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# *Lillington Local History Society*

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Our twelfth on-line newsletter: March 2022



My brother and I were sent regularly by our Mum to Sensicle's to buy bread.

If we were lucky.....

## **Then and now**

The corner of Lime Avenue 1910-1915 and in 2022.

Images Peter Coulls

## THEN AND NOW ----- SHOPPING...THEN

### CO-OP CUBBINGTON ROAD

Every week a lady would call at our house in Kinross Road, on her bike, to collect mum's grocery order from the Co-op which was situated opposite the Rugby Tavern. Then two days later it would be delivered, mum would check her items and any dented tins etc had to be returned by me. I was about seven or eight but deemed old enough for this task. I loved the Co-op, we had to wait our turn to be served and once my goods had been exchanged I could, if I had any pocket money left, buy a cone of sherbet, taken from the jar and wrapped up by the shopkeeper. The money was sent up in a tin on a wire to the lady in the office and any change sent back the same way. *Barbara Blackwell*

### HAROLD POOLE

I have vivid memories of Harold Poole's the Butcher. Being brought up in Farm Road from 1949 until 1969. As a young girl I was often sent to collect the meat that my family had ordered. One day I was sent to collect a Joint of meat. The queue in the shop was so long that by the time I got served I had forgotten what I had been sent to buy, so instead I asked for a pound of sausages. When I got home and was told what I should have purchased, I said well I didn't know you wanted a 'GIANT'. Something I will never forget. *Linda Reidy*

### SENSICLE'S



My brother and I were sent regularly by our Mum to Sensicle's to buy bread. If we were lucky, she would give us a one shilling piece, which was enough to buy the loaf (10 old pence), and for us to choose a Penny Arrow each as a treat. These were long thin toffee bars – there were many different flavours – my favourite was banana . We used to carry the bread in a plastic string bag. These bags were commonly blue, green, or red in colour striped with white. In time due to putting

too many heavy items in the bags the individual strings would snap, and eventually all you had left were two handles and one big hole.



Today we have our bread delivered once a week, and it costs almost as much as a thousand Penny Arrows. *Les Markham*

### LOCAL SHOPPING

Until the early 1950s there was no self-service in shops, and customers had to queue at the counter to give their orders to the shop assistant who would produce the goods from under the counter or from the fixtures at the back. Shopping was necessary about three times a week, since very few people possessed refrigerators to store the food safely. Better-off people might have their groceries delivered. People with servants tended to walk up the right-hand side of the Parade since it was not done to be seen outside shops into which the servants would be dispatched to collect what was required, but perhaps there were few such people in the village of Lillington, though those living in the villas in north Leamington could well have fallen into this category. *Graham Cooper*

### CHILDHOOD MEMORIES OF SHOPPING



Stanways, the shop in my childhood, had a long dark wood counter on either side of the shop, a couple of bentwood chairs for ladies to perch on whilst they waited for their order, each chair bearing an enamelled sign for 'Rinso' washing powder. At one end of one counter was a rack of biscuit tins with glass lids, allowing customers to see the contents. Once chosen, the grocer

tipped the biscuits into a brown paper bag and plonked it quite unceremoniously on the counter, with a quarter of tea (just weighed out) a blue bag of sugar (also just weighed out) half a pound of butter (ditto) and some bacon.

The bacon slicer was the most exciting thing for me, even more than the coffee roaster and grinder, with its wonderful aroma. There was something magical in the way the grocer turned the handle one way and out would come perfect, evenly sliced rashers of bacon. It never ceased to intrigue me, and I longed to see what made it work. I am still waiting for someone to take a bacon slicer to "The Repair Shop", so that I can see one being taken apart.

*Margaet Rushton*

## **GETTING FOOD IN THE FIFTIES**

As a boy I lived in the small village of Thursby, midway between Carlisle and Wigton. Mr Fox, the Wigton butcher came in a van and my Mam would go out with the other mothers to buy direct so it was as fresh as can be! A fish van came weekly, (I think from the East coast) but the grocer, also from Wigton, came to our house, had a cup of tea and a chat, then asked Mam what she wanted for that week. It would be delivered the next day! Although Mam always baked our bread herself, a bread van also visited the village and she sometimes bought fancy cakes and pastries. Two of my uncles ran a bakery in Cockermouth and in school holidays Dad and I would do deliveries for them to Maryport, Workington and Whitehaven.

*Will Jackson*

## **40 YEARS AGO IN LILLINGTON**

When we first came to Lillington, in 1980, I was delighted to find so many good shops nearby, not least Mr Poole the butcher on Cubbington Road. I became a regular customer. We were having a chat one day and I asked him- 'Why do I always feel so tired about 2 o'clock? I could go to sleep! Never happened in Coventry when we lived there'. He told me so many people in Leamington felt the same! I still don't know if he was having a little joke. But he agreed with me very seriously! A couple of years later he congratulated me on my (obvious) pregnancy and after about a fortnight presented me with a pair of baby's booties crocheted by Mrs Poole. Such a beautiful, touching gift. And well used, and shown off, when Henry was born...

Soon after that I was standing with the pram, Henry fast asleep, outside the Post Office when a very striking woman came walking quickly towards us. She had very pale, wrinkled skin and dark curly hair almost hidden under her hat...and piercing, sparkly eyes, dark as jet. I almost got ready to run but she beamed at me, took hold of my hand, and pressed two 50p coins into it, 'for the babbly', she said, and 'Bless you, mother!' To this day I sometimes wonder if this was a Romany lady wishing us well. I never saw her again.

But what she did, happened again while I was shopping, with Henry in his pram, in Crown Way. Another...unknown... lady pressed silver into my hand, 'for the baby'. I wonder if this lovely custom still survives? Or would, if it weren't for covid?

And...incidentally... I STILL get sleepy about 2 o'clock...

*Judy Cooke*

## **SHOPPING ...NOW**



## THEN AND NOW.... FROM MY GARDEN

Our house backed onto the former playing field situated between Valley Road and Haddon Road. I spent many hours of my summer holidays on the field, playing cricket and football with the local boys. One of the things I remember is the very different planes that used to pass over from two local airfields. From Baginton came the drone of single engine planes trailing canvas advertising slogans for Kosset Carpets or other such household goods. From Gaydon came what appeared to be the huge white V-bombers during the days of the Cold War.

*Les Markham*

## THEN AND NOW.....MILK DELIVERY

Our milk was delivered by Alf who worked for Clyde Higgs, based at Hatton Rock near Stratford. The bottles had a green logo on the side of them. Often there was a rhyming sales slogan present. The only one I remember is:



*"North, south, east, west  
Clyde Higgs is Best!"*

But here is another one.....

*Les Markham*



## NOW AND THEN ..... FOOD



I remember that fresh fruit out of season was so much less available and so a regular "afters" was sliced peaches out of a tin with Carnation evaporated milk, which also came out of a tin which had a blue and white striped label, over the top. We opened the tin of peaches with an opener which gripped the top of the tin and then twisted the handle, while we opened the tin of milk by pressing down with the triangular shaped tin opener, once on each side, and pouring out the milk. Delicious.

*Larry Connor*

## NOW AND THEN .....DOMESTIC APPLIANCES



During my early childhood (born 1953) my mother relied on a gas-fired "copper" to do most of the clothes/bed linen washing. This was a cylindrical water container on three short legs and with a gas ring of some kind underneath it. It could be connected to a gas tap by a hose. When I was four I was scalded when playing too near this contraption. The milkman (Frank West) happened to call seconds later, and with no car to turn to mum asked him to take her and me to the Warneford Hospital in his milk float, which he did - an hilariously slow way to go to hospital, but probably quicker than waiting for a bus..... *Tina Rowe.*

## **NOW AND THEN.....GOING TO THE DOCTOR**

I remember going to the doctors, which was in a house on the Cubbington Road opposite Aitkins the chemist, this was around 1957. This same doctor, if my mother thought I was ill enough, would often come to visit me at home, on his bike. I think his name was Dr De Coursey. Later this doctor's surgery joined a group of other doctors and formed Clarendon Lodge which is still situated on the corner of Clarendon Street and Clarendon Avenue.

*Barbara Blackwell*

## **NOW AND THEN.... ROADS AND TRAFFIC**

In the 1950s the only local set of traffic lights were at the Kenilworth Road - Lillington Avenue junction, which could be activated to green by vehicles driving over elongated pads in the road surface. Perhaps there was a zebra crossing at the bottom of Lillington Avenue, where it joins Rugby Road, but there was certainly no roundabout. There was no such thing as a pelican crossing. When near a bus in Kenilworth Road, one jumped when there was a loud hissing of air, which turned out to be its air brakes, which was a new experience. Cars tended to have semaphore traffic indicators and the idea of flashing lights fore and aft was an innovation.

*Graham Cooper*

## **NOW AND THEN.....BUS JOURNEYS**

The entrance to a single-decker bus was at the front, with no doors, so that passengers had to be warmly wrapped up to compensate for the draughty conditions. Smokers were relegated to the first four rows (or was it the last four?) and there were notices forbidding spitting. The vehicles usually smelt of petrol and leather, which could encourage a bout of travel sickness. Until the late 1940s the destination of the bus was on a white-painted plank or board, which the conductor put in place manually. Yes, there were conductors, supervised the journey who came down the rows collecting fares and allocating tickets, which, initially were from a sprung rack which was hung from a strap round the shoulders. Occasionally, "The Inspector" would come on board to check the issue of tickets and he always seemed to be a figure of great authority.

*Graham Cooper*

## **NOW AND THEN .....THE RAG AND BONE MAN**

In 1981, just prior to our move to Lillington from Coventry, I took my last photograph of a 'Rag and Bone Man'. He rode on his horse drawn cart shouting what sounded like 'Rags and



Bones'. Rags were used to make paper and any 'bones' would probably have gone to the De Mulder plant near Coventry for petfood, bonemeal and glue. The school behind the cart was Clifford Bridge Primary on Coombe Park Rd. The trees just right of the school in the photo were in Coombe Park. Curiously, in William's first post as a Science teacher in 1970 at Foxford he taught a Robert De Mulder, one of the family. We are still visited by the modern version of Rag & Bone men, in white vans, and one of them announces his appearance by blowing a trumpet. *Text and image Will Jackson*

## THE GYPSY

When I lived in Leicester (1947-65) Gypsies used to call at the 3 houses we lived in. They visited annually, with huge baskets of pegs, notions and heather. My mother always 'crossed the woman's palm' with silver and bought pegs from her. I continued to be visited by Gypsies in Coventry, and always bought from them (but never the heather, considered unlucky in my family). In Lillington I remember buying shells and having my fortune told! Finally, in 2020, I had my last Gypsy visit, but this time in Brittany, just after we'd bought a 'project', so it was for good luck with that. I gave her a silver Franc and a glass of water in exchange for a lace mat.

*Dearne Jackson*

## THE KNIFE GRINDER



Knife grinders used to visit Lillington as late as the 1990s. On arrival he would pitch his wheeled, hand-driven grinding wheel (sandstone I think) and then knock on doors asking if he could sharpen knives, scissors or garden shears for a small payment.

*Dearne Jackson*



### THE REVEREND GRAHAM COLES

It was with great sadness that we learned of the death, early in February, of the Reverend Graham Coles, Vicar of Cubbington, and before that Curate at St. Mary Magdalene's, Lillington. He proved to be a good friend of the Society and many members will recall a fairly recent visit to Cubbington Church when he made a special point of making available interesting historical documents and reading up the history of the area. He bore his illness bravely, especially during his last twelve months and most people were well aware of his kindness and understanding of the people he served. We remember him with affection and gratitude. GEC

It was with great sadness that many people associated with Lillington and our neighbours Cubbington learned that Rev Graham Coles had passed away recently. Rev Graham was a man of sincere community conviction and desire to support the communities he served so very fondly. He supported Lillington Youth Centre amongst others, during his time as curate at St. Mary Magdalene parish church of Lillington to raise funds to support youth work support for children in the community and the wider district. Rev Graham touched so many lives of all ages in Lillington and Cubbington and we are all the richer for having known him. Gary Timlin (LYC)

If any of the memories in the newsletter have reminded you of something from YOUR past, please write it down and send it to [chriscdmrhdes@aol.com](mailto:chriscdmrhdes@aol.com) for inclusion in a future edition.

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