

## Memories of Trades People in Kibworth Beauchamp in the 1930s

*By Dennis Clarke*

Although Kibworth was fortunate in having an excellent train service to Leicester and Market Harborough, many folk at that time did not have the time or resources to venture far from the village but their needs were well catered for by various local trades people.

Starting near the top (west end) of Fleckney Road lived Mr 'Billy' Smith who was a chimney sweep and window cleaner. His services were in high demand for almost every house was heated by a coal fire which meant some chimneys required sweeping on a monthly basis.

On the opposite (south) side of the road, just below the hosiery factory, was George Gamble's builder's yard followed by 'Winky' Orams' fish and chip shop where one could buy a pennyworth of chips. On the corner of Halford Street was Miss Adams' sweet shop, noted for a small bell on the entrance door which small boys shook vigorously, and for the wire netting which covered the open sweet trays to stop little fingers from taking samples.

Just below the Working Men's Club was another sweet shop owned by Miss Harvey. When small boys and girls asked for 'jelly babies' or 'dolly mixtures' she would insist on their saying "if you please" before letting the sweets fall out of the jar into the scale pan.

Moving towards Buller Street was a butcher's shop run by Mr A Sedgley and his son Terry. They also had a slaughter house in Buller Street and it was a common sight to see Mr 'Loddy' Ward, the assistant, carrying half a beast on his back from there up to the shop. On the corner was an 'Off Licence' and grocery owned by Mr George Simons.

There were two shops opposite (on the south side of Fleckney Road) whose roles I cannot recall, but in Harcourt Road lived two nurses, Nurse Harris and Nurse Homer, who ran the Kibworth and Smeeton Nursing Association. This provided midwifery and routine medical services in return for an annual subscription and to which most villagers belonged as visiting the doctor's involved paying a fee.

Back in Buller Street there was also a builder's yard owned by a Mr Billing. Further down and left in an unmade extension to White Street, next to the Salvation Army hut and on the north side, was a cycle repair shed owned by a Mr 'Spotty' French. He was well known for owning a very early Morgan three wheeler, one of the few cars in the village at that time. Nicknames were quite common in those days; it was part of the culture and I cannot recall why the particular nicknames above were given.

The Salvation Army hut in the unmade-up extension of White Street was of wood and had the appearance of an old army hut, possibly one from World War 1 (the Kibworth Band hut in Halford Street at that time was of similar design). It had a wooden floor, and also windows with curtains. The hut was used regularly for services and meetings in those days.

Returning to Fleckney Road (north side), there was a shoe repairer's shop owned by a Mr A Roberts, to be followed on the corner of Kimberley Street by The Newtown Bakery and Bakehouse run by the Badcock family with Mr Ross Jacques being the baker. Then followed another small sweet shop owned and run by Mrs Maudie Stevenson.

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On the opposite side further down was a large house called 'Southlands' where Dr Phillips lived and had his surgery and dispensary. Moving into the High Street and on the north side one arrives at the Market Harborough Coop Shop which was established in 1900 and which has been one of the main grocery stores since that time. The next shop was Mr Eli Bale's outfitters and in the adjoining house a Mr Dewey from Market Harborough ran a visiting dental clinic.

Then there was a photographer's shop (Mr Walter Bale) and a lending library run by Mr Alan Timson. A lady called Daisy Driver ran a haberdashery shop on the corner of School Road, with Mr Greasley's barber's shop on the opposite corner next door to Callaghan's bakery.

Opposite School Road (on the south side of High Street) was Miss Hare's stationers and newsagents, the Royal Oak public house (Mr W Brutnell), Mr Rudkin's pork butchers, another butchers (F Simons) and Dalton's shoe shop. After a row of cottages was Mr Davis' builder's yard.

As I was born and lived at the far (west) end of Fleckney Road, my recollections and knowledge of shops and traders around the main square (The Bank) and in Station Street are less clear, but even in those days of few cars the needs of villagers were adequately supplied by the shops and traders existing at that time.

*Written in November 2008*