



Cleeve Prior Chroniclers

My Memories of Cleeve Prior- Diane Whiting

I was born in Cleeve Prior in the 1940's to Mary Smith and Robert Caldicot Smith

There used to be a tea and snack place down by the river and that is where my parents met. Father came from South Littleton

My Grandmother Esther Elizabeth Ankers lived in Lynwood opposite the vicarage and near her former home the king's Arms pub. She had two children- my mother and a son John. My Grandad was Richard John Ankers.

Granny Ankers always seemed strong type of person. She kept hens and probably a few other animals.

My father was a market gardener and had land and plum plantations off the Evesham Road, Cleeve Prior and in South Littleton. He also had a lock up shed in the barn off Evesham Road, Cleeve Prior. My brother Bob, Sister Annette, my mother and myself helped with the gathering of the crops and picking the fruit. Most of this was packed and a lorry would collect some and take it to Litr Annette, my mother and myself helped with the gathering of the crops and picking the fruit. Most of this was packed and a lorry would collect some and take it to Littleton and Badsey Growers or Blackminster Railway Station to go elsewhere.

We lived in the Close at Cleeve, which was a friendly place, Mrs Nichols and Mrs Selby would offer to look after Annette and myself when my mother would have to go in the ambulance with Granny Ankers who was a diabetic on insulin.

Granny passed away in 1956, and my mother purchased 'Lynwood'. This was a lovely house and garden. Next door- to the left- as you faced the front of Lynwood lived Carl Harris, in Sharrow. He asked my mother if she would sell him a strip of land to extend his garden and make it longer and this was agreed. This strip lay between Lynwood and Sharrow.

Facing the front of 'Lynwood', on the right hand side, next to the cottages and the Kings Arms Pub, was a piece of land that my mother told all of us that this piece of land would never be built on. All of her Grandchildren were aware of this.

Before we moved to 'Lynwood', my father had kidney problems. He had injured his kidney when he was younger playing football. He had to have the one kidney removed and the operation took place at the Briar Close Hospital, Evesham, I was about 5 years old at the time. My father manged with one kidney, but had to give up some of the market garden land and took on a lighter job as a sales rep for Littleton & Badsey Growers. He passed his driving test in the 1950's. He was also an accomplished saxophone player and conductor of silver bands locally.

My brother worked the land and helped with looking after Annette and I, as my mother decided to get a job. This was to help with Annette's fees at St Catherine's Teacher Training College in Liverpool, and my ballet classes with Miss Daniels and shorthand typing by Mrs Miller in Evesham.

Cleeve Prior School was very food, the infant class and junior class were divided by a curtain across the middle of the school. We had our school dinners in the Village Hall. There were lots of afternoon walks up Hoden Lane, learning about nature-birds, flowers and trees4



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There was a youth club by the church and different things in the village hall. Fetes on the green and a very good fete at the Manor in aid of charity.

Shops in the village:

Mrs Osborne ran a shop in the main street not far from the Close-groceries etc.

Mrs Stephens had a shop further down Main Street- groceries and odds & ends. Annette was in charge of the ration book and I helped to carry the shopping.

Mrs George almost opposite Mrs Stephens had the post office.

The Kings Arms Pub. At one time I can remember going there with a dish and lid and buying faggots and peas

The garage, belonged to Hilda & Geoff Orvis.

Near the garage the two miss Lloyds ran a tea shop and served food.

Mr Ward came from Evesham, selling household goods from his van.

Buses [Midland Red] came to and from Birmingham to Evesham, through Cleeve Prior

Evesham, Bidford-on-Avon or Stratford were all handy places for groceries and clothes.

At the top of Hoden lane lived my Grandmothers Brother who was a farmer, Ralph Hathaway.

Annette and I were taken to church on a Sunday and also to Sunday school. My father had a bike with a seat on the back and a stirrup and seat on the crossbar. He would take Annette and I for a ride and also to see Grandad Smith [local pig killer] in South Littleton, then back home for a lovely Sunday dinner.

Both Parents had a bike and they would take Annette and I to Blackminster Railway Station to catch the train to Oxford for a pantomime, and various places as well as holidays to Barmouth in Wales and Yorkshire. Bob was the eldest and he came on holiday with us.

My parents had a soldier billeted with them and he came from Pocklington by York. When WW11 ended, we kept in touch and went to their farm for a holiday, and they came to stay with us every year.

Mother's brother also lived in Cleeve Prior, along the Evesham Rd, just past the barn. His name was John, known as Jack and his wife Aunty Dorothy.

Notes:

Brother Bob gave up the Market gardening and joined the Warwickshire Police Force.

Mike Edwards the local Poet also grew up in Cleeve Prior.

At one time the Gertrude Myers, Home for the Elderly, was just past Mill Lane