

Returning over the bridge into Talbot Street, I passed some of the oldest houses in the village. Harry Jackson and his wife lived in Bridge Cottage, which faces up the street and next door is the house where Mr. and Mrs Smithies had the Post Office and petrol pumps. Bread and pies were made in the bake-house down Buck yard. When I was at St. Mary's school Miss Murphy would send me to the Post Office on Fridays to buy saving stamps, I would get a butter pie and eat it on the way back. The crusty bread was often still warm when purchased and the crust was the best bit! The Post Office was, for a time, a V.G.store and when there was a fancy dress parade in the village I asked for a sack and dressed as Miss V.G. As we processed down the street, someone pushed a wire-basket full of groceries into my hand. I didn't win, but Mr Bond who kept the Tillotsons gave a party for us in the back room.

Mrs Crane kept the toffee shop, the door was always kept open with a shiny black stone, and she would let the children go behind the counter to choose something from the Penny tray. She looked smart in a black dress with a square neck and always wore powder and lipstick. Under the Lobby were Sally and Stan Harris, Bill Martin and the Coes on the left. Back in the street were the six cottages of Mrs Bertha Moon, then Paddy and Mary Price next to Mr and Mrs Harold Anderson (she was one of the few women in Chipping who drove a car), Gertie and Ted Freeman, Auntie Jane and last but not least, my Nanny Bamber.

"Ginger Beard" the tramp, came round often with a large sack on his back and his pots and pans tied around his middle. We were all afraid of "Peg-Leg" who wandered around on his crutches and was often teased by the children. The rag 'n bone man came and gave us pots for old rags and hikers came and went.

Yes, I remember the diesel fumes but where else could I breathe the fresh warm milk at Bailey's, the proven at the mill, the sweetness of vanilla at t'Bottom shop, the snowdrops up the Lodge, the wild daffodils in the gardens of the derelict Leagram Hall, the mayflowers by the kissing gate in Procter's field, the bluebells down Saunder, the primroses up "Lumpy" and the wild violets on Green Lane?



One day we were told that we must have a number for our front door and we duly went to Longridge to buy ours - No.27. A few years later an officer from the Rural District Council came round and his report condemned several of the houses in the village. Some of the people of Windy Street moved up to Kirklands. I am so pleased that the once-condemned houses of our village were not knocked down and the street of my birth remains externally much the same as it was when I was a child.

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