

My Memories of Chipping

by Arthur Preston

Part Two

Most of the people living at Old Hive worked at the local chair works, or the foundry, Proctor's Mill or the Council. One family living in the first house was Tom Freeman and his wife Betsy. They had two girls and eight boys all brought up in this one house. Tom worked at Proctor's Mill. His wage was just over £2 per week - what about that to keep twelve people a week!

Next we are at the Top of Saunders, and a house which my father bought for £1,020 in the 1940s. Then up to Fish House farmland, we turn right down the hill. Here was an iron foundry in the 1920s, the machinery driven by a waterwheel fed by water from the dam behind. Later, it changed to a dairy owned by the Proctor family, then private houses and now (in 2004) holiday flats.

Let's move on out of this place, up the hill and turn right down to Saunder Rake. Half way down the hill on the right, was a large dam in front of Saunder House which held water, drawn from Chipping Brook, to drive the waterwheel that powered all the machinery in Tweedy's Foundry. It was one of the largest water wheels in England. Before the 1939 War this foundry made port holes and cast iron wheels for ships etc.. After the war they made potato peelers to peel seven pounds, fourteen pounds, twenty pounds and fifty-six pounds of potatoes, also chippers, pie machines, agricultural mixers and castings. All the ironwork for all these was made in their own foundry. Chipping Brook used to run through the yard, but was later tunnelled. More recently, the whole place was pulled down and new houses built on the site.

Down the road is Berry's dam to drive the chairworks' waterwheel which also generated electricity for the works. Later, a factory extension was built on the other side of the road, the whole chairworks being a credit to the Berry family for continuing through depressions etc.. Workers at Tweedy's and Berry's used to come to work in the mornings in two double-decker buses from Longridge and Preston. Most of the local people worked at these two places too.

Over the bridge is a row of houses on the right - The Grove. The first house was used by John Smithies as a bread and cake shop. Up Malt Kiln now towards the village, the first place was a farm, and next was a small bit of land, now Raymond Freeman's garden. But in the old days it was Edward Timbrell's clog shop for new clogs, shoes soled and heeled, iron put on your clogs. Next on the left was a barn which became the local council warehouse, now turned into a house. The end house, next to the churchyard, was Mrs Blezard's toffee shop.

I used to be a sidesman at the church and I remember on Harvest Sunday every seat was full and we filled every aisle with forms to sit on, which were also full.

Round the corner to Talbot Street where the first house was where the midwife lived. Next door was the Chipping tailor where we went to get measured for our fustian pants, jackets etc. I think the tailor was John Bright. Next door was the butcher's shop and slaughterhouse, owned by Bill Robinson and his son Victor. We used to help Vic in the slaughterhouse to kill sheep and pigs. When he had a cow to kill they put a rope round its head. It used to be a struggle to get the cow in the slaughterhouse, but when they got it in there was a ring on the floor, and they got the cow's head down to the floor then they had a large iron axe with a point on and gave the cow a full, powered blow on the head, it dropped over dead. Then they had to bleed it, and later cut it up for beef.

Next to the shop is the Talbot barn and yard. The Talbot used to be a farm. After the cows were milked each morning they went up Chipping to graze in the fields up Garstang Road and came down again at night for milking. The manure from the cows was stored in the yard and later taken up to the fields. It was pulled out of the cart with a muck creek and put in heaps, which were later spread out to make the grass grow. Casual labour was used to spread these heaps out with a fork. It used to be two shillings a score heaps for spreading.

