

Colonel Clerke Brown, The Grove, Kingston Blount. 19th May, 1987.

Old Croft Close used to be an orchard belonging to us and fifty years ago Davve Harding then a small boy used to go in there with his small brothers on their way home from school, and they used to pinch our apples. My grand-mother and Joe Hill's grand-mother who reckoned they kept order more or less in KB in those days, and at apple time they were always around Pleck Lane, and Old Croft Close with their walking sticks with silver handles, so when these boys were caught coming out they got it round the ankles and then my grand-mother want to see Mrs Harding so when he got home he got his ears boxed, and that evening when his father got home his father would beat him with his belt, so he had three punishments for one crime. I have read I think in a book that Rob Clark has got that the post in 1905 used to arrive at the Post Office at 06.25 hours, via a bicycle, now it comes with a woman in a van, and it comes at 09.30 hours.

The photos of Arthur & Charles when young were taken at Lower Farm in the gardens. My grand-mother was a force to be reckoned with, when she said something by jove it was done. You see we were all born at Lower Farmhouse.

When my brother and I were young we knew all the children who went to Aston School, probably all their parents, and probably even all their grand-parents, who all lived in either Aston or Kingston. I was born in 1912.

I don't remember anything about the cheese school, the Meek's lived at the Red Lion and they farmed a bit of our land and they had the buildings which the Clarks now have right next door to Most Manor. The Clarks have always been in Town Farm and they farmed basically the land on the left hand side as you go to Kingston Stert and Lower Farm basically is the right hand side. When Walter Meeks gave up the land and the land of which we now call Lower Farm which was that part of the land which is nearest the Hill's land at Crowell of course the Clarks took to it.

I don't ever remember it being called The Red Lion, it was always called the Lions, it belonged to us of course.

Mr Clark senior used to walk about with a walking stick with a 'spud' on the end which was a thing you dug out the thistles with. Of course in those days there was no means of spraying so he would always walk about on a Saturday or Sunday afternoon, it was amazing the number of this and docks he got out was amazing.

Mr Chown the paper man's brother was my brother's soldier servant from 1939 to 1940.

Aston House was a jolly good place to go to in the old days, we had lots of fun there as children. The Green at Kingston has not change~~d~~ much. Mr Golder used to work for Joe Hill he came here as a soldier. You might try Mrs. Golder's brother Gordon Plumridge who lives in Park Lane, ~~who lives in Park Lane~~. His wife used to be secretary to the chap who owned the Garage in Watlington that we used to deal with, my father did, Arthur Scott. Gordon Plumridge is a first cousin to what we call our Plumridges, George and Jimmy and all that lot. Mrs Foster's father, a fine chap he was too. The man with Cis Munday was Mr. Wallington, he was well over 90. He was always known as Basher. Tom Wallington of Kingston Stert is his son, he runs the farm on the left as you go into KS. Now then, let me think, he married as his second wife my old nanny and Rosemary ? who lives in Icknield Close is his daughter by my old nanny. I really do not know what my nanny's name was as we always just called her nanny.

Now my sister Rachel, who is twelve years younger than me, the nanny in her day married his eldest son, as far as I know he is still alive. He was a very high class gardener, and held a very good position in the Beaconsfield, Gerrards Cross area.

Fifteen or so years ago, after my father died, various people thought, I think quite rightly, that the Hillock Gardens were not used as allotments, quite a lot of them, therefore something ought to be done with them, and in fact Bob Clark and his two sons took on a couple of acres of it which they have still got, so there was a great meeting in the old village hall opposite where Mrs. Paris lives now, and it was really just like the House of Commons, on one side were the old people and on the other were the new who were the ones who wanted something done with the Hillock Gardens, I didn't realize there were so many of the old families still in KB. I don't suppose any of them had been to meetings before or since.

Mr Church lived at Kingston Stert in a little bungalow just beyond where ? lives now. He used to trim the hedges and do out the ditches two or three times a year it was always absolutely immaculate. If I drove past, I used to touch the horn and he would take his hat off. He was a guardsman in the First World War. I believe, all his working life he worked on the farm at Chalford, most of the land has now been split up but I know that when The two farms which were the Copcourt Estate was

split up Frank Howes from the top of the Hill bought one of the fields the one on the left as you come off the Chalford Road on the Bridleway Path that leads up to Aston Rowant and he said that it was slightly funny sort of land and that it was in two bits as it were. he said it's tricky and did I know anyone who had been on that land for years, and I said yes, its that man he will tell you when to plough, and when to keep off it, yes I remember him well.

Moat Manor belonged to us, it was three cottages when I first remember there was an old chap there called Daniel Young who used to come and pump the water at Lower Farm by hand at 7.00 every single night of the week, all through the year from a well. As long as the wind was in the south west you could hear the clock at Aston Rowant chime easily and he never arrived after Aston Clock stopped chiming. It was about 1935 that Moat Manor was sold off and made into one house. I think it was first sold to Mrs. Mitchel and then I think she sold it to a young couple, the husband of which worked at Whethered's Brewery at Marlow. I cannot say what his name was as I was away in the Army at the time. It was not far off derelict when it was sold.

We used to go to London on the train. Most people who wanted to go to London, went on a Wednesday because that was the cheap day. You would get into the train at Kingston Crossing at 8.50am and you would be in Paddington at 10.00am. There was plenty of time to change at Princes Risborough, you didn't have to dash about or anything, I think it only stopped at High Wycombe and Beaconsfield in those days.

My mother came from Shabbington, her father was the parson there, and when my father and mother got engaged in about 1910, the then Miss Burt Reynoldson of Adwell House was engaged to a Captain Ashton and on one particular day my mother was going to London and so was Captain Ashton. They both arrived at Princes Risborough Station, the Station Master knew that my mother was engaged and had heard of a Captain Ashton who was engaged also ushered them into a first class carriage and locked the door. He rang up Paddington and told them that there was an engaged couple in such and such carriage, please let them out on arrival. My parents were married in 1911.

The people that worked on the farm set their watches by the train, because at 11.40 everybody said it is nigh on dinner time. My father said that Will Seymour was the best man on a farm that he had ever met. He worked at Woodway Farm virtually all his working life except for a period during the First World War when he served in my Regiment. He used to walk all around the area and I asked him one day if he would

keep an eye on our house at week-end if we are away point-to-pointing or hunting. He said no sir, I couldn't do that, I have never had anything to do with the Kingston Blount Estate, and I have no right on it. If you would like me to, then I will walk round the bottom of the wood.

The football team used to play at Aston in the field behind the school. Aston House was certainly a very smart establishment in those days. I think there were six gardeners working there. Peter Lambourne's grand-father was head gardener there. The Lambourne's came from Aston not K.B. most of them moving to K.B. when they got married because of the lack of housing in A.R. He was head gardener when I first remember and of course a head gardener to a house like that was a very important chap. He was also responsible for the electricity machines and the water supplies.

We often had to get our horses out of the bog-garden down where Plowden Park is now, during the time Dashwood had it. I used to go and ride his horses. We used to go right down to Watlington Hill.

I remember my horror when I came back from Singapore in about 1949, and all the bungalows and houses in the gardens had just been built. There were practically no trees or bushes left, and I suppose I went to see someone in Aston, I came back to Kingston House, so it must have been 49 and they were not here then, and I asked what on earth had happened. Some speculating chap had got hold of it, and there was no planning then, this may have been the same man that cut down the trees, he didn't have permission to do it. Then the William's family bought it. (The Green)

The Turners used to live in the house in Brook Street. It seems incredible to think that there were two bakers in KB. in those days. One was at Oakley House and one at Vine House. Even on this place, we had a black-smith, who was old Pullen, who was about as broad as he was high. Joe Pullen at Aston School is his son.

There was a road-man in K.B. who kept the place tidy. The last one I remember was a Wallington. Joe Hill's grandfather used to live at The Firs and he used to always walk about in Britches and Gaters, he was very dapper (Henry).

My grand-father died in 1919 but my grand-mother lived until 1949. Nobody argued with her.

I heard a story about before the first world war My grandfather's sister married an Ashurst from Waterstock and he was always known as the squire (I don't know why), he came to stay at K. House one sunday and went to church on sunday evening with my grand-father who was a very big man, nearly twice the size of me, there was a local parson there,

because our parson was away, who was very high church. there was a lot of bowing. There were about 18-20 people in church, and at the end of the service the parson got right down almost underneath the altar and so my grand-father who was deaf anyway at the top of his voice, said to Squire Ashurst 'the damn chap's gone to ground under the alter, let us go to K. House for a whisky and soda. I remember the Royal Oak being open. That was the infants school. later being the village hall.

Old Mrs. Ludlow's husband worked for the Clarks all his life. He was a shepherd. they farmed the land at Crowell hill and lambing time was Christmas time. He used to walk up the plantation between Kingston House Park and what we called Rectory Field four or five times a day to look after the yews, he had a little chicken house on wheels up there.

The biggest mistake any body ever made, when they closed the railway the County Council came and took the bump out of the road where the rails had been, because it would deter these speed merchants. I can remember my father being absolutely delighted, when years and years ago when a chap in a Jaguar came over that bump so fast that he went into the ditch.

Rats close is the field to the left at the base of K. hill. Just at the end of the First World War my grand-father on a horse was up K. Hill and a chap on a motor bike went up there, my grand-father was so horrified that he told the farm foreman at the farm here at the Grove tomorrow send two men on a horse and cart up to Gurdons Farm get a load of flints, and put four large flints across that road, I will not have that damn chap riding a motor bike up that road.

I think that the nice thing about the Green at Aston is that it has not been spoiled.

When Crowell Church was joined up to Aston there was not the need for three churches. The land belonged to us and, I think, the money for building it was provided by either Mr. Hill or Mr. Hamp, who I think lived opposite to the Cherry Tree. The church was built in 1877. The road from Stokenchurch came down past Aston House and out where the church was built. If you get a dry year like 1976 you can still see where that road went.

Kingston House was the manor farm for K.B. because the back part of it is very very old, and in my I don't know how many greats grand-father time it was fashionable to have a building like that very un-attractive, but larger house on the front and he decided to have the road moved as he didn't want it going past his drawing room window. If you come out of my sister's garden by the church and across that little orchard, in a dry time you can see to a foot where the road was.

The road used to go across the Ickniel Way where there is nearly always a puddle because it is lower than the road, it then joined the existing road where the Water Bard now is.

Back in the time before the First World War, if a horse and cart went from this farm to the Manor House it had to go right through the village and in at the entrance opposite Ickniel Close.

Mr. Kent was the gardener there when I first remember. Harry Kent died about two years ago. I think Mrs. Kent came from Kingston Stert.

Stokenchurch is a strange place, because certainly twenty or thirty years ago there were a lot of families in Stokenchurch who traced back to this village. I used to play cricket for Stokenchurch when I was here. My father was Lord of the Manor at Stokenchurch and there was always a hullabaloo going on between the footballers and cricketers about the cricket field, on which they also played football and which is common land. The boss of the football club would come and see him and then the boss of the cricket club would come and see him, so he got fed up with it and said lets get rid of all this and let them sort it out between themselves, so I was sent to play cricket with them as a sort of spy. By jove they were a good cricket side in those days. Mr Sears who lives in Old Croft Close used to play in the slips for them.

Eric Lambourne is the man you should see about the Cricket Club here. They used to play in Kingston Park before the ~~XXXXXX~~ First World War ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~. There was a great story told\*: Stokenchurch used to

come down to play here, my grandfather got up a side to play against them called Aston which also included Kingston. The Squire provided the lunch of course.

My grandfather went to see their cook, Beatrice Meeks and asked her what they were going to supply them with for lunch. She said that she thought they might give them a nice rabbit pie. My grandfather said 'rabbits for Stokenchurch, they eat my rabbits all the year round, we cannot give them rabbit we must give them a bit of beef.'

Some of the people from Stokenchurch still come down especially to the Cricket Club, also to the Cherry Tree and the Shoulder of Mutton.