

*Caught
by the tide*

Michael Ayland

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Dedication

Dedicated to all the nice people I have met.
This book was inspired and constructed by my cousin
Roderick Shaw my fondest mentor on all things print.

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The stories were originally posted
on a delightful facebook page
“Memory Lane, Frampton, Saul and Arlingham”

A DAY ON THE CHURNS

Milestones in ones life: at a certain age you are strong enough, with a mate, to lift a full ten gallon milk churn off the ground as high together as a lorry bed.

You're on! you are man enough to go on the milk round. My family was sort of connected to the Watkins family at Westmont, Bridge Road, Frampton who at the time had about five Morris Commercial Lorries collecting milk for Cadbury's at Frampton. Especially at holiday times like Easter they were glad of help to enable everyone to finish early. My lifelong friend John Magor, who was also related to the Watkins and I would be encouraged to come on the milk run for a day for the price of a promise of some Cadbury's crumb. Cycling over to Westmont early in the morning all of the lorries would be ready to roll each loaded with a full bed of empty churns. But departure was not yet as some farmers would not have had their morning milking finished. A convoy up the Perryway and everyone going off in different directions. The Morris Commercials had only one passenger seat so one of us would sit on the engine cover. Seat Belts were a thing of the future. I remember most the Cambridge, Cam, Coaley, Frocester run best of all. Down the A38 and halfway, the first stop. Sensible farms had a churn stand which was somewhere around the height of the lorry bed. This made the loading so much easier. So one churn off, one churn on . . . check the docket . . . "What?" Make sure there is a ticket on every

churn and make sure it is filled out! Those not familiar with Cadbury's churns they had a small pin on the side at the top and the farmer attached a stiff brown card giving the date, quantity of milk and where the farm was. This was in the form of a smudged rubber address stamp. Painted on each side was a coloured circle which indicated when the churn was last overhauled. Often several colours were visible. The rest of the run was very much the same, one churn off, one churn on and boy was there a difference in the handling of the full and empty churns. Some farmers would be waiting to greet you and in some instances a brown paper bag of Crumb would be passed silently. With three on the gang the driver, usually Reg Davis would stay seated whilst us enthusiastic helpers would do the humping at speed. With a full load it was back down the Perryway which was the racetrack for milk lorries . . . get in quick, get offloaded, get home. Everybody knew everybody else and they knew just when a certain round would be in Frampton no matter where they came from. Into the Factory and find a spare bay on the Milk Deck. Roll those churns onto a designated area and someone knocks all the lids loose.

I am hazy, but I think samples were taken before the churn was moved but our job is done and we have an empty lorry. I think we moved to a loading chute to refill the lorry and you make sure the handles on the churns are East /West so no matter which way the next churn is delivered its handles will not hit your fingers. Because if it does you will need to say OUCH! Very loudly. Job done, day finished, milk round completed . . . not quite . . . it is

bonus time. The Frampton Factory had a canteen and they served hot chocolate that cannot be bought anywhere else in the world.

I had never seen half pint china mugs but they had them there. The gorgeous smell of hot milk and chocolate will last forever. Both cold hands around the cup and sup slowly, make it last.

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ALEXA TURN ON THE LIGHT

Dedicated to all those electricians involved with house wiring, concealed cabling, wifi switching and house electrical house management.

It was not always thus. Mains electricity was only introduced to Framilode Passage, Priding, Overton and Arlingham in the mid 1950's. Although Arlingham had enjoyed its own private electricity supply which covered the church, chapel, the Red Lion and the shop plus about fifteen homes all at 110volt by the good services of my uncle Bernard Shaw. Basic though it was, it gave villagers light, but no power for a long time before the Midlands Electricity Board came on the scene. Powered off a large Lister Generator it suffered one major downside. It could not be run at night because of the noise so when Bernard went to bed the generator went off and Thank you and Goodnight everything went dark.

Once it was announced that mains electricity would be

brought to the area there was a scramble to get every house wired . Every home was cabled on the surface with cable cleats, carelessly hammered into wherever they could. My experience was at Rosemead at Priding, which was a reasonably modern bungalow. The total wiring ran something like three fifteen amp round sockets in the whole of the house all brown and screwed onto varnished wooden mounts. One for the new Berry's Magicoal three bar fire, one for the television, again new and in a cabinet with doors to shut it away at night and the third in the kitchen for the new Swan Electric Kettle. That was all the power done! Every room had a single light rose in the ceiling (in brown of course) with cotton flex down to a bayonet fitting with a clear 60 watt lamp. A few rooms had the luxury of two way switching on round brown switches again mounted on a wooden varnished mount with a slot cut in the top for the cable. Both bedrooms had a suspended switch over the bed with live wires coming down to the switch . . . none of your string pull cords for safety. The radio remained unchanged as battery powered, with the wet accumulator being changed by Mrs Evans from Frampton every two weeks. In the dining room we went overboard and had a five branch hanging light with five fifteen watt, clear candle bulbs ...this is modern electrics. I am sure almost all the other homes in the area were very similar.

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ARLINGHAM CANNONBALLS

Back in the mists of time there was a militia firing ground at Awre and they would practice firing cannonballs across the Severn.

The good folks of Arlingham would go out at low water and collect them out of the mud as keepsakes. As a child I remember being told about them as there were some at Greenfields and also at Clapsgate.

I buy cider from Nick Bull at Severn Cider at Awre and on one visit he confronted me and asked “You come from Arlingham?”, “Yes Nick, originally” “Well, we want all our cannonballs back!”

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ARLINGHAM ELECTRIC SUPPLY

Everyone takes the supply of electricity to be a common utility but up until about 1954 Priding, Overton and the whole of Arlingham were not on the mains electricity network.

In Arlingham was a marvellous alternative which people joke about and ridicule. But laugh as you may, parts of the village had power and reasonable lighting for many years before the Midlands Electricity Board condescended to bring mains electricity to the area. .

My Uncle Bernard Shaw had worked for the Stroud Electric Supply Company before they merged with the Midlands Electricity Board so had a good grounding in electrical supply. When he married and moved into Greenfields in Church Road he provided himself with a generator adequate to power his own home and a bit more. It was not long before he put a pair of wires over the fence and supplied one, then two, then more and more neighbours.

This grew and grew and I am unsure of the extent of the network, but Arlingham Church and Chapel the Red Lion and, The Shop all had lighting as well as one street lamp, which vanished when the MEB took over the supply.

There was a major downside to all of this. The cost and technology to store power was just not on and no one wanted to listen to a diesel generator running all night in the middle of the village . . . so ten' o'clock and Bernard is going to bed...power off . . . Goodnight All Sleep Tight.

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ARLINGHAM-NEWNHAM ROAD BRIDGE

“Uncle Harry is going to build a Bridge”

“Oh yes, where’s that, in his garden?”

“No across the river at the Passage...all the way across to Newnham. ”

“Harry and who’s army?”

“Well Lou Greenway from next door and a couple of his boys . . . he’s got his boat, a Jones Crane and a fresh tin of St. Bruno Flake Ready Rubbed pipe tobacco”

Captain Harry Aldridge lived at Greenhaye, Arlingham and was educated at Arlingham School, he probably left at fourteen which was the term before they did the nine times table. He became a Captain because his father Lewis Aldridge put him in charge of one of his boats and he had bought a regulation Captain’s Breton cap from a boat store in Watchet.

His bridge building qualifications or any qualifications were Zilch, Zero, None, Nothing .

Enoch Williams was a ferrymaster, he owned and operated the Old Passage Severn Ferry Company Limited. This ferry carried cars and light commercials on a roll on roll off ferry between Beachley and Aust, downstream on the River Severn. In 1939 Enoch announced that he had bought the ferry rights at Newnham and had a proposal to build a chain ferry between Newnham and Arlingham.

That year, an Austrian house painter Adolf Hitler intervened and any plans were put on hold.

Late into the war the Ministry realised the need for floating airfields to progress the battle in the Far East. To achieve this a series of interconnecting octagonal tanks were built and tested at Stranraer under the code LILY but never used, as by then the war had ended. Williams saw the possibility to use these surplus tanks for the Arlingham to Newnham crossing, bought them and started to deliver them to site.

Harry and his team set to work with initial success. I think most villagers visited the site on almost a daily basis and I can remember going there whenever I was in the village. After a few months the pontoons were one third of the way across the river when disaster struck. With a fast tide running the ground anchors failed and a large section became detached. Being at Priding at the time I remember them floating past us and out of sight, ending up on Longney Sands. Sadly the project was abandoned from that moment on.

Great support to Williams had been given by the Red and White Bus company who operated most of the forest buses and had aspirations on the Stroud Valleys. They also ran three double deckers every day from Lydney, Coleford and Cinderford to RAF Quedgeley. A new crossing would give them considerably more choices.

The remaining tanks were slowly removed with a couple

being used by the local farmers as churn stands.

A worthy project embarked on by very worthy people with ambition. Today such a project would need a ten million pound feasibility study a six million pound tidal study, a twelve million pound environmental assessment, the project costing eighty million to construct with a budget overrun.

For Enoch Williams sadly he lost twenty thousand pounds on the venture.

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CHARLIE HALL'S FORDSON TRACTOR

Back in the Middle Ages of the 1950's at Priding motive power was exceedingly scarce.

But my neighbouring friendly farmer owned a pre-war Fordson Standard Tractor and if you were ever to get to drive it you had to look and learn for a long while. Another requirement was twofold. One that you had enough body weight to depress that mighty clutch pedal on the right hand floor pan and secondly you had to be able to swing the starting handle fast enough to start the beast. I did not think I would ever achieve the second task.

But visit after visit you gained more experience. Their

model was with, cast wheels at the front with rubber tyres and the two large rear wheels were similar but with massive zig-zag treads. It seemed there was always a need to inflate these on every visit which was an art form in its own right. Once the engine was running it would be stopped and a spark plug removed and a long air hose taken out of the shed and one end had a spark plug fitting and the other a tyre valve connector. This was connected and the engine restarted and each tyre inflated until it looked about right. But rear wheel punctures were a morning wasted . . . find a jack, find a large lump of wood, find the wheel brace then find a four foot length of 2 inch pipe. Release the nuts by standing on the pipe attached to the wheel brace, one hour gone! Jack the wheel up and take the wheel off and lie it on a dry piece of the yard to work on it with the tyre levers. Take out the inner tube and pump up the tube and put it in the cows drinking trough and find the leak. Another hour gone. Once repaired it all had to be put back together and that is the morning gone!

Before a day on the tractor could begin the pre flight checks had to be done. Unscrew the water cap on top of the radiator. Find the watering can or the bucket and fill the water up. These Fordsons drank / lost water and would boil any time you liked. Find the starting petrol, that's in the red can with SHELL-MEX pressed into it. At this time the engine must NOT be running as the spark plugs were on the top of the engine and there was always an aurora of blue sparks when she was firing. Secondly you filled the TVO (tractor vaporising oil) (Paraffin to

you and me) tank up. That's the large square green can and it smells like paraffin. Next find a small hessian sack printed "Gospil Brown Sack Hire Gloucester" on it. This is vital and has two uses. Firstly it folds up and becomes a seat cushion on the cold and wet steel drivers seat but also if the TVO leaks as it does, the fuel sometimes goes onto the magneto and it all catches fire. Well you can beat the flames out with the sack! Check the tool box for the day's essentials...the Fordson had a square tool box on the side with a steel lid the contents of which were four rusty spanners that had never been used since the tractor was new, the regulation bent rod Ford screwdriver that every Ford owner had and a Tecalomit alloy cased grease gun. Operating the grease gun had very serious education to it as you had to know which component would fail that day. Before it did you pumped it full of grease until the grease fell on the grass below.

We are ready to go . . . "Can I drive...Can I Drive".
"No, not until we get into the field". What an achievement that first time you are solo. This is better than aviation. At fifteen or sixteen one would drive and turn hay hour, after hour or chain harrow an orchard until there was nothing left. For my lovely friendly farmer it was trust in me to drive and he could go and trim a hedge fix a fence whilst I play. Clutch in , into gear and latch the throttle part way open, you were king of all motive power. Many farmers with this tractor had a bit of stick found in the hedge, in the hand throttle ring to make using it easier. Not for this lady, I remember an elegantly turned handle, probably a belaying pin,

maritime meets agriculture!

These Standard Fordsons were simple, but so, so reliable and needed to be, as every morning two churns for Cadbury's would be put into the small trailer, lashed in and taken from Framilode Mill to The Pike for collection. She never let you down.

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CLAPSGATE REMEMBERED

My memories of old Arlingham of the 1940's- early 50's was of two communities The farming communities who farmed the land, milked the cows and kept their community to themselves, went to Church and had Harvest Festivals. The other half of the village were the Mariners that built the boats, ran the boats, repaired the boats, owned the boats carried the cargoes, went to chapel and sang "for those in peril on the deep". Both communities seemed to marry within their own with the Aylands, Shaws, Aldridges, Watkins and Herberts dominating the maritime side of the villages.

Clapsgate House at Arlingham, for me, was the epicentre of this traffic. The maritime hub and centre of shipping. Visitors came and went on an hourly basis "Where's Hughie" would be asked . . . a look at the clock and the reply would be " he should be just off Swansea by now" Everyone was fed and watered. With constant food cooked by the lovely Alice Holder . . . Many talk of the

hardships of rationing . . . not so . . . there was rabbit, salmon, dab, elvers, pheasant, beef, chicken and bacon with enough fat to kill. Clapsgate walled garden provided enough for the house and the ships. Drink? Oh No! most local mariners were chapel and you were lucky to find half a bottle of Wincarnis from last Christmas.

Conversation was single topic . . . Shipping . . . No one talked politics, religion, sport and certainly not sex! “We came out of Bideford . . . and it came on to blow and tide had turned and I said to Fred . . .” It was always the same. Most of those that came were unschooled or totally unqualified yet were masters of the craft of seafaring. My great grandfather Lewis Aldridge went to sea at thirteen and spent his life on the water but probably never had a craft which had a motor!

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CUTHBERT AND KITT Y

In my childhood at Priding nearly everyone had a pretty basic living . . . coal fires or wood from the river, vegetables from the garden, fish from the river, no electricity, no mains water and sanitation was down the garden.

The exception to this was Cuthbert and Kitty . . . Mr Cuthbert Blakelock was a retired solicitor of some note so funds were plentiful. Kitty his wife was elegant or best described as chic wearing designer clothes and jewellery

even to do the gardening. Not the cleaning as that was unheard of. They had a lovely lady Aggie Smith come and do the cleaning and the chores like washing the bed sheets. Their lifestyle for Priding was on another level to everyone else. They had CENTRAL HEATING with radiators! Fitted carpets! and electricity off a Lister Generator in their massive garage. A swimming pool and their own air raid shelter. This was how people from away lived. With no work to do Cuthbert dedicated his time to devices. People had push lawn mowers but he had an electric home built mower with power off the Lister (which of course had to run for you to cut the grass). In the garage the Lister also drove a shaft which drove drills and grinders but also a shoe polisher similar to ones you now see in modern shoe repair shops and a riddler which was a rotating barrel with holes in. Once the boiler was empty you put the ash into the barrel, turned on the Lister and rotated the barrel, the small ash fell through the holes and what was left could be reused! . . . simple! The Blakelocks also had the only car in the hamlet; a polished, black, Morris Ten which had a dedicated routine of Gloucester once a week and Church on Sunday. Then dried and polished before it was returned to the garage. Kitty knitted for export which was a government incentive to obtain dollars after the war. Rich Americans would pay over the odds for hand made knitted garments from English Ladies. A lovely couple, who were really out of context with the area.

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Downsizing Charles Jones Camm

By the 1920's Charles Jones Camm owned the whole of Priding with the exception of the two Wick Court Cottages which as their name implies, belonged to Wick Court. His estate included two hotels, one temperance and one alcoholic so you had the best of all possible trades. I think by the mid 1930's the Severn View Hotel had been sold and became Priding House and its artefacts such as the Prince Victor figurehead and the cannon moved closer to home. The tea rooms lasted until the early 1940's although the farm (Priding Farm) was still being rented until the early 1950's. Always willing to sell a bit of property, Charlie sold a plot for the tin bungalow which became "The Burrow" although he refused to sell the well outside the property. No problem . . . it said nothing about the water . . . so the purchaser still benefited from the contents of the well. Priding Villa was sold less the front room to which Charlie would exercise his right and go and sit there when the mood took him. In the mid 1930's he sold a plot of land in his orchard to enable "Rosemead" to be built by the Greenway Brothers of Arlingham, although the deeds and the plot were ninety degrees about which caused a lot of trouble later on. Year on year Charlie sold more and more properties although in my time he would still walk by with a purple velvet bag on a Saturday morning going to collect the rent. It would be only a few shillings. . but it all added up. In the end he lived with his brother Clifton in the first house at Priding . . . "The Homestead"

This was a house like no other, musty and dark, ceilings

darkened by oil lamps and tobacco smoke. But . . . BUT it was a showroom for his trade as an antique dealer. Cabinets filled with fine china, Bristol Glass, decorated Meerschaum pipes, furniture by very famous names and a cannon.

As den builders extraordinaire, once you built such a structure on the river bank, one needed to defend it and a real cannon would be just the job! Charlie let us have this device and many homes had 12 bore shotgun cartridges lying about so we acquired a couple, opened them up and filled the cannon with the contents. Pointing it towards Rodley someone lit the firing hole . . . fizzle, fizzle, phut! It took us several years to know you were supposed to ram the charge to make it explode.

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FIRST BIT OF FRAMILODE

Walking up from Framilode mill, the stiles and the path, at the high level were perfectly gravelled, manicured and maintained. I was told the Church paid for the upkeep as the ecclesiastical parish for St Peter's went as far west as Wick Court Cottages. Whereas the low level path was overrun by tides on a regular basis and not suitable for ladies going to Church in their Sunday best. I am sure in my childhood there was a resident Vicar at the Rectory but I am unable to recall his name. This was way before Rosie and Sidney Ayland went to live there. Next stood the Church and the small path up to the School house. Living there were Mr and Mrs Scrivens, their daughter Diane and son David. The school room at that time was empty. Across the road was Forest View, a really

robust minibrix red house in which Mrs Broacher and her daughter Gillian lived . Mrs Broacher was really the quintessential Victorian Lady, time warped into the 1950's. Gillian attended Saul National School and later rode the School buses to Stroud.

Opposite was one complete huge building which must have been warehousing for the canal and I am unsure who lived within the complex, but in the first cottage was Mrs Agnes Smith "Aggie" and her daughter Joan. I never understood what was going on but on a regular basis Mrs Smith would visit my mother with a bag of groceries and lay them out on Rosemead's kitchen table. Mother would lay out a similar range of groceries and they would swop. It was a sort of high stakes chess but with baked beans and peach halves. In the complex was Mrs Davis and Jaqui, Bonnie and Gail her daughters and next door or somewhere was Mr Baldwin the builder who ran his business as Lewis and Baldwin, and his family. I never knew who Mr Lewis was. Finally in the small cottage next to the canal was Mr and Mrs Hickman and their son Keith whom I always did the disservice of calling "Dasher" even when I had the privilege of knowing his real name. Mr Hickman was the local cobbler and in the post war years you had your shoes repaired and a lot of people used the services of Mr Hickman to keep their footwear usable. My memory of the canal bridge says it was still swingable. Probably last swung in the late 1930's for salmon fishing boats in transit to Davis's at the junction for their annual overhaul. But prior the canal's abandonment in 1954, I think with a small bit of bar and a good shove one could have opened that bridge. Built by T. H. & J. Daniels of Stroud, it would last forever.

FRAMPTON GREEN CINEMA

Missing in the Netflix era is the Frampton “Green” Cinema, aptly named as it was on the Green and was painted green.

From my memory, it was a composite building with a world war one wooden travelling cinema building unit attached to what must have been the brick coach house for the Bell.

The brick portion housed the projection loft which was the domain of the projectionist Reg Walden with two massive projectors and the controls for the lighting and sound in the main cinema.

The lower part of the building was a bike store for the many patrons who turned up on their pedals. It was not uncommon to find twenty or more cycles stacked in the entrance, out of the rain.

The other half of the building was wooden and had many clues to its previous life of being transportable. My memory suggests it had about fifteen rows of about ten seats wide, one hundred and fifty total seats. These were age graded, with children at the front, teenagers further back, then the adults, with the back row traditionally reserved for courting couples. Entry was through a single file porch at the far end where one was confronted with a curtain and the formidable Mrs Mason in her darkened pay booth with rolls of tickets hung up on string.

The Mason Family were the local cinema dynasty,

operating the cinema at Frampton as well as the one at Berkeley and at Drybrook. The same film would appear in rotation at all three cinemas. In 1959 the cinema opened Tuesdays, Fridays and Saturdays with prices at 3/- (15p) 2/6d (12. 5p) and 1/6 (7. 5p) "Reduced prices for children with parents at 5. 15pm. Children under five not admitted"

Taking one's seats was a prolonged event as nearly everyone knew most of the rest of the audience and discussions went all the way to your chosen seat . . . "Hello is our Margaret here tonight?" "No . . . she's got a cold".

Once seated the climax to the evening began and the lights dimmed and the projector whirled. Reg had not opened the curtains yet and the Notification from British Board of Film Censors telling you the film was a "U" Classification appeared on the curtains before eventually getting the curtains back and coming onto the screen.

The first film is what is called a "B" movie which means no one would ever watch it unless they had to get to the main movie. Forty minutes later and you now know what the Adriatic looks like and we get the interval. Lights Up and sixpence for an ice cream tub or choc ice. No need to go for a smoke, because you have been doing that all evening so far.

Then for the flea spray! Mrs Mason would stand at the front with a large brass flea sprayer pumping like mad . . . "No it was not it was an air freshener" "Well I never got fleas there, so it must have been flea spray."

When everyone had settled the show began again and the famous Cockerel of Pathé News would crow loudly. News . . . no its not! That happened last January. But it was worth watching. My memory is a bit hazy but I think there were trailers for forthcoming films and a couple of local adverts

During the whole evening performance very many patrons were smoking and all of the evening the film had been shown through a clearly defined smoke filled beam of light. I was practicing smoking at the time and had bought a packet of ten Bristol Cigarettes . . . Well keep it local . . . I lit my cigarette and passed it to my friend next to me for a puff but he passed it on and I am certain to this day it never came back!

Heavy rain was a problem as the sound of it often drowned out the sound of the film. It made things worse when the hero was crawling across the dessert sand in blistering heat looking for a water hole and the heavens were beating down on the cinema roof above. LED lighting had yet to be invented and I am sure the exit signs were lit by C battery powered red rear cycle lights bought off the card in Silveys Garage window!

As time progressed and wide screen and Cinerama films came in, the curtains were made to open a little bit further and the whole new experience had arrived at Frampton, except you could see the joins in the additional screen panels!

Once the 'Main Film' started some patrons would still be discussing things and Mrs Mason would SHUSH them and shine her torch at them, "NOW KEEP QUIET."

Not all films were continuous. Twenty minutes in and there is a black dot to advise the projectionist to change reels . . . Reg . . . REG! The screen would go white, a cheer would go up and then the next reel would start...not quite where we left off.

Towards the end of the evening when the last Indian had been shot, or the real murderer revealed and the estranged lovers kissed for the very first time . . . BANG the emergency doors would open and everyone exited. Don't worry about fire drill, twelve point five seconds and most of us were on our bikes. I am reliably informed as a mark of respect they played the whole of the first verse of the National Anthem at the end of every performance but we were on the homeward side of Fretherne Bridge by then.

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GEOFFREY HOWARD TELEVISION

Many people of a certain generation would have known Geoffrey Howard who lived at Priding for half a century and cycled the lanes of all the Severnside villages. I am sure he would not mind me telling a tale about him. In the 1970's- 1980's Geoffrey had no television and was hostile against it, using terms such as "The idiot's lantern".

Infrequently the licencing authority would write to him stating they had no record of a licence at his premises and he could be prosecuted should he be operating a television. This would bring about the most, amazingly

hilarious response in the form of a letter, suggesting they may wish to delay any such action.

I flirted with very early satellite television which gave me access to most Pan European channels of the time. When Geoffrey discovered this and as a keen cyclist he put away all of his inhibitions and would park himself on our sofa for the entire Tour de France, on one of the Canal Plus channels in French. Once the tour had finished he would return to his opposition to the medium.

Many years later he was hospitalised for a short while and when I visited him with the statutory grapes and magazines he was in a side ward and a television was blaring the most rubbish soap anyone could find.

“Hello Geoff . . . How are you?”

He replied . . . “have you seen this programme? . . . This woman’s having an affair with that man’s son, and her husband thinks the forthcoming baby is his . . .”

It gave a whole new meaning to catch up TV.

Upon his recovery to Priding he announced “ I think we need a television”. “We? . . . I already have a television”

Just by chance I was offered an old very large colour set which would suit him fine.

I installed it and told him he now needed to get a licence.

“No” he replied “I am old enough not to need a licence”.

“Listen Geoffrey . . . you need a licence . . . you may not have to pay for it but you need a licence”

“Well I am not getting one” was his response.

I answered “If you are in Leyhill Prison for not having a licence do not expect me to come and visit you.”

A week or two later I met his neighbour who worked in Frampton Post office at the time and I told her the story. "Oh that is strange" she replied. "He came in last Monday and got a licence!"

Geoffrey's last days were spent in Henlow Court care home in Dursley. As soon as I got him settled in, the first thing I bought him was a nice new television.

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GEOFFREY HOWARD'S PIANO

Geoffrey's grandfather was a from a family of piano makers from Germany in a little town in the North East very close to the Polish border.

Geoffrey's grandmother worked in a music shop in Nottingham, England and grandad as a young man was on a sales tour of English shops trying to get them to stock their pianos. Not wanting to go home empty handed, he married Geoffrey's grandmother and she went to live in Germany. She gave birth to Geoff's uncle and was pregnant with Geoffrey's father but got fed up with living in Germany so left her husband and came back to the UK . . . but . . . BUT, brought with her, two pianos.

Upon her death her two sons each inherited a family piano apiece. After Geoffrey's Father died he inherited the Family Piano.

Come forward fifty years and we have to clear out

Riverside and it was important his piano was not destroyed. Very fortunately, a chance conversation about the story to a family friend, revealed her daughter was looking for a piano. SORTED Madam yours for free... can you collect!

Very fortunately Geoffrey knew the lady who was going to be the recipient so it ended exceptionally well.

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GOODMAN'S BAKERY

At the back of Severnleigh at Framilode Passage was a series of outbuildings. The first one was a long brick building up two steps and was the bakehouse. "Go and get us a loaf" and I would be despatched along the road to Goodman's Bakery. Fresh Bread . . . it was too hot to handle. Pull your shirt out and put the loaf in the material to walk home. The business had been at Framilode since the 1930's and really was enough for two employees. There was "Baker" Holbrow who was up before dawn to tend the coke fired ovens and William Goodman (Bill) who shared the work and delivered the bread in a new, at the time, Morris J van, around Saul and Arlingham. My memory of the bakehouse is prioritised by smell. That of, freshly baked bread like you get deliberately today, in some supermarkets. You were greeted at the door by the heat from the ovens, both sporting clock hands labelled "DCL YEAST" which were set to the time the loaves were ready. Inside, scrubbed wooden tables dusted with flour and large wooden rolling pins for the cakes. Oh yes cakes . . . cream slices with real cream, dough cakes cooked in a bread tin with a

greasy crust, the taste of which has never been equalled. But my favourite was their cottage loaves which were usually just a bit burnt . . . take the top crust off and add Phipps's Butter. With larger and larger shops selling sliced wrapped bread the bakery could not keep up and sadly in the 1950's it closed and Bill Goodman went to sea operating sand boats. The last time I was there the two oven clocks were still there saying "DCL YEAST"

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HORSESHOE FILLING STATION AND CAFE

Just on the borders of this memory, lane but remembered by older readers was the Horseshoe Cafe and Filling Station on the A38 at Moreton Valence opposite Downtons' Yard . . . at a time when their lorry (singular) would come in for a fill with a five pound note cash!). The establishment was run by Hector and Pat Wells and their daughter Joan, assisted by several local ladies that did everything needed to run a successful double cafe. The site had several components. The transport cafe with formica tables, sauce bottles on the tables and cracked, ex Port of London Authority plates. Large portions of well cooked food for lorry drivers. Adjacent in a separate room, a smart cafe with table cloths and all matching crockery and cutlery but with smaller portions at more money, but you could take you aunt there.

The orchard housed about five or six residential caravans which Hector had bought and let out to long term tenants. A very large transport yard which would take

a dozen lorries, the yard was full of potholes and it was almost a daily job to, repair the worst of them. Why it was never tarmacked I never know.

Finally the modern (for it's day) four pump Fina Filling Station, complete with canopy and central kiosk. Fina Regular, Fina Super and for those that did not need it Fina Super Plus. The fourth pump was for Diesel which was almost entirely for Commercial Vehicles. This was a very busy filling station and on summer weekends would stay open all night.

Be aware this is before the motorway was even thought of and everything, everything, went up or down the A38.

Working the pumps was a challenge of accountancy. The first task on shift was to read all the pumps, count the cash in the till and count the cigarette packets in the drawer. The last job on shift was to do the same and make it balance . . . NEVER. This is because at the Horseshoe, cash was the currency of last resort. This was because firstly, most of the diesel was on agency card, and I mean card, a bit of tatty old stiff cardboard soaked in oil carried by the driver. If you could read it you put the number in a book with two carbon copies. One for the driver, one for the petrol company and the remaining one was attached to the book. If you did not know the lorry company you checked the stop list before you fuelled in case they were a known bad payer . . . several ministry departments appeared on the stop list. The next trick was to with the drivers persuasion add a couple of gallons so he got either a free breakfast or a packet of Park Drive. For petrol, bank cheques were never accepted, no matter who . . . if you wanted to

pay by cheque you had better go and get approval from Hector first and you had better have a good reason plus leave your watch behind! Then there were local farmers who would arrive and ask for two gallons without any offer of payment but two days later would deliver four trays of eggs, account settled! Hector also entertained several friends on quiet afternoons, these were usually other cafe owners such as from the Cafe Roma in Gloucester and Hector would instruct "Go fill Nicky's car up!" That's another five gallons gone missing off my tally.

In the yard of the Horseshoe the parked lorries were a cornucopia of vehicles and would all grace today's vintage shows. The big beasts were the Scammells of Pickford, ICI and Cowburn and Cowpar which were dated even for that day. The magnificent eight wheeled Atkinsons Tankers of Petrofina, who, would play their horns as they passed. The response was flashing the pump lights if you were not serving. Austin car transporters carrying left hand drive Nash Metropolitans bound for export via Avonmouth Docks. Dee Valley Transport with highly decorated Foden and Guy lorries were regular visitors as were all the China Clay lorries, short wheelbase tippers going from St Austell to Stoke on Trent the drivers bragging that the Rowe Hillmaster lorries were actually made in Cornwall. Bee's Transport from Hinkley in Leicestershire were daily visitors with AEC flat beds and vans. Marshalls from Evesham with Morris Commercials coming back early in the morning from Bristol Fruit Market with just one or two spare crates of cabbage and cauliflower, again paid for in food and cigs. Cadbury's Leyland Crumb Tankers were in the Horseshoe almost every day and we all know what was in the brown paper bag. Baby Cham was a very popular drink of the time

and it was not uncommon for the Horseshoe to sport six or more Babycham new ERF lorries in two tone blue. The store room at the Horseshoe was never short of Babycham.

The Horseshoe had the most luxurious Gents toilets anywhere! Hector had been a lorry driver and knew the needs of the drivers. The 1950's was the time of dirty heavy uncomfortable cabs and the drivers had often made a long journey to get to the Horseshoe. There, and almost unheard of, the toilets had large sinks with hot water, mirrors and clean good towels, good lighting so a good wash up and a meal was invigorating before the next stage of your journey.

One item of currency at the Horseshoe was nylon shirts. . . . there was a period of time when Moreton Valence must have been the world distribution centre for nylon shirts. Where they came from no one knows but there were masses of them and I am sure they were all not quite right either one sleeve was longer than the other, the buttons did not line up, but they were cheap. All you needed to know was your collar size and you got what came. Many a customer would walk out with three or four.

Another currency was Fina freebees, with the regional office of the Petrol Company in London Road Gloucester, the Horseshoe was the first call for the Petrofina Sales Reps, so if you wanted key rings, pencils, diaries, calendars, the Horseshoe was the place to come.

Summer Afternoons the Horseshoe sported Hector's Parrott who sat on a perch by the Cafe entrance and

talked to incoming patrons. He had been taught to say “Knickers” and on occasions “Bugger Hector”.

It was great time to be in Moreton Valence.

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KETCH ROSE AT PRIDING

This is only conjecture, supposition, guesswork, coincidence, as no hard evidence is in my possession but . . . what I know to be true is that during the 1940's, 1950's and into the 60's the prow of a substantial barge stood proudly out of the river bank. Slightly upstream of Rosemead at Priding the top timbers had gone but the lower timbers remained as did the bow post well tarred and supporting a heavy iron strap. Tide after high tide would hit the Bow post with a resounding Thwack! slowly wearing everything away. Then suddenly it was all gone!

It is my belief there must today be some items remaining . . . nails an inch square and probably a foot long, rotted timber well hidden and silted over by tide after tide.

Various reliable sources lead to the possibility this was the ketch “Rose” built in Bristol in 1882, of 64 tons and originally owned by A. Johns of Gloucester. Later she was to be owned by Harry Purcell of Fretherne who traded her with coal from Bullo Pill to Framilode. Finally selling her to Charles Camm at the Homestead, Priding in the late 1920's to early 1930's. Charlie operated summer rowing boats for hire and allegedly bought “Rose” to stabilise the bank . . . someone put a large barge into the bank at Priding . . . more research needed!

LEARNING AGRICULTURE

As a young teenager and coming from a maritime family anything agricultural was a total mystery.

What do cows do? And why do hens lay eggs? But I had two good mentors, Derek Fellows and Hubert Hall and even at a young age Derek helped out at Glebe Farm, Fretherne. Now the farm was a funny set up as two Miss Phipps's lived at the farmhouse but did none, of the farm work except make the richest of farmhouse butter using two wooden butter hands, which produced a decorated round of butter covered in a diamond grid pattern. The farm was run by Douglas Phipps who lived next door at Bibury House. Doug was a "Gentleman Farmer" who always wore a smart shirt, breeches, a cravat and a waistcoat. Now working farmers DO NOT wear a cravat. But Doug had the considerable ability of getting everybody else to do the work and Derek and Hubert were two of the main fall guys. I was told that Wednesday they would have a day thrashing . . . "what's . . . thrashing?" . . . come along you will find it exciting. Wednesday came and I made for Glebe Farm and from my current memory what confronted me, was, directly out of a picture book farmyard jigsaw scene of the 1950's, even down to the geese running about!

In the yard centre stage was Ken Jones thrashing machine resplendent in bright pink, shaking to a regular beat of the belt driven mechanism. Helpers were on top of the machine, by the sides of it, in front of it and everywhere. Powering this spectacular event was Ken's Massey Harris tractor with its flat pulley drive feeding the umbilical cord of power to the thresher. A

green Field Marshal tractor added it's signature bump bump sound to the orchestra. At the other end was a Lister Elevator where cut wheat sheaves were being untied, separated and placed carefully on the tines to get hoisted to the top of the thresher. Once here the shaking began and continued and continued for the rest of the day. Somewhere underneath a man was tying up full bags of wheat and professionally sewing them together. Another was throwing the spent straw into heaps while another moved the heaps even further away. Ken Jones orchestrated the whole event lubricating, greasing and honing every moving component. Doug Phipps stood gracefully by and looked on smiling happily and put another pinch of snuff on the back of his hand and snorted, he had everyone working so well. There were rats and rats and rats but no one took any notice there was too much to do, to bother with them. It was a day to remember.

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LIMERICK SEA MONSTER

Schooner Captain Hugh Shaw recalls an incident that took place when he was in Limerick immediately after the fall of the Strand Barracks on 21st July 1922.

In 1922 Hugh Shaw and his crew were getting the ship ready to sail on high tide in the afternoon, when the mate called him from the cabin: "Captain! Come up here at once!"

"When I reached the deck I saw the quays on both sides of the river crowded with people and they were watching

the most amazing sea creature they or I had ever seen or read about. The object was close alongside my vessel [resembling] in size and shape...a small submarine. It was large and black and shining and it had a very long neck, at least twelve feet long, held proudly erect and shaped like a swan's. It waved its small head from side to side and its bright shining eyes seemed to express alarm. "Behind its long neck for a distance of ten or twelve feet was a massive black cone-shaped hump. "

At this stage the monster was heading upstream at a very slow speed and seagulls in the vicinity flew off in fright.

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LOCAL TELEPHONE ENGINEERS

In the 1970's prior to privatisation, British Telecom was a very comfortable place to work. No GPS vehicle trackers, no travelling half the country to your next job, no twenty minute target visits. Life was grand. Frampton, Saul and Arlingham had its own engineers who were known and loved by their users. Our man at that time had a catalogue of elderly ladies he cared for. My mother at Rosemead would be checked upon just before lunch and he would play the piano whilst lunch, for two was being readied. Alice Dowdswell at Wick Court was another customer who was on the 'special customer' category list. Those who had visited Wick Court at that time will know the kitchen sported a very large Elizabethan oak settle, which had probably stood there for at least two centuries. Alice must have complained

about the inconvenience of her old telephone and our man agreed to move a new phone to the kitchen, to a site where she may sit comfortably and talk. Be aware this is the time when cream cable, cream staples and cream telephones where in vogue and also a new invention of power staple guns had been introduced. Kerzamp-Bang!, Kerzamp-Bang, Kerzamp-Bang he power stapled this brilliant cable to the back, all along the top, down the side of this centuries old artefact and onto the arm where a new cream large block terminal was screwed to the Elizabethan oak arm rest. Job done. Alice could now sit in the warm and chat for hours. In a local graveyard a Settle Maker turned over!

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ME AND THE ASHMEAD KERNAL

For my Birthday in 1994 my neighbour at Priding, Mrs. Norah Leach gave me a book of Apple Poems specifically because she had written one of the poems.

I like apples and apples like me

Apples are English and grow on our tree

The tree in our garden is lovely to see

In Spring all the blossom is free for the bee

Mother bakes tarts, Mother bakes pies

Dear Mother so kind and so wise

Father looks further his cider to brew

His friends will surround him, Does this mean you?
Small boys out of school gather apples galore
They love them and eat them right down to the core
Nature loves apples and grows them for all
Horses, cows, rabbits and hares from over the wall
Oh, English Apple how important to all . . . Even Me.

Norah Leach

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MEMORIES OF THE CANAL

To try and convince someone today what it was like on the Gloucester Sharpness Canal in the early 1950's is unbelievable, the response is bewilderment or that you are making it up. But I will try not to.

For the first twenty years of my life everyone referred to it as the Berkeley Canal, which is where it should have ended up before they called it a day at Sharpness. Modern commercial status made it the Gloucester and Sharpness Ship Canal. All day wherever you went there was a chance of seeing a boat or a train of barges in sight, approaching, or going away. Every bridge was a double wooden structure which required the resident bridge man and one travelling bridgeman, who rode the tow path on a bicycle. Their territory would depend on the volume of returning traffic and at busy times, several mobile bridge men would be required over the sixteen mile length.

Tugs, these were the workhorses of the canal. I recall at least six Addie, Iris, Mayflower. Primrose, Resolute and Stanegarth. They would tow anything from a single barge to a string of four or five. These strings were usually all the same, four or five timber barges from Mousell and Chadbournes, lighters stacked so high with deals that the helmsman needed an added platform to see over the top. “Need a bit of timber for a project?” “we will leave a couple below Parkend for you.” Mud Hoppers carrying the endless quantities of silt from Gloucester to go back into the Severn. The dry goods barges like Severn Conveyor, with aluminium ingots for Worcester or seedless raisins for Gloucester and wheat for the docks. Timing of these strings was vital. The age old battle of canals, continued with the first at the bridge gets the route, the loser waits and the barges go all over the place in the wind. Amongst the melee the winner puts on full power to come through and adds to the confusion. In bad winters the tugs would have extra thick steel bow plates added and used as icebreakers.

Two small regular canal craft were the “Pisgah” taking grain right up the River Avon to Partridge’s mill at Pershore. She was last seen as a Restaurant Boat on the Seine and The “Kyles”, built on the Clyde in 1872, was 80 years old when working the canal. Still afloat today she is part of the Scottish Heritage Fleet. In the 1950’s she was taking gas oil waste from the gas works at Hempsted and dumping it in the Bristol Channel. You would not do that to-day. Waterways had their own fleet of “Severn “ boats, one of the more recent ones was “Severn Stream”, used for grain carriage to Reynolds Mill, in Gloucester.

Coasters appeared on a weekly basis, one being The

Reginald Keeron, taking Austin cars to Ireland in component form. Loading on the North Quay in Gloucester, the cargo was a tax dodge, with it being cheaper to import cars into Ireland in bits rather than as a whole car. Hugh Shaw's Arlingham based "Eldorita" came occasionally as well for surveys in the dry dock at Gloucester. Granite road sets came by the thousands of tons to Llanthony Quay. A few coasters were still steam powered although oil fired. A big beast was SS Condority which graced the canal infrequently.

But the real kings of the Canal were the tankers, predominantly Harkers with their Knottingley registered boats, all with the suffix "H" after their names, which were almost all "Dales". "Nancy H" being one of the exceptions. Following them were the Regent Fleet of much smaller tankers, Bristol registered and some built by Charles Hill to go right up river to Stourport. These boats were all prefixed "Regent", "Regent Jane", "Regent Linnet", "Regent Swallow", "Regent Jill" etc. etc. . . . Much later BP introduced tankers to the canal and later still Bowker and King took much larger tankers to Quedgeley and Monk Meadow

At no point along the canal can I remember pleasure craft being moored, that would have been far too dangerous. The bit of the Stroudwater Navigation at the Junction had a couple of Motor torpedo boats moored together with a couple of yachts, a few narrowboats and some famous residential moorers. Peter Scott kept his narrow boat "Beatrice" at Slimbridge as accommodation for researchers visiting the Wildfowl Trust

A popular place some of us would frequent, was the



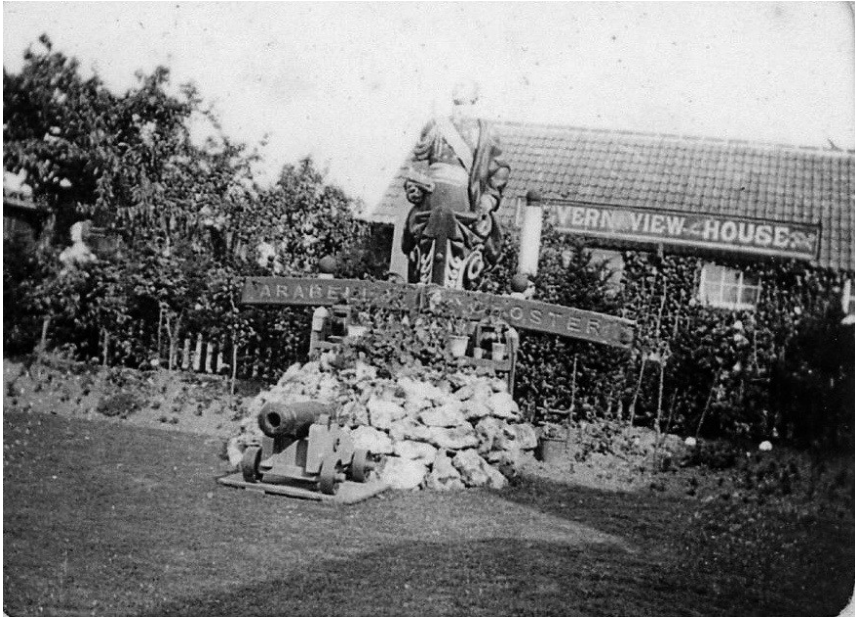
Malcolm Ayland greeting Black Labrador
At Rosemead 1940



Hugh Shaw
Master Mariner



Alice Holder
Housekeeper Clapsgate



Severn View House, Priding
Bust of Queen Victoria, The Priding Cannon,
figurehead of Prince Victor



Victoria Temperance Hotel
and Tea Gardens, Priding



The Darell Arms, Framilode.

Darell Arms. Framilode
Ayliffe's Mill chimney to left



Framilode Passage
Ayliffe's Mill chimney centre



Saul Juniors 1947/48
Sarah Griffiths Teacher



Margaret and Hubert Hall
On their Fordson Tractor
Photo courtesy: Charlotte Whincup



The Green Cinema Frampton on Severn
Photo courtesy: Laura Wood



"Kindly Light"
Owner: Mrs A. Watkins
Westmont, Frampton on Severn



Horeseshoe Filling Station and Cafe
Moreton Valence Proprietor: Hector Wells



Geoffrey Howard
Of Priding

Figurehead of The Prince Victor
Standing in the garden of
"The Aviary", Priding.
Jet the labrador



Painting of The Prince Victor



Harry Aldridge and Sons
Building the bridge to Newnham



Bernard and Norah Shaw
Outside Clapsgate House, Arlingham

“Cowsdrink” a sandy inlet on the Frampton side of the canal about halfway between Saul lodge and Frampton church. If no boats were in sight then you needed to know if one was coming. Forget your AIS Automatic Identification System, your Satellite Navigation or Marine Traffic app on your mobil . . . two sticks is all you need. As the wave lapped up the sand, place stick one at the high point . . . give it five minutes and do the same operation again with stick two. If the second stick is higher than the first stick, then a boat is coming if the second stick is lower, the boat is going away . . . go on home. The canal was such, the displacement caused by the boats was easily read.

The memory is of a very busy canal that provided so much to the community and work for so many, how many? Well lets do a rough count: 15 bridge men plus reliefs; 20, six, mobile bridge men; 26. Two maintenance gangs of six; 38, fifteen on the tugs; 53, lightermen ten; 63, workshops six; 69, Office staff ten; 79. Harkers would have at least forty; 119, Regents twenty; 139, and many more I have missed. Today they are all missed.

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POP VALLENDER

Many years ago the County Council would blade mow the grass verges and leave behind the hay. Mr Vallender would rake all of this up day after day and store in a huge hay rick at the top of the large double field at Priding. In mid Winter he would sell the hay.

My mother met a man who socially asked where she lived, she told him Priding and he replied. "We bought some hay from a chap down there . . . it was terrible... You would have thought it came off the side of the road!"

Mother smiled sweetly!

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PRIDING REMEMBERED

My memories of Priding come from the period of the late 1940's when the whole of the river bank from Lower Framilode corner to Priding House, was totally unobstructed by any fences, boundaries or impediment of any kind. No road existed but a clinker track which was renewed periodically with fresh clinker from Cadbury's at Frampton. There was only one car owned in Priding which was by Cuthbert Blakelock at Riverside; a Morris 10. Delivery vans would also disturb the tranquility but only a few times a week. Majestic elms stood between Rosemead and The Homestead with a high level path behind, above tide height. A Post Office telephone route trundled down the middle of the River Bank, but with only three subscribers. Mr & Mrs Blakelock, Major

Graham at Priding House and Wick Court Farm. Be aware that there was no electric supply to the area until the mid 1950's. Mains water, also was not installed until the early 1950's but most houses were supported by a well or shared one.

Going Westward from Lower Framilode were two large fields with a pond between them, which was originally owned by the Mill but subsequently sold to Harry Purcell. For us children this was play area number one. Large enough for football in winter, cricket in the summer, kite flying in the March winds and blocking the ditch to make waterfalls in the autumn.

The Homestead was the home to Charles and Clifton Camm and was an Aladdins cave of all things interesting, clay pipes, ancient coins, foreign china and antiquities from another age. Charlie was an acquirer rather than the polite term of dealer, whatever he could acquire he would do so and sell them on to visitors to the riverside on a Sunday afternoon. To help promote this, the River bank was mowed to perfection and the front two rooms of the house were laid out as a showroom. Clifton would run boat trips from the water's edge for a few pence, or convey people over to the sands opposite in an elegant skiff, in which he competed with the licenced ferry at the Darell Arms; a source of much animosity. The orchard had fruit trees of every denomination with plums, greengages, eating and perry pears and apples for every occasion. There were three van bodies around the orchard for hens to nest in and another pond for moorhen's nests. It also had a large wooden, black tarred shed, which was a holiday home to Charlies family from Bristol, who seemed to spend every weekend there.

Rosemead was next and really a modern bungalow having been built a decade before. It had water from the well drawn by a rotary pump in the kitchen and a septic tank for toilet waste. This was a major luxury as most homes had either an earth toilet or an Elsan. With the River nearby "Bucket and Chucket" has its true meaning. Lighting was by paraffin lamps as was most of Priding. My parents had bought Rosemead as a new house for £400. 00 payable on a twenty five year mortgage.

The Aviary was where the Wren's lived, Mrs Wren was bedridden and slept downstairs by the double french windows. She would call persistently for her son Ivor who was very good in looking after her but occasionally his patience would wear thin and the worse utterance he could make was "Oh! Ivor's Leg". In the garden was a "Man" lurking behind a mass of brambles this was a massive 8ft tall large carving of a "man", only years later did anyone discover this was a ships figurehead from the wreck of the Prince Victor.

Three Riverside Cottages followed each with magnificent carved porches and for the period large sash windows. Miss Dorothy Clyde lived at Number One who kept a cow called "Julie" the produce from which she made into massive soft cheeses with the taste of best Stilton.

Mrs Smith lived at Number Two. I was told that Mr Smith had died but he lived separately at Number One anyway but BUT all of the Riverside Cottages had interconnecting doors and Riverside One shared a kitchen with The Aviary. There was one well for everybody and at the back were three earth toilets between all the cottages which was probably enough for everyone.

At Number Three Riverside Cottage it was a different scene completely. Cuthbert Blakelock was a retired solicitor and was much better off than the whole of the rest of the hamlet and he and his wife Kitty socialised with people from far afield, went to Opera, Theatre and places the others only read about. There was a very large garage and a greenhouse above, an air raid shelter and a swimming pool. The house had carpets in every room and electricity driven off a Lister engine at the rear of the garage. The Lister also drove a belt pulley which had a shoe polisher, a knife polisher/sharpener and an ash riddler called "Diogenes". Cuthbert had also built himself an electric mower which was four pram wheels supporting a wooden frame onto which was mounted an electric motor directly connected to a steel blade which rotated to cut the grass. The story goes that a pike was put into the swimming pool for revenge. Everybody knew who did it.

Up the Alley and firstly; Sunflower Cottage, Bill and Jean Goodman, Bill was part of the Bakery at Lower Framilode and delivered bread and cakes over the local area. A lifetime later I have no recollection of ever paying for anything I ate in abundance, but as I have been good friends with all the family for a lifetime, I am sure they would have asked.

The Leach Family, Redvers, Norah Leach and their daughter Irene lived in the bungalow named "The Burrow" complete with labradors Guinea and Pansy. When accommodation became short they built a "Daughter Pad" in the garden, beautifully self contained with stove, bed and fittings for Irene.

Two more cottages followed up the Alley with Priding Villa for Danny and Doreen Cordrey and Harts Cottage for Charlie Hart, his wife and daughter and her husband George Green who had come from London, a place as far away from Priding as Kurdistan.

Finally Priding Farm which was really two properties with "The Dunns" at the front whom I do not think were ever there and had their furniture stored in the tea rooms. Fred and Lucy Cox lived at the back with their daughter Kathleen and her son Richard who, from our first meeting, became a lifelong friend. Our playground was the magnificent tea rooms with their painted murals and scrubbed floor filled with apples in the autumn and a Hornby clockwork train set in the winter.

Priding was a settlement not connected to anywhere. It was in Arlingham parish but never went there because no real road existed beyond Priding farm. The postal address was Saul but that was a City which it might belong to far away and Framilode, even Lower Framilode was somewhere else.

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PRINCE VICTOR FIGUREHEAD, PRIDING

Carved in New Brunswick, on the shores of the Bay of Fundy the 145 year old figurehead without his moustache was on the bow of the St. Martins built, Prince Victor. On Good Friday 1887, Captain Hans Cornelinsen in the Norwegian sailing ship Prince Victor, was en route from New York to the dock at Sharpness, with a cargo of 10,000 barrels of paraffin.

He was negotiating the Severn Estuary, with the assistance of two tugs and a pilot, when it was discovered, too late that there was insufficient water to clear the sands. The ship struck a sandbank near Beachley and turned broadside on the tide, falling over on her beam-ends. She crushed the tug Victoria into the sands, Captain Cornelinsen's wife and son were both lost, the lady being in the ship's saloon, the son in the galley, both being drowned when the vessel rolled over. The Prince Victor dragged across the sands for another half mile, where sheet was secured by lines to a large oak tree at the water's edge at Woolaston where she became dry at low water.

At Woolaston churchyard there is a grave to the two passengers who died. The villagers were said to have been very kind to the survivors, who camped on the bank near the wreck.

The Prince Victor was later caulked, righted and towed to Sharpness where she was condemned and then auctioned, selling for £250.

The figurehead was acquired by Charles Camm who displayed it outside his Severn View House at Priding. When he sold the property he moved the figurehead into the garden of the Aviary where brambles eventually consumed it. In the 1960's my father Wilfred Ayland uncovered the bramble hidden figurehead, restored it and transformed it with paint.

The figurehead was later transferred to the safekeeping of the Gloucester Folk Museum

In 2016 the figurehead was restored a moustache was added for reasons unknown and returned to St Martins New Brunswick.

World's End Sands Victim

by Bernard L. H. Shaw reproduced from Sea Breezes

Visitors to the Severnside hamlet of Priding have no doubt gazed in wonder at the figurehead which stands in a secluded cottage garden. Few have knowledge of its origin or of the tragedy that befell the proud ship whose bows it once adorned. For well over half a century it has stood uncared for, slowly decaying, its princely regalia and haughty features still displaying the woodcarvers art of long ago - a veritable prince indeed. To this day the story, with many variations, is still told around the farmhouse fires. Happily still with us is 83 year old Mr. J. Brinkworth of Frampton-on-Severn, who helped to salve and subsequently break up the vessel Prince Victor, a fully-rigged ship of 1,217 tons, built at New Brunswick in 1870. She had formerly owned by R. G. Moran of Liverpool, but when wrecked was under the

Norwegian flag. My informant is a brother of the late A. E. Brinkworth, whom readers of "Sea Breezes" (Vol. 15, No. 149) old series, will recall was master of the Lloyd Royal Belge steamer Elzasier, when in 1920 she picked up the disabled barque Kilmallie and towed her to Lisbon. I am indebted to Mr. J. Brinkworth for the loan of the photograph from which the accompanying illustration was reproduced and also for the account told here in his own words.

"On April 7th, 1887, the Norwegian full-rigged ship Prince Victor arrived at King Road, near Avonmouth with a cargo of about 2,000 tons of paraffin - in barrels - from New York. On that voyage the master, Capt. Hans Cornelinsen, was accompanied by his wife Nathalie and eight-year-old son Olaf. The next day was Good Friday and at an early hour the vessel with the pilot aboard, got under way. Ahead was a tug and another alongside, the Victoria. All went well until the Chapel Rock was reached when the pilot, guided by the beacon, realised the dreadful truth - there was not sufficient depth of water for the vessel to clear the sands she would have to cross. The master was warned as to the danger in which his vessel stood and was advised to call his wife, then still asleep. Only those who know the treacherous River Severn with its mill-race tides can appreciate the plight in which the Prince Victor stood. But even then, had the tug ahead been more powerful and have kept the vessel in the main channel she could have anchored safely in Slime Road.

"However it was not to be; within a few moments the Prince Victor struck the dreaded World's End sands, was turned broadside, and immediately fell on her beam ends

on to the tug Victoria, crushing her into the sands. To this day no trace of the Victoria has ever been seen but by a miracle all her crew escaped. They scrambled on to the port side of the Prince Victor which was then awash, and with members of the vessel's crew, were recued by the remaining tug. Not so fortunate was the captain's wife and son, the former being drowned in the saloon and the latter in the ship's galley, where his body was found, his face impaled on a large iron fork used by the cook. The subsequent tides dragged the vessel half-a-mile further up the channel where myself and 14 others managed to secure her to a large oak tree near the water's edge at Woolaston.

“It will be appreciated that at low water she was high and dry. We soon hacked through the rigging and allowed the masts and spars to go crashing overboard. Some six barges assisted in lightening the vessel of several thousand barrels of oil, in preparation for getting her to Sharpness. Meanwhile the officers and crew had erected a tent ashore in which they lived. The state of mind of the master, who through his own ignorance of the river, had lost his wife and son in one fell swoop can well be imagined. In those far away days fatal accidents seemed fewer than in modern times, and a gloom was cast over Severnside. The nearby villagers of Woolaston where the castaways camped showed great kindness by doing all in their power to help them. A tombstone in Woolaston still marks the grave of the wife and son. Capt. Cornelinson, to show his gratitude, gave away his last article of value, namely his gold watch chain, which is still a treasured heirloom of a Woolaston farmer.

“It will be appreciated that at low water she was high and

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“On the next high tides the vessel, her damaged side having been caulked, was towed to Sharpness where it is though she might sink. She therefore stayed out in the basin where it was proved she could with safety be brought into the dock. There, she was lightened of her remaining cargo. Soon afterwards she was condemned, she was offered for sale by auction and was bought by Mr. James Owner of Sharpness, for the reputed sum of £250. There, she was slowly broken up, her timbers going for firewood, and to the farmers to build sheds. I well remember the massive copper bolts holding the keel to the keelson, some 8ft in length, and even then the ‘spivs’ were about trying to induce me to ‘knock off’ some of these for them.

“The event was not without its happier side. The mate, aged about 30, whilst staying at Woolaston, met a young

lady with whom he fell in love. Some years later he returned to Sharpness as master of the Prince Regent and this time married the lady of his choice. While in Sharpness I worked on the rigging of the Prince Regent, also helping to paint her topsides, doing so by standing on the ice which at the time was 18in. thick in the dock. When she sailed for Cardiff, where she was to load coal for a South American port, I was one of the runners who took her from Sharpness. To mark the occasion of the master's wedding the ship was dressed from deck to truck with every flag on board. On reaching Cardiff we bade him and his bride farewell, and were presented with £5 to be equally divided amongst us, in addition to our pay. ”

Now all that is left of the Prince Victor is the lonely figurehead which the writer hopes to possess and remove to a kindlier home. No longer then, on darkening evenings, will children with fast beating hearts, hurry past the prince who lurks in the shadows!

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SAUL FLOODS PUNCHLINE

After Saul got flooded in 1965 all of the telephones were out and Stroud Jointers were on the scene very quickly. A good time later, I went to work in Stroud and met one of the jointers that had been involved (Brian). Knowing I came from thereabouts he said “They are a funny lot down there” “There was a guy who walked up and down Church Lane several times a day and every time he passed held his hand out and said The water

was up to here... Honest Mister!" This became a greeting between Brian and myself . . . "The water was up to here . . . Honest Mister". Some twenty years later I went to Brian's retirement function in Bristol and as I walked into the room Brian called out . . . "The water was up to here . . . Honest Mister!" Don't you love Saul folk.

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SAUL SCHOOLS 1947/48

There were two schools in Saul, the National School next to the Church and the British School which was half way up the Black Road towards Framilode. I have never understood how the intake was arranged and two theories are made. If you lived North of the Cross you went to the British School which included all of Framilode. If you lived South of the Cross then you went to the Church (National) School. Another version is if you were God Fearing of course you went to the Church School whereas those heathens went to the British School. By this time Framilode School had long since closed. The British School had only two teachers, Mr. Wade as Headmaster and my Mother, Norah Ayland as primary teacher. She must have made some impression because some fifty years later some of her pupils now the local hard men still said "Hello Miss".

Thinking it was not a good idea to be in the same school as my Mother I was sent to the Church School, a scheme which was to backfire two years later.

I enjoyed every minute at Saul School with Sarah Griffiths as the Junior's teacher, Mrs Wathen at the middle school and Mr Thomas (the first) as Headmaster.

At this time if you failed to get to Grammar School then you stayed at the village school until you were old enough to become employed. This meant there was possibly a ten year age gap between the oldest and youngest pupils. There were two lovely dinner ladies Mrs Keeble and Mrs Hillman and free school meals were provided delivered in heated containers These were supplied from cooking kitchens in Frampton by Mr Oliver Silvey in his County Council signed Austin Van. A third of a pint of milk was mandatory and first supplied by Freddie Gardner at Fretherne. A cardboard disc sealed the top of the bottle which you pierced with a straw and you did NOT blow and make bubbles. Even post war the building was tired and had had its life. Bomb blast tape still graced the windows, lighting was poor. Heating was by a tortoise coke stove in each classroom which glowed red and gave off awful fumes. Boys would spit on them and listen for the hiss. High brick built toilets with earth closets were down at the far end of the playground, an open unroofed building with high dividing walls. The challenge for the boys was to pee to the top of the wall or beyond whilst standing at the urinal . . . “Yes I could!”

The syllabus was very basic to teach you to read and do basic arithmetic, to make things out of paper and card. You had to listen to stories about epic adventures and to go to church and hear bible stories. In those days the Vicar had considerable input to the workings of the School. Once a term an important day would be announced and for an hour in the afternoon Lady Darell would visit. The girls would curtsy and the boys would continue to pick a hole in the desk top or pencil in their initials on the back of the seat in front. The lady was old, older than Granny Ayland and I have images of a fur stole probably made from the rarest of exotic wild animals but

most importantly, she was important.

Games were encouraged as part of your development, but always the girls led. Hopscotch squares were laid out in the playground and the girls always won. Rounders were played and the girls always won but at Conkers they were rubbish, that was totally male dominated. I had a fiver (five games won) but cried when it got beaten. Meat skewers were prized and shared to drill the hole in the chestnut for the string. Care was needed not to drill a hole in the palm of your hand. Once a year came the School photographer and dearest Mrs Keeble would plait the girls hair again, and with the same comb, straighten everyones hair ready for the photograph. Before Christmas was the school play which was to incorporate every pupil, even if they were just shepherds standing silently at the back with a crooked stick and a tea towel on their head for a keffiyeh. Another pastime practiced only by the girls was cotton reel knitting. Using a cotton reel with four nails in it and with a crochet hook they would knit miles of multi coloured useless woollen streamers.

Finally every few months came the Nit Nurse, a lady in full uniform and take everyone, one at a time, out into the cloakroom for this very personal inspection. I cannot recall anyone being found with head lice, but what an embarrassment if you did!

The following year the British School closed and my mother was transferred to the Church School. This is when rule one came back into play, and it was not a good idea to be in the same school together. I was sent off to the King's School in Gloucester . . . but that is another story.

SAUL TRANSPORT

A large commercial garage for lorries was situated at the Pike Corner on the junction of the road to Framilode Passage and the lane to Fretherne. It was at the back of Bibury House, the domain of Harry Purcell. Harry actually lived at the "Fire Station" the long farm house opposite Fretherne Church, so called because the windows and doors at that time were painted bright red. But Harry operated out of the Pike Garage which was a fascinating site for adventurous children. It was crowded with old cars a large generator, as much junk as you had ever seen, and a wartime air raid shelter with a round and corrugated roof. Harry was a hay merchant who bought and sold hay. He transported it on two Bedford Ex WD Lorries. Working for Harry was Ivor Wren who lived at The Aviary (now Chalk End) Priding "Wrens live in an Aviary" The story goes Harry owed Ivor a mass of wages. Instead of paying him he donated the five ton WD Bedford to him. Ivor became Saul Transport In Brackets (Harry Purcell) Limited. Harry kept the hay trade.

Ivor started by becoming what in the trade at the time was a Smalls Carrier, four generations before 'White Van Man' and the parcel carriers we know today. The licensing of commercial vehicles at that time mean Ivor's vehicle could only operate within a small radius. So Avonmouth and Bristol was as far South as he was permitted to go and Cheltenham Tewkesbury and Cirencester in the other direction but that was sufficient for him to make a living. On a Saturday Morning he would go to Avonmouth and Bristol and collect five of these four of those and a dozen boxes of sliced peaches a few cans of Jeyes Fluid in fact anything at the docks

which needed distributing. On Monday he would deliver them to Gloucester Stroud or wherever. Tuesday back to Bristol and collect . . . Wednesday deliver and so life went on.

The business was good although not spectacular and if he had too much work he would farm it out to Frank Underwood at Eastington or Joe Yates at Nupend. Occasionally he would employ local drivers if the extra work was there and in time he changed the Ex WD Bedford for a "S" type and later a Bedford TK when they came out new. Ivor ran the business well into the 1960's and eventually retired through age and failing health.

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SAUL TXE2 TELEPHONE EXCHANGE

Much has been said on this site about Saul's manual telephone exchange run by Mrs Travell and her family in the High Street in Saul. Physically answering and connecting every call, a fantastic service that provided so much to the local community. This finished in the early 1950's and was fully automated by a new electro mechanical telephone exchange in Whitminster lane. This was a long single storey building not dissimilar to a very long single garage. The UAX 13 (Unit Automatic eXchange). A Stowger exchange in Whitminster Lane in Frampton. Behind the later built police station.

By the 1970's this was old technology and all the old rural exchanges were being replaced with TXE

(Telephone eXchange Electronic). At that time I was part of a team installing these exchanges all around the Gloucester Telephone Area. There was always a satisfaction to build the exchange where you lived. Saul was on the books and I was determined I must angle myself ready to land the job. And I did but there was a catch! For the first time ever the exchange was to be built in the factory and shipped out in one piece. Standard Telephones and Cables Ltd (STC) based at Southend on Sea were awarded the contract and they would install the equipment in just one day. A site was chosen in the field in Bridge Road which was a former football pitch. To accommodate this change in delivery practice the building, (yet to be built) was designed for the South Wall to be removable beyond the dimensions of the new one piece exchange and with sufficient access for a large crane and an even larger lorry. Once the building was up the large Lister standby diesel generator was fitted and run. Underground cables to the New Exchange were installed, tested, tested again and connected to a distribution frame, the other side of which would be the new exchange. Visits were made to Southend on Sea and our friends at STC, which we affectionately called Standards Travelling Circus, and a date agreed with them for the installation.

As the day approached we had to ensure everything was ready and one dread at these events was that hierarchy from all over the planet would turn up to watch, district managers, area managers, zone managers, regional managers, the lot. Saul new exchange had a wonderful lady from Saul that cleaned up our daily detritus and she asked what I would like her to do on the day. "Joan, you make the finest tea and coffee east of the Canal" "Just

Make sure every visitor you do not know is given tea, coffee, chocolate biscuits, jammy dodgers, anything but keep the out of the exchange”.

Come the day, I rose early, drove over to Bridge Road and parked out of the way of cranes and large lorries. By about seven thirty the crane had arrived and news the lorry was not far behind. By nine o'clock the two vehicles were in place. The long arm of the crane was high above the building and the lift began. STC uttering prayers that it would not be dropped. Once on the ground then air pads were attached to the feet and inflated which made the huge unit a hovercraft, it was gently and easily walked into place . . . up to that marker line . . . just a bit more then turn the air off and it settles into place. You look up and find the crane has gone and the lorry driver has almost stacked all his ropes. It is all yours now! Carpenters are shuttering up the end wall and replacing the tiles, but it was a beautiful day.

The next few hours were spent trying to appreciate what you have got. Colleagues are connecting the power and the loom to connect somewhere just over four hundred customers telephones. By about four o'clock that afternoon we had sufficient green lights up to believe it would work. Lift a test telephone and listen . . . dial tone! . . . well that bit works. With the utmost of care you dial the telephone on the next table and pray that it works! A phone rings and you hope a college will be able to speak to you. This is the moment Alexander Graham Bell said to his assistant “Mr Watson—come here— I want to see you!” I said, more like “Hello John, well that all works, lets all go home”

Anyone connected with the installation industry of any type of equipment will tell you this is the moment you take off your shoes and socks and tiptoe very quietly out of the building. You have done your job, you have put it in and got it working . . . leave. It is now the responsibility of the maintenance team to look after it for evermore. If it goes wrong then it is their problem, nothing to do with you. It worked when you left it. If they cannot look after it then too bad.

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SHOPPING IN ARLINGHAM

My childhood memories of Arlingham are centred upon my Grandfather, Hugh Shaw's home Clapsgate which is the first house on the left as you enter the village. Hugh had been a Master Mariner and it was fairly obvious to anyone who went there. A large discarded marine engine stood by the orchard gate, mutilated propellers in the coach house and the conservatory was strewn with navigation charts and tide tables . Chronometers or barometers in almost every room and paintings on the walls of sailing ships in the worst of all possible storms. But I want to focus on where you could buy something within the Village.

Flowers, then you went to Mrs Harbard in Friday Street, she and her husband had a prolific Market Garden enjoying the fine sandy soil of the village. With a large greenhouse, it meant for large parts of the year, bunches or posies of flowers could be purchased. They also sold fruit and vegetables, but they mostly went elsewhere as

so many villagers had very prolific gardens of their own.

The Post Office was in Bay Tree Cottage in Frampton Road with it's mandatory call box on the opposite side of the road. This was run by the Butt Family before it moved around the corner to the home of Jack and Renee Price. Jack had been a submariner during the Second World War but had surfaced to run the Post Office. The post box however, remained at Bay Tree for many years afterwards.

The Red Lion was really the centrepiece of the Village with its dart and skittles, run by Albert Daw and his wife. It was a hard drinking pub as pubs did little in the way of food. Packets of Crisps, a pickled egg and if you asked really nicely a lump of yesterdays bread, a pickled onion and some old cheese. Times were different! Two other pubs graced the village The Bell in High Street run by Mrs Bishop and my memory is of a smoke stained room and quarry tiles and men playing shove halfpenny. How they ever made a living is a mystery. Finally on the River bank opposite Newnham was the New Inn run by Mr and Mrs William Twyning. Bill was a Farmer and the pub, a straight mile outside the village, was run, in spare time. The ferry was operational in good weather so a few from Newnham would visit. During this time all licensed premises worked to very strict hours and Time was called very promptly.

In 1949 the New Inn became the headquarters site of the project to construct a new Severn crossing to Newnham. Enoch Williams the owner of the ferry rights attempted to construct a floating pontoon bridge . . . but that is another story!

On Saturday evenings the last bus would wait until closing time then take all the out of town Red Lions patrons back home calling at Milton End, Overton Lane, Fretherne and The Pike.

Arlingham supported its own bakery in Church Road which later became "The Cottage Loaf". Very aptly names as my favourite bread was their two tier cottage loaf which Mr and Mrs Cousins made with a burnt crust and still warm. The shop was close to the road and had several display windows. There were jam donuts somedays and in summer they came with their own swarm of wasps. Every window with a handful of wasps busying themselves. Their son Stan worked the deliveries on a tricycle with a large delivery box on the front. The tricycle would do justice to any fast delivery outlet today.

The emporium to end all village stores was Hardings in High Street. A double fronted store with an annex into the house next door. Mr William Harding and his wife ran the store with the "boy" Fred Leach. The Hardings had spaniels and showed them, when they won a new certificate it would appear pinned to the shop ceiling for all to see. Biscuits were in tins, loose with glass lids so you could see the variety you wanted, you then passed the tin over the counter and they would weigh out the biscuits. Cool green bottles of Roses Lime Juice, Camp Coffee made from chicory essence, Nescafe coffee in squat round tins with a prise off lid and OXO cubes in a red tin with a hinged lid. A tin you would keep, forever filled with buttons, dead biro's and a South African Penny. Sweets in bottles, Cadbury's penny bars and jars of liquorice root. A magnificent and large, red, hand

wound bacon slicer, with a blade so sharp it could slice hairs, stood on the counter. Feathery Flake Flour adverts decorated the store. In the window next door, were children's toys and at six pence per week pocket money some serious finance had to be arranged to save up for both sweets and a model of Bluebird.

Weekly, a new Commer box van would arrive from J. B. Williams and Co the Gloucester food wholesaler restocking the shop.

A travelling pop man with a small Austin lorry came selling Pickup pop in bottles labeled "Pickup Sussex Place Bristol" With many of the maritime families being Chapel and teetotal he did a good trade.

Milk was NOT delivered, you walked to the nearest favoured farm with your enamelled milk can and took what you wanted out of the churn in the dairy. Clapsgate's favoured farm was Puckpool Farm and I assume at some time they paid for the milk, but that was never in my presence.

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SHOPPING IN SAUL

During my childhood shopping in Saul village gave you a lovely choice of suppliers.

At Saul Farm was Cyril Rudge's butchers, long before he had the purpose built shop along the High Street closer to the Cross.

Assisted by his sister Rosa it was sawdust heaven with everything scrubbed and hygienically clean as it should be. Opposite, at Lion House, was the blacksmith shop with its forge and visitors, especially farmers, taking bits of iron in to be bent and re-tempered. Opposite the Church was Saul Post office which was the front room of Mrs Annie Silvey's home. In through the front door, turn right and the grille for the Post Office confronted you which was very similar to village post offices of today. But the rest of the room was a delight for how much could be neatly displayed. Tobacco of every variety and persuasion, our school time favourite was Black Beauty Shag as you could say a naughty word and get away with it . . . although we did not know what it meant ! Sweets like you have always wanted and encouragement by Cicily Franks, who ably assisted Mrs Silvey. Then in the left hand corner of the room, the Public call box. A coin operated telephone connected to Mrs Travell just a few houses along at Saul Exchange. "Please insert four pence" and you will get pips after three minutes. The box was glazed so you may see if it was occupied and had doors with giant black loop handles, giving access to the room for the public and to the house for the Postmistress. Three doors up towards the Garage was the Supply Stores a purpose built double fronted shop, which was probably

clad in highly dangerous blue asbestos. But this was the domain of Miss Stella Gower. It was a no frills grocery store selling unexciting everyday food for the villagers. I always felt the layout needed revision as bread was here, butter was over there, jam was somewhere else and so on. But, BUT she sold Lyons Maid Ice Cream . . . this was big town stuff and for a few pence in those days you could come away with a wafer or cornet.

Silveys Garage . . . what an institution! If you had a new bike or a new car then it came from Silveys . . . nowhere else. Radio batteries, torch batteries, inner tubes, brake cables . Anything transport, it was available. Set in sections on the left side, was the long storage garage for the taxis including the 7 seater Vauxhall FFH7 and cars in for long term repair. The central, double fronted garage had the office and shop on the left hand side with a front window full of goodies from rear lights to pocket knives. The similar area on the right was more of a store and not so attractive. The main workshop had a pit as well as a single ram hydraulic vehicle lift and central to everything, was the famous tortoise stove which I think was waste oil burning. To the right of the garage was the Showroom, pristine in layout, with Morris advertising, and coconut matting. Every few weeks a new Morris Minor, Oxford or Isis would appear. I am reliably told by several sources, that, at that time, Silvey's did not do Hire Purchase. Cash or cheque only and when your cheque is cleared they would register it. Scandal if your car was left waiting there for a while, because your milk cheque had not arrived! Also in the Showroom was a small selection of bikes and if you really chatted them up nicely they would give you a Raleigh Catalogue. Three Petrol pumps grace the roadside in regular, and super,

only I do not see there was any call for Diesel at that time although they would have had a good trade in paraffin for lighting, cooking and heating.

Further along the High Street in a side building to The Hollies House was the shop belonging to Mr and Mrs Arthur Mathews with daughters Gloria and Carol. Arthur was an entrepreneur as he introduced fish and chips to Saul frying a few nights a week. You knew when this was because the smell wafted down to Saul Wood. He also toured the villages with a Karrier low platform van professionally converted into a mobile shop. Arthur sold real Coca Cola in glass bottles which was a first for the area and started many on the addiction. I was given money for one birthday and spent a large portion of it on a full case of 24 from Arthur. His best ever sale but I did not get trade discount!

On the cross was the Co-op. The Cainscross and Ebley Co-operative Society. Saul's Superstore Mr Alder, Lionel's Dad was the manager welcoming everyone. Mr Smith who cycled around the regular customers picking up orders for delivery in a few days time in their Morris PV Van There were about three others in the shop including a couple of ladies. Don't forget your 'Divi'. As shareholders you owned the shop and were allocated a share number or Divi Number. I believe my mother saved hers up all of the year then her Christmas shop was paid for out of the Divi, as I believe did many others. And is it not time you had another Cat. The Co-op had amazing Cat/Cats which bred on a regular timeframe so you better think about having another kitten. The Coop cats sat on the counter, purred and were stroked by everyone or curled up upon one of the sacks that graced the store in

those days. Food Hygiene what's That??

Up the Black Road was a dual purpose venue, an off-licence and bakery which to my memory, was a hatch through which all commerce was conducted. The Proprietor was a Mr Harris . . . Baker Harris to give him his correct title, who appeared as a white apparition covered in flour when baking. The off licence was a canvas bag job to go and get a few bottles of Forest Brown or stout for grandma. He also sold cigarettes in ones. Two pence each and share them with about four of your mates if anyone had a match!

Finally a lovely store in an eight by ten garden shed halfway down Passage Road on the right hand side. The emporium of Frank and Sylvia Chapman. The only evidence it existed was a stOKes ice cream sign stuck on the house wall. I may be doing them a disservice but Stokes Ice cream came from Wotton-Under-Edge and it did not travel well! Frank was the local Newsagents and delivered newspapers around the area in a grey Austin A35 van selling sticky cakes, sweets and a few tins of essentials whilst delivering the papers.

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TALES OF MEN FROM ARLINGHAM
HUGH SHAW

In the 1920's at the height of the Irish Civil War between the Irish Free Staters and the Irish Republican Army. Hugh Shaw from Arlingham traded to ports in Southern Ireland often with Droitwich salt loaded out of Gloucester. In July 1922 Hugh was moored in Limerick...he relates . . .

“For the first time that day I felt alarmed. Part of the way down the street, on the side where I was walking, I had to step off the pavement to avoid stepping into a large pool of fresh blood. Just beyond on the same side I saw two men, standing by a house armed with rifles at the ready. From the house leading to a hole in the centre of the road were two lines of covered wire and I thought to myself “These men are guarding a mine!” I realised it was no use for me to turn and go back. I stepped back on to the pavement and passed close to the men. They looked at me but did not speak. I kept my eyes on the end of the street, where I believed I would be safe, once I had turned the corner. I did not hurry. Nothing Happened. It was a dangerous time.

I got back aboard Camborne. The shooting had not restarted and as it was nearing high water, I decided to shift from where we were and enter the dock, which was some distance down river well away from the rifle and machine gun fire.

Within another couple of days the shooting was over in Limerick. The government forces brought an eighteen-pounder gun into action and the first object

they bombarded was the Strand Barracks. After about four hours the fighting was over as far as Limerick was concerned. The next day the city came back to life. Shops opened business was resumed and we moved back to original berth ready to commence loading. ”

End.

In 2008 I received an email from Jim Corbett who asked my connection to the story and I told him. He said he had just written a book about his grandfather Captain Connie Mackey who defended the Strand Barracks on that day. I bought a copy of the book and Jim wrote inside a dedication . . . “In memory of Hugh Shaw . . . who was there!”

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THE KINDLY LIGHT

Steel Hulled Ketch

116 tons

Built 1896 Pool, Skinner and Williams, Falmouth

Owner: Mrs A. Watkins, Frampton on Severn

Lead, Kindly Light, amidst th'encircling gloom,

Mrs Agnes Watkins awoke at Frampton on the morning of the first of February 1918 not knowing what was to befall her ketch “Kindly Light” that day

HER ketch, yes her ketch it was often the policy of many coastal shipping families to register the craft in the wife’s name.

It had many advantages. If the husband was lost at sea or went off with a mermaid . . . the family still had the boat

The husband was a lowly paid employee and was taxed very cheaply. The wife was unemployed so was not taxed at all. For the husband if anything went wrong such as damage or a collision he could say "Well its not my boat". "You claim of my wife if you are lucky"

That day Alexander Watkins was on route from Honfleur to Milford Haven in the Kindly Light and just a day away from finishing his trip. Many of these small sailing vessels were engaged in delivering South Wales and Forest Coal to ports in Northern France during the First World War.

Captain Carl Siegfried Ritter von Georg of the Imperial German Navy commander of submarine U101 had different plans and to sink as much of the British merchant fleet as possible was his main priority. These old sailing ships were easy prey. They were slow, easily caught and one or two shells would sink them. On February 1st. 1918 they caught up with the Kindly Light and ordered the crew into its lifeboat and sank the vessel 10 miles WNW of Trevoise Head, Padstow. Alexander and his crew rowed away to safety.

This was the end of the Watkins maritime adventures and after the war ended they were awarded compensation for their loss. The 1921 London schedule of payments forced Germany to pay 132 billion gold marks in compensation . . . that did not all come to Frampton but they had been comfortably recompensed for their losses.

By this time just across the road Cadburys chocolate factory was booming and Alex and son Alec saw the opportunity to transport milk from outlying farms to the Frampton depot.

No more hardships of life at sea . . . this was working from home and a comfortable bed every night. The business flourished with about four or five lorries on the road every day. In my time they were Morris- Commercial and I am certain at least one was supplied by Silvey Brothers at Saul . In later years the fleet was run by Alec's son in law, Reg Davis up until milk tankers became the norm, when KEM transport from Marlbrook took over milk collection.

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THE PRIDING CANNON

The photograph posted in the photo section of the Severn View Hotel, shows clearly the Priding Cannon, used to defend the hamlet against anything hostile.

Come forward to the 1950's and the cannon had been relocated to The Homestead at Priding and belonged to Charles Jones Camm. Charlie and his brother Clifton were very tolerant of us children who played in the orchard and around their garden. It was an adventure playground for "The Priding Four". Myself, John Magor, Derek Fellows and Roger Hudd and prized game changer was the Cannon. It was not long before we realised that this should be a working cannon and a plan was afoot to test out our theory but there was a snag. Saul school

had not taught any of us Gunnery so we were all self taught. We knew gunpowder was the main ingredient and many places had shot gun cartridges and a couple were “acquired” and taken apart. Now were required a cannonball and this was more difficult but we eventually found a ball race and took all the ball bearings out and kept them ready for the day. We also realised we needed a fuse so we soaked string in Paraffin. I think the idea was forgotten for a season but eventually resurfaced and we dragged the cannon down to the bank outside The Homestead and pointed it at Rodley. We found all the components and primed the cannon, first the string through the charge hole then the gunpowder, then the ball bearings. Everybody ready? with a match someone lit the string and it burnt well . . . wait for it . . . Fizzle, fizzle...dead. Nothing, absolutely nothing . . . oh well let’s go and play den building without a cannon.

It is a little known fact but shortly afterwards the Government abandoned National Service ensuring not one of us ever got near to a cannon again.

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THE SEVERN COLLIER

“Do you want to go down to Sharpness tomorrow with Uncle Frank?”

“Yes please!” So be at Fretherne Bridge for half past seven. A trip on the “Severn Collier” was always a Summer School holiday adventure . . . into Cadbury’s on your bike and up to the barge, surrounded by coal

everywhere.

A mug of very milky drinking Chocolate to start your day whilst Frank Pockett and Tom Dangerfield readied the boat for the Tow. Watching, watching Sandfield Bridge for the first sign of movement which would be the tug to take you to Sharpness.

When she appeared there was usually a string of barges and you were to tag on the end. Bridge after bridge and a conversation with the Bridgeman and a banter with your pass man on his bicycle.

All too soon you were at Sharpness and the tow was slipped with enough momentum to get you round the corner into the barge arm.

The first job was to turn the Collier so she was ready to leave and so much easier when empty to place her under the tip.

Then to climb the bank to the railhead level where about six wagons had been prepared for you. A white line on each truck indicated the end where the open door was so each one was the right way around. I can still see the scene now with Tom Dangerfield operating a small winch to bring in the first truck into the tip.

Then BANG a lever was pulled and the wagon tipped, the door came open and ten tonnes of Forest coal went down into the hold below.

DUST, Dust everywhere and you could wash for a week before the last black coal came from behind your ears.

At this point the empty wagon was lighter than the counterweight on the tip and it returned to level easily. The tip was at the end of two tracks serviced by a “Y” point so the point was changed and the empty truck sent off down the empties road. Put the point back to the full road and take the next wagon and repeat this until the Collier was full.

The whole exercise taking less than an hour. Soon a tug was ready to go northbound to take us back to Cadbury’s. This was a different trip as the Collier, laden steered “ like a wagon with a wheel adrift”. Oh happy days!

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THE TROW “SPRY” THAT NEARLY CAME TO SAUL

In 1972 the Stroudwater Canal Society was formed and had an overnight membership success. The enthusiasm meant that anything was possible.

At one of the committee meetings a member proposed the members purchased a Severn Trow. The Society had a trow as its emblem and it would be nice to own an example of one of these famous vessels. The Spry was for sale and was the last remaining example of the craft . The owner wanted four hundred pounds for it. Yippee! What a good idea, even though it was sat on the bottom in Diglis Basin, Worcester, I would go twenty pounds, the next committee member said he was good for twenty and another and another . . . sorted, we would go

and have a look at our prospective purchase. Virtually every bit of timber was rotten! I remember taking a long electrical screwdriver to the keel and easily went right through with little or no effort. But undaunted nothing a bit of six by two timber would not fix. I was fortunate to dine every month with the Waterway Manager in Gloucester and I announced to him that we had plans to buy the Spry. He held the back of his hand on my forehead and told me he thought that I might recover! A few days later he telephoned me in an official tone and asked what we intended to do with the craft. I suggested we may take her down to Saul. The friendly voice turned professionally official and I was instructed that under our new ownership, the Spry would not be accepted anywhere on Waterways property in her current condition. Its hulk had caused problems for him for decades and he wanted rid of her. Time went by and the original enthusiasm waned substantially and we all knew our purchase was not going to happen. A long standing acquaintance from the Ironbridge Gorge Trust rang me and asked if we were serious about buying the Spry, because if not they would like to acquire it. I made a decision instantly. . Go for it, she is all yours... The rest is history.

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YOU ARE WHAT YOU READ

For the first portion of my life most of the newsprint I read came through the portals of Frank and Sylvia Chapman's shop, in Passage Road in Saul.

My parents bought me no day to day luxuries but gave me generous amount of pocket money for me to allocate

as I wanted and to balance between comics, sweets or a balsa wood glider. Occasionally Grandad would supplement it by slipping me a two shilling piece. Comics were an essential and you only had a choice of two the Dandy or the Beano and it really did not matter which. You got either Korky the Kat or Biffo the Bear. Within a few years the Eagle appeared which was a totally different type of publication Dan Dare the pilot of the future battling against The Mekon. But more importantly the centre pages were a cut away drawing explaining how things worked and the reader very soon knew the basics of the Metropolitan-Vickers Gas Turbine. A few friends took the Lion Comic but nothing could compare to the Eagle. A favoured aunt would buy you the Eagle annual for Christmas and life began again. The Eagle had a sister comic The Girl but as I did not have a sister I never read it but was told it was full of ponies called Charlemagne and stories of the nasty girl swat in the upper dorm.

Then came Rock and Roll . . . where? what? how?. It was not on the radio, well not the BBC anyway. You had to tune to 208m medium wave for Radio Luxemburg . . . where is Luxembourg? Somewhere where they broadcast Rock and Roll but every other minute it hopped and went quiet. No matter and there was a newspaper dedicated to the music. "Frank . . . could you order me the New Musical Express, please" and he did, on the school bus and in school we poured over it and studied the hit charts more avidly than anyone did the Financial Times stock list.

My parents did not take a daily paper but they had the evening Gloucester Citizen, which, as a teenager news was unimportant, but the small adverts were worth

reading. “Lost, Tuffley area, gents bicycle with new saddle, answers to Horace”. “Pets: Labrador puppies six weeks £5”. “Daaad can we have a dog?” “No”. We also had the Radio Times with BBC 1 television only. Last weeks copy was cut into four a hole put in the corner, hung up with string and doubled as toilet paper. Izal had yet to be invented! Mother took Womans Weekly well it was not worth looking at I did not need to know how to sew together an Angora sweater. On Sundays they would have The Observer which was pages and pages of everything a teenager does not want to know but next door they had the News of the World, which at the time was ‘Bonker’s Gazette’ with every page filled with the intimate sex lives of someone famous. For a lad going through puberty this was amazing class A pornography. At the other end of the scale, my friends parents took The Methodist Herold which was God’s own Newspaper.

With motoring approaching it was time for Frank to supply The Autorcar because I needed to choose between a new Riley Pathfinder or a new Ford Zephyr. The reality was I bought a 1936 Ford 8 for £25. 00 but the magazine was read from cover to cover every month and one became a motoring expert. Better than Hubert Hall who bought Farmers Weekly . . . what? four pages on how to improve your silage and next week it is about how to treat Warble Fly. Even the adverts were for Sheep Dip . . . come on! Ivor Wren took Commercial Motor and that was worthy of borrowing . . . the New Guy Invincible, Atkinsons, Albions and The Rowe Hillmaster that was something else. Geoffrey Howard took the New Statesman which was all about politics and I was not old enough for that. Another of Frank’s supply was Motor Sport magazine, essential reading for those wanting to

know Eric Carlsson's Saab stage times . . . but grow up . . .
and I did!

"Frank could you please deliver me a daily paper" "Yes
Mike what do you want". "The Manchester Guardian,
please Frank" . . .

"Sylvia, I am worried about that lad" "Why Frank" "He
wants The Manchester Guardian"

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50 VOLT TELEPHONES ESSENTIAL

Back in the Middle Ages I was working at Miserden UAX
13 and arriving in the morning in my own car a Ford
Escort and as it had been foggy, I had the headlights
on. Locked the car and did a days work, until late in the
afternoon decided to call it a day and go home. It was
then I realised the lights had been left on and I had not
a bit of battery. But, BUT, Miserden had a battery rack
and fifty volts and I also had two reels of red and black
power cable and also two Mole grips. With sufficient
cable to reach the car I made two long jump leads. Red
to positive and about enough of the large glass cells to
give me a good twelve volts. Then the black, bolting them
carefully to the exchange battery and mole gripping them
to the car battery. This could go horribly wrong and it
would be Miserden off the air. Please explain! . . . I had
turned the lights off and carefully tried the starter. Get
a Ford started and they will go forever! She whirled on
the starter and fired and ran. Yippee, now to see if the
Exchange still worked. Selectors were still in place, I
lifted the main phone and heard a selector come in and
give me dial tone. We were home and away. Carefully
taking the jump leads off one at a time ,I had won.



Price: 6d.

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