

A SON OF THE RECTORY

Appleby Magna at the dawn of the
20th Century

Aubrey Moore

**Expanded edition with a
new chapter by
Peter Moore**

Published by Information Byway cic in conjunction with Appleby Environment

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Revised and Edited by Sonia Liff. Layout and Production by Marilyn Dunkelman

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Frontispiece to the original edition (1982)

Aubrey Moore is the only surviving son of the Rev. Charles Thomas Moore, rector of Appleby Magna from 1877 to 1922 whose brother was the then squire and owner of the 4500 acre Appleby estate which was in the possession of the Moore family for over three hundred years.

“A Son of the Rectory”, at first unnamed, was written as a series of notes for the information of the author’s children and their descendants to put on record some details of the life and history of the family and the village and its inhabitants at the time of his early life at the turn of the century. It was after it had been read by a number of friends that Aubrey was persuaded to offer it for publication as a work of country and autobiographical writing of much more than local interest.

Aubrey Moore and his wife, who have recently celebrated their sixty-fifth wedding anniversary, still enjoy an active life in the Oxfordshire village of Bloxham where they have lived for the past twenty-four years.

*To the memory of my father and mother
Aubrey Moore 1982*

*All those responsible for its production dedicate this new, extended edition to the
memory of the author of the original edition, Aubrey Moore, with gratitude,
admiration and affection*

Introduction: 2nd edition

I am honoured and grateful to be asked to introduce a new edition of my father's memoirs of his early life as the son of the Rector of Appleby Magna, in Leicestershire, the Reverend Charles Moore. Charles Moore was Rector of Appleby Magna from 1877 to 1922.

The publishers of the first edition made many reductions from Aubrey's original typescript. The first edition soon went out of print, but there has continued to be a steady demand for the book. It was to satisfy this demand that a handful of residents of the village, some time ago, decided to obtain the rights to publish a new edition, incorporating previously unpublished material from the original typescript.

My gratitude at being asked to introduce this edition is because it gives me the opportunity to thank the people who have worked so hard, and so skilfully, over the last few years to produce this new, extended edition. A number of people in Appleby have made useful contributions in one way or another, which are greatly appreciated, but all will agree that full credit for the successful production of this new edition must go to Sonia Liff and Marilyn Dunkelman, long term residents of the village. They have used both their literary and their technical skills in incorporating material which the original publishers left out of the first edition, and in inserting explanatory pedigrees and explanatory footnotes. All of these additions greatly enhance Aubrey's original book as, I know, he would be the first to acknowledge with gratitude.

Aubrey has an economical writing style, which makes for easy reading. In my own view his rather conversational style enhances, rather than diminishes, the appeal of his story and gives an immediacy to the subjects which Aubrey is recalling and describing, as if he is talking to the reader.

Aubrey died in April 1992 at the age of 98, six weeks after his beloved wife, May. They had been married for just under 75 years. Although distressingly frail physically he retained his mental faculties to the very end. A week before he died I took him out for a pub lunch and on the way back in the car he said to me cheerfully "Ah well, things can only get better!" which summed up the sturdy, no-nonsense and optimistic view of life which he had always held. All my life I never heard him – or my mother come to that – grumble or admit to an emotional weakness, such as feeling depressed. Any doubts or troubles they may have felt they kept to themselves and did not reveal them to their family nor to the outside world. That was their philosophy and, generally speaking, the philosophy of their generation.

This philosophy is evident in *A Son of the Rectory* even when Aubrey is writing about trench life in World War One. He cannot bring himself to admit to the horrors of his life in the trenches. "Anyone reading these notes must think that we had a really

uncomfortable and miserable time in France” he writes. “Far from it. It was a cheerful and happy time. There were good times and bad times, the latter being very much in the minority.” These words are not the product of a memory mellowing with the passage of time. They are typical of Aubrey’s robust attitude to life as a young man, an attitude which he retained for the whole of his life to the very end.

His refusal to express emotion about his own life and times did not prevent him from being a kind, generous and thoughtful husband, father, family man and friend, who inspired great love and affection.

A Son of The Rectory is an extraordinary feat of memory of the major events and, especially, of the minutiae of the first 25 years of Aubrey's life and an important source of reference for social historians. Sonia and Marilyn, with the help of others in Appleby Magna, have performed a notable public service in enhancing the original work and in making it available, once again, to the general public.

Peter Moore
July 2010

Contents

Acknowledgements	9
1982 Edition.....	9
This Edition.....	9
Illustrations	11
Chapter 1 The Moore Family and Estate	15
The Family	15
Appleby Grammar School	21
Appleby Hall	25
The Appleby Estate.....	29
The Acreage and Rental	30
The Rectory.....	30
Christmas	48
The Church.....	50
The Choir Supper	55
Chapter 2 Celebrations, Socialising and Entertainment	59
Children's Games and Hobbies	59
Good Manners.....	62
Dress Styles.....	63
Family Celebrations	64
Church Choir, Bell Ringing and Related Social Events	65
Sports and Hunting	67
Dinners and Balls	68
Sharing Stories and Gossip	69
Self Made Entertainment	70
Travelling Players and Local Theatre	71
National Events	72
Chapter 3 The Farming Year	74
Chapter 4 Changing Technologies, Changing Lives	86
Heating and Lighting a Home Before Electricity	86
Farming Before Engines	86

Firefighting	87
Weddings	88
Funerals.....	88
Railways.....	88
Bicycles.....	89
Motorcycles.....	89
Roads Before Tarmac	91
Early Motorcars	93
Aeroplanes	95
Chapter 5 A Walk Round the Village	97
Village Personalities	121
Ashby-de-la-Zouch and Measham.....	128
Chapter 6 Later Years	133
Eve of War	136
Mobilisation	138
War.....	140
Returning Home.....	150
Chapter 7 End of an Era.....	154
Introduction.....	154
The Decline of the Moores of Appleby Magna	155
Sources.....	175
Acknowledgements.....	175
Appendix: Moore Family Trees.....	176
i. The early Moores, from approximately 1654 to Aubrey Moore.	177
ii. Aubrey Moore's immediate family	178
iii. Links with the Byron family.....	179

Acknowledgements

1982 Edition

Warm acknowledgement is made to Harold Oakley of the Old Rectory for supplying photographs and for verifying many facts from records in his possession. And to Jack Wolff, of Bloxham, for his valuable services in proof reading.

This Edition

This edition has been a long time in production and we would like to acknowledge all those associated with Appleby Heritage and Environment Movement (Ahem) and the Sir John Moore Foundation who contributed to the early stage of the project.

Particular thanks to Richard Dunmore for providing many of the original photographs from the 1982 edition, and for his invaluable knowledge of the Moore family and the history of Appleby Magna. Thanks also to Duncan Saunders, Chris Bee and Fred Steward for their contributions and to all those (named in the illustrations list) who gave permission for their pictures or photographs to be used.

Our greatest thanks go to Peter Moore for his continuing enthusiasm for the project and for his unfailing patience over the time it has taken.

Sonia Liff and Marilyn Dunkelman
August 2010

Illustrations

*Illustrations marked with an asterisk appeared in the 1982 edition of A Son of the Rectory. In some cases the original photographs have been scanned from private collections, and the rest have been scanned from the book

*The Rectory, Appleby, 1883	17
<i>Image from 1982 edition</i>	
Augustus Byron	18
<i>Peter Moore's collection</i>	
*A Family Group, 1885	19
<i>Richard Dunmore's collection</i>	
*Appleby Grammar School	22
<i>Richard Dunmore's collection</i>	
*The Boys' School, Appleby	23
<i>Richard Dunmore's collection</i>	
*George John Moore.....	28
<i>Image from 1982 edition</i>	
*Appleby Hall.....	25
<i>Richard Dunmore's collection</i>	
*Rev. C.T. Moore, 1918	33
<i>Image from 1982 edition</i>	
*The Staff at the Rectory, 1910	34
<i>Image from 1982 edition</i>	
*The Almshouses.....	49
<i>Image from 1982 edition</i>	
*St. Michael's Church, Appleby.....	50
<i>Richard Dunmore's collection</i>	
*Interior of the Church.....	51
<i>Richard Dunmore's collection</i>	
Wearry Willie and Tired Tim on the front of Chips comic.....	60
<i>Reproduced with kind permission of David A Gerstein</i>	
Young lady playing the Diabolo game	61
<i>Image scanned by H Churchyard, Wikipedia Commons</i>	
Victor V disk phonograph.....	71
<i>Collection of John Lampert 2006. Norman Bruderhofer</i>	
<i>{Permission = Creative Commons Share Alike 2.5 }</i>	
*Haystacking in the Rectory rickyard.....	79
<i>Image from 1982 edition</i>	

1903 Quadrant bike	90
<i>Reproduced with the kind permission of Leon Mitchell</i>	
<i>http://users.senet.com.au/~mitchell</i>	
Acetylene gas lamps circa 1904.....	92
<i>Photograph provided by Peter W. Card</i>	
<i>http://www.websolutionswa.com/pwc/ecl.asp</i>	
1901 Enfield Quadricyle	93
<i>Photograph by Michel Gosset, reproduced with kind permission</i>	
<i>of the Surrey Vintage Vehicle Society, www.svvs.org</i>	
1899 Benz D388 Car.....	95
<i>Source: MilborneOne, Wikimedia Commons</i>	
<i>{Permission = Creative Commons Share Alike 3.0}</i>	
Graham White's plane, 1910	96
<i>Rosebud's WWI and Early Aviation Image archive (Rod Filan)</i>	
<i>www.earlyaeroplanes.com</i>	
*The Centre of Appleby from the air.....	98
<i>Image from 1982 edition</i>	
The Anker / Anchor Inn	101
<i>Richard Dunmore's photograph 1974</i>	
*The Cricket Team	102
<i>Richard Dunmore's collection</i>	
Hall Place, home of the Gartons, painted by Clara Vaughan Lee	104
<i>Peter Moore's collection, photograph by Jon Dunkelman</i>	
*Appleby Magna Post Office.....	106
<i>Richard Dunmore's collection</i>	
*William Greasley, wheelwright	107
<i>Richard Dunmore's collection</i>	
The Clockmaker's House.....	108
<i>Margaret Cater's collection, courtesy of Appleby village web site</i>	
*Church Street, Appleby (Tunnadine outside his shop)	111
<i>Richard Dunmore's collection</i>	
Church Street, Appleby (Queen Adelaide and chapel).....	112
<i>Margaret Cater's collection, courtesy of Appleby village web site</i>	
*Church Street cottages and church, Appleby	113
<i>Richard Dunmore's collection</i>	
The village school	115
<i>Appleby village web site</i>	
Map of locations	120
<i>Marilyn Dunkelman</i>	
*Appleby Fields Farm.....	122
<i>Image from 1982 edition</i>	

*“Eight and Eighty”	123
<i>Image from 1982 edition</i>	
*Mrs. Moore and Nell Guy	127
<i>Richard Dunmore’s collection</i>	
*The Girls’ School	128
<i>Image from 1982 edition</i>	
*Aubrey Moore in Yeomanry kit.....	138
<i>Image from 1982 edition</i>	
*Dr Alexander Davidson	147
<i>Image from 1982 edition</i>	
*The Wedding of Mr & Mrs Aubrey Moore	148
<i>Image from 1982 edition</i>	
Three Generations, 1923	151
<i>Peter Moore’s collection</i>	
*Back in Appleby, April 1982	152
<i>Image from 1982 edition</i>	
*The Old Rectory, present day (1982).....	153
<i>Image from 1982 edition</i>	
Lancelot Geoffrey Moore	166
<i>Peter Moore’s collection</i>	
George Moore and Isabel Moore, neè Holden (miniatures)	178
<i>Peter Moore’s collection</i>	

Chapter 1

The Moore Family and Estate

The text of this chapter is unchanged from Chapter 1 of the first edition of A Son of the Rectory although there are changes to the illustrations. This chapter introduces Aubrey Moore's immediate family and their long connection with Appleby. It also describes the main buildings associated with the family - the Hall (which no longer exists), the Rectory and the Church, and the School – and the routine events associated with them.

The Family

I was born at the Rectory in Appleby Magna on 30th August 1893. It must have been a marvellous day for all concerned. My weight at birth was unbelievable! I weighed fourteen pounds! This, I am sure was wishful thinking, but the story stuck. Somebody must have said 'this child must weigh a stone'. That would be enough. No doubt I was a big baby, when it is remembered I was number six. Other stories say I was born on the floor, or I was dropped in the commode. Whichever it was I apparently landed unharmed.

At the time of my birth Appleby was a typical hunting country village, a close-knit community. It had a squire, a rector, a doctor; a Church and three Chapels, four pubs and an off-licence. There were two blacksmiths, three snobs or shoemakers, one carpenter and undertaker, one wheelwright also undertaker. Three butchers, two bakers, an ironmonger, a saddler and a watch and clock repairer. There was a village 'Bobby', two 'Gamps' and a variety of individual skilled tradesmen. There was a post office giving two deliveries a day six days a week, one on Sunday. Education was looked after with a Grammar School and an attached school for the village boys, a girls' school with a school attached for infants of both sexes. All this for a population of 650.

The Moores have been in or about Appleby since the sixteenth century and possibly before that. The family originated, so far as we know, in Lancashire. Records show the family, then More, as being important people in and about Liverpool. Our little bit of history starts with the parents of Sir John Moore, Lord Mayor of London in

1682 and on close terms with Charles IIⁱ. We come down in line from Sir John's father, Charles, who married Cecily Yates of Appleby, then from Charles, elder brother of Sir John, who married Rebecca Mould of Appleby. The Moulds were big people in Appleby and the pedigree shows the Moores marrying into the Moulds and vice versa for many years. Through the years the Moores seemed to do well both in trade and professionally, some being barristers and accountants and some in the weaving industry in the Midlands and in London. The Leicester Moores were mainly weavers, but we do not know a lot about them and what we do is only hearsay. Father never mentioned his grandfather but talked a lot about his father, George. Born in 1811, he died early by today's standards. He had a moor in Scotland near Fort Augustus, caught pneumonia and died there in August 1871. He was a hard man, lived hard and expected everyone to be the same. He married twice. His first wife was Susan Inge from Thorpe. She was very frail, had a miserable life, left her husband and went back to Thorpe where she died having been a wife for three years.

My grandfather married again, a Miss Holden of Aston-on-Trent near Derby who I doubt had an easy time. It is reputed that once he pushed her into the fishpond as they were walking past it, having asked 'can you swim my duck?' The answer being 'no', he pushed her in. Father assured us it was true. Also, when he sent father to Eton (his brother George went to Harrow), he sent him back from holidays a day early so he would not be late. My father had a miserable twenty-four hours, having to join his Tutor for meals, taken in silence.

When my grandfather died he was succeeded by Uncle George. He married Louisa Kekewich, daughter of Samuel Trehawke Kekewich of Peamoor near Exeter, a terrible snob and very extravagant. They produced three sons and a daughter. They could not be born among the common herd of their own home but a house had to be taken in London, with doctors and nurses in attendance. Somewhere about 1880 George Moore got into low water financially. He took a smaller place, Witchingham Hall in Norfolk, and recouped somewhat, Appleby Hall and the shooting being let to a Mr. Sidney Jolliffe from Petersfield.

My father was the second son. After Eton and Trinity Hall, Cambridge, he went into the Church. He was ordained in Worcester Cathedral and went as Curate to Elmbridge, a village in the same county. Following that, he was Vicar of Breedon-on-the-Hill. He lived at the Hall, there being no vicarage, with one or two of his sisters. He was very friendly with the rector of Lockington, Nathaniel Storey. Both enjoyed their hunting together and a bit of cock fighting too.

ⁱ A family tree showing the relationship of Aubrey Moore to Sir John Moore can be found as Appendix i.



The Rectory, Appleby, c. 1883. *On the lawn (sitting) are the Rev. C.T.Moore, Sylvia and Tim (eldest son). Standing (l) governess and (r) Nell Guy. Mrs. Moore is seated on the front steps.*

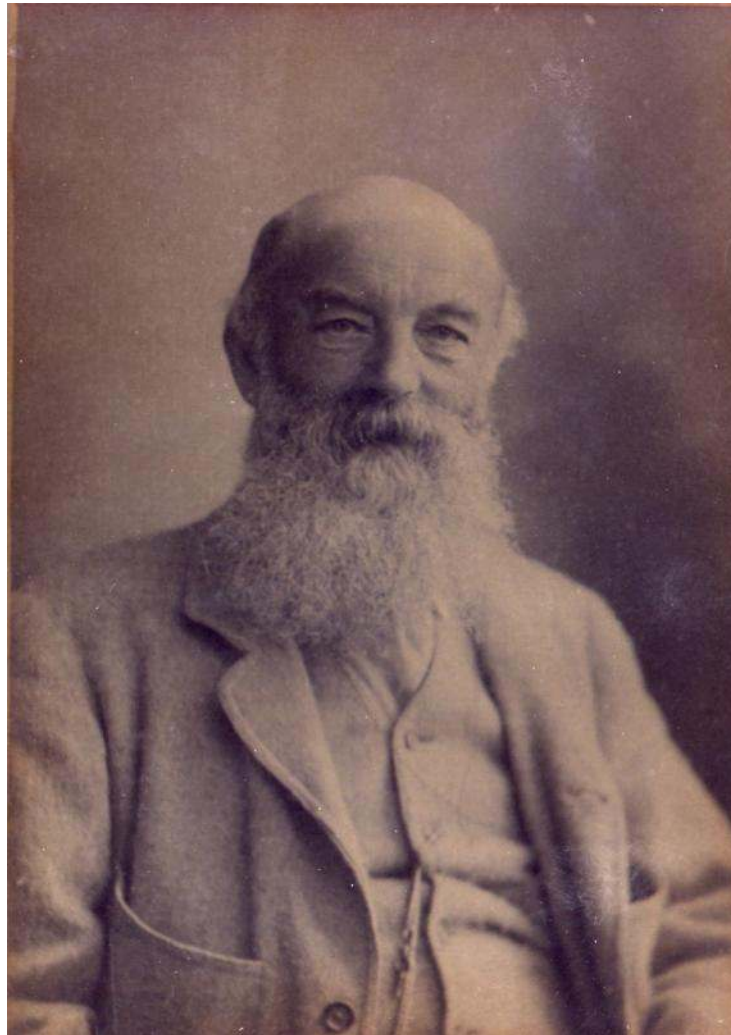
Father succeeded the Rev. J. M. Echalaz as rector of Appleby in 1877 and remained there for forty-five years. In January 1880, he married Mabel Charlotte Byron, daughter of the Hon. Augustus Byron, rector of Kirkby Mallory, and like his brother had three sons and one daughter. There were, in addition, a son and a daughter who died in infancy. Like his father he was a first class shot, in fact he liked all forms of sport.

I must say something of my familyⁱⁱ. Of the four children who reached maturity the eldest, my sister Sylvia Mary, married her second cousin, Wilfred Byron, twenty years her senior, on his return from serving in the South African War. He was mother's first cousin. The Byrons and the Moores were not noted for friendliness to each other so the proposed marriage was not well received, although father eventually agreedⁱⁱⁱ. Years later they emigrated to Australia where Wilfred's brother-in-law, Sir William Campion, was Governor of Western Australia. Their son, Rupert, succeeded

ⁱⁱ A family tree showing the immediate family can be found as Appendix ii.

ⁱⁱⁱ A family tree showing the links between the Byron and Moore families can be found as Appendix iii.

his kinsman to the title as the 11th Lord Byron in 1949. Sylvia returned to England on Wilfred's death.



Augustus Byron. *Aubrey Moore's maternal grandfather.*
See Appendix: Links with the Byron family

My eldest brother, Charles, always known as Tim, also wanted to be in the South African War and joined the Cape Mounted Police. On returning from South Africa he went rubber planting with the Bertam Rubber Company. He died at the comparatively early age of fifty-one. My other brother, George, after leaving Cranleigh, had ideas about going into the Church, which would have pleased father but he suddenly changed his mind and went to Moira Colliery, indentured to John Turner, a leading Leicestershire coalowner. Through neglected 'flu and general awkwardness about eating he developed T.B. and died in 1911 on his twenty-second birthday. I had already taken over the indenture, which John Turner had offered and I remained with the Company until the outbreak of the war in August 1914.

On my mother's side the Byrons were a large family, with their full quota of eccentrics, and their connections by marriage were legion. My maternal grandfather was a wonderful man. He studied law and medicine before eventually going into the Church. He was a splendid horseman and I was told it was a great sight to see him swing a team of four through Kirkby rectory gate.

One of mother's sisters, Aunt Minnie, a very tall stately woman, married Frank Newton of the Curzon family and lived at Bearwardcote, outside Derby, pronounced "Baracote". They had a family of three daughters, all rather undistinguished, to put it mildly. Their mother could never see it and paraded them about and even had one of them presented at Court – a frightful blunder. Something happened at the act of presentation that was hushed up. She fell over on rising or curtseying, and uncontrolled nature took over. Needless to say the other two were not presented.



A Family Group, c. 1885. *The Rev. C.T. Moore, Mrs. Moore, Sylvia and Tim taken in the Rectory Garden.*

A famous story is worth recording. The eldest daughter was in love with, or had a crush on the local curate. He eventually went on to a living and the girl was very upset. To pacify her he promised to send her his parish magazine every month, which he did. Some time after, at one of the many dinners at Bearwardcote, she was sitting

next to the new curate, and appeared very glum. He said to her 'Miss Newton, you look very sad, is anything the matter?' She answered 'Yes, there is something that should come every month and it hasn't – I'm worried'. The curate was somewhat taken aback. It was only the magazine which had not come.

A niece of mother's, Nora Byron, was a great character. She never married, had various jobs, many abroad. She was a great talker and linguist being fluent in German, French and Italian with a smattering of others. She became a Dame at Eton, an office she held for thirty-five years and became a rabid Etonian. I always said her conversation was seventy-five percent Eton, twenty-five percent Byron and five percent casual. Being a Dame at Eton she had the entrée into houses all over the world and she spent every school holiday visiting somewhere, having a port of call at all the places she stopped and being entertained royally.

The patronage of the living of Appleby was sold with the Appleby estate by my cousin Charlie after the death of Uncle George. Father was getting a bit tired by then and things would not be the same so he retired in 1922 and went to live at Hill House in Ashby.

So came the end of the Moores in Appleby after well over 300 years, the sole connection now being as governors^{iv} of the Grammar School. It is to be hoped that so long as there is a member of the family left that connection will be kept.

Father was no doubt a good rector. He ran the church efficiently but left no doubt as to who was boss. Mother was a tower of strength. She did a large amount of the parish work, chose the hymns etc., and conferred with the organist William Riley, the headmaster of the boys' school and a churchwarden, as to the Church music in general, as father was not musical. He never let sport, on which he was so keen, interfere with his duties. A funeral, wedding or other Church function was not popular if fixed for the day of the Grand National, Ascot week, the Varsity or Eton and Harrow cricket matches. He was a staunch Conservative and showed his dislike for the Liberals by not reading the prayer for Parliament when that party was in office.

In his early days as rector he had a good old row with the then bishop of Peterborough, Appleby being in the Peterborough diocese at this time, who told him

^{iv} The body referred to here as governors of the grammar school is now the Trustees of the Sir John Moore Foundation. Originally this group were responsible for the overall management of the school – for example appointing headmasters. This was no longer the case after the Grammar School closed in 1907. From 1982 an Education Act used the term Governors to refer to the legal body managing the public school and the original governors became known as the Trustees. (For more information on the history of the school see Dunmore R. (1992) *This Noble Foundation*, Sir John Moore Foundation.)

among other things he should not ride in point to point races. From then on he had a marked dislike for bishops.

Years later when Bishop Wood came to the Peterborough diocese he declared he would walk round his diocese, calling on parishes, which he did. The rector or vicar, with churchwardens were to meet him at the parish boundary and after a short stay, escort him to the next parish. The Rev. H.E. Worthington, rector of Seals, accompanied him to Appleby. When he got to the Red Lion Farm Harry Saddington met the party, followed by a correctly dressed parlourmaid carrying a large tray on which was a decanter of whiskey, a syphon of soda, a jug of water, several glasses and a box of cigars. The bishop was most impressed, and, as it was a hot day, was glad to see the tray. We also laid on a band to ring the bells. The bishop declared he had not received such a welcome anywhere. Father was really pleased with him and was almost converted to liking bishops. As time went on he began to think very highly of Bishop Wood. I always like to think I was instrumental in getting him to meet the bishop. When he got the notice of the impending visit he was very reluctant to comply but I persuaded him to do it and he really enjoyed it. Bishop Wood was eventually translated to Winchester.

Appleby Grammar School

The Grammar School and the Moore family have close links, for it was founded by Sir John Moore at the end of the seventeenth century. The story of its building to an original design attributed to Wren (a friend of Sir John), can be found in the letters we have which passed between Sir John and his two cousins, George and Thomas, brothers, who lived in Appleby, and who supervised the work. It is interesting to compare the difference in costs and procedures in those days with anything in the last sixty years. (A great deal has been written about the school before the turn of the century so it will not be repeated). The school undoubtedly flourished up to the turn of the century, but at that time it began to decline. It was always said that the lack of rail service was the cause, as both Ashby and Bosworth had a railway station and their old established grammar schools continued to attract pupils.

The boys of the English or National School later moved into the main building. William Riley was headmaster and very well he ran it. Discipline was strict both in and out of school. No boy met him in the street without raising his cap and he did not hesitate to lay about a boy with his cane. (No one was any the worse for it.) He continued as head until just before the second war when he retired. I had a year or two in the National School under William Riley who had all the boys in the village over infant age. They were a mixed bag and it did me a world of good to be there. It taught me about other boys and their upbringing and cured me of being the spoilt little

brat I was, which I appreciated when I grew up. Being brought up on the farm, their talk and language was not new and I learnt all the pranks boys got up to and often went down the village at night and went around with them; at home they thought I had gone to see John Wilkins, the old farm worker who lived in a cottage on the rectory land. We got up to all sorts of mischief but never crime or vandalism. As I got older and more independent I lost none of the respect my family in general received. I was always 'Mr. Aubrey' to all but my few intimate friends. It was all part of my education.

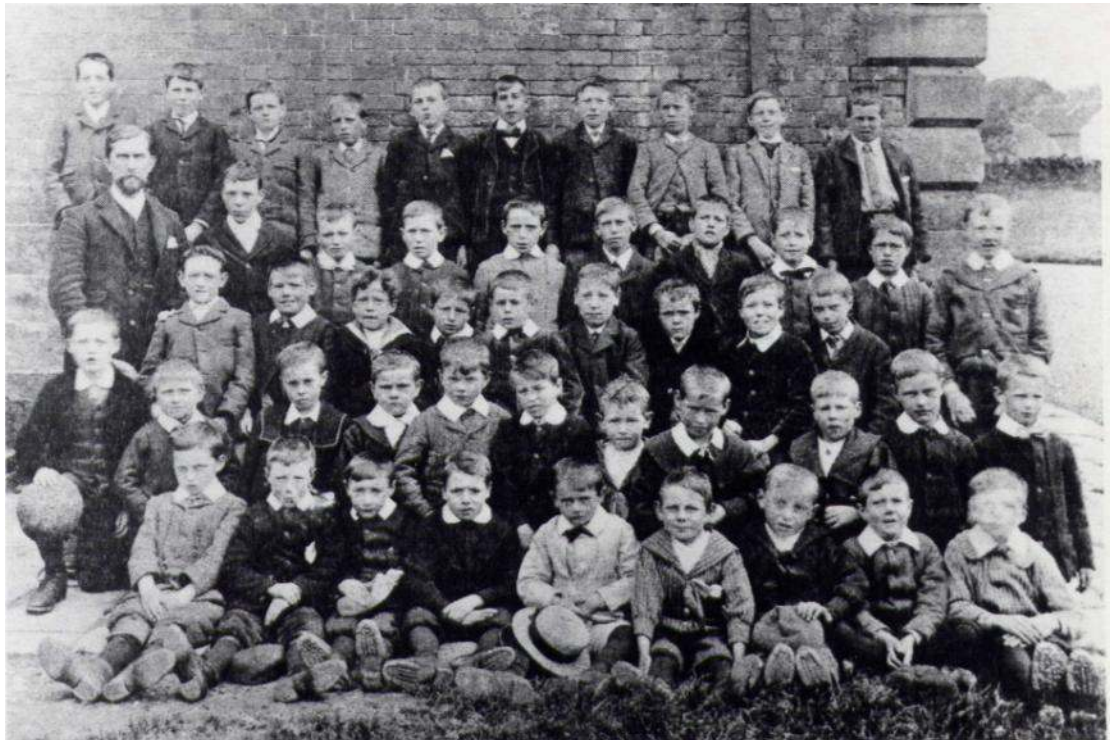


Appleby Grammar School. *Founded 1697. Now the Sir John Moore School.*

The school main hall was the venue of all big functions and dances. It was the only large room in the village. I went to two coronation dinners there, as a boy, for Edward VII and, as a young man, George V; I tried to dodge the latter, preferring to mess about with the motor bike I had just acquired. However, father sent someone to the rectory telling me to come to the school at once. All large church events were held there such as sales of work, whist drives etc. At the former it was usual for Nairn Riley, William Riley's son and I to run a penny stall of things made by the children. Three or four good dances were held each winter. The band was Mr. Fearn of Ashby on the violin and his wife on the piano for a high-class dance (tickets half a crown or three shillings including refreshments) or Frank Booton on the concertina and Jimmy Miller on the big fiddle, really an old cello, (tickets one shilling). The two made passable dance music. As the evening wore on, with the secret introduction of suitable liquid sustenance, it was nothing unusual for these two to play through a set

of Lancers or Quadrilles apparently fast asleep. All were agreed their time was excellent for that type of dancing which was Polka, Barn dance, Waltz, Veleta, Two-step and the Square dances. These dances were the highlight of the winter for the young and not so young. The layout met all requirements. Refreshments in the old dining hall, Riley's school room where the gents could hang their coats and change their shoes. Ladies had one of the many upstairs rooms. Lavatory accommodation was non-existent, many rows of jerries for the ladies, gentlemen doing the best they could, hoping for a fine night.

There was, of course, no light other than oil lamps and candles. There were lots of stairs and spare rooms etc. The privileged went on the roof if it was fine. It was all good clean fun and a good time was had by all, except those who had to clear up in the morning. The ample room made our dances popular and many people cycled or drove over from the neighbouring villages.



The Boys' School, Appleby. A group taken c. 1900. Aubrey Moore is standing at the extreme right, back row. William Riley, Headmaster, is standing on the left.

There were occasions when Church services were held in the school. One when we were driven out by smoke from the hot air heating and another when the church was being painted throughout which took a long time. Again the layout catered very well. The laboratory was the choir vestry and there was even a bell to ring. There was usually a good congregation in church, but a novelty like having the service at the grammar school filled the hall to capacity.

The old clock and its striking bell is one of the school's greatest treasures. It must be as old as the school, the bell even older, dating from the sixteenth century. When the grammar school functioned as such, the clock was well maintained and wound daily by the school gardener. The strike could be heard all over the village and was never far off the church clock, a great achievement when one compares the works of each clock; those of the school clock being rough looking and few of them. The bell was rung for school times, from class changes to getting up time.

A feature of the big room is the carving on the oak panelling all round the room except for the gallery, but this did not escape the knife. It was said that the panels were once the tops of the desks and that much of the carving was done in this position. Whether this is true I do not know, but a good deal was done in the panel position which is obvious from the names and dates. The same thing was found on the roof, names being carved in the lead. Boarders were allowed to sit up there in summer to do their prep and boredom would lead to carving. Again some modern carvers had been at work including myself. The time came to remove the lead owing to frequent trouble and expense to repair leaks. It is a pity some photographs were not taken of the carving for the record. The roof was re-covered with aluminium, effective but without character. The sale of lead nearly paid for it.

The new Education Act altered things. The old school closed, pupils over eleven were taken to Ibstock Secondary and those under eleven gathered in the old church school.

In 1938 my brother, Tim, died. This left a vacancy on the Board of Governors which I filled. There should be at least two Moores on the Board. In due course I became chairman, and soon afterwards we finished the old minute book, all of which was hand written. It is customary for all governors present to sign the minutes of the previous meeting, a practice still carried on. Almost all the minutes carried the signatures of two Moores. I doubt if a Moore signature is missing from any meeting in this book, which started in 1710, except for the 1939/45 period. This book is in the safe keeping of our clerk, Arthur Crane, but some day it should go to the Leicester Museum unless a museum is opened at the school. There are not many Moores left to carry on the tradition but I hope that, as long as there are any, some one of them will be a governor. Odd though it may seem, to be offered a seat in the board of governors of Appleby Grammar School was, at one time, considered one of the highest honours among the gentry within reasonable distance (by horse) of Appleby. It was the custom, until the First World War, for the governors to have lunch at the Moore Arms after a meeting. William Bowley and his family provided the meal, the squire providing a butler and the port. Regretfully this old custom has not survived. No squire – no William Bowley – no butler – no port!

Appleby Hall

As halls go, Appleby Hall was not large. Its origin goes back a long way and probably it would have undergone some modifications at times. One such was done by the Rev. John Moore when the Hall underwent a major reconstruction in 1796 at a cost of £1,861. The original contract is in our possession between John Moore and the architect and builder, Thomas Gardner of Uttoxeter. As far as I understand the Hall remained virtually the same until it was demolished some years ago. The Rev. John Moore was not rector of Appleby. I suppose he was the squire and a very rich man. Although other Moores took Holy Orders, my father was the only Moore ever to be rector of Appleby. In my boyhood, my Uncle George Moore was squire at the Hall.



Appleby Hall. A photograph taken c. 1912. The Hall was demolished in 1927.

I never knew how many staff were employed, probably only the estate office knew the exact number. There was a butler and at least two footmen and an under-footman. Junior and senior female staff were numerous as, apart from the everyday running of the establishment, Aunt Louisa had her own two maids and latterly cousin Elsie had her own plus her own stable lad known as 'Pony Boy', and what his duties were was nobody's business.

In addition to the house staff there was a large outdoor staff. Seeing how low wages were, one or two extra were not noticed, but looking back the place was overcrowded. Do not let it be forgotten that there was a large income from the estate and income tax was under a shilling and there was no such thing as sur-tax, and putting insurance stamps on cards only came in about 1912 and then only very little.

There was an imposing entrance hall with an inner hall off which led the principal rooms and a large sweeping double staircase. The dining room and drawing room were both large and dignified. There was also a large library and the squire had a small study near the entrance. His wife had a boudoir at the top of the stairs. Apart from the main bedrooms which were off the main landing, the guest rooms were along two passages and very ordinary.

The Hall was lighted by coal gas. There was a small private plant just over the road from the grammar school opposite the jitty door. It was put as far away from the Hall as possible to avoid the smell. It did not seem to matter that others, notably the school, would have to put up with the smell and it was a bit strong at times. The plant was looked after by Tom Greasley, who also fetched the coal for it from Donisthorpe. The resultant coke was used in the Hall boilers. The gas was pretty awful by modern standards. Decoration of rooms deteriorated quickly and all ceilings soon became a horrible yellowy brown. Wallpaper suffered the same way. Somebody once told me that the gas works was put in that place with the idea of putting gas into the school. That never materialised.

The back premises were plentiful and large but dreadfully old fashioned. When I was sent down with a note I always went to the back door unless instructed otherwise. I liked Uncle George, but I could not stick Aunt Louisa. For that reason I went to the back thus avoiding even a chance meeting. Also I hated being ushered in by a footman.

The stables and coach houses were in a large square stable yard. At one end was a riding school with open side, a good length and a floor of peat moss. Here the horses could be exercised in hard weather. There was also a home smithy where the Marshall brothers attended. Somewhere around the back was an ice room for use in summer. There was, in the wood near the gardens, an icehouse, well covered by trees. It was the practice to skim the ice off certain pits after a frost and take it by cart to the icehouse. The bulk of it was below ground. The ice was tipped in and men got in and rammed it as solid as possible. In a severe winter there was plenty of ice to fill it and it lasted all summer. There was a large square purpose-built pond in the park which was only skimmed in an early frost because it was the best bit of skating in the village. That and the Park pit by the rectory laundry were the only pieces of water on

which to skate unless we went to the canal or 'cut' as it was called. Usually that was spoilt by the passage of the iceboat, which was sent along to keep the water open for boats.

The shooting was fairly good. Partridges were plentiful away from the middle, on the two rectory farms, Barns Heath and the White House (now demolished). Pheasant shooting in the home covers was good. There were two keepers so there was little poaching although there were some well-known masters of this art in the locality. Foxes were kept down to a reasonable number but Blobbs, the nearest covert, had to be a sure find for local meets of the Atherstone Hunt or questions would be asked. White House covers had a good lot of pheasants and a quantity of wild duck were at the decoy on the river Mease. The decoy was in operation but I could never see the object in it except to get good flights of duck and for breeding. There was usually a fox lying there. Perhaps it was easy living.

Apart from a ball or party I do not remember ever having a meal in the Hall until my cousin Charlie was there. Father and mother may have had a cup of tea on rare occasions but I never knew them have lunch or dinner. Apart from a ball I never had a drink in the Hall except when Charlie gave a farewell dinner^v to father, mother, May and me. When the butler re-filled my glass with champagne Charlie assured me I would be drunk. Brandy and whisky were brought into the library after dinner but not offered.

Occasionally a Ball was held at the Hall but the only one I was old enough to go to was about 1910 or 1911, the last attempt before the war to marry off my cousin Elsie. Great preparations were made. The stabling was a problem as few cars were used even then. Most of the guests came in carriages, mainly broughams etc. There would be over fifty carriages, several with pairs. Then there were the coachmen and footmen to be fed and looked after. The catering would for sure be done by Harrods or the Army and Navy Stores. Louisa Moore could do nothing without one or other of these stores. The band was the White or Blue Viennese, I forget which. These bands had a monopoly for private house balls as had Archibald Joyce for the more public balls. The village folk came down the drive to have a look through the large dining room windows. There was quite a sea of faces.

^v Chapter 7, *End of an Era*, written by Peter Moore, explains more fully the circumstances under which the family left Appleby Hall and the village. The hall was demolished in the 1920s.



George John Moore. *Born 1842. Squire of Appleby 1871-1916.*

A one-way traffic system was operated. We went in through the Twycross Road gate, using the old drive. As this was overgrown a number of hurricane lamps were placed to outline the drive. George Jordan, an estate worker, stood on the road to direct the traffic, shouting to each coachman 'Kape betwain the loights'. I suppose some youths in the village heard him as it was called after him for a long time afterwards.

Some coachmen took a little too much refreshment but that did not matter much, for, as most country people know, a horse will always find its way home without guidance. However, one got so drunk that he could not get out of the village because he would not let the horses have their head. After going around for some time, one of the ladies got out to lead the horses to the top road, then got on the box and drove the pair home.

Balls and dances never finished until about four or five o'clock in the morning. It was then about time to get ready for work. What we did then was to have a glass or two of draught beer. It seemed to have a wakening and refreshing influence.

The Appleby Estate

When my uncle, George Moore, moved to Witchingham Hall, Norfolk, to recuperate his finances in the 1880s he had a try to sell Appleby, and to this end the estate was offered for sale by private treaty.

It was put in the hands of Messrs. German, German and Cooper, estate agents of Ashby-de-la-Zouch and Messrs. Osborn and Mercer of Albemarle Street, Piccadilly, London. It is worth recording the headings from the very full and descriptive catalogue – a real work of art –, which is in my possession:

The very valuable Agricultural, Residential, Sporting and Freehold Domain,
known as Appleby Hall, embracing an area of 4,523 a. 1r. 38p.

20 well cultivated farms

Keepers' and under-keepers' lodges

Two picturesque villa residences and grounds

Several shops in the villages of Appleby, Snarestone and Norton

Three capital Inns

115 cottages and gardens

Well-timbered and extensive woodland and coverts

Good partridge and wild fowl shooting.

Most excellent hunting with the Atherstone, Meynell, Quorn and other packs.

Trout fishing in the River Mease and other brooks. The Manors or reputed

Manors, or share of them, at Appleby, Snarestone and Norton, also:

The very valuable Advowson being in the gift (or perpetual presentation) to the Rectorial living of Appleby.

The Acreage and Rental

	Acres	Rental (£,s,d)
Appleby Estate	2218.0.01	4428.18.0
Norton	669.2.39	966.13.8
Austrey	237.2.19	388. 0.4
Snarestone	788.1.27	1613.19.6
Measham	39.0.38	132. 0.0
Oakthorpe	26.2.07	46.13.6
Orton-on-the-Hill	466.0.25	704. 2.8
Carlton	77.3.02	120. 0.0
	4523.1.38	£8400. 7.8

The full catalogue runs to no less than eighty-four pages and it forms a comprehensive ‘Domesday Book’ of the land and property comprising the village of Appleby Magna and the surrounding district, since every lot, from the Hall down to the smallest individual cottage and garden, is fully and meticulously described. It ends up, in amplification of the social amenities of the estate, by listing the forty-seven most important country seats in the neighbouring area, with the names of their owners. Of this list no more than twelve are still in existence as private properties and only six of these are still in the possession of the same families as then.

As a footnote the estate was not sold. I never heard whether or not a bid was ever made. In fact I never knew about this until the catalogue came into my possession on the death of Charlie Moore. Whether the rents were raised later I do not know but I always understood that at the turn of the century the income was about £12,000.

The Rectory

The Rectory was built by the Rev. Thomas Jones, rector of Appleby Magna from 1793 to 1830. The previous rectory being somewhere near the almshouses. It stands in large grounds and has over fifty acres of glebe land attached to it which was farmed by successive rectors. Up to the time father retired it had always been farmed in more or less the same way, milk for the house, home made butter, corn and hay for the horses and stock, some roots including potatoes. The land carried sheep and young stock including young horses from our own mares.

A sweeping drive between lawns led to the front door, imposing with its twin columns supporting a large portico with leaded roof. Inside the front hall had doors leading right, into the drawing room, left into the dining room, both large rooms. The inner hall had a sweeping stairway branching at the top of the first flight, right to the main bedrooms and left, to a long passage off which were the children's and servants' quarters. The front stairs had a long banister rail which gave great fun to the children. I spent hours sliding down from the top, swishing round the rather sharp bend and accelerating to the bottom. I do not suppose I ever walked down those stairs, I always rode the banisters.

Past the stairs the inner hall led to the study and to the pantry and passage to the back stairs, kitchen, servants' hall, larder, dairy etc. Outside was the courtyard or back yard as we called it, with its large coalhouse, stick place and an outside earth closet. A wide passageway led to the stable yard and onto the muck yard with its cowsheds and carthorse stables and beyond these to the rick yard with some pigsties, hen houses and cart sheds.

In the passage at the top of the back stairs there was a small landing on which we had a large rocking horse. It had been in the family for years and I do not think that it was new when it came to the rectory. It was a source of great pleasure to all children. The horse had one very evil looking eye and one blank, more evil looking than the good one. It was minus a tail, pulled out many years past. This had left a convenient hole into which someone had at some time inserted a marble, all rides were accompanied by the noise of this marble to-ing and fro-ing in the belly. It was eventually given to the Rileys and later Nairn took it for his children. I last saw it years later in one of the top rooms in the school, the old marble still there.

By modern standards the house was badly lit. We moved about in semi-darkness but as we knew no other we were not missing anything, and for us the lighting was ample. The front hall had a table lamp near the bottom of the stairs in the inner hall. There was a hanging, counterpoise lamp in the outer hall, but seldom used. The long passage had one wall lamp, as did the upstairs passage, placed outside the nursery door. The kitchen had a hanging lamp as also the servants' hall. The nursery and schoolroom had hanging lamps. There was no lighting on the landing, it was 'borrowed' from below. All bedrooms were lit by candle, two on the dressing table; the last job of the housemaid was to light these in the principal bedrooms. On going to bed one took one of the many silver candlesticks from the hall table, lighted it and took it to the room. This was the bedside light. A box of matches was kept by it. It was the duty of the housemaid to trim the lamps every day. This was done in the pantry. A large drum of paraffin, about fifty gallons, was kept in the 'oil place' in the

stable yard and one gallon cans filled from it. Trimming meant filling, trimming the wick, cleaning the chimney and if brass, keeping the whole polished.

The rectory land was bounded by roads on three sides, the main traffic was coal, milk from farm to station and beer from Burton, plus of course, horse drawn carriages of various sorts. There was a procession of milk floats along the top road morning and night going to and from Measham station. There was also a continuous flow of carts going to and from Donisthorpe pit and a large number of floats and two-horse wagons with beer from Burton to all the pubs in the district. We had regular deliveries from the brewery which seemed to go quickly. A good quantity was consumed by callers and tradesmen. It was usual to offer beer to all and sundry. The outside staff had beer on the slightest excuse and each delivery was greeted with some delight. It was a standing joke that if one of our men saw a beer float in the village the driver was asked 'are you going to the rectory?'

One of the daily chores was fetching the papers from Measham, two miles away. The shop, also the Post Office, was halfway up the street, kept by Mr. Johnson. The usual transport was the small pony cart pulled by a Shetland pony, Mabs, with one passenger or as many as could be crowded into it. We also collected those for Mr. Cooper of the Beeches and Dr. Davidson. Billy Cooper's groom collected his from us and Doctor Davidson took his when he came for tea. We had the *Daily Telegraph* and *Sporting Life*, and the local gossip papers produced in Burton, Coalville and Leicester. A chore in summer was to collect at Measham station about a hundredweight of ice which came from Burton twice a week. It was put into a large ice chest in the dairy. The load was about as much as the pony could manage up Birds Hill so we had to walk up the hill and push when the road was wet and heavy. We also took the horses for exercise to Measham for papers. The meeting of a motorcar or steam wagon created an exercise in horsemanship, as the mare, Stella, was a terror and went nearly mad.

A large amount of coal was burned in the rectory fires of which there were a great many. The kitchen range alone must have used between one or two hundred-weight a day according to the cooking. All the open fires were very uneconomical and badly designed. In spite of stocking up, carts made frequent journeys to Donisthorpe pit. In summer the coalhouse was filled and by stacking outside a hundred tons could be stored. By taking a hundred tons by rail to Snarestone station it cost a special price of 7s. 6d., a bit cheaper than taking delivery at the pithead. We also burned a lot of wood. There were always a great many fallen trees and branches. These were stored in the croft behind the stable. We had a saw table and engine once a year to cut up into logs or fencing material if good enough. The logs were stored in the stick place at the end of the coalhouse.



Rev. C.T. Moore. Photographed on his seventieth birthday, 3rd February 1918.

The rectory was large and required a large staff inside and as we farmed the glebe there was also an outside staff. Of the rectory indoor staff I can just remember the butler, William Savage. For some reason I was reprimanded for calling him Bill. I was very upset at this, went to Bill and said 'I'm not to call you Bill any more but I can still call you Mungo'. That was the name I had called him since I was able to make a noise like talking. We were never allowed to call the men by their Christian names, always by their surname, except the garden boy. Savage went soon after this to be a caretaker of Kirkstead House, an estate in Lincolnshire, which my father owned. We never had another butler. The first parlourmaid I remember was Emma Mee. She was followed by Lucy Smith, a local girl, and then by a series of others, Annie Hardon from Burton, Annie Sizer from Gainsborough, both called Emma so as not to be confused with Annie Reeves, and finally Lilly Butcher, from Woodhall, the best and most proficient of all. Annie Reeves was cook, a very good one. There were various junior maids coming and going. Upstairs, Nell Guy reigned, assisted by nursery maids who came and went which was not to be wondered at. I can hardly remember any except Hetty from Norton who suffered severely from our antics.



The Staff at the Rectory in 1910. *Standing (l to r) Tom Gregory (groom), Hook (gardener), Bill Winter (stockman). Sitting (l to r) Annie Reeves (cook), Annie Sizer (housemaid), Nell Guy (governess). In front Fanny Foster (housemaid).*

The first groom I remember was Charles Aucott who came from and returned to Repton. He was followed by Harry Farmer who came to us from Cliff House, Twycross, where the Oakleys lived. Farmer left us to go to the Hall as second horseman to Smith, the stud groom. Their man, Thomas Gregory, came to us after a short break and stayed with us until the end of the war. He married a girl from Ashby and in due course they produced a son. He was christened Vernon and at the gathering afterwards mother remarked how good the baby had been. The reply was 'just eight spots of whisky mum'. Not many people go drunk to their own christening!

Gregory was a good groom and a good horseman. He turned his horses out beautifully, whether for riding or carriage. They had to be good to satisfy father. After hunting – and we were sometimes quite late – the horses had to be groomed, fed and bedded down, the tackle cleaned and put away, not a thing left to the next day. If I was not hunting I did my bit and the garden boy was also roped in to help. It could be nine o'clock before all was finished. When we got back we always had a hot bath but we had to go out to see the horses, give them a good look over, have a word with Gregory and say goodnight before sitting down to dinner. When all was finished Gregory came in, had a whisky and reported to father. They discussed the day . . . no overtime!

I have made it clear that Appleby was hunting country. Mabs, a Shetland pony was my first 'hunter' as she had been for George. As was the custom we children were put on a pony as soon as we could sit upright, or almost. I was led by someone, probably the groom, or Sylvia or Tim. I well remember being taken to meets at the Red Lion Farm and to the first draw, either Blobbs or Measham Gorse. We would hear them find and see them go away and so back home. I also remember being led to the meet at Acresford.

The master of the Atherstone at that time was Gerald Hardy who was a great friend of father. He later became Sir Gerald, Bart. and left us to succeed his late father as master of the Meynell. I believe he, in turn, was succeeded by his son Bertram. We then had Mr. J. C. Munroe, an excellent master who always had time to have a word with a youngster. The huntsman with Hardy was a great character whose name was Orvis or something very near it but was known as Whiteheaded Bob. I believe he went with Hardy to the Meynell. He was followed by George Whitemore a large man for a huntsman, a first class man with hounds but not so good hunting them. Munroe was followed by Lord Huntingdon but by then my hunting days were getting very few because of work. The Atherstone were always turned out immaculately, second horseman even wore livery. We sometimes followed in a carriage. No cars were ever seen. I think it was Munroe who requested that those with cars would not come closer

than half a mile from the meet. My introduction to hunting gave me a passion for it. With father it was almost a religion and the MFH (Master of Foxhounds) next to God. That is, until he took up Freemasonry. Then it was the turn of the Worshipful Master!

I spent a lot of time in the stable yard, riding round on my bicycle and generally getting in the way. I was also mad on climbing, especially on walls and roofs. On one occasion when I was in what appeared a particularly dangerous place, a worried Gregory shouted 'Aubrey, you little bugger, come down before you hurt your bloody self'. At this point mother appeared, was also alarmed, and asked Gregory to get me to come down, to which he replied, 'Yes, Mum, I was just saying to Mr. Aubrey, I beg your pardon Mr. Aubrey, but if you don't come down you might hurt yourself.' Just an example of the relationship between us all. We all knew how to give and receive and many similar tales come to mind. How angry Gregory was for instance if I brought back a horse from hunting the least bit overriden.

Gregory was with us for many years. He ran with me riding a pony on a leading rein, and was with us to go with me to camp as a civilian servant the weekend before the first war. He left us at the end of the war to work at Barratt's Mill, Moira, for the Moira Colliery Co., looking after horses. We no longer farmed, we had a 'T' model Ford and the pony was pensioned off and turned out.

Charlie Bowley was gardener but, with a boy to help him, he also did other chores including cleaning boots, knives (they were all steel blades), filling the copper with soft water for the baths and lighting the fire early. Filling the many coal boxes, heating the oven on baking days and generally keeping the place clean.

One of the twice-daily jobs was to pump water from the hard water pump to the supply tank for the kitchen hot water system and to the tank high in the roof above the pantry which fed the flush of the upstairs and only loo.

This pump, close to the scullery window, was a force pump. A screw cap was fitted on the spout, the rod worked in a gland and so held the pressure to force the water. It was easy pumping to the kitchen, but upstairs which Bowley called 'Klondyke', was hard going. This tank also filled by rainwater. Many a night Bowley would look at the sky and declare it was going to rain so did not pump upstairs.

The men were paid on Saturday night after work. They gathered in the scullery and went in turn to the kitchen to be given their sovereign and discuss things. Harvest gave them a bit extra. For a year or two each was given a cask of beer for harvest. Winter and Bowley took theirs home but Gregory kept his in the apple house and it did not last long.

As would be expected, the rectory had a large garden and orchard. With the lawns there was a full-time job for a man and boy, as well as the chores. The walls on two sides were covered with fruit trees. Gooseberries, black and redcurrants lined each path. There were two cherry trees near the muck yard door from which we never had a cherry. Near by were the rhubarb bed, a mint bed and two asparagus beds, very old. There had been a greenhouse of sorts, long since gone. In the little coach house were two large crates of glass for a greenhouse which, I believe, were there when father took over. When Fred Booton came to work for us he and I decided we would build a greenhouse. We had all the glass, a big store of timber; tongue and groove and some three inch by two inch, and in a few days we had our greenhouse.

Like most small boys I had my tiny piece of garden on which I worked hard. I do not know if I ever grew anything except a bit of mustard and cress, but my small wheelbarrow carried many loads of manure from the muck yard. It was considered very rich soil. The orchard had many old trees which bore huge crops of useless apples. There was a large Blenheim orange which bore a large crop each year, the apples being really beautiful by Christmas. There was a curious shaped Siberian Crab, a tiny apple but very sweet and a lovely colour. Along the side next to the garden was a row of filberts which carried a fair crop of eatable nuts. In the top corner was the dump for the leaves gathered each autumn. I think this place had been the leaf dump since the rectory was built. There was a never-ending supply of leaf mould. Nearby was a small spinney where sometimes a fox would lie up.

The whole area naturally abounded with birds and many a pleasant hour was spent birds nesting. All the country boys were naturalists in their way and were fully conversant with country lore which is impossible to put into words. We knew every bird and animal and their habits. The red squirrel was plentiful and the grey unknown. There was a regular run of them between the orchard and the long spinney. Rabbits were also in fair numbers. There was a burrow a few yards from the septic tank where I spent many hours ferreting. Owls of all sorts were around. Foxes could be heard most nights in winter. There were animals about the yards as well, among them innumerable cats in two colonies, one based on the brewhouse which were amenable and could be handled. The other was based on the big barn and quite wild. The two colonies did not mix but both produced kittens at a steady rate. I think there was some sort of control on the number of survivors. There were also a number of rats so there was no starvation in the cat world. I always had a kitten which I claimed as my own until it became an uninteresting cat then I claimed another. One such kitten had an unfortunate experience. It was a marmalade kitten, and I was very attached to it, and would not harm it in any way. One day I purloined the knife which the scullery maid used to peel potatoes. I picked up my kitten and set off towards the

muck yard; somehow the knife came into contact with the kitten's tail and with the action of walking set up a sawing motion to the detriment of the kitten. It must have been Charles Aucott, the groom, who saw this yelling kitten and my smock covered in blood. A quick cut with his pocket-knife severed the remaining link between tail and kitten which then bolted as hard as it could. I had no idea I had been harming the poor animal but I did become the proud possessor of a bob-tailed cat. I must have been very small to be wearing a smock, but I very clearly remember the incident.

About the same time I had a dog, at least, I looked upon him as mine. He was a sort of Irish terrier by the name of 'Winks'. He lived in the kitchen and slept in the servants' hall. Why this was allowed I do not know, but there he stayed until his death when I was about eleven. I think he came from away and not as a puppy. He was a lovely little dog but a great one for the ladies. There was not a bitch in the village he had not tried to woo and he must have been the first dog to know when there was a bitch on heat.

We had several dogs, retrievers, sheepdogs, terriers, etc. When they died they were buried in the dog cemetery at the top of the orchard. There were several grave mounds there and father knew the grave of each of his dogs buried there. As the Echalaz family also buried their dogs in the same place there must be a goodly amount of bones in that part.

When the house was built ventilating holes were left in the outside walls of the kitchen between the ceiling and the floor above thus allowing air to circulate above the kitchen ceiling, probably with the object of dispelling the heat from the ceiling. One set of holes was above the kitchen window and the other above the scullery or back door. At some time in history bees took up their abode in this comfortable spot. The positioning of these bees gave some concern and discomfort to many. Old John Wilkins assured us they were there when he first went to the rectory as a farm boy about 1840. The bedroom had the constant buzz to contend with and at times the rather sickly smell of honey. Two maids slept in the room and the night nursery next door was not immune. Father decided to do something about it and brought in William Bowley from the Moore Arms, an expert, to deal with the bees. I was very small but remember the operation very well. He first drilled inch diameter holes in parts of the floor into which he put the nozzle of a sort of bellows which blew into the space the fumes of burning sulphur which eventually killed the bees. Floorboards were taken up and I will never forget the sight of so many honeycombs of various shapes and sizes. This was all collected and for several days it was strained in front of the kitchen fire. A quantity of comb was put in a piece of old sheet, the bundle hung in front of the fire and the warm honey dropped into a pancheon beneath. It took several hours. The honey was beautifully clear and a good deal of beeswax was also

collected. The idea of the operation was also to get rid of the bees, but they were soon back and were still there when we left. According to old custom or folklore, the bees had to be told of a birth or death in the family; I well remember mother telling our bees that George had died.

For a while I became a pigeon fancier in a mild way. Father was keen on keeping pigeons and at one time was crazy about getting some 'tumblers'. He found an address in Birmingham where they could be bought, and he and I set off to get some, going on the train from Tamworth. We eventually found the place in a terrible slum in a long row of brick terraced houses. The owner kept his pigeons in a bedroom. We brought back half a dozen and put them in the loft over the bullpen. They were kept shut up for several weeks and then, with great ceremony, let out. They flew quite happily but they turned out to be 'tipplers' not 'tumblers'. Father was most disappointed. Tipplers fly around and keep doing back somersaults, quite interesting to watch but not as spectacular as tumblers, which fall several feet almost like a shot bird and had been known to fall too far and kill themselves.

I also kept homing pigeons. They had a very superior cote just inside Little Jobs field by the small walnut tree. I got hold of this from No Man's Heath. We borrowed Jimmy Miller's dray and Bill Winter, Charlie Bowley and I set off to collect it. It stood on a wooden framework about a foot off the ground. The cote had nesting boxes and the holes led onto a large cage. I soon gathered a few pairs, mainly from John Rowland and it was not long before I had a colony. I occasionally sent some to Ashby market and got a few shillings for them. I would take a pair up to seven or eight miles away and let them fly home just for the fun of seeing if they were home when I got back. Some other lad, often Nairn Riley, would cycle out with me. Often we would go to Polesworth and after letting the pigeons go would train watch as we collected engine names from the expresses on the London and North Western line, from London Euston, to Crewe and beyond.

We baked our own bread and made butter. Bread was baked on Tuesday and Friday. We had a big wooden dough tub into which went the flour to warm in front of the kitchen fire. A hollow was made into which went the prepared yeast. After more warming the tub was put on the kitchen table, for a deal of mixing and pummelling of the dough. When made, the dough was again put in front of the fire to rise. It was then made into cottage and tin loaves. They all went on to a long tin tray ready for the oven. In the meantime the oven in the brew'us was being heated with cordwood or faggots made from the hedge cuttings. It was 'drawn' about midday, Annie, the cook, would test for heat and the loaves put into bake. After lunch the bread was done and taken to the larder. A lot of people ate a lot of new bread for tea; Annie knew the exact amount to bake.

Friends calling for tea were a feature of these days. We had a bit of a reputation for home made bread and it was amazing the number who always called on a Tuesday or Friday. Mother would sometimes say at lunch 'I am sure the so and so's will call this afternoon' and sure enough they would. For tea there was always an uncut cottage loaf and a large lump of butter in the table, from which people helped themselves. Cut bread and butter was never seen on the tea-table.

Butter was made on Monday and Thursday. The milk panchions were skimmed and the cream put in a pippin every day. Our churn was the barrel type with internal baffle plates. The 'up and over' types were quicker. The garden boy turned, a steady turn for a long time. I was not allowed to churn as I whizzed it round or went too slow. The butter having 'come' Annie would go to work on it, mixing in salt. Then the 'hands' made it up into half-pound slabs. It was lovely butter.

In addition we had poultry which was exclusively mother's right. She looked after it all herself which took about half the morning. She was quite expert and produced good chickens for the table in fair quantity. There was fun and games when she had hens sitting. The sitting hens were not always as co-operative as they might have been and the conversation between mother and the hens was not always what one would expect from a parson's wife. Guinea fowl were also kept. In the spring anybody who could, would spend many hours looking for their nests. They were quite wild and laid their eggs anywhere within five hundred yards radius. We ate quite a lot after the game was finished. They had to be shot, it was impossible to catch them. They were good watch dogs. If anything unusual happened during the night they created one hell of a noise.

When eggs and butter were over plentiful, mother would send the surplus to market at Ashby or Burton, taken by carrier. All villages had a carrier who, for a small fee, took goods to the local town and brought goods back. They put up at the same place every journey so shopkeepers could send ordered goods to them for delivery in the village. A Mr. Harper in Bowley's Lane did this for many years.

It was at pig-killing time, a commonplace of country living in the early part of the century, that I was probably the greatest nuisance. It was a great time. Tom Greasley was the pig-killer and all the men assisted. With much squealing the pig was brought from the sty to the brewhouse turned slaughterhouse and killed under conditions which today would be considered barbarous. Being the bloodthirsty little horror I was, I would run across Little Jobs Field to see the blood come out of the drain from the yard. Amid much steam the carcase was skinned and hung up to a strong ceiling beam when the next enthralling scene took place. The belly was slit open and all the innards gathered in Tom's apron and deposited on the bench, there to be sorted into

pancheons and buckets. This having taken place early, the cutting up ceremony took place at about seven o'clock in the evening. Tom would arrive with more sharp knives and two of the men would come back.

I was always impressed with the skill of Tom with those knives and the care with which the hams and sides were prepared for curing. These were taken to the dairy and laid on the thrall and the salt, saltpetre and sugar were skilfully applied. A fair amount of beer was drunk and something was had to eat. The offal as it is now called was dealt with by Annie Reeves. Next morning Mrs. Wright, the expert pork pie maker, would arrive; I would be banished from the kitchen only to keep coming back. We all say there is no pork pie to touch a home-made one, especially those made when we were young. It is of course true as we had larger pigs fed differently. Dressed in a white apron and a white sort of bonnet, Mrs. Wright stood humming and harring and making clucking noises, all the time mixing away in a large wooden trough the ingredients for the pastry, all having been carefully weighed. While this was rising she cut up the pork for the filling. Then the cases of dough would be shaped on the countless wooden moulds we had. The cases were filled, tops put on, the pies put on the baking tins and all painted over with beaten yolk of egg. Meanwhile, the oven in the brewhouse was being heated with wood ready to receive the pies. They were put in soon after lunch and ready to come out after tea, and taken to the larder to cool. Meanwhile, Mrs. Wright was making faggots and white puddings. She also made pork pasties which we had for tea both in dining room and servants' hall. They were very good and very rich and some ate too much. Next day the leaf would be cut up and the lard rendered. The residue of scratchings or chitterlings were another enjoyable dish and many a one I had for supper. What with the rich tea and many other parts of the pig being eaten in a short period it is not surprising that, on occasions, mother had a sick bout.

I must record that the pigs we killed were between twenty and twenty-four score, about double the modern size. The hams were huge and beautifully cured, nothing fancy, just salt, brown sugar and a little saltpetre. After lying in the dairy and turned a few times they, with the sides and chawl, were hung on the ceiling hooks in the kitchen to dry. Then they were hung in the passage to the larder. They were thick in fat and I was brought up on it. When I eventually went to work, Annie made bread cobs, about the size of a teaplate and about one and a half inches thick. One was split and a thick slice of fat bacon put between. This was my lunch at work day in and day out, a wonderful meal when hungry and one of which I never tired.

Tea I have mentioned; drawing room tea was different, with cut bread and butter, fancy cakes, etc. taken in the drawing room, usually for first time callers. If they came again they had to muck in in the dining room or in the school room.

Dinner was the set affair as had been the custom for years. We changed but did not 'dress' except when we had guests. I was about twelve before I was allowed to sit up for dinner. The meal consisted of soup, fish or similar, meat or game or poultry, sweet and savoury. Coffee in the study or drawing room. Dinner was at eight o'clock, fairly prompt and finished after nine o'clock. After that the staff had their dinner so seldom got to bed before 10:30. Breakfast being at eight o'clock there was not much time in bed as they had to be up at 6:30. The copper fire had already been lighted for the hot, soft water to be carried to the bedrooms for the slipper or saucer baths.

In those spacious days at the rectory we all must have eaten too much. Breakfast was porridge, bacon with kidneys, egg, mushroom, sausage, white puddings or whatever was in season. On the sideboard would be a ham or shoulder from a home-fed pig. Lunch would be hot or cold meat and vegetables followed by a substantial pudding such as boiled suet and treacle, spotted dick, and fruit pies, all very filling, but good. A lot of people had to be fed and everyone took plenty of exercise.

In a house of any size there was usually a soda or seltzer syphon known as a seltzogene. It was two glass globes joined together like a figure eight, the top being smaller than the lower which held four to six pints of water, according to size. The whole was encased in a closely woven wire mesh to protect against bursting. The finger-operated valve was on a glass tube reaching to the lowest part, the whole being about twenty inches high and fairly heavy.

To make the soda, the lower part was filled with water. A gadget was now inserted to block off the tube to the lower part. The two seltzer powders were put into the upper part, the tube put in and screwed tight, the syphon tipped to allow water to mix with the powders, a gentle shake and gas would start to form. In a few hours it was excellent soda. At the rectory two syphons were kept on a shelf by the pantry door. At meals, one stood on the corner of the table. We drank little else with milk, lime or lemon juice. Seldom did we drink plain water. After dinner, 'The Tray' was taken to the study or drawing room with glasses and syphon. Nearly all would have a glass of plain soda before retiring, father would have a whisky and soda, a custom of many men.

There was not much drinking at the rectory except beer which was almost universal. Mother was completely teetotal. Father had a good cellar but wine rarely appeared at dinner, though port was drunk every night. The sideboard cellarette had bottles of liqueurs and brandy but I never saw father touch any of these, but I expect he did in his younger days.

As already written my mother was the daughter of Hon. Augustus William Byron, rector of Kirkby Mallory. He was previously rector of Corton Denham near Sherborne, Dorset, where mother was born. She was a very clever woman being strictly educated in the manner of those days, having foreign governesses and being taken on the 'Grand Tour' as was considered the thing to do. Consequently she was a good linguist and musician. Strangely, none of this was passed on by her with one exception. She was a brilliant mimic in both manner and voice and my brother George was equally good.

Mother was an expert at embroidery, which she would do any time she had a moment to spare and sometimes had more than one piece going. She had a large frame for the big stuff like a screen and a circular one for the small things such as a chair cover. She had by her a cylindrical tub-like container in which there was a quantity of wool in all colours. She would dip into this and whatever colour came out she would embroider this into wherever it would match, say, in a leaf. The next piece might match with a bough and so on. In the end a beautiful piece of embroidery would emerge. Mother always boasted she never had a lesson. However, she became very friendly with Mrs. Bellasis of Willesley Hall who was really good. Mother did learn a lot from her and admitted it. She was also a quick knitter. During the war she knitted a sock a day for the troops and in addition embroidered three panels to make a screen for May and me when we set up house. Every Christmas she gave to each collier in the village a pair of thick woollen stockings. I gather she had done this since she came to the village. Always having a German governess, she knitted the German way which is very quick. This went on all the time and if anybody was present she did not stop talking and rarely looked at her work.

Like many of her generation, mother was a great letter writer. There being no telephones, everything had to be written so the letters contained every little scrap of news and this flowed off the end of the pen exactly like conversation. Page after page was written. I always enjoyed standing beside the writing table watching mother write. Up to the time I was ten or eleven years of age mother always wrote with a quill pen which travelled over the paper at great speed spilling a deal of ink between the inkwell and the paper but not on it. When I was in France I had at least one letter a week.

A little incident occurred one evening when mother was letter writing in the drawing room. There were two candles in front of her. The writing table backed on to a sofa. I climbed on to this to get a closer look. I had a large mop of curly hair. I went too near the candle and my hair caught fire. George was nearby and promptly jumped on the sofa and rubbed the little flame out with his hands. Of course he was the hero and

I, the injured party, only got a good ticking off and probably a little slap. I was not amused, thinking that a fuss should have been made of me.

Another amusing little incident involving mother happened when I was very small. One Sunday, after church, the family was summoned to walk back to the Hall to partake of some pineapple which had been sent from somewhere by someone I cannot remember, but it was considered to be something special and we were supposed to be suitably impressed. I was seated at a long table with others and a footman placed a plate, on which was a slice of pineapple before each child. I was no doubt in difficulty preparing it so mother took over. She proceeded to operate the knife and fork, talking all the time and at the same time tasting it. The upshot was I got no pineapple and mother scoffed the lot. As I always looked with suspicion at anything new, I did not create but kept quiet. Had it been something I liked I would have raised the roof.

Groceries for the house came mainly from Simpkin and James of Ashby. Four weeks supply was ordered at a time. On or about the Monday of every fourth week their traveller, or out-rider as he was called, would arrive in a very smartly turned out dog-cart. He, mother and Annie Reeves would go into a long huddle over the requirements for the next four weeks. It was a pretty formidable list. On the following Friday, Simpkin and James's large van drawn by a pair of fine looking horses, would arrive in the stable yard. All groceries were carried to and put on the parish room table. After a beer the men would depart and mother and Annie would check and put away in the large cupboards at the end of the room. Annie kept the keys and controlled the issue of stores.

Meat in vast quantities came from Tom Starbuck in Church Street, next to Bates, and, after Tom died, from Blunt of Snarestone. Charlie Blunt was some relation of Nell Guy. Huge joints of beef, legs and joints of mutton, legs of pork, oxtail, mainly for soup, etc. As we made our own butter and baked our own bread we were self-sufficient in that respect. For all the large quantity the bills would not be all that large. Accounts were quarterly and paid at the end of the next quarter. The butcher's bills were subject to a long-standing tradition with country butchers. They sent in their bills to all the 'big houses' yearly in the New Year. They were not paid until the following New Year. To them it was as good as a bank and they would have resented anything different. A Mr. White who retired from butchering after many years in Netherseal and had a number of 'big houses' on his book, confirmed this to me. On retiring he took over the glebe when father gave up farming towards the end of the war.

We made journeys regularly to Ashby for general shopping. We would all load into the wagonette, usually driven by the coachman. Simpkin and James would be visited. Chairs would be placed and a glass of port wine offered. Mother did not drink anything so someone did well. There was a deal of talking, tasting, bowing and parcels carried to the carriage, more bowing, and off to the dress shop, Seabourn. I would be bored stiff. Then to Litherland, the china shop. Anybody who was anybody visited this shop, kept by Jimmy Staines. China was looked at, sometimes somebody bought something. I would perhaps get a glass sphere snowstorm. Mr. Staines would bow and we would load up for home.

It is difficult to remember what prices were so long ago, but some will be remembered forever. The modern generation are hardly likely to believe them. I have mentioned the very cheap coal, used in every house, there being no alternative. The first petrol I bought for my motor cycle in 1911 was nine pence a gallon. A really good suit from Cunningham of Burton was three guineas or under, and in the autumn of 1911 I bought from Knights of Leicester a top coat of the best cloth for that price, which I still have!

Drink cost very little. Beer two pence to three pence a pint according to quality and room. A bottle of Bass or Worthington was tuppence ha'penny or three pence. Bought by the case it was two shillings a dozen. Before the war the young men like myself would meet in the George Inn, in Market Street, Ashby, kept by the Kirk family. We drank half pints, rarely pints, of Mild, Bitter, Best or a mixture of any. In winter, Best was favourite. The cost of Best in the smoke room was 1½ *d.* a half-pint. If we wanted to indulge on a cold winter night we had one or two bottles of Bass's No.1 Barley wine, cost 4*d.* Very extravagant! Spirits cost 2*d.* a tot in a pub. A bottle of Scotch was 3*s* 6*d.*, Irish 3*s*. 0*d.* as was gin, seldom drunk by men. Cocktails were unheard of. A gallon of Scotch in a wicker-covered jar cost a guinea with a shilling back on returning the jar, net £1. Good port and sherry were about 4*s*. 0*d.* a bottle, poorer qualities cheaper. Father had very good port for everyday drinking from Sarsons of Leicester for 4*s*. 0*d.* a bottle.

Cigarettes were five a penny. Better makes were 3*d.* for ten, 6*d.* for twenty. Good tobacco was 4*d.* an ounce. Twist and the like 2*d.* to 3*d.* an ounce. Matches were 3*d.* for a packet of a dozen boxes.

I must recall something of the life and customs which went on at the rectory. Father, probably like his predecessor, was burglar conscious and as a result the house could not have been more securely fastened at night if it had been a prison, except it was to keep people out instead of in. At dusk the parlourmaid did the round. All windows were fastened, shutters closed and barred, bells on spring steel fitted into slots behind

the doors, curtains drawn and finally the door into the hall bolted and locked. This applied to all ground floor rooms, back and front. All doors were kept locked and one could neither get in nor out without unlocking a door. The front door had a massive iron bar across it. This door was never used at night except on special occasions. Every night, when he was at home, father went all round the house seeing everywhere was locked and bolted. In the passage downstairs, the shutters, when opened, were held in place by butterfly catches which revolved. On passing these he would, without fail, flick them with a finger. If he missed he had to go back and do it. Of course, in rooms where there had been a fire, the door had to be opened to see if it was safe.

In case of fire rope ladders were kept in his bedroom but I do not remember ever seeing what they could be fastened to. On both landings fire buckets were kept, some with water and some with sand. Upstairs windows had no bars or other impediment to a hasty exit. One exception was the private apartment of the parlourmaid. The window looked onto the sloping roof of the larder which gave easy access to the room. Thoughts were probably not only on burglars when these bars were fitted.

There was just one flush lavatory in the house, at the top of the front stairs. This was used only by the ladies and children or by anyone at night. When we boys reached a more mature age we were banished to the earth closet in the corner of the garden, known as the 'Dub', and quite a walk from the front door. This was a two-seater but only the boys operated together. We had to stand outside when we accompanied father on his long walk. It was supposed to be a landmark in one's life when told to use the 'Dub'.

Spring-cleaning in a house like the rectory was almost a festival. It went on for weeks. With so many fires there was bound to be dust and dirt. Over a hundred tons of coal, plus wood, were burnt every winter. First came the invasion of the chimney sweep, Mr. Bywater from Measham, whom I would call Mr. Waterby. We went out onto the lawn to see the brush come out of the top. Father insisted this must be done. It took at least two days to do all the chimneys. The kitchen alone took over two hours. Having got that over, Harriet Taylor arrived. She was the regular extra help and a very good worker. Nothing was skimped with her around. Most of the front room carpets were big and heavy. They were taken up by the men, taken onto the lawn, long hazel-nut stocks were cut and the carpets beaten until not a speck of dust remained. It was then drawn up and down the lawn, topside down, to put a shine on it. Carpet beating had a sound of its own and could be heard a long way off. It was as much a herald of spring as the first lawn cutting. Meanwhile, soap, water and carbolic were being flung about. All the gossip of the village was well and truly gone over time and time again and many a reputation was tarnished during this time. Harriet's

tongue never stopped and mother was not averse to joining in. In the evening we would have a re-cap with mother imitating Harriet, which was good entertainment.

Most years Arthur and Walter Boss would be doing out one or more of the rooms. The kitchen was done about every third year. Every time that awful old range was made up, smoke billowed from the opening. Wherever any of this work was going on I was sure to be covering myself with paint and whitewash and pasting bits of paper all over the place.

The pony cart was used to carry the weekly washing down to the laundry at the bottom of Jobs field. As a small boy I took part in this operation. The dirty linen was taken on Monday morning and the clean collected on Saturday. This was the job of the garden boy. When we were loaded we set off across Little Jobs field, through the big gate, which had to be unlocked, then along the path to the corner. We generally had to walk, as there was no room to ride. The pony went to the same place near the small gate into the laundry garden and waited without being tied. The laundry was taken into the wash-house and the baskets checked with the book. The return journey was at full gallop, round the bend on one wheel – it was a wonder we never overturned – and a very sedate amble across the little field. The reverse was the order on Saturday. As the years wore on I grew older, so did the pony and she retired. The same small cart was man-handled. The time came when the garden boy went. A Londoner named Hook took over, acting as clerk of the church also. He took the laundry on the Monday morning but forgot to fetch it on Saturday until night, when it was very foggy. He found the laundry all right but got hopelessly lost returning, and had to abandon the cart. After a long walk he found the rectory and reported the situation. He had no idea where the cart was, so we set off to find it. If anyone has ever tried to find a pony cart, without a pony, in a seventeen-acre field on a foggy night they will know the difficulty. After a long time it was found and brought safely in. Hook could not stand the country so he returned to London. Fred Booton was installed in his place, becoming our first and only chauffeur after the war.

On Christmas Eve the choir came to the rectory to sing carols and Christmas hymns. After a suitable time mince pies would be handed round with beer for the men and lemonade for the boys. Riley would go into the study and have a whisky or two, a further bit of singing and off they would go to their next call. In our case they came into the house and filled the front hall but in most cases they sang in the open air. They brought with them an ancient harmonium which was conveyed round on a heavy looking dog-cart or trap drawn by an equally ancient and large pony, the outfit belonging to William Greasley, wheelwright and undertaker. For some reason it was left at the iron gates at the entrance to the drive. On one of these occasions, we boys, Tim, George and myself unhitched the pony, put the shafts through the gate, backed

the pony in and hitched it up again leaving the gate between the cart and the pony. There was real trouble when the driver tried to move off. It was all part of the fun we had to make for ourselves.

Christmas

Christmases at the Rectory were really happy times. There were a good number of people in the house with family and staff which all helped. We seldom had anyone extra, not counting Dr. Davidson as he was part of the family. Sometimes Duncan Perkins was asked as he was a lonely man on his own. He lived at the Hall at Orton-on-the-Hill. He was a great friend of Davidson's and visited his house two or three times a week for about an hour, leaving in time for Davidson to get to us in time for dinner at eight o'clock.

The making of the plum pudding and mincemeat a few weeks before hand was always enjoyed with so much stirring and wishing and tasting that it is a wonder any of the mixtures were left. Christmas dinner, after a light cold lunch, was always at night. I do not know at what tender age I was first allowed to sit up for it, but as I got older I took more interest and enjoyed it, although I got more fun by going to the kitchen end. The food was traditional and I expect I ate a good deal, perhaps too much. The order next day was cold turkey and hotted up plum pudding. The day after that back to roast beef for which everyone was thankful.

There was a weekly issue of soup at the rectory. Every Monday a number of elderly men and women came up with their cans for the soup. A very large iron pan stood on the kitchen range so the soup was nice and hot. Nearly all had their special times, some because they did not wish someone else to see them. All the Almshouse people came up, and that could and did provide some entertainment. Inevitably there was a sort of self-appointed king of the castle. There was always something wrong, from the closet seat to the wash-house pump. Father was head of the Trust by virtue of his office as rector and he had the task of keeping the peace. There was in this small community a subtle form of snobbery which would be difficult to better. Hardly anyone spoke to the others and a good deal of 'jockeying' went on to avoid meeting.

When it came to looking after people few could do it better than mother. She literally spent her whole life up to father's retirement looking after the sick of the parish. Every afternoon she and Nell Guy set off for the village carrying a can of soup and a basket with some form of nourishment in it for the sick. She often went in the mornings driving the pony cart pulled by Mabs. The pony was hitched to the tub after breakfast and a rein looped over a hook outside the saddlery door. It was there for anyone who wanted to do a short journey. The pony would 'bait' for an hour at dinnertime.

Mother always made a point of visiting mothers with newly born babies, taking some little thing for the baby and something nice for the mother. It was not unusual for her to help the 'Gamp' if the occasion demanded it. She also attended all christenings and as a consequence was Godmother to about half the village. She always acted as interpreter for the names as some were given so indistinctly that his reverence could not get it, especially if there was some impediment in speech.



The Almshouses. *Built by the Misses Moore in 1839 and still flourishing in a modernised form.*

Father also visited people, especially the older ones he had known all his life. I remember how upset he would be when someone of his 'age' died. It was not uncommon for him to sit talking in front of a good fire and fall asleep. They all knew him well and let him sleep and prepare a good tea for him when he wakened. At Christmas, father had to distribute two charities to the poor. One was five hundredweights of coal which our cart fetched from Donisthorpe pit and delivered to those entitled. I do not remember how many had this coal but our carts made several journeys. It was only possible to make one journey a day as farm work had to go on as usual. Bill Winter often got a tip of 3d. which bought a pint of beer. The other charity was a joint of beef. Everyone entitled, and more besides, got a joint of about three pounds. Father subsidised this fund so no one should want for a Christmas

dinner. Others who had a joint were the outside staff and the parents of the indoor staff.

The Church

Being the son of the rector I was of course very close to the Church in so many ways. I was taken to church with the family. We spread out over the length of the rectory pew, a long pew at the front of the north side. The rectory servants sat in the side seats on the north wall. The Hall pews were the first two front on the south side and their servants sat in the side pews on the south wall. The grammar school boarders and masters sat behind the Hall pews on the south aisle, and the headmaster assisted with the service. The Sunday school from the school opposite sat in the gallery. The church was always well filled for morning service and very full at night. The choir was good and the singing generally of a high standard.



St. Michael's Church, Appleby Magna. *The Girls' school (on the right) is now the Church Hall.*

Father did not like low church, neither could he tolerate high church so he struck a happy medium which seemed to suit everybody. The services were regular. Morning service 11 am. and evening service 6:30 pm. Morning service was Matins with ante communion, i.e. we had the Commandments said, with the Kyrie sung to various settings which were changed about once a month. The Litany was said about once a

month and on occasions we waded through the Athanasian Creed. We seldom had a sermon in the morning that was, on the whole, a pleasant bright service.

The 'Squire and his relations' of course attended. The squire sat in the front seat next to the middle aisle. His wife sat at the opposite end. Important relatives or friends sat between, lesser fry sat in the second pew. The Hall people rarely attended at night but the squire did on occasions. They never had a carriage out to go to church unless the weather was really foul. The morning attendance was perhaps a good example of Conservatives at prayer. Billy Cooper, the character who lived at the Beeches, a near cripple, was a very regular attender. Billy had the seat of his pew widened at his own expense, with a crosspiece at the end so that when sitting he could rest his leg. The pew is still the same. Pew rents were of course in vogue in those days. A form of snobbery but a good income for the church.



Interior of the Church. *The centre, free-standing pews have now been removed to widen the nave.*

Evening service was the standard form as in the prayer book and never varied except for the occasional anthem at festivals. There was a sermon lasting no longer than ten minutes. Father disliked long sermons made so by padding for the sake of talking. He preached a good sermon, and hit hard when required.

The church-going youth of the village sat in the northwest corner pews. They were always first out and congregated by the school wall opposite the gates and made remarks, complimentary or otherwise, about the rest of the congregation coming out. There were free seats (now removed to widen the nave) in the nave occupied by those who did not like sitting in the box pews and the poorer elderly who thought they ought to sit in them, such as from the Almshouses. Old John, who never missed at night, sat in the front seat. Box pews, not rented were occupied by the same people whose circumstances would not run to a pew rent.

Many people came from neighbouring parishes in summer to hear the singing and for the general quality of the service. Father never intoned, he did not alter his voice nor his manner when taking a service. The responses were usually said by choir and congregation but occasionally they were sung.

Holy Communion was celebrated on the first Sunday of each month. On the preceding Sunday notice of this was given by reading part of the first Exhortation prayer as far as ‘...and made partakers of the Kingdom of Heaven’. The preliminaries for the Communion were the arrival at the rectory at about 10 am., of the clerk to collect the ‘Box’ i.e. the box containing the Communion Plate which was kept in father’s bedroom. After breakfast, a loaf of bread, bread board and knife and a sheet of kitchen paper were put on the dining room table where father would proceed to cut small cubes of bread for the Host, destroying most of the loaf in the process. This was wrapped in paper, placed in the box and taken to the church. Once Nell Guy asked father to cut the bread smaller, remarking, “Old Mrs. Quimby nearly choked this morning”. We never had wafers. After service the plate was put back in the box (no altar ablutions) and taken back to the rectory to be thoroughly cleaned by the parlourmaid and so back to bed. Early Communion, 8 am., was only taken at Easter, Whitsun, Trinity Sunday and Christmas. I never remember a midnight service at Christmas but we did have a few New Year midnight services, referred to as Watch Night Services.

Up to the time the bells were rehung they were only rung at Christmas and New Year. What was called practising for Christmas started with Advent or thereabouts. This would take place twice a week and was a milestone in the year signifying we were near Christmas. The ringers were George Reeves, Jimmy Miller, George Rowland, Ted Miller, William Greasley, followed as required by Bert Greasley, Wilfred Smith, John Stevenson, Jack Chandler, and Jack Smith. Younger ones came on such as Jack Greasley, Charlie Reeves and myself. We rang when we could or were asked. On all Sundays, morning and evening, the bells were chimed and one or two came only for chiming. There was a distinction between ringers and chimers, a bit of closed shop technique. Chiming stopped at ten minutes before service time. Then there was the

ten minute bell, the fifth, which was chimed for five minutes, then the 'five minute bell', the treble. This bell had to be kept going until told to stop. This was when father was ready and told a choirboy to go and stop the bell. He ran out of the vestry door to the belfry door, yelled 'Stop' and dashed back to join the choir entry. Sometimes the bell would go on for minutes if his reverence was not ready. Another custom was the ringing of the treble bell after service for a few minutes. I understand the idea, very old, was to inform the village the service was over and the dinner could be got ready.

Keeping the five minute bell going had its advantages especially for the Lent weekday services as it was sometimes not exactly convenient or possible to be there dead on time. These services were at 7 pm., and by tradition were held on Wednesday evenings. We were situated in the Wednesday country of the Atherstone Hunt. It usually worked out all right, but there were inevitable times when a late found fox would inconsiderately run in the opposite way to home and we could end up miles away. On such occasions, we would go straight to the church, leave father at the vestry gate and take the horses back to the rectory. On such an occasion albeit rare, the bell would be kept going for up to fifteen minutes. Nobody bothered, it was all part of the set-up.

Somewhere about the year 1910 repairs were done to the spire, including a new weathercock. Prior to it being taken up, it was laid in the road for children and others to jump over it, so that in future they could point to the cock on the spire and say they had once jumped over it.

Other work on the church at this time was the painting and thorough cleaning inside by the Boss family, the village painters and plumbers. Arthur and Walter were the craftsmen and very good too. A younger brother, Frank not too strong, went in for photography. His first 'studio' was the front door. He then built a hut at the back and later moved to Ashby where he built up a flourishing business.

At the same time new lighting by oil lamps was installed, father putting in the chancel lamps and a few of the better off parishioners put in the nave lamps. The previous lighting had been very poor, very ordinary looking lamps on a few pillars and the choir stalls had candles in tripod brackets on a pole. The new lamps were attractive in appearance and gave what then seemed a brilliant light. All the lamps were supplied through Tunnadine, the village ironmonger.

I do not know if there is any legal standing to it but it was the custom for the incumbent to be responsible for the chancel and the parish for the nave or remainder of the church. It could and did lead to some trouble as to the dividing line. One such occasion was when a crack appeared in the arch dividing chancel and nave. Father

cast many anxious glances at it for a long time until it was realised it was a hair crack in the plaster. All this is long before the days of parochial church councils. It was just as well as I am certain my father would never have stood for any interference with the running of the church.

A few years after this the bells were re-hung. They were on an old oak frame of massive proportions, none stayed except the tenor and none of it very safe. Ringing had to stop. As I have said, ringing generally only took place at Christmas. Around that time a deal more ringing was done, so I suppose this brought matters to a head. A subscription list was opened and the money raised. I had a list of all subscribers and a very true picture it gives of the inhabitants. Nearly everyone gave something, and gave generously according to their means. There were many gifts of sixpence and that meant a lot to the givers. I gave my list to Harold Oakley to put among his collection of records of Appleby events.

There was a great and prolonged argument as to which firm should do the re-hanging. Quotations were obtained from Taylors of Loughborough and Messrs. Mears and Stainbank of Whitechapel. Also from an unknown firm, Kemp of Leicester. Kemp was really a jeweller and had shop near the market. All the ringers wanted Taylors to have the job although their quotation was the highest. Kemp was the lowest and eventually he got the job, influenced, I fear, by the fact that he, like father, was a Freemason. Taylors would have taken the six bells to their foundry, recast two, then hung them in their frame for testing before re-hanging in the tower. Kemp, it transpired, had only just gone into the business as a side line, and without going into details, he made a thorough mess of it. He declared the job finished and the bells ready to ring. He had no ringer on his staff so no bell was rung up and tested. The man just did not know his job. It was arranged for Mr. W.W. Worthington (Willie) of Netherseal, a good, very keen and well-known ringer, who had given generously to our fund, to bring a band over and ring a peal to open them. They started to raise the bells when all hell was let loose. Everything, which could be wrong was there. Bells bound on the frame, bearings slipped, the frame slipped, the clappers would not swing and heaven knows what else. Kemp had to put things right and I believe got Taylors to get him out of the mess. It had now become clear what a mistake it was not to have let Taylors do the work. Eventually they were just ringable.

When May and I stayed at the rectory the first or second week-end after our wedding, the ringers still available decided to welcome us by ringing for Sunday service. They found they were one short so sent a message to the rectory asking me to make up the band! So I can almost say I rang for my own wedding. It was a nice thought.

The Choir Supper

One important village event was the choir supper. I was told that such an event had been held through the ages in one form or another. It was the occasion when the incumbent said in a practical way 'Thank you' to his choir, ringers and other officers of the church. I think those held in Appleby had always been happy affairs. I gathered father carried on in much the same manner as his predecessor, the Rev. J. M. Echalaz. They all followed more or less the same pattern. I can remember these suppers from a very early age. It was of course an annual event held in January or February, but I do remember one being held in the summer. Those who attended were the senior members and officers of the church plus, at times, one or two guests, so that about twenty to twenty-five would sit down. The party assembled in the Parish Room at the rectory and on being summoned, trooped up the long passage to the dining room. Some sort of precedence had evolved over the years in so much that people tended to sit in the same place year after year. Father of course took the chair, Riley the opposite end and the middle on each side by a warden or sidesman provided he could carve.

The kitchen was a busy place for a day or two prior to The day. The menu was always the same, roast beef, roast pork, boiled leg of mutton and rabbit pie. Plum pudding, mince pies, trifle and cheese followed. Beer was the drink, lemonade in case anyone wanted it. Whisky and cigars appeared later.

Beyond the sound of cutlery on plate little else was heard while the first helpings were consumed. Second helpings were soon being served and the buzz of conversation began to swell, glasses having been refilled more than once. It was not uncommon for a few to go through the entire menu. On one occasion a guest, ploughing through his third plate was pressed by father to have some beef, the reply being 'presently Rector, presently'. The Loyal Toast would be drunk and the national anthem sung. Father would disappear to his study and return smoking a cigar and carrying a box of Marcella cigars, which were passed round, and a bottle of whisky would circulate. The front door would be opened and the guests would have a look at the garden whatever the weather!

Everyone back was the signal for Mr. Riley to give a song, usually a hunting song and more often the ever popular 'We'll all go a hunting today' with its good chorus. Continuing the ritual, whoever had sung called upon someone to sing the next song, so, Riley would rise and say 'I call on Mr. Miller for the next song'. Mr. Miller would say 'No'. Cries of 'Go on Jimmy'. Another 'No', or 'Let someone else have a go, I'll sing later'. A little more persuasion and of course, Jimmy would go to the piano and sing. There would have been one hell of a row had anyone else sung the

second song. He always sang 'She touched me up a little'. A small extract will give some idea of the song. 'Where she kissed me on the fa-hace, was a little crimson tra-hace, so she must have touched me up a little beeeet'. One can imagine what could come out of a song with such a title. Sometimes we would have a repeat later in the evening, a somewhat tarted up version, but by that time nobody cared. Jimmy, after much applaud and 'encore' would rise and say 'I call on Mr. Charlie Quinny for the next song'. Charlie would go to the piano and give us 'Come into the garden Maud', or a similar song. He had a very pleasing tenor voice. He, in turn, would call on someone, and in time would have John Stevenson reciting, 'Kissing Cup', the story of a girl who was to suffer a fate, allegedly, worse than death if a mare named Kissing Cup did not win a certain race. The recitation ended, 'It's Kissing Cup, she's won by a head'. Great applause and the girl's honour was saved. John was a most likeable fellow. He unfortunately had a cleft palate so his words were not too distinct, but we all knew it by heart so it did not matter.

By this time further whisky would be circulating, the jug stewards would be getting a bit maudlin and just capable of supplying beer to those who chose to stick to it. Jimmy would sing his second song – about a henpecked husband who was sent to do this and that – again better sung early than late. After this Jimmy would rise and say, 'I call on the Rector to give us a song'. After a suitable delay he would sing 'The Tars of Tarporley', a popular song with a rousing chorus, based on a booze-up at the Swan Hotel at Tarporley.

I have already said what a mania father had for Freemasonry. Besides being a member of the Ashby and Hinckley lodges he was also a member of several Leicester lodges. (His mother lodge was Hinckley). He was in all sorts of lodges leading to high degrees. After lodge, he would catch a train back to Ashby, or, if a late banquet, to Coalville, which was as far as the last train went. Gregory was the principal sufferer from this, having to take a carriage to meet him. What I am leading up to is the time he had a special masonic service one Sunday in Appleby Church. As near as I can remember this would be in 1911 or '12. I know I had a motorcycle which helps to date it. It was a Sunday very near midsummer, a lovely hot day. A number of local masons attended but the main body was from Leicester, made up of top class singers and an organist of repute. I must say it was a wonderful service much appreciated and talked about for many a month and remembered for much longer. The singing was superb and an excellent sermon was preached by one of the leading clergy of Leicester. There may be a record of this service in the archives of the masonic temple in Leicester. Just before the blessing father made one of his most diplomatic utterances. He announced there would be no evening service!

Incidentally nearly all the masons went to the rectory for lunch. It was some lunch, plain straightforward food. There was a large piece of cold roast beef and an enormous ham from a well over twenty score home-fed pig and which had been hung for about two years. I don't think it received any special treatment but it must have been cooked to perfection as it turned out to be one of those hams which occur only a very few times in one's life. It was talked about in the Leicester lodges for a long time. It was a splendid lunch accompanied by champagne and other wines, or beer for those who wanted it and of course, port. Father never thought a meal complete without it.

Keeping to the period just before the war, England was involved in a vicious struggle with the Suffragettes campaigning for votes for women. They overstepped the mark in their fight by engaging in stupid, useless destruction such as attacks on churches. The beautiful church at Breadsall in Derbyshire was almost destroyed by fire early in 1914. This caused concern in many parishes, not least in Appleby. It was decided that the church should be guarded every night and volunteers were called for. They were not lacking and a guard of two men went on every night. They went on at about 11 pm., to dawn. As it was summer it was not very arduous. I did my stint on Saturday nights with Fred Booton. The vestry was the guardroom. We had food and drink and did patrols sometimes in pairs and sometimes alone. Nothing ever happened except occasional visits from Saturday night revellers. One early morning a youth asked me what I would do if the ladies arrived. I replied "same as you lad, run like hell". He did not visit us again and the novelty wore off. The menace stopped with the outbreak of the war in 1914, so we only did the guards for a short time. Father always carried a revolver when he took his turn. He handed it to me, loaded, when I went on duty. It would have been very awkward if an incident had occurred. I think father would have been more likely to shoot than I. There was a lot of leg pulling of course, but we had to be deadly serious as these fanatical women stopped at nothing.

The Church clock and its mechanism is a fine piece of work and of great interest. It was given by the old Miss Moores of the White House. It was always supposed to be a fine example of that type of clock. As a small boy I was occasionally taken up the rough and worn steps from the ringing chamber to the second floor where the clock case was situated. The clock was wound every Sunday by George Reeves just before chiming for service started. No one else was ever allowed to touch it. Winding was a laborious job. The striking weight was very heavy and George had to stop two or three times during the wind. As we got older and stronger we were allowed to have a go as a great treat. I did know the weight of each of the weights but I have forgotten them. Having finished winding, a piece of candle was lighted and held near the brass

plate so that the inscription could be read. The clock struck on the tenor bell with double hammers giving a quick strike. With the grammar school clock also striking, the villagers had no excuse for not knowing the time.

Chapter 2

Celebrations, Socialising and Entertainment

In an era before television and radio what did people do to pass the time? When there was a special event how did they celebrate it? And what were young people taught about good manners and the correct way to behave? These fragments from Aubrey Moore's memoirs, not previously published, provide us with a vivid picture of how children played and adults socialised.

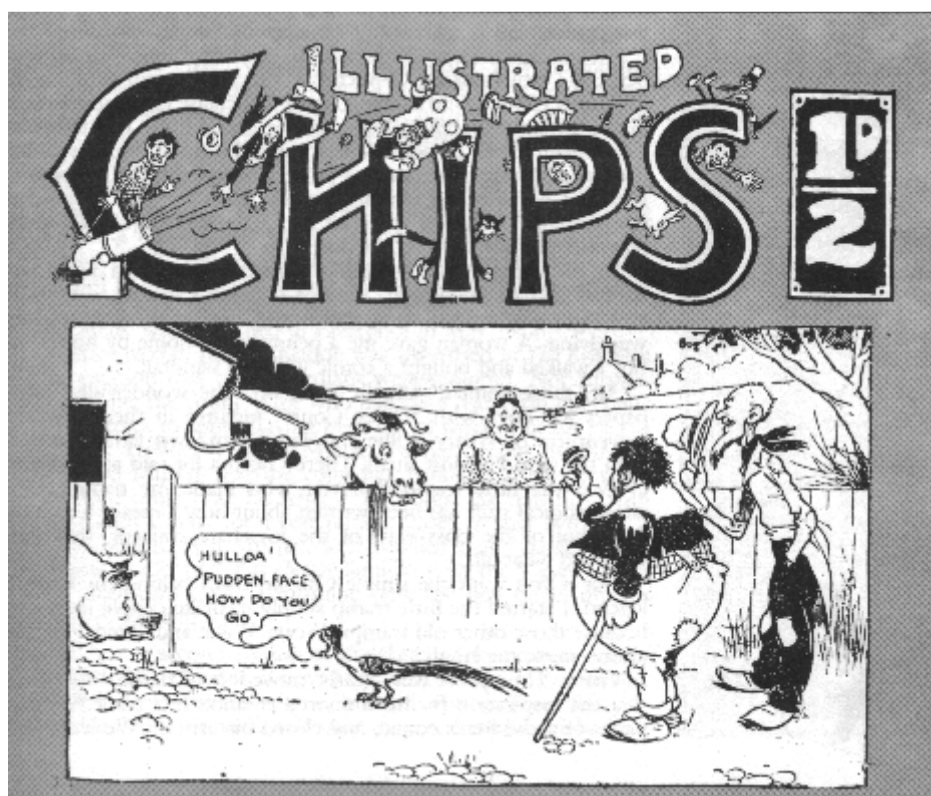
Children's Games and Hobbies

Children's comics were a popular source of entertainment.

Comic papers were a source of amusement and a certain amount of help with reading if not very educational. The two most popular and best sellers were 'Chips' and 'Comic Cuts'. The 'heroes' of the former were 'Weary Willie' and 'Tired Tim'. These two worthies lasted all my boyhood. Looking back one cannot help but admire the author(s) for thinking up all the various episodes and scrapes these two got into to make the stories, for year after year. It was much later on that new and different comics were introduced. None, to my generation ever quite came up to the two named above. There were a number of fiction papers, mainly detective or Western stories. Sexton Blake and Dr. Nicola, in book form, were two favourites with boys but not with their teachers. The Strand Magazine ran a series of Sherlock Holmes stories for many years.

There were a variety of games, only some of which are still familiar.

Battles with conkers have gone on since someone first thought of hanging one on a piece of string or leather thong. It was taken very seriously. Long searches were made for large nuts in an effort to be undefeated. Some would keep conkers to the following year when they would be as hard as a piece of oak. As it was impossible to break one with a new nut it was not considered sporting to use one in serious battle. They were very handy to topple anyone with a swollen head. Many conker battles ended with fists being used.



Weary Willie and Tired Tim on the front of Chips. *Reproduced with the kind permission of David A Gerstein.*

Customs and games which went with them were many and varied. Some have long since disappeared. Many games mysteriously appeared and ceased for no apparent reason. Whip and top came in with Lent. A peg top gave the greatest pleasure as it could be driven along with a good chance of hitting someone or breaking a window. Those which were just kept spinning by the whip were tame and cissy. At this time the girls bought out their battledore and shuttlecock and skipping rope. Hoops came out at a given time and as quickly disappeared. Boys had thin iron hoops, driven along with a stick or with an iron hook or ring with a foot or so to hang on to.

Tip-tap was hitting a piece of wood, about four inches by one thick, pointed at each end. By tapping one end, up it would jump and it was hit with the 'bat'. It was completely out of control and there, too, was a good chance of hitting something or someone, so adding to the fun.

All these games and more took place in the road or street. Modern traffic made it impossible so they have disappeared. These games kept children outside in the fresh air and made them hardy. Marbles survived a long time except that of chasing each others' marbles in the gutter on the way to school. Most boys carried a supply of marbles in the pocket. Great gambling went on, the expert winning marbles from the less expert. The popular game at home was the foot diameter ring into which each

player must put so many marbles. All marbles knocked out of the ring were claimed until the ring was cleared. Some boys were expert shooting the 'taw'. Others, like myself were not so good. I used to wear a hole in my thumb nail.

At the turn of the century the Diablo craze swept the country and was played anywhere by all ages so long as there was room to throw the spool. It was a good game which went out in about two years, never to return. It was followed by the Yo-yo.



Young lady playing the "diabolo" game.
From "Costumes Parisiens", 1812.

Keeping animals and observing farming life also provided interest and entertainment.

I have mentioned ferrets. I also kept rabbits in the hutches near the old pig sties in the rickyard. Quite a lot of rabbit dealing went on between Bill Winter, Jimmy Greasley and myself. We did level swops, a doe and a few pence for a good buck and so on. I am afraid some of the subjects of these deals ended up in the stew-pot but I was not to know that. The rabbit craze lasted quite a few years.

The most enjoyable parties were those at farms or at Riley's at the school or at some house such as Mrs. Wright who put on large quantities of pikelets, home made, and

swimming in butter. There were some good parties at Varnams at Barnsheath where we could get out on the farm and get thoroughly dirty. Daniel and Mrs. Taylor at Stretton Farm always made me welcome at any time of the day. I often walked over to them, particularly if I knew something exciting was on which could be anything from thrashing to castrating lambs. This farm was about three hundred yards on the left along the Stretton Road and down a drive. We did a lot of mutual borrowing with the Taylors. I was not very old when I first went over there on my own but there was little traffic on the roads and motors were few and far between, in fact, it was great excitement to see one and we would get on the side of the road and watch it go by. Sometimes I would ride over to the Taylors on Mabs, the Shetland pony.

The young Aubrey clearly preferred such events to formal children's parties.

Children's parties were events I disliked and, I believe, showed it by various delaying tactics to suit the occasion. They so often occurred when, something special, to me, was going on on the farm and which I did not want to miss. The usual parties were at the Hall when Uncle George would dress up as Santa Claus with the aid of an old red dressing gown and some flour on his beard. The Inges at Thorpe, the Kings at Lullington Rectory, Charringtons at Netherseal, Hastings at Ashby and a few others made these parties annual events. The last named I disliked more than any because the Hastings girls, rough at the best of times, enjoyed mauling me about, or so it seemed. Looking back on those parties they were far too organised. There was too much 'We must keep the little dears happy', there being very few 'little dears' among those present. I really believe there was a general sigh of relief when a footman or maid came to say the carriage was at the door.

But for some children childhood was very different.

Jackie's (Chandler) father was not in a position to bring up a son and Jackie had a rough start in life. He was not above talking about it. One thing he told was how he was taken, as a boy, into pubs where he would stand on a table and sing for a few pence and a drink for his father. As he grew up he developed a good tenor voice which he could use to good effect. He was also a superb whistler. It is safe to say he hardly walked a yard without whistling, either imitating birds, a well known tune or extemporising. To listen to him was really entertaining.

Good Manners

Relations between adults and children and between people of different social classes were much more formal as these two extracts show.

Before I started school we were walked round the village nearly every day and we would call in various houses where I would have to sit still while the inevitable gossip went on. On these walks women and girls would 'drop a curtsey' to mother and men

and boys would raise their caps or hats. George and I were always made to raise our caps to every woman we met. If we were some way ahead and a lady was coming towards us we would be sure to hear the strident voice of Bella ‘caps boys’. If we did not we soon had a lecture on manners. Such were the manners of those days, both given and received.

One thing I dreaded for years was the receipt of presents from my Aunts Rosamond and Kate. White handkerchiefs one year and a dark tie the other, alternating strictly every year. That was not the worst. I was made to write a ‘Thank you’ letter, father standing over me but I had to compose the letter myself. How I hated it and the presents.

Dress Styles

The clothing people wore also gave an indication of their status.

I suppose it is fair to say the style of clothing did not alter much from the time I was born to 1914. People dressed very correctly, there was no such use as casual wear. The manual workers always put on a respectable suit at weekends, some had on a collar and tie, many a scarf or even a handkerchief knotted round the neck and certainly clean boots. Ladies wore ankle length skirts or dresses. Many of the older wives might wear a shawl and certainly a head dress of some sort.

Middle and upper classes wore more or less the same style, very dressed up on Sundays. Many in the village came to Church in frock coat and top hat, the ladies in costumes, the show piece being the hat. Habit has not altered very much. I well remember hearing “Did you see Mrs. So and So’s hat...?”

Father’s clothes did not alter from the turn of the century until he died. He had a new rig out for my sister Sylvia’s wedding, frock coat and trousers, which was the last suit he bought. This he wore on Sundays, to go to London and Ascot. In the week he wore a dark suit, wing collar and dark tie. A clean collar every day was the order.

I cannot describe the ladies’ clothes except that mother, as was the custom, always wore a hat for luncheon. Fashion was always changing, but father never changed the weight or style winter or summer. On the hottest day he would wear what he would on the coldest day in winter. He had an amazing amount of riding clothes. He had numerous white cord breeches and a few buckskin. Several coats, waistcoats stocks etc. Many pairs of top boots and jack boots and two or three top hats. Being a short man, none of his clothes fitted me so I had to hunt in ‘rat catcher’, as did Tim and George.

Father never wore the conventional clothes of a parson beyond frock coat and white bow tie on Sunday and for other services, weddings, funerals etc. He never wore a

‘dog collar’. When he decided to go into the Church his father said to him ‘If you must go into the Church Charlie, for God’s sake dress like a gentlemen’.

Family Celebrations

Christmas and New Year were times for special family meals. Also described is the wedding of Aubrey’s sister where the celebrations went beyond the family.

Preparation of the turkey started with the pulling out of the sinews from the legs which took the united efforts of our three men. One held the bird on the inside of the brewhouse door for a grip and the other two, with the aid of a rope and a great show of strength, pulled out the long, tough sinews. This effort, of course, required a jug or two of beer to help recover from their efforts. We always had a goose on New Year’s Day. About all I remember was the fat being retained and somehow refined to be applied to sore throats and tight chests in times of bad weather.

Sylvia’s wedding was a great day for the village. It would be the first wedding in the Moore family since 1863 when Aunt Susan married Walter Coyney. Sylvia had been secretly engaged to Wilfred Byron for some time. Father was against the marriage only, I think, because he had no use for the Byrons although he had married one. He never really got on with them and always quarrelled with his father in law whenever they met. He opposed the marriage until Sylvia told him that when she was twenty one she would marry, like it or not, so he later gave way.

The village went very gay. It was September and the weather was fine. Floral arches were erected at the Rectory and Hall drive entrances. Several houses were dressed up in various ways. The bridegroom stayed at the Hall with his best man and the bridesmaids. Both Hall and Rectory were full up. The service was taken by my other godfather, the Rev. Samuel Hailstone from somewhere in the Manchester area I think. The wedding breakfast was done by Baileys of Burton who had more or less a monopoly in the district. I don’t remember anything very special about the day. The Church was crowded, on coming out I was pushed into a Hall carriage and back to the Rectory. In the evening I was put to bed too early for my liking, the object being to get rid of me because of a party to follow in the evening.

There was a troop of Leicestershire Yeomanry to act as escort, together with the coachmen and footmen of the guests, they all had a good ‘do’ in the stable yard, lashings of beer and eats. The yeomanry had with them a monkey. This got hold of Alfred Stimson’s tobacco pouch and tore it to shreds. The gentleman kept the Queen’s hotel at Ashby and its livery stable. He had supplied all the extra carriages for the wedding.

Church Choir, Bell Ringing and Related Social Events

As the son of the Rector it is not surprising that many of the activities described had links to the church. He participated in both the choir and bell ringing, with different degrees of enthusiasm. There were also suppers and outings connected to the church.

I was put into the Church choir, not because I could sing but because somebody thought I looked lonely sitting by myself in the long Rectory pew. At this time I had to wear an Eton suit on Sundays complete with top hat. The choir went into the vestry via the north aisle so I became adept at doing drop kicks with my hat, clearing the curtain rod between the nave and the vestry. I was by this time well and truly among all the village boys and one of them.

The Band of Ringers was a bit of a closed shop and they were getting old. In fact the bells were no longer known by their number but by the name of the man who rang it, for example I remember the 4th was George Rowland's bell, the 3rd Bill Miller's bell and so on. Jack could ring a bell so he took upon himself the task of training some young men and ran a practice two or three nights a week with tied clappers. My brother, George, and I were among his pupils but as I was the youngest and smallest I did not get much of a look in but I did learn how to handle a bell. In those days none of the bells was stayed except the tenor. With learners there was every chance of the bell going over which it frequently did. A learner would be seen desperately trying to hold his bell when someone would make a flying leap like a rugby tackle and just save the bell going over. On 'standing' the ringer would have to hold his rope. He passed the 'tag' end under his foot in the fashion of a stirrup, keeping the end taut. All very primitive but it taught a ringer to handle a bell. If the bell went over he knew what to do and do it quickly.

I took music up again at about seventeen. I made progress and Riley got me on to the Church organ which I enjoyed. There was no electricity so the organ had a hand operated blower. I would give a boy a penny or two to blow for me, sometimes Fred Booton would blow. The war came along when I was making rapid improvement. After the war I was hardly in a position to take up music again, but I have regretted it ever since.

Referring back to Netherseal, I went to ring there to try to improve my ringing. One of my colliery friends, Bert Wagg, son of the colliery farm manager was a good ringer, trained by Willie Worthington. He would often ask me to run down in an evening on my motorbike. He was so busy training his own learners in method that I seldom got off the tenor and missed the tuition I should have had. Again, the war put an end to that. Bert came to a sad end, being killed by a fall of rock in the pit.

Some of us were keen to get hold of a set of hand-bells. We wanted to learn method ringing and we had ideas of getting some of the young ladies to join us. I made enquiries at Taylors and got some advice and a quotation. I cannot remember if we had an octave or twelve. The price was under £20. We had a whist drive and a dance for which I begged the prizes and also begged a few pounds so we soon had the hand-bells. Unfortunately the war spoiled everything and they had to be forgotten. A case with a glass front was made for them and there they remained for many years, unused.

There was an annual outing associated with the choir.

One of the yearly entertainments was the Choir outing. This was organised by the Rector of Netherseal, the Rev. H.E.Worthington and it embraced a number of choirs from surrounding parishes. In the main it alternated between Blackpool and Scarborough. Looking back it was a pretty ghastly affair. We caught a train at Measham station at about five o'clock in the morning. It did give a full day by the sea. Once there the party divided into groups according to age, the boys being kept together by Riley. Sometimes dinner and tea were laid on in advance when everybody would meet again and relate what they had done. Some paddled, some, very few, bathed. The more adult went for what they called 'arride on the water' which could be a small rowing boat or a pleasure steamer. The small boys would take delight in having met others of the party such as 'I saw Mr. Miller twice' and so on.

Blackpool of course offered far more amusement than Scarborough, having the Big Wheel, Tower, Circus and much more. Also the young ones got lost easier. Scarborough on the other hand was more peaceful, less crowded and better sands.

The journey home would start at about eight o'clock and get to Measham at midnight or after, very cross and tired. Mother joined in once or twice but I do not remember his reverence ever going. Riley really ran the whole thing, took charge and looked after the tickets, booking the meals etc.

There was also a choir supper which seems to have been a lengthy event.

The choir supper, always held on a Saturday night, broke up at about eleven thirty after suitable speeches and a good deal of buttering, and that was that for another year. After one of those evenings, a lady came to the Rectory to walk home with her husband having spent the evening with a friend. She was shown into the study and given a glass of port. She was wearing a very long coat with innumerable buttons which she duly unfastened. Having drunk the port and expecting to go she did them all up again. Husband not ready to go she had another glass of port and undid the buttons. Again, after a suitable time the glass was empty and the coat done up. Still no husband, another glass of port and buttons undone. The face got redder, the glass

got empty and the buttons more difficult to handle. The husband eventually appeared, the buttons were finally done up and the pair departed for home.

For the younger children there was a Sunday school party.

In summer there was the School Feast. This was in reality a tea and games etc. for all the children who attended Sunday School which was run by mother. It did in fact, comprise nearly all the children in the village. It was held on the Rectory lawns so a fine day was essential. Long trestle tables, borrowed from the Moore Arms, were set out with long benches to sit on. Boys played cricket and girls played girlish games. All brought their own mugs as was customary, nearly all being either Jubilee or Coronation mugs. The tea was huge by any standard and a good time was had by all. A later innovation was for parents and others to come along later and dance on the lawn until about nine o'clock, Frank Booton and Jimmy Miller making the necessary noises. It was very popular and pleased the adult teachers.

Sports and Hunting

All the villages had a range of sports teams and played against each other. Hunting was also an important pastime in the Moore household.

I have said little about sport for the simple fact I was not outstanding in any particular game and only got few chances to play anything except tennis. This was a bit haphazard until I joined the Castle Club at Ashby. I played a bit of football, a little Rugby and some hockey. I belonged to a mixed club at Nailstone which was good fun. We played some rough sides such as Desford and Hinckley. The language was appalling. In winter I preferred shooting and hunting when I could go. I liked cricket but only got an occasional chance to play for the village. The period in which I might have played, the village had one of its best sides so I could only rarely get a look in.

As a very small boy I was sometimes taken to watch the cricket matches played on the area in front of the Sir John Moore school building. The ambition of the batsmen was to hit the ball on to the roof, or, better still, over it. From the other end, the lime trees were the target.

My uncle George Moore, the squire of Appleby, was a tough, hard man in his approach to sport which he lived for. He was a fine shot and a hard rider. It was said that he, Sir Mylles Cave and Tom King, an ex prize fighter could clear a hunting field in five minutes with their language. He once accidentally shot a fox at Gopsall. He was terribly upset and went home. This event is recorded in *Hunting Songs and Sport* collected by Mrs. Chaworth as 'On the death of a fox in Gopsall 1868'. This generation lived for sport and did a certain amount of public work.

Horses were kept for domestic use, farm work and hunting – but weren't necessarily suitable for all these activities!

A horse with great character was Columbus. He was as strong as an elephant and was really bought to pull the wagonette which he did with ease. With only two aboard he would run up Bird's Hill. Father one day took him hunting. Columbus had one idea only, tail up and head down and go like hell. Father came home exhausted with his arms nearly pulled out. He was quite beaten for a few days and I think, had his leg pulled in the field. Needless to say he never took him hunting again. Eventually Columbus was relegated to the farm where he very nicely took his place with the others. He was a nasty tempered horse both in the stall and when out in the field. He would make a sudden rush at anyone he did not like and I was one of them.

Hunting often took its participants quite a distance from home.

There is a legend of the Three Elm Trees. On the boundary of the estate, along the ridge of Austrey Hill, runs a lane called Salt Street. It runs from the Twycross Road, over the Austrey Road, to No Man's Heath. At the highest point, in full view of the Rectory, stood three elm trees close together like huge cricket stumps. They could be seen from miles away in any direction. Legend had it that my Great-grandfather planted them to guide him back to Appleby when riding back from a distance. This is rather ridiculous as elms could not be planted to serve such a purpose in a life time. They might have been 100 years old when I was a boy. My idea is there was a line of elm trees along the ridge. Some may have blown down, giving rise to the idea of a land-mark. Perhaps other trees were felled to isolate the three. I can remember them from my first childhood as they stood out so clearly in view from the rectory front door. When hunting, even several miles away it always seemed possible to see from some point, these three trees. Salt Street was a nice walk in summer but was impassable in winter except on a horse.

Dinners and Balls

Large dinners, made possible by large numbers of domestic staff, and balls were an important part of adult socialising for certain families.

Large parties for hunting and shooting were held at the Hall. They had dinner parties starting at about 4 p.m. and which went on for hours. There were several courses and father often described the characteristics and capabilities of some of the guests. Burgundy seems to have been the popular wine followed by lashings of port. All the main joints were very large and were carved by the host. The amount of dishes and plates, and the quantity of knives and silver must have been enormous. When one considers the number of courses it is easy to appreciate why these houses had such large numbers of silver spoons, forks, ladles etc. They also had a very large staff to

deal with everything. Apart from the house there was a large staff in the stables, the gardens and on the estate. Some of the old staff were living in retirement when I was a small boy. The old Misses Fish, Keziah and Elizabeth, lived in the Overtown. One of them had been housekeeper. I would be taken to see them by father and they would talk about old times. There were plenty of people in the village who remembered father and Uncle George being born.

Billy Cooper, of the Beeches in Appleby, gave numerous dinner parties. A small party would sit at a round table in the sitting room. I cannot say why I remember this and I never attended a meal, but his favourite in spring was guinea fowl and asparagus. I must have heard it often. He had a good staff looking after him. His cook and housekeeper he called 'Lizabeth and Mary was house parlour maid. 'Lizabeth was a wonderful cook and he never lacked guests. Outside there was Alveston, the groom who Billy called 'fat guts' and Frank Booton called 'know-all'. He was good to his staff and they in turn repaid him. The men had all the beer they wanted and did not abuse it. Every night a jug of beer was left in the saddlery for the village policeman, Rosling. All he had to do was raise the window and find the jug handy. Regular callers were John Fowler of Donisthorpe who rode over on his horse, John Turner. John Hassall and his son from Ashby, Ben Hedge and a host of others.

Attending an adult ball at Appleby Hall was an intimidating event for a young person as this extract shows.

I only went, much against my will, to escort my sister Sylvia because Wilfred did not want to go. I was too young and too far out my depth to enjoy it, so was collared by Elsie to talk to old ladies who had brought daughters with the same object, and above all, to take Bertha Taylor in to supper. Luckily she knew me very well and I knew her. She ate and talked without stopping so I only had to see she had a full plate and glass and keep fairly quiet. Sylvia spent most of her time dancing. I had one dance, with someone who took pity on me seeing I was bored stiff, which I indeed was, no one else of my age being there.

Sharing Stories and Gossip

Recounting stories and sharing news was an important part of less formal socialising as these extracts show.

When we were over at Kirkstead, one of the entertainments for the shooting party at Horncastle, was to visit a cobbler by the name of Marwood who had been an official hangman for a number of years. I gather they took some drink and sat in his shop, listening to Marwood talk about the different people he had hung. He kept in his shop

all the ropes he had used and knew which rope had hung which murderer. Sounds very morbid entertainment.

Jimmy Staines also had two barbers' shops, one for the elite and one for the lesser fry, the difference being one penny. In the former, presided over by Mr. Hines, a superior gentleman, one paid three pence for a hair cut. To this came the local gentry, reached by veering left at the entrance. By veering right, or popping up a side entry one came to a similar room presided over by a younger, more frivolous gentleman and get the same treatment but in rather mixed company for two pence. This young man was a pal of Walter Shakespeare, so he came to know me, as Walter took me in sometimes. Therefore, when father gave me three pence to go to Mr. Hines, I would go to the other shop and make a profit of a penny, and, maybe, asked to turn the wheel which operated the cylindrical brush to which men were subjected after each haircut. These were done away with as they were suspected of causing lung disease through inhaling dust. It must be said that Mr. Hines presided with the utmost tact, discretion and dignity. The other shop was the local hotbed of gossip and scandal.

Self Made Entertainment

A popular form of entertainment involved local people performing songs, poems or short plays.

I have already indicated that entertainment had to be largely of one's own making. We had village concerts once or twice a year, a stage being erected in the large room of the Grammar School. A 'Nigger' Minstrel show was popular. It included anyone who could sing a bit and would black their faces. Sometimes they had black head covers made from black stockings. William Riley was 'Mr. Interlocutor' and the questions and jokes were of a local flavour.

Miss Kinns would sing Abide with Me and Ora pro Nobis and some others. Mother would sing something from Handel. Miss Leech of Measham would sing Comin' thro' the Rye. 'Dada' Riley would give us hunting songs dressed in a red coat and top hat. He would also put on a kilt and sing Scottish songs. The school children sang Madrigals, Glees and part songs. There would be duets such as Larboard Watch Ahoy, Excelsior etc. On the whole it was good value and always packed houses.

Several houses had a Magic Lantern of some sort. This projected colour slides onto a white sheet or tablecloth. I was the lucky owner of a Cinematograph which projected continuous, belt-like film, showing a little incident like a dog or a policeman chasing a criminal along a street, repeating about every ten seconds. It was thoroughly enjoyed. Conjurors were great entertainment at parties as was the Punch and Judy.

On Boxing Day, in most villages, some lads would get together and keep up the old custom of going round the village and giving a short play at various houses depicting

some horror. Chief characters were, 'King George', 'Bold Slasher' and 'The Doctor'. At the Rectory, they acted their piece in the Back Yard. Sticks, shaped as swords and spears were prominent, someone was slain and a maid's honour was saved. Mince pies were eaten and on to the next venue.



Victor V Disc
Phonograph
(Gramophone).
*Collection of John
Lampert 2006.*

One Christmas day, early in the century I was given a phonograph. It was the latest thing and considered to be a reproduction of the human voice in clear tones beyond the wildest dreams. The machine was an Edison Bell, named after the famous inventor. The records were cylindrical, made of a black substance we called wax, very brittle. They were carefully kept in cylinders of thick cardboard. To drop this was to break the record. The selection was limited. New records could be bought at most music shops. They only played for a short duration, no long-playing records.

I can remember two of the first half-dozen I had. 'I'm off to Philadelphia in the morning' and 'She cost me seven and sixpence', not very high class, each chorus ending 'I wish I'd bought a dog'. It was the only phonograph in the village and was in great demand at parties.

Travelling Players and Local Theatre

Sometimes travelling players would come to the village or people would travel further afield for more professional entertainment.

Travelling Cinematographs came to the village once or twice a year. They showed exciting films of fairly short duration, but several of them. Strolling Players would sometimes come to the village and give a few short but blood-thirsty plays. Maria

Marten and the Red Barn was always popular. There was some pretty lousy acting and make-up but the entrance was only about two pence, so one could not expect Grand Guignol for that!

Ashby put on some good amateur theatricals, such as Ici on parle Francais, Charlie's Aunt etc. We sat on very uncomfortable chairs in the very cold Market Hall and pretended that we enjoyed it. Two other popular shows at this time were the Orcadians with that great comedian, Alfred Lesber and Peter Moody, the jockey who never won a race. The other was The Whip, a spectacular, with real horses galloping flat out on the stage. I saw each of these at least three times.

Birmingham and Leicester produced the real thing. We went to pantomimes in the winter. As I got older we went to plays and to see well known actors including George Robey and George Formby, the father of George of modern times with his ukulele. These two were the top of their profession. Good musical plays such as The Merry Widow, San Toy, Florodora and of course Gilbert and Sullivans' operas were always worth going to see. Later on, when we were just married, May and I saw the first production of Chu Chin Chou, I think, the best of all. Sometimes a good play would come to Burton.

National Events

Some national events and visits by royalty were the focus for local events or interest.

One of the first things I remember was the festivities connected with the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria. I suppose I was duly impressed. The events centred between the Moore Arms and the Grammar School. The things which stuck in my mind were the cricket match and the Oddfellows walking with their banner. I suppose I was given a mug along with all the children.

As I got older I was then able to take more than a passing notice of what was going on in the world if it was exciting enough. The Boer War in South Africa was the main subject in the papers and in conversation. To me it was the rejoicings which rang the main bell. When a town on the Cape was relieved people went mad with joy almost comparable with the end of the Great War in November 1918. It only meant the relief of a small town such as Mafeking or Ladysmith or similar small place. The more worrying events and defeats did not ring a bell with me.

Then came the death of the old Queen which did not really register though I was now getting older. I remember very well the memorial service in the Church which was draped in black and mauve cloth from Aaron Chandler's shop.

Then came the Coronation of Edward VII – the scare about his appendix and the operation and the possibility of another royal funeral. All this was great excitement

for one of my age and in my surroundings. However the King recovered, all the fashionable ladies swore they had appendicitis, the celebrations went on in a muted form to be followed by minor celebrations when the King was finally crowned.

Early in the turn of the century an event of great interest and importance was the visit of Edward VII to Gopsall to stay and shoot with Earl Howe. Tremendous preparations were made for a year ahead. Special bathrooms and lavatories were built and the whole Hall redecorated etc. The visit was reputed to have about ruined the estate. I cannot remember the year but it must have been early in the King's reign because I was not very old at the time.

Large crowds turned out to see the departure from Shackerstone Station where the Royal Train was waiting. We all drove over in the Wagonette. We were parked in a field on the route near the station and lined up overlooking the road. The Royal Carriage was escorted by a Troop of the Leicestershire Yeomanry, not long back from S. Africa. Wilfred was with the Escort. I rather think he was in command as it was only troop strength. We had a good view of the King and Queen. The large crowd gave him a great cheer.

The only other time I saw King Edward VII was at the Royal Show at Derby, round about the same period. Again I had a good view and again I was very small and I cannot say definitely whether it was before or after the Gopsall visit.

Chapter 3

The Farming Year

The text of this chapter is unchanged from Chapter 2 of the first edition of A Son of the Rectory although there are changes to the illustrations. In Aubrey's youth agriculture employed far more people than it does today. It also affected the sense of the village with working farms at its centre and was part of young people's lives rather than a separate world of work.

Whenever I could break away from the house I would be on the farm with Bill Winter. Those in charge of me were no doubt glad for me to be there as they knew I would be quite safe with him. On the other hand I would come in when fetched, filthy dirty and stinking to high heaven. I have often said I was brought up by Nell inside and by Bill Winter outside. From a tender age I mixed with all the aspects of farming. I was taught to milk as soon as I could hold a bucket or at least put the bucket where the milk would go into it. By the time I was seven years old I could be trusted to milk out a cow.

The carthorses were my great delight. I remember Blossom, Flower and Dragon particularly well. There were others but evidently not my favourites. The mares had foals which came into work when I was older but they were just another colt or filly to me. Flower met an early death from fever and pneumonia after a dead foal. Blossom I expect ended at the hunt kennels, the honourable end for all horses.

The farm work generally was always of interest. Bill had me holding the plough and I must have been very young when I was allowed to set out and I was very proud of my first furrow. Winter and summer work was all the same to me as long as I could take part. I loved milking time after dark. There was something very cosy about it, the warm shed lit by a single hurricane lamp, the noise of the milk going into the bucket, the general mutter of the cows and 'Soo then' from Bill.

Hygiene was not of a very high standard, but I suppose we were no different from any other farmer. The milker frequently dipped his fingers in the milk to make the action of the fingers on the teats so much easier. Then there would be a few cats hanging around and sometimes falling into the large bucket into which the smaller milking buckets had been tipped. When finished the milk was taken to the dairy and put into

shallow pans. Some would be skimmed for cream for making butter. Some milk went to the young calves and the men had a can.

As I have said, everything was consumed at home. Wheat and Barley were ground for stock feed. Oats were consumed by hunters and carriage horses. Mangolds and swedes were clamped for winter use. A few carrots were grown for the horses, put in a special pit in the hay place. About a dozen rows of potatoes were planted for the house and each man had a row.

There were rules and traditions about the cropping. The Park field, nearest but two to the church, was mown for hay every year. It was very good quality and was kept for the light horses. Jobs field, seventeen acres, was cut for hay about every fourth year, roughish fodder at best. There were always corncrake in it when down for hay, a lovely summer sound. The two rented fields Millses Close (earlier known as Hay Furlong Close), opposite the front gate and Finger Post field over the main road opposite Rectory Lane, were cut for hay in alternate years. Little Jobs and Little Meadow were never mown. The mares and foals occupied these.

Young light horses were usually in the rented fields. It was a Sunday afternoon ritual to go with father to see them and, of course, take them sugar. It was all part of their education and ours. The roots and corn crops were moved round the arable fields in a recognised rotation.

Roots were sown on the ridges which were drawn out by a ridge plough although Bill often used a breast plough which, he said, made a better job and he was very fussy. Farmyard manure was carted and spread by hand and ploughed in on land coming roots. Muck was the only fertiliser used. Grass had a dressing of basic slag. Land coming wheat, often after a fallow, was usually limed and worked down with heavy and light harrows and the roll. Corn was sowed by hand, often broadcast on the ploughing. Bill was an expert and could put on to the pound the required rate per acre. He could also broadcast the small amount of clover seed required to under-sow barley, the traditional mother crop. A ridge drill was used for roots. All root crops were horse and hand hoed several times and hand singled. It was most important to keep the root crop clean.

An important job in summer was thistle spudding. All available hands were armed with a spud and went carefully through the corn which was now knee high. Every thistle had to be cut off but docks were dug out. As all corn was hand tied at harvest it was necessary to have as few thistles as possible, otherwise the language from those tying could be a bit strong and directed at the person who had neglected the spudding, viz: Bill Winter. A spud, now unknown, was small, spade shaped, about 2 inches wide and 3 inches long, very sharp and on a long handle. Most farmers had a spud on their walking stick so if they saw a thistle it could be spudded.

One field was usually put to dead fallow which was good farming practice. It saved anyone having to think what to do on a fine day – go and work the fallow! The field was scuffled, harrowed and scuffled time after time. The harrowing rolled up the twitch which could then be burned. Working the fallow was the opportunity to break in young horses. This was a great occasion and without doubt the atmosphere was transmitted to the horse, which, when the time came for it to be yoked, was worked up into a nervous state. The young horse was put in the middle of a tandem of three with much heavy handed leading, shouting and pulling. After a few days both trainer and trainee had calmed down and the new horse was fit for ordinary work with care. At the end of the fallow the field was given a good dressing of lime and wheat sown.

Young carriage and hunting horses were sent to the horse breaker. Ours went to Jackson who lived about two miles our side of Market Bosworth. Father thought him to be a very good breaker. They certainly came back completely trained and trustworthy.

We ran a flock of thirty to forty Shropshire sheep. About a dozen were grazing in the churchyard all week, being fetched out on Saturday and taken in on Monday. Lambing was a busy time for Bill Winter and I joined in when I could.

On the advice of Bill I began to take a financial interest in the farm. He suggested I invest my savings in four sheep. Father thought it a good idea so I was duly allotted four, the arrangements being he should have the wool for their keep. I was mad keen and even took an interest in what ram we would have to cross with our Shropshire ewes. In due course they lambed and strangely enough all mine had twins so I possessed twelve sheep. The value of sheep was about £2. 15s. 0d. to £3. 0s 0d. for a very good one. It was marvellous the way money began to grow. Things like buying cycles and, later, motor cycles, presented no problems. Castrating and tailing was a great occasion, that is for everybody except the lambs. Bill performed the operation. The unfortunate lamb was held up by someone and Bill, using a very sharp knife, opened up the purse and extracted the testicles by drawing them out with his teeth in the traditional manner. He would then spit in the cavity, why, I don't know. As a final indignity the luckless lamb would be let out, held by the door for a second while a swift stroke with the knife sent it on its way minus seven eighths of its tail. The whole operation per lamb did not take long and they were soon looking none the worse.

Even as small boys we knew all about the breeding side of stock. Even if we were not very expert we knew when a cow was 'bulling' or a mare 'ossing', and so on, such things being part of normal discussion and general chatter which went on between Bill Winter and myself. I always looked forward to putting the red raddle on the tup and then, when we did our daily shepherding, counting the number of ladies with a red

bottom. When all were accounted for, the red was replaced with blue and some ladies would then be the proud possessor of a blue bottom.

In due course, lambing would start and I would naturally be in on that. I liked to have a cade lamb to look after. This regretfully occurred when a ewe died or sometimes it would be the odd man out of triplets, discarded by mamma. Of course I got into trouble trying to bring it into the house, perhaps to the nursery. Sometimes I sneaked it into the back quarters only to be shooed out by Annie Reeves, so we would retire to the brewhouse.

About the turn of the century, father sent the wool from a shearing to a mill in Yorkshire to be made into cloth and blankets, a quite usual practice for farmers. In due course it came back made up. If we had been hoping for bright colours our hopes were soon dashed. The bulk was black, the rest dark grey. Fair enough I suppose since most people wore dark clothes and school clothes were black or grey. 'Sunday best' were always dark, and black was usually worn for about a year after a death in a family. Our clothes were made from this home grown cloth for years. These rolls of black cloth were used to drape the Church at the memorial service when Queen Victoria died. It was stored in Aaron Chandler's shop as it would be safer from moth.

When any of us required a new suit it was made in Aaron's shop. There were quite a few shelves of rectory cloth. Aaron would take the required length from one of the rolls. I do not know how long the cloth lasted.

Some wool was also made into blankets. In a household like ours the number was considerable. My parents would never stand for the staff sleeping and living less warm than the family. There was no heat upstairs. No fires in bedrooms except in the case of illness.

Although no longer a boy at the time, I must record a nasty experience when a mare foaled. I had not long started to work. Father had bought a well bred mare, a good looking shire with the old fashioned large feet and heavy feathering. Unfortunately, she developed grease. She was sent to a well known stallion, Bardon Forest King. When due to foal she was put in a loose box in the stable yard as was the custom. Bill Winter was a very sick man so Gregory and the waggoner whose name I cannot remember, stayed in the saddlery at nights. She started to foal. Father came and awakened me to say the mare was in trouble. I went and the foal's head was out and two tiny short legs with cloven hooves. It was a weird sight. Bill Winter was fetched for advice. No one had seen the like before. At last we got the foal away, a beautifully marked foal except for those two freak front legs.

The mare was in a terrible state so I went on my motor cycle to get the vet, Mr. Sturgess from Ashby. He came at once, by horse and trap. He had never seen anything like it. He told us to destroy the foal.

I will not go into the details of the killing of this freak. For some reason father would not let me shoot it. The whole business was horrible, such a lovely foal but only a useless piece of flesh. It had all the appearance of a kangaroo. I went off to the pit at about six o'clock. I heard when I got back quite a few people had been to see it.

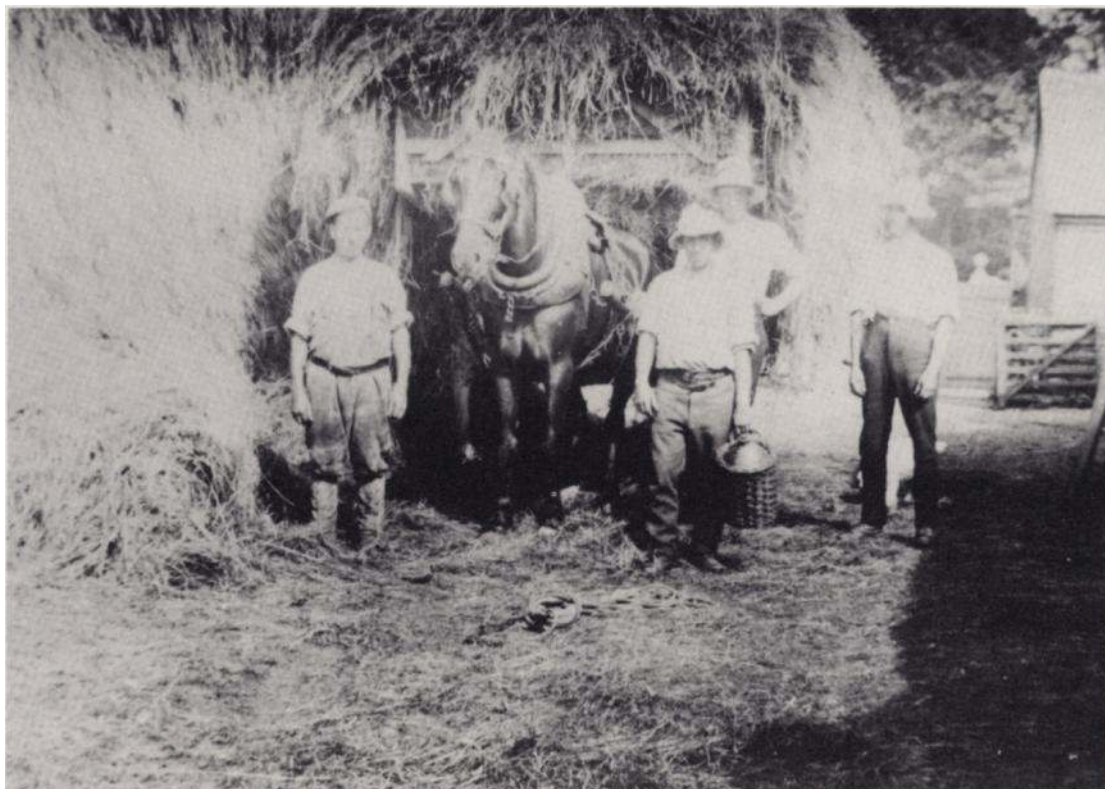
The mare recovered and was sent to the same horse but she never returned. She was a really bad buy.

Hay harvest sometimes started in June if it was a good summer. It was quite a festival. The grass mower with two horses would mow into swaths. Bill would do this by himself with one of the men or a boy to look after the corners, and rake back the first swath so the machine could go the reverse way to cut the outsides. The knife also had to be sharpened. After one or two days according to the weather, a gang of up to twelve would turn the swaths with fork or rake according to choice. After two or three turnings the whole field would be put into windrow with the horserake, wide enough to allow the carts to go between. When ready the hay was carried to the rickyard for stacking by an expert at the job. Ben Wright was such a man, another was 'Soaker' Wyatt. When they finished, Bill took it on. It was a matter of personal pride that the rick would not require propping.

Corn harvest was carried out with the hay mower adapted to deal with corn, having an extra seat for the man using the rack and rake. Bill did this job and I often drove the pair of horses. Bill's foot worked a pedal on the rack which he held down while guiding the cut straw with the rake. When the rack was full, the foot was raised, the rack flush with the ground, the untied straw guided off with the rake. Round the uncut corn men were placed at about fifty yard intervals to tie the sheaves. They took a small handful of straw to make the 'bant', gathered the straw with hand and leg, put the 'bant' round, twisted and tucked it under. The men moved on in a circuit till they came to where the man in front had started and waited for the machine to come round. The whole operation depended on team work. It was considered a let-down if the machine had to stop for untied sheaves. Self binders did not come our way until I was about fifteen. A man named Boss, of Measham, had one for hiring out. We had it and cut the six acre with it. Father and the rest of us were not impressed and we reverted to the old method. Labour costs were never considered.

When all was finished, the machine put away, the horses fed and turned out, the men had a rest and tea if not already taken or a round of beer. The men went back plus a few more who thought they would like to help, (wage – a drink of beer) to start shocking, (called by some shucking or stooking). All would stop until it was finished,

even if it was dark. Rabbits shot out of the corn were given to casual helpers. The corn would remain in the field until fit to carry. The field would be walked over regularly to rebuild collapsed shocks. Father was very fussy about corn being dry. With oats, which could be cut fairly green, it was said that the church bells must ring over them for three Sundays before being carried.



Haystacking in the Rectory rickyard. About 1910. The traditional beer jar with its wicker casing is well in evidence.

Horses were controlled by voice as well as rein. 'Eet' or 'Ayte' was go right. 'Come back' or 'Koom' was come or go left.

Traditional with the harvest was the tea and beer. A boy was employed to carry the beer in a two gallon jar in a wicker carrier. A 'glass' made from a cow's horn was the traditional receptacle from which to drink, holding about half a glass, about two good swallows. Little and often. I don't think this was ever washed from start to finish except a swill round with a little beer. It must have been pretty foul. For tea a large basket was filled with bread and butter, both home made, lettuce and cake and a large bucket-like soup can, full of tea. I was always in on this if we were not having a family tea party in the hay. At carrying time both beer and tea were divided between field and rickyard.

At the end of the harvest was the thatching which we called thacking. A wet day job at any time was cutting thack pegs. Wheat straw was drawn, i.e. a batten was opened

and the best straw drawn from it and made into neat sheaves. Several hanks of coconut fibre or thack cord were brought. The stacks had sunk a good deal and the ridge was made up with straw. Bill Winter did the thacking and as in all his work, he took tremendous pride in it.

Finally, well on in winter, the threshing machine came. This outfit was owned by Mr. Wadlow who lived in Ducklake in the village and kept his machines there. I used to meet the engine at the gate and be helped up on to the footplate. I was allowed to take the wheel and to do a lot of steering. It was surprising how light the steering was. All sorts of characters followed the machine from farm to farm and it was each to his special job.

The rickyard was usually full of hay so the corn was stacked in the field near the cart hovel where it was convenient for threshing. The wheat straw was bound in battens, oats and barley were stacked loose. All corn had to be carried from the drum, down the rickyard to the big barn, up the steps to the granary, through a very low door, about five feet, and the sack 'shot' onto the floor. These sacks held about half a quarter, a quarter being 480 pounds – wheat being 60 pounds to a bushel and eight bushels to a quarter. Two men did this job, Bill being one. I carried a few just to show I could do it, but I was the wrong build. Getting through that low door was my Waterloo. However, I never dropped one.

Wages were reasonable for the time. All had one pound a week, the boy five shillings to start. They had perks, but did long hours, 6 am. to 6 pm., Monday to Saturday, Sunday they came for milking, bedding and feeding. They had breakfast in the saddle room and went home for dinner.

All estates employed one or more gamekeepers, according to the size. Appleby had two. We had one at Kirkstead. A big estate like Gopsall had four or five, the head keeper being a man of some importance and standing and of course, had many friends. A good keeper was a dedicated man. He was a born naturalist, knew all there was to know about every kind of game, and, what was more important, about all vermin and predators, including human. Poaching was prevalent in those days. The keeper and the village bobby were constantly on the lookout for poachers, particularly in winter and sometimes made a catch, usually red-handed. A good poacher had to be a cunning man, but so was a keeper so it was wits against wits. Poachers usually got short shrift at the local bench if found guilty. The chairman of the bench was invariably a local landowner who had no use for poachers.

If poachers worked in a gang they would often use a net to catch partridge. One of them would know where, and in which field the covey juggled. In the dark they would drag the net over the ground and when it went over the covey they would rise only to be caught at once in the net, quickly dispatched and put in a bag. A field could be

dragged very quickly and the poachers away. A look-out was employed and a scout would know where the keeper was. The defence against dragging was 'brushing' a field. Partridges had favourite fields in which to jug. The keeper would stick firmly in the ground fairly large branches of thorn at intervals all over the field. Poachers would know this so would not drag that field as their nets would be entangled and torn, nor could they take up the thorn as it would disturb the birds.

Pheasants were easier to get. They roosted in trees and on a moonlight night were easy to see. They could be knocked out with an air gun or a catapult, or, if low enough, caught by hand.

It was always said a good poacher made a good gamekeeper which is of course, pretty obvious. Both had to be dedicated country men, know about country lore and its wildlife if they were to be any good at their job. Apart from the gamekeeper's job of 'keeping', he had to be able to show good sport when the shooting days came along. He had to have all his drives well planned out and advise his master when going over the plan for the day's shoot.

The usual plan was to walk birds in September. Guns and beaters spread out across grass and stubble in the hope of driving birds into roots. These would then be walked, the guns and beaters close together. A necessary part of this plan was good dogs. It is almost impossible to collect killed or wounded game in roots without dogs.

All gamekeepers had their vermin 'larder'. This was usually a wire fence, near the middle of the estate, on which all vermin were hung. Usual victims were stoat, weasel, rats, hawks, carrion crow, magpie, jay, small owl and a few others. The object of the larder was 'pour décourager les autres' and also to show the master that he was doing his job. The bigger the vermin larder, the better the job was being done. A fox was never seen hung up. If one was shot it was discretely buried.

The magpie, always a bit of a character, was the most hated bird; because of that they were much more scarce in my young days. They would steal bright objects, as jackdaws will, and steal eggs. For all this, the older generations, such as father, always raised their hats to a magpie which, of course, I did. As hats are not worn much now, we wave to them. May, my wife, was brought up in the same tradition.

There were a few ways boys in the village could make a penny or two pocket money. Cow 'tenting' was one. A boy would mind or tend a small herd of cows while they grazed the road verges. This was a common practice in summer. The herd would be made up of one, two, or three cows from three or four smallholders who owned or rented a few acres. Some or all these few acres would have to provide hay for winter so the cows had to be fed elsewhere. Roadside grazing was a right. In the days before cars and lorries took over the roads the sides were very lush grass, free for all.

There was only horse drawn traffic and riders so there was no problem. When the first cars arrived they did not bother the cattle and the cattle did not bother them. There was an old man from Wigston who did nothing but tend cows, but he usually had a large number from larger farmers who would save their own grass by grazing the verges. This man wore a large coat and a very greasy felt hat, turned down, and sat immobile on a milking stool and only moved to rejoin his charges when they had moved some distance away.

Big farmers employed a bird scarer when the corn was ripening. A few pennies would be earned at this. They were given a clapper made from three pieces of half inch board, four or five inches wide by six or seven inches. One piece was double the length, one half shaped to a handle. The three pieces, handle in the middle, were lashed together with a leather thong. Properly used this made a loud clapping noise.

‘Oss mucking’ was a lucrative business. A soap or sugar box on a pair of small wheels and an old dustpan was the only equipment required. Boys would go out on the roads and collect the horse droppings. Either this was taken to their own garden or sold to someone else. Many cottages made up quite sizeable heaps in the course of the year. Some roads were more rewarding than others. The going rate was two or three pennies a load according to size.

An energetic and enterprising boy could, with the afore mentioned and running a few errands, make quite a few shillings over a period. One of the first jobs boys went after, on leaving school, was that of telegram boy. They just waited at the post office for a telegram to come in, then off they went to the person it was addressed to. I do not know what they were paid, about five shillings a week most likely. However there were tips to be had and an occasional quick meal, especially at the outlying farms. Telegrams were the only quick method of communication. Boys, on leaving school, generally found something to do. Their usual goal was pits or brickyards but they had to wait a year or more to get taken on. In the meantime they did odd jobs or got on a farm.

Every country boy was a naturalist. We knew all about wild animals and birds, their general habits and character. Birds nesting was an important time. I had a passable collection by the time I reached my teens. It was an unforgiveable sin to take more than one egg. If a boy destroyed a nest he did not do it a second time. If an egg was broken when blowing, we tried to find another nest from which to get a replacement.

The area of the rectory contained a large assortment of birds, common to fairly rare. If we found an unusual egg we could not identify we would not be long before we found the answer. Many birds had local names but I have forgotten them. Sparrows were ‘spadgers’, blackbirds ‘blackies’, hedge sparrows were of course dunnocks and buntings (yellowhammers) ‘bunties’. Apart from respecting their nests, we did not

spare the common birds. They were fair game for the catapult to the delight of the gardener. Mortality was not very high with this weapon, but we did catch sparrows by the hundreds. It must be realised the sparrow population was very high in those days, particularly around the rickyard and in the ivy on the house. We used to borrow a sparrow net from a farmer and catch hundreds. This net was about four feet deep and six wide, between two long poles. This was placed against the rick, a hurricane lamp held up on a pitchfork and the net would be a mass of sparrows. The net was closed and the birds killed. We did the same operation on the ivy on the house. This may sound cruel but sparrows were so numerous as to be a pest. For a small operation a riddle on a pitchfork was a suitable weapon.

Going back to the catapult, most boys had one which they made themselves and a fair number of grown men had one. We cut our sticks and got the elastic from Tunnadine, sometimes thick, quarter inch, but some preferred three or four strands of thin which seemed to give a higher velocity. The catapult was a deadly weapon in the right hands. A squatting rabbit, a hare in its form, or a pheasant at roost were easy targets.

Other pursuits were mushrooming and blackberrying. What we called the Little Meadow was full of mushrooms. Millses Close and Fingerpost Field had several too but one had to be up early because others had the same idea. There is nothing nicer for breakfast than freshly picked mushrooms and several slices of home-cured fat bacon from a twenty-five score pig. Modern fertilisers and herbicides have practically put an end to the natural grown mushroom.

For a long time I kept ferrets, in fact I was hardly ever without one in my pocket to the annoyance of everyone except father who was amused by it. When he was away Bill and I would have a few hours ferreting. Bill always knew where the rabbits were. Sometimes Bill would come to me and say 'Old Sarah (Bill's name for a hare) sits in the middle of Millses Close. You get the gun and I'll drive her to you.' He would tell me where to stand hidden and sure enough, Sarah would come along. If I shot it, he would have it. It was all very hush hush.

The rectory had a fair sized rookery extending on both sides of the drive entrance and down the long spinney. Father would not allow rooks to be shot before the fifteenth of May and if that fell on a Sunday it had to be the sixteenth. He was most strict on this, as was the squire so it must have been a rule of my grandfather. We shot a lot of rooks, rifles only being used except for one gun walking the outside to get flyers. When very small, father would let me have a shot which was my start in shooting.

It takes about ten rooks to make a rook pie, only the breast being used. It then requires a good proportion of beefsteak and hard boiled eggs and eaten once a year. We were allowed to shoot flyers for a day or so. A lot were given away in the village.

Rooks are wonderful birds to watch and study their habits. From a very early age I spent a long time in the spinney watching their antics and the rows which would suddenly spring up. They started building on March 1st, and that was when most of the rows started. Rooks do not stay in their own rookery at night but go off to a large wood several miles away. Our rooks and the Hall rooks went to Gopsall where they were joined by others. When they started building they continued their nightly exodus until about to lay. They then stayed at home until the young birds who had survived the guns could make the journey which would be about the end of May, when the nightly migration would go on until the next spring. Nearly every night I would watch them start. Suddenly all would rise simultaneously from the trees. I would watch them out of sight, feeling a little lonely when they had gone. We would watch the rooks from other rookeries come over from Willesley, Stretton and a few we did not know, all going to Gopsall where thousands roosted every night and I was told they all had their own area and never mixed.

Starlings roost in large colonies like rooks. All starlings in our district went to Newton Gorse and we watched them go over. Like the rooks, they flew at varying heights according to the weather and humidity. When out hunting we knew we were near Newton Gorse by the strong smell which came from it. Yet foxes were always there. If we did not run there it was a sure find. Efforts were made at both Gopsall and Newton to get rid of the birds but without any success.

I was never able to find out what was the signal for the departure of the rooks. I watched and listened carefully. The nearest I got was to notice the obvious, that one bird got up first, but the time lag between the first and the remainder was a split second. I never came to any conclusion as to what timed their departure.

When father was a boy they shot with muzzle loaders so all shooting was by walking the land. Driving birds only came in with the advent of the cartridge. There were various ways of getting close enough to the birds. Setters and pointers were used. The dogs, on winding the game would stand motionless pointing with their noses. The guns would then move forward and flush the covey. The line of guns would then stand while all guns were reloaded. Another way to walk birds was to fly a kite shaped to resemble a hawk hovering. This device was used later in the season when the birds were wilder. Seeing this image of a hawk would make the birds squat and so allow the guns to get near before flushing them. If the shadow of the kite could be brought over the field it was more effective.

One of our pastimes in summer was to fly this kite. We got very skilled at it. The tail had up to six small bags which could be weighted with stones or some could be discarded to give a critical balance weight. With trial and error one could get a very manoeuvrable kite according to the wind. Then one could carry out all sorts of tricks,

such as diving and zooming. George and I would play with it for hours, thoroughly enjoying ourselves. We would see who could dive nearest to the ground without crashing.

When I was allowed to carry a gun by myself and as soon as September was in, I would be out at dawn walking up partridges. The night before I would watch where they juggled. As soon as it was light enough I would walk to the spot hopefully. By seven o' clock I would likely have a couple of brace, ready for a large breakfast, possibly including mushrooms I had gathered.

Up to this time my rabbit killing was by ferret and purse net. This was a net fashioned as a bag and placed over the bolt-hole. One soon learned which this hole was. Sometimes a good deal of digging had to be done if a line got fast round a root or a loose ferret would not leave the rabbit it had killed.

As soon as possible after killing a rabbit it had to be dealt with. I was taught all about this when very small. First the rabbit was drained by pressing round the area of the bladder. Then the belly was slit open and all the guts pulled out. This was much easier done when the rabbit was warm. It was rather a smelly job when they were cold. Then a slit was made in the hind leg between the bone and the sinew and the other leg threaded through, a nick made in the hock and there was a loop to sling it on to a stick to be carried over the shoulder. There was a big row if caught carrying one on the gun barrel. The alternative was to carry them in the 'hare' pocket of the jacket. This was a very large pocket on the inside of the jacket big enough to hold a hare, hence its name. Most country men and boys had one, or one each side of their jackets. It was surprising what one could carry in these pockets. Whenever I killed rabbits I nearly always gave them to the men though some went for our own consumption. The men appreciated them. It meant a good meal for a family. If we had one in the dining room it was often roasted whole. The skins were hung up to dry. These were bought by the 'rag and bone man'. These people came round at intervals and took away all the useful rubbish such as old rags, bones, rabbit skins and certain kinds of bottles. Sometimes with a bit of luck I would do the selling and pocket the proceeds.

Whilst a rabbit has to be gutted as soon as possible after killing, this does not apply to a hare. The guts are left in until prepared for cooking. By then it is not a very pleasant job. After shooting a hare is only 'legged' like a rabbit

Chapter 4

Changing Technologies, Changing Lives

The early 20th century was a time of rapid technological change in terms of transport, agriculture and domestic heating and lighting. These fragments from Aubrey Moore's memoirs, not previously published, provide a sense of life before the car, widespread mechanisation or electricity. They also provide a vivid sense of the idiosyncrasies of early motorbikes and cars and the challenges faced by those 'pioneers' who first used them.

Heating and Lighting a Home Before Electricity

In this first extract the work required to keep a home well lit is clear.

In the Rectory it was the duty of the housemaid to trim the lamps every day. This was done in the pantry. A large drum of paraffin, about 50 gallons, was kept in the 'oil place' in the stable yard and one gallon cans filled from it. Trimming meant filling, trimming the wick, cleaning the chimney and if brass, keeping the whole polished. Father's study had a reading lamp. There was a large standard lamp for the dining room. This also did for the drawing room. After dinner, one of the males would carry it to whichever room was being used.

Although all heating was done by open fires of coal or wood, damage to property by fire was a rare event. There was no gas or electricity in the villages except a few private plants and no oil-fired stoves except in big houses. What I remember of them they were very heavy, clumsy affairs with an oily smell and unless carefully trimmed would stink the place out. They were not popular.

Farming Before Engines

Farm work before engines was also very labour intensive and heavily dependent on horses to power the machinery that was used.

There was, of course, no power driven machinery on farms, only 'horse-power'. Such operations as pulping roots, chaff cutting and corn grinding were done by hand or from a driving unit worked by a horse, known as 'jinny', from gearing outside the barn. This was a horizontal, heavy, cast iron disc, cogged on the under side, which engaged a pinion connected in turn to a universal joint to a long two inch steel rod to

the jinny inside the barn. This, in turn, with a fast and loose pulley, drove, with a four inch belt, on the one side the pulper and equi-distant on the other side, the chaff cutter. A long belt drove the corn grinder, past the chaff.

The outside drive operated with a ten feet long wooden beam or pole, to which was connected the horse. The chain traces were attached to the swingle tree at the pole end and a thin, steel radius rod to the bridle. The horse moved round in a circle, called the 'jinny-ring', pulling the pole which, via the cogs, universal joint and the steel rod, turned the jinny inside. This was the 'power house'. The usual horse on the jinny in my time was old Blossom. She would go or stop, whichever was shouted from the barn by Bill. Others required a driver and going round and round the 'jinny ring' was monotonous.

Upstairs in the granary was the cake grinding machine. The cake, in slabs, had to be carried up the stairs. It was ground up there and was carried down to be fed. No 'time and motion study' in those days. Out of reach of the jinny, cake grinding was done by hand.

However the first mechanical cultivators were coming in during this period.

The cultivator sets were two engines, each with a horizontal drum under the boiler on one of which was a long wire rope. The implements were a large six or eight breast plough and a large, many tined cultivator. The engines would be stationed each end of the field, the implements being pulled backwards and forwards across the field. Where used they did a good job, getting in deep and breaking up the pan. A large acreage could be covered in a short time compared with horses but fields had to be large.

Firefighting

Firefighting, when it was required, also involved horses and manual labour.

I remember very few fires of houses and not many hay stacks. When it did happen it was a great day and talking point. In the event of a fire the Measham or Ashby fire brigade was sent for, by telegram or bicycle. All fire engines, town or country, were horse drawn, going to the fire at full gallop. It was an inspiring sight and never failed to thrill one. Many people followed miles to see the fire.

Which brigade came depended on horses available. If, for instance, there was a big dance or ball on, it was unwise to have a fire that night. The original fire engines were weird contraptions compared with later engines. They had hand operated pumps, worked by volunteers the crew dealing with the hoses etc. There would be five or six men each side working the long bars up and down, the quicker they pumped the greater the pressure. Sometimes the water would be a long way from the fire, like from the brook to the top of Black Horse Hill where I saw a fire. This meant

hard work for the pump crew, the Captain all the time calling for more pressure. The only reward was beer and gallons of it. It was said by many that the cost of the beer was greater than the cost of the brigade. There was no free fire service then. Some stacks, if isolated from others and buildings were allowed to burn themselves out as the cost of the brigade, plus beer was greater than the value of the fodder.

Weddings

Few people had motorised transport and so people walked more – even to events such as weddings and funerals as described in these next extracts.

Providing a major diversion, all walked to the Church for a wedding, including bride and bridesmaids. Sometimes someone would lend a vehicle of some sort to take the bride to Church and take the pair back home otherwise everybody walked. Such things did not bother anyone as it was customary.

Funerals

When the person died all the blinds in the house were drawn and sometimes in the neighbour's house. On the day of the funeral all the houses in the village, especially those on the route to the Church drew their blinds. Coffins were invariably carried on the shoulders of the bearers, the mourners walking behind. The origin of the Lych Gate at the entrance to Church yard was for the coffin to be put down to give the bearers a rest before entering the Church and to give shelter.

Only the better off employed a hearse. Some of these were very elaborate affairs. It was also necessary to have carriages for the mourners. So the hearse was usually owned by the local livery stable and was hired from there which meant some black horses were kept among the cab horses.

An 'economical' vehicle was an outfit called a shillabier. This was a hearse with a cab attached. Just behind the driver was a glass panelled compartment in which the coffin was placed. Then came the passenger compartment which held about six of the chief mourners, all very compact and cosy.

Railways

Longer journeys were usually carried out by rail. Trains were much more frequent and there were stations at far smaller places than there are now – the nearest to Appleby at that time was Snarestone.

There was a constant run of trains in both directions (*between Crewe and London*), averaging six to eight per hour, sometimes more. It was great fun and one had to be quick to spot the name owing to the speed. The Trent Valley was one of the fastest lengths in the whole system. We always said at the Rectory that if we could hear the trains over Austrey hill it would rain before morning and it did. Humidity caused it.

However journeys could still be very slow and difficult as this extract shows.

During the shooting season four or five visits were made to Kirkstead going on a Monday and back on Saturday. The journeys were terrible by train. The usual route was from Ashby Little Station, catch the Derby train at about 9am. Change at Derby, go to Nottingham, change, go to Lincoln, now about 1.30pm. Here we changed stations from Midland to Great Northern, about 7 minutes walk. We took the Boston train to Kirkstead, changed and took the local to Woodhall Spa. It would now be dark. All this with at least twenty pieces of luggage, two dogs, three or four family, Annie Reeves, the cook, a parlour maid, Gregory to valet etc. A handcart was engaged at Lincoln and one met us at Woodhall to take the luggage to the House or keepers lodge.

Bicycles

Bicycles were a very common form of transport for local journeys.

I rode a bicycle at an early age. Walter Shakespeare helped me to become reliable and through him I got my first modern bike. This is how I came to go with him to Ashby fairly often. My parents trusted him implicitly. We usually went in the evenings. Walter was teetotal, a non-smoker, a very good living man. He was a good friend to Alex Davidson, who, as a bachelor, did not have an easy time.

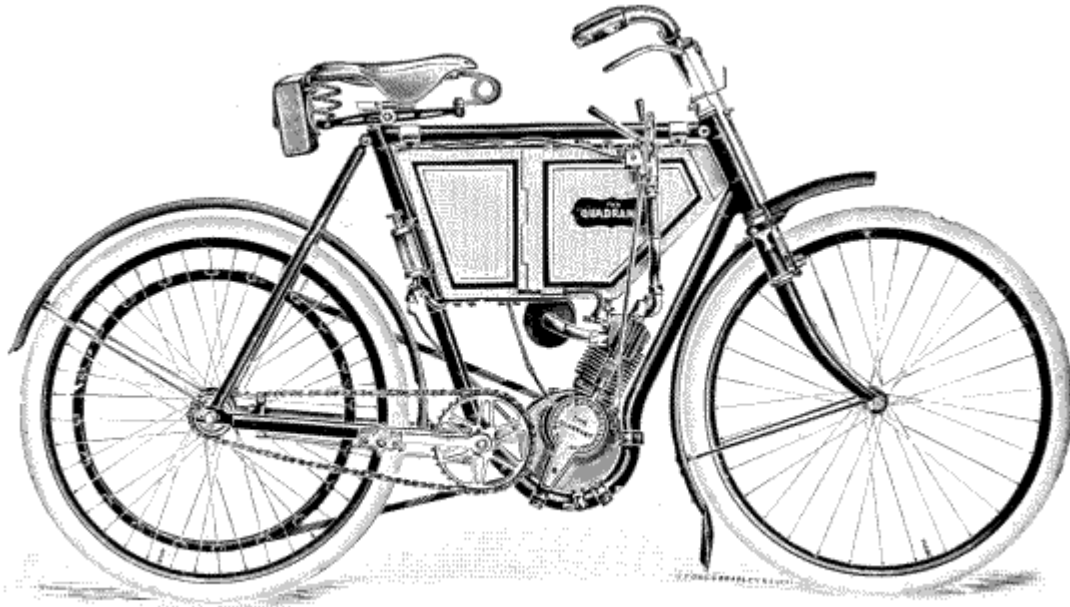
Bicycles were getting popular and gradually we all had one. My first bicycle was from my grandfather Byron, a queer contraption which must have succeeded the penny-farthing. The front wheel was a larger circumference than the rear, the cross bar sloped upwards to the front fork. It was very, very heavy. I was taught to ride by various people and soon mastered it. Uncle George seemed to discover he had a similar bicycle which he gave to me. He had had it many years. The story goes that he had one try to ride it, fell off and never tried again. I was therefore, the proud possessor of two bicycles. Father, Sylvia, Nell Guy and Annie Reeves all had bicycles and all were kept in the Parish room. I of course, frequently left mine in the passage for everyone to bark their shin on. I regularly got into trouble about this and threatened with confiscation of said bicycles. At last all machines were banished to the brewhouse (brew'us) where they interfered with no one but got very dusty.

Motorcycles

Motorcycles offered the possibility of travelling further and with less effort and as such attracted a lot of interest as these extracts show.

Father bought a motor cycle about 1903 or 4 as near as I can remember – another queer contraption. It was not much more than a strong ordinary cycle with an engine attached. It was pedalled along to get the engine to fire and when it did it made a lot of noise. Father was no mechanic. The controls, throttle and ignition, were mounted

on the tank, slung beneath the cross bar. Father had only two speeds, stop and go. If it was go, all levers were open to the full and away he went. Between home and Ashby he would not touch the levers. It was said it was a great sight to see him, coat tails flying, bowler hat pushed firmly on the back of his head, roaring through Measham, full out.



1903 Quadrant bike, probably similar to the motorcycle described. *Reproduced with the kind permission of Leon Mitchell.*

He bought this machine from a well known cycle dealer in Market Street, Ashby, Joe Haynes. Joe was known to everybody and was a great character. I knew him from a very young age because Walter Shakespeare took me there when we went to Ashby by bicycle. He had supplied father with his machine and tried and tried to teach him a few things about it with little success.

Walter Shakespeare, who is mentioned in a number of these extracts, took up racing.

It was a general thing for us to have lunch at the Villa on Saturday. I would spend all my time with Walter who was very good to me. He was really groom/gardener but being a good mechanic, he made a good chauffeur. He was a great cycle enthusiast and reached top flight among Midland racing men. We often went to see him ride if it was not too far away. He did a bit of cycle dealing and supplied me when I was old enough to have modern machines. He courted and married our cook, Annie Reeves. The reception was held at the Rectory as was usual when staff got married. Walter was one of those men difficult to replace and the Doctor never took to anyone else.

Both Aubrey and his father undertook long journeys on their new motorcycles which resulted in adventures ...

Father decided to go to Cambridge on his motor cycle and asked Joe to go with him in case of trouble. Joe, being game, they set off. In the evening we got a telegram from Cambridge 'Arrived safely, lost Joe'. Joe was never tired of telling the story of that trip. He said he could just not keep up with father. How he ever got to Cambridge was always a mystery. He must have known the road very well. Father made for home in a day or two. The machine stopped at the top of Bradgate and he pedalled it to Coalville where he stopped the night at the Railway Hotel. He wired for Joe to come over. Joe arrived, tapped the petrol tank and said 'no petrol'. We never saw that motorcycle again.

Some of us became motor-cycle crazy. It led to John Shields, Frank Joyce and myself being together a great deal especially at the weekends. These two were top class cricketers, John being captain of Leicestershire and Frank played for the county often. When they were playing away I would go on my motor cycle after work if it could be fitted in. We all eventually got ourselves Indian motor cycles 7/9 HP, painted red, very silent and fast – lovely machines. Prior to this we had been satisfied with 500cc machines, which we later fitted with side-cars.

The Easter before the advent of the Indians, Frank and I set off for Brighton, on my outfit. Frank was six feet four and weighed 17 stones so we went better when he drove. Thursday night we stayed at the Swan Hotel in Bedford, the landlord not only being a friend of Frank but was also Mayor. We had a hectic evening and left some time in the morning hoping to get to Brighton. We got lost, went through a severe thunderstorm on the Sussex Downs and landed up at Horsham, wet to the skin. We decided to stop, booked in at an hotel and got into dry clothes. The staff got our things dried, cleaned and ready in the morning. A zealous Hall porter had put Frank's boots in an oven and next morning they were well cooked. There was a row of course, but the hotel people were very straight and Frank was compensated.

After the storm a terrific gale came up and, during the night, Worthing pier was blown down. We went that way to have a look, it was a sad sight. We went on to Brighton on the coast road in a howling gale. It was hard work keeping the machine on an even course. We stayed at the Albion hotel, one of the two owned by that great sporting character, Harry Preston, where he lived. He also was a friend of Frank so it was he who arranged for us to stay in this hotel. He was a great character in his day and was known internationally for his support of boxing.

Roads Before Tarmac

We think of village roads as relatively quiet and safe but as these extracts show even before the rise in motor vehicles all was not peaceful.

When a person was seriously ill, even dying, it was the concern of everybody. Straw would be strewn thickly in the road outside the house to dampen any vibration,

traction engines with threshing or cultivating machinery would be asked to go another route to avoid passing the sick person's house.

There was very little street lighting and things were made worse by inadequately lit vehicles.

There was no electricity in country places and not much in towns. It was only just emerging. There was one street lamp, outside Bates' shop at the corner of Bowleys Lane and Church Street. Paraffin of course.

Lights on vehicles were a real dim affair. They showed that a horse drawn vehicle or a bicycle were there but were of little help to the driver or rider. Carriages had a light, powered by a candle, sometimes only the right hand side carried one. Bicycles had an oil lamp, using Golza oil, no rear light. For the summer months it was not necessary for horse drawn vehicles to have a light.

Cars soon had acetylene lamps, the gas being formed by water dripping on to carbideⁱ. This gave a white light and with the aid of suitable reflectors gave a good beam well in front of the car. Soon bicycles had small acetylene lamps. The main trouble was putting on too much water and ending up with no light and a sloppy white mess in the carbine chamber. Paraffin lamps were also used on cars, mainly for side lights and to give a glimmer when the carbide failed.



A sided-pair of Badger Brass Ltd 'Solar' acetylene gas lamps, circa 1904. *Picture and information on gas lamps kindly provided by Peter W. Card.*

ⁱ According to Peter Card, author of *Early Vehicle Lighting* (Shire Publications), acetylene gas lamps for bicycles came first, in 1897. Motor-car lighting using acetylene gas did not arrive until 1899. Too much water created too much gas producing a problem of cleaning out the resulting slake lime.

The road surfaces were not adequate for the increase in traffic and coping with them required some imaginative driving techniques.

The main roads were granitestone, rolled, water bound with soil, granite dust and water. Very muddy in winter and dusty in summer. By-roads just had loose granite spread in the wheel tracks by the road man and left for the traffic to grind in. It was rough on bicycles and the early motor cars. The technique was to race the car up to a high speed – 30mph! – on reaching the stones, free wheel as far as possible over the loose stone and crawl the remainder in lowest gear. It saved the tyres a lot.

All other traffic was horse driven except for the steam engines with thrashing or cultivating machinery. If a few of these went along the country lanes it was a God-send if there was loose stone about.

The problems were so severe it led some motorists to give up their cars.

After a while the Doctor gave up the car and had a motor cycle. The bad condition of the side roads caused so much tyre trouble. He even had solid tyres fitted to the back wheels but that caused axle trouble.

Early Motorcars

Early car drivers needed to know how their vehicle worked – but there were no controls over who could drive.



1901 Enfield Quadricycle owned by Wolfgang Butte, probably similar to the car described as a 'Lee Enfield' owned by Dr Davidson. *Photograph by Michel Gosset.*

Dr Davidson was a pioneer motorist. In 1901 he bought his first car, a one cylinder Lee Enfieldⁱⁱ. He sent his man, Walter Shakespeare to the works in Birmingham, for a week to learn all about it. Walter was a natural engineer. Breakdowns were frequent and a walk home from somewhere on his rounds was no unusual event. He often took me with him and it was to me a great treat. One day he said I ought to be able to drive it and sat me in the driving seat. I would be just over eight. Now I knew how to drive a steam traction engine having ridden on the engine when they came to thrash. I knew that if I wanted to go to the left I would twizzle the wheel to the right and vice-versa. I naturally thought the same applied to car. After frantic efforts by both of us we got the car back on an even course and having got over that hurdle I never looked back. Actually I did and I can see now the corkscrew pattern of the wheel marks! This happened on the road down to Little Orton from opposite the Norton turn. I was soon driving by myself in villages and often drove for most of the rounds.

Later on Aubrey Moore bought a car of his own.

In the autumn of 1915 I was home from the front in France with a broken ankle and John Shields was also home on sick leave. He knew where was an old car for sale, cheap, so off we went in the dog cart to see a William Brearley at Ticknall. He showed us an 1899 Benz. He had bought a new car about six years back and wanted the room, had no use for the old car and we could have it for £10. We agreed and would come next day. We called at Melbourne, got an accumulator (now called the battery) and some petrol. Next day May drove us over in the dog cart. We attached the battery, put in water and petrol. Second pull she fired and ran perfectly. We were delighted and paid the £10. We set off and May got home in the dog cart first!

The engine was one cylinder, battery and coil ignition. Starting handle was on the off side front at right angles to the engine. When it fired you let go quickly as the handle remained engaged until you operated a small trip lever which freed it. The main drive was a five inch belt running fore and aft on a fast and loose pulley between gearbox and axle. This was operated by a long lever on the driver's side. Gear lever and throttle were on the steering column, the wheel being about the diameter of a tea plate.

It would take a book to describe the driving technique. It was virtually impossible to change up unless on the level or downhill. By the time you had done all necessary things the car had stopped and you had to start all over again. The car's speed was below walking uphill in low gear and 20mph on the level. The body was a tonneau, door at the back and room for two inside. The tyres were solid rubber about 2½

ⁱⁱ According to the Surrey Vintage Vehicle Society, who provided the picture of the Enfield quadricycle, the description 'Lee Enfield' is a mistake. The manufacturer was probably Enfield Cycle Company who made bicycles, motorcycles and quadricycles. A little later they produced cars under the brand Royal Enfield.

inches wide. The rear wheels were a larger diameter than the front by about six inches, chain driven from counter-shaft. We had the greatest fun out of this car. It never let us down. I went back to my unit and John was going back to his and we did the most foolish thing. We sold the car to Bunting, the local plumber, for £20. He put a flat top on it to carry his stock and tools. We were not to know we had a potential of great value on our hands. Of course, an 1899 car was not very old in 1915.



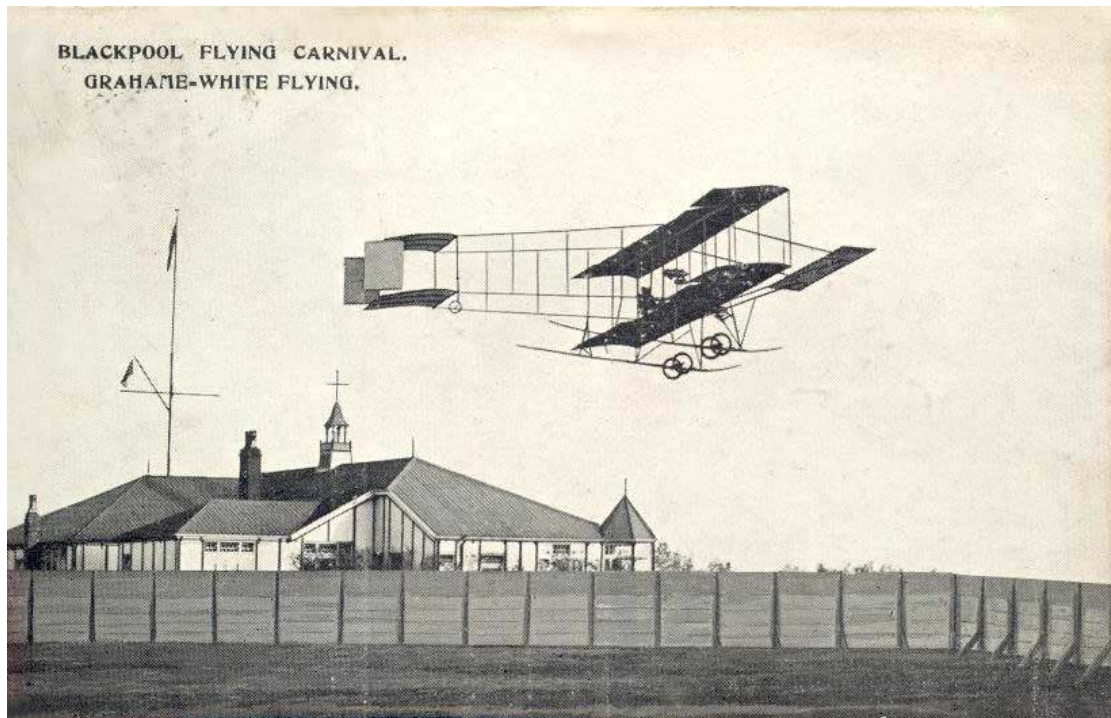
1899 Benz "D388" with a dogcart body in Crawley, West Sussex during the 2006 London to Brighton Veteran Car Run. *Source MilborneOne, Wikimedia Commons.*

Aeroplanes

Aeroplanes were a great novelty in this period.

One of the important developments of my early life was the aeroplane. The Wright brothers in America had already made flights and England soon had people trying their luck. There soon came cash offers for flights from A to B or X to Y etc. Bleriot a Frenchman, flew across the Straits of Dover for £1,000 given by the Daily Mail. The same paper offered £10,000 for a flight from London to Manchester. This caused great excitement and many entered, with little hope.

The name of Graham White emerged as a flyer, in fact the only Briton at that time to hit the headlines. He made great preparations for the attempt and much reconnoitring. His route was to follow the old London and North Western Railway through Rugby, Crewe and on to Manchester. At places, farmers were asked to lay in the open, long strips of white linen pointing in the general direction of Manchester. This was in case contact with the railway was lost. One such strip was on the land of a patient of the Doctor, so we were in close touch with what was going on.



Graham White's plane at a flying carnival in 1910. *Rosebud's WW1 and Early Aviation Image archive.*

One day we heard Graham White was ready to start. Later, via the surgery, we heard he had come down near this strip between Grendon and Polesworth. I suppose it was holidays for I set off next morning with Gregory to see the aeroplane. Cycling down the hill into Polesworth I saw the machine flying towards Tamworth, about half a mile away. Disappointed at not seeing the aeroplane at close quarters, I had at least seen an aeroplane flying so achieved some degree of one-upmanship. Graham White did not get the prize. A Frenchman, Paulham, brought his plane to London, got in it and flew non-stop to Manchester without any fuss or publicity.

Several towns had flying meetings, Burton being one. Thousands attended to see people fly – and crash.

Chapter 5

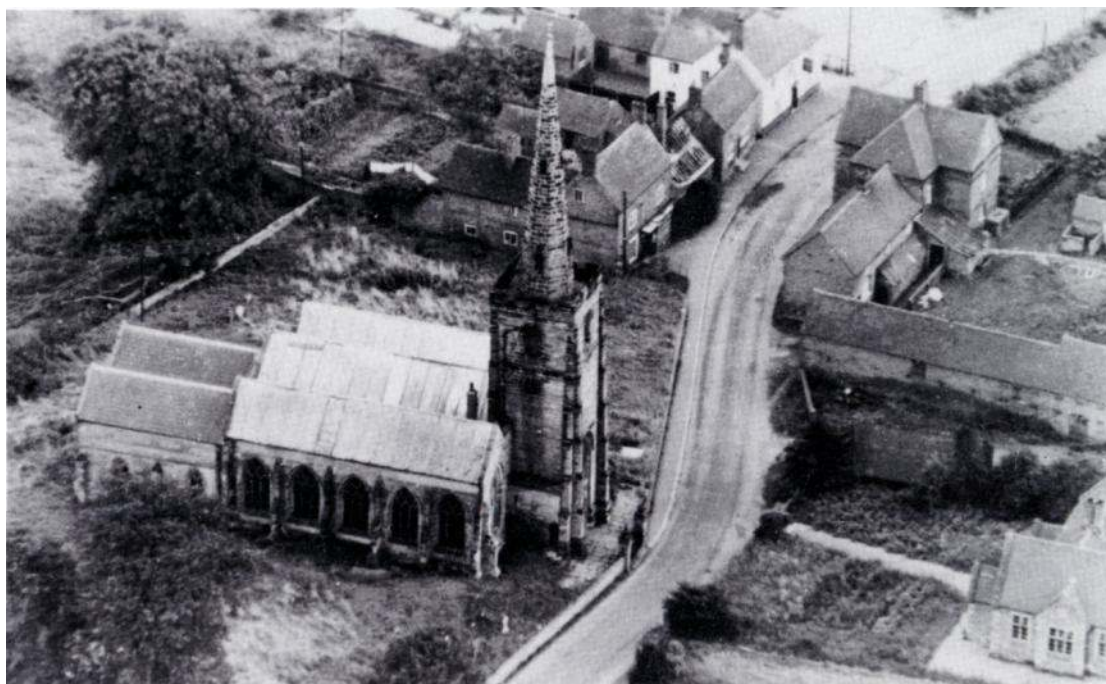
A Walk Round the Village

The text of this chapter follows that of Chapter 3 of the original edition. The first part of this chapter provided a sense of the village and its occupants around 1900 by the ingenious device of taking the reader on a walk. However some of the locations that would have been known to an earlier reader no longer remain. To allow a reader to follow (in their imagination or on foot) the route described, a modern map appears at the end of this chapter. Numbers on the map link to those inserted in the original text. These also link to footnotes which provide information on the buildings which now (2010) exist at the locations being described. This will allow the reader both to follow Aubrey's route and to see how things have changed over the last hundred years.

I think the best way to get a picture of the village around the turn of the century will be to go round it, starting at the rectory.

Going up the lane and turning right was Heath House¹, where lived the Tunleys. They had a daughter, Sylvia, about the same age as my sister. They left about this time, followed by the Goodalls, an elderly couple with a son and a daughter of uncertain age. Like the Tunleys, they were tenants. Their two fields joined our Finger Post field and the old man objected to us shooting rabbits out of this fence. (It was called Finger Post because of the signpost at the cross roads. They were always called 'finger posts' and the main road was the Turnpike). The far side was the boundary with the Stretton Estate, owned by Sir Mylles Cave-Browne-Cave. Also full of rabbits, so we had brushes with the keeper.

¹ Not surprisingly this walk starts from Aubrey's home, now known as the Old Rectory, located at the far end of Rectory Lane from the village. The entrance is still at this location but high gates make it difficult to see the building. The classic view of the Old Rectory, as seen on the front cover of this book, can be seen from the A444, at the Villa (footnote 3), or more calmly from one of the village footpaths described later. The walk starts by going up Rectory Lane from the Old Rectory away from the village and turning right onto Tamworth Rd (the road to Measham, referred to as the Turnpike). Heath House referred to here no longer exists. However there is a more recent house, now called Heath Lodge, which is in the same location but set further back from the main road.



The centre of Appleby Magna from the air, c.1930. *This area has shown little change over the years.*

Field Farm at the cross roads, formerly the Red Lion², was farmed by Mr. Prince who left to go to Pinwall ('Pinel') near Market Bosworth. Towards No Man's Heath was Wigston, a little hamlet of ten or twelve houses with an evil reputation and considered locally as the last place before hell. Really unfair as some good, respectable families lived there, two being Moore and Grewcock, who worked on local farms. They had nice children with whom I played. Somehow Wigston became a temporary haven for down and outs, drunks and the like. Rents were cheap, about 1s. 0d. a week, but some of the houses were in a terrible condition.

About half a mile down the Atherstone Road was a little colony known as the Overtown³, mainly part of the Hall establishment. In the first house, The Villa, lived Dr. Davidson, a tenant. Next came Hatton the cobbler who made our boots, father's shoes, most of the Hall family boots and shoes, and repaired the lot. The Hattons were a very nice family with two sons and three daughters. Ron helped his father; his brother Charlie went to the Hall and became a footman. The three daughters were Annie, Lilly and Edith who all held good positions. Edith became parlourmaid at the

² The Red Lion Inn was on the site now occupied by McDonalds! Wigston, now 'Little Wigston', is the other side of the motorway roundabout on the road which goes towards Tamworth. There are only two houses here now and a trailer business.

³ The area referred to here as the Overtown is Appleby Parva. The Villa is now called Appleby House and is a Georgian building. The cobbler's house referred to is the house next to the pub. It has been substantially rebuilt in recent years. The 'lodge' where Mrs Hatton took the under-gardeners' dinner was the old Hall gate-house (now enlarged) and is about one third of the way along New Road (number 35), on the corner of the former driveway to the Hall.

Hall, one of the most proficient I ever knew. Mrs. Hatton looked after the under-gardeners who lived in the lodge. Every midday, Mrs Hatton would be seen going along New Road carrying dishes of food for their dinner. Going to Mr. Hatton to be measured for a new pair of boots was an event. A cobbler's rule was used to get the length of the foot. A narrow strip of brown paper was put around the ankle, instep and the ball of the foot, with a small tear made for each. Later came fitting and finally wearing of the new boots. I had the run of the house besides spending many hours watching Ron and his father at work not realising at that age that I was watching two real craftsmen. Their hand made shoes were superb.

The Moore Arms⁴ was an important part of village life. The Bowley family had been there a long time, three or four generations. The grandfather of the old man I remember made an oak chest I have, bought by father when the family finally left the village, and which he gave me. The old people had died by this time; nearly all the girls had married. John had become a civil servant, was relief officer and lived in Ashby. The Bowley family were all skilled carpenters and craftsmen in a small way, undertakers. After a certain funeral in which the coffin was a very fine one (if there is such a thing) made by the Bowleys, mother remarked to John, 'I hope, John, when I die, you will make my coffin'. To which John replied 'I hope so mum!' The carpenters shop had in it the old fashioned saw pit, which I often saw being used in spite of the advent of the engine driven saw. The boss would work above the pit and the luckless assistant in the pit, pulling down on the large cross-cut saw, getting covered in sawdust. A tramp or similar penniless person, was often given a few days work in the pit for his keep, somewhere to sleep and a few shillings.

The County boundary ran through the pub yard; in fact, it divided the pigsties. There were several farms with county boundaries running through the farm. It made the movement of pigs a bit of a problem, as pigs could not be moved from one county to another without a licence from the police.

On the subject of boundaries, Appleby was in two parliamentary divisions, Market Bosworth mainly the South part and South Derbyshire the remainder. Both were inclined to be Liberal. Labour had not come on the scene at this time. Several people had a vote in each division. Father had four votes, two in Appleby, one for Cambridge University and one for Kirkstead. At this time the general election was spread over about two weeks. Appleby voters had to go to Measham to vote for the South Derbyshire candidate.

Going back to the pub and the Bowley family, besides John there were four daughters, all good looking, very good fun and all married well. The pub was the headquarters of the Order of Oddfellows, their lodge being held in the large clubroom. It was used

⁴ The Moore Arms was renamed the Appleby Inn in the 1990s. It is considerably larger than it was at the time Aubrey was writing. The original building is the left-hand section.

for many functions, not least for one of the social events of the year, the Hall servants' ball. The rectory was always put out of gear on this night as all the servants were invited. There was great huffing and puffing, bathing, hair curlers and curling tongs all over the place. Meals were anyhow from one midday to the next.

The Moore Arms and those who ran it were a true village institution, yet had only one bar where casual callers and locals of all classes could drink.

Dingle Lane⁵ ran alongside the pub field, which, if followed, comes out at the bottom of No Man's Heath hill. It was a very nice walk in summer and was used in winter for exercising the horses. Just along the lane was a small grocer's shop kept by a Mrs. Lee, whose homemade ginger snap was in great demand at two pieces for a halfpenny. Then came the Overtown proper. The smithy was operated by three brothers, Jack, Joe and Hugh Marshall from Norton where they had a smithy and kept the Moore Arms there. They came to Appleby on Tuesdays and Fridays walking from Norton carrying heavy bags of tools. One brother would go straight to the Hall stables to deal with their horses at their own smithy. Our horses went down when required. It was the duty of the groom and the waggoner to see that their charges were properly shod without reference to father. I would take Mabs myself and a groan went up when I arrived. They hated shoeing that pony, there seemed nothing to get hold of and she was so low down.

Over the road from the smithy were five cottages⁶. The Misses Fish, who had held position of importance at the Hall, lived in the first next to the road. They had excellent homemade wine. Next to them was Bartlett, the general factotum inside the Hall. I made quite a pal of his son Frank and we used to go long walks together. In the next pair was Annie Reeves' mother, who had been a widow for many years. Annie looked after her as best she could and for that reason was late in marrying Walter. In the next house was a character, Hancock, who, as a child, lost his right arm from the shoulder. With his one arm he could do, and did, as much work or more than many with two arms. He always said he could do all ordinary work except scythe. He was a champion hedge cutter. He took prizes all over the Midlands and for a long time was unbeatable. The estate had first call on him. He was a good cricketer, deadly accurate in his hitting of the ball and his throw-in came like a cannon ball.

⁵ Dingle Lane still exists as a footpath on the far side of the pub car park – and one can walk to No Man's Heath.

⁶ These are on Atherstone Rd between Dingle Lane and Austrey Lane. Two have been demolished. The 'smithy' referred to was the private building visible over the garden fence on the east side of the A444. The five cottages mentioned formed a terrace at right-angles to the road next to the surviving group. They were demolished when the road was widened.

Nearby was Knight, the Estate Foreman who followed Jewell. On the opposite corner was the old Anker or Anchor Inn (since demolished)⁷. I think it closed as such when father was a boy. In it lived the Levington family, he being a traveller for a brewery. At the foot of the steps was a letterbox where letters could be posted up to 8:05 p.m., seven nights a week.



The Anker or Anchor Inn. *The octagonal house is in the background. Picture taken by R Dunmore, 1974.*

In the gardens nearby, in an octagonal house, lived Mr. Grubb, the head gardener, suitably named. He reigned over the grounds and under-gardeners, a very good, knowledgeable man. As can be imagined, the gardens were well kept.

Along the Austrey road the Ginders lived at Westhills Farm. There were two or three sons and one daughter, Muriel, one of the finest horsewomen in the Atherstone country or any other. Not only in her ability, but she was also most elegant, mounted or not. She married Harry, son of Edmund Saddington of Side Hollows, Harry later going to the Red Lion Farm and his brother, Ernest, going to Side Hollows. They had one daughter, Daphne, who grew up to be as elegant as her mother. The Ginders boys were a wild lot. Tim ran with them a good deal. They were good horsemen and were in the Staffordshire Yeomanry together.

⁷ The Anchor Inn was on the opposite side of Atherstone Road near to the Octagonal house where Mr Grubb lived, which still exists as a dwelling (although not visible from the public road).



The Cricket Team. *The team, about 1912, featured several well known village personalities.*

Coming back to the village there was Hall or Home Farm⁸, tenanted by Richard Woodward. His young son, at about the age of five tried conclusions with a chaff cutter, losing a piece of finger. His father and my father were in the farmyard at the rectory, leaving young Dick in the float in the stable-yard. Mother comes along and asks Dick how his finger was. He replied 'Bugger off!' His father just then appeared and said 'Has he been swearing at you mum?' I can't think where he gets it from. He must get it from the men.' It should be mentioned that Richard could hardly go six words without an oath!

Joining the grammar school grounds in the corner was a house⁹, the window opening to the grounds and being the school tuck-shop. It was kept by Mr. and Mrs. Farmer. He was known as 'Nicky' and was a great poultry man, mother and he having many a deal. Opposite the jitty entrance was the Hall gas works. Beyond, on the right lived the Saddington family, another branch. The old man, William, was a farmer and

⁸ Hall Farm is at the village end of New Road (and has a name plate on the barn end); it remains a working farm.

⁹ This house is still there and called Greenedge. If you go inside the main school gate and look immediately to your right you can see the tuck shop window Aubrey is referring to. The jitty entrance referred to is on the left hand boundary of the site and is the walled path that was created to provide a separate entrance for the village children. After being out of use and overgrown for many years it was re-opened as part of the restoration of the Foundation site and is now the main entrance for children coming to school. The 'gas works' was on the site of the house the other side of the road called 'Gascote' (now number 112). The Saddington's house is called 'Bateman House'. Bateman Saddington farmed there in 1841. His son Samuel was the butcher.

butcher. He was known as 'Whispering Will'. He had a most powerful voice. His normal talk would have been shouting in any other person but when he did shout the whole village knew. He had three sons, Will, Tom and Vincent who all went to the grammar school. Will and Tom went into the civil service and did very well. Vin was a schoolteacher at Ashby. All were good cricketers and in their heyday Appleby fielded a very strong side. I think there were three daughters, all good looking and held good positions.

Just beyond, at the corner, was a small community known as 'Eternity Where?' named after the chapel of that name, which stood there (now a private house)¹⁰. Whoever painted the sign bearing the name of the chapel failed to space the letters out and took up too much space for the first word and 'WHERE' had been squeezed in, the 'ERE' almost joining up and leaving no room for the requisite '?'. It stayed like this for many years. This little chapel had a few adherents led by Matthew Rowland, a farmer who lived in Ducklake. A little farther on the lane leads to Sandy Lane and Botts Lane¹¹. Up this lane lived Bill Kelsey, a self-employed bricklayer and a thorough craftsman. He did all small jobs for us. On one occasion he was doing a repair job to the soil pipe of the indoor loo, which meant taking out a section of the down pipe. All were warned not to use it for that day. However, Hetty, the nursemaid, either had not been told or she forgot. Anyhow, she used it and flushed it straight into Bill's face. What he was going to do with Hetty was nobody's business, but a trowel and some mortar were to be used, if he could catch her!

At the junction of these lanes¹² lived William Smith, postman, his sons, Wilfred, Mark and Jack and daughter, Fanny, schoolteacher. The boys were all good workmen on farms and estates. They were expert tree fellers. They knocked up good money. John Stevenson was in the gang. They were an extremely nice family. Wilfred, who was killed in the war, and Jack were bellringers. Old Billy was the copy of the caricature of a postman who read all the postcards or letters. Of course, the village postman did know who had sent postcards etc. The recipient would read the card in front of the postman and have a good old gossip about it. Postmen were news carriers and really the only inter-communication there was. Villages were very close knit communities and everybody knew everybody's business. Billy was a great character, very bow legged. Ron Hatton was postman for the rest of the village.

¹⁰ This was the Particular Baptist Chapel built in 1826, still a private house, at 71 Top Street. It is on the right hand side of road as it bends and the windows are reminiscent of the chapel.

¹¹ It appears that the footpath mentioned here ran from the cottages near the bend on Top Street (now 63/65 Top Street) along the far edge of the existing field to the middle of Bott's Lane (number 16 Bott's Lane). This is no longer a path, Sandy Lane is the footpath at the junction of Bott's Lane and Snarestone Road, through Jubilee Farm.

¹² As the lane referred to above no longer exists, this is no longer a junction but is on the sharp bend half way along Bott's Lane. This means William Smith's house must be number 16. This is borne out by other sources (see the Memories of Sarah Caldicott, on Appleby's history web site).

Bott's Lane got its name from the family of Bott who lived in the corner house opposite Jordan's farm¹³. This farm in Silver Street (now Top Street) was occupied by Will Jordan and two sisters. The land was all over the place. They milked and made excellent Leicester Cheese. Next came Beadman in the old picturesque cottage¹⁴ and its well-kept garden. Next were the Miss Yardleys, dressmakers, and Elsie, a schoolgirl. Then came the Boss brothers, painters, and the Hall Place¹⁵ where the Gartons lived in the then pretty farmhouse of which I have a painting by my aunt, Clara Vaughan Lee. It was an almost perfect setting for an old property. They also had land down the Old End.



Hall Place, home of the Gartons, painted by Clara Vaughan Lee. *Photograph of the original painting courtesy of Peter Moore.*

Overlooking the farm and the road was a fairly large house in two parts¹⁶. Here lived Mrs. Wyatt and her daughter Dessie. Also Mary Stokes, a little older than me,

¹³ There is a difference between Aubrey's account and other accounts of the time regarding the residence of Mr Bott. Most other sources indicate that he lived at the second house along the lane, now number 4. Jordan's Farm still exists (as can be seen from a small plaque on the end wall) and is located next to the current medical surgery. However it is now a private house rather than a farm.

¹⁴ The picturesque cottage is the remaining thatched cottage (number 42).

¹⁵ This old farmhouse stood back from the road on the site of Garton Close (named after the Garton family referred to by Aubrey). Garton Close was built in the late 1990s and the house referred to was demolished. However it had already been radically altered from the description given here.

¹⁶ This is Eastgate House (26 Top Street), the old Estate agent's house, and the public footpath is still called Hall Yard footpath (although there is no name plate).

somehow related to Dessie. The other part of the house was the Estate Office. This was presided over by Mr. Edward Nelson who lived up Snarestone Lane in what we called the Doll's House. Mrs. Wyatt looked after the office. From Hall Place was a path going through the Hall Yard, alongside the old moat and coming out by the side of the Crown Inn.

Opposite Snarestone Lane there were some old houses¹⁷, occupied in my time by a few Bootons, Mortimor and Garrett, who had an enormous family, eighteen I believe. They were all good old Appleby families. Joe Booton probably caused the greatest excitement at a rather dull time by attempting suicide with the aid of a razor. Father went down, taking me with him, not into the house of course, but I had a whale of a time hearing what the children were saying which lost nothing in the telling, also being with P.C. Roslin my pal, the village bobby.

Across the road were Dan Jewell and his son George. Dan was a master at land draining, in fact did little else. To me it was just digging a trench with a narrow spade, putting pipes in the bottom and filling it in. When I got older I appreciated the skill of Dan. He never used a level or boning rods, it was all done with the eye and all his drains worked. George worked with him. He was lame and walked with a pronounced limp. Like so many lame men, he was a good cricketer, being a deadly bowler. He had to field close in. He was a good bat but someone had to run for him. One finds in so many local teams the lame man who perhaps walks with difficulty, but plays havoc when he goes on to bowl; I have known quite a few.

Further along (now) Top Street is the Black Horse¹⁸ on the corner. I cannot remember who kept it at this time. Across the road stood a very old house¹⁹ where, at one time, the Taverners lived. It had some good architectural features but I never went into it.

On the opposite corner was the shop²⁰ run by Mr., Mrs. and Miss Munday, newcomers to the village and good church people. At about this time Lucy Bowley gave up the post office near the Crown Inn and it was transferred to Munday's shop. Also at about this time father had a visit from a Captain Holloway, a Church Army Officer. He wanted to conduct a Mission in the village and take part in a church service to which father agreed. Great excitement! He accompanied the hymns on his cornet and preached. He found lodgings with the Munday's for the week he stayed.

¹⁷ There are still a number of old houses in this part of Top Street (12-16 Top Street). These date back to the mid 17th Century and are known collectively as Walker's Hall.

¹⁸ Still there and still called the Black Horse!

¹⁹ The House opposite referred to is now called Hill House and is mentioned in Pevsner's guide to Leicestershire (1 Top Street)

²⁰ This is the private house at the corner of Mawby's Lane and Blackhorse Hill (1, Black Horse Hill). The shop front shown in the photograph has been replaced by the bow window. Lucy Bowley's post office shop was at 21 Church Street, next to the Crown.

However, he hung his hat up, married Miss Munday, carrying on the shop and post office after the old people died.



Appleby Magna Post Office. Taken in 1903 when seemingly a little overstaffed! Now a private house.

Going on down the hill, up on the left were Ben and Mrs. Wright who put our pigs away. Just behind was Bill Winter with his parents. He was courting Annie Wright. Across the road was John Rowland, a homing pigeon fancier where I spent a lot of time, having pigeons myself. John had some fine successes with his birds. Below on the left was William Greasley, wheelwright and carpenter, also undertaker²¹. This was a regular port of call when out with Nell. I would be given a few nails, a hammer and a piece of wood and would hammer away while gossiping went on. I loved watching the fitting of the iron tyre to a new wheel which had been made in the shop, the tyre being made by Tom Rice, the blacksmith in Church Street. This was heated by a fire built all round the tyre to give an even heat to the whole circumference. The wheel was placed on a circular iron plate with a hole to take the hub to allow it to lie flat. When the tyre was at the correct heat it was lifted by three men and carefully fitted over the rim and adjusted by a few taps with a hammer, all done very quickly. When William was satisfied all was well, water was pulled on until the tyre was cold.

²¹ The houses being referred to here are on the left hand side of Black Horse Hill. The wheelwright's name was actually Gresley, and Greasley may have been a local pronunciation. The house is number 13, and much modernised compared with the photograph.

The shrinkage from full expansion was sufficient to make it very tight and secure. Four or five nails were then driven in at intervals round the tyre and the wheel was finished. Every part, the hub, spokes and felloes were all made by hand by real craftsmen. The family consisted of three sons, Bill, Herbert and Jack, about my age, plus a daughter. All the males were bellringers. I was sometimes taken there for a large tea. Matthew Rowland's farm²² was across the road, most of their land being up Snarestone Lane and some land and buildings next to the grammar school. In some cottages opposite lived a village character, Lazarus Bowley, a relative of all the other Bowleys, so he claimed, but very distant so they said. In some ways a pathetic case, but he always seemed happy, drunk or sober. He worked mainly for Parkers in Church Street and occasionally did a bit at the Moore's Arms. He would go to William Bowley with all his troubles. When he had too much beer, which was not infrequently, he would walk about shouting 'Where's William Bowley. Damn yer eyes, I want William Bowley.' His pal was John Stretton or Stratton, nobody ever knew which. He was also a proper character. He had been a head gardener somewhere and his knowledge of gardening was terrific. He could reel off Latin names of most plants easier than some people can say the English. He lived in Bott's Lane and obviously came from a good family.



William Greasley, wheelwright, 1910. *He is standing outside his house admiring an example of his work.*

²² This is Homeley's Farm (see the name plate on the low wall) and is now a private house.

The general area from Rowlands farm and along the brook was known as Ducklake, the name not being confined to any particular road²³. There are a number of cottages around this area, but I cannot remember who occupied which, except Charlie Gothard lived on the corner. The part known as the Old End²⁴ was nothing but a mud track leading to some fields, almost impassable for walking in the winter. Down here lived Ben Edge and family in a reasonable house. His two daughters went out into good class positions and maintained a high social standing, in spite of the problems of the house. After their parents died they lived at Seal Pastures near Acresford. Ben was a great friend of Billy Cooper.

Half way along the lane coming back to the Church lived 'young' Jim Parker, often called 'lazy James' not because he was lazy but really his farm was not big enough to keep him occupied²⁵. There was a field at the back and a few fields along Measham Lane, so he managed to get in a day's hunting when he wanted it.



The Clockmaker's House. *Home of George Reeves.*

²³ Duck Lake does now refer to one road, marked on the map which goes alongside the brook. Aubrey Moore refers to this area again at the end of the walk in reference to flooding and rebuilding the bridge.

²⁴ Old End is still partly an unmade road with a few houses. The grandest one that appears to be an old manor house (Chamant Manor) is actually a new house. In earlier times the term 'end' was used for access lanes to the fields. Ben Edge's house is number 11.

²⁵ This was Duck Lake Farm which was demolished to make way for St Michael's Drive.

Next was George Reeves²⁶, the clock and watch repairer with his wife, son Charles and three daughters. George was a knowledgeable man about Appleby and the proud possessor of a copy of Nichols' History of Leicestershire. Then came Harriett Taylor, a great layer in and layer out. She was a real good sort and would help anyone in want or sick. She came to the rectory for spring-cleaning. From the time she entered the house she never stopped talking. Tommy Gregory lodged with her for years until he got married.

Coming down Black Horse Hill from the pub, now called Mawbys Lane, why I do not know, there were, on the right, two cottages²⁷, the first being George Rowland's, a bellringer, who worked as a general labourer. He had two sons; one was to find himself one of my Company signallers in France. On the night of 1 July 1916 at Gommecourt, a sharp piece of shrapnel crashed onto his steel helmet, making a dent in it, sure death if he had not been wearing his helmet. I was talking to him at the time. He hardly blinked.

Next-door was Mrs Bowman with her son, Jack and daughter Annie, who married Bill Gothard. They were all ready-made butts for any prank. Boys knocked on their door for the one purpose of hearing what Jack had to say when he opened it and to see how long he would keep saying it. Jack worked at Red Bank. A few yards down was Rock House²⁸, which Nell bought from Everard Tunnadine for her mother for about £200. Opposite lived the Fowkes family, the Fowkies as they were known. He was a good hardworking man and also worked at Red Bank brickyard, as a stoker or firer I think. I believe there were two daughters. The Fowkies were well known for their language, very loud and not too acceptable to some neighbours. The youngest boy was born a few years after me and I was honoured by him being given my name plus John. Up to then I had been the sole possessor of the name Aubrey in the village.

At the bottom of the hill, opposite Ducklake, was a house and shop with the brook running under a tunnel. The thing to do at my age was to walk through when the brook was low enough. Some way through it the stable drain discharged direct into it and one could get more than one bargained for down the neck. When I first remember it, old Charlie Bates had his shop and bakery there. He moved to Church Street and made what was then a magnificent shop. Levingtons from the Overtown then moved in and ran a bit of a shop with an off-licence. They sold a very cheap beer known as 'Levington's returns' which tasted awful according to reports.

²⁶ This house was demolished in the early 1990s. It stood on the site of the new houses (the front two of which are called The Farm House and The Granary) at the post office end of Duck Lake.

²⁷ These are opposite the Black Horse car park entrance.

²⁸ Rock House is identifiable by being built on a stone plinth.

A footpath²⁹ runs alongside the brook, past the Moat House joining the path through Hall Yard. The property and the adjoining field, at this time, belonged to Market Bosworth Grammar School. It was always in bad repair. Fred (Nobby) Gothard bought it and lived there many years. The house and moat have a long history of their own.

Going back to Church Street, the first place after the Beeches³⁰ was Tunnadine, ironmonger³¹. Mr Tunnadine was a very dignified gentleman in every way. They are a very old Appleby family. Mr Edmund was people's warden for many years. His family, besides his wife, were Everard and Emmie who lived at home, and Jack who was married and lived in Burton and had a daughter, Vera, my age. There was a bit of land with the shop, which Everard farmed with a cow or two, and a bit of arable. The shop was a real emporium selling anything from plough shares to mouth organs. They supplied most of the village, including the Church, with paraffin. When they went to Burton, Nell would take me to Jack's house for tea. They lived in Stapenhill and we went on the tram.

Opposite Tunnadine's the field, in which was held the annual wakes, belonged to Queen Adelaide Inn³². The wakes were the feast of St. Michael and All Angels at the end of September. There were swing-boats, roundabouts, coconut shies and various other attractions, all a penny each. I was rarely allowed to go at nights when the fun was at its height, but I did go in the afternoon. The pubs did a roaring trade, people coming from adjoining villages. The Saturday night saw the most drunks and a few fights.

Along the street was the General Baptist Chapel, now demolished³³. It was run by a minister from Measham and a few village supporters. It was always full on a Sunday night. Next came Monkey Row, so called because of the cherub faces (not monkeys) let into the brickwork. There were four houses, Hodson, Gothard, Lees and another.

²⁹ The house and shop referred to in the previous paragraph are the current village shop / post office. The footpath is marked on the map and starts at the Parish Notice Board near the post office. It goes past the Moat House which is Appleby's finest historic domestic building, parts of which date from the 16th Century.

³⁰ The Beeches is the large house on the sharp bend near the New Road end of Church Street, now known as The Charter House.

³¹ Tunnadine's has been replaced by the new terrace of houses 59-65, on the Crown side of Wren Close.

³² The Queen Adelaide Inn was demolished in the early 1970s. It stood near the corner of Bowley's Lane and Church Street on the site of the modern house now called Adelaide House. Queen Adelaide (1792-1849) was the wife of King William IV (from 1830-1837) and did actually visit the area in the 1840s staying at the Gopsall estate. The wakes field is the triangular field opposite Wren Close and adjacent to the recreation ground.

³³ The General Baptist Chapel, built 1820, was on the opposite side of the road to the current number 57. Monkey Row, also demolished, was immediately behind the chapel fronting the road.

The back was the recognised battleground where boys had their fights. Next came Chandler, already mentioned, then the Queen Adelaide kept by Joseph Cookson, his wife, a bevy of red haired girls and a son or two. The back was a farmyard where I sometimes played with the family and others. There were about eight houses in the row opposite³⁴. There were Coultons in the first house, the Kirklands in the middle, a daughter dying at an early age from diabetes.



Church Street, Appleby. *Tunnadine (ironmonger) outside his shop. Underkeeper Haythorn is on the right.*

Tom Starbuck, butcher, was at the other end and his shop next door³⁵. He was often ill and father visited him regularly and they talked racing, both being well up in the subject. His family would not discuss it so he depended on these visits for his favourite topic, at which, I gather, he had not done too well.

I have mentioned Charlie Bates, another person father visited when ill, although chapel and a Liberal. They talked hunting. Next was the other blacksmith, Tom Rice. Again, a Liberal, we did not send our horses to him, but that made no difference to our friendship with this nice family. The son, Ron, emigrated to Australia or Canada, I forget which, but I heard he did very well. The daughter married Jack Saddington

³⁴ This terrace, numbers 39-51, still stands.

³⁵ The single storey building against the footpath next to number 39, where Tom Starbuck lived. Charlie Bates' shop faced Bowleys Lane, number 35, now divided into flats. The blacksmith's shop was a single storey building, now number 33 and converted to a house (named The Old Forge).

from the Crown Inn and produced Sybil. Charlie Bowley, our gardener, lived in the next house in the row. I think I have said Charlie was a bit of a wit. When asked what he had for dinner he would say he had taken a piece of bread into his front room, looked through the window at Parker's cows and imagined he was eating bread and beef! The next two houses were occupied by Nobby Winter and George Jordan an estate worker. Then came the Crown Inn³⁶, kept by Jack and Harry Saddington. It was then the busiest pub in the village, a position it kept up for years. I never went into it as a young man. I doubt if I have ever had a drink in it.



Church Street. A view in the opposite direction, showing the Queen Adelaide on the right, and the chapel further down also on the right. Date unknown.

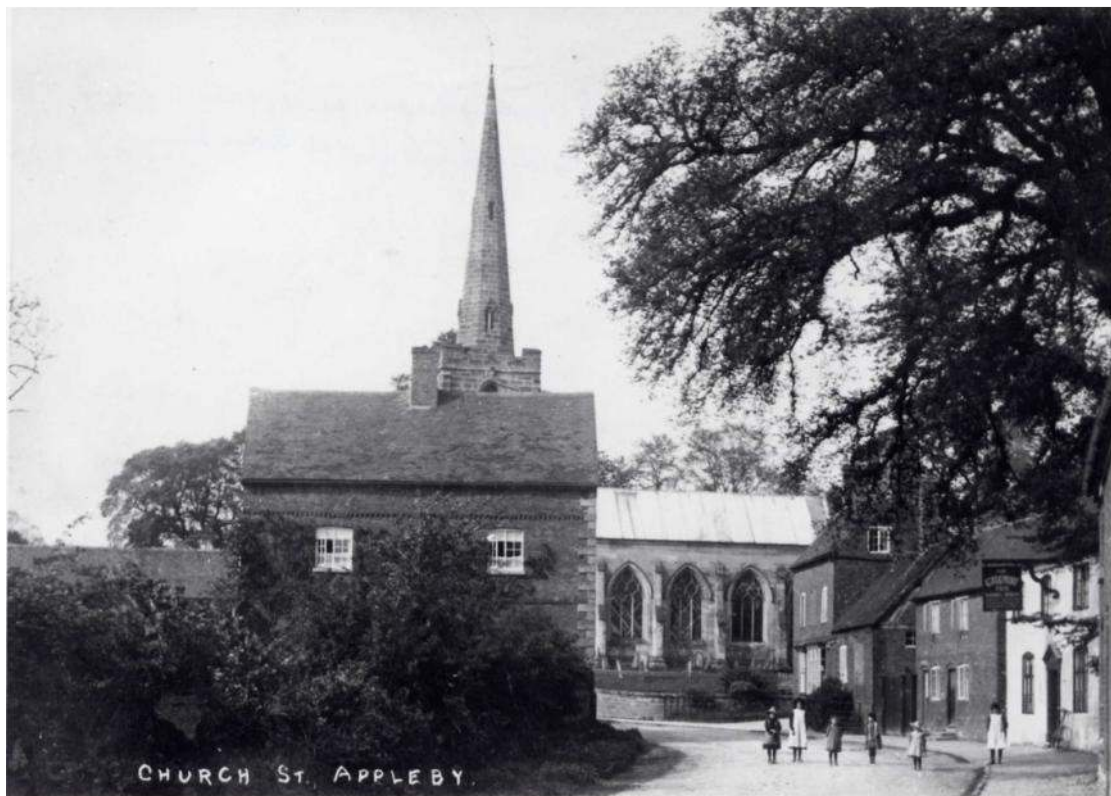
Jack and Harry Saddington left the Crown and moved to Botts Lane to the house Bott lived in, where they carried on their slaughtering business and were what was usually called 'Knackers'. They collected all carcasses of dead animals from miles around. These two as well as 'Whispering Will's' family and 'Codger' were related to the 'Side Hollows' Saddingtons but it was 'fairly distant cousins' which was the nearest one could ever get. One had to go back several generations and then it was very complicated.

The post office³⁷ was next to the Crown, kept at this time by Mrs. Lucy Bowley and her daughter, Mabel, who sang in the choir and practised her shorthand by taking down the sermon. As a very small boy I took money to put in the savings bank. Mrs.

³⁶ Another pub which is still there and whose name has not changed.

³⁷ Number 21; this is now a private house called 'Willow Cottage'.

Bowley would produce a little cloth bag into which I would place my bit of money, convinced it would stop there until I wanted it out. It was also a shop, which sold a variety of things from stationery to silks and cotton. Like most village post offices it was also the gossip shop and I have cooled my heels outside for long enough when anything spicy had happened. Next door was another bakery³⁸ belonging to Mr. and Mrs. Smout and two daughters. The elder, Florry, was a schoolteacher, she and Fanny Smith taught at Measham for years. The younger one unfortunately had a defect in her hip so was partially crippled. Mr. Smout had a reputation for the beautiful cakes he made. He was also a trained butler and stood in at the Hall when extra help was wanted. Besides selling bread and confectionery they sold chocolate and cigarettes. One could go in with sixpence, buy four bars of milk or plain chocolate, a packet of five cigarettes, Woodbine or Tabs, four boxes of matches and have threepence change.



Church Street, Appleby. *The Church and cottages about 1905, and on the left Church Farm. The Crown Inn is opposite.*

³⁸ This is number 17 with the sole remaining Victorian shop-front in the village. It became a butcher's shop, and is now a private house.

Opposite was James Parker's farm³⁹. He was a fine looking man, a large beard and a gruff voice. He was partnered by his brother, Will, unmarried. James had a son, James, my age. They had a very large uneven field at the back and some land that ran from Wesleyan Chapel to the turnpike at Heath House. They worked the land themselves with one man, Tom Pointon. They had a weird and wonderful collection of farm implements. We often borrowed their tedder, very old but very effective. They made Leicester cheese which was sold locally, some to market. All the cheese-making utensils and tools were still there up until the time young James retired. Towards the end of the 1914-1918 war rationing was introduced, cheese included. Farmers were supposed to declare their stock. This did not suit James, which led him to keeping a good supply under his bed. It was usual for us to buy a whole cheese.

The old homemade Leicester cheese was quite red and crumbly and tasted different from what now passes as Leicester. A good chunk of homemade bread, some homemade butter and a goodly piece of Leicester was a meal fit for anyone, particularly with a pint of beer as it was then.

The church school⁴⁰ nearby was divided into infants of both sexes in one room and girls in the other. Except for going in and out they did not mix, the playgrounds being divided by a high wall. When very young, father took me down to see William Greasley laying a new floor in the infants' room. There was a small opening left. Father threw under a roll of newspapers, some coins and other matter. The idea was for them to be found when the next new floor was laid. The actual sequel to this is that when the floor of the former school, now the church hall, was next relaid, in October 1972, no coins or paper were, in fact, found but there was discovered a piece of timber on which was inscribed in pencil 'Ex cultu robur' bearing the initials 'C.F.K.M. Aged 14, 24th Aug. 1897', (my brother Tim). The Latin tag can be loosely translated 'I was deprived of learning'. The date would be just before Tim went to Cranleigh. The piece of wood is now in a private collection of old Appleby relics.

Alongside the school was the start of a footpath⁴¹ across the rectory land to Wigston, i.e. between the school and the churchyard extension, generally known as the cemetery. The path went across Parker's field, across the Park field, past the

³⁹ Church Farm still exists as a private house (number 22). The outbuildings have also been converted into houses (Church Barns). Young James lived in the converted old Wesleyan Chapel after he retired.

⁴⁰ This is now the Church Hall, opposite the church. It houses the village play group and is a meeting place for village groups.

⁴¹ This footpath is still used, passing between the Church Hall and the cemetery. After going through a kissing gate you can see the earthworks referred to on the left. There is a network of footpaths at this point. The earthworks are thought to be the site of Dormer's Hall which was demolished in the second half of the 18th Century and gives its name to the field, Dormer's Hall Close. James Parker was the owner.

laundry⁴², across Jobs field and the Six Acre to the main Nuneaton road. Parker's field has old and obvious earth works that indicate the presence at one time of buildings of some sort. Some say a large hall stood there with a moat. It was all part of the estate. In his early days as squire my uncle gave a piece of land for the extension of the churchyard. It was fenced off with iron railings and a quick hedge planted. My first memory is of this hedge being two or three feet high. When Charlie sold the estate no documents could be found making over this piece of land to the church and it was eventually assumed that no deed of gift was ever made.



The village school. *Now the Church Hall. The footpath to Wigston is along the side, up the steps. Picture from the Appleby Magna village web site.*

Just beyond the almshouses⁴³ that I have mentioned, was a stile to a footpath⁴⁴, which went behind George Reeves' house and came out in Ducklake. This is the way we went on our frequent visits to the Reeves household.

Turning into Golden Way (now Rectory Lane) there was a pair of cottages on the corner; 'Punch' Gothard lived in one. A little further was a pair of more superior

⁴² The 'laundry' house was near the 'laundry pond' on the left of the path in the second field (Park field). The laundry was brought from the Rectory using the diagonal path across Jobs field, also still a public footpath.

⁴³ The almshouses are one of Appleby's landmarks, opposite the Church on the corner of Mawby's Lane.

⁴⁴ This path was re-routed through St Michael's Drive in 1969. The road is close to its original line and the path still comes out in Duck Lake.

type⁴⁵. In the farther one of the two lived a relative of the Bowley family, an elderly lady with a very smart, aristocratic looking daughter whose name I cannot remember. Next came Jimmy Millar's nice looking house standing well back from the lane, with his stable and yard at the back. Then came the entrance to Parker's land and the start to a footpath leading to the turnpike just beyond Heath House. Next came a garden, then the Wesleyan Chapel, well attended on the Sunday evening.

The next house belonged to father and housed the grooms. Bill Winter had it and died there. This later became Lavender Cottage⁴⁶ where mother moved to after father died and where she died two years later. I doubt if she ever realised that she was there. Next to this was the allotment field. Every plot was cultivated and men waiting to get hold of the plot. It was a great sight to see this field on a spring evening. Every plot was being worked, whole families hard at it. Good Friday was the busiest day.

Then came the Saddingtons and the rectory⁴⁷, quite a busy lane, being the route from the village to Donisthorpe colliery so nearly all coal carts used this lane. All domestic coal came from Donisthorpe, being much superior to Measham which was mainly steam coal and was only considered fit for boilers. Today this does not make sense, but things like calorific values and boiler house efficiency were of little importance, coal was cheap and money plentiful. Donisthorpe Main Coal, known as Donisthorpe 'Sit Back' was too fierce for most grates and had to be mixed with coal from the Eureka seam known as 'Raker'.

Bowleys Lane, running from Church Street to Burton-Atherstone Road had few houses on it, mainly in the middle. First on the right was property owned by father, a pair of cottages, one occupied by Pointon, the other by Roslin, the village bobby, followed later by Howton⁴⁸. Beyond and deeper in was the rectory laundry⁴⁹ operated by the Wyatt family. This was a nice old house part timber and a brick infilling, lath and plaster etc. It had an extension for the wash-house, from ground to roof, a high

⁴⁵ The 'Superior' cottages are numbers 4 and 6; Jimmy Millar's house is Number 8. The garden next to the chapel is now number 10 and the Wesleyan Chapel itself is now a private house called Chapel Cottage, number 12. On the opposite side of the road is the current Rectory.

⁴⁶ Lavender Cottage, number 14, has a name plaque on the top left. This was occupied for a long time by Clive Didcott, who was Chairman of Appleby Magna Parish Council for many years. Didcott Way, created as part of a new housing development in the 1990s, is named after him. The allotments are still thriving but are not quite as busy as described here.

⁴⁷ The Rectory referred to here, where Aubrey lived, is now referred to as the Old Rectory and is a private house. This stopped being the village rectory in the early 1950s. The current Rectory (closer to the village on the same side of the road) is occupied by the Team Vicar who serves Appleby and a number of neighbouring parishes which are part of the larger Woodfield Team. The Woodfield Team, which also includes Measham, takes its name from the Woodfield coal seam.

⁴⁸ This describes Bowleys Lane from Church Street. These cottages are now one dwelling, number 30.

⁴⁹ See note 42 above. There is a footpath from Bowleys Lane, just past number 30, leading to the network of footpaths and the site of the old laundry.

ceiling to take the lines and horse rails. There was a central stove on which irons were heated. The family who washed were almost rectory staff; the amount of washing was enormous.

The sunken field close by⁵⁰, belonging to the Queen Adelaide Inn was where the village football team played. Opposite this property lived George Boss shortly to be followed by Charlie Bates junior, who married one of the Rowland girls from Ducklake. Farther along lived Harper, a smallholder and a village carrier. At the next corner lived the Toon family, small farmers, who owned a bit and rented a bit⁵¹. That practically accounts for the lane then except for two houses nearly opposite father's property but I forget who lived in them.

Measham road had nothing except the pair of houses father bought for Nell Guy⁵². Opposite was an old barn, later Charlie Jones' workshop.

Snarestone Lane had a few houses. What we called the Doll's House which stood nearly opposite Sandy Lane and a rather nice looking old house stood to the side and the rear of it was where Nicky Farmer later went to live⁵³. On the right lived Jewell, the estate foreman and just beyond a pair occupied by 'Soaker' Wyatt and Tom Greasley, estate worker and pig-killer⁵⁴. Going now to Snarestone Lane, first came the beginning of the long drive to Upper Rectory Farm and about a quarter of a mile on the shorter drive to Lower Rectory Farm, occupied by Tom Varnam senior and after his death (I remember his funeral), Tom junior stayed for a bit and then moved across the road to Barns Heath. Charlie Ward took Lower Rectory for several years and then went to Westhills.

Just before the turn into Barns Heath Drive was a cottage⁵⁵ where the Jones family lived. The father worked for Varnam, as did the eldest son, Jack. The younger ones, Charlie, Fred and Alfred were my contemporaries. The father died in Leicester Infirmary, I believe, the result of an accident. Barns Heath regularly sent a load of Leicester cheese to Leicester market. It was said that the remains of Mr. Jones came back from Leicester in the returning empty wagon.

⁵⁰ The sunken fields in this area, in the corner of land behind Bowleys Lane and Church Street, are the result of clay extraction for brick making in the 19th century.

⁵¹ George Boss lived at number 23 (now The Elms), Harper lived at Bowley's Farm, number 39, and the Toon family were at Greycroft, number 41.

⁵² Numbers 31 and 33 Measham Road, the last houses on the left going out of the village.

⁵³ It is not clear where these houses are. There was at least one cottage next to Sandy Lane that has been demolished.

⁵⁴ Presumably these are the cottages on the south side of Snarestone Lane, past Bott's Lane.

⁵⁵ On the south side of the road, this is the site of the village windmill. It has been known as 'Old Hinges'.

There was a nice stretch of land by Snarestone Lane, via Barns Heath, White House and the back to the village. We walked it many times and when we felt energetic we would run round spending time messing about in the Mease.

Before Varmams moved to Barns Heath a family named Price lived and farmed there. John Price and his wife were very friendly with my family. They had a son Allen who was the same age as George. They were at the grammar school together. He unfortunately stuttered badly. John Price was a keen mason long before father got the bug and was a past master of the Ashby Lodge. Mrs. Price was a believer in the story that masons wore nothing in lodge other than the apron or fig leaf as the uninformed called it. She was sure of this because John always had a bath before going to the lodge. John, of course, never denied this.

The biggest farm on the estate was Norton House Farm where lived the Scarratt family, the house being on the road to Norton village⁵⁶. I played tennis with the younger members of the family. This farm was some of the best land on the estate, yet paid only a pound an acre rent.

Opposite Measham Road on the main Ashby Road and down a drive stood the Manor House⁵⁷ in which lived a Mr. Lowe, one of the Lowes of Sheepy, millers. As far as I know he was retired. He hunted regularly and kept an eye on me when I was out by myself. The manor house was more a gentleman's residence, there being only a few acres with it, adjoining Sidehollows Farm. Here had lived Mr. Edmund Saddington prior to Harry going there. He now lived at the Chestnuts, a nice house, the first going into Measham. He was a horse dealer in a big way, having a contract to supply the railway with horses. All these horses were stabled at Sidehollows and were shipped in large numbers. It was a great sight to see fifty or more large Shires in Measham station yard waiting to be loaded into a special train of horse boxes, all in perfect condition, dressed in ribbons on mane and tail, looking a picture. This happened three or four times a year. Edmund Saddington would not let any horse go unless it was perfect. His son, Harry, who ran the farm, also did a bit of horse dealing but mainly of lighter types. He was a short man but a very good horseman who could show off a horse well. He left Sidehollows and took the Red Lion Farm (Appleby Fields) – his brother, Ernest, going to Sidehollows, a biggish farm extending to White House and the Gorse⁵⁸. Harry was a good neighbour. When May and I were living at the rectory prior to the grammar school House, we often walked up after dinner at weekends for a drink and talk.

⁵⁶ This is Orton Road, near Twycross Zoo (not on the map below)

⁵⁷ This is down the farm lane, almost opposite the end of Measham Road.

⁵⁸ White House is reached from the track near the top of Measham Road. Sidehollows Farm is on Bird's Hill, on the road to Measham.

The family of Gothards had been in Appleby as long as the Moores, so I was told. In my young days there were four brothers, Charlie (I cannot remember his nickname), Bill, called Funny, Fred known as Nobby and Herbert was Punch. They would be the first to admit they were a rough and tough family but they were real good types. These four all had children so there was a fair crowd of them. All worked at the pits and good workers they were. Most of them drank a good deal of beer, which, in turn, led them into a bit of trouble occasionally, but there was nothing vicious about them. They always held the Moores in great respect and the Moores respected them. I personally liked them all and we were all great friends. I suppose they were the biggest family in the village but the Millers would run them close.

A large part of the village flooded easily after any heavy rains, due to the bad clearance of the brook that flows west to east, dividing the village. The corner just below the Villa had a short but deep flood⁵⁹, a shallow one outside the Beeches and the whole of Church Street and a good deal of Bowley's Lane were all flooded. All land and roads alongside the brook, the bottom of Hall Yard, Ducklake and along past the Old End were the worst of all. The chief trouble was the bridge at Ducklake which was too narrow to take the volume of water from quite a large watershed.

At last the parish council decided to rebuild the old bridge. One member suggested it would be cheaper to widen it by building new sides and put on a new top. Being long before computers, no one was able to work this one out, so a new bridge was built which partly relieved the situation.

Another bad flooding area was Stretton Mill on the Burton Road. Here it could be very deep with a swift current and could be impassable except for high carts. This affected those working at Donisthorpe pit. If a bad flood was expected they would go by Measham and along Walton Way to join the road again near Acresford. There might be a flood at the bottom of Birds Hill but never very deep, there being a large area of meadowland for the water to spread over.

⁵⁹ This is roughly half way between Appleby Parva and Bowleys Lane on the A444. Although the 'corner' has been straightened out, flooding can still occur in severe weather, as it can at the other places mentioned.



Map of locations mentioned in the text. *The numbers refer to footnotes.*

Note relating to the walk around the village

At the time of publication, we are in the process of producing a walk leaflet covering the places described in this chapter, to be available from the Appleby Magna village website (www.applebymagna.org.uk). In the meantime it is possible to follow the walk with the aid of the footnotes and the map (although there is a jump between 29 and 30!). You are advised to start at no 4, the Appleby Inn, (which has a large car park if needed) and backtrack to 3. Then follow the numbers to 47 then to 1. From the Old Rectory it is possible to take the footpath to Bowley's lane to see landmark 49 above, the rectory laundry. If you want to make it into a circular route you can then go back and continue on the footpath to Church Street and from there to New Road for a final look at the school before returning to the Appleby Inn.

Village Personalities

No account of Appleby would be complete without a word about George Reeves. It was the custom of what were known as big houses to have their clocks wound weekly by the local clockmaker. So, every Monday morning, George set off to wind clocks at the hall, the villa and the rectory. Every clock in the house was in his care and he would clean as and when he thought it was necessary. Nobody else was allowed to touch a clock, not even to adjust the time. George arrived at the rectory, prompt at midday. He did the round of the house even to the nursery. It took quite a time to get round as there was always a spot of gossip to be had and if it was something spicy, it took a little longer. Also George had a jug of beer at each place so the tongue was getting loosened by the time he got to us where, of course, he had another jug of beer.

George Reeves was a real master of craft, taught by his father. His shop was a great joy to me. Here was a place where I had the run of the house. All round the walls of his workshop, stood or hung clocks of every description. At the hour all of them struck almost together, a sound to be remembered. On his workbench were watches in various stages of repair, each under an inverted wine glass of which only the stem was broken. Whenever a wine glass was broken, provided the bowl was all right, it was taken to George to use as a dust cover for his delicate work. The hall and rectory were his chief source of supply and this gave me an excuse to get into his shop.

I never knew what the winding service cost but it did ensure correct time. They were all set to the church clock which George looked after, but where he got his time from I do not know. If George cleaned or repaired a watch or clock it did not fail the owner.

One of the last things George did was to obtain, on the behalf of the parish, the gold watch presented to father on his retirement in 1922 and which I still have.

A Sunday ritual was the walk home from church after morning service. Mother would go by the road and have a good gossip on the way. I would wait for father while he talked with Riley who, in addition to being organist, was also warden and as such counted and took with him the collection. We always went home 'by the fields', calling on John Wilkins. He lived in an old cottage, now demolished, in the corner of the glebe joining Parker's field, just off the footpath. John was very deaf so we had to shout. Father would ask what he was having for dinner, the oven door would be opened to display the joint. Usually John said 'bit of poke' (pork). We would get back to the rectory just on time for lunch at one o'clock.

Old John played a large part in my early life. I would go down to his cottage as often as I could. It had been the bolt hole for Tim and then George for a long time. As I got older they took me with them. They had done most of their smoking there and I soon joined them in this forbidden practice, i.e. until old enough. We all smoked pipes. Cigarettes were definitely out in my family. We just listened to tales of old

times. Except for occasional prompting to get the tale we wanted, we did not speak much. The same pattern followed when I was there alone.



Appleby Fields Farm. *Originally a coaching inn and later known as Red Lion Farm.*

Old John started his working life as ostler's boy at the then Red Lion Inn near Little Wigston. He was born in 1821 so he went back a long time. He told me about the stagecoaches and private carriages which called at the Inn for a meal, a drink or a bed for the night. They also changed horses which was one of his main jobs. He was kept on the go for long hours, with little rest. His best stories related to the prize fights which took place near to No Man's Heath along the road towards Tamworth. Just to the right, at the bottom of the hill there is a place where the four counties met, Warwickshire, Staffordshire, Derbyshire and Leicestershire. The reason this place was so popular for fighting was that prize fighting was illegal under the law of each county. If and when the police arrived, the stakes and ropes were taken up and transferred to the next field in another county and so on. The meeting place before and after the fights was, of course, the Red Lion. John saw a number of these fights and could remember the names of those who fought and some of the details of the fights. I cannot remember any of the names he frequently remembered except those of Caunt and the famous Bendigo. They were in the top class. John never saw them fight each other but he saw both of them fight other opponents.



*“Eight and Eighty”. Aubrey Moore in 1901,
with John Wilkins in his cottage garden.*

Old John would tell many tales about Appleby and its people of his youth and middle age. All mowing was done by scythe. If the summer was very hot when they were mowing they would start at about 3a.m., stop for a few hours around midday and if it was moonlight, carry on until quite late. Although it was quite a laborious job it appeared to be remarkable how quickly a field was mown. There would probably be up to six men mowing.

When Old John became too old to work father let him stay in his cottage. His wife died when I was small, I just remember her. The old man lived on his own, keeping his cottage spotless and very comfortable. He spent his days gardening. It stretched from his door to what we called the park pit. It was neat and tidy, well cropped with vegetables and flowers. He loved his pipe. He kept his tobacco wrapped in a cabbage

leaf. His hobby on retiring was making walking sticks. He went round the hedges looking for suitable ash, quick or blackthorn. The bark would be stripped, the stick and handle shaped, sandpapered and hung up to dry in his sitting room. After a suitable time they would be varnished with gum shellac as he called it. Most houses in Appleby had a stick made by him.

About halfway along his garden path was a large elm tree with a seat at the base on which he sat for hours smoking his pipe. It was on this seat he and I sat for the photograph when he was eighty and I was eight. It was taken by a grandson of 'Nobby' Winter who had bad health and did a bit of photography. Old John died about ninety-four or five during the first world war.

Another character in my life was the saddler who lived near the rectory, William ('Codger') Saddington. His shop, a few yards beyond, was full of interest for me and full of rubbish besides. I spent hours just watching him work. He was a master craftsman with leather. He did practically all the harness and saddlery in the village. The shop was a fine example of orderly chaos, yet old Codger could put his hand on any particular piece he required at once. He was a master at plaiting and spent quite a time trying to teach me. He had examples of any number of plaits. The tools of his trade always fascinated me. He had a large mallet made from *lignum vitae*, a very hard wood which he used for beating the leather and which had a very high polish. I used to hang on to this all the time I was in the shop. We could buy hanks of whipcord for a penny. We were regularly replacing the whipcord on the hunting ropes, as much for the sake of doing it rather than because it was required. There was a certain way of doing it. Father, Tim and George were good at it but if mine did not please me I would take it down to Codger who would oblige. He made up his sewing threads by twisting several strands of thin string or thick cotton and waxing with cobblers' wax. This gave a very strong material and anything Codger sewed rarely came apart.

The last job Codger did for me was to make a revolver holster to slip on my Sam Browne belt at the start of the 1914 war, father having said I could take his .45 Webley. I still have both. After Codger died at a big age, his daughter Annie converted the shop into a small house where she spent the last years of her long life, dying at the age of ninety-seven.

One Saturday, our gardener, Charlie Bowley was temporarily acting as groom-coachman. On this particular Saturday night father had to be met at Ashby station at about six o'clock. Bowley dressed up in his long uniform coat and top coat and duly arrived at Ashby station. As father arrived he did what most coachmen would do. He felt his hat to see if it was correctly on. His hat would not move! The hat was still firmly on his head when he got home. He groomed the horse Columbus, still wearing it and locked up to go home. Whether the penny had dropped that he was the victim

of a prank I do not know. Here he made the mistake of his life. He may have wanted to be a martyr. He went straight to the Crown Inn still wearing the hat firmly on his head. He was bit of a butt at the best of times, so the incident was egg and milk for the customers. Being a Saturday night, the place was full. So started the biggest laugh the district had known for years. To say Bowley was furious is to put it mildly. Father kept out of it, save to feel sorry that Bowley had been victim to someone in the place. Bowley suspected Tim as having something to do with it but had no proof. After all these years it cannot matter to say that Tim got the cobbler's wax from the saddle shop and Bill Winter applied a very thin smear of melted wax on the inside band. Codger Saddington knew nothing of the trick. Tim asked him for a bit of wax as he was waxing some thread. He put a piece on his bench and said, 'I'm just off up to the house for a minute'. When he got back, having smelt a rat, both Tim and the wax had gone.

Mrs. West at the Villa was the doctor's housekeeper and a wonderful cook, and she put on some good lunches for us, especially home-fed chickens. She was an expert on poultry. Every Saturday she and mother spent no end of time looking at and assessing her poultry, mother being no mean judge herself. Mrs. West held very strong views about motor cars. She hated the sight of them, and did not like to see doctor going off on his rounds in a motor car. She would remark 'What looks nicer than a doctor in a tall hat, stepping out of a nice brougham'. She eventually died. Mother went to her funeral, riding in the passenger compartment of the shillibier, with distant relatives of the deceased, displaying tears and handkerchiefs and hope. Alas, Mrs. West left all she had to the doctor, who promptly bought a new car!

As Mr. and Mrs. Riley played such a large part in my early life I must write a few words about them. They had two children, Lilla and William Nairn, the latter my age and the sister a year older. It was therefore natural that we should play together from a young age. The parents were always referred to as 'Dada' and 'Moma' Riley as long as I can remember. They were wonderful with children and young people. The two children were very clever, far above average. As they got older so they made friends. During holidays the house was always full with their friends from which I benefited and spent so much time with them. They had their troubles. Nairn lost a leg in the war and Lilla's rather late marriage was not a success and she died at a far too early age.

'Dada' was one of the great acquisitions every village hopes to have. Full of energy, he ran everything and did it well. He sang comic songs, often dressing up for the part. He went far and wide for concerts. With it all he was the perfect gentleman, he mixed and talked with all walks of society. He was a great sportsman, especially loving hunting. If hounds met at Appleby or ran into the Appleby covers, and he knew, the school with himself was after them very quickly.

When retirement came, Nairn bought a house for his parents in the Overtown. He also bought for the village and as a memorial to his parents a piece of land in Bowley's Lane to be used as a recreation ground. It is today one of Appleby's most important and most appreciated amenities. Nairn, in spite of his disability did not lose his flair for sport. He played a good game of golf and was an expert fly fisherman. He ultimately lost his other leg and died.

I have already mentioned Billy Cooper who lived at the Beeches. He owned Acresford Brewery, sold out and bought himself an annuity. He had no relations and retired to Appleby. He had a host of friends, but was crippled and could walk only with the aid of two sticks. He kept open house and was glad of company, he kept a good table and a good cellar, but the main drink for callars was whisky and soda. I often went with father when he called and was bored stiff. I must have spent hours in that small sitting room which reeked of cigar and pipe smoke with the distinct smell of a brewery in the background. Billy Cooper died in about 1902 at a fairly advanced age. He instructed that he should be buried at Uttoxeter, his home town. Also, those who had attended the funeral were to have a really good lunch at the expense of his estate. The cortège left the Beeches in time to catch a train at Measham at about ten o'clock. I watched it start with great interest. Needless to say there were many followers, a few had a quick one at the Union before boarding the train for Burton where the party had to change trains for Uttoxeter. The mourners duly arrived there to find no Mr. Cooper, having failed to put him on the train at Burton. The railway officials assured them he would arrive by the next train. This gave a little time for those who wished to go to the hotel near the station for sustenance. Eventually all parties were reunited and Mr. Cooper safely laid to rest. The party then proceeded to deal with the remaining instructions in the will and a good time was had by all. No details were ever known as to how the lunch went off because nobody could remember. One gentleman who had no top hat went to a farmer friend to borrow one only to be told by his wife that alas her husband had accidentally sat on it and it was ruined. The problem was solved by the gentleman going to the funeral in Mr. Cooper's own hat.

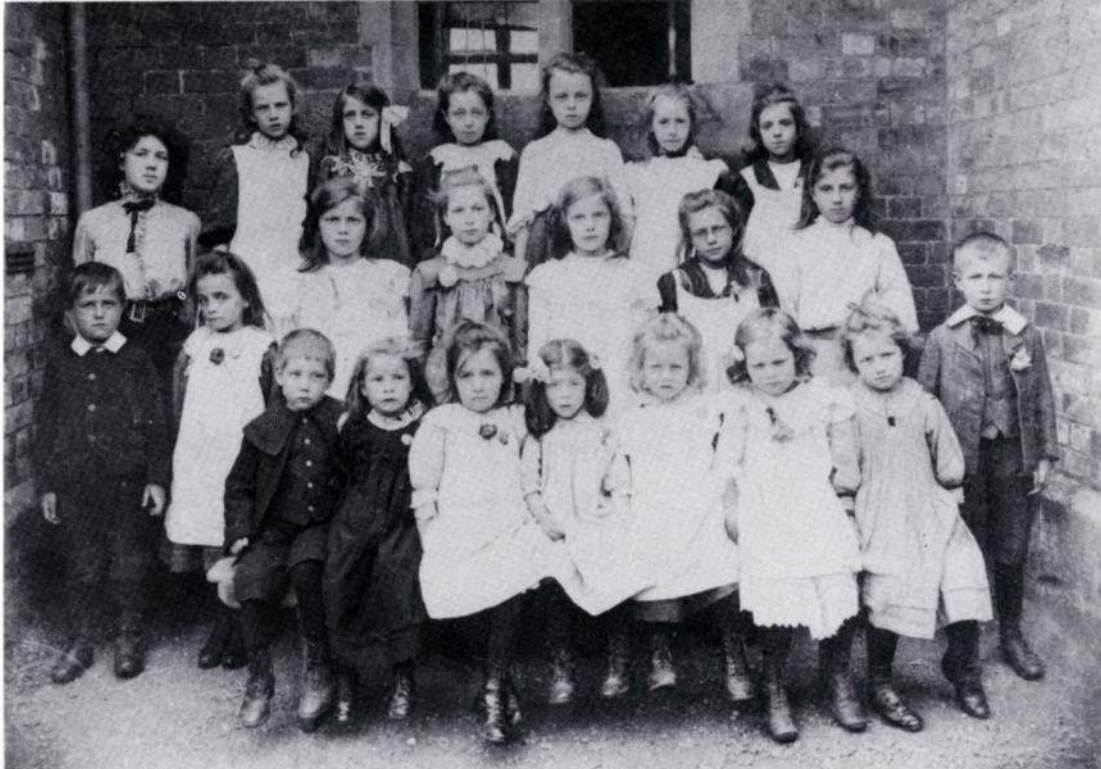
Nell Guy was my nurse and brought me up. She was the daughter of the English school headmaster, William and Mrs. Guy. She figured largely in my life until she died, and was one of the most delightful, saintly and loving characters it is possible to imagine. She spent almost her entire life with us. When finished with me she looked after my father and my mother for the remainder of their lives, going to Hill House, Ashby, until my father died and then with mother back to Appleby until she also died. Nell died in 1943, and left me a pair of cottages on Measham Road, which father had given her. I appreciated her kindness, but they were a liability. One house paid me 1s 6d a week and paid rates, the other paid 2s 6d a week, me paying rates. I also had a tax demand yearly based on the rateable value. Charlie Jones looked after them for me, collected rents, paid rates, did minor repairs as required and at the year's end I

owed him money. A busybody came to live in the village and, without asking the tenants, got the local council health officer to report on them. His report gave a number of items to be put right. I was well out of pocket so I got rid of them. So ended the Moore ownership in Appleby.



Mrs. Moore and Nell Guy. *Standing by the dovecote looking on to Little Jobs Field. Mrs. Moore is feeding her chickens.*

About the time of which I write there arrived in the village, as newly appointed headmistress of the Girls' school, a lady of dominating character and personality and, with it all, a charming manner – Miss Martha Sophia Kinns. She had an elegant figure and dressed accordingly. She very soon brought the school up to a very high standard and as might be expected was a strict disciplinarian. She soon made her presence felt in the village and commanded great respect. She was the possessor of a fine singing voice and, indeed, we thought she was the nearest approach to the great Clara Butt one could wish to hear. She had a large mouth which she opened to the full and out came the notes of a fine singer. Quite naturally she was in keen demand at concerts. Her singing of "Abide with Me" and "Ora pro Nobis" brought the house down. She came from a musical family and she had a brother who also had a fine baritone voice and was similarly in demand at concerts and private house parties. As a regular church-goer she of course added much to the singing and was a great asset in the congregation.



The Girls' School. *A group of girls and infants outside the School c. 1912.*

Billy Cooper having died Miss Kinns took over his pew. It was not long before father suggested to Riley, as warden in charge of the Church music, that Miss Kinns should train the choir and that, with himself as organist, they would produce a choir of a very high standard. The fat was well and truly in the fire and an almighty row developed. Riley's attitude was firmly "over my dead body" so status quo ante prevailed. However, good came of it. What with Martha Sophia letting go on one side of the Church, mother on the other side and Riley trying to drown them both with the organ, there was a good deal of noise about.

Miss Kinns lodged with Mr. and Mrs. Jimmy Miller in Rectory Lane until she married Everard Tunnadine in 1919 when she went to live at the shop. May and I went to the wedding which would be the last I attended in Appleby. They both lived to a big age and that would be the end of the Tunnadine family which had lived in Appleby as long as the Moores.

Ashby-de-la-Zouch and Measham

Ashby played a great part in my life as a child and as a young man. Apart from the family journeys for shopping, father sometimes took me when he went on business. Having put up the horse at the Queens Hotel, we would visit shops. The ironmongers, Holdrons and Isons, would be my favourites. Sometimes we went to Davenports, wines and spirits, where a bill would be paid and/or new supplies obtained. Mr.

Davenport would say 'and you will take a refreshment Sir?' I would be given a fizzy lemonade.

Ashby's vision of becoming a watering place is history. The Royal Hotel was built with the Assembly Rooms near by. A large area was laid out for cricket, croquet, tennis etc. The scheme of a Spa did not succeed but the hotel, grounds etc., were a great asset to the town. Three or four really good dances were held yearly in the Assembly Rooms which were excellent for such events. There was ample room for dancing, supper, changing and the like. Shoes had to be changed and many of the men had to put on a clean collar halfway through the night. Dancing was strenuous work. One jockeyed for getting a special partner for the supper dance or stood in for someone else to make up a table. Sitting out room was ample, long passages with small cubicles, a relic of the spa days. For a small consideration one could engage one of these and have private drinks and lure special female friends into it. The passages, with many chairs, got darker, the farther one went in. New partners stopped at the front, more advanced in the middle and very advanced went to the back. A girl was often referred to as 'a good goer up the passage'. These dances were great fun and went on until 3a.m., or 4a.m. Transport was bicycle, horseback or some sort of carriage.

One important annual event was the tennis tournament, held in the Bath grounds. There was a good cricket ground of county standards. On this were marked out about half a dozen courts in addition to two permanent courts. Some players came on from Wimbledon with a fair number of locals of high standard. The best remembered visitors were the Allen brothers, identical twins who spent their summers playing in tournaments all over the country. It was impossible for a stranger to tell them apart. They dressed in the old-fashioned manner, white flannels, a white or faintly tinted shirt, stiff white collar, a tie, sleeves down with gold cuff links. Their technique was to stage apparent quarrels and tear into each other with the usual effect of making their opponents careless, enabling them to win. They were very good players and good entertainment value.

Popular annual events were the Whit-Monday 'Fete and Gala', a flower show and an agricultural show, all well attended. The Whit-Monday attraction was the balloon ascent and the parachute drop. The build up before the ascent was perhaps the best part. A captain somebody was the original one to drop, but he was joined after a year or two by a lady, Miss Dolly Shepherd, the pair going up together and dropping. It was all very exciting, watching the balloon rising, the captain sitting on the bar, wondering when he would release the parachute, would it open? There was never a mishap at Ashby, but the captain and Miss Shepherd had a narrow escape elsewhere when her parachute would not release and the two came down on one parachute and escaped serious injury.

The Statute Fair, held in September, has one of the oldest charters in England. Held in Market Street, it completely blocks the main road. I was taken as soon as I was old enough. I got more kick out of it when I got older. It was great fun. Most things cost a penny, a half-crown going a long way. The fair was a great social occasion, all classes of society joining in the fun and letting their hair down.

As I got to my later "teens" I was in Ashby a good deal, being no distance on my motorbike. I joined the Castle Tennis Club. We also had a motorcycle club, there being about two dozen of us with motorbikes. On one occasion I got well and truly told off by the superintendent of the police because I was creating a nuisance with my motorbike in Market Street. The message went home all right.

It was the custom in nearly all market towns for some of the hotels to put a cheap lunch which was called a Market Ordinary. Such a lunch was put on at the Queens Hotel, Ashby. There was a certain ritual about it. A prominent farmer took the head of the table and in some cases, carved the joint. The meal was as much meat, usually beef, as you liked, with vegetables, followed by a pudding. There was also cheese on the table. The cost of this was one shilling. Alfred Stimson, landlord for many years, told me that many of the older customers gave him a dirty look if they were not given a tot of whisky on the house when they paid their bill.

The prices I have given are some indication of the cost of living, and these sort of prices never altered all the time I was under the age of twenty-one, nor, for that matter, did wages. Even in industry they only varied very slightly. I cannot quote prices of food as I never bought any. I suppose nobody thought it cheap as there was no yardstick, but I do know it did not vary from one-year end to the next, except for a seasonal penny or two. As far as I remember, our men were getting the same wage in 1914 as when I was a small boy. The same applied to indoor staff. What we now call the cost of living never altered either.

A fair amount of shopping was done in Measham where prices were considered to be cheaper than in Ashby. There were some good small shops, exciting to children as a penny would go farther. After the Chandler era my clothes were bought at Wades, at the left-hand side at the top of the hill. This was presided over by Mr. Wade senior, a most dignified gentleman, frock coat, grey waistcoat and the inevitable tape hanging from his neck. He was ably assisted by his son who dealt with my requirements. It was a great shop for the ladies of the district with a high social atmosphere, both sexes being catered for.

Although Hatton made all our heavy footwear, the household as a whole did a lot of business with Bonas, the boot shop just below the church entrance, presided over by father and son.

As we got older we were upgraded to Williscroft, in Bath Street, before it was widened to allow for a new tramway from Burton to Ashby station. Here, we of course, received VIP treatment, with shoes to match. I suppose it was the same thing as Bonas but cost a penny or two more and sounded better.

I have already said we had our daily paper from Johnsons of Measham, on the flat between the two hills, also the post office. Close by, on the same side was Stanfields, where all kinds of furnishings could be bought. Our great joy was the china shop next door. I cannot remember the name of the lady who kept it but she was very short, very fat and always smiling. The shop was stacked full of very conceivable china and pottery objects. One could spend from a ha'penny to several pounds. We never went into that shop without buying something or went to Measham without going into it. Snow showers were popular, glass balls of all sizes filled with liquid which would, when shaken, give the impression of a snowstorm. We collected many in the course of a year. The older ones went to the church bazaar when the village rubbish annually changed hands.

The Mecca of our female staff was the 'Star Tea' shop where much could be bought for little and a free gift thrown in. When they went 'down to Measham' they came back with a variety of things and had spent little. Other shops in Measham included a very good chemist, equal to anything in Ashby. It was opposite Wades and next to Dr. Hart's surgery, although he, like most doctors, did his own dispensing. A butcher's shop stood by itself, an island, at the front of the square kept by a Mr. Ball, a large, jovial gentleman with a son very similar. One seldom went by without seeing Mr. Ball standing at his door, greeting all and sundry, raising his straw hat to the quality!

At this time Measham was a station of some importance. It was served by two companies, the old Midland and by the London and North Western. The latter ran from its main line at Nuneaton to Burton and Uttoxeter and on the main line again at Crewe. Slip coaches were used on the London trains not stopping at Nuneaton, to serve this line. The Midland used the same line but from Nuneaton Midland station. They stopped at the intermediate stations. After Donisthorpe, the trains turned a sharp bend to the right, joining Burton to Leicester line. So it was that Measham had a large number of trains, both passenger and goods, or luggage trains as they were called. There were several expresses on this line but all stopped at Shackerstone where connections were made with the single line which went over the forest to Loughbrough via Coalville, a very nice run, often used by people for a cheap day out. The bulk of the goods traffic through Measham was beer and coal. Two trains, one day, one night, took beer from Burton to London. Endless trains of coal went through from Moira, Gresley and Donisthorpe pits. In addition there was the local pit and the brickyards. The position of the master was considered to be a good one and of some

importance. A very nice Mr. Sears held it for a long time. Country stationmasters did very well from local farmers and gentry.

A regular call for us in Measham was at Jones, the carriage builder. As later with motor cars, carriages had to go into the builder's shop for repairs, tightening of wheels, painting etc. The yard was opposite the station and next to the Union Inn. The same coming and going went on from the Hall but the visits to Jones' were more frequent as they had more vehicles. They used an oldish horse and dog cart for their utility visits, driven by Smith and the stud groom. On his errands he seldom missed calling at the Union for a drink, a drink the horse knew backwards. George Moore always drove himself to Ashby where he was chairman of the bench which sat on Saturdays. On one occasion all the horses were laid up except the old one so he was taken. Coming back, when they got to the Union the old horse swerved to the right and stopped at the door! He was eventually persuaded to continue. The squire mentioned the odd behaviour to Smith who said the horse was used to calling at Jones'. The squire believed, or so Smith hoped!

Mention of the squire brings to my mind something never heard today, and which will never be heard again. The squire of the village was invariably known as 'The wicked man'. This had nothing to do with his character. Father always referred to his brother, George, as 'The wicked man'. The nickname, if it can be so called, goes back many, many years. People discussing other estates in the country might ask 'Who is the wicked man there now', meaning 'Who is the squire there now?' The origin gives rise to an old tale. It was the custom in some village churches that the parson should not start the service until the squire was in his pew. On the occasion of the story the parson started off with the opening sentence of morning service – 'When the wicked man turneth away...', a voice came loudly from the verger, 'He hasn't come yet sir'.

Chapter 6

Later Years

This text of this chapter largely follows Chapter 4 from the original edition. It describes Aubrey's first jobs in local coal mines and then his time during World War 1. During the war he was injured and suffered gas attacks. However he also found time during one period of leave to get married. The account of the war years has been shortened slightly from the 1st edition. At the end of the chapter there is the inclusion of a previously unpublished account of Aubrey's return to Appleby after the war and his early married life.

I was taken away from school much too soon. There was an idea I might get an apprenticeship with the London Midland and Scottish Railway works at Derby. The suggestion came from John Hassell, a friend of father and a brother mason. He fancied he wielded some influence and could pull strings. An appointment was arranged for me to see the chief engineer, Mr. Fowler, later Sir Henry Fowler, the idea being, according to John Hassell, that he would take a look at me and ask me when I could start. It did not turn out a bit like that. He took a look at me, sat me at a table and gave me an examination paper to do, hoping I would not be long. By this time I was frightened to death and very nervous and so made a complete hash of the paper. I might have got away with it if I had not put such stupid answers to the simplest questions. The upshot was that Mr. Fowler decided he could manage to run the works without me. I did however get a tour round the works. Then Wilfred, my brother-in-law, took a hand. Being friendly with C.S. Rolls, he approached him with a view to my being accepted as an apprentice with Rolls Royce. Rolls agreed and had the indentures drawn up, much to my joy. I could see myself driving Rolls Royce chassis about the country very soon. It was a wonderful opportunity. However, it was not to be. Father flatly refused to sign the indentures. This was because he and Wilfred were not on speaking terms. The fee for the three-year indenture was £50 a year and I would have had a wonderful start in life. Rolls Royce then had their own technical school where I would have spent a good deal of the time and might have improved my neglected education. Everyone was furious and several tried to get father to change his mind, but he would not give way, although he knew at heart he had no excuse. So, on George being declared unfit to carry on in the mines, I took over his indentures and started with Moira Colliery. This cost father nothing, which appealed.

A footnote to this. The feud between father and Wilfred, which affected me so much, continued for several years. After the war, Appleby, in common with others, erected a war memorial. When the time came to unveil it someone suggested Wilfred Byron should be asked. Father agreed, Wilfred and Sylvia came to lunch and the feud was forgotten. They remained friends to the end of their days. A great pity it ever happened.

I do not propose to go into much detail of my working life. I started in the surveyors drawing office mainly engaged in underground surveys, plotting on the plans and working out royalties. Other times I was engaged in various jobs below, usually at Donisthorpe. This was really my home pit so to speak, working under the manager, Jesse Armson. He was old fashioned in so many ways but those ways were based on long experience, backed up by deep devotion to his work, discipline, and absolute fairness to each man. Every man respected Jesse Armson and if they had cause to be brought before him, they knew they would get a fair deal. He was a man of the highest principles, chapel preacher (his family were all Church of England), teetotal and non-smoker. I cycled to work each day, acceptable in fine weather but hard going when it was wet. Roads were water bound, tarmac had not come in. Consequently, after rain, the roads were thick with mud which the cycle had to be driven through. After George died, father or mother or both feared I might go the same way and wanted me to live near my work. I was not very keen but it happened that my surveying boss, George Fox Robinson, by this time a friend of the family, got married so his rooms were vacant. As I knew his landlord and family I had no difficulty in moving in. The house was called Bolton House, quite near the Donisthorpe colliery, owned by Mr. Fairbrother who worked at Rawdon colliery. His wife had died a few years back and his daughter, Flo, ran the house. There was another daughter, Nell, who was a school teacher. No man ever had more comfortable lodgings. I had my own sitting room cum dining room with a large bedroom above. No bathroom but as we did not have one at the rectory, I did not miss it. Hot water was carried up to my room when I got back in the evening. In winter I had a roaring fire in my sitting room. I could entertain my friends in comfort, and nothing but kindness from my landlady, Flo, if I wanted to have someone for a meal. For all this, including washing, I paid one pound a week. Mr. Fairbrother, having no son, treated me as one.

After about two years a friend, Frank Joyce, joined the colliery. At the same time we both became motorcycle owners. So, in spite of being comfortable in rooms, I moved back to the rectory and used my motorcycle for work. In those days at the rectory, we took it for granted that facilities for washing would be available in our rooms and a bath would be there when wanted. When I came home from the pit I wanted a bath. Hot soft water appeared in my room. The water had to be heated in the brewhouse copper and carried up to my room. The hard water from the kitchen boiler was never used for bathing. After bathing the bath water had to be emptied into a slop bucket

and carried to the W.C. It never occurred to me that it could be done any other way. It never occurred to me that I might have carried the water to the room myself. This evening work was all extra to the normal house duties, meals etc.

The same happened about my meals. Fanny Foster and Lilly Butcher, two of the best housemaids we ever had, got up to get my breakfast in time for me to leave at about 6.15 for the pit. Having had my bath I had to have my dinner at about 6 o'clock because I would be too late getting to bed if I had my dinner with the others at 8 o'clock. I also had studying to do. The same staff got the later dinner so they did not get to bed early. It all seems so wrong as one looks back but none of us felt it so at the time. No one complained and the atmosphere could not have been happier. In fact, Fanny and Lilly often said they liked getting up early as nearly all the work was done by the time the others had their breakfast.

When my indentures ended I was given a job by Jesse Armson as assistant to a deputy and dogs-body to him. For this I received £1 a week. I felt a rich man! Many people were running a house and family on that. But I was not satisfied. It was not the amount. On Friday, pay night, I drew only 19s. 8d., 4d. being deducted for national insurance (Lloyd George's 9d. for 4d.) so I did not draw a gold sovereign. This rankled a bit.

I went to Birmingham University to get my deputy's certificate. Having passed, I could be called an assistant deputy and so was given a small district, No. 4 Little Coal, to look after under Daniel Williamson. I suggested to Mr. Armson that I should have a bit more money so he gave me a challenge. My district turned out only twenty to twenty-five tons a day. If I could get it up to thirty tons a day he would consider giving me a bit more.

I told this to Dan. It was easy to get out thirty tons in a day but not so easy to keep it up. The coal lay at a fantastic angle, some at 1 in 2 and nothing under 1 in 4. I cannot think it paid. Only the best men could work it but they made good money and deserved it. I got my thirty tons out and kept it up. I will not go into details as to how it was done save to say it cost a good few pints of beer, but all fair and above board.

All this occurred at No. 2 pit where I had worked with a grand leading deputy, Bert Webster. He had lost an eye years back but he could see more with that one eye than many could see with two. He taught me much of what I knew in practical mining but more important, had given me self-confidence. However bad or tough the situation was, Bert never flapped. Under-managers came and went but it was Bert who carried things and it was he who mattered. He had a phobia about being late when he was a young man. This developed into a habit of getting to the pit early. Then he joined the select party who, on a point of honour never missed the first draw, i.e. the first cage of men to go down at 6 am. To do this he got to the pit at 5 am., sat in the stoke-hold for

a last smoke before getting his lamp. This meant getting up at 4 am, as he had to walk the two miles from Oakthorpe. I said to Bert one day 'Aren't you glad when Sunday comes and you can have a lie in for an hour or so', to which he replied 'No, I always get up a bit earlier on Sundays so I can have a long day at home'.

Then came 1914. War was looming. On the Sunday of August Bank Holiday I set off with 'D' Company, 5th Battalion the Leicestershire Regiment T.F., to our annual camp at Bridlington, and did not come back to the colliery for four and a half years. About three weeks after this an incident happened at the colliery which would have affected my whole life or even ended it. For some time before I had been detailed to go down on the last draw before winding coal started. There had been a bit of trouble with some pony lads. On this particular morning and for no apparent reason the up-coming cage, with only the ostler on board, left its guides and swung loose, colliding with the down cage. As this was the last draw I would have been on it! Nice thought! I was of course told all the details when I went to see Mr. Armson while on leave. The ostler was killed outright as his case broke loose and fell to the bottom of the shaft, about 300 feet. The down cage tipped sideways and jammed itself across the shaft. Some in the cage were either killed or died in hospital. All had broken ankles, the Y bone splitting with the sudden stop. I suppose this is a case where I can say the outbreak of war saved my life.

Eve of War

Some of my friends were in the Staffordshire Yeomanry, Tim had served with them, so, soon after I started work and had my motorcycle I joined the Burton squadron. Yeomanry was the cavalry of the territorial force which followed the old volunteer regiments. The Staffordshire Yeomanry was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Clowes, a distant relative. My squadron was commanded by Major Heywood, with Captain Ratcliffe and Lieutenant Vaughan-Williams. Captain Towse was adjutant. I stayed with the Yeomanry until 1913 when I became pressurised to take a commission in the 5th Battalion the Leicestershire Regiment, T.F., and join 'A' Company at Ashby. Harry Hassell, commanding the company, was responsible, abetted by father. My last camp was at Barton-under-Needwood. I took my motorcycle as well as my horse kit. Only doing a week, I left on the middle Sunday. Davidson offered to fetch my kit in his car. Father went with him. He did not like the sound of the language he heard, which led him to press me to join up with Harry Hassell. I reminded father that if he called that bad language, what did he think I heard in the pit?

The camp was in a large field on the right entering the village. Having a motorcycle, I was asked to do dispatch work. My pal, Arthur Ward, used to get me a horse from a friend in the Warwickshire Yeomanry, a lovely horse, well trained in cavalry work. The fee was the horse allowance we drew. This horse was not available so Arthur got

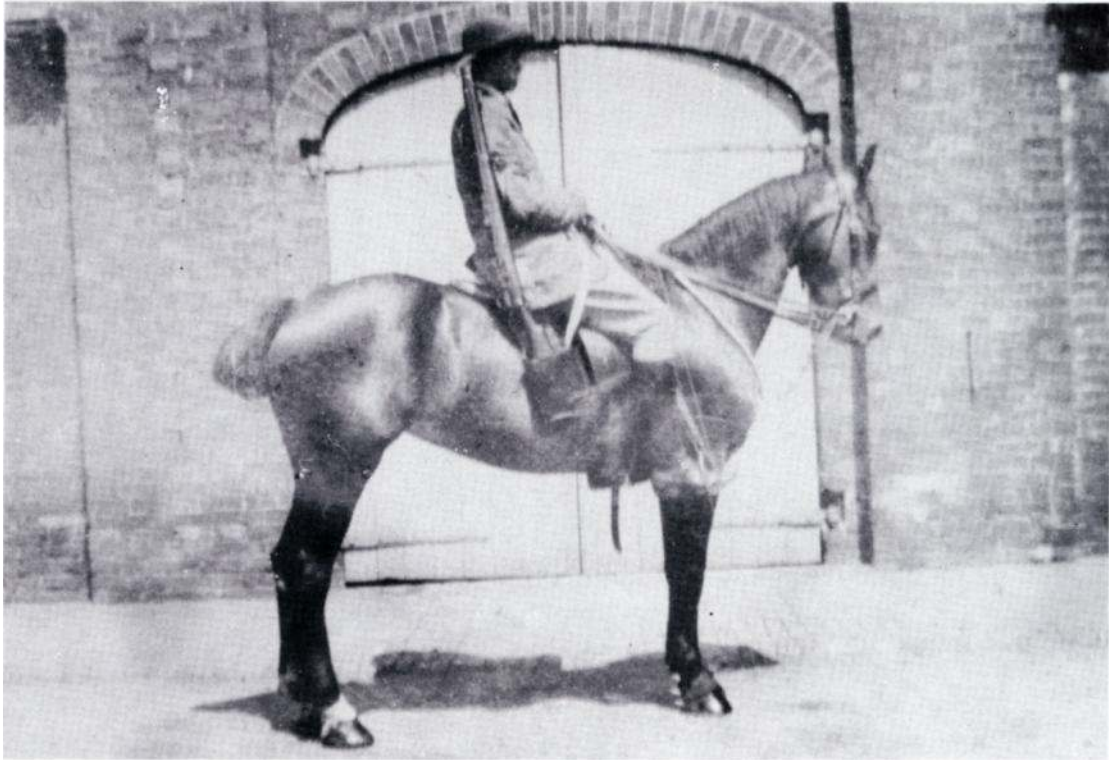
me one from Glovers of Snarestone. It came over the day before going to camp, so I decided to take him in the field to try him out. As soon as I got him in the field he went mad. I do not think I got on the back of a more vicious brute. After a short time of bucking and kicking, Gregory yelled 'Get off, he'll kill you'. I got off and it took the two of us to hold him. As I was taking my motorcycle to camp, Arthur said he would bring him. He never reached camp and he nearly killed Arthur.

Some time later, after having an interview with Lieutenant Colonel C.H. Jones, commanding officer, and Captain W.T. Bromfield, adjutant, at the Leicestershire Club with a good lunch, I was accepted and was commissioned by H.M. King George V in December, 1913. Harry Hassell took me to Hobson and Co., in Lexington Street, Soho, to get my uniform. I was given an allowance of £20 and the whole outfit cost just over £40, father paying the balance.

Suitably equipped as a very green and young second lieutenant I trained with 'A' Company all winter. In the spring I was asked if I would go to the Hinckley company 'D' as Ashby had its full complement of officers (captain and two lieutenants) whereas Hinckley had only a company commander, added to which I lived on the Hinckley side of Ashby and had a motorcycle. (I was to have a motorcycle allowance, but I never got it.) So I joined James Griffiths, the company commander and almost senior captain in the battalion and started a lifelong friendship. I went to Hinckley once, sometimes twice a week for training, often having dinner with James and his mother.

As a preliminary to the pages which follow relating to the war years of 1914-18 and some of my army experiences in France and elsewhere, it might be appropriate to describe a cricket match which, it could be said, effectively rang down the curtain on my life at Appleby Magna and which closed for me an era in which I was born and which had persisted more or less serenely in England for more than a century. It so happened that several of us playing in that match were to be closely associated together in quite another activity during the next four years. Very occasionally I played with Ashby Hastings but that was probably only when they were desperate for someone to make up the team. My last game with them was on Saturday, 1 August, 1914, the day before we went to the ill-fated camp at Bridlington. We were playing Castle Donington at Ashby. They included three Shields in their team, John, top class, Charlie and Joe, both above average. We were all great friends. I, with Frank Joyce, had been a regular visitor at Isley Walton for a long time. Ashby fielded and Castle Donington knocked up a sizeable score. Frank, who was captain, said to me 'Come on in with me and we'll knock up a hundred for the first wicket'. We made a big score. I got four! Frank was a terrific hitter. I just stone walled and he took nearly all the bowling, in fact I had very little to do but run. I was not very proud of my effort but I was playing to instructions. Rowland Farmer, another player and a

very old friend of all of us had, like Charlie Shields and myself, recently been commissioned in the territorials. We walked off the field together for a drink and talked about the forthcoming camp and the journey next day. Many walked off the field that evening for the last time.



Aubrey Moore on his Yeomanry "charger". Taken in the stable yard at the Rectory, 1912.

The Bridlington camp episode is now a part of history like that of so many other territorial army camps that week-end. In the event it was struck almost before we had entered the site and I had arrived home from the location early on the Tuesday morning and waited for the next move. A telegram arrived about lunchtime saying 'Mobilisation imminent'. I got my things together and in the evening went to Ashby on my motorcycle.

I was back in time for dinner and soon after went to bed having had little sleep for forty-eight hours. At about ten o'clock father woke me with a telegram which said one word 'Mobilise'; he thought I would want to dash off at once but I said I would have a night in bed. Dr. Davidson came up to say he would take me to Hinckley whenever I wanted to go. We decided on nine o'clock.

Mobilisation

We arrived at Hinckley about 9.30 am., to find the town crowded with excited people. It was, after all, bank-holiday week. The town seemed to have gone mad. By midday

the pubs were running short and men were crowding into the drill hall to sign on for enlistment with us, being quite prepared to take on the whole Germany army single handed. We started to kit out as best we could. James and I were continually studying standing orders on mobilisation, usually finding something we had missed. Swords and bayonets were sharpened. Some men could not be fitted with uniforms but they insisted on coming with us in civilian clothes. So, on Friday afternoon the company paraded, full of pride, hope and a certain amount of beer, to start our part in what was to be the greatest and bloodiest war in history. We set off for Loughborough for battalion mobilisation, spending the night at Groby; the men in the school and James and I in the pub where we were well treated, the landlord offering two nice bedrooms and meals. I had been over to Groby the previous evening on James' motorcycle arranging for a supply of bread etc. I also saw the village bobby and made suitable noises about martial law, conveying the impression we would be in charge.

We got to Groby in the evening, a bit footsore, had a foot inspection and got things sorted out. Our two senior sergeants, Casswell and Diggle, were a tower of strength, as were one or two N.C.O.'s who had served in South Africa. A contingent of ladies had followed us from Hinckley on cycles who proved to be a bit of a menace, luring the troops away from their billet which resulted in several getting lost in Bradgate Park. However, we got away on time on the Saturday morning and joined the other seven companies at Loughborough, being billeted in a school with the Melton Mowbray Company. After two days in which we got together as a battalion, we assembled in the market place where the mayor addressed us and wished us Godspeed. We went to Belper by train for brigade mobilisation.

'B' and 'D' companies were billeted in a mill by the river. The officers were in a large house nearby, occupied by one of the Strutt family. The owner was away, but had sent word that the house was at our disposal. We were welcomed by the butler in his absence. We had a magnificent dinner, the cellar was ours for anything we wished. The butler, with little difficulty, pressed upon us some fine wine. We were soon in comfortable beds which were welcome, having slept on the floor the previous nights. The second night, to my disgust, I had to sleep at the mill as I was the officer on duty. We had decided that war was not too bad after all, but we were soon off again, this time for division mobilisation. We marched to Derby where we entrained for Luton. Here the real training started and we were soon turned into a fit, tough-looking lot and from then on it was a tough life. I count myself lucky having experienced the mobilisation of a territorial division.

Just one more note of that time. On 30th August, about a fortnight after arriving at Luton, I had my twenty-first birthday with very little recognition of the fact from home. However, being a Sunday, Roland Farmer, Charlie Shields and myself went

down to the Royal (I think) Hotel in the main street and bought a bottle of champagne – cost 7s. 6d.

I make no attempt to write about our training at Luton or Sawbridgeworth to where we moved in November, save to say the training was hard, marching miles and miles in full kit until we were really fit and tough. We did field training based on open warfare. This did not fit us for what we eventually did. We went off to France in early 1915 via Southampton where we boarded a Clyde river steamer.

These ships were very small and held, with much discomfort, half a battalion. We left in a gale, got well out into the channel when the convoy of about a dozen ships was ordered back. The ship with the other half of our battalion did not get the order and went on alone to Le Havre. We sailed again the next night and with a very sick lot of troops. Fortunately, being a good sailor I was all right but I did stay in a sheltered spot on the upper deck. I will not describe what it was like below. So at last we were about to discover what war was all about. Ever since September we had worried ourselves sick that it would be all over before we could get into it. Our C.O., Lieutenant Colonel C.H. Jones, told us frequently, 'You will get there soon enough and you will be there long enough'.

War

The following pages are about the war and set down some of my experiences and recollections of that time which have remained so clearly in my mind despite the passing of more than half a century. I have always been conscious of the fact that those of my age and generation who were similarly caught up in the war machine missed the normal human phase of the developing maturity of early manhood. We were thrown into the whirlpool of war when little more than boys, returning, those who were lucky enough to do so when war had ended, 'old' in everything but years, with the background of experiences and responsibilities unknown to older generations, while in previous peacetime we would hardly have been regarded as sufficiently senior to balance the cash book or to operate a lathe!

After a few days I was sent with a sergeant and ten men to a nearby village to be taught how to make jam tin bombs. I was selected for this because Bob Martin, our second in command, knew I was in mining and consequently knew something about explosives. My sergeant, Harris, also knew a little. Arriving in the village we found a similar contingent from the other battalions of the brigade. We soon found our instructors, an ex ADC and a farmer from Horncastle, knew how to make the holes in the old jam tin, but knew little about explosives. So Sergeant Harris and I dealt with that part. We started off with detonators only, then we used a gun cotton primer with a five second fuse. This, in an old tin packed with soil and some nails and odd scraps of metal, made a very effective bomb.

Early in May, 1915 the Boche made his first gas attack at Ypres. We were just south of it so only got the smell. We were just going up the line when we first knew of it. I well remember Bob Martinⁱ shouting to each platoon commander as he passed 'If gas comes over tell your men to pee on their handkerchief and tie it over the mouth and nose. It is the only hope'.

A little while later, actually May 13th, we were out of the line, in brigade reserve, the Boche made an attempt to break through. In the afternoon we were suddenly put on buses and rushed to plug a gap near Zillebeke Lake. We had to dig in quickly. I never saw men dig faster. I think every man felt we had to hold that bit of line if the Boche came. However, as soon as we had things organised, we were pulled out at dawn and taken back to our huts. The whole British line was so thin. I supposed we could not be spared. In this battle the Leicestershire Yeomanry was also wiped out. A yeoman from their horse lines jumped on our bus and told us they had been heavily attacked early that morning. Several I knew had been killed, including their C.O., Lieutenant Colonel Evans Freke and Bill Martin, Bob's brother.

By June the division was withdrawn and sent to the Ypres salient. As I was on brigade strength while tunnelling I asked before I left them if I could have my leave on their rota (very flexible) to which they agreed, so I went home for three days.

It had become the custom in my battalion for officers returning from leave to bring back a salmon. Having innocently mentioned this in front of Harry Ford, a friend of my father, he kindly gave an order to Warners of Leicester to hand one to me at the station on my way back. I caught an afternoon boat train at Victoria. It was very hot. The salmon became very hot and a bad travelling companion. I was all for ditching it but another officer in the carriage suggested hanging it outside the carriage (we were now back in France). In this way it travelled to railhead. I took it to our mess sergeant Joe Collins, who pronounced it lovely. It was cooked and went up the line that night suitably apportioned to companies and it was much enjoyed. I also rejoined 'D' company and took over my old platoon.

Soon after this I broke my ankle jumping into a deep trench to avoid an oncoming shell. It happened as I was walking near Zillebeke Lake with my servant. We both jumped and I fell badly. I knew my battalion was near by in reserve so my servant went for help. In due course a stretcher arrived and I was borne along to the medical officer. He bound my ankle with a wet bandage. I wanted to go back to my billet so I waited for dark and found a G.S. wagon from my lot. After several drinks with 'D' Company I was put aboard. A G.S. wagon has no springs so I had a very

ⁱ This was Lt-Col Sir Robert Martin, who officially re-opened the Sir John Moore School, as Lord-Lieutenant of Leicestershire and a former pupil of the school, on 29th April 1959, after being closed since 1933. Aubrey Moore was Chairman of the Trustees at that time.

uncomfortable ride. I hoped to avoid going to hospital, but I was in terrible pain. The Royal Engineers had no medical officer but had a vet, John Shaw from Alford. I got him up. I was a bit fed up too. It was a most unsatisfactory way of leaving the salient. There were so many ways in that unpleasant spot of making an honourable exit. The vet was not pleased when he saw my ankle. It was double its normal size and when he cut off the bandage he guessed something was broken so I was sent to hospital.

I was taken to the casualty clearing station (CCS) in a monastery nearly at the top of Mont des Chats. There I was carried in on a stretcher at one end of which was a peer of the realm, Lord Crawford and Balcarres, who objected to fighting but would do any ambulance work and throughout the war made a great name for himself. From here I was put on a hospital train and taken to the Trianon Hotel, now a hospital, at Versailles. I was X-rayed and two or three small bones were found to be broken or cracked. I was there about a week or ten days in bed. The food was good but alcohol was restricted to one whisky a day, half could be taken at lunch and half at dinner or all at one meal. Most of us elected for one drink in the evening. My foot being in a splint, I was immobile except for a limited range. Suddenly we were all moved owing to the impending battle at Loos with heavy casualties expected.

We duly arrived at Southampton, then to Waterloo, then by ambulance to the home of Mrs. Hall-Walker (later Lady Wavertree) in Regents Park. All patients were limb cases, so the floors were kept polished to the highest degree and like a skating rink! Mrs. Hall-Walker had her own doctor in residence, others came in. She also invested in an X-ray outfit which had just been installed. I have always thought to this day I was the first victim! When I went into the small room I had the impression Mrs. Hall-Walker and the doctor were not very conversant with the apparatus. There was a lot of crackling and sparks flying until they got it going. I do not think I was ever quite so frightened of the unknown! I cannot remember how long I was there but I was eventually allowed to go home with a heavily bandaged foot. After a while I attended a medical board, given light duty, went to the battalion headquarters at Loughborough and did a bit of recruiting. Believe it or not, a soldier, 'wounded' in the Ypres salient was a 'draw' for a recruit meeting. Eventually I was passed fit again.

I went to our reserve battalion at Grantham on my motorcycle, had one look, asked the adjutant, 'Fanny' Fielden, an old friend, to put me on the first draft. I had a few hours leave, went to Isley Walton, left there at 6 am., said goodbye to May and was back in France twenty-four hours later.

Following the episode of my ankle and my return to France, I first went to the staging camp at Rouen. I took one draft to some unit in the line and came back. Soon after I took a draft to the 46th division and rejoined my own unit. I had missed an

engagement at Loos where the battalion took a bad mauling. One did not like missing battles if it could be helped because coming back was never the same. Old faces had gone and new ones had joined. However it was all part of the set up. I was again lent to brigade, this time to deal with drainage. The division was now holding a line in the flat belt of land in the valley of the river Lys near Estaire and Sailley sur la Lys, known as 'Sally on the Loose'. It was something like our fens. The water level made trench digging impossible so we lived behind sand-bag parapets. I went round with the brigade major to see if, by a bit of clearing and unstopping, we could drop the water level. As it did not stop raining for very long it did not look very hopeful. I was given some men and we had a try. We made a bit of progress when we learned we were for Gallipoli. On the morning I was to leave with my unit, I had booked a rendezvous with a division staff officer at a place known as 'Chocolat Menier Corner', after a large advertisement on a building about 500 yards behind the line.

It was very foggy with visibility about thirty yards. After waiting a suitable time and no staff officer as I expected, owing to the move I decided to return. I had a bicycle which I was pushing (it was usually quicker to push an army cycle than to ride it except downhill) when suddenly I heard marching troops and out of the fog loomed two officers on horses followed by troops in column of march. I realised to my horror it was the C.O. and adjutant of a battalion marching towards the line quite unaware they would soon be at it. I moved quickly and told the C.O. where he was. I would have loved to have had a photograph of his face when I told him. The battalion turned about very quickly and very silently and moved at a fast step. The C.O. was most grateful. He was certainly sweating more than I was.

I had become second in command to Rowland Farmer who commanded 'C' company. We soon learned we were to take over from the French on Vimy ridge. The British were lengthening their line. Rowland and I went up with the advance party to take over, twenty-four hours before the battalion came up. We were to be reserve company so found ourselves living with the French battalion headquarters.

It took a few days to get things sorted out. There was hardly any wire to be seen, except German, so we had to do a deal of wiring. The Boche soon knew we were there and in a short time they began to liven things up. I think one of our men must have let off a rifle shot by accident and they did not like the silence being disturbed! They soon began to throw everything at us they could find. We were heavily mortared with horrible things about the size of a five gallon oil drum, very crude but they made a shattering noise and were very destructive to trenches. They were known as minenwerfer. One of these was the cause of Rowland Farmer being killed. We had look-outs posted and when one was coming he would shout 'mini left' or 'mini right'. Rowland was an expert dodger. We all thought he must have slipped and

fallen and the mini dropped near him as his body was found away from the trench, head down in a water filled shell hole.

I took over the company and had one of the worst weeks possible. I kept losing men either from bombing, shelling or the appalling conditions, severe cold and wet. By a stroke of luck my correct strength never reached the quartermaster as I continued to receive the ration of rum based on our strength when we went in. I had a wonderful company sergeant major and one good officer. We gave a rum ration about every six hours and I am sure it saved the day for most of us. I brought out about two dozen men plus all the extra rum we had accumulated.

So, in March, 1916, I started my tour as commander of 'C' company which was not to end until April, 1918. When we first arrived in the area I was pressed by the tunnelling company on Vimy to join them. I saw Lieutenant Colonel Jones and told him I preferred to stay and he agreed. I would have had rapid promotion but in these conditions a Territorial unit was next to home and like a family. Last time I was tunnelling I had men I knew. This time it would have been with strangers.

We left the Vimy area and went south where our division took over from the 48th Division Warwickshire Territorials at Gommecourt. It was a quiet sector, largely unspoilt as there had been no major action in that area since the start of the war. We had on our right the 56th London Territorial Division containing many well known regiments. We soon realised we were for it on the Somme front, and on July 1st it came true.

I will not attempt to describe it or the build up to it, which was hard going. I will only say that on the day I never before or after saw such appalling slaughter. Needless to say we only reached No Mans' Land and some of us got back. I took in with me three officers who had hardly heard a shell burst. One, in the line for the first time, was killed very early, together with my CSM, and one officer was wounded. Company Sergeant Major Johnson, from Shepshed, was a young man full of promise and would have made an excellent officer. I felt his loss very much. The 46th division was on the extreme left of the attacking force. The idea was that we and the 56th division would attack the village of Gommecourt from two sides and pinch out the pronounced salient round the west side of the village. Excellent idea – on paper. For some reason nobody ever knew, the 37th division on our left made no feint or demonstration of any kind. As soon as the Boche realised this all those guns and machine guns were turned on us with the result that the 139 brigade, Notts and Derby, were almost wiped out by enfilade fire. Of course all the front attacking troops were caught in this crossfire. That was why the slaughter was so heavy. But for this we might have reached our objective. Certainly casualties would not have been so heavy. Later on we were destined to capture Gommecourt and when we looked back from the Boche lines we

saw what a wonderful field of fire they had. As we suspected, it was from their reserve trenches they did the damage.

After forty-eight hours we were withdrawn to billets. We got cleaned up and rested. I got a message that the Divisional Commander, a very senior officer, would visit each company at its billet. I paraded my company, what was left of it, on two sides of a farmyard. The general arrived, complete with staff, looking immaculate and highly polished. He was, however, carrying a small pekinese in his arms. One could feel the tension – everyone was seething. We were told we had done a marvellous job. Intelligence had learned that our attack had drawn I do not know how many divisions of Germans from the south so enabling our troops to advance on another front. We were not impressed.

We took over the line at Monchy, just north of Gommecourt. This relieved fresh troops for slaughter and enabled us to recover and get reinforcements. We held this line until the Boche showed signs of retreating due to pressure of the Somme battle. We were back at Gommecourt when he did go, so we got some satisfaction.

I must mention a bad operation we did in August, 1917. We were holding a line just opposite Hulluch, a little north of Hill 70. In the village, well hidden, was a very annoying heavy mortar which sent over, at frequent intervals, large shells. Somebody high up and well back, thought it would be a good idea to eliminate this mortar, code name 'Goose'. So, a raid at battalion strength was ordered and we were to do it. In a large field about five miles back a replica of the trench system was set out by the R.E. The position of 'Goose' was clearly shown and just to make sure everyone should know a large board with the word HULLUCH, in about two foot letters, was planted. Short of advertising in the German press, we could not have had better publicity. The fact that the Boche could take air photographs as well as or better than us did not seem to occur or was forgotten. We had a lot of casualties. We never knew if 'Goose' was destroyed. If it was it was soon replaced, which should have been obvious from the first. The demolition party was never seen or heard of again. Among the wounded was Charlie Shields, so soon to be my brother-in-law. I saw him soon after he was hit and he did not appear to have a very severe wound. It was worse than I thought, as, when I went to see him next day the leg had been amputated. He, like many others, was hit by one of our own shells falling short.

In the early part of 1916 some kind person suggested that those who had been awarded decorations should come home for them to be presented by H.M. King George V. The two concerned in my battalion were Toller, second in command, and myself. Toller did not want to go just then so I was told to go, to which I offered no objection as I had not been home for several months. The movement order for me came when we were having dinner having just come down from Vimy Ridge. The

Commanding officer, Jones, and Tollar argued whether my pass should be marked 'leave' or 'duty'. Tollar won the day with 'duty'. Now this may seem to be of little importance but in fact it made a great difference. That night I developed dysentery but not too bad. Off I went next morning, uncomfortable but happy, and arrived at Bologne. As we got off the train we were greeted with 'All leave cancelled. All ranks will return to their unit etc., etc'. This was followed by 'All those on duty will proceed as ordered'. Those with such passes went on board the ferry to good hearted jeers and cheers from most of those we had travelled with, the boat being nearly empty.

When I got to London I booked in at the Grosvenor, Victoria. At this time I had my hair cut by having clippers cutting it close to the scalp for cleanliness. I went for a haircut which caused some concern to the barber. I explained the position by saying I wanted to look sharper and have a good shampoo. My innards were still a bit tricky.

I was due at the Palace at 11 am. next day. The dysentery got worse and I got very frightened. I left it to the very last minute, went off in a taxi and was last to arrive to the relief of agitated officials. The checking and re-checking had to be seen to be believed. I got that over, dashed back to the hotel with considerable relief and had lunch, probably consisting of port and brandy. I did some shopping and, I expect, went to Cox's Bank for some money. I caught an evening train to Leicester and on to Ashby. There had been a terrible blizzard in the southern half of England and all wires were down. I sent a telegram from St. Pancras asking to be met at Ashby, but the telegram went on the same train as myself. I got to Ashby and went to the George Inn and got a man there to take me to Appleby, getting there in the middle of dinner. I had three days at home and then rejoined the battalion.

Whenever I came on leave Alex Davidson lent me his two seater Sunbeam which was typical of his good nature. This enabled me to get about especially to Isley Walton. However, on one leave, I think about 1916, I used my motorcycle on the last morning. I was to catch a train at Nuneaton in the afternoon, going in the Sunbeam. Coming back from Ashby earlier in the day going a good pace on the straight our side of Bird's Hill, my front tyre burst. I crashed pretty badly. A lorry driver helped me, he called at home and father soon arrived in the pony trap. Davidson strapped me up, I was a bit concussed, but persuaded him to take me to a later train. I stayed at the Grosvenor, Victoria, where Tim and Sylvia were to meet me and found me in bed at about 11 pm. Tim was just back from Penang. He took me to the train fairly early and handed me over to an officer of our 4th battalion. My groom met me at railhead, took me back to our transport and told John Burnett, transport officer, I was off my head. John took me to a nearby dressing station and I soon found myself in No. 1 CCS at Choques. There I stayed for two weeks because of a deep cut between the eyes.

They seemed to make a lot of fuss about the cut between my eyes. I nearly got evacuated to base hospital. I told matron I could not possibly go to a hospital full of wounded when my injury was from a tumble off a motorcycle in England. She saw my point and let me stay. I rejoined my battalion in the Arras sector.



Dr. Alexander Davidson at the Rectory. *Village doctor at Appleby in the era 1885-1915.*

I must get in somewhere a small thing which may sound silly, but it in fact was not. Sometime during our stay in Luton I was given a mascot by the barmaid at the hotel many of us frequented. It took the form of a squatting monkey, carved from ivory. I carried it in my pocket for a long time. When we were issued with identity discs this monkey was attached to the cord and carried slung around my neck. From then on it remained there throughout the war and it became an obsession. Only once did I go up the line without it so I sent my servant back to the transport lines to fetch it. This may sound daft now but it was deadly serious at that time.

About August 1917 I was due for a month's leave and to my surprise and delight this came through unexpectedly at the end of the month, and the brief return to England which this allowed was to see me married. I should go back a few years to explain that during the period I was working at Donisthorpe I was getting on very friendly terms with May Shields. We went to the Castle Tennis Club at Ashby together and I visited Isley Walton as often as work could allow. Along came the war and messed things up a bit but the upshot was that we were married at Isley Walton Church on 1 September 1917, and I can say with a fair amount of accuracy that we have lived happily ever after. The unexpectedness of my leave called for some very rapid

organisation and by the superhuman efforts of Mr. and Mrs. Shields and their staff we were married at midday on the Saturday, three days after my arriving home. There was a certain amount of worry about getting the licence but that was overcome by the kind co-operation of the Rev. William Fowler, vicar of Holy Trinity, Ashby-de-la-Zouch. My best man was Fred Wilson, Davidson's nephew, who, like his brother William, was a medical student, nearly qualified. He had joined up and was serving as medical officer on one of Campbell's 'Q' ships. He had been sunk and was on leave staying with his uncle, a convenient best man. Frank Joyce was on leave to support me. When Fred and I arrived in the stable yard at Isley Walton he came across from the house with a large whisky and soda which I was glad to have. Charlie Shields was, unfortunately, in hospital in France, after losing a leg in the raid we had done a week before, involving the whole battalion. This put a bit of gloom on things. John was also in France with the Royal Artillery.



Wedding of Mr. & Mrs. Aubrey Moore. At Isley Walton Church, 1 September 1917. Fred Wilson, best man, is seen over the bridegroom's right shoulder.

The Rev. Samuel Hosgood, Rector of Kegworth and Isley Walton, married us. We went to the house by car, a hundred yards! A wonderful wedding breakfast was put on of which I remember very little. We went to London from Loughborough station and stayed at St. Pancras Hotel, had a good dinner at the Trocadero, which cost about thirty shillings including champagne! We went to see Chu Chin Chow, one of the best musicals I ever saw. The month's leave came to an end all too soon. It was not funny going back, for either of us, although by now the war had become a way of life.

Anyone reading these notes must think we had a really uncomfortable and miserable time in France. Far from it. It was a cheerful happy time. There were good times

and bad times, the latter being very much in the minority. In a battle there was too much to think about. Being constantly and heavily shelled in a water-logged trench was not comfortable but it did not last long. One would not choose a trench as a nice place in which to stay. But there was a job to be done, no alternatives, so we had to make the best of it. It was always nice to know that the bloke across no-man's-land was in the same fix. Troops were never morbid or miserable or, if they were, they did not show it. The other ranks were well able to enjoy themselves when we were out of the line and they did not do so badly in the line because nobody else had the humour of the British Tommy if things were uncomfortable.

Early in April 1918 and during the Boche break-through south of us we were subjected to a steady but continuous shelling, much of it gas of every variety. We also had a thick fog for much of the time in which the gas remained, as of course there was no wind. So we just lived in an atmosphere soaked with gas and I took in a fair quantity, not being much good with a respirator.

I did not remember anything about going from the CCS to hospital in Bologne where I woke up. I had trouble with my eyes for a few days as mustard gas was one of the many being thrown at us in the fog. Gas is a horrible thing. We saw the effects of the first attack at Ypres where phosgene was used and no protection. It left a horrible choking effect and could damage the lungs, particularly if any quantity was inhaled. By 1917 the Germans had a variety of gases, but I always thought mustard gas was their favourite. They had one which, if taken in any quantity would make one sick. The technique here was to put this over, hoping to have all the troops so sick they could not wear a mask and then put over the mustard when they were unprotected; good in theory but it did not work like that. One learned ways of defeating their tricks. I got the dose that finished me through living in it for days on end. I suppose I should have been more careful. I often thought I ought to try to stick it out, but the plain fact was that I was completely exhausted both mentally and physically. I had commanded a company for over two years, all the time in the line and it had taken its toll. I am not making excuses or grumbling. Charlie Shields and myself had commanded companies longer than anyone else in our battalion or in the brigade for that matter. But I repeat, if we had got to have a war of that magnitude, I would not have changed places for any other job. But I must have had astounding luck.

I have written enough about the war and have strayed away from my original intention of keeping to my early life in Appleby. On the other hand the war played a great part in my young days.

Returning Home

After I returned from France in April or May 1918 I found myself in Leicester Military Hospital, where the Leicester University now stands. I was kept in hospital for about six weeks and eventually landed up in a convalescent camp at Squires Gate, Blackpool. Here I did nothing except get bored. I had two or three medical boards but could not get passed fit. At last I suggested to the Commandant that I should be allowed to go home where I would live on the farm and have plenty of good food and occupation. He fell for it and gave me a month's leave. Eventually I was allowed to leave the convalescent camp and was told I could do a vocational course at Nottingham University, but not yet return to active service.

The upshot was that I lived at Isley Walton and went by train, daily, to Nottingham. All this coincided with the terrible 'flu epidemic which killed people by the thousand. Nottingham was most depressing. One almost got the impression that the bulk of the traffic in the streets was hearses. Men we were working with were losing their wives. Men we travelled with in the train were one day not on it and the next day dead. A newly commissioned subaltern lost his new wife and was unable to get her buried for a week. Such was life.

I was in Nottingham for Armistice. The whole town went mad, but I felt a horrible pang that I could not get back to be in at the death. There were many like me and there was nothing we could do about it. May and our families were glad I had not gone back which was to be expected.

In January 1919 I was taken from the University and sent to a demobilisation centre where we dealt with priority of release from the service. Utter shambles. Nobody knew what to do. I was relieved when I was posted to our reserve depot at Liverpool. At the end of March I was demobilised and home to Appleby. The next day I went to Donisthorpe Colliery to see Jesse Armston and I started work next day. I was put on all sorts of jobs and not very well paid.

I think it was October or early November we moved from the Rectory to our first home, the Headmaster's house at the Grammar School. At the end of the war it was a bit of a wreck, having been used to house Belgian refugees. The Governors did a lot of repairs and decoration and put in a bathroom and lavatory, in fact, they made quite a nice house of it for those days. Of course there was nothing modern by today's standard. We had oil lamps and candles in the bedrooms. There was a large kitchen with a new Herald cooking range which fairly ate up the coal. This did not matter much as I had free coal from the colliery at the rate of one ton per month.

The dining room and our bedroom were two beautiful rooms by any standard. We also had a nice sitting room down a short flight of stairs. All other rooms were not

very attractive. Our staff consisted of Mrs Woolard, a widow of a gamekeeper and her daughter who was a nursery maid.

We were very happy in our first house. I went off to work at about 6a.m. and cycled to Donisthorpe. I had a motorcycle but did not use it in the winter, why I do not know. I think I must have thought more of my motor cycle than I did of myself. Of course, the roads were not made up with tarmac and were thick mud for most of the winter. I had long hours and only saw daylight at weekends from midday Saturday to about five o'clock Sunday.

We did most of our shopping Ashby, having a monthly order with Simkins and James and got our meat from Len Taylor, which we fetched on Saturday on our weekly visit to Ashby for general shopping. Our first lunch party was Boxing Day 1919. We had father and mother, Alex Davidson, Harry Ford who had dinner and stayed at the Rectory the previous night, also the Rector of Twycross who had dined and slept at the Rectory. I think we had a house-warming party previously.



Three Generations, 1923. *Left to right: Noel (baby), Tim Moore, Rev. Charles Moore, Aubrey Moore, Peter (baby). Taken at Hill House, Ashby de la Zouch, in 1923 Rev. Moore retired to Hill House on his retirement. Picture courtesy of Peter Moore.*

In the February Rosamond was born, May having a reasonable time, if such a thing is possible. I went round for the doctor at about three o'clock and when I got back it was all over. Nurse Coy was in attendance, the same nurse being with May when the first child was still-born, a most efficient person and very nice with it. I was always glad to know that a Moore had been born in the Grammar School House. Rosamond

was also the last Moore to be born in Appleby, Sir John's older brother presumably being the first.

We enjoyed living in Appleby and I think mother liked having May in the village. She called nearly every day. May was not having a very exciting time with me going off to work at about six o'clock and getting back after four. Then came the decision to leave the colliery which ended with us leaving Appleby and moving to Shropshire.



Back in Appleby, April 1982. H.W.Oakley, Mr. & Mrs. Aubrey Moore and Mrs. M. Hatton after the re-dedication of the Church bells service. Mr. Moore and Mrs. Hatton were present at the similar service at Appleby in 1912.



The Old Rectory, “present day” (1982). *Now in private occupation it is otherwise very little changed.*

Chapter 7

End of an Era

Peter Moore

During the period which forms the backdrop for Aubrey Moore's memoirs of life at the Rectory, his Uncle, George Moore, was the squire of Appleby owning a large estate and living in the now demolished Appleby Hall. Shortly before Aubrey left Appleby this estate was sold by George's son (Aubrey's cousin) Charles Moore. This parallel story of the circumstances which led to the end of the Moore family's ownership of the Appleby estate is told by Aubrey's son, Peter Moore. It provides both a deeply personal account of the relationships between family members and a wider sociological discussion of the factors underlying the decline of longstanding family estates which happened across England in the inter-war period. It was originally published as an independent pamphlet in 2000 and revised in 2003. This pamphlet contained reference to the Moore's other estate at Kirkstead. This chapter is a slightly amended version which focuses more centrally on Appleby.

Introduction

The Moore family were Lords of the Manor in Appleby from 1599 to 1919. They owned Appleby Hall and park, surrounding farm land and practically the whole village. For 320 years they were Squires of Appleby. All my life I have wondered why my cousin, Charles Moore, sold the whole estate, his own family home, with so much history behind it, so soon after inheriting. My father said simply that the tenants would not accept the rent increase which Charles asked for. One almost had the impression that Charles abandoned 320 years of tradition in a fit of pique, but that is not entirely fair to my father who also said that Charles inherited a mortgage and death duties and that the rent increase was vital. It is certainly not fair to Charles.

When my father died in 1992 I found, among his papers, a miscellaneous collection of family letters which Lilian, the widow of his cousin Charles, the last owner of the Appleby estate, had given to my father on Charles's death in 1961.

I decided to file these letters chronologically, to study them and to make notes about them. For the first time, from these letters, I learnt of the pressures which led to the

eventual sale and I gained, also, a wonderfully revealing picture of the relationships which existed between the various members of the family. Everything I write about the family is based on these letters. These letters, taken in conjunction with reference to the state of English agriculture between 1871 and 1914, reveal precisely why the Appleby estate had to be sold in 1919, after 320 years occupancy by the Moore family.

The Decline of the Moores of Appleby Magna

Charles Moore who, with his wife Cecily, lived at Norton-juxta-Twycross, purchased the neighbouring Manor of Appleby Parva, in Leicestershire, in 1599. The Moore family lived in Appleby and owned the Appleby estate until November 1919 when it was sold by Charles's descendant, another Charles Moore. At the time of the sales the Appleby estate had been reduced to 2,786 acres, and in 1919, after being Squires of Appleby Magna and Appleby Parva for 320 years, the Moores suddenly disappeared from the scene - like the Incas in Peru. What caused this?

The reason for the decline of the Moores can be attributed to internal, or family, influences and to outside factors beyond their control. Let us first consider the internal, family influences.

It is necessary to start with Appleby's most famous son and the most distinguished member of the family, Sir John Moore (1620-1702). John was the second son of Charles, who purchased the manor in 1599, and his wife Cecily. As the second son he would not have inherited the estate and he went to London to make his career as a merchant. He was very successful. He was knighted for his services to King Charles II. In 1671 he was Master of the Grocers' Company and in 1681 he was Lord Mayor of London. He married Mary Maddox, but they had no children. In 1694 he financed the building of a grammar school in Appleby Magna, designed originally by his friend Sir Christopher Wren, but taken over by the Midlands architect, Sir William Wilson. The School was completed in 1697.

Sir John Moore died in 1702. In his Will he stated "To the Moores of Appleby I leave nothing." He had no children of his own and it is not known why he did this, but it is not thought to have been through bitterness. He was fond of his family and of his home village. He probably thought that the Moores there already had enough. He left his large fortune to his nephew, John, who was also a London merchantⁱ. Perhaps, as a self made man himself, Sir John admired John more than his senior nephews living on the Appleby estate.

ⁱ Sir John's nephew John purchased the Elizabethan moated mansion Kentwell Hall in Suffolk, where the Moore family lived for 150 years.

Had Sir John Moore left his large fortune to the Moores of Appleby matters might have turned out very differently and the Appleby estate might have still been in existence to the present day. As it was, the Appleby estate - in Moore ownership - was eventually doomed.

When George Moore inherited the estate in 1871 it was a thriving and desirable property. Yet, in the 1880s he rented Witchingham Hall in Norfolk to recuperate his finances and, in 1885, he put the Appleby estate on the market for sale by private treaty. The Particulars of Sale - a splendid document which has survived – describes it as follows.

The very valuable Agricultural, Residential, Sporting and Freehold Domain known as Appleby Hall, embracing an area of 4,523 acres 1 rood 38 perches.

20 well cultivated farms

Keepers and Underkeepers lodges

Two picturesque villa residences and their grounds

Several shops in the villages of Appleby, Snarestone and Norton

Three capital inns

115 cottages and gardens

Well timbered and extensive woodland coverts

Good partridge and wildfowl shooting

Most excellent hunting with the Atherstone, Meynell, Quorn and other packs.

Trout fishing in the Meuse and other brooks.

The Manors, or reputed manors or share in them in Appleby, Snarestone and Norton

The gift of the Rectorial Living of Appleby.”

The Particulars of Sale added that the estate land was in the parishes of Appleby, Norton, Austrey, Snarestone, Measham, Oakthorpe, Orton-on-the-Hill and Carlton.

It is probable that the estate was put on the market at this time because of the extremely depressed state of agriculture and this factor will be examined in more

detail later. Probably no bids were received and the estate was not sold. However, it is likely that the outlying portion, of some 1,737 acres, was sold either then or later because, when the estate was finally sold in 1919 its size had been reduced from 4,523 acres in 1885 to 2,786 acres in 1919.

George and Louisa Moore returned from Witchingham Hall and resumed residence in Appleby Hall after the 1885 attempt at sale and they remained there until the death of George in 1916.

George's wife, Louisa, was the daughter of Samuel Trehawke Kekewich, of Peamore Hall, near Exeter. They were married in 1874, three years after George inherited the estate. They had three sons and a daughter. The eldest son, Charles Louis George, was born on 3 March 1876, Gerald Henry was born on 15 May 1877 and Lancelot Geoffrey was born on 5 February 1886. Elsie Louise was born on 13 February 1889. George and Louisa and their three sons (Aubrey Moore's uncle, aunt and cousins) provide the *dramatis personae* of the rest of this account, which is based largely on letters between them, and others, which survive.

We move now to 1914. Charles had married Lilian Gosling, the governess at Appleby Hall, somewhat to the disapproval of his mother Louisa, although, by all accounts, she was a charming young lady from a perfectly respectable Devon family. Charles and Lilian had returned to England after several years ranching in British Columbia and they were living in Devon. Gerald had married a girl of whom his mother bitterly disapproved. This was Gerald's first marriage and there were no children. He was to marry again later. Gerald was a gentleman of leisure but later he became an officer in the Royal Navy. Geoffrey was a young regular officer in the 60th Rifles and not yet married. Elsie was living at home, Appleby Hall. She never married.

On August 4 1914, Germany invaded Belgium and Britain declared war on Germany.

On 30 July 1914 George Moore wrote to his son and heir, Charles, and he wrote again on 2 August. These letters express George's pessimistic view on the future of landowning and outline Charles's financial obligations to his two younger brothers.

30 July 1914

Appleby Hall

Dear Charles,

I enclose £1 for Skipper - I hope that will be enough if not don't hesitate to tell me. He is very well and has transferred his affections back to me.

I have been into the question of the capital sums to be paid by my heir to the younger men and find that, during your mother's life, he need only pay 3.5% but after her death they can claim the whole - I don't know, of course, what turn events may now take nor of course can any man say - but were I to succeed to a landed property tomorrow I should endeavour to sell it. Even if England comes out of this scrap victorious, it is certain that we must be still more heavily taxed and I do not know whether we shall be able to live here or not.

Just heard from Geoffrey; he has had some sport with the salmon, getting two one day when noone else got one.

Yours most affectionately,

G.Moore

Charles's reply has not survived.

2 August 1914

Appleby Hall

My Dear Charles,

Yours of 31st to hand.

As to payments to younger children.

Elsie gets her mother's fortune, £70,000, so that does not come out of the estate. This leaves £15,000 to be raised. Towards this there will be my scrapings, viz, 2 life policies of £5,000 and £1,500 respectively and their accrued bonuses so that, after your mother dies you will have the rental of the estate and not nearly so much to pay as you think. As Life Tenant you can sell all with the Trustees' consent. Were it not for your mother's fortune I would not live here and you will recollect that I always told you that you would not be able to do so unless you

acquired some money in some way. You have also had £5,000 from the estate already and if you get 10% for that you are doing well with, if you like, £250 from me. I will tell Mammatt, my solicitor, to explain all this to you in an interview, which is much better than writing. I went over the whole matter with him last week and he knows it all. Of course, no man can tell what the upshot of this war may be, but one can only legislate for the moment and it may be as well that you should know exactly how matters stand.

I know that I have not stated things quite correctly because I understand them at the time but forget them afterwards, but Mammatt can put all before you and you can come here for a night and go and see him.

Your affectionate father,

G.Moore

These letters must have had a profound influence on Charles's attitude of mind.

They told him that he was to inherit a problem and that his father's recommended solution to that problem was to sell the estate as soon as he inherited. They also told him that he would have the heavy commitment of having to find £15,000 for his brothers.

George made two other significant comments. The first was that he could not have afforded to retain the estate and live there if he had not had the help of Louisa's fortune of £70,000 and the second, in much the same vein, " I always told you that you would not be able to (live here) unless you acquired some money in some way." It has been suggested that the Appleby estate had a useful income from coal royalties from the nearby north-west Leicestershire coalfield, but George makes no mention of them nor are they mentioned in any other correspondence. The suggestion appears to be unfounded. The main source of income was from farm rents and they held the key to the fortunes of the estate, as will be discussed later.

Charles was told by his father's lawyer, E.A. Mammatt, that, on succeeding to the estate and after the death of his mother, he would have to pay Gerald £9,000 and Geoffrey £6,000.

George died on 31 July 1916, at the age of 75, two years after writing these letters and Charles inherited, aged 40. Charles and Lilian had been living in Stoke Lodge, Stoke Fleming, South Devon since they returned from British Columbia and Charles did not immediately return to Appleby Hall on the death of his father. The first documentary evidence of his reaction on inheriting the estate is contained in a letter which he wrote

to his cousin, Arthur Vaughan-Lee, a co-executor of his father's Will with his mother, Louisa.

Arthur Vaughan-Lee lived at Dillington Park, Ilminster, Somerset. His mother, Clara, was the elder sister of Charles's father, George. She was brought up in Appleby and she was a gifted artist. I have several water colours which she painted of Appleby scenes in the mid to late 19th century.

In surviving letters written by Louisa to her son Charles in 1913, before the death of George, she wrote in affectionate terms mostly about the doings of the family and there was no hint of any animosity between them. However, Charles's letter to Arthur Vaughan-Lee, written from Stoke Fleming on 26 December 1916, reveals an intense animosity towards his mother. It is a long letter. He told Arthur that he was banning his mother from going onto the estate or from entering the Hall. "You may possibly think I am acting unjustly" he wrote " but I have been treated by my mother for twenty years and more and my wife is included in this in such a manner that no son would have any other feelings than those I have at the present time and I am not likely to have any unless her conduct is considerably altered and *unless she restores to me such articles which she took belonging to my ancestors and by which by all right should belong to me.* I regret to inform you that never as long as I have Appleby will she set her foot in it or on it again. I have given orders to this effect and if she does, some lawyers will take measures to prevent her doing so." Charles's letter continued by writing that the estate was saddled with great charges and that the Hall was in a deplorable state. He was entitled to let it fall down, as his mother and father had attempted to do. "The whole matter is very sad" he continued" but it is not my fault and I might add that I should have thought that my Parents might have had more pride in the family than to have treated and left the property in such a state *considering that my father had a gross income when he succeeded of £11,000 per annum*" (my italics).

This is very strong stuff. I believe that much of Charles's resentment against his mother stemmed from her evident disapproval of his marriage to Lilian, apparently because she was the governess and not somebody grander. However, there was another cause for his resentment, which I have italicised in Charles's letter, and that was what he called Mother's Selection, which allowed her to take virtually what she wanted from the Hall. This prerogative arose from George's Will and it appears that Louisa made full use of it, to Charles's understandable resentment. Certainly the amount she chose to take made him extremely bitter.

I have emphasised Charles's comment about his father having an income of £11,000 per year on inheriting in 1871. This significant point will be discussed later.

To return to George's controversial Will. He was very generous to Louisa with regard to household contents and to outside materials. She was left all china, plate, etc,

which belonged to her before marriage, plus all George's watches, jewellery etc. He also left her "All such articles of furniture, plate or other effects of household use or ornament, not including money or securities for money, but including consumable stores and provisions, wines and liquors, and also horses, carriages, saddlery, motor cars and accessories thereto in or about Appleby Hall at testator's death *or as she should within 3 calendar months from his death select.*"

"Bequests of residue not before bequeathed *or selected by his wife* of furniture, plate and other effects of household use or ornament, consumable stores wines and liquors horse, carriages, saddlery, motor cars and accessories in or about Appleby Hall to C.L.G.Moore (Charles) or person entitled for life to the Appleby Estate."

The Will gave carte blanche to Louisa (my emphasis) to select virtually whatever she wanted of the contents of Appleby Hall, inside and outside.

Charles had good reason to feel bitterly disappointed about the state of his inheritance. On top of this, he had the knowledge that Gerald and Geoffrey were entitled, one day, to claim respectively £9,000 and £6,000. This probably explains the rather tetchy relations between him and his two younger brothers apparent in correspondence between them. The first correspondence, between Charles and Geoffrey, was sparked off by two almost tragi-comic incidents. First, Geoffrey and his new bride were refused entry to Appleby Hall, Geoffrey's family home, to collect his old raincoat and, second, Charles complained that he and Lilian had not been asked to Geoffrey's wedding. The letters also shed more light on the state of Charles's inheritance and of his state of mind.

First, the raincoat. Here is a letter from Charles's manservant, Walter Bartlettⁱⁱ, in Appleby Hall to Charles at Stoke Fleming, Devon.

ⁱⁱ Walter Bartlett is mentioned by Aubrey on page 98 where he describes him as "the general factotum inside the Hall". He goes on to say "I made quite a pal of his son Frank and we used to go long walks together".

25 February 1917

Appleby Hall

Sir,

I thought it best to write to you that Capt Geoffrey Moore and a lady came to the Hall today. Of course, I did as I was told & did not allow the Capt to come inside the Hall. He asked me about a raincoat which was left in the chest in the front hall. I told the Capt that I could not allow him to have the raincoat without your orders, so by that they went away. I don't think the Capt liked it, should there be any unpleasantness about it I hope you will be at my back. Everything is going on alright at the Hall, the ponies are quite well.

I remain your obedient servant

Walter Bartlett

Following his abortive visit to his family home, Geoffrey wrote to his eldest brother.

28 February 1917

Claridges Hotel
Brook St
London

My Dear Charlie,

I was sorry that neither of you was able to attend my wedding. Elsie tells me that she sent you an invitation, but no reply was received - from which I conclude that either you did not answer - or that your answer went astray. Last weekend I was staying near Loughborough and came over to Appleby - I did not know you were away and I wanted to introduce you to my wife: and also, incidentally, to ask you to let me have back the waterproof which I lent you when I was in France last time. Would you mind sending it to 1, Chesham Place, SW? I want it during the summer out there.

When I reached Appleby, Bartlett informed me that, by your orders, nobody was allowed to enter the house. As you were away, I naturally did not wish to do so, but it appeared to me (though I may be mistaken) that these orders have been given by you with a view to the exclusion of your own relations, including myself. It hardly seems probable that all human beings would be excluded from one's

house, unless one requires complete solitude.

Now I don't in the least wish to enter into any discussion with you as to this latter affair which is obviously your own business entirely and about which you can do as you like. But I do wish to know whether your intention is to assume an unfriendly attitude to me or not. If so, please let me know because I must know how this matter stands before I leave for France on March 5th

I sincerely hope that my surmises are mistaken. It is very far from any wish of mine to be in any but a friendly position with you. But I cannot overlook the undoubted fact that you did not think fit to reply to an invitation to my wedding - a reply which the most ordinary politeness demands. Please send me an answer as soon as you can.

Yrs Geoffrey

Charles replied to Geoffrey's letter by return. He refers to the dilapidated state of the Hall and complains about "Mother's Selection."

March 3 1917

Stoke Lodge
Stoke Fleming
South Devon

Dear Geoffrey,

I received your letter of February 28 this morning. We never received an invitation to your wedding or of course we would have answered it and as I do not wish to be thought unnecessarily rude will you please tell Mrs Newton that we never received it.

I heard from Bartlett that you had been to Appleby, surely you knew that we were not there, the house is in the most wretched dilapidated condition and it needs a frightful amount doing to it to keep it from going to absolute ruin and owing to Mother's Selection which was rather extensive most of the rooms are dismantled to say nothing of the common necessities to run a house that were also taken and which I cannot afford to replace.

I have no wish to quarrel with you whatever and I am surprised at the tone of your letter, altogether uncalled for.

I have given orders to Bartlett that noone is to be admitted in my absence and to my way of thinking it is an ordinary precaution - for I do not think that my relations would have the bad taste to go there if they knew I was away and anyone else would have no right of business there. Had you written that you thought of going there, in ordinary politeness, especially as you were bringing your wife, I should have written you that we were not there, but we hope to meet her, and if and when we are next in London possibly she will come to see us, but you must let Lilian know her address to arrange a meeting.

When next I go to Appleby I will send your coat. I hope you will receive this letter before you leave for France but seeing that I only received it (sic) today and the London postmark is March 2nd whereas you wrote it February 28th you have given me little time to reply."

I wonder if there is a page missing from this letter as it ends rather abruptly without the usual signing off. Charles's grammar and punctuation are not always what one expects from an Etonian (as were Gerald, Geoffrey- and their father George and my grandfather, Charles, for that matter).

Geoffrey wrote to Charles again before returning to the Western Front in France.

March 5th 1917

The Bath Club
34, Dover St
London W

My Dear Charlie,

Many thanks for your letter of March 3rd. I am sorry to hear that you did not get my invitation to my wedding. Elsie told me she had sent one - I suppose it must have gone astray in the post. I had not the slightest idea whether you were at Appleby or not when I went there. I did not ask in London before I was married. I had a good deal to do in that short time and did not think of doing so nor had I heard in France where you were.

You might let me have that old waterproof when you return home. It really is very useful in the trenches. There is no immediate hurry.

I wish I could meet you when next I return to England and talk things over. I hope for some leave in about 3 months if I survive that long.

Yours Geoffrey

I find this a very moving letter, unconsciously so, from a younger brother to his eldest brother, especially the final paragraph. He always addresses his brother as "My Dear Charlie" but he only receives a "Dear Geoffrey" in return. Geoffrey seems genuinely anxious to retain the affections of his brother.

There is one more to this interchange of letters. Charles replied to Geoffrey's letter of March 5th. It is a cursory note from an elder brother to a younger brother about to return to the trenches and possible death. The wedding affair rumbles on and Charles gives no ground. The rain coat also features again.

March 6th 1917

Stoke Lodge
Stoke Fleming
South Devon

Dear Geoffrey,

I have received your letter of March 5th written from the Bath Club.

Elsie did say in a letter that you hoped we should come to your wedding but I thought it was the privilege of the Bride's Mother to send invitations. We considered such a one as Elsie sent much too casual and not an invitation, especially coming from Elsieⁱⁱⁱ.

I have returned your coat to 1, Chesham Place. You give me various reasons why you went to Appleby without letting me know, but I should still have thought that it was not impossible for you to have found a moment to write to me.

I have addressed this letter to the Bath Club, is that the address you are having letters sent to?

I hope you will return safe and sound.

Yours, Charlie

Charles's letter shows no recognition of the rigours of Geoffrey's life and suffering in the trenches and the ending does not indicate the warmest solicitude to a youngest brother returning to the Front and he signs off with just "Yours."

ⁱⁱⁱ Elsie was regarded by both Moore families as rather a simple soul.



Lancelot Geoffrey Moore. *Peter Moore's collection.*

These exchanges between Geoffrey and Charles have a definite Evelyn Waugh flavour, a mixture of comedy and poignancy but the comedy is touching, being unintentional. Geoffrey shows some nice flashes of irony, whereas Charles is more downright. The poignancy is Geoffrey's desire to be on good terms with his cantankerous eldest brother before he returns to possible death in the trenches. ("But I do wish to know whether your intention is to assume an unfriendly attitude to me or not. I must know how things stand before I leave for France on March 5th" and "I wish I could meet you when next I return to England and talk things over. I hope for some leave in 3 months if I survive that long.") There is a poignancy, too, about "that old waterproof" which "really is very useful in the trenches." Geoffrey was a brave and successful soldier. He became a colonel and commanded his battalion of the 60th Rifles. He had the rare distinction of being awarded the DSO and Bar, he was badly wounded and he was taken prisoner. His lone attempt to escape was the model for an incident in a book written by Alec Waugh, a fellow prisoner with Geoffrey in Germany, and brother of Evelyn. My father, Aubrey Moore, Geoffrey's cousin, who also fought on the Western Front - and who was awarded a MC and Mentioned in Dispatches - always said that Geoffrey was an outstandingly fine soldier.

To return to the affairs of the Appleby Estate. Charles's father had requested the two younger sons not to claim their share of the estate until after the death of their mother. Louisa did not die until 1921, but in 1918 Gerald comes back into the picture. Gerald, a year younger than Charles, was serving in the Royal Navy during the war. A year after Geoffrey's wedding invitation and raincoat correspondence with Charles, Gerald dropped the bombshell of asking Charles for his £9,000. He wrote:

25/2/18

Naval Base
Ganton

My Dear Charlie,

In case it may be of some benefit to you to have some notice in advance, I intend to ask the Executors of the Appleby Estate for the £9,000 left to me by Father's Will. You will probably remember that a wish was expressed in that Will that no demand would be made during Mother's lifetime. However, I feel it is imperative to set this aside owing to the state of affairs in this country as they are at present.

It seems probable that all landed estates will be taken over by the Government in the near future and one does not know what will happen; therefore in order to protect myself and any future family a more reliable investment or investments are necessary. I do not see that this will affect you by much as payment was bound

to be made some day or other.

We have left Hythe Cottage for good now and cannot have any permanent residence until after the war, whenever that will be. It seems likely that this year will see the beginning of the end. Things look very black at present and it is difficult to see the next move. I have long hours & little time for anything else, but I cannot grumble as I have a shore billet at present.

Your affectionate brother

Gerald

Charles replied to Gerald's letter by return. He does not reciprocate Gerald's affectionate opening and closing. By now, it seems, Charles was living in Appleby Hall (He refers to the saw mills going from morning to night).

28 February 1918

Appleby Hall

Dear Gerald,

I have received today your letter of February 25th.

I am sorry that you are going to ask for your portion of the estate left you by our Grandfather's Will as the estate has suffered so considerably from all the different duties. Evidently, Father knew that this would be the case and he expressly asked you and Geoffrey not to ask for it during Mother's lifetime and anything more out of the estate will affect you and your children as much as myself.

The matter has nothing to do with the Executors of Father's Will. You must communicate with my Trustees or their Solicitors. I think you are under a mistake as to land being a bad investment as I believe that Government are going to protect it in every way as it is the Nation's chief means of subsistence these days. The poor old estate has been pretty well sucked dry and I expect it will have to go up for sale before long as I do not intend to spend my energies trying to pull it round after there has been such unfair leakages and management which, if you knew as well as I do now, might open your eyes.

I fear the war will not end for some time and I am sure you have a strenuous time of it. I have not been idle and feel I am doing some good for the saw mill goes from morning to night sawing for the Government and I find every moment filled up. I am afraid that death duties will have to be paid which has not been done yet

and of course your portion will have its ratio to meet, so I expect it will take some considerable time before you obtain your money.

Yours ever,

Charlie

At this time Charles was 42 and Gerald was 41. Although the relish with which Charles wrote the final sentence of his letter is almost palpable, there is a noticeably more cordial tone in Charles's letter to Gerald than in his letters to Geoffrey. This is probably because Gerald was only one year younger than Charles, whereas Geoffrey was ten years younger. One cannot help comparing Charles's war effort (the saw mill going from morning to night sawing for the Government) with that of Gerald, only a year younger, and, especially, that of Geoffrey.

A year later, in January 1918, Geoffrey asked for his share of the estate, £6,000. There was a flurry of letters between Geoffrey and Charles and their solicitors and, although Charles accepted the validity of Geoffrey's request his reaction was more hostile than it had been to Gerald.

In 1919 matters had reached a climax for Charles. The situation was that he was living in Appleby Hall, which was dilapidated and sparsely furnished after his mother's selection, and he had to pay the £15,000 owing to his two brothers. The only way in which he could refurbish the Hall and pay off his financial commitments was to ask the farm tenants to agree to an increase in rents. The outcome of this is best described by Aubrey Moore in the draft of his memoirs, *Son of The Rectory*, which were published in 1982, without this extract.

... Rents were low and Charlie asked the farmers to help by paying more rent. They always refused in spite of all the facts being put before them. There were heavy commitments under the Settlement which were bound to cripple the estate for a long time. Charlie made a final appeal to the farmers and they agreed to ten shillings an acre increase. I went to see Charlie at the time of this meeting and I passed the farmers having a talk under the chestnut tree at the bottom of the drive. As I came out of the Hall I met two farmers going in. They had come back to tell Charlie that they had talked it over and had withdrawn their offer. He told them he would sell. "You'll never do that, Squire" they said. He told them plainly that he would unless they gave him what had been agreed. They were adamant and the estate was sold that night.

A Mr Beechy-Crundle, a name worthy of Dickens, Evelyn Waugh or P.G. Wodehouse, had already made an offer.

So ended 320 years of ownership by the Moore family of the Appleby estate. So ended also the estate itself, which was broken up and sold piecemeal.

This was the sorry culmination of five disappointing, frustrating and unhappy years for Charles and Lilian starting with the letters from his father in 1914 warning him of the state of his inheritance. As I commented earlier, I believe that much of Charles's tetchiness in his letters to his brothers and others is attributable to the stress which this caused him. I have referred earlier to the poignancy of Geoffrey's war time letters to Charles, but there is also a measure of poignancy about Charles's life since he inherited. Although he and Lilian lived comfortably off the proceeds of the sale for the rest of their lives, having to sell his ancestral estate was a bitter blow to Charles and I have much sympathy for him.

The new owner sold the lead off the roof of Appleby Hall and allowed it to become ruinous. The Hall was eventually demolished in 1937, the last vestiges being removed in 1952.

Having sold the estate, Charles was able to pay off his brothers and the mortgage and the death duties. He built himself a beautiful house which he called Coleridge Place, overlooking Start Point and Slapton Sands on the South Devon coast. He and Lilian lived there happily until they died, Charles on 31 July 1961 at the age of 85 and Lilian a year or two later. My father, Aubrey, was a life long friend of Charles and my mother and father were frequent visitors to Coleridge Place. As a child I saw it being built in the late 1920s and I made several visits thereafter, the last one with my wife.

Gerald and Geoffrey died in Africa. Gerald lived in Tahiti and Australia before settling in Stellenbosch, near Cape Town, where he died after the second world war. Because he volunteered to serve in Russia in 1919, Geoffrey missed Staff College, which limited his future in the army, so he resigned his commission. His wife, Rachel, had relations in Kenya and Rhodesia and they went to Rhodesia to farm. Geoffrey was killed there in a riding accident in 1955. Charles is buried at Slapton, Devon, Gerald in South Africa and Geoffreys' ashes were brought back to Appleby, where he has a memorial plaque in the church. To my regret I never met Gerald and Geoffrey.

Louisa, their mother, died on 12 October 1921 and is buried in Appleby with her husband, George. Elsie, who died young, is buried with them. A rather sad little letter, written by Louisa to Charles, points to some sort of reconciliation between Charles and his mother before she died.

Louisa wrote from London to Charles in Appleby Hall.

Tuesday 14 January 1919

12, Walton Street
London SW 3

My Dear Charlie,

A brace of pheasants has just arrived. Thank you a thousand times. It is most kind of you to think of me and for sending them. I am sorry to say that I have to leave this house in February. I think I shall go to the Victoria Hotel, Sidmouth, for the Spring. I hope you and Lilian are well.

Believe me

Your ever, Mother.

I am not well nor strong.

Geoffrey goes to Russia in February, I am sorry to say.

It was typical of Geoffrey's courage and his sense of duty that he volunteered to go to Russia with the British contingent in 1919, having miraculously survived the slaughter of 1914 to 1918 on the Western Front. The British, Americans and their allies sent troops to Russia after the Bolshevik revolution in an unsuccessful attempt to stop, by force, the spread of communism to the whole country and to support the non-communists.

To complete the story of the decline of the Moores in Appleby I will deal briefly with the demise of the 2,000 acres Kirkstead estate, in Lincolnshire, of my grandfather, The Reverend Charles T. Moore, Rector of Appleby for 45 years, who was younger brother of Charles Moore's father, George. The estate had been left to C.T. Moore by a Moore uncle.

Evidently, C.T. Moore shared the same view as his late brother (who had advised his son Charles to sell the Appleby estate on inheriting) because he sold the Kirkstead estate at about the same time as the Appleby estate was sold. He died on 21 July 1924 and his eldest son, Charles Frederick Kirkstead, always known as Tim, inherited all my grandfather's estate under the primogeniture rules, including the proceeds of the sale of the Kirkstead estate.

The solicitor in charge of dealing with all this money was E.A.(Teddy) Mammatt, of Ashby de la Zouch. Teddy Mammatt had handled the affairs of both the Moore families in Appleby for many years, though both Louisa and her son, Charles, had complained that he cost them a great deal of money. He was a popular and dashing local figure and he enjoyed social as well as professional relations with his clients.

He was living far too well and to pay for his lifestyle and debts he gambled with his clients' money and lost. My uncle Tim was the main victim and he lost the whole of the investments left to him by his father, including all the proceeds of the sale of the Kirkstead estate.

Teddy Mammatt went to prison, but in those days there was no lawyers' compensation fund and my uncle, from justifiably thinking himself a rich man, was impoverished. He died at the age of 55 on September 28 1938, a charming and gentle man.

The last beneficiary of the Appleby Estate Trust, and the end of the Trust, was the daughter of Gerald and his second wife, Minnie, Anne Delille Moore. She was their only child. She was born in Australia and she lives now in the West Indies. It is a curious fact that George and Louisa Moore had three sons but not one of them produced a son who survived infancy. Charles and Lilian had no children, Gerald and Minnie had one daughter and Geoffrey and Rachel had a son who died in infancy and two daughters. The elder daughter, Katherine, was born in England and the younger, Mary, was born in Rhodesia.

Geoffrey's elder daughter, Katherine, married a Rhodesian, Tony Johnston, who was a former RAF pilot and a civil engineer. He flew his own aeroplane in Africa and in France, to where they moved after thirty years of marriage. He died in 1986 and Katherine continues to live in France.

His younger daughter, Mary, married Lord John Manners, brother of the Duke of Rutland and lived at Belvoir. She attended the Tercentenary Celebrations of the founding of the Sir John Moore School in Appleby in June 1997, but died later that year after a brief illness.

My Uncle Tim had a son, Noel, and a daughter, Marion. Noel lives in Germany and Portugal and Marion lives in Cyprus. Noel has a son and I have 3 sons but, otherwise, as a family, the Appleby Moores have practically died out in England. There is a strong American branch in Rhode Island and Connecticut from a Moore who settled there in the late 19th century and another in Maine. Other non-Appleby branches, who share the same coat of arms exist elsewhere but communication between them is tenuous or non-existent. The one link with Appleby which remains is through the Sir John Moore School, which is still owned by the Sir John Moore Foundation under the auspices of the Charity Commission. The Moore heir at law, at present myself, is entitled to nominate two Trustees and, since the opening of the School in 1697, there have always been two Moores on the Trustees. I have been a Trustee since 1954 and my nephew, Rupert Scott, my sister's younger son, is my nominated Trustee.

In bringing the story of the Moores in Appleby up to date I have digressed from my main subject - the causes of their decline. I have concentrated so far on the family

and personal factors involved in this decline. In the case of the Appleby estate, I believe that these can be summarised as follows:-

1. Apart from rather dubious economising by the temporary lease of Witchingham Hall, the probable failure of Charles's parents, George and Louisa, to adjust their lifestyle to times of reduced income, for example when farming was depressed and rents were down.
2. George's loss of confidence in the future of landowning.
3. The sale of parts of the estate by Charles's father, reducing its size from 4,523 acres in 1885 to 2,786 acres when Charles inherited and so reducing the rental income.
4. Charles's financial commitment, on inheriting, under a Settlement by his grandfather, to pay his two younger brothers £15,000.
5. The refusal by the farm tenants to accept a rise in rent as a last resort.

Some may add a sixth family factor, Charles's failure to build a lucrative career for himself. He had been warned by his father (George's letter to Charles of 2 August 1914, quoted earlier "... Were it not for your mother's fortune I would not live here and you will recollect that I always told you that you would not be able to do so unless you acquired some money in some way.") The justification for this factor depends upon how early in life Charles first received this warning and the degree of importance with which it was pressed upon him.

I believe, however, that the influence of these internal factors was far outweighed by external factors, the first of which may be summarised under the general heading of Agricultural Depression. From 1874 to 1914, practically the whole period of George Moore's stewardship of the estate, agriculture was in a state of depression. The second influence was the imposition of unavoidable and punitive Death Duties. Writing in 1923, the distinguished Cambridge Agricultural Economist, Dr J. A. Venn, wrote "The contributions taken from the owners of considerable properties in the form, not only of annual contributions, but of Death Duties, have progressively swallowed up a large proportion of the gross rents received by a numerically small body."

It will be remembered that Charles Moore complained on inheriting, in his letter to Arthur Vaughan-Lee of 26 December 1916, that his father had had a gross income of £11,000 per annum when he inherited in 1871 and Charles wondered how his father had allowed the estate to deteriorate with that sort of income. The answer is that his father's father had benefited from an unprecedented period of agricultural prosperity, from 1837 to 1874, which included the famous Golden Age of British Agriculture

from 1853 to 1862. Rents were high and farmers competed for the opportunity to rent. This was the scene when Charles's father inherited in 1871.

Within 3 years of Charles's father inheriting in 1871, with the gross income of £11,000 per annum, this period of prosperity came to an end. The period of 1874 to 1914, the period of Charles's father's somewhat maligned stewardship of the estate, became known as the Great Depression, with only brief and very occasional periods of reasonable prices to farmers.

This is not the place to discuss in detail the causes of, first, the period of prosperity and, then, the depression in agriculture. In general terms, the prosperity was caused by the increase of the urban population and the advance in agricultural techniques. The depression was caused by the opening up of the virgin lands of the new world, allowing imports of cheap cereals to Britain and the development of refrigerated ships bringing cheaply produced meat into the country. At the same time, British farmers experienced a series of poor summers and disastrous harvests.

The effects of the depression were to convince many landowners that there was no future in owning agricultural land. To quote from a later edition of Lord Ernle's *English Farming Past and Present*, first published in 1912, "... Moreover, this was a time (1874 -1914) when considerable political attacks were being directed against the landlords, without much discrimination between the owners of agricultural land and those reaping 'unearned increment' from ground rents in urban areas. Some landowners took alarm and divested themselves of an investment which at the time was yielding an inferior rate of interest, yet carried with it heavy social obligations."

So serious was the depression that a Royal Commission on Depression in Trade was appointed to investigate causes and make recommendations. In 1886 this Commission was told by one expert witness that the yearly income of landlords, tenants and labourers had diminished since 1876 by £42,800,000 (at the 1886 value of the pound, a huge sum of money at today's value). In 1894-95 the price of British wheat was at its lowest for 150 years.

The decline of the Appleby estate and the gloomy opinions of Charles's father and his brother Gerald about the future of landowning in Great Britain have to be seen in this context. It must be borne in mind, too, that the subsidies and grants, which have been a feature of farming support since the second world war, were not available in those days and there had been no agricultural protection since the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846.

It has long been accepted among Land Agents and Surveyors that it is difficult, if not impossible, for the owner of a moderately sized estate such as the Appleby estate to live off the income of the estate and to manage the estate efficiently. There has to be

an outside source of income, too. At Appleby Hall there was not even a thin red line of Old Masters to be cashed in times of financial need. Although the Hall had some beautiful pictures, books, furniture and artifacts, The Moores had always been more interested in hunting, shooting and fishing than in collecting works of art. Charles's grandfather, George, had a grouse moor near Fort William, Invernesshire, and he died there in 1871, at the age of 60, having contracted a chill on the moor. His trophies from deer stalking adorned the walls of the large inner hall and staircase of the Hall.

Charles had no significant outside income and Lilian, unlike Charles's mother Louisa, was not a rich lady. By his own admission, George was subsidised by Louisa. Charles had no such source of subsidy. The sale of the estate by Charles was always going to be inevitable. Was this why Louisa objected to Lilian as a wife to Charles - because she knew that Charles - and the estate - needed a rich wife ? It is a charitable suggestion.

Although the decline of the estate took place under George's stewardship from 1871 to 1916, he was no villain. My father, his nephew, always spoke of him with great affection and said that he was widely liked and respected and very popular with the tenants. Perhaps George was too kind.

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Acknowledgements

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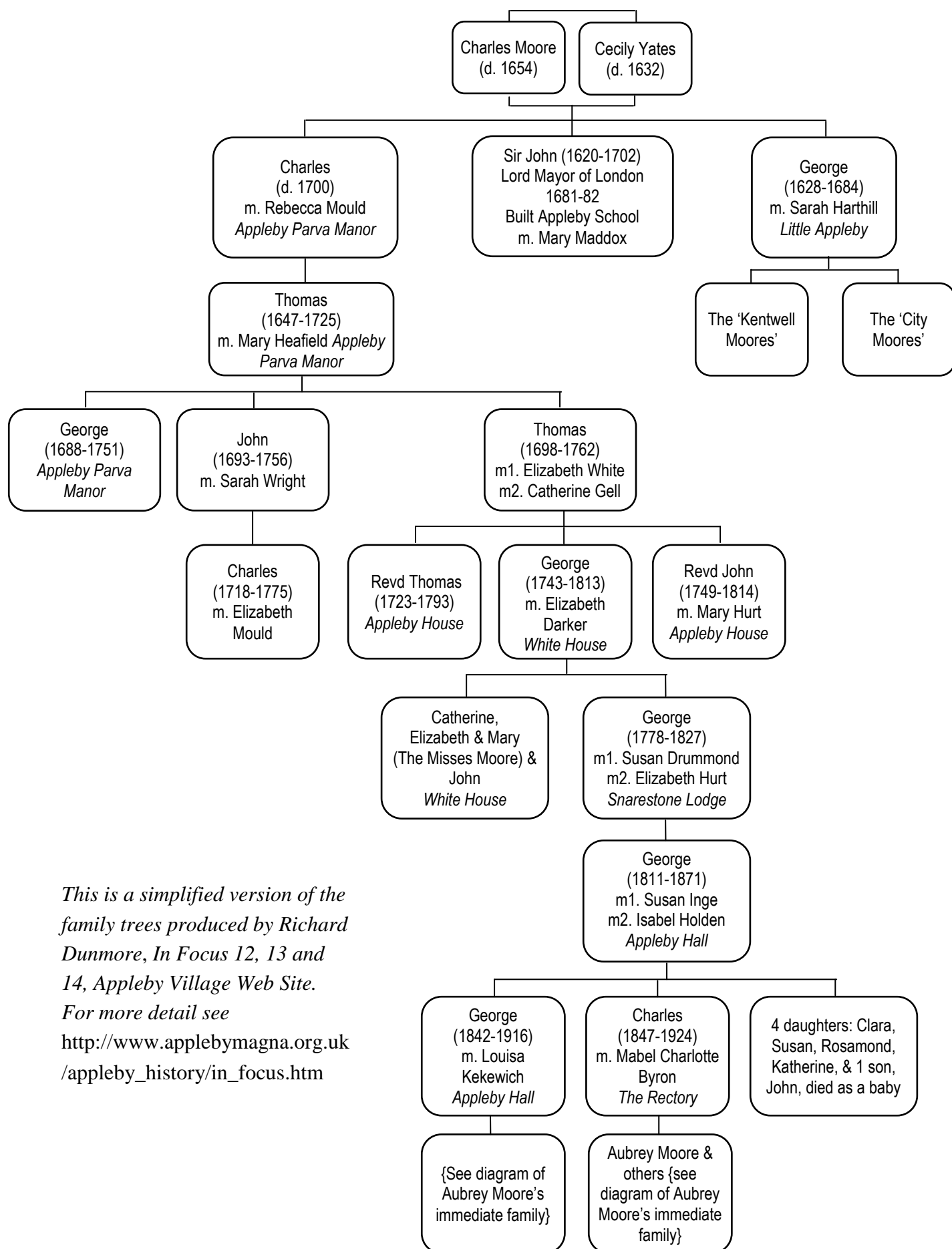
Peter Moore

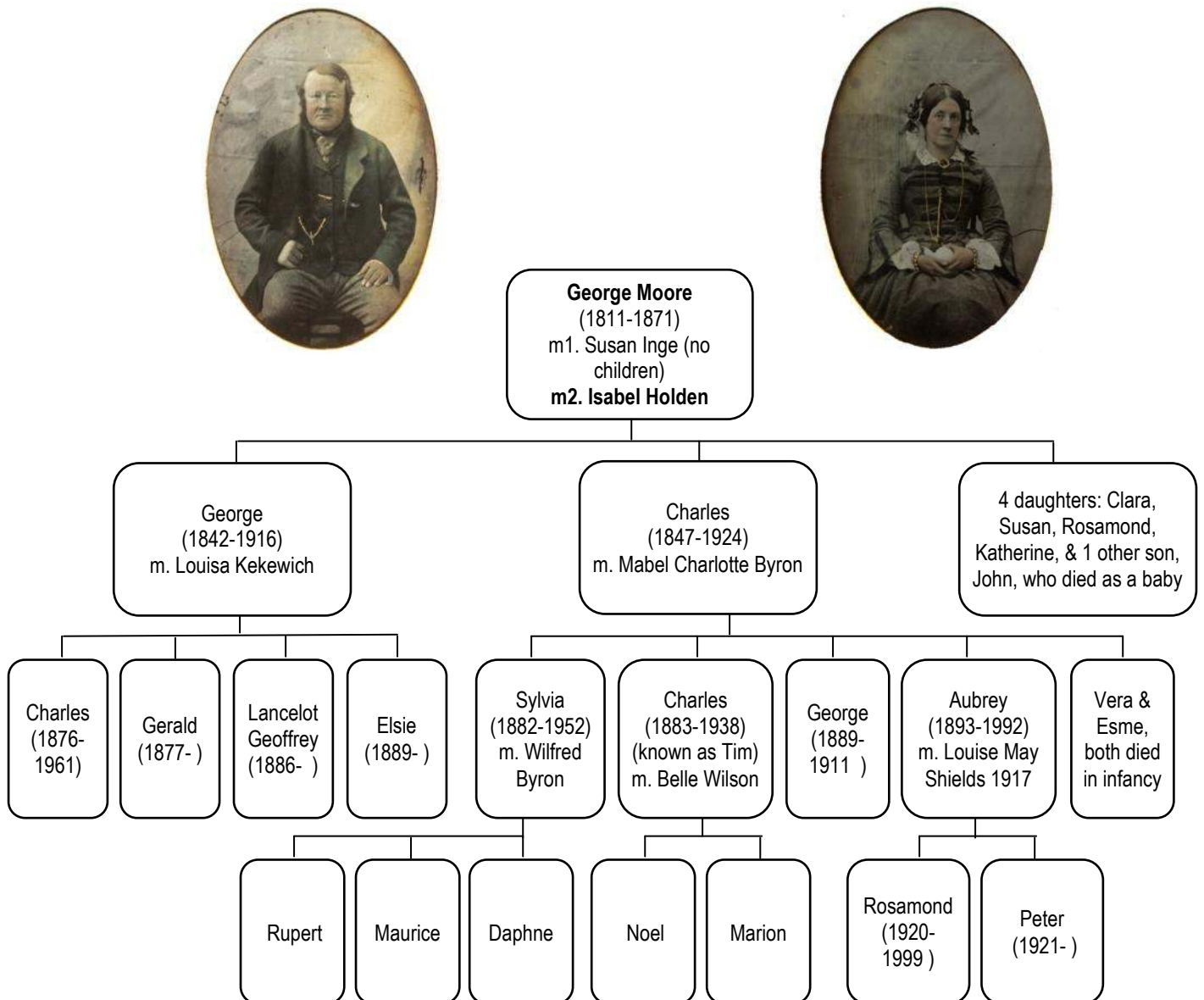
Appendix:

Moore Family Trees

- i. The early Moores, from approximately 1654 to Aubrey Moore
- ii. Aubrey Moore's immediate family
- iii. Links with the Byron family

i. The early Moores, from approximately 1654 to Aubrey Moore.



ii. Aubrey Moore's immediate family

iii. Links with the Byron family