

PARK ROAD PEOPLE

Having established the names of local families, it was illuminating seeing them crop up in the "Evesham Journal", often, it must be said, for causing criminal damage. In 1879, Fred Keitley and John James are mentioned as having stolen 2 ferrets and caught a rabbit in Campden Wood.



Deben Cottages

In 1913, Ruby Harris, who was about 10 and lived in Brick Kiln Cottages, together with her 7 year old friend Agnes Payne (of "Deben Cottages" at the far end of Park Road) were charged with setting fire to a hayrick at Westington, worth £20.

There are reports of Park Road men assaulting other Campden residents, even Park Road women assaulting their neighbours in the street; a gang of young Park Road men charged with damaging crops on a local farm; a Park Road child killing a gosling belonging to the farmer's wife by stamping on its head; a Park Road woman accused of theft at the Noel Arms; a Park Road couple getting divorced during the first world war; bad behaviour by gypsy pea-pickers down Park Road in the 1930s; accidental and non-accidental deaths and the resulting inquest hearings: all human life is here, no doubt as it has been played out for centuries.

Charles "Slap" Blakeman 1862 - 1930

Charles - "Slap" - was the son of Joseph and Ellen Blakeman and spent his early life in "Robin's Cottage" before moving to Westington. He spent his working life as a horse breaker and dealer and was reknowned amongst all classes of society for his skill at these, as well as for his quick wit and cunning, in spite of having a bad speech impediment. The booklet "Campden Characters" recounts some of his retorts to authority figures, who seem to have been stumped as to how to deal him for he was often drunk and disorderly round the town. One night, for example, when stopped by a policeman for loitering on Sheep Street and told to go home, he replied: "Home be damned, I'm not going home, all the houses keeps going by and as soon as mine goes by I'll step right inside!".

He always wore a tattered bowler hat, breeches, and leggings, and carried a walking stick - in fact towards the end of his life, when there was less need for his skills with horses as cars became popular, he supplemented his income by making ash walking sticks from the trees in Weston Park.



Charles (Slap) Blakeman

Although he had a bad speech impediment, he had a quick retort for everything and there are stories of his cunning and not only in buying and selling horses. For instance, when 'Slap' had a broken leg, he borrowed a three wheeled invalid carriage from the vicarage. He was wheeled around by a lad in this contraption, keeping warm with a horse blanket under which he hid the quart bottle that he kept for urination. One day after inspecting a horse in Back Ends they reached Wold's End bank where the lad let go of the handle and 'Slap' and the carriage careered down the bank! Miss Josephine Griffiths was a witness and quickly ran up to Slap to enquire whether he was injured; he responded saying that though he thought he was all right. but he had broken his bottle of whiskey. Feeling sorry for him, Miss Griffiths promptly produced some money for him to buy another bottle!

William Ashwin

One appalling incident which featured in the "Journal" took place in the brewhouse at the back of the "Volunteer" on 20th January 1883. Here there was an 80 gallon copper furnace, and a former soldier named William Ashwin accidentally fell into it. According to the newspaper account, *"he was engaged in lifting some boiling water from the brewing copper to the mash tub ... his feet slipped off the bench on which he was standing and he fell into 130 gallons of scalding water. Mr Griffin [then landlord] with great difficulty, and presence of mind, got him out, but he soon died."* Such incidents no doubt happened from time to time before the days of health and safety, but it doesn't bear thinking about and I for one sometimes think about that poor man when I pass by.

"Sal" Brotheridge 1875 - 1953

Sarah - or "Sal" - Brotheridge as she was known, was from another long-time Watery Lane family, and lived with her brother Jim in "Rushen Cottage". She never married and kept 8 or 9 cats, and perhaps for these reasons, the local children thought her a witch. Indeed, there were three white rings on the flagstone floor in front of the hearth which had been made at

one time or other over the centuries to keep witches away - and the story of these must have excited the children's imaginations even more.



Being a single woman without regular income, Sal eked out a living picking up bits and bobs at auctions to deal in, the most she ever paid for anything being a shilling. Anything she didn't resell there would be wheeled home in an old pram which she kept just inside the cottage door and another attempt made to resell at the next auction. She was a well known figure wheeling this pram about the town collecting empty bottles to return to the pubs for cash, and also for foraging in the surrounding countryside for firewood - apparently she would break off small twigs to smoke. She must have cut a curious figure she continued to dress in Victorian style clothes long after they went out of fashion.

She enjoyed a drink of cider along at the "Volunteer" and her nephew, Denis Hughes, recalls that, unbeknown to the world at large, she had a huge pocket in her apron in which she kept a funnel and quart bottle, so that when anyone bought her a half pint of cider, she could surreptitiously decant it and keep her secret supply topped up for free; and if it filled quickly, she would just return home to get a replacement and come back for more.

She sounds a resourceful woman who approached her monetary challenges creatively: one story had it that when attending the Baptist Church once, she insisted she had put a two-shilling piece in the collection plate by mistake, thinking it was a penny and actually asked for the change, and - even more extraordinarily - was given it! She remained in her home till she died, her enterprising nature in the face of poverty making a real character in the town.

The Buckland family

One family long-time resident in the street were the Bucklands. The first was Emmanuel Buckland, a retired tinware plater from Ratley, Warwickshire. He had been born into a gipsy family back in 1817, and the census records for his family show them travelling round the Midlands, parking their vans in small groups and hawking tinware products. The children often had Romany names - that of Emmanuel was handed down at least 4 generations - and his grandson, Ernest who was born in 1904 and lived in Daphne Cottage with his family for over 50 years, was brought up to speak the Romany language to his fellow gipsy travellers, long after the family had settled in Chipping Campden.

Ernie left school aged just 12 so he could help the war (the First World War) effort working for a market garden at Mickleton - quite a feat considering the work was 6 days a week and meant a circular seven mile walk. He acquired his nickname, Peony, as a child after mistaking a rose for a peony flower, and unfortunately for him, the name stuck.

He grew up learning many old Romany crafts and skills, including their traditional language, and in later life, he revived the old Campden Mummers, whose origins are thought to be connected to the gypsies in mediaeval times. Was it because of his heritage that he was

instrumental in setting up the Mummers with their Christmas play of “*King George*” fighting the swashbuckling “*Bold Slasher*”, with “*Doctor Haro*” arriving at the end to miraculously restore the injured king?

This tradition has carried on to the present day with performances in many local pubs round about, as well as in the town square at the time of the outdoor festive market.

Apparently he insisted that each character learn the part by word of mouth rather than from a script, to keep up the old way whereby the play evolved over time and remained fresh. Other members of the group sound from their names as though they also lived at one time or another in Park Road - Eddie Tomes, Jack Wheatcroft, Charlie Wright, Freddie Farman, and Charlie Pitcher. The costumes and props were kept in an old tea chest in the attic at Ernie's house. They became renowned for their performances, and were even recorded by the BBC in 1946, for which Ernie negotiated a unique contract of £2 and two pints of beer per man!



Ernie worked for local market gardens and farms and once won a ploughing completion with horses. He maintained his family's connections with the land, eating traditional Romany food such as snails, which he would gather by the bucketful in late autumn time with his father, William: son Bill, who has provided us with these memories, could never bring himself to eat them when offered a snail with bread and butter, so that was the end of that gypsy way of doing things.

In 1930, Ernie married Agnes Turnbull, from Northumberland who had been working at Starveall Farm near Ebrington, and they set up home in Park Road with their children, Bill and Roseanne. He was encouraged to stand for the Parish Council, such was the respect of fellow residents for him as a natural leader of men with sound views on the way things should be run, and particularly in regard to footpath disputes and rights of way. The local newspaper, which once asked the question "where was the authentic voice of Olde Campden?", later noted that "There is hardly a parish council meeting between 1952 and 1961 when a contribution from Buckland is not quoted in Evesham Journal reports?"

The Cherry family

One early and long-established family in the street was that of the Cherrys, two brothers, - Joseph (1805 – 1848) and James (1807 – 1871). In 1841, Joseph Cherry is listed as a 35 year old chimneysweep and has a wife, Fanny Wilkes, and 4 children. Nearby was James, a few years younger, and working as an agricultural labourer. His first wife, Mary Esprey, did “silk work” at the mill. By 1851, the two families were living next door to each other, but Joseph

was by now dead, and James had taken over as Chimney sweep with his nephew, young Joseph, as his assistant. It is now that the scene was set for a tragedy in the street after two sisters from Willersey came to lodge with the Cherrys and work at the silk mill.

Louisa and Matilda Jarvis were the daughters of a shoemaker who lived at Willersey Tollhouse: Thomas Jarvis was only 43 himself at this time and still had several young children to provide for (one son going by the picturesque name of Crescens) so the elder girls must have sought work in Campden at the Sheep Street silk mill which was enjoying its final flourishing before closing in 1862. Louisa by now was 23 and had a 2 year old daughter called Fanny; they lodged with Joseph's widow, Fanny, while 21 year old Matilda lodged with James and Mary. The problem was that Louisa was not married to the father of her baby, William Bennett, and he refused to give her money towards the child's upkeep. He lived in Back Ends with his parents. Even when she bore him another child, he would not help maintain them, and one day in August 1854, a desperate situation got even worse when they rowed outside his house: he hit her, then hit her again as she began for home, causing her to break her neck and die. William argued that Louisa was drunk and that she had "*fallen over a heap of dirt*" but there had been witnesses to testify against him, and he was found guilty of her manslaughter. He was sentenced to an extraordinarily lenient 18 months' hard labour at Gloucester Gaol and on his release, moved to Dudley for a time before returning to Campden to marry and settle down.



Sophia Cherry

Another of Thomas Jarvis's daughters came to live in Watery Lane – Sophia – who in January 1858, married James Cherry, the by now widowed landlord of her sister Matilda. They went on to have a number of children but by the time of the 1871 census, they must have been impoverished. They were living in one of the cottages at the end of the street, four of the children were under 10 years old, and James's occupation is given as "*pauper*". He died very shortly after. Sophia appears on the 1881 record in the High Street, aged 50 but without work.

By 1891, she was back in Watery Lane, living with her son, James, a cowman. One of her daughters, Sarah Ann, had married Thomas Payne in September 1886 and they too lived here, latterly in one of the Deben

Cottages on the corner of Blind Lane and having had 14 children. The photo of her standing at the door of her cottage (4, Park Road) shows looking very cheerful. When the enumerator asked her to sign her name on the 1911 census form, she couldn't do so – even at the age of 78 she was only able to put a cross instead. She died in March 1924 at the ripe age of 90, having been widowed 53 years and spent almost 66 years living in our street.

James Stafford the sweep

James Stafford, the chimney sweep, was another well-known figure, but for a different reason, for in January 1882, he had been arrested and charged with the attempted murder of a labourer from Willersey called Richard Hiatt, who had apparently been spreading rumours about him. Following a disagreement between the men on Boxing Day, Stafford

had gone to Straford to buy a single-barrelled pistol, come back, and done the rounds of the pubs looking for Hiatt. He had found him drinking in the “Swan”, had taken aim through the kitchen door but missed, the shot lodging in the seat just inside. He did then manage to get into the bar, but just before taking aim at his victim, was stopped by the landlord, John Taplin, grabbing Stafford’s right arm as he discharged the pistol towards Hiatt’s head. A passing policeman immediately set him in handcuffs before locking him in the Police Station.



James Stafford's home, now called St. Catharine's Cottage

The trial at the Gloucester Assizes heard from the landlord of the “Volunteer”, Richard Griffin, that he had warned Hiatt that Stafford was out for him, while landlord Taplin’s mother, Mrs Elizabeth Osborne, explained how she had tried to stop him by barring the kitchen door at the “Swan”: *“I saw the gleam of something in Stafford’s hand, which i thought was a knife. I cried ...George stop him”*. Her son had dashed into the kitchen, and seized Stafford before realising he was wielding a pistol. *“Mind you don’t get shot”*, she told him, before there was an explosion. *“Where is your honour now?”*, Taplin had asked Stafford, who then recounted how he had merely wanted to frighten his victim for spreading untruths about his behaviour, and that he could produce plenty of witness who would vouch for his good character. The Judge allowed that the evidence of his character was *“irreproachable”*, and Stafford was let off, though not before the foreman of the jury made an unfortunate – though hilarity producing – slip of the tongue by saying *“We find the prisoner guilty of wilful, rather than attempted, murder.”*

James Stafford was often in trouble with the law though, as the Petty Sessions are peppered with cases of his assaults on people who owed him money, or for gossiping about his family, or for being drunk and disorderly. In 1870, he had been charged with assaulting the wife of another chimney sweep, Ann Clayton, but the case was dismissed. *“Jealousy in the trade was the groundwork of the love”*, he remarked.



The First World War provides a very sad sidelight on the history of our street, as seen in the pages of Paul Hughes's book "Campden 1914 – 1918". He recounts the stories of nine young Park Road men who were killed in France, whose names are those of well-known and long established families:

Harold, son of James and Kezia Ashwin:

Harold had worked as an indoor servant before joining the army in 1911. He was sent to the front line in the autumn of 1914 and was killed in action during the first Battle of Ypres on 14th November. He was aged just 21 and is commemorated on the Menin Gate, Ypres.

Frederick and Thomas, sons of Thomas and Sarah Payne at 2, Deben Cottages:

Frederick had been employed as a stained glass worker before joining the army back in 1912. When war broke out, he was sent to China for 2 years before being posted to the Western Front, where he died of mustard gas poisoning at the Somme in 1918. He was 25 and was buried at Crouy Cemetery near Amiens.

His younger brother, Thomas, had been working as a footman at Swinbourne Castle, Northumberland when war broke out, but he returned home to enlist in Campden with the Grenadier Guards. He went missing in action in September 1916 near Guillemont on the Somme although his parents did not receive official confirmation of his death till the following June. He was buried where he fell, aged just 21.

The boys' father himself also enlisted at the mature age of 52 when the war broke out. Thomas Payne had already served in the Boer War during a 7 year stint in the army in his younger days, but by now he was discharged as being no longer fit for service. The "Evesham Journal" carried a feature on the family on 16th June 1917 under the heading "*Patriotic Campden Family*" showing photographs of all 5 of Thomas and Sarah's sons who were involved in the war effort. At the end it mentioned that "*Charles, the youngest son, who will not be 18 years of age until next September, has seen action in France with the Machine Gun Corps, but his parents have him at home and out of the army on account of his age*".

Ernest and Richard, sons of Noah and Sarah Bennett: Richard, was a printer in London when he joined up. He worked as a signaller in the trenches and was shot dead while at his telephone post trying to send for help to in April 1918. He was 26, and left a widow and baby at home. His name is on the memorial at Arras.

His younger brother, Ernest, a baker, was killed just 3 months later. He had been posted to German East Africa, Egypt and Palestine before ending up in France, where he was killed in the Battle of the Marne in July 1918, aged 21.

Harry and George, sons of Enoch and Fanny James of "The Garden": Harry had been fighting in France for 2 years when his battalion got caught up in the German "Spring Offensive" in March 1918, and he was reported as missing, presumed dead following intense bombardment at Holnon Wood near St Quentin. His name is commemorated on the Pozieres memorial near Somme.

George spent 11 months on the Western Front and more than 2 years in Salonika before being invalided home with disease. He died at Norton Hall in June 1918 and was buried in St James's Churchyard with a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. He was 24 years old, his older brother, Harry, 27.

Charles and Willie (Harold William) Brain, sons of John and Mary Brain: A fourth pair of Park Road Brothers also died in the Great War, tragically, on the very same day. Both were in the 10th Battalion of the Gloucestershire Regiment, Willie, the younger of the two, having to wait till he was old enough to enlist and join his brother. Paul Hughes writes: *"On 23rd July 1916, the battalion were ordered to attack the German Switch Line at Martinpuich. This was a very deep and heavily defended trench system near High Wood. The battalion left the cover of Bazentin-Le-Petit Wood and advanced over open fields. Both were to die in the attack and neither body was to be recovered."*

There are memorials in the town to these men, both at the war memorial and in the churches, and they are remembered to this day, but of course there were many more men involved in both wars who did come home and make new lives for themselves here afterwards, one example from the first war being Charles Brotheridge, who operated the steam tractor: he was prepared to enlist in April 1918 despite being by then 50 years old and leaving a wife, 5 daughters and 3 sons at home. His expertise driving the machine proved valuable to the Road and Quarry Troops Department. After the war, he worked as a market gardener and probably lived in what is now "Watery Lane Cottage.

Valentine "Val" Hobbs

Val Hobbs was born in "Rushen Cottage" in 1913 to local saddler, William Hobbs, and his wife Florence. It has been a feature of our research into the families of Park Road how close by each other the different generations lived in the past, for William's own parents, William and Ellen Hobbs, ran a grocery-cum-bakery just round the corner on Lower High Street, while Florence's parents lived a few doors away on the corner of Park Road in "St Catherine's Cottage", her father, Jim, being the local chimney sweep.

His unusual name was apparently suggested to his mother, Florence, by her half-brother from Canada, who had a son of his own called Valentine, and promised to give the new baby £1,000 if she agreed to christen him with that name - an agreement however that was never kept.



In January 1935, he married a Welsh woman, Jane Eleanor Lewis, who was a nurse/companion to Dr Lovegrove's wife, and who he had met teaching her to swim, for he himself was a strong swimmer. They named their new home "Glyn for Avon" - Welsh for "the house beside the stream" - and went on to have four children there - Cynthia, Michael, Jane, and Richard - and were married for 61 years before both of them died in 1996.

Val spent most of his life in Park Road apart from a few years when his parents moved to Broad Campden and when he himself was in the army in World War II. The family moved in to what is now "Michaelmas Cottage" in the early 1920s, buying it from the antiquarian Percy Rushen for £600.

He worked for a number of local market gardeners, including his brother Bill Hobbs on land at the Hoo and the Bratches on Aston Road, where he was particularly successful at growing broad beans. In the evenings after work, when required, he would drive to Covent Garden, Southampton and Liverpool to deliver produce for sale.

Later on, he worked as a builder, working first for Pyments, then setting up in business with Fred Coldicott. In 1956, he joined the local fire brigade as a retained fireman, and although he claimed to have only taken on the job to earn enough money to buy his family a TV set, he must have enjoyed the work as he continued service till 1968.

He had a lifelong friend in Fred, and in their youth, they set up a boys' boxing club in town, and also developed an enthusiasm for pigeon racing - a popular pastime among the menfolk in Park Road in days gone by. In fact, along with his own son, Richard, Val won many long distance competitions, with the pigeons flying from as far away as northern Scotland.

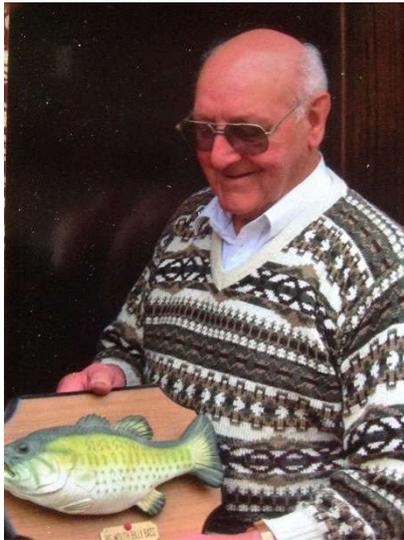


When in 1934, it was mooted to move Scuttlebrook Wake from Leysbourne to the new recreation ground up George Lane, Val and Fred joined a protest, carrying a banner round town proclaiming that the wake was still alive and well and would take place as usual on its time-honoured site at Leasbourne.

Val Hobbs working in his vegetable garden behind their Park Road cottage.

Stan Brundle

Stan was born in London and came to live in Campden during the war when he was in his teens. He worked for several local farmers, and despite being city born and bred, he discovered he had an aptitude for animal husbandry and repairing and adapting agricultural implements. On Christmas Day 1947, he married Barbara Strutt and when his long-term employer, Fred Badger of Lapstone Farm retired in 1965, he gave the couple the house now known as Stanfred, in gratitude for Stan's hard work for him. Here Stan grew vegetables and took on the mantle of "flood warden" for Park Road, holding the keys to several neighbouring houses as well as for the manhole covers in the street in case the drains needed to be accessed in an emergency.



He died in 2011 but is still fondly remembered for his alternative medical theories, particularly the use of corks to fend off various ailments, and warning mothers against leaving their children bare-headed in strong sunlight. "That child will get brain damage", he would say. Dowsing for water was another of his skills he was happy to demonstrate, and he was quite earnest in going about it - he sincerely believed in the power of it and was often proved correct.

In his later years, he loved going on day coach trips to Weston-super-Mare and have some fish and chips by the seaside. He was an interesting character, and a kindly neighbour to have.

'Happy' Joe Court

Joseph Court was born in Mickleton in 1872, his parents were James and Mary and he had two older brothers. By 1901, he was married to Elizabeth who was twelve years his elder.

'Happy' Joe and his family lived in a cottage in Lower High Street next to the Volunteer Inn.

By 1911, Joe was a jobbing gardener and later was engaged by the GPO to convey mail to and from the Post Office to the railway station.

He was further employed by the Council to collect and carry the town refuse to the dump on an old quarry on Westington Hill and he used local lads to help push the horse and cart up Conduit Hill. He carried the ashes, refuse and mail in the same cart.

With his horse and dray, he was also a familiar sight carrying local produce to the neighbouring markets. At blackberry picking time, local schoolchildren could earn a few pence by taking them to Joe who supplied the jam factories in



Evesham. He also accepted rabbit skins that were another source of pocket money for the local poachers.

Mary Whatcott remembered him buying her blackberries for a penny a pound and taking her and other children in his huge dray in the processions from St Catharine's Church to Campden House. He was a regular member and caretaker for many years of the Baptist Church where his daughter, Lily, was Sunday school teacher. At one time, he was a Deacon of the church and a chorister as well.

Dennis Hughes recalls *"I had two jobs when I was at school and at the end of the week I'd have sixpence halfpenny. Six days a week I called on old Joe Court who kept pigs, to collect an empty bucket, and carry it up to the Golden Cockerel Hotel. There they took my empty bucket and gave me a full bucket of pigswill that I carried down six days a week and at the end of the week I'd get three pence."*

He was well known in the town for his cheery disposition, earning him the nickname 'Happy'. His wife predeceased him by ten years and his daughter kept house for him until her premature death in 1938, three years before Joe.

The Bennett family



There were several families of Bennetts in Campden in the late 1800s. Two brothers and their families lived next door to each other in Watery Lane. Thomas was an agricultural labourer, living in one small cottage with his wife and eight children, ages 2- 21 years.

Known as 'Long Tom' Bennett, his wife was 'Short Ann', which presumably referred to their heights.

Henry was a Miller, probably working at Westington Mill for widow Eliza Keen, who was running the watermill with her son.

Henry and his wife Ann also had eight children, the seventh of whom was Austin. He grew up to be yet another Park Road pigeon fancier.

Henry, Ann and the eight children





On Nov 18th 1914, Austin married Amy Hughes, from another Campden family, and they set up home at 4, Brick Kiln Cottages, Park Road, where their three children were born. Austin served in WWI and 'after his safe return to Campden his sister bought his share of the bakery business and he turned his hand to many different skills, as a handyman.'

(Campden 1914-18: Paul Hughes)

The wedding of Austin Bennett and Amy Hughes



Austin with his pigeons

One of the first films to be made in Campden, in 1927, was "The King's Highway" featuring Matheson Lang as a highwayman.



Evesham Journal 28th May 1927

'On setting up cameras on the top side, in front of the old Post Office at London House and including the Market Hall, all ready to roll when our own Austin Bennett, local racing pigeon enthusiast, upset proceedings by pushing his way to the Post Office door to record the arrival home of his bird as was customary. On being impeded, Austin, in his usual direct manner, told the director what he could do with his film and won the day!!'

Film set in the Market Square, 1927

By this time the family had left Park Road to set up a bakery business in the Square (the house behind the carriage in the photo). Enoch bought the premises on the High Street and developed the business that is still run by Bennetts today.

The Hughes family

Richard Hughes was born in Mickleton in 1877 and moved to Campden (where his grandparents had lived) in 1905, with his wife Lucy and first children. In all they had four daughters and three sons one of whom, Arthur Charles, set up his building and decorating business in Campden.



Richard was 37 years old when WWI started and he enlisted



The Wheatcroft family

Harry Lewis Wheatcroft was born in Ebrington but moved to Park Road after his marriage in 1906. He and his wife Evelyn lived in Tally Ho cottage initially but then moved to Yverdon with their four boys, to live with grandparents George and Suzette Vinn. Harry became a market gardener, using his skills at growing fruit in extensive orchards on the slopes behind Park Road.

Don Wheatcroft, the youngest boy, remembered:

This was a small dwelling with a three-seater outside toilet and a water pump in the corner of the kitchen. They had named this 'Yverdon' after the Swiss town my great-grandmother had come from. Having only two bedrooms the cottage was much too small for us all so a wooden, two roomed ex-army building was erected in the garden across from the back door. Always referred to as 'the bungalow' it became bedrooms for my brothers and me until my Father could afford to extend the property.

The family were Plymouth Brethren: initially the regular meetings for local members were held in Yverdon, but later a meeting hall was built next to the house and Harry Wheatcroft was the Minister. Don said, *'He had a love of singing hymns, with a natural ability to sing both the bass and tenor parts by ear. My mother Evelyn was also musical and would sing in harmony with him sometimes playing her violin.'*

There are many more memories from Don Wheatcroft on our website.

Some well-known Park Road residents

Bill Payne, son of William and Matilda Payne who lived in “Robin’s Cottage”, is one of the most widely recognised names associated with the street. He returned to Campden after serving as an air mechanic with the embryonic RAF during the First World War, and worked locally as a plumber. He was well known as a footballer, and also as an actor, eventually landing the role of Ned Larkin in “The Archers” from 1956 till his death in 1967.



Across the road, “Julia’s Cottage” was let out during the 1980s and 90s by Robin Wharmby and his wife, Heather, to actors working at the RSC in Stratford. **Sir Anthony Sher** wrote in his autobiography of his time there while playing in the renowned production of “Richard III” in 1985, and the RSC’s founder and theatre director, **Sir Peter Hall** was another temporary resident there, one of his children apparently being born in the house.

What is now “Orchard Cottage” was at one time the home of Alexander Primrose and his wife, Anita. They had bought the property in 1953 from a **Miss Lillian Oates**, whose history has perplexed us – rumour had it that she was the sister of Captain Oates, the famous polar explorer – but we have found no information to substantiate that claim. All we do know is that she had run a small school there during the war.

Alexander Primrose, born in 1889, was a Scottish journalist who had worked in the USA and London during the 1930s and 40s and had been instrumental in setting up the British Council for Film Development and the precursor of the tourist board, now known as “Visit Britain”. He had been awarded the OBE for his services in this regard and you can read online about the travelogue films he helped make. One of them which is available to watch on youtube is called “Border Weave”, made in 1941 to promote the wool industry, and includes scenes of particularly woolly looking sheep on the High Street at the covered market in Campden. The Primroses lived at “Orchard Cottage” until Alexander’s death in 1969. He was buried in the churchyard of St James, in a town he obviously loved being part of.

“**Orchard Cottage**” was a star in its own right, as it was the setting for a more recent rom-com film called “Crush” in 2001 starring Andie McDowell, Imelda Staunton and Anna Chancellor. It stands back off the street, so with its central garden path and beautiful garden, the house attracts many admiring tourists to stop and take their own photographs of it as the epitome of Cotswold charm.

The American musician **Bob Wilbur** also stayed in Park Road for a time during the 1990s. An internationally renowned player of the clarinet and saxophone who had played with many of the great names in jazz in New York in the 1940 and 50s, he made numerous jazz recordings. He and his wife, singer Joanne Horton, lived at “M’Dina” before moving elsewhere in town.

We would like to acknowledge the following one-time residents who have contributed their memories to the project:

Mr Dennis Hughes
Mr Bill Buckland
Mrs Margaret Rae
Mr Charles Pieters
Mr Don Wheatcroft
Mrs Sue Keitley
Mrs Sylvia Bruce
Mr Robin Wharmby