

# A History of Kirklands

*by Ann Fletcher*

At thirty minutes past midnight on August 4<sup>th</sup>, 1888, the Local Government (County Council) Bill was finally read and agreed by the House of Commons. Nine days later, Queen Victoria affixed her Royal Assent and County Councils were born. Up until then the care of the sick, poor and badly housed fell mainly on the Parish with the assistance of various boards and unions. Over the next fifty years, and by various Acts of Parliament, the welfare (or lack of it) of the poor and sick and badly housed was no longer the burden of the Parish but became, in the main, the responsibility of the Urban and Rural District Councils.

Chipping was under the umbrella of Clitheroe Rural District Council through which the Rural District Housing Committee was set up to improve the lot of people living in rural areas, such as agricultural workers who were housed in tied cottages. Grants were made available to private landlords to improve the properties which were often unventilated and without water or sanitation. This action was not always met with approval by all, but strict rules were laid down by the council to ensure that fair rents were charged when improvements had been carried out.

The Housing Provision Act of 1938 had provided an Exchequer subsidy of £10 a year for forty years for each house built by a local authority for the rural population whether it be for slum clearance, overcrowding or general renewal and the District and County Councils had a responsibility to contribute £1 a year for 40 years. Accommodation in rural areas was set to improve!

The first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century saw many changes to village life. The sadness felt by the loss of several young men from each village during World War 1 was followed by the Depression of the 1930s. On the brighter side, in Chipping, Berry's Chairworks built a row of cottages – Kirk Cottages – for their workers. The telephone had arrived, with other improvements such as water on tap, electricity, better roads and extensive land drainage to come. But then came World War 2, more loss of life, rationing and so plans for much needed housing with better facilities were put on hold.