

# Little Comberton

## *A View of a Country Village*

By

David Parker



# **INTRODUCTION**

I was born in Little Comberton in 1945, and apart from four years in the early 1970's, I have lived here all my life. For many years various people have said that I should record in book form my memories of the village, together with all the information I have in my possession. I have always had a keen interest in history and a particular love of this village so here is my attempt to present to you the village I know.

Some of the information was told to me by people no longer alive but who had in their possession documents long since discarded. My thanks go to Harold Helmsley Hall, who has done a great deal of research and has kindly made this available to me. I unreservedly apologise for any mistakes in the text, and for information and people not included in this narrative.

I must thank my wife, Margot, for putting up with the endless amount of files, photos, books and other items that fill every bookcase, room and space available. I also thank Edith Powell for her encouragement, for reading, correcting and retyping this document and to her husband, Julian, for allowing me to take up so much of her time.

Lastly, I thank villagers, past and present, who have made this such a wonderful place to live, and without whom this written record would have been a pointless exercise.

*David Parker 2008*

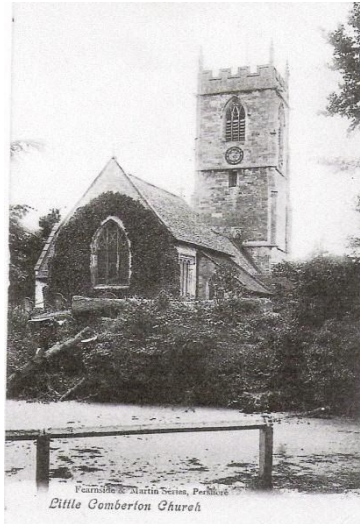
## *1. Short History of Little Comberton*

The area we know as Little Comberton has been known to man since the Roman Times, and probably for many centuries before. The land here was fertile and with Bredon Hill as a stronghold, this made the area an attractive place to live.

Comberton was recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086, but only as *Comberton*, not with the descriptive name of Little or Great. When “Comberton” became two separate villages it is hard to know, however, at this time it belonged to the Church of Westminster, with Gilbert Fritz Thorold holding the majority of land and one Urso having the smaller amount,

The present church of St Peter dates from the twelfth century, with major alterations in 1886.

There are fragments of 15<sup>th</sup> century glass in the windows in the south wall and there are medieval tiles on each side of the altar. In 1264 people with land in the Comberton area were ordered to be buried in Pershore Abbey, whilst non-landowners were to be buried in Little Comberton churchyard. This probably meant that the Abbey gained financially at Little Comberton's expense as it was customary to make a large donation to the church where a person was buried, and landowners were obviously richer than those without land to their name. (For more information about the church in Little Comberton please refer to the leaflet, produced by Mr. H. S. Helmsley Hall, and which is available in the Church).



*St. Peter's Church*

Little Comberton was obviously a thriving village during Tudor and Stuart times as some of the houses seen today date from that era. More details of these houses will be given in following pages.

The English Civil War of the 17<sup>th</sup> century would have had an effect on the village as there was much activity and loyalty to both sides in the surrounding locality. One of the problems was when both sides were in the area they both demanded taxes - the Parliamentarians (Roundheads) demanding local allegiance to them, while the King's men (Cavaliers) claimed the same. This caused huge problems as people tried to avoid paying taxes to either side.

(I wonder if our attitude to paying taxes has really changed over the years!)

It was during the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries that the village that we now recognise really began to emerge, shaped by so many people and events, especially between the two World Wars.

## **2. Buildings of the Village - Black and White Houses**

There are many houses of great age in the village. Nash's Farm is possibly 16<sup>th</sup> century and is reputed to have once belonged to Catherine Parr, the surviving wife of Henry VIII. In the grounds there is a large, circular, stone dovecote, which may not have been popular with the other residents in the village as the doves would have fed on their crops, and they could have done little about that due to the importance and standing of the owners.



*Nash's Farm*



*The Old Dovecote at Nash's Farm*

The Old Manor House, opposite the church, is probably of the same age, and although it has had some recent extensions, was originally a very large house.



*The Old Manor House*



*April Cottage in foreground*

As you walk along Manor Lane from the church and round the corner, on the right there is a black and white cottage, The Laurels (now Old Manor Cottage) which used to be a laundry, and opposite is the next half-timbered building, known as Belles Cottage. Continuing down the lane April Cottage is on the left, and next is Fern Dairy, a very attractive cottage with an overhanging gable. A little further then on the right is Orchard View that once housed the post office, and next door is Tudor Cottage.



*Belles Cottage*



*Fern Dairy*



The last black and white cottage on the left before the crossroads is Meadow Cottage and old photographs of this lovely dwelling show it having two doors, which could indicate that it was once two houses.



*Meadow Cottage*

Leaving Manor Lane and turning towards Pershore on the right is the Old Thatch, a much photographed cottage and known to be the subject for a jigsaw puzzle. Like Belles Cottage in Manor Lane, this house has suffered from a severe fire, but luckily both were rebuilt. Fires are always a hazard with half-timbered and thatched houses.



*The Old Thatch*



*Old Thatch jigsaw picture*

Back to The Cross, into Wick Road and there on the left is Windrush. This house had a half-timbered wing which was demolished and then rebuilt entirely in brick, however, part of the original black and white thatched house remains.



*Windrush around 1920*



*Windrush today*

Leaving Windrush and walking on through the village towards Wick there on the left is Lantern Cottage. This house is reputed to have had nuns living there and when a drainage trench was dug in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century two skeletons, with crosses around their necks with the skeletons of two infants were found. This may not be too strange as the morals of outlying religious establishments may not have been as strict then, and women often died in childbirth, together with their babies. On the opposite side of the road, at the end of a long drive is Old House Farm, and here the monks are reputed to have lived. (Could this have accounted for the pregnant nuns?) Unfortunately, this is an incident now lost to history.

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*Lantern Cottage*



*The Old House Farm*

The last black and white house in the village stood on the site of 10 Pool Close and was demolished in the 1960's, along with other brick cottages, to make way for the Pool Close development. At that time there was not much interest in preserving old properties.



*Pool Thatch*



### **3. Buildings of the Village - Brick Houses**

Most of the brick buildings are Georgian or later, and there are a few quite notable properties. The Rectory, built in 1853 and once the residence of the serving rector, is on the main road through the village, to the left of the church, and is now a private house. Well Furlong, also on the main road and diagonally opposite the church, is a large house of regency design, and is said to have been the home of the curate. This reflects the time when there would have been a large congregation, several services each Sunday as well as weekday services. The rector would probably have had private means with quite a reasonable income from the village as he would have received rents from land and properties owned by him or the church.



*The Old Rectory*



*Well Furlong*

The Manor is an imposing brick built house in Manor Lane, of an early age and has a dovecote believed to be 17<sup>th</sup> century.



*The Manor*



*The Grange*

The Grange in Wick Road, once the home of the Stephens' family, now in the fourth generation of farming in the village, is a private residence and unconnected with the farm.

There have been three barn conversions in recent years: in Manor Lane the first was Rectory Farm, now known as Hopwood House; the second, Twinton Barns, on the main road and once the farmyard for Nash's Farm, were converted into two dwellings; and lastly Tithe Court in Manor Lane.



*Rectory Farm*



*Twinton Barns*

Two houses identical in design are Rectory Cottage, on the crossroads, and Three Chimneys, sited on the road to Pershore, although the latter has been much enlarged. Both Houses were owned by the rector at one time; Three Chimneys being the home of the school teacher and the Rector's laundry woman lived in Rectory Cottage.



*The Cross showing Rectory Cottage*



*Alms Houses shown on right of Pershore Road*

The White House on Pershore Road, also much enlarged, used to be two small alms houses and is shown in the photograph above. The Village Hall, also on the Pershore Road, was once a school but more about that in a later chapter.

Going into Pool Close, on the right hand side there are bungalows, built in the 1960's, on the site of a pool which gave the close its name. To the rear of these bungalows was a brick barnyard and the barns were used to house the German POW's during World War II and when the war ended was a temporary home for refugees and displaced persons. The barns are seen in the background of the picture below, which shows me sitting on the pool railings and it was these barns that were demolished in the redevelopment of Pool Close. In the area to the left of these barns, there were also six houses, two blocks of three, also demolished to make way for the 60's development.



*Young David Parker with brother-in-law*



*David Parker at Pool Cottages*



*Sydney Parker Snr. and grandson at Pool Cottage*



Back along Wick Road to The Forge which once had a smithy attached and was a working blacksmith's shop. The forge was obviously a hive of industry as not only the blacksmith worked there but also the carpenter, who when needed, was the village undertaker as well! One old villager remembers a sawpit to the rear of the property - trees or large pieces of timber were placed across the pit, and two men with a large two-handled saw would cut the wood into planks. One man, standing above the timber, the *top dog*, pulled the saw in one direction and the other man stood in pit below and in turn pulled in the other direction. The chap in the pit was known as the *under dog* and had sawdust showering down on him!



*Ashley House*

The shop and post office moved about over the years, being in Ashley House and then in Manor Lane in the house now called The Old Shop. The post office was located separately for some years in Orchard View also in Manor Lane. There was a petrol filling station, with a car repair workshop and general stores, on the Pershore Road, opposite to the Old Thatch and when the station was knocked down in the 1980's bungalows were built on the site.



*The garage on Pershore Road, shortly before closure*

The second house on the left, going from the cross roads towards Pershore, was the home of the nurse, and she played a very important part in village life. We have to remember that before the National Health Service was introduced it could be very hard for the working classes to pay a doctor's bill. The local doctors lived in Pershore and as the journey to the village had to be made on foot, horse-back or bicycle, cars being very few and far between, visiting a doctor could be difficult. The nurse was, therefore, the first person whom people contacted if they were ill. She would deal with most cases, asking advice from the doctor if needed and requesting a home visit if the illness was serious. A villager has the diary of Nurse Hodges, who lived in the village in the early part of the last century, and this makes interesting reading, as it describes her journeys on her bicycle and the problems she encountered. Hopefully, this document will become available in print as it is an important insight of the times.

#### **4. Village Life in 19<sup>th</sup> Century**

The village would have been almost self-sufficient during the 19<sup>th</sup> century and, to a large extent, during the 20<sup>th</sup> century also, but for the moment we will look back at the former. People would have worked on the land, or in one or other of the village industries. The census for 1851 lists these people in the following occupations:

Benjamin Aldington	- blacksmith	Charles Aldington	- blacksmith
Thomas Barnet	- hurdle maker	Frederick Clemens	- tailor
Mary Copson	- laundress	Charles Davies	- carpenter
Harriet Fanshaw	- gloveress *	Ann Faulkner	- gloveress*
Elizabeth Fletcher	- gloveress *	Allen Heeks	- cordwainer **
Frederick Heeks	- sawyer	William Heeks	- sawyer
Richard Lane	- butcher	Frederick Pelliner	- hurdle maker
Benjamin Phillips	- shoemaker	Susan Phillips	- school mistress
Thomas Phillips	- shoemaker	William Pugh	- letter carrier
Harriet Salisbury	- laundress	Thomas Salisbury	- shepherd
William Salisbury	- carpenter	Robert Summer	- timber merchant
Lydia White	- shop keeper	Ann Wood	- midwife
Charles Summer	- hurdle maker	George Yeend	- bonesetter

\* By the 1861 census this job description had changed to kid glove maker

\*\* This was an old fashioned name for a shoemaker.

The farmers in the 1851 census were listed as:- Frances Woodward, Charles Abel, and William Baker.

In 1861 a dressmaker, bricklayer, bailiff, wheelwright and baker had been added to the list.

A certain William Lewis was the police constable, and Thomas Sheekle, a Justice of the Peace and also a deputy lieutenant, was also a resident in the village. Law and order had definitely arrived.

At this time six people were in receipt of parish relief.

The Reverend William Parker arrived in 1826 (no relation to the author!) and a new chapter began. He remained here for over half a century and changed the outlook of the village forever.

It is reputed that the houses listed below were owned, or even built under the instruction of William Parker; the Rectory, Wells Furlong (for the curate?), Three Chimneys (for the school teacher), Rectory Cottage (for the Rectory's laundry woman, and as the census of 1861 shows not only he and his wife living in the Rectory but also two daughters and four servants there was probably a lot of washing to be done what with church linen as well). It is likely that William Parker also owned the Laurels (now Manor Cottage) as it was in the possession of the Lowndes family until around 1970 when it was sold with an asking price of £30,000.

In 1840, he embarked upon another village project, this time a school, now the village hall, which was built in the western corner of the churchyard; in 1871 the building was enlarged and this is probably when the old porch and lobby that is visible on the western end of the old hall, was originally built.



The school rules of 1862 state:-

- 1. A charge for each pupil of 1 1/2d. The weekly payments to be made on each Monday in advance, and every child who does not bring the required sum will be sent back home.**
- 2. Any child sent after this time to any other school without written permission from Mr. or Mrs. Parker cannot again be received into Little Comberton Day School without written permission from them and this would be given only in particular or urgent cases.**
- 3. The penalty for sending a child to another day school without leave will be that the child's Sunday clothing, if any has been given, will be taken from them and not given to them in future.**
- 4. Children arriving at school after prayers are ended without good reason will be kept as much after time - either at the schoolroom, the rectory, or at the governess' house, and made to learn some lessons before being set at liberty.**

A shoe club was established in 1862 when each child belonging to the school could subscribe 1d or 2d to be taken to the schoolroom every Monday and Mr. Parker would add 2d to every shilling (5p nowadays) saved for the child's boots or shoes, which were ordered as soon as the total amount of money was saved.

This was a time when rules were meant to be obeyed and disobedience was viewed more seriously than it is today. However, I remember, as a child, that the very old people in the village spoke kindly of the Reverend Parker, whether from their own recollections or that of their parents I really cannot be certain. He did, however, help people out, and the shoe club is just one example.

In R.H.Lloyd's "History of Elmley Castle" he states that the Reverend Parker made a series of improvements to the church building, work for which he paid. In a newspaper during 1886 it was reported that there were only three bells in the church tower and that Parker installed a new tenor bell at a cost of £90, while parishioners and friends donated £160 to complete the peel of six that we can hear today. In 1871 he paid for a clock to be fitted in the tower, one with two faces, and it still rings out the hours today, but more of that in another chapter.



*St Peter's Church clock installed in 1871*

It would appear from the following agreement that he set up an area for allotments on land which is now known as Orchard Drive and these remained in use until the land was sold and the bungalows built on the site. On a map of 1880 the land appears to have a path running through it although there is no indication for what purpose.

**An AGREEMENT made and entered into**

1843, between the Rev. **WILLIAM PARKER**, and the several Parties whose names are hereunto subscribed, that we severally and jointly agree for ourselves, our Heirs, and Administrators, to Rent of the said Rev. William Parker, certain portions and Allotments of Lands, the Property of Mr. Nash, at the rate of £3 4s. per acre.

And we do further agree for ourselves, our Heirs, and Administrators, to abide by certain Rules and Regulations, which said Rules are ;---

1. No Person is allowed to occupy more than one allotment, which allotment shall not exceed  $\frac{1}{4}$  of an acre.
2. That no Tenant shall Under-let or Exchange his Allotment.
3. That the Land shall be cultivated by the Spade, shall be managed according to good Husbandry, and be well manured, and that no Tenant shall in any one year plant more than one half his Land with Wheat.
4. That the Rent be at the rate of 16s. for a quarter of an acre, to be paid in Quarterly Payments of 4s. to Robert Fletcher, or any other person Mr. Parker may appoint, on the *first Tuesdays* after Christmas Day, Lady Day, Midsummer Day, (June 24) and Michaelmas Day, (Sep. 29) between the Hours of 6 & 8 in the Evening. Any Tenant not paying his Rent at that exact time, shall forfeit his Lands, and the crop be taken at a Valuation.
5. Any Person working on the Sabbath, or injuring his neighbours Crop, or being convicted of Theft, Poaching, or other Misconduct, shall at any time be deprived of his Land, and receive the value of his Crop, which value shall be determined by 4 of the Tenants,---2 to be chosen by Mr. Parker, and 2 by the several Tenants.
6. That the Land be worked at leisure hours ;--or otherwise with the consent of the Tenants respective masters.
7. That the several Tenants shall attend their Parish Church at least once on every Sabbath, and send their Children to the Sunday School.
8. That no Tenant shall by himself or any other Person, either bring, or cause to be brought any kind of drink to be drunk on the allotment ground. Any Tenant trans-



gressing this Rule, shall upon the first offence pay 2s. 6d. to Mr. Parker, and for the second lose his Land for one year, from the Michaelmas after the offence.

9. Any Tenant ceasing to reside in the Parish, shall give up his allotment at the end of the year to Mr. Parker.

10. As an encouragement to good cultivation, Premiums will be awarded at the discretion of the Landlord, to such Occupiers as shall keep their Land in the cleanest order, and produce the largest crop.

**Wm. PARKER, Rector of Little Comberton.**

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Signed, April 1843,

W. Salsbury.  
S. Salsbury, Widow.  
Robert Fletcher.  
Joseph Pugh.  
T. Salsbury.  
B. Holder  
John Sheriff.  
T. Sandall.  
J. Davis.  
T. Edwards.  
W. Heekes.  
W. Copson.  
J. Phillips.  
T. Phillips.  
W. Taylor.  
W. Kennett.  
W. Pugh.  
J. Tinson.

T. Hunt.  
H. Lane.  
George Tinson.  
John Faulkner.  
W. Nash.  
W. Green.  
W. Chambers.  
W. Bozard.  
T. Heekes.  
G. Knight.  
F. Clemens.  
J. Wood.  
J. Daniell.  
A. Nash, Widow.  
W. Salsbury.  
Thomas Hayden.  
James Dowler.  
Andrews.

The Reverend William Parker departed this life in 1885 and his death was remarked upon in *From the London World* section of the New York Times in January of that year:-

“The late Rev. William Parker, who died a few days ago, was one of the oldest clergy men in the Church of England, as he had reached the age of 91 years and 6 months. He had held the living of Little Comberton, Pershore, for over 58 years, and was for 67 years a clergyman. Mr Parker was not only a good botanist and geologist, but a first rate pomologist; and he used to say that as a Worcestershire man he should feel ashamed if he could not present a good apple to a friend on any day of the year”



William Dobson Lowndes and family

Edward Lowndes became the Rector in 1885, followed in 1898 by William Dobson Lowndes and he was in the village at the outbreak of the First World War. Many men from the village went to war, most of them returning safely, and in recognition of their service to our country their names are recorded on the Roll of Honour sited at the Little Comberton crossroads. Sadly, three men were killed in France:-Harry Fletcher died in 1916, aged 22; James Winwood died in 1917, aged 20; William Salisbury died in 1918, aged 19. Their names also appear on the Roll as well as the Remembrance plaque in St Peter's Church.

There was great rejoicing when the war ended in November 1918 and the Reverend Lowndes announced in the parish magazine of 1922 that to mark the safe return of his two sons he had purchased a silver chalice and paten to be used for the festive communion celebrations. The cost of the chalice being £15 and £4.10s was paid for the paten, and he would be pleased to receive contributions from anyone wishing to do so. The Reverend Lowndes' family was liked and greatly respected, and the association continues as its descendents request that the ashes of family members are brought back to the churchyard of Little Comberton Church.

It was during the Reverend Edward Lowndes incumbency that in 1897 the school in the churchyard was taken down and rebuilt on the site it now occupies.



Little Comberton Village Hall



This was quite a feat but in those days little was discarded, and much reused - unlike the trend at the beginning of the second half of the twentieth century! When rebuilt, the hall was divided in the middle by a folding timber and glass screen so that the building could be used as one large room or two smaller ones. One end was heated by an open fire, the other by a cast iron stove.

In 1904 the hall was leased to the village by Jane Lowndes, still to be used as a school. In 1934 it was sold to the Parish Council, with financial assistance from the owner of Wells Furlong, Louis Barrow (a cousin to the Cadbury's family, that of chocolate fame). A toilet and kitchen block (now demolished) was added in 1937/8, and it was around this time that it ceased to be a school and was used as the village hall. The Parish Council was responsible for the hall until in 2001 a newly formed Village Hall Trust took a lease of the building. Major refurbishment took place in 2005/6

The village may have been two separate communities in the early years with the upper classes living around the church whilst the working classes resided close to the forge. There are early references to the forge standing on the edge of the village green and with the pool close by, it may well have been an ideal place for workers' huts. When I was a child, villagers always referred to the now Pool Close as the "bottom end" and the cross roads area of the village as "the top end". This may well have been the remains of the old way of life, and although everyone was friendly, there was a definite class/social division at the drive to "Old House Farm". This is a theory that I have had for many years, but have found no written evidence to support it, however, if it is true it would not be unique.

Water was obtained from wells, and there are still a few wells in existence today. Toilets were primitive, brick or wooden sheds in the garden, sometimes more than one household sharing the same privy. These would have been bucket loos or just holes in the ground, with chamber pots used in the house. Is it little wonder that disease was common?

People would have rarely left the village although they could have travelled on foot, coach and even by horse and cart with one of the carters taking goods to one of the local towns. Beer was often made by the wives and sold from the house to earn a little extra income. There are references to Lantern Cottage and Windy Ridge selling beer.

Life in villages changed little over many decades, different people came and went, church services were attended by all, the clergy and the rich making the rules, and generally speaking attending church services was compulsory. And so life rolled on into the twentieth century.

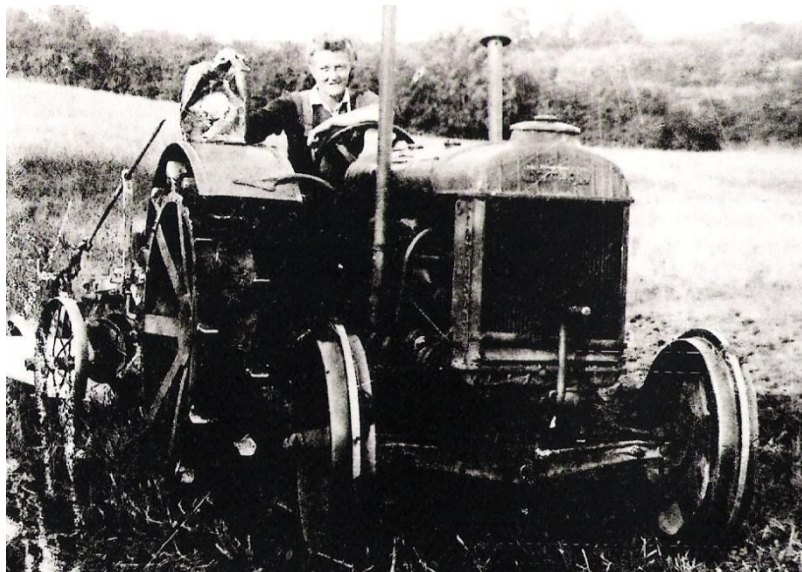
## **5. Little Comberton in The Twentieth Century**

The First World War was supposed to be the war to end all wars, and for a while this seemed to be true. Rural life carried on much as it had done before although new inventions were making their appearance, for example, steam traction engines replacing horses. This led to new devices such as threshing boxes being used on farms, and Fisher Humphries, who lived at “The Mount” in Pershore, built his factory opposite the railway station to produce this new machinery.

The railway meant that local produce could be moved about the country easily and quickly, and people could travel by train to places not dreamt of before. However, the rural people of the working class remained poor and so, to a large extent, they carried on in much the same way as their predecessors. In this village the large houses still had servants for menial tasks and the men still worked the land.

Slowly as we nudged into the nineteen thirties the storm clouds of unrest were gathering over Europe, then in 1939 the unthinkable happened, World War II began. The men of the village were somewhat luckier than those young men in the Great War because land work was a reserved occupation; labourers were not conscripted as we needed all the food that could be produced. The farmers around this time were the Pitchers, Revers, Stephens, and Brookes. However, some men from the village volunteered for service in the forces and those not in protected occupations were conscripted.

The Second World War certainly changed life in the village. Women and anyone available helped on the land, in fact Land Army girls came and were lodged in the village.



*Marjorie Lewis (nee Peace), of the Women's Land Army, at Defford in 1941.  
Marjorie married Roy and lived for the rest of her life in Little Comberton..*

An airfield was opened in Pershore and even Comberton had an airfield sited at Wick, but the latter was not an actual airfield but a communication and interception station. Although it was in Wick it was called Comberton to confuse the Germans and this may have been very fortunate for the village of Wick but not so good for us in Little Comberton had the Germans tried to bomb the station. RAF personnel were billeted around the nearby villages with Little Comberton accepting its quota.

A Home Guard platoon was formed with Ray Stevens as captain. The Home Guard was a company of men who worked by day and then did night patrols when everyday work ended. Now we may laugh at the television series “Dad’s Army”, but these were dedicated men who really gave their all in a way that was possible for them, although obviously, many funny incidents occurred.



*The Home Guard Platoon at the crossroads*



In this photograph my father is on the extreme right.

(The above pictures of the Comberton Home Guard Platoon courtesy of the “Evesham Journal”- a Newsquest Publication and are therefore copyright)



The Grange,  
Little Comberton,  
October 25th, 1941.

To all Members of the  
Combertons Platoon Home Guard.

Orders have been received from Headquarters that intensive winter training of Home Guard personnel in this platoon is to take place.

In future, evening or Sunday morning parades must be attended by all persons who wish to remain members of this platoon.

Anyone not wishing to pull their weight have the option now of resigning by giving the usual 14 days' notice in writing, signed and dated.

Members who slack or avoid their duties will be discharged.

Regular night patrols have been discontinued for the time being.

Notices giving times and dates of parades will be put up on the Notice Boards provided at Little Comberton Cross and Great Comberton Post Box corner.

The first parade will be at the Headquarters Room,

The Grange on 8 OCT 1941 at 8.00 P.M.  
and the next on 9 NOV 1941 at church room  
*Details later*

Stores and equipment will in future be administered by Quartermaster-Sergt. Mosson, from Little Comberton Guard Room (Old Reading Room).

(Signed)

*R. J. Steph*  
Second-Lieut.,  
Platoon Commander.

There were many aircraft flying around in the skies above the villages and one day a Wellington Bomber crash-landed in the fields down the Wick Road, but luckily, no-one was injured. A bomb was dropped along the road to Elmley Castle; it is not known whether the pilot was trying to hit the Comberton airfield or just getting rid of bombs, and although there were no casualties, houses shook and everyone was frightened.

My mother used to recall the night that Coventry was bombed. She told me that she stood out in the road, listening to the noise of the aircraft and the exploding bombs. She vividly remembered the glow in the sky from the flames of the stricken city. She recalled being too frightened to stay outside and too afraid to stay indoors. Repeating over and over again "Oh, those poor devils!"

Life was not all doom and gloom. Tales often retold were about the time a barrage balloon broke free from its moorings and drifted over the village, with everyone on full alert as they thought the Germans paratroopers had arrived.

Another tale recounts how, when the Home Guard were on watch one night on Bredon Hill, a tree seemed to be moving nearer and this was thought to be the Germans. It turned out to be a trick of the light but indicates the tension that abounded, however incidents of this nature were later thought to be funny and I suppose it was from countrywide tales such as these that "Dad's Army" was born!

The German POW's arrived and were housed in the barns as mentioned before (page 8). They worked on the land and also on farmer Ray Stephens's buildings as his private workforce. My mother spoke of a German named Kurt, reputed to be a U-boat commander, who she described as arrogant but saying that the rest were very nice. None tried to escape, firstly there was little chance of getting out of Britain, and secondly, they seemed to be quite happy to stay where they were.

Some people's lives were touched by sadness as either friends or relatives were killed, reported missing, or taken prisoner. My mother's brother was reported to be missing but eventually the Red Cross found him in a German POW camp after he had been taken prisoner at Tobruk.



*Lupin Cottage today*

So the war rolled on until its end in 1945 and this is the year that I entered the scene, born in the end one of "Lupin Cottages" These were three cottages in those days, being made into two dwellings many years later. When I was only a few months old, my parents moved across to the now demolished Pool Cottages, where I spent all of my childhood and part of my teenage years, then we moved into the newly built Brookfield bungalows.



*Brookfield Bungalows*

## 6. Services

In the 1890's water was piped from a reservoir on Bredon Hill, fed from a spring in Cames Coomb Wood, at the instigation of General Henry Fanshawe Davies of Elmley Castle. In 1896 a sum of 60p was received in payment for the first year's rent, the supply being granted for 1,000 years.

Received from the Inhabitants of  
Little Comberton 60 pence  
in payment of my first Year's Rent  
of the Spring in Kaines Combe  
granted for 1000 years for the  
Little Comberton  
WATER SUPPLY.  
29. 9. 96 H.F. Davies

This agreement seems to have been terminated by Little Comberton Parish Council in the last quarter of the twentieth century.

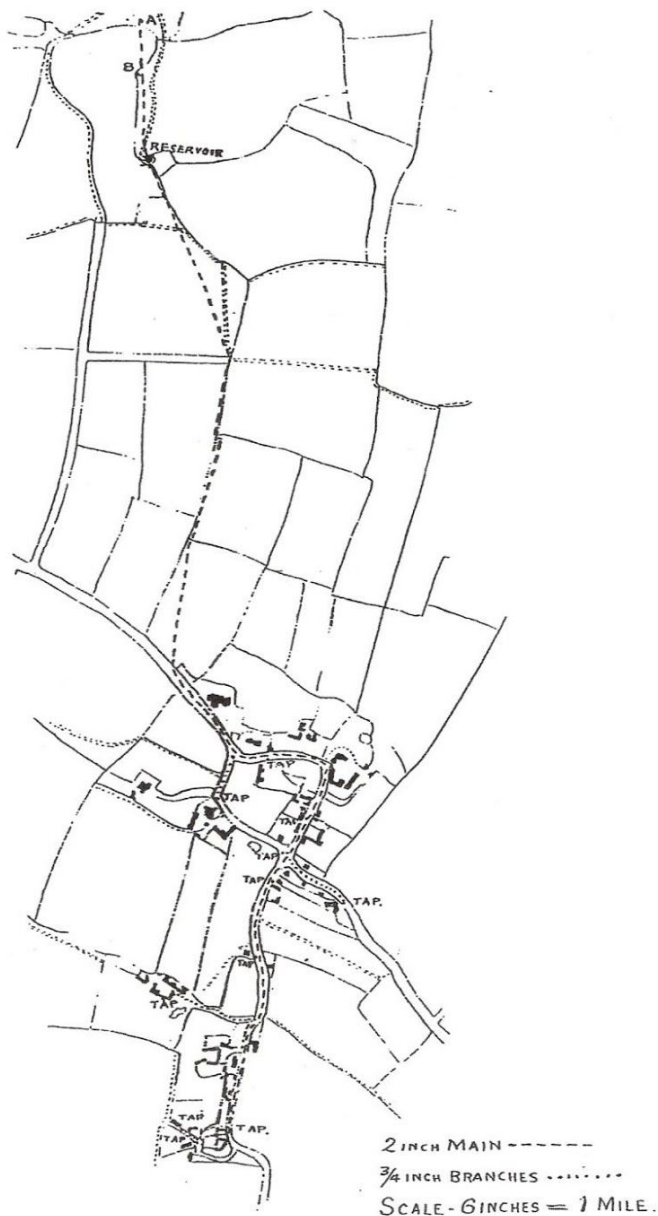
A 1934 handwritten report by Louis Barrow states that 1933 was a very dry year and the water supply had not been sufficient to meet the needs of the village. An extra borehole had to be dug but some vandalism had taken place damaging the valve, however, this was corrected and all was well.

In the late 1940's or early 1950's a petition, signed by thirty six people, was handed to the Parish Council requesting that the gypsies and roadsters be stopped having access to the drinking water as there was insufficient for the village's needs. And we think that water shortage is a modern day problem!



Gas was brought into the village around 1900 and electricity probably in 1920. The sewage system was installed in the late 1950's, early 60's, until then households relied upon septic tanks, and in some cases the waste was discharged straight into ditches or brooks

LITTLE COMBERTON WATERWORKS.  
SKETCH PLAN.



## **7. The Village Bobby**

The police station was built on the crossroads around 1950, although prior to this there had been a policeman living in the bungalow in Wick Road, now known as Karena . P.C. “Taffy” Evans took up the position of village policeman serving not only Little Comberton but also the surrounding villages. He actually did a good job but was the butt of many harmless pranks.

As children we used to refer to him (behind his back, of course) as “beetroot face” due to his very red face - children could be as cruel then as some are now. He found out about our name for him and confronted us, saying that he had got his red face fighting for his country; he did not elaborate nor did we ask. We nick-named his wife “Chopsy” as she would stand and shout for him at the top of her voice when he was wanted on the telephone.

As children we were afraid of him as law and order was less tolerant of minor offences than is evident today. I remember Bill Pearce being prosecuted for failing to stop at a halt sign while riding his bike. He was fined 10s, which was a lot of money then. Bill Pearce lived in the barns at Old Fallow Farm; to live in barns was quite common after the war. Taffy was, however, the first person we would contact if there was any trouble, and he solved and dealt with many of the minor incidents that occurred.

To return to the pranks! I recall an incident when, one very wet Sunday, his daughter went to Sunday School using an umbrella that she left in the church porch until she went home again. When she came out the umbrella had disappeared! After a quick search it was nowhere to be found so she went and informed her father. On their return to the church porch there was the umbrella in exactly the same place she had left it. The village children claimed this to be a miracle!

The most remembered practical joke was referred to as “the body in the pond”. An anonymous tip off to P.C.Evans reported that some-one with a large parcel was acting rather suspiciously by the church pond. He went to investigate and saw what appeared to be a body in the murky waters. He immediately contacted the Pershore police station and the body was dragged out of the pond. The “body” turned out to be nothing more than a tailor’s dummy. An article appeared in the local press saying that the prank was in very bad taste, but no further action would be taken and the dummy was awaiting collection from the police station in Pershore.

It was never collected! I can’t help wondering if, when the police moved from the old station in Three Springs Road to the Civic Centre, whether they still had that tailor’s dummy!

P.C. Evans was probably undeserving of these pranks but we lived in an era of providing our own amusement, and practical jokes were common.

## *7. Memories of a Village Childhood.*

The previous chapters give the backdrop to the village where I was born, but World War II changed things. Outside the village there emerged factories, building and other companies that paid their labour forces more money than could be earned by working on the land. This having been said, a large proportion of the men continued to work on the land due to the fact that they lived in tied houses, houses that went with the job, or they were too old, or had no inclination to change jobs. The large houses had to manage with reduced staff because people were lured away to better paid jobs. Women were now doing jobs in factories and offices, unthought-of before the war, when they would be working in the large houses or on the land, as they had to be home to cook midday meals for their men and children.

A great many of the houses were in a poor state of repair: they were cold, damp, and draughty. The Old Manor had been divided into three dwellings and these were known as Church Cottages but around 1970 the building was converted back into one dwelling again. In our house we had no electricity, only gas, which ran our lighting and cooker: water was from an outside tap, installed originally when water was supplied from the hill; our toilet was a bucket loo up the garden. The bucket was emptied when full by burying the contents in the vegetable garden in which was grown fantastic vegetables, eaten by the family. This was true organic gardening!

My father worked on the land, starting his working life as a shepherd, then becoming a general farm hand, and in the summer my mother also worked on the land, helping with the fruit and vegetable harvest. These were the days of mixed farming when farmers had mixed crops and animals; the fields were full of cabbages, peas, beans, cauliflowers, and there were many fruit orchards in the area. Cows, sheep and chickens, etc., ran around the fields; birds were in abundance, including skylarks, linnets, yellow hammers (yellow buntings), finches, and the bullfinch which continually attacked the fruit blossom. Many types of warbler sang out, as did the cuckoo, from dawn to dusk, and we saw fieldfares and pewits (lapwings), to name but a few. Cowslips, buttercups and many more wild flowers grew in the fields and on the roadsides, while the poppies splashed the cornfields with red, watercress grew in some of the streams, and glow worms glimmered in the dark. Life for me as a child seemed idyllic.

Nearly all the houses had large gardens where we grew our own vegetables, kept chickens and one or two households even kept a pig. We played in the fields, around the farms, or on the roads. There were a few cars around but we rarely saw more than one or two a day coming through the village so we played hopscotch, football, and cricket using a plum box for a wicket. We climbed Bredon Hill and often went down to what was known as the "miller road", (the stretch of road leading out of the village towards Wick) to catch minnows in the Merry Brook. There **were** small fish in the brooks then. I presume that "miller road" was so called as the corn was probably taken along this road to the mill in Pershore.

Ray Stephens, who lived in The Grange was the first person in the village to have a television. In the field on the opposite side of the road to the Grange he had a huge mast, which must have been fifty or sixty feet tall - I'm afraid I still work in feet and inches! Mr Stephens invited all his workers and their families to watch the funeral of King George VI in 1952, but unfortunately I only saw about fifteen minutes before falling asleep.

The following year, for the coronation of Elizabeth II, a television was hired and installed in the village hall so all that wished could watch this memorable event. There was also a fancy dress parade and the supper in the hall. The royal family was treated with much more respect then and this "viewing" was the start of people buying televisions for themselves. Electrical appliances were fast becoming the norm but in our house still no electricity.





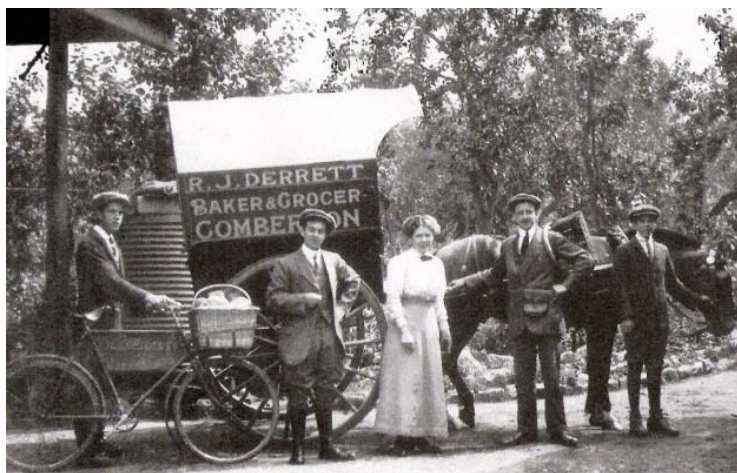
*Fancy Dress Parade for Coronation 1953 (Copyright Evesham Journal)*

I went to school in Pershore, walking from the bottom end of the village to the crossroads waiting by Ashley House to catch the bus, and after school we would go into the fields pea picking to earn some money. Pocket money was unheard of then, if you wanted any money you worked for it, and fortunately there was nearly always some job you could do if the need arose.

Gypsies came during the summer months to help with the harvesting of fruit and vegetables and their help was necessary as there were not enough workers to cope. The same gypsy families came year after year, camping by the drive of Old Fallow Farm, in the area between the Merry Brook and the beginning of the drive in Wick road

They had their own code and the head of the camp would ban anyone who broke it. We knew a lot of these gypsies, and while they respected the villagers' belongings they were not averse to pilfering from the farms.

We shopped mainly at the village shop, which was in Manor Lane, and although it still went in the name of R.J. Derrett, had been taken over by Harry Onslow. The post office was in Orchard View, also in Manor Lane but this eventually closed and went into the shop. The Derretts employed quite a lot of people as they had a bake house at the rear of the shop, and they had vans to deliver the bread to surrounding villages. Harry and his staff formed a great darts team that won major tournaments in the area.



Photograph by kind permission of Mrs Marie Saunders

Once a week the large van belonging to Wards of Evesham came to the village, and we were able to buy hardware, paraffin etc., items that were not available from the village shop. Another weekly visitor to the village was Turner's fish and chip van, turning up in the early evening with fish costing 9d and a portion chips for 3d - fish and chips for the grand total of 1s (5p) and a real treat for us, but more often we settled for just three pennyworth of chips!

We spent most of our leisure time in the village, only going to Pershore, Evesham or Worcester on rare occasions. Some of the children learnt bell ringing; there were always church functions and the Sunday School although, as a Roman Catholic, I missed out on a lot of this - religious faiths were much further apart then than they are now.

There was also the children's Christmas party which was organised by the Women's Institute.



*Children's Christmas party during the 1950's organised by the W.I.  
(Photograph copyright of the Evesham Journal)*

The Women's Institute was eventually disbanded but the party, along with the retired people's party, was then organised by the Sports and Social Club and carries on to this day. At the Christmas party the children still each receive a present from Santa, as was the tradition with the W. I.



*Women's Institute around 1960.*

*Back row L to R - Mrs Miles, Mrs Mills, Mrs Parker, Gillian Woodford, Pat Woodford, in front of these last two, Mrs Baird.*

*Middle row L to R - Nurse Maine, Miss Watson, Mrs Grinnell, Mrs Bricknell, Ruby Bradford, Miss Grove, Mrs Bradford and Mrs Hine.*

*Front row L to R - Granny Norman, Miss Corbishly, Mrs Woodford, Mrs Norton and Mrs Norman*



Old House Farm was a place where we enjoyed playing. Jack Hutton's farm manager lived in the house and with his children we would catch newts in the pond, play in the barns, and have races in the brook with sticks, leaves and anything that would float. We met Margaret Hutton (Sutton as she is now) here quite often, for although the family lived at Hopney, near Wick, Mr. and Mrs. Hutton often spent whole days on the farm. During the school holidays, and at weekends, they would bring Margaret to the farm and she would join in the fun, so she is almost a life-long native of this village and has a great deal of knowledge about the place and its people.

The pride of the village was a most successful cricket team, winning most of its matches and having people queuing up to become a player. The pitch was in Flax Meadow, which was a field behind the houses on the Great Comberton side of the Pershore Road. There is in existence a newspaper cutting describing a wonderful fete organised by the team, and another cricketing social event was the annual dinner.



*Cricket Team 1952 (kind permission of Brian Woodford)*



*Junior Team 1959 (kind permission of Brian Woodford)*



*(Kind permission of Michael Bicknell)*

This was how our time was spent when I was a lad, but as I moved from my childhood into adulthood things began to change.



## **8. The Last Fifty Years.**

I left school in 1960 and started work as an apprentice bricklayer with a firm in Pershore, so I, like many others, was going out of the village for work and with more and more people owning cars the roads became much busier. Agriculture was beginning to change with farmers choosing to grow less labour-intensive crops and it was around this time that the Stephens' family dropped the bombshell that they were laying off most of their workers and going over to cereal crops. Many moved out of the village to seek work elsewhere and so a number of tied houses stood empty, available for rent but, one by one, were sold as people began to buy their own houses.

In the mid 1960's, virtually all of the people from the old cottages in what is now known as Pool Close, moved into the newly built bungalows in Brookfield, including me and my parents. The old houses were demolished and new ones built, and the bungalows at the entrance to the Close were built on the site of the old pool, which had been drained and filled in many years before.



*The new houses in Pool Close*

The next building development was on part of the allotments and so the whole structure of the village was beginning to change. New people arrived, but due to the fact that the village shops were still well patronised, people met and new friendships were formed. However, within a short while of one another, both shops closed, leaving the village hall as the one main point of social contact within the village. Social events were organised with new vigour in an attempt to keep the village united and these activities continue to this day. A few more newly built houses have appeared as the years have rolled by, making the village that we know today.

The Millennium came and to mark the event a stone was erected near the Roll of Honour at the crossroads, and on top of this stone is a plaque which shows an artist's impression of the village as well as giving a brief history.

This then is our village today, shaped by time, people and events. The village has evolved reasonably well as its history can show and only the future will reveal if further developments will be as sympathetic to Little Comberton.

## **9. Former Residents of the Village**

This is a list of residents worth a mention for one reason or another.

**Louis Barrow** of Well Furlong was the owner of Barrow Stores on Corporation Street in Birmingham and was also a cousin to the Cadbury family. He made many donations to the village and as recently as the 1990's a member of the Barrow family, in his will, left £1,500 to the Little Comberton Parish Council in the hope that it would be used for the floral enhancement of the village.

**Dr Rosemary Biggs** was a leading haematologist and also lived in Well Furlong for a time during her retirement. A hospital consultant informed me that she was involved in setting up of the Blood Transfusion Service. In the churchyard there is a wrought iron seat from her last garden, placed there by her daughter as a memorial to overlook the beautiful and unrestricted view of Bredon Hill.

**Mr R.J. Derrett** owned the village shop and gave donations to many village projects.

**Ronald Ridout**, a well known writer of educational books widely used in most schools throughout the country during the 1950's and 60's lived in Pool Thatch for several years.

He did return to the village to visit friends and neighbours, when he was reported in the press as being a millionaire. I have in my possession an eleventh edition of one of his early books first printed in 1947, this around the time he was living in Pool Thatch with his wife and son.

**The Lowndes** family were very generous to the village (please refer to Chapter 4) and one "donation" was to lease the school to the Parish Council during the years 1904 until 1934, the agreement states that the rent was one shilling (now 5p) if demanded.

The **Thackwell, Phillipson- Stowe**, and **Byrd** families have lived at the Manor in past years and, although no longer Lords of the Manor, they all had a lot of influence in village affairs.

There have been many characters that added colour to the village and I now take time to mention but a few.

**Jack Bell** was born in Little Comberton, around 1910 and for most of his life he had a medical disability that prevented him from working for a living. He was a keen gardener, winning many prizes and cups at the Great Comberton flower show. He knew all the tricks for producing prize-winning vegetables, and these included growing parsnips in large pipes filled with sand so that he could remove them without breaking the tip of the root. His sister and cousin helped to prepare the exhibits for the shows and he always insisted that they use only his vegetables and fruit, although people often offered better for his use. He was also a keen wine maker, and I often saw his friends trying to find their ways home after a session on Jack's wine, with Wellingtons on the wrong feet. Jack's father was a bricklayer and as they lived in rented accommodation and he wanted to be sure that his son would always have a place to live, he built a shed on land they owned below Moor Leys - planning regulations were not as strict then as it is now. Jack went blind in his later life and I visited him most weeks and he would say "Tell me what's going on, you are my eyes now". In his early years he had been a bell-ringer and when he lost his sight he had a set of hand bells mounted on a frame and played them using a small wooden hammer. After his death he was buried in the churchyard as was his mother and father. In the 1980's and 90's the shed was used by certain villagers to store their homemade cider, and there were rum goings-on in those days in the "house" that Jack's father built and I tend to think that Jack himself would have approved!

**Norman Hedgecock** was another person who was known far and wide. He had a problem with one of his legs so rode a homemade, specially adapted bicycle with only one pedal that turned, and he propelled himself along with the aid of a long stick. He also drove a horse and cart, or rather a pony and trap as it would be called today, was very knowledgeable when it came to horses and, in the summer, would often be found round the gypsy camps “talking horses”. Norman made a living from land he had and from some he rented around the village, also keeping milking cows and doing livery work, in those days known as looking after other people’s horses. He seemed to have a way of getting things on the cheap and I remember one example when a villager, who was helping Norman to get his hay in, asking me if I would like to help. I asked the rate of pay and was told “The money is not much but you can have all the homemade wine you can drink”. I declined the offer!

Three men used to sit on the seat at the crossroads, putting the world to rights, and they were **Charlie Arnold, Arthur Rodgers** and **Chris Bicknell**, the three of them well known in the village. However, a newcomer to the village was not used to seeing people sitting around outside talking asked me why they sat on that seat all the time. “They are waiting for the good times to come round again”, I replied and long afterwards that person often reminded me about this saying, “You were definitely right, you know!”

There are probably many more names that should be added to these, but I leave future historians to update the list.



### 10. In The Churchyard

As in most churchyards the headstones standing in St Peter's make fascinating reading and here are some epitaphs that caught my attention.

ALLIN HEEKS  
DIED NOVEMBER 6<sup>TH</sup> 1863 AGED 27  
I am too young to die said the sleeper  
T'was pale consumption gave the blow  
And laid my cherished hopes too low  
Leaving all my dear friends to mourn.  
My dear friends cannot return  
My earthly choice I made for life,  
Intended soon to be my wife  
But sleeping in Jesus now I lies  
Till the last trumpet shakes the skies.  
Forgive, O Lord, the parents' wish  
That death had spared their son.  
O Lord, thy will be done.

(Consumption was the name for T.B. which would almost certainly kill the victim in those days.)

Another epitaph to John Young of this parish, late of Wick, and who died Feb 20<sup>th</sup> 1834, reads:-

Affliction sore long I bore,  
Physicians help was in vain,  
Till God was pleased for death seize  
And ease me from my pain.

Two testaments to some workers are as follows;

Ann Nash died September 8 1857

She was for nine years faithful and unwearied nurse to the late Mrs Phipps of Bricklehampton by whose direction this stone was erected.

Also-

William Copstone died January 25 1850

has recorded on his gravestone;

For many years a respected labourer of this parish

A tribute to:-

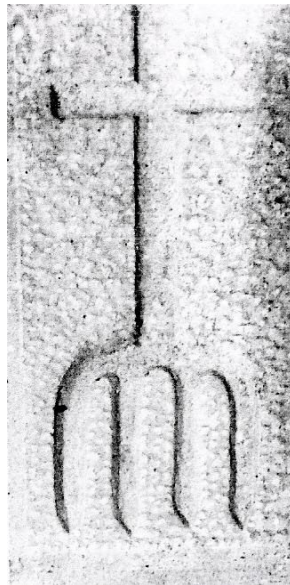
Francis Elizabeth Wood  
Died October 14 1849

Sweet and endearing in her disposition. Exemplary in the fulfilment of her duty, and charitable in the best and widest sense. She lived beloved and died respected after a short illness, calmly resigned to the will of God and in the pious hope of a joyful resurrection through the merits of her Redeemer.

And finally, a rather sobering inscription on the gravestone of Thomas Hunt (1866) and his wife, Elizabeth, who died in 1877:-

All ye that come to my grave to see  
Prepare yourself to follow me.  
Repent in time, make no delay  
For youth and time will both decay.  
Life is uncertain, death is sure  
Sin is a wound, but Christ the cure.

Some gravestones around the country give a fascinating insight to times past, and there are some very interesting designs to be found, and Little Comberton is no exception. There is a fairly recent one to Edward Harris, displaying a fork in recognition of the many years he was employed as a gardener in the village, and his family still live here.



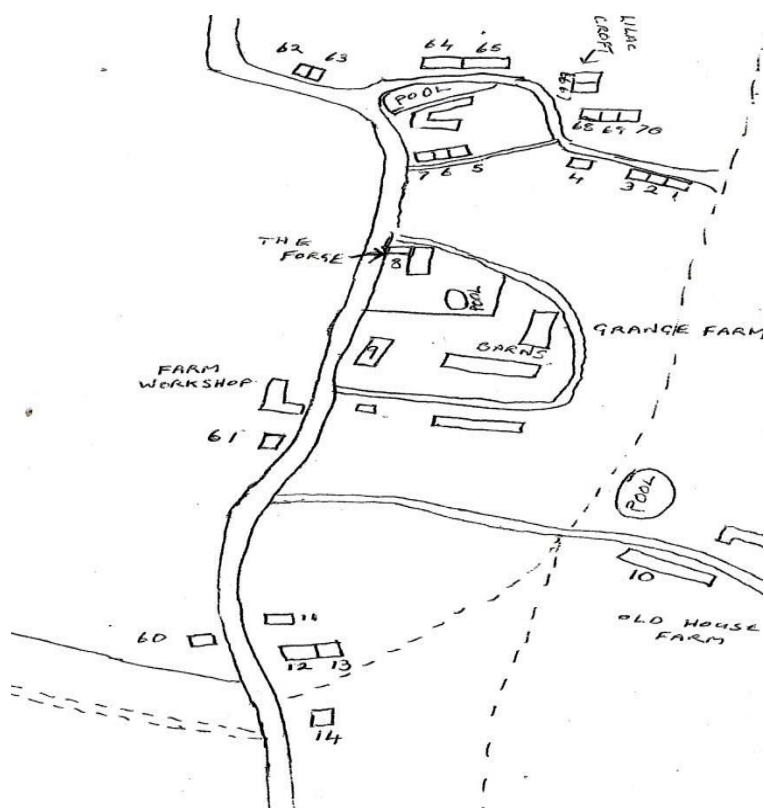
11. The Rectors and Incumbents of the Parish

<i>1331 William Arlot De Wich</i>	<i>1940 Courtney Charles Weeks</i>
<i>1349 John Sunbury</i>	<i>1948 Thomas Hunter</i>
<i>1401 John Peeche</i>	<i>1954 Earnest Downes Panter</i>
<i>1409 Nicholas Hunter</i>	<i>1963 Stanley Childs</i>
<i>1446 John Spekination</i>	<i>1970 Gideon Davis</i>
<i>1454 William Philip</i>	<i>1981 John Dale</i>
<i>1469 George Painbach</i>	<i>1989 Stephen Kenneth Clarke</i>
<i>1509 Roger Brereton</i>	<i>1997 Susan Margaret Sharples</i>
<i>1535 William Carterbecke</i>	<i>2002 Terry Henderson</i>
<i>1550 John Gale</i> <i>(present Rector )</i>	
<i>1580 William Doverdale</i>	
<i>1631 Lawrence Tayler</i>	
<i>1681 Richard Sherif</i>	
<i>1632 Francis Derby</i>	
<i>1643 Anthony Aston</i>	
<i>1664 Henry Chamberlaine</i>	
<i>? Francis Lamb</i>	
<i>1734 Bridges Thomas</i>	
<i>1741 Robert Jackson</i>	
<i>1752 William Neale</i>	
<i>1754 Richard Turner</i>	
<i>1791 Joseph Martin</i>	
<i>1810 Leonard Middleton</i>	
<i>1826 William Parker</i>	
<i>1885 Edward Spencer Lowndes</i>	
<i>1898 William Dobson Lowndes</i>	

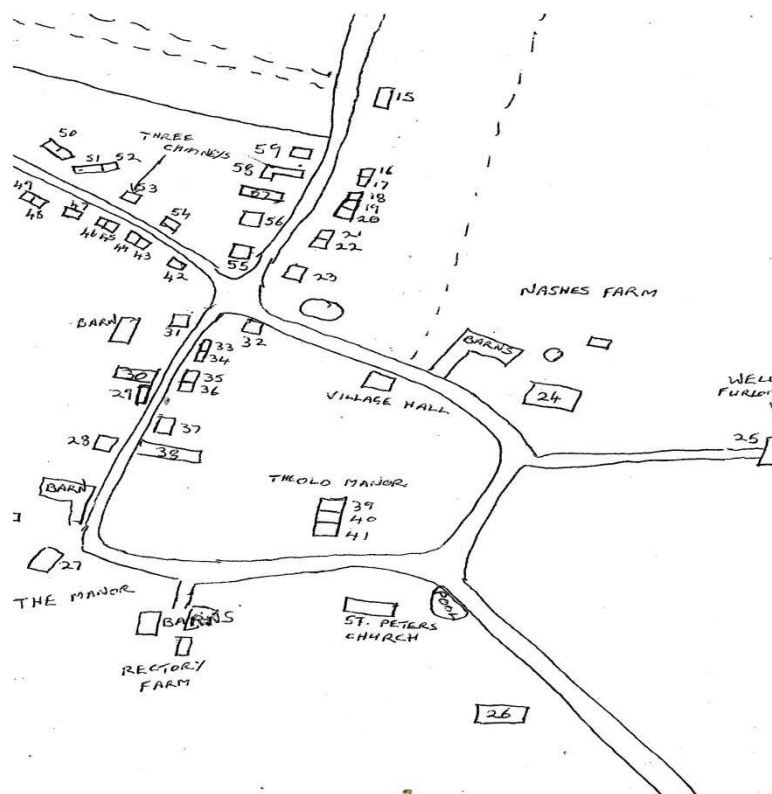


## 12. Some Residents Remembered From My Childhood

1. Mrs Fuller
2. Miss Watson
3. Mr & Mrs Parker, Olive, Syd & David
4. Mr & Mrs Killick
5. Mr & Mrs Alf Ball
6. Mr & Mrs Rose, Sylvia, Florence & John
7. Mr & Mrs Sid Morris
8. Mr & Mrs Jeynes, Mary & Margaret
9. Ray & Mrs Stephens & Priscilla
10. The Sutton family
11. Mr & Mrs Cook
12. Mr & Mrs Barlett, Carol, Stella & Freddie
13. Chrissie Clarke
14. Ruth Hodges
15. Mr & Mrs Taylor, Joan & Marie
16. Mr & Mrs Arnold & family
17. Stan & Doreen Pritchard
18. Walt & Nancy Haines
19. Gert & Nora Heeks
20. Mr & Mrs Rodgers & family
21. Mr & Mr Birch & family
22. Mr & Mrs Chris Bicknell & Mick
23. Taffy & Mrs Evans, Angela & Maxine
24. Miss Marsh
25. Dr & Mrs Kellman  
(daughter Louis Barrow)
26. The Rev. & Mrs Panter & family
27. Mr & Mrs Byrd, Sally & Nanny Jo Williams
28. Mr (Grampy) Hedgecock
29. Granny Norman
30. Mr & Mrs Norman Hedgecock & family
31. Mr & Mrs Watts
32. Mr & Mrs Edward Harris, Margaret & Joan
33. Mr & Mrs Portman (he was the village roadman)
34. Mr & Mrs Wensal  
(village post office)

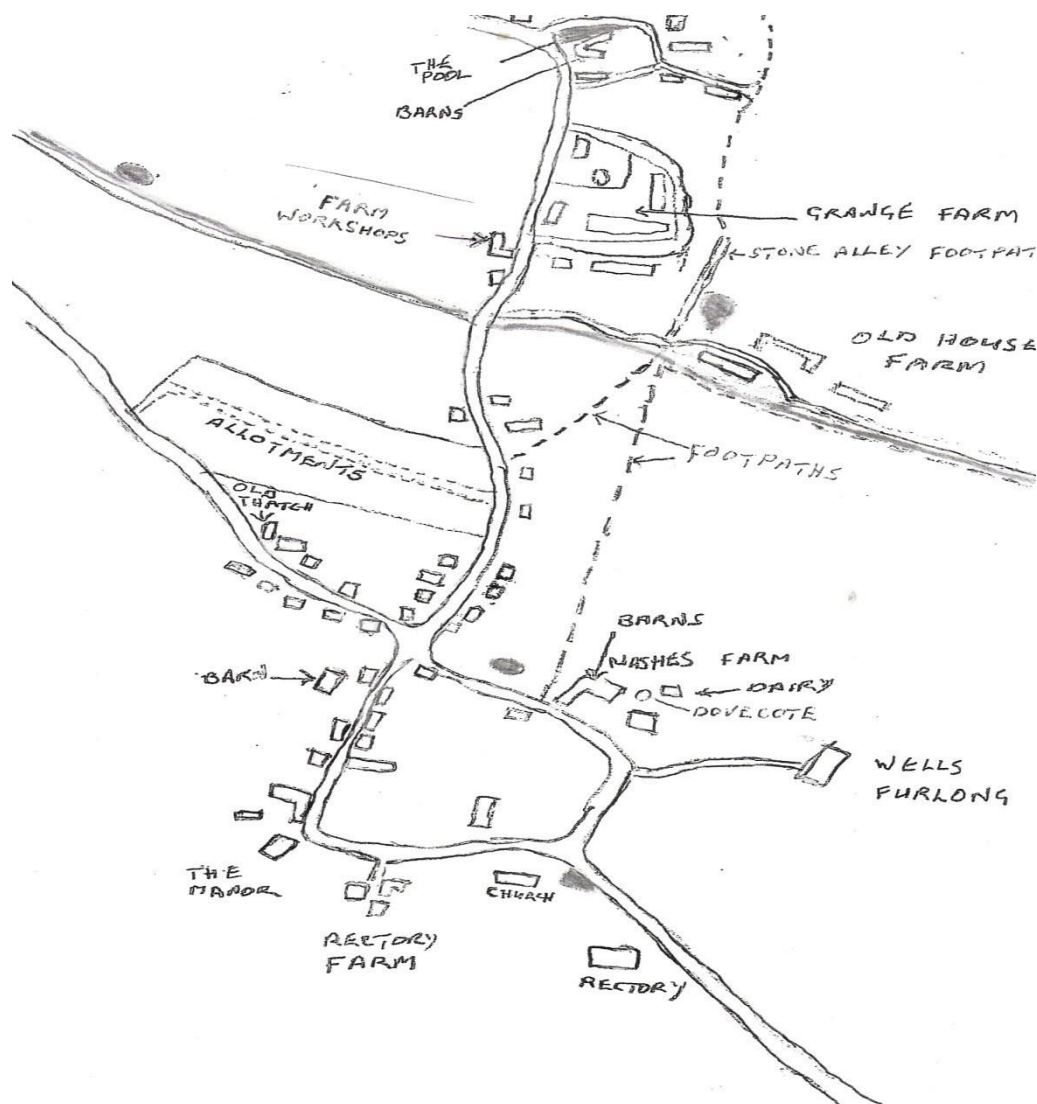


35. Harry Onslow, Mrs Price,  
Gillian & Lol Williams
36. Village shop
37. Mr & Mrs Pitcher
38. Miss Allen & Jean Corbishly
39. Mr & Mrs Les Smith & Jean
40. ?
41. Miss Hunt
42. Mr & Mrs Weston
43. Nurse Maine
44. Mr & Mrs Moore & Brenda
45. Mr & Mrs Mosson
46. Mr & Mrs Woodford, Brian,  
Roy, Pat and Gill
47. Dick Derrett
48. Mr & Mrs Sheward, Peter,  
Tony & Mary
49. Mr & Mrs Wright, Ian &  
Wendy
50. Mr & Mrs Jones
51. Mrs Green
52. ?
53. Mr & Mrs Crowley
54. Mrs Snape
55. Mr & Mrs Davis, Beryl &  
Irene
56. Mr & Mrs Grinnell, Terry,  
Dick & Mel
57. Mrs Deakin
58. Mr & Mrs Lewis & Jane
59. Mr & Mrs Arthur Norman,  
Pauline & Joyce
60. Mrs Palmer
61. Mrs Waddington
62. Mr & Mrs John Miles
63. Mr & Mrs Frank Morris
64. Mr and Mrs Douglas & Victor,  
followed by the Norton family
65. Mr & Mrs Mills, David & June
66. Mr & Mrs Mills Snr & Gerald
67. Mr & Mrs Morris Senior
68. Miss Astle
69. Arthur Reynolds
70. Jack Bell & Kath Osborne



There was also Dr & Mrs Hine, John and Pat living at Hickley Piece, and Mr & Mrs Alec Oakley at Old Fallow Farm. Don Zoob had made part of the POW accommodation into a house and he married Mrs Magrath who had two children, Rosalind and John. At this time Porters Cottages were part of the Great Comberton parish but the residents attended all Little Comberton functions. Living in the cottages were Mr & Mrs Hussell Snr., Mr & Mrs Saunders with Dave, Alan, and Janet, Mr & Mrs Alf Hughes and Jane, Mr & Mrs Haines with their son "Ticker", and lastly, Mr & Mrs Richardson.

Finally, there are people living in the village today who are either direct descendants or related to the villagers of 19<sup>th</sup> century and, I am sure, have their own story to tell.



### 13. Additional Facts, Figures and Items of Interest

Anker Bechelim (Beauchamp) bequeathed in his will of 1496 the sum of 10s to Little Comberton church.

John Morgan stated in his will of 1534 that he desired to be buried in the chancel of St Peter's Church, Little Comberton, and that a legacy would be left to that church.

The church silver, which is now deposited with a bank, was given by Thomas Byrche Savage, Squire of Elmley Castle and Sheriff of the County, each piece is dated 1773 and is used each Christmas Eve for the Midnight Mass. (The Communion silver used each Sunday now was bought to replace that given by Reverend Lowndes in 1922 as this was stolen when the safe was taken some years ago).



The Church clock was installed in 1871: it is hand-wound and powered by weights. Once a week Arthur Rodgers climbed the tower steps to wind the weights back up, and it was his job to stoke-up the central heating boiler, as well as ringing the church bell to call the congregation to church. When Arthur retired 40 years ago Dave Saunders took over the weekly task of winding the clock.

Mary Revers had played the church organ for 66 years before retiring in 1998.

In 1938 the plot of land on which the council houses were built was purchased from William John Newman of Hinton on the Green for the purchase price of £302.10s.

A wage slip from 1948, and belonging to my father, shows his wage as £4.6s.10d with three shillings deducted for rent of the cottage, and the bill on the next page shows that my mother supported the local shop!



Telephone: Elmley Castle 236  
Eckington 266

61938

**LITTLE COMBERTON & ECKINGTON,**  
**PERSHORE.**

16<sup>th</sup> August 1948

M<sup>70</sup> PARKER  
BOUGHT OF

**R. J. DERRETT & SON**  
Bakers and Confectioners, Grocery, Provisions.  
SHARPS, BRAN, MEAL AND POULTRY CORN.

25 Sugar		1	00
14 Butter		1	8
Syphard			3 1/2
14 Marg			11 1/2
5 Lard			5
10p Bacon		1	7
Matches			18
2 Soap			5 1/2
5m Kerosil			5
Cocoa		1	16
13 Tea	(4)	1	10
100g Flour		1	05
3/4 Sweeten		2	6
1/2 Raisins	2		10
1/2 Dates	2		5
		15	00

John Eaton purchased land and property in Pool Close ready for redevelopment in 1965 and one cottage and its garden was bought for as little as £150.

#### **14. In Conclusion**

To the best of my ability I have tried to set down memories and information about this village of Little Comberton. There are obviously many more stories and facts out there yet to be uncovered and recorded, and I hope that this narrative encourages some-one to carry on where I have left off.

I give this manuscript in its entirety to St Peter's Church in Little Comberton, and any profits made from it in any form to be used solely for the benefit of that church.

David Parker.  
January 2009