I was getting better after a bad illness, in which I thought myself, I should have died, and when I still wanna able to rise from my bed—that I felt as some very loving arms were put under me, and I was carried out to the yard of my house, and I saw mountains of bread, and mountains of cheese, and mountains of butter, and mountains of age; and the distant hills covered with cattle and sheep. I turned round to look, and saw it was the Lord Jesus that had carried me out, and He said to me, as I was leaning on Him, "Dear Ann, can you think I could grudge you the little bit you will want out of all these?" (Psalm xxiv. 1; l. 10, 11; lxxv. 9, 13; cxlv. 15, 16; Jeremiah xxxii. 3.) "And," says the dear old Christian, "the Lord has been true to His word—I have na lacked, thanks be to His name, I felt quite sure it could be so when I com'd to myself again, lying on the bed there. I cannot tell ye, my dear, how, or when help has often come to me; but I do know that the Lord puts it into the hearts of some of His children to help me, as I dumna know and have never seen. Maybe, some days I have only a few tatars and a cup of milk—I can't take butter-milk now, it gives me pain—for my dinner, but thank God for that, I know that sooner than I should lack even that, the Lord would send an angel with it, for He knows I canna get it for myself—an is He not the same God as He was Elijah through the ravens? We all want to trust Him more—that is all, inn't it, my dear?"

Dr. C—was, on one occasion, called unexpectedly from home, and on his return, he expressed his wish that Ann would, at any time, if she wanted anything, send a neighbour up to the Old Hall. He then asked her how she had fared in his absence, for he had felt anxious about her. With her bright face lighted up to more than its usual animation, she replied, "How have I fared, Dr. C? I'll just tell ye," and, point-
ing upward, "to Him be all the praise. The day you went, somebody came in and said as you won called off on a sudden; I didn't take much notice, only I hoped as it was no trouble to the family as had took ye from home, and I asked God for help and a blessing, be it what it might as had took ye where ye won gone. I had my supper, and was just going to draw the bit of coal on the fire"—the woman puts this on the brick hob close by, as Ann is too feeble to lift it up herself. 

"When, all on a sudden, I thought of me as was the last of the coal, and something stopt me an' said, 'you munna put that on, for if ye do, you'v none for to morrow,' and I did stop, for it seemed rest on me, to think how I should do; and then I remembered, sure enough I've just eaten the last bite I have in the house, turning to where I kept the loaf there was none for breakfast, nor had I a penny, and that's the last candle too, I thought, and the Dr. away. "How will ye do now, Ann? what'll the neighbours say?"—the Lord has surely forgotten ye at last"—and with that I know'd the voice of him as was 'a far from the beginning,' so I then told him to go about his business, and not to trouble me. What if the Dr. was away—the God of Dr. C—and my God was high at hand;—and He know'd what I should want for to morrow and He would provide. So as I needed a bit of fire at nights for light and warmth, I drew on the coal as I always did, and put my trust in the Lord, to care for me and my fire on the morrow; and with that old Satan went his way, I read a bit, and put out my candle, as I didn't want fire and candle-light both, and then I meant to spread all my wants out afore my Heavenly Father and ask Him to supply them as He saw fit. But I didn't ask Him for a thing. No! I hadn't a want to tell Him. I shall never forget that night, I was so full of joy—I didn't think I could live and bear it.

"Full of joy," said Dr. C—"why how could that be and you with nothing in the house?" "Oh," she replied, "dunna ye see the honour God had put upon me, that I had to trust Him for my breakfast—an' to think that He had not only given His own dear Son for me, and that Jesus had bin willing to suffer, an' beside all this, that for one so poor, so mean, so unworthy, so unable to render Him any return, He Himself would stoop from heaven to supply the bread and fire for my need. Oh! Dr. I canna tell ye, but I felt as tho' I couldna live for very joy; it seemed as if this poor owd body woulnd hold out wi' it all. I could do nothing but praise Him, praise Him. Well, I was at last a'most into bed, when there come a knock at the door. I thought it was a neighbour, so I asked—'Whaten ye want? I'm gone to bed.' An' somebody said in a pleasant voice, as I didn't know, 'Unloose the door a moment Ann,' so I did, and a hand was put in, and shook me by the hand, saying: 'There, now shut the door agen, and get into bed.' I felt the soft kid like a lady's glove, and something was left in my hand, and when I turned to the table, I found it was silver enough to supply my wants for some days." 

'Thus did the Lord prove the truth of His word—"Before they call, I will answer, and whilst they are yet speaking I will hear." (Isa. LXX.) God has been pleased to bless to the comforting and strengthening of some of His children, this account of my old friend's "mountains of bread," as I have in various places related it; and by some of these, I have been urged to write out—as I have now done—this true record of the Lord's faithful care and loving-kindness. My desire in so doing, is that He would own and use it to His own glory very greatly, as a means of encouraging many tried and suffering ones, in these days of uncertainty and perplexity, to put their trust more completely in the Lord, rather than in some of those too doubtful modes of securing, as their future dependence, those riches which sometimes bring a snare with them. And I have hoped also that this little book may be read by some of those whom the Lord has made stewards only of the wealth He has given them the power to get. Oh that you truly realized that the Lord's poor cry to Him, and that He conveys honour on you, in sending His answering message to them through you.

... "Many a hungry one is pitiful. Thy willing hand must be outstretched and free; Thou Father hears the mighty cry of anguish, And gives His answering messages to them."

Oh, seek no longer to link love to Christ and love to the things of the world together; it cannot be done. Be not satisfied with merely giving your help to this society and the other, but seek out for yourself the poor, the widowed, the fatherless, and believe me, through some of these lowly and too often lonely ones, it may be that God will speak to your hearts such words of gladness as you now fail to receive.

I asked my dear old friend if I might thus narrate the Lord's goodness to herself, in the hope to comfort others, and had her reply,
"Well, my dear lady, if the Lord has put it into your heart to do so, yo' han only to tell of His merciful care and faithfulness—so I wanna nothin' to say agen it.

Dear young christian friend, as you read this, will you notice that Ann spent not her youthful days in useless regrets as to what she might do, were she only in other circumstances. I dare not here enlarge as I could desire, and tell you how this dear old follower of Jesus was helped to take up the work appointed her, and to do it heartily as unto the Lord, whether in the way of the daily labour of her hands for her parents, or in the many little deeds of kindness for and to her neighbours, still manifest in the appearance of an ancient patchwork bag, in which the children expect will be found the button or bit of tape their mothers have sent them to beg. True, she did not save money for her old age, for the needy ever had the help of her heart and hand. But now that she cannot work, God sends the supply of daily bread, as when her own busy fingers were wont to ply the straw in earning it, as the bread of honest industry. Even so will the Lord provide for you and me, if needs be, and we are found trusting in Him with our whole heart, and leaning not to our own understanding.

Perhaps, unrepented sinner, if such should glance over these pages, you may only smile at what you deem its foolishness. You have often heard, I doubt not, but will you believe God's own word concerning yourself—that you, a sinner, can do nothing—give nothing to purchase your soul's salvation; but that, out of love to you, sinner as you are, God gave His own dear Son, that He might die, the just One, for you, the unjust, the guilty one—and Jesus suffered thus in your stead, and now there is laid up in Him all that your soul needs for its peace and safety. Will you receive this glad news with your heart, and prove the blessedness of that man, that woman, that child, who know their sins to be forgiven, their iniquities to be covered; or will you laugh on, and as a rejector of Christ, dare to appear before God in your sins? If so, then will you indeed prove, to your soul's eternal ruin, that God is faithful and true, even when He says, "And will by no means clear the guilty."

One day last Autumn, on calling to see my old friend, though she said nothing, I felt there was some danger of her shedding herself, by using the too heavy kettle of her neighbour. So, a few days after, it was my privilege to take for her use a small tin kettle and saucepan.