

TAKING A TRIP DOWN MEMORY LANE BUTLEIGH 1923 -1933

**By
WESLEY ADAMS aged 91 (2010)**

My father rented Holman's Farm from the Squire from 1923 – 1933, I lived there from the ages of four to fourteen years of age.

SQUIRE NEVILLE GRENVILLE

The Squire was master of all he surveyed and everyone had to tug their forelocks when they met him. The tenants of his farms could collect any materials for repairs from the stores at his yard. This way he did not have to employ any labour to carry out routine maintenance work. A very astute business man was the Squire. I have the old rent book from Holmans Farm but there is no record of acreages.

VICAR

The vicar of Butleigh was the Reverend Joe Becket, rather a stern old chap with long flowing white hair down to his shoulders, fingers and hair stained yellow with nicotine, by many years of smoking. I can also remember the new vicarage being built, my guess is about 1927. Before the new vicarage was built I think the vicar lived between Mr Latcham's workshop and Mr Dunkerton at the Smithy. All the time I lived at Butleigh, the church only ever had the hour hand.

CO-OP

You could buy almost anything from this shop, but I fondly remember the sweets! Bobby dazzlers - a toffee like sweet, 9 for 1d (1d =one penny, 124d = £1), a liquorice straw in a cardboard tube of sherbet, Woodbine cigarettes, 5 in a paper packet for 1d.

The shop had a large staff, I have seen a photograph with members of staff in front, about six or seven in total. The picture belonged to Jack Ford, a school friend of mine.

POST OFFICE

The post office contained the only telephone in the village, consequently the Post Master knew everyone's business! I think the postman was called Mr Lock and lived at Oddway.

COBBLER & HARNESS MAKER

Mr Wilfred Dyer repaired harness and shoes and was quite a busy man in those days.

SCHOOL TEACHERS

The school master was Mr Edward Clegg, a heavy smoker. The school mistresses were Miss Udel and Miss Brown. He kept a three thonged leather strap in his desk. I have seen boys strapped on their hand. I managed to escape that one - goody two shoes! After I left school Jack Ford remembers some of the boys took this strap and burnt it in the cast iron tortoise stove which was in the classroom. When Mr Clegg discovered this he demanded to know who the culprit was. No-one confessed, so the whole class had to suffer the punishment.

When Mr Millard, a farmer from Bridge Farm, died, his coffin was on a horse drawn hearse and as it came past the school, all the school children were standing outside with heads bowed as the cortege passed by. I can only assume he must have been the School Governor.

Opposite the school house was the school's kitchen garden, some of the older boys used to do the work, and in the summer if there was any surplus produce, we could take some home. My mother wasn't happy when I chose to take home some beans which were past their best, over the cauliflower! I can't remember the main use for the garden produce.

There was no false ceiling in the school building and in one part there was an RSJ (steel girder) with Nelson's famous words printed on it 'England expects every man to do his duty'

I've still got some of my school books from Butleigh High!

HEAD GARDENER TO THE SQUIRE

Mr Mounsdon was Head Gardener and had about three of four gardeners under him, to manage the grounds. There were 2 or 3 heated greenhouses, one of which had a banana tree. There was also a swimming pool in the grounds, the Clarks children from Street (of shoe fame) used to visit to swim. I was best friends with Mr Mounsdon's son Tony, I preferred Tony to come and play at our house

because Mr Mounsdon kept a cane on the table at mealtimes!

BAKER

Mr Classey was the baker but he also had a charabanc (we used to call it an'umblybus') for hire and day trips to the seaside. He also had petrol pumps and you could buy petrol in 2 gallon cans, and batteries could be recharged for portable wireless sets. Sometimes when coming home from school a Steamfolden lorry would be unloading a delivery of flour and in the morning the smell of baking bread would make my mouth water.

The bread was usually delivered, if you wanted a loaf you could go to the bakery, but there was no shop as such.

BLACKSMITH, FARRIER

Mr Dunkerton did not like shoeing horses but was a highly skilled blacksmith. I've still got a branding iron made by him.

CARPENTER, WHEELWRIGHT

Mr Latcham, who also made coffins. When a cortage passed through the village all blinds were drawn out of respect.

BUTCHER

Mr Rabbage delivered meat to your door.

TAXI

Mr Bouch [Baulch] drove a model-T Ford van and used to drive to Glastonbury once or twice a week, taking people shopping or bringing anything back.

TRADES VISITING THE VILLAGE

PAPER DELIVERY

Suzie Francis came weekly from Glastonbury in her horse drawn old Co-op bread cart to deliver the Western Gazette. Upon arrival in Butleigh she would scatter her large brood of children in all directions delivering the paper, while she sat in the cart directing operations!

ICE CREAM

Mr Benny Lazenbury visited the village during the summer months in his motorbike and sidecar selling ice cream. My mother used to give him a glass of milk in exchange for an ice-cream.

My mother used to make our own ice cream in the smaller of two containers, one inside the other and ice packed between the two. I remember it was mostly custard based. No-one would dream of buying ice cream in the winter.

FISH & CHIPS

Mr Curtis visited the village during the winter months selling fish and chips from his van. The fryer used coal so there was plenty of smoke about! 'Elf n' Safety weren't about then and the chips were delicious. Mrs Curtis was in the background peeling and chipping the potatoes.

HARDWARE

Another Mr Curtis (possibly a relation) came with a lorry festooned along each side with pots and pans, kitchen and fire utensils and all things for the home, also paraffin for oil lamps.

VILLAGERS I REMEMBER

FARMERS

Mr & Mrs Jim Gane, father

Mr & Mrs Jack Gane, son

Mr & Mrs Percy Gane, grandson

Mr & Mrs Foot farmed Holmans after we left

Mr Jack Dyke

Mr & Mrs Plumley, father

Mr Harry Plumley, son

Mr & Mrs Jack Whitehead, also a cattle and sheep dealer

Mr Jack Killen

Mr & Mrs Winstone, managed Home Farm for the Squire

Mr & Mrs Len Maunder

FARM WORKERS

Mr & Mrs Gollidge, Mr Gollidge worked for us at Holmans

Mr & Mrs Bush, possibly no relation to Mr Bush in 'other residents', Mr Bush worked for us at Holmans

Mr & Mrs Jack Ford

Mr Pope

Mr & Mrs Moore

Mr & Mrs Dimmock, Mr Dimmock worked for us at Holmans

Mr Billing

Mr & Mrs Marsh.

OTHER RESIDENTS

Mr & Mrs Mounsdén, Mr Mounsdén was head gardener to the Squire

The Rev Gresley brothers, either retired clergy or they belonged to a religious order

Mr & Mrs Barber

Mr Whitcombe, worked under Mr Mounsdén

Mr & Mrs Farr, Mr Farr worked under Mr Mounsdén

Mr Cuttings

Mr Derbyshire

Mr & Mrs Higgins

Mr & Mrs Hickman used to keep a shop at Butleigh and retired to Bristol, possibly before we moved there

Mr P Jacobs, could be the Squire's secretary/cashier as his name is on the rent book

Mr & Mrs Bush, Mr Bush worked in the yard for the Squire

Mr & Mrs Bob Davis, Mr Davis worked in the yard for the Squire

Mr & Mrs Little

Mr Sugg

These are only a few of the people I can remember living in Butleigh at that time.

OTHER NECESSITIES

Most houses in the village did not have flush lavatories. At the bottom of the garden there was always the traditional earth closet, complete with last weeks' Western Gazette cut into neat squares and a hole punched in one corner, all tied up and hung behind the door with string! In most cases a healthy clump of rhubarb grew close, always well nourished!

At Holman's we were lucky to also have an upstairs flush toilet.

It was the years of the 1920-30's depression. Everything that could have a second life did, out of absolute necessity. We were doing our bit for recycling all those years ago, we called it 'make do and mend'

FINALLY - TO RUFFLE A FEW FEATHERS IN BUTLEIGH

This may have happened some time ago but who, in their wisdom, decided to remove the circular yellow sign attached to the wall at the entrance to the village? It had been there for years. Why not put it back where it belongs, next to the monstrosity? Sez I!

MY MEMORIES OF LIVING IN BUTLEIGH

by

IRENE BENNETT (nee Adams)

I didn't go to Butleigh when Mum and Dad moved from Blagrove Farm to Holmans Farm at Butleigh; I spent a year with my grandmother Clark at Westholm Farm near Pilton and even went to the village school at North Wooton while Mum, Dad and family settled in at Holmans. I then joined them and went to school at Butleigh.

It was a very busy life as my Mum made cheese, butter and cream. I used to take butter round to customers in a little case. Dad bought milk from the two Mr. Killens who lived in the village also

Mr. Jack Gane. Dad rented the farm from the Squire Sir Robert Neville-Grenville and the girls had to courtsey to him when we met him. He gave us a kitten and would come and call on us in his old banger when he would check if the kitten was alright.

Mr. Classey was the local baker and Mum used to say he made the best bread ever. He would sometimes make us children some tiny loaves which were lovely. On Fridays the paper woman called Susie Francis delivered the paper calling in a very loud voice - Paper!!! Also the ice-cream man came on a motorbike and sidecar with a very loud bell ringing; a real treat for the children.

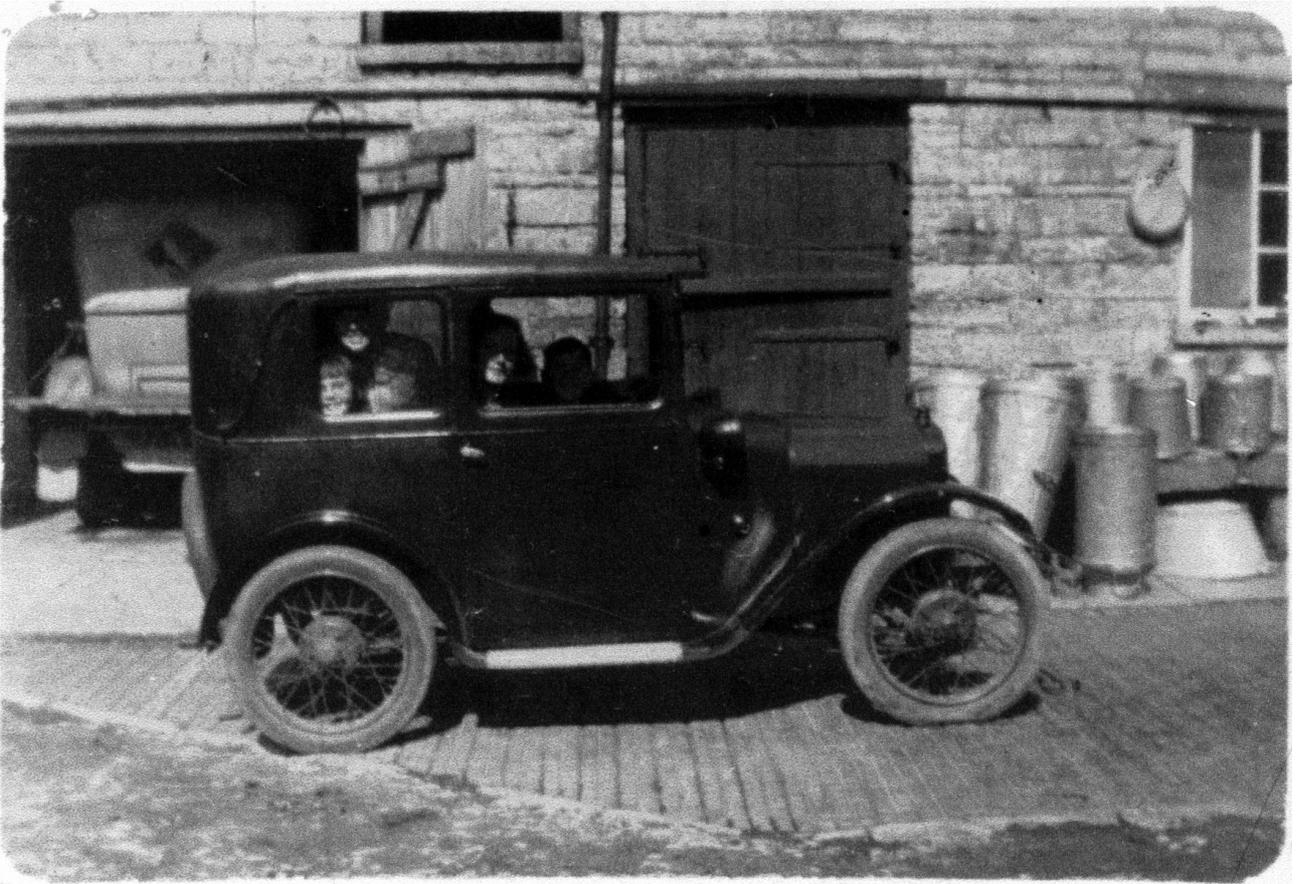
We all went to the village school - I think the headmaster was called Mr. Clegg. Many children would remember him as he had a nasty strap with tails which would land on your desk as a threat. One of the teachers was Miss Baker who lived in a cottage in the middle of the village. The Blacksmith, Mr. Dunkerton mended our old gramophone; he would let us stand inside the door and watch him make horseshoes. The Wheelwright - Mr. Latchem repaired and made things for the farmers.

The Dyke family lived opposite Holmans; they had five children - Thora, Olive, Vera, Donald and Jim. They left Butleigh eventually and went to Somerton to live. Then Arthur and Harry Plumley arrived, Arthur moved elsewhere and left Harry to carry on farming; sadly he died there. The Says lived next to our high garden wall, then Mr. & Mrs. Bush, then an empty shop called Hickmans on the corner. Opposite lived Mr. & Mrs. Little. Mr. Little hatched chickens and sold them and my Mum would buy a sitting of eggs and hatch her own chicks. There was also a butcher catted Mr. Rabbish and a Co-op, a good all round shop which sold almost everything. A Mr. Mounsdon was head gardener to the Squire and there were three children - Tony, Peggy and Mervin. The Vicar lived in a nice house just at the beginning of the road to the Church — his name was Joe Beckett. My brother Jeffrey and I went to his house for confirmation classes and I would take him a pat of home made butter which he liked very much.

I am going up towards the Rose and Port Cullis which is now a Restaurant; further on was a lovely cottage hospital which was very sadly boarded up. My four children were born at Butleigh cottage hospital. My memory of living at Butleigh is how happy we always were there.

I am 94 now and not able to remember any more, so I do hope you will find this of interest. [2010]





The photographs were taken around 1927 at Holman's Farm.



The above picture shows the garage at the house and when Mr. Adams bought a car the entrance wasn't wide enough so he asked the squire whether he could alter the entrance to make it possible to park the car in it.

The squire replied "Adams, why don't you buy a pig to fit the sty!?"

The squire relented and allowed the alteration work to be carried out.