



Cleeve Prior Chroniclers

Mary Collins Memories of Cleeve Prior

When I came back to live in Cleeve in 1995, I spent time with Mrs Stella Fletcher, who was then I think in her eighties. In my childhood she was Miss Stella Roberts, whose late father had been the village blacksmith. She did all the secretarial work for my father's [3C] Transport business. She married one of the 3C drivers Chris Fletcher in 1942, [Their son, Clive now lives in North Littleton]

I heard my parents talking about the 'Motherly Ladies' in Cleeve and I asked Stella if she knew who they were. She said that her mother, Mrs Roberts was certainly one, and the only other name she could remember was 'Ma Nicks'. This was Mrs Nicholls who lived at No1, the Green, whose husband was shepherd for Chris Gray at the Manor. These ladies did what they could for the 18/19 & 20 year old boys, stationed in Cleeve Prior, before they left for France in 1939. Just what the kindness meant to these young men, most who had never been away from home before, is expressed in a postcard sent to Stella's mother. I found it so moving that I asked her if she would allow me to copy it:

To: Mrs Roberts, the Smithy, Cleeve Prior, Evesham, England.

From: Driver Harry Laidlaw RASC 150th Field Ambulance BEF

France 1st March 1940

Dear Mrs Roberts, The kindness and love you showed me at a time I most needed it will forever remain a lovely memory that will never die, and as time goes on may God's blessing be forever with you my Fairy Godmother.

Harry Laidlaw was evacuated from Dunkirk in June 1940, posted to Egypt, and he was killed aged 21.