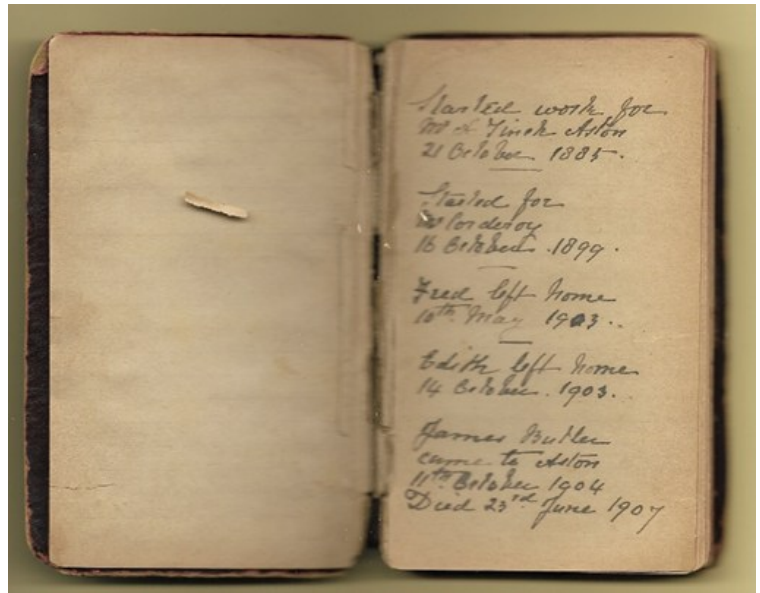
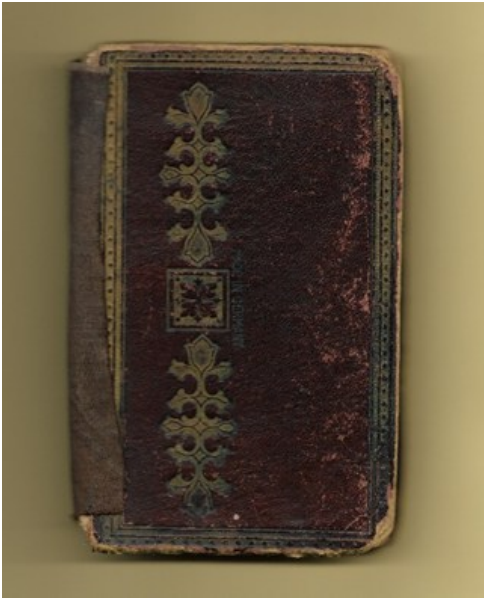


An Astons journal.
The 'diary' of Stephen Elliott
and Tom Powell: 1885 to 1984.
Transcribed and annotated by Judy Barradell-Smith
Compiled and collated by Jancis Smith



9 Aston Street - "Tom Powell's Cottage".

Astons History Group. 2019.



Introduction:

We are very grateful to Judy Powell of South Moreton (niece of Tom Powell) for the loan and subsequent donation to the Astons History Group of the diaries of Stephen Elliott and Tom Powell.

The earliest diary has been transcribed by Judy Barradell-Smith, and is here presented with her notes - giving the wider context of the brief entries - together with relevant photos from our archive. Several of these are from Tom's collection of photos, which Judy Powell also gave to us.

The diary is physically tiny - only 6" by 3.5" - and is not marked up into a set day or weekly format. We call it a diary, but it covers many years and has two separate, albeit related by marriage, authors. Tom, as the later writer, used remaining blank pages for some of his entries. The diary was begun by Stephen in 1884, with Tom (Stephen's son in law) taking over. Stephen Elliott died in 1924. Tom's earliest entry is dated 1910, but he would only have been five at this time so this is an early example of where he adds relevant information from an earlier date.

Entries written by Stephen and Tom are shown **in blue**; Judy's notes are in black. Judy has largely kept to the original spelling, which in places is clearly incorrect, but has occasionally added a correction in brackets where it is a misspelt name, or needs specific clarification. There will be some repetition of information through the notes, as aides memoire in a complicated tale!

House names are given as written in the diary, but changed to the current spelling in the notes. Thus Tom writes Copsestile, but in Judy (Barradell-Smith)'s notes it is given as the current Copse Stile.

We are most fortunate to have a picture of Stephen Elliott taken around 1896 by the Rev Curry, the Presbyterian minister at the time. Stephen is second from the left in a white shirt and leather apron, with his hand on the horse.



The shoe smith bending over with the horse's foot in his hand (far right) was Ben Mace of South Moreton. Tom Powell's mother was a Mace, Kate Agnes Sarah Mace, who married Harry Powell (Tom's father) in 1904.

Who was Tom Powell?

Cyril Tom Powell was born on 29 July 1905 in South Moreton, the second of four children, and the eldest son of Harry Powell and his mother Kate Agnes Sarah. In the 1911 census Harry was a railway plate layer working for Great Western Railways and living in South Moreton. They had four children aged 7, 5 (Tom), 2 and 3 months.

In 1931 Tom Powell married Winifred A Elliott, Her father was the local blacksmith Stephen Elliott, and her mother Rachel (nee Butler). Winifred was one of three children, her birth date was 12 January 1897.

He worked as an agricultural labourer for Frank Cross and lived at no. 9 Aston Street for most of his adult life. He told me he went to work on the farm "after leaving school." The school leaving age was raised in 1918 from 12 to 14, so it's likely Tom, who turned 14 in 1918, may well have left school at age 12 and gone straight to work on the farm as a "boy" in 1917, when he turned 12. He may have worked on a farm in South Moreton first while living at home, but he was definitely at no. 9 in 1939, so he may well have applied for a job with Frank Cross around the time he got married and moved to this tied cottage. In a pre war register from 1939 (see page 10) Tom and Winifred are living in No 9 Aston Street but he is serving in the RAOC (Royal Army Ordnance Corps), with his wife Winifred listed as 'domestic duties'.

I remember him so well as he lived just 2 doors away from me. He was a widower and retired when I met him in 1971, his wife having died in 1964.

He was renowned for his garden. He loved flowers and vegetables and his garden was a goodly size with one of the last working wells, worked with a wooden bucket and a winder mechanism over it. The well water was delicious and cold and I remember being offered a drink from it. He often would invite you into the garden and show you around. In the summer there was not a square foot of ground that wasn't covered with flowers or vegetables. He didn't have any lawn at all. He would often give away his glut of tomatoes or cabbage or beans. He was amazingly self-sufficient and cooked and cleaned and shopped for himself. I do not think he could drive (or at least never had a car), but then again, he may well have driven tractors in the fields. He told me how he used to drive the three horse binder and reaper both before and after WW2 and was also a carter on the farm.

He had a lovely warm personality, and a real Berkshire "burr" to his voice. Softly spoken. Very kind. Loved having children around but they had to be on good behaviour and he would not tolerate anyone romping around his garden or messing up his flowers.

Tom's cottage was the last of the Cross cottages in the village with what was called an agricultural "tie". In other words at retirement age, which for Tom would have been around 1970, Tom was able to stay in his cottage for life and could not be thrown out.

No.9 was the last of the Cross estate tied cottages to be sold. It had never really been modernised, although he did have an inside toilet as well as the privy at the end of his garden!

There are still many people who have fond memories of Tom, his friend and neighbour Wendy Margetts in particular, who loved chatting to him about times past:

"Tom had been in the Hussars and was stationed in Germany during the rise of Hitler and the beginning of the Nazi party - he told me that it was a dangerous time. Later he worked in the war effort and was stationed in the north, maybe Cumbria. . . Tom later worked at Didcot Army depot and told me that one of the huge sheds was full of horse shoes, stockpiled (*maybe from WW1?*) but never required for WW2".



In uniform during WW2.

Who was Stephen Elliott?

Stephen Elliott was a blacksmith by trade, born in Blewbury in 1852 and baptised in St Michael's Church Blewbury on 4 July of that year - although to date I can find no official registration of his birth in the civil records. He was the son of William Elliott, agricultural labourer, and his wife Hannah (nee Fisher) who were married on 16th October 1832 in Hagbourne.

The family moved around quite a bit because of his father's agricultural work, but the children (of whom five are shown on the 1861 census) were all born in Blewbury. In 1861 the family, with Stephen aged 8, are living at a farm called Aldins in the parish of Hendred. It is sometimes listed as at Churn in other census papers, but I think this was probably an isolated cottage up on the Downs somewhere between Upton and Hendred, but actually in the parish of Hendred.

In 1871 he is living in Nuneham Courtney as an apprentice blacksmith working for a blacksmith called Solomon Benbow, who I believe was the man responsible for training him.

In 1881 he is aged 28 working as a blacksmith in Upton, and living in a tied cottage there together with his father and his mother. One street away is a young dressmaker Rachel Butler living with her widowed father James Butler. Both Rachel's and Stephen's fathers were agricultural labourers.

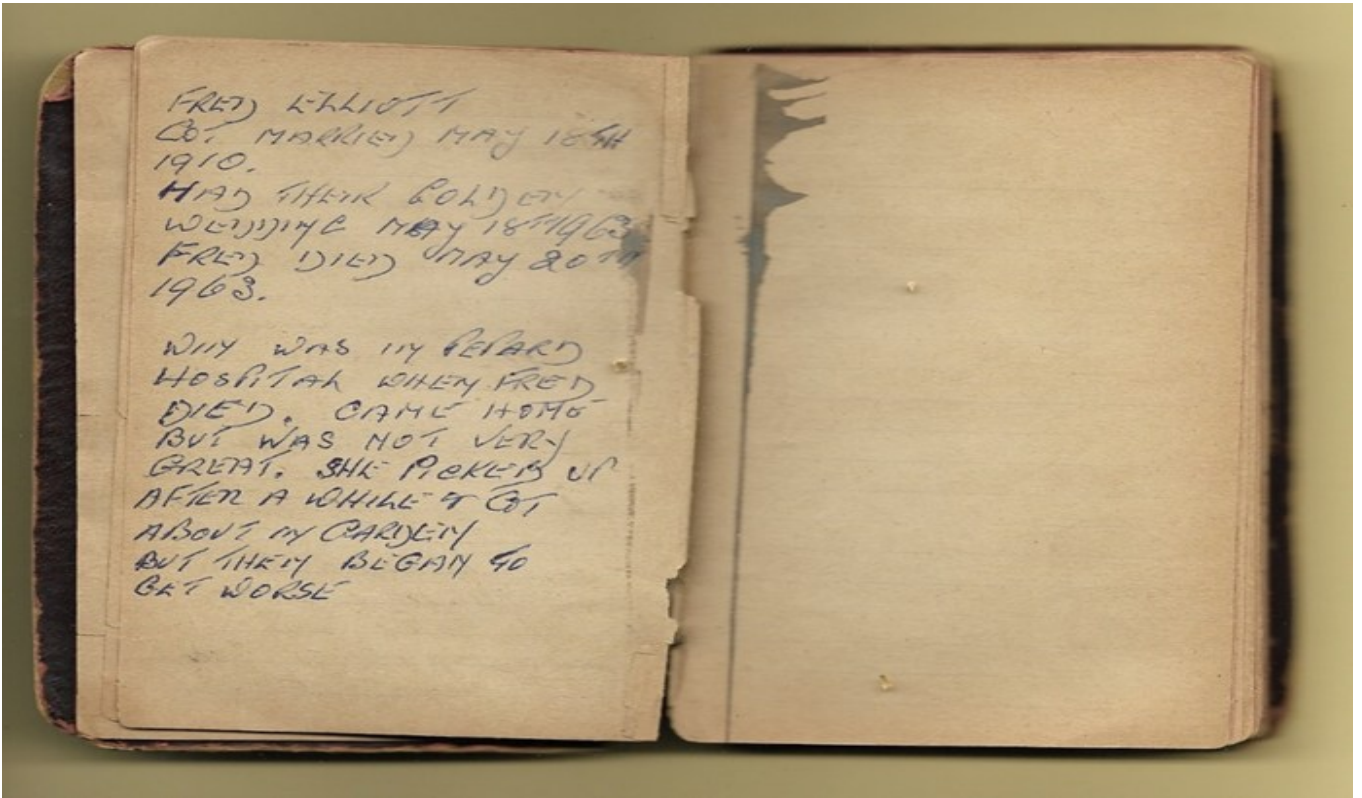
In early 1885 Stephen married Rachel, probably in Blewbury, and their first child, Edith Mary, was born later that same year. Edith's birth place is given in different censuses as either Milton or Aston Tirrold. The second child, Frederick William, was born 30 December 1887 in Aston Tirrold. They had one more child, Winifred Annie, who was born nine years after Frederick, on 12 January 1897. They are now firmly established in the Astons.

In 1891 the family are living in one of only two houses in The Croft – land adjoining The Croft was still in agricultural use - and Stephen is working at the Smithy in Thorpe Street, firstly for a Mr Finch and then Mr Corderoy. (*The Berkshire Record Office holds a works or accounts book for carpenter Finch listing jobs done and for whom. It is a fascinating insight into village life at that time and we hope to transcribe as a later project*).

By 1901 the family are living at Blacksmiths Cottage in Aston Street and Stephen is working at the forge adjoining the house. There are two Barnardo's children lodging there, for which they would have received a weekly allowance. (*It was common practice in the 19th century for the Dr. Barnado's charity – now the Children's Society – to board out 'waifs and strays' to provide board and employment for such children*).

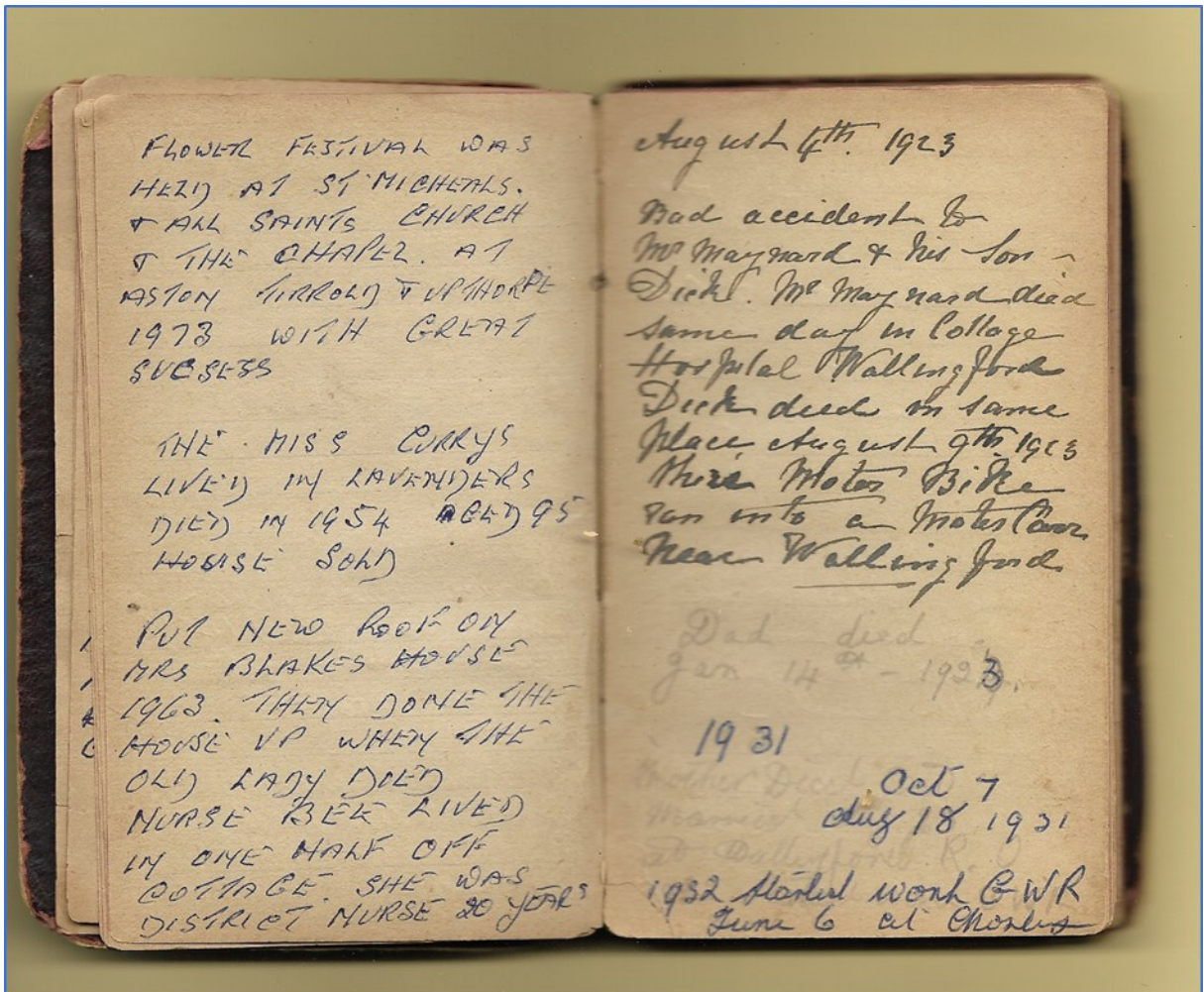
It is the marriage of Stephen and Rachel's third child, Winifred Annie Elliott (known as Win) that joins the Elliott and Powell families - when Tom (born Cyril Thomas Powell on 29 July 1905 in South Moreton) married in 1931 in Aston Tirrold.

The 1911 census shows that Stephen and Rachel had been married 25 years and had three children all of whom were still living. Although the houses are not given names, by a process of elimination and knowing which way the enumerator was walking up the road, it is most likely that the Elliotts were then living in part of Blacksmiths Cottage, Aston Street. (*Many cottages that are now single occupancy were then two or even three cottages*). It is shown in the diary that he had agreed to pay rent for the premises, to include the forge. He is marked on the census as 'worker' and I suspect that means that although he was paying rent he was probably working in the main for Frank Cross, as Blacksmiths Cottage was one of the Cross estate houses. He was probably taking on other work outside of the Cross estate's requirements, as around this



Above, Tom reporting on events in 1963, and below an example showing entries by both authors on the same page.

1923: Stephen's writing. 1931: Tom's writing. (Stephen died in 1924)



time he employed a shoeing smith with expertise in the shoeing of race horses - a new racing stables having recently been set up by John Morris on Thorpe Street. (*More detail on this equestrian enterprise can be found in our WW1 publication 'Wee Joe'*).

The 1911 census lists this shoeing smith as Cyril Brown, born in Compton - and lodging with them . Cyril was the younger brother of Albert Edward Brown who later married Stephen and Rachel Elliott's daughter Edith.

We know from Stephen's first entry in his diary that he began working for the blacksmith Finch at the Smithy in Thorpe Street in 1885, and that the Finch family sold the house and premises to Mr Corderoy in 1899.

By 1901, he was located at Blacksmiths Cottage and working at the forge there. The forge is still in working order, and is used for occasional family barbeques!



A Curry slide showing the Smithy in Thorpe Street the 1890s

THE DIARY BEGINS:

These extracts are in Stephen Elliott's handwriting:

[Started work for Mr A Finch, Aston](#)

[21 Oct 1885](#)

[Started for Mr Corderoy](#)

[16 October 1899](#)

We know from other sources that this workplace refers to The Smithy in Thorpe Street Aston Upton. It was owned in the late 19th century by a Mr Finch but there was some issues with expenditure over the business and it was sold to the Corderoy family in 1899. It seems likely that Stephen Elliott took up employment at Finch's Smithy and then after the sale of the business worked for Mr Corderoy, who both owned and lived at The Smithy. In 1891 the Elliott family are living in The Croft. In 1901 Stephen Elliott and family are shown on the census as living in Aston Street three doors away from Chestnuts on the same side of the road and next door to John and Alice Wheeler. So it's likely he was already living at Blacksmiths Cottage by 1901.

[Fred left Home](#)

[10th May 1903](#)

Interesting to note that Fred - Frederick William Elliott, Stephen's second child - would have been aged 16 when he left home in 1903. In the 1901 census he had still been living at home (aged 13) and was working as a News Boy. By the 1911 census he was living in London and working on the great Western Railway as a Carman.

[Edith left home](#)

[14th October 1903](#)

Edith May Elliott would have been aged 18 in 1903. In the 1901 census she was working in Aston Upton as a live-in domestic servant for Dr John Aldington Gibb, the village doctor who probably lived at The Red

The Astons at the beginning of the 20th century.



Note the preponderance of orchard and open space around the village - all linked to the main farms based in the village - Thorpe Farm in Thorpe Street, Popes in Fullers Road, and Cope Stile in Spring Lane.

The entries are full of references that reflect how farming was almost the sole source of employment in the village for most of the last century.

House on Moreton Road.

On 27 August 1910, Edith is married in St Michael's Church, Aston Tirrold to another blacksmith (a shoeing smith by trade) called Albert Edward Brown, and by the 1911 census they are living in Highfield Cottage, Malton, North Riding of Yorkshire.

James Butler comes to Aston

11 October 1904

Died 23rd June 1907

James Butler was Stephen's father in law - Rachel's father. Although it does not specifically say, I expect he had moved in with the Elliott family into Blacksmith's Cottage, Aston Street, where Stephen and his family had moved in 1901. He describes himself as a 'worker' so was employed by Frank Cross.

Heavy snow storm

25 Apr 1908

Edith and Bert went to Canada 1st time

8 Apr 1914

This is Stephen Elliott's eldest child Edith who married Albert "Bert" Edward Brown. It implies they went back to Canada another time. We know from Tom Powell's sections of the diary that they eventually emigrated out there. Edith died in Canada 24th June 1984 aged 98.

We know from another entry in Stephen Elliott's writing that Edith and family finally left UK for Canada on 26 October 1922. I looked for their passage out in 1914 and found this record:

'Albert, Edith and son Albert BROWN (aged 2) departed Avonmouth, Bristol on board The Royal Edward bound for St John's Newfoundland, Canada and arrived there 16th April 1914'.

A S Brown born in Yorkshire

13 July 1912

This must be the birth of the firstborn child of Edith (nee Elliott) and Albert Edward Brown. Born in Malton, North Yorkshire he was also called Albert and was Stephen's first grandchild. He is listed on board the ship out to Canada in 1914 aged 2 – see entry above.

Rev Green Wilkinson inducted 13 July 1912 Aston Tirrold Church

The Astons History Group has recently acquired two Green Wilkinson family albums, with photos showing family and village life in the Astons.

His diaries (including the war years) are held in the Berkshire Record Office. We hope to transcribe these as a future project.

Have aged to pay £6.10s.0d a year plus rates for a cottage in Aston Street 1908



Photo from one of the Green Wilkinson albums

I think this house he was renting was one half of Blacksmith's Cottage, Aston Street plus the blacksmith's forge in the adjoining barn.

These next 2 entries are written by Tom Powell.

(This is an example of Tom using remaining blank pages in Stephen Elliott's diary to add one of his own entries).

Fred Elliott got married May 18th 1910

Had their Golden Wedding May 18 1963.

Fred died May 20th 1963

This is the marriage of Stephen Elliott's second child and only son Frederick William Elliott, who was born in December 1887. Although Tom gives the date as 1910 their marriage is in fact registered as 18th May 1913 - in St Mark's Church, Noel Park in Middlesex - so I think he has written the year 1910 incorrectly. Frederick Elliott died in Wood Green, London only two days after his 50th wedding anniversary aged 76.

Win was in Peppard Hospital when Fred died. Came home but was not very great.

She picked up after a while and got about in garden but then began to get worse

Win is Tom Powell's wife Winifred Annie Elliott.

Peppard Hospital had originally been a sanatorium and in 1964 was still being used for the treatment of chest infections and tuberculosis. The wards were built so that patients could sit outside and get access to fresh air and exercise. I suspect she may well have had TB or some sort of associated chest complaint for several years.



Peppard Hospital Wards in 1940

We are now back to Stephen Elliott's handwriting:

Aston's Horticultural Show – Stephen lists the dates with the first being held on July 29th 1903. None were held during the 1914 -1918 war. The last entry on the page shows a provisional date of August 9th 1923 but against it is written **“not held on account of accident to Mr Maynard”**

Win was engaged to P Hearn 3 years

Engagement broken off August 5th 1923

This I must assume is his daughter Win (Winifred) I wonder who P Hearn was?

War with Germany declared 4 August 1914

Armistice signed 11 Nov 1918

S.E club money 7/6

F.W E ditto 6/4 ½

per quarter

No explanation about this, or what club. The initials I assume were S E for Stephen Elliott and F W E for his son Frederick William Elliott.

A very good size for a rag mat

5ft 4 in long and 2ft 5 in wide

Home made wine 3 lbs fruit

3 lbs sugar to 1 gallon of water

Now back to Tom Powell's writing:

Last of the Fuller's died. She was 80. Miss Lucy Fuller. She lived at Croft House.

This was Lucy Fuller. She gave an address on village life and history to the village Women's Institute in 1921, which was then produced as a booklet. It was re-printed by the Astons History Group in 2005.

Alteration to our house. August 1962. Took the thatch off and put tiles on. Put bathroom in and lavatory. Put a new sink unit in also a Rayburn cooker and hot water tank. Took some old cupboards out. Pulled the old shed down and built a new one. We shifted back into Blacksmith's Cottage while alterations took place. Retuned to house 196(2 or 3?)

Now back to Stephen Elliott's handwriting: *(This next entry is an example of dates being 'pulled together' to give information from an earlier date for an entry).*

Edith and Bert left England for Canada the second time 26 Oct 1922

Moved into house in Aston Street 10 July 1896

Under this entry in faint pencil is the sum

1945 – 1896 = 49.

Was someone calculating how long someone had lived there? But Stephen Elliott died in 1924 in Aston Tirrold, aged 71, so it could not have been him.

A different hand, neither Stephen nor Tom's:

Astons News Paper came out Dec 1968. Rev Harris Editor Aston News

See page 30 for more on this.

Now back to Tom Powell's writing:

Mr and Mrs F Wilcox came to live in old Bert Jones house April 1972.

Now called Chalk Down Cottage

In addition to census information about people and houses we also have access to a nationwide Register drawn up by the Government in September 1939, just after war was declared. It listed all household members - with their dates of birth and occupations - in order to provide the appropriate ration books for each household. The Register is available to the public, but due to the 100 year rule for non-disclosure of personal data some entries are blacked out. Their entry can be shown however if they have died, as data protection rules in the UK cease on death.

Tom Powell and his wife Winifred are registered at what we now know as No 9 Aston Street. Their next door neighbours were Albert



Rachel Elliott standing outside no.9

		4	Edin Eric R.	-	M	24 Apr 23	S	Butcher roundman	-
		5	Broomfield Dorothy	-	F	20 Mar 14	M	Unpaid domestic duties	-
This record is officially closed.									
		7	^{SHAW} Broomfield Janet	-	F	4 Mar 39	S	Under school age	-
Baker St	99	1	Gardiner Emily	-	F	24 Jan 79	W	Paid domestic duties	-
		2	Blake Ernest D.	-	M	13 Oct 04	S	bentley lane road man	ARP Warden Wallingford
Baker St	100	1	Scotts Jack	-	M	18 July 90	M	Gamekeeper	-
		2	Scotts Ellen L.	-	F	16 Aug 04	M	Unpaid domestic duties	-
This record is officially closed.									
		4	Scotts David G.	-	M	16 Apr 29	S	At school	-
Baker St	101	1	Griffiths James	-	M	10 Aug 50	W	Master Baker	-
		2	Griffiths Mary J.	-	F	12 Mar 71	S	Domestic + adsp duties	ARP Warden Wallingford
Rose Cottage	102	1	Vennell Archibald	-	M	12 Mar 50	M	General Labour R.R.O.	-
		2	Vennell Evelyn E.	-	F	1 Feb 85	M	Unpaid domestic duties	-
		3	Vennell Philip B.	-	M	5 Dec 17	S	Shop assistant general	-
Finches	103	1	Blay Majorie B.	-	F	10 May 79	S	Private means	-
		2	Stewart Helen J.	-	F	14 Aug 78	S	Private means	-
bope stile 310	104	1	Green Edith Annie	-	F	12 Jan 98	S	Cook	-
		2	Bakerott Neil R.	-	F	29 Dec 03	M	Unpaid domestic duties	-
This record is officially closed.									
This record is officially closed.									
This record is officially closed.									
		6	Jefferys Edna L.	-	F	25 Dec 74	S	Paid domestic work	See Page 12.
		7	Blake Emily	-	F	19 Oct 15	M	Whitman round	See Page 11
This record is officially closed.									

Examples from the 1939 Register - showing entries referred to in the text (above Mary J Griffiths (page 21) and below, the Curry sisters and Hilda Bee and Mary Blake (pages 10 and 12).

		2	Powell Winifred	-	F	12 Jan 97	M	Unpaid domestic duties	2
		3	Lane Herbert W.	-	M	14 Apr 15	S	Dep. Office Distribution	3
School House	67	1	Evans Florence	-	F	13 Dec 77	W	Head school teacher	57.1
		2	Webb William H.	-	M	26 Feb 80	S	Grain Broker retired	2
		3	Perry Margaret	-	F	11 Apr 94	S	General servant	3
Twilton	68	1	Baker Agnes M.	-	F	7 Mar 55	S	Unpaid domestic duties	68.1
Aston St.	69	1	Blake Mary J.	-	F	18 Oct 76	W	Paid domestic duties	69.1
"	70	1	Bee Hilda M.	-	F	2 July 78	S	District Nurse	70.1
Crossways	71	1	Baker Percy V.	-	M	25 May 82	M	Bank Manager	71.1
		2	Baker Phoebe E.	-	F	16 Jan 89	M	Unpaid Domestic Duties	2
		3	Baker Diana	-	F	7 Dec 22	S	At school	3
Saunders	72	1	Curry Helen J.	-	F	29 Mar 76	S	Assistant School Mistress	72.1
	F	2	Curry Katherine P.	-	F	6 Oct 69	S	Head School Mistress Retiree	2
		3	Curry Elizabeth M.	-	F	15 Nov 73	S	Nurse Retiree	3
		4	Gladstone Thomas B.	-	M	22 Dec 11	S	Medical student & Gen	4
"	310	73	Washer Lorna M.	-	F	17 Feb 90	D	Unpaid Domestic Duties	73.1
	M	2	^{Washer} Shirley	-	F	23 Jun 19	S	Violinist R.O.M. 2nd Lt.	2
		3	Washer Florence	-	F	28 June 50	W	Unpaid duties	3
Chestnuts	74	1	Wyatt Constance M.C.	-	F	24 Aug 62	S	Private means	74.1
The Rectory	75	1	Cyren Charles A.W.	-	M	12 Mar 82	M	Rector of Aston Tirrold	75.1
		2	Cyren Elizabeth M.	-	F	9 Dec 00	M	Unpaid Domestic Duties	2
		3*	Washer Constance W.	-	M	15 Feb 35	S	Under school age	3
This record is officially closed.									
This record is officially closed.									

“Bert” Jones, as mentioned in Tom Powell’s entry in the diary for 1972. Albert was born 2nd January 1869 and his wife Bertha born 15th March 1884. He is shown as a farm labourer in what we now call Abbey Thorn Cottage but which was called Chalk Down Cottage when the Wilcox’s moved in.

Tom Powell’s writing:

Flower festival was held at St Michael’s and All Saints and the Chapel at Aston Tirrold and Upthorpe 1973 with great success.

The Miss Currys lived in Lavenders. Died in 1954 aged 95. House sold

The word ‘Currys’ implies more than one Miss Curry, but he only gives the death of one person. In their 1939 Register entry (see previous page) there are three Miss Currys listed living at Lavenders in Rectory Lane - Katherine born 1869, Elizabeth born 1873 and Helen born 1876. Two were school mistresses and the third a retired nurse. I had assumed they were all children of The Rev Curry, but they had only two children one of whom died; their son Thomas had been born around 1845, so the three Miss Currys were not his siblings.

In the 1911 census Thomas Curry and his wife Mary Jane (nee Fuller) are shown as having been married for 29 years, but as I hunted back through the censuses I discovered that the Rev Thomas Curry had been married before. In 1868 he had married Katharine Phoebe Palmer and had six children with her, including Katharine born 1869, Elizabeth b 1873 and Helen born 1876, a son Alfred James born 1872, and then two further daughters, Annie in 1879 and Phoebe in 1880. His wife Katharine appears to have died in childbirth in 1880 aged 36.

So the three Curry sisters living in Lavenders are all children of Rev Thomas Curry and his first wife Katherine. Looking at the death indexes for the Wallingford Area the three Curry sisters died in 1948 (Helen) 1958 (Elizabeth) and Katherine who died aged 93 but in 1962 (not in 1954 as given in the diary).

(I checked for any other Curry females dying anywhere in the UK in 1954 and there are none listed with any of the names given above dying that year or of that age).

Put new roof on Mrs Blake’s house 1963. Then done the house up when the old lady died. Nurse Bee lived in one half of the cottage. She was district nurse 20 years

This above refers to Appletree Cottage in Aston Street having its old thatch taken off. I remember Wendy Margetts (a great friend of Tom’s) saying the house had been thatched not long before they bought the house in 1978. Tiles were considered a great improvement at that time, and the History Group have several pictures of thatched cottages around the village that are now tiled. Appletree Cottage was also another example of a cottage in single occupancy now that was originally two cottages, with two fireplaces and two stairways.

The 1939 Register shows Mary J Blake in one side and Hilda M Bee in the other, with Hilda Bee listed as district nurse. The cottage was a tied cottage for Cross employees but at this point was being rented out to



This photo from the 1950s shows no.9 (far right) still thatched, with Blacksmiths Cottage in front.

these ladies. The Cross family sold it off shortly after Mary Blake died (shown as a widow on the 1939 Register) and after old Mrs Alison Cross died (the widow of Michael Cross) in December 1975.

Sorting out the estate took three years and the Margetts finally bought the house from the Cross estate in 1978, having rented it since 1971. Mary J Blake died in Aston Tirrold in 1966 aged 89. According to Wendy Margetts old Miss Bee died saying her prayers by her bed. Tom Powell would go over most evenings to check she was okay but one night he forgot. She was found dead the next day still kneeling by her bed. Tom Powell always said he felt a bit guilty that he had not checked up on her that evening.

Stephen Elliott's writing:

August 4th 1923

Bad accident to Mr Maynard and his son Dick. Mr Maynard died the same day in Cottage Hospital, Wallingford. Dick died in same place Aug 9th 1923. Their motor bike ran into a car near Wallingford

The Maynards ran a grocery store at Croft Corner. Percy Maynard the father was aged 54 and his son Richard 21. It seems they were both on the same motor bike.

No obituary or accident report has been found. There is an earlier entry in Stephen Elliott's hand (page 7) about the flower show being cancelled because of Percy's death.

The next entry is in pencil and in a different hand – not Tom's nor Stephen's - possibly Winifred's.



Croft Corner in the 1930s.

Dad died Jan 14th 1923

Mother died Oct 7 1931

If as I assume this is Winifred's hand then the death must be that of Stephen Elliott and the "mum" in the second entry her mother Rachel Elliott (nee Butler). See on the next page a copy of her mother's funeral invoice from JR Corderoy - wheelwright, carpenter, undertaker, painter and decorator. It was common for a tradesman with transport, ie. a wagon, to act as undertaker. Carpenter Finch's work book in the Berkshire Record Office lists a similar range of occupations.

The above entry has been changed from 1924 to 1923. In fact Stephen Elliott's death is registered as January 1924, aged 71. Rachel Elliott (nee Butler) died October 1931, aged 71.

Tom Powell's writing:

Married Aug 18 1931 at Wallingford R.O

Cyril Thomas (Tom) Powell married Winifred Anne Elliott in Wallingford 1931

1932 Started work GWR June 6th at Cholsey

1934 Mr Sopwith with his Endeavour . Beat Mr Vanderbilt's Rainbow on 1st run and 2nd run

These two boats raced in the 1934 America's Cup Race held at Newport, Rhode Island USA during September 1934. Endeavour was the British boat and Rainbow the American boat. Britain won the first two

ASTON UPTHORPE, Wallingford,

Oct. 1931

Funeral of late Mrs. Elliott

Dr. to J. R. CORDEROY,

Wheelwright, Carpenter, Undertaker, Painter and Decorator.

Tyring done on the Premises.

1931

Oct. 11	Coffin & Attendance	3	15	
	4 Bearers		16	
	Grave Fee		15	
	Church Cleaner		1	
		£	5	7

Received with Thanks
Oct 15/1931

J.R. C



The funeral invoice for Rachel Elliott, Winifred Powell's mother.

From Gilbert Corderoy's 'Village Memories' in the Astons News in 1994, recorded by Jenny Worthington .

"Gilbert's father, Joseph Corderoy, came from Blewbury and bought the Smithy from the Finches in about 1902 (actually 1899). Joseph was a wheelwright and carpenter - the Corderoys were also undertakers for the Astons and Moretons."

aces - the nearest Britain ever got to winning the America's Cup.

[Bert Brown came to see Win and me when he returned from India after the war 1946. On his way home to Canada. He was a major in the Indian Army medical Corps. He was in middle east under Gen Monty. He is now a doctor in Ontario, Canada](#)



Oil painting showing Endeavour out in front.

This I assume must be Albert S Brown who was the son of Albert Edward Brown and Win's elder sister Edith Mary Elliott, who married in Aston Tirrold in 1910. The Brown family went to Canada in 1914 and 1922, finally emigrating sometime around 1922. Albert S Brown their son was born in 1912 in Yorkshire. They had one child. I do not think it can refer to the father Albert Edward Brown as he would have been too old to serve in WW2.

[1934 Made permanent on great Western Railway August 27th at Cholsey.](#)

This is of interest as it shows that this Cross tied cottage was not always occupied by workers from the Cross estate, as clearly Tom Powell was renting the tied cottage but working for the Great Western Railway at this time. I had always assumed that up until the death of Frank Cross in 1951 all the cottages were occupied by estate workers. Clearly that was not the case here, nor in the next door cottage occupied by Mrs Blake and Miss Bee circa 1939.

[Bert Brown jun visited England from Canada 1934](#)

This is another visit from their nephew Bert Brown – but here it definitely states “jun” for Junior.

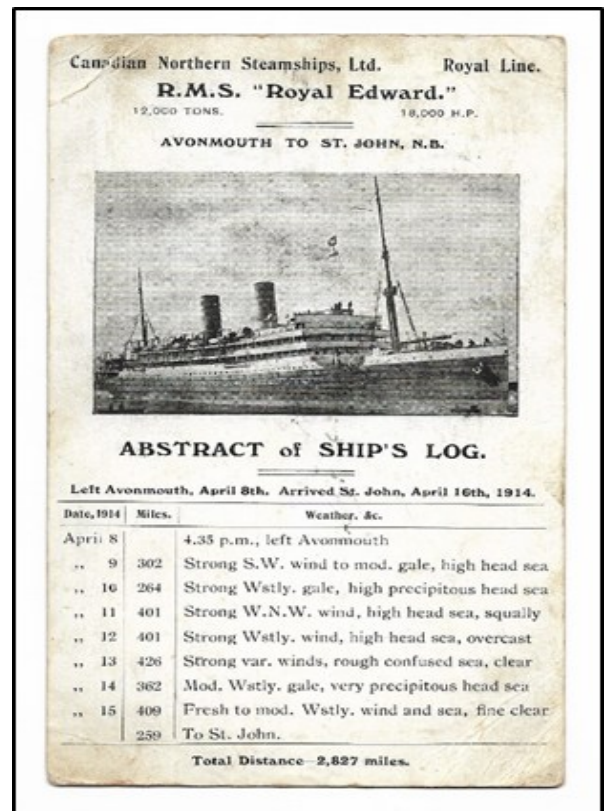
[Win passed away Tues 13 Feb 1963 at 11.00 o'clock after a long illness. God rest her soul](#)

A sad entry. Winifred died at 11.00pm 13th February at their home of No 9 Aston Street - she was only 47 when she died. *Postcard sent by Bert to his mother in 1914.* Poor Tom was a widower for a very long time. Win was a member of the Presbyterian Church whereas Tom was Church of England. Win was buried in the URC Chapel grounds in Spring Lane, and when Tom died he chose to be buried there with her.

(There is an earlier reference on page 7 where Tom describes Win being in the hospital at Peppard in 1963. The two entries regarding Win are quite separate in the diary – an example of the dispersed nature of entries).

[Alice Adby died 26 Sept 1968. She died sudden. I lost a dear friend, she was good to me after Win died. God bless her.](#)

Mercy “Alice” Timms born 1914 married Herbert Adby in 1932 in Henley. In 1939 they were living in Croft





Cyril Hester (above), last resident vicar in the Astons, with the Bishop of Reading, Eric Knell. Taken during Wessex Week (1971), an ambitious celebration to mark the 1100th anniversary of the Battle of Ascendune (Ashdown) (871).



Cottage, The Croft. They had a very large family of eight children, born between 1933 to 1948 in this order : Joan, Joyce, Phyllis, Alice, Ruth (1940) Hilda, Peter and Phillip. Herbert inherited the house and all the land along that side of The Croft from the then owner of Croft House – a widow, for whom Herbert did gardening and maintenance work. Herbert was born in 1908 and died in 1976.

Tom Powell's writing:

Brown came to live in Nurse Cottage April 1968.

I assume by "Nurse Cottage" Tom is referring to Appletree Cottage where Miss Bee the District Nurse lived. I do not know who Brown was, but I speculate that he was renting the house from the Cross estate after Nurse Hilda Bee and Mrs Blake died, and until the Margetts moved in 1971.

Mrs Blake died 1966 at Wallingford Hospital. She was 90 years old. Grand old lady

Must assume this was the same Mrs Mary J Blake who lived in one side of Appletree Cottage. She is shown there on the 1939 census, and as born in 1876 - which matches with her being aged 90 on her death.

Mr P Baker died August 1968 Aged 90. Their house up for sale £16,000 in 1969

This refers to Mr Percy Baker, born in 25 May 1882. He is listed as a bank manager in the 1939 Register, and living at Crossways, Aston Street, with wife Phoebe and daughter Diana.

Rev Hester came to Aston Rectory 1969

The Reverend Hester was a very popular figure, and when he died the Astons parochial church council arranged a collection for a memorial plaque in St. Michael's church, Aston Street.

Built bungalow in orchard 1969

This refers to Armadale in Aston Street. Armadale and Tanglewood were built in the grounds of The Rectory – part of the Church of England's downsizing programme during the 1970s and 80s.

Miss Francis died Jan 1968. Sudden at The School House, Aston Street. She was Headmistress at the school

Notes about Miss Francis from Sue Newman, March 2019:

"Miss Francis was my teacher when I was at Aston School. She married George Wadsworth who was June Bolton's uncle. She carried on living in the school house when Mrs Keys became the new teacher at Aston School. My mum was the school caretaker at the time of Miss Francis death."

Kathleen Winifred Francis was born 1907 in Trowbridge and married George William Wadsworth in Aston Tirrold in 1959. Although she was married she was always known in the village as Miss Francis. Her husband George William "Swanny" Wandsworth was born in Henley in 1912. After Kathleen died in 1968, he married in 1969 the widow of his brother Robert John Wadsworth – Hilda Mabel May Wadsworth (nee Jones, born 1923). His brother Robert had died in 1966. George Wadsworth died in 1987 and his second wife Hilda in 2011. In 1939 Kathleen Francis is living in Reading with her parents and teaching at an elementary school in



School photo from the 1950s

the town. I do not know when she came to Aston Tirrold to teach but Sue remembered her as teaching at the school in the early 1950's. In the later 50s and 60s she taught at St. Frideswide's girls' school in Didcot.

(The Didcot Girls' Grammar School and St. Frideswide's Secondary Modern School were amalgamated to form the Didcot Girls' School (Comprehensive) in 1973).

3 big elms cut down in Parfitt Orchard. Feb 1969. The house known as The Chestnuts.

Mr Cyril Parfitt and his wife came to live in Chestnuts in 1961. They bought Chestnuts for £6,500. Not long after they arrived Mr Parfitt bought a piece of the neighbouring Jervis Cottage's garden and added it to his own in order to protect himself from the possibility of developers building close to his house. (I am not sure who owned Jervis Cottage at that time - it may well have been part of the Cross estate. It was later bought by Stephen Whitwell, who became a significant researcher of village history).

The elms referred to were at the end of Chestnuts' long garden, which already contained a number of old apple and pear trees. Tom refers in several places to "The Orchards."

These 'orchards' need a bit of quick explanation. When Frank Cross bought the bankrupt Fuller estates in 1900 being an astute business man he saw the opportunity of using the close proximity of Cholsey Station to move produce by train up to London.

He planted mostly apple trees but also pear and plum trees, along the back of the houses and fields to the east of Aston Street - running from the stream at the junction of The Croft and Aston Street all the way to Blacksmiths Cottage. By 1920 these trees were producing a huge crop which was harvested and boxed and sent to market. (The 20th century houses from that junction up to Races Farm were built on orchard lands in the late 1960s). Thus the trees at Chestnuts, Appletree Cottage, Peartree Cottage and Blacksmiths Cottage are all the remnants of that 1900-1905 planting.

(The History Group Archives holds a recording of Judy Dillon's conversation with Geoffrey Cross in 1983, including information on this subject).

Returning to the elm trees, I think this is an early reference to the impact of Dutch Elm Disease. The stumps of these elms cut down in 1969 were still at the bottom of the garden of Chestnuts when my father Mike Page bought the house from Mr Parfitt in June 1971.

Cyril Parfitt and his wife then bought a piece of land from the Baker family of Crossways, Rectory Lane and built a new house there for themselves (now called Parfitts) which was completed in 1971, the same year they sold Chestnuts.

Mr Parfitt was a very tall man and had banged his head so often on the low beams in Chestnuts that he had developed an inflammation of his brain and had been warned that he might risk long term brain injury if he knocked his head again. So they built the new house with tall ceilings! *(In 1971 every doorway in Chestnuts had a cushioned surround to the top lintel of the doorways between rooms to help protect his head).*

The 1939 Register lists the Baker family as living in Crossways. Tom Powell also notes the building of this new house.

Mrs Alison Elizabeth Cross died 30 Jan 1975 her funeral took place at St Michaels Church 2 -1-76 . A gale was blowing very cold. They rung a muffled peel on bells to her memory

I wonder if Tom mean she died 30 December 1975 and her funeral was 2 Jan 1976; otherwise the dates don't make sense as the death and funeral would be one year apart? I have looked up her death

registration and it was made in December 1975. So I think she must have died 30 December 1975. Her birth date is given as 25 June 1899.

Alison Elizabeth Hobart-Hampden had married Michael Cross in Great Hampden, Buckinghamshire on 3 June 1922. Michael was one of the sons of Francis John Kynaston "Frank" Cross of the Manor, Aston Tirrold.

In 1939 Michael and Alison were living in Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, he listed as a grain merchant. When his father Frank died in 1950 Michael and his brother Geoffrey (who was unmarried) took over the running of the Aston estate. In the 1960 Electoral Roll we find three of the four Cross sons living in Aston Tirrold. Michael and Alison Cross were living at Copse Stile, Geoffrey at Upper Hill Barn Farm, and a third son Christopher, a clergyman, living at The Rectory in Aston Street. The fourth son Phillip seems to have lived in London and some distant memory seems to tell me he may have been a solicitor?

Geoffrey lived at Upper Hill Farm until about 1984 when he moved to Warwickshire, where he died in 1999. Michael died in Lancashire in 1969. Phillip died in 1949 in London, and Christopher in 1993 in Cornwall.

Alison was left to run the farm in Aston Tirrold with the help of her children. She was already selling off some of the old tied cottages before her death, and after her death in 1975 most of the remaining farm and houses were sold. Some of the land was bought by the Allen family and some by Commander John Morgan, who bought Copse Stile and surrounding fields.

[Paul Harris got killed on motor bike at Sheep Wash Bridge on the Aston Rd at 3.00o'clock 27-6-75. 18 years old](#)

I acutely remember this sad day. Paul Harris was the son of Rev Gordon Harris, the United Reformed minister and his wife Jean, who lived at The Manse in Baker Street. After the sale of the original Manse Gordon and Jean moved into one of the two new houses built at the Chalk Hill end of Baker Street. Sheep Wash bridge is the small but awkward bridge set at an angle over the stream as you drive into South Moreton from Anchor Lane.

[Ken Howard died sudden 9-7-75 Muriel's husband my brother in law](#)

Tom's sister Muriel was born in South Moreton on 3rd January 1911 and appears on the 1911 census for South Moreton aged 3 months. Her full name was Muriel Ida Aileen Powell.

In 1938 she married Joseph K J Howard. In 1939 Muriel is shown living in Portsmouth but her husband is not listed there with her. I have not been able to find a registered death for her.

[Mr Bucksy died and buried 1-4-75 Funeral St Michael's](#)

Harold Bucksey, born on 30 Sept 1892 married Florrie A Chester in Droxford, Hampshire in 1918, at the end of WW1. I do not know when Harold Bucksey moved to the village, but the name of Bucksey is still around in this area today. Their 1939 Register entry shows a 'closed' entry (*this refers to the 100 year rule re non-*



Muriel and Ken's wedding (Harry Powell, Tom's father, is second right).

disclosure of personal data). I assume this was a child of theirs. Harold is shown in that entry as farm manager and living at Carrimers Farm in the main farm-house.

They sold the school and house March 1976. Been closed for 3 years. Mr J Twine bought it. Moved in 10 July 1976.

This was John and Sue Twine. They did a lot of alterations to the school house and grounds over their years there, finally selling it to the current owners in 1997. So since 1976 the school has only had two owners. There are still several ex pupils living in the village.

Sister Ivy K Mohr died in hospital in London at quarter past 10 O’Cclock on Jan the 16th. Died of cancer. Aged 72. Ashes laid to rest in my mother and father’s grave South Moreton.

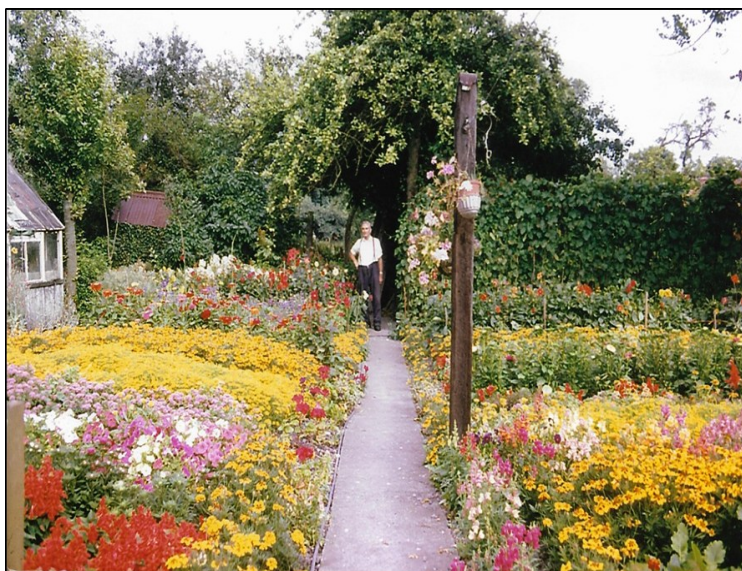
Ivy Kathleen Caroline Powell was the older sister of Tom Powell and was born in 1903 in South Moreton. She married James J Mohr in 1936 in Stepney, London.

Put up new green-house 30 March. Started putting flowers in 1st April.

Tom Powell was famous in the village and in neighbouring villages, for his amazing floral displays in his back garden. He would water them from his well which he said was the best water.

In the summer the entire back garden was a riot of colour, plus he grew lots of vegetables. Tom would take his vegetables and flowers to local flower and produce shows including Cholsey, and the Astons Flower Show, which was still held regularly in the 1970s.

Tom would often sit in his chair at the side gate of his house and watch the world go by, and would offer passers-by who he knew some of his surplus vegetables and flowers. He often let my mother Faith Page, who lived two doors down at Chestnuts, come into his garden to pick flowers to decorate the church.



Tom Powell in the garden of no.9 in the 1980s.

Field Marshall Montgomery was buried 1 April 1976. Great leader of men. Won a great victory at El Alamein and German surrender 1945

Tom Barlow died 22-1-76. Worked for F Cundell as Horse Box driver. A great chap. Horse box driver for F Cundell.

I found no sign of Tom Barlow in the 1939 Register for the village so he must have arrived later than that.

Fred Webb died aged 74. 4-11-75. Lived in bungalow. Worked all his life on farm.

In 1911 Fred (Frederick George Webb) is shown as a son of Frank Webb who was a carter on Thorpe Farm in Aston Upthorpe. Fred was born in Blewbury in 1900. He joined up at the tail end of WW1 aged 18. His name is found in the 1939 Register but he and his wife Alice (nee Avery), who he married in 1927, were living on Westbrook Street in Wantage in 1939. I assume Fred may have returned to the Astons after the war. By 'bungalow' Tom may have meant part of The Close perhaps?

William Brown died 1-3-75. Nice man. Very friendly. Had a large family. Worked on the farm.

Although a fairly common name I think this must be William R Brown who is 1939 is living on the Moreton Road at number 21. He is shown as tractor driver and general farm hand. He and his wife had five children. One of his children was Derek Brown who worked for the local firm of Wilmots.

The Vicar of Aston Tirrold Rev Hester had operation on his hip July 1976.

Paid rates for first time 12 July 1976

In a conversation with Wendy Margetts in March 2019 Wendy remembered taking the cash for Tom's rent into Allen's, the estate agents in Abingdon who acted on behalf of the Cross estate. Tom's quarterly rental for the cottage was £3-30p (after decimalisation).

Mrs and Mrs Twyne (*Twine*) moved in to the old school on 10 July 1976 with their 4 daughters.

Mr Backhouse bought Blacksmith's Cottage and orchard from the CROSS estate August 1976.

Peter Backhouse and his wife Janet and their family lived in Blacksmiths Cottage for quite a while. He was the farm manager for the Cross estate and when old Mrs Cross (Mrs Alison Elizabeth Cross – wife of Michael, the son of Frank Cross) died in 1975, she left him Blacksmiths Cottage in her will.

The probate took about 3 years to be 'proved' as a number of the cottages had been bought as part of the Fuller estate as tied agricultural houses in the original estate sale of 1900, and had no title deeds, no defined boundaries and no land registration.

The Backhouses later sold Blacksmiths Cottage and bought land and a house up on the Downs at Upper Hill Barn, shortly after Geoffrey Cross died. This farm is now called Ashdown Farm but was previously known as Upper Hill Barn.

Frank Cundell race horse trainer retired from racing in May 1976. Sold his house and stables. Went to live at Bournemouth

The Cundell family are probably the most famous of the various owners and trainers of Astons racing stables during the 20th century. Leonard "Len" Cundell born 1879, originally owned a racing yard in Chilton, but in 1937 it was compulsory purchased by the Government for RAF Harwell.

Seeking new premises he bought the Astons racing yards, based at Blewburton Hall, from the Morris brothers, who had started their racing yards in the 1910s. Len Cundell was assisted by two cousins, Ken



Leonard Cundell



Cundell stable lads at Popes, 1960s

and Frank Cundell. Frank rode in the 1934 Grand National, coming in sixth. At one time the Cundells ran four stables - at Springfield House, Orchard House, Frimley Stables and Popes.

Bill Williamson Dr Finlay of film and plays Doctor of Finlay's Case Book came to live at old Piles Aston Upthorpe.

This actually was Bill Simpson. He lived at Old Pyles for a time with Tracy Reed, the daughter of Carol Reed, director of The Third Man.

The driest summer 1976, no rain for 4 months. Everything turned brown but quite a good harvest. First rain on 29-30 of August. The well in garden went dry. First time in 100 years. All ditches went dry . The Mill Brook at South Moreton went dry. First time in living memory

Put a big gas pipe across the field at Carrimers Farm carrying North Sea gas to the South Coast.

Mr and Mrs Smelly came to live at Aston Tirrold in Crossways House, Aston street 1970. Mr and Mrs Smelly went to Greece in 1974

Correct spelling is Smellie. Craig Smellie and his second wife Diana (nee Jowett) and his daughter from his first marriage Kirsty (her mother died at her birth) came to live at Crossways in 1970. Craig was Chief of Intelligence at Stormont, Northern Ireland during 'The Troubles', working for MI6 and licensed to carry firearms at all times. He was on the security division of Northern Ireland secretary Willie Whitelaw and responsible for a lot of the personal security for members of Government.

At a Christmas drinks party I attended at Crossways in 1972 somewhere in the house a window banged shut making a loud 'crack'. Immediately four men in the room I was in took loaded pistols out of their holsters from inside their jacket pockets and stood on high alert. A bit of a scary drinks party! Craig died in 1980. The morning he died, a police car arrived at Crossways and an officer went into the house and removed an arsenal of weapons that he had been licensed to keep. Even after his retirement from M16 Craig was always on alert in case of any historic reprisals from his time in Northern Ireland.

After his death his wife Diana stayed on in Aston changing her name back to her maiden name of Jowett. Craig's daughter Kirsty married Martin Watts and went to live in Yorkshire and had two children. Diana later sold Crossways and went north to be with Kirsty and her family. In the 1980s Diana had donated a slide for the recreation ground, but asked for her involvement to be kept secret.

Craig Smellie has an entry on WikiSpooks, but of course there is no picture!

Mr and Mrs Withall came to live at Crossways in 1974

Craig and Diana were sent to Greece for two years and Mr Withall, Craig's boss at MI6, rented Crossways from them for the duration.

Mr and Mrs Margetts came to live at Appletree Cottage Aston Street 1971 August.

A new house was built in Bakers garden Church Lane 1971 bought by Mr Parfitt

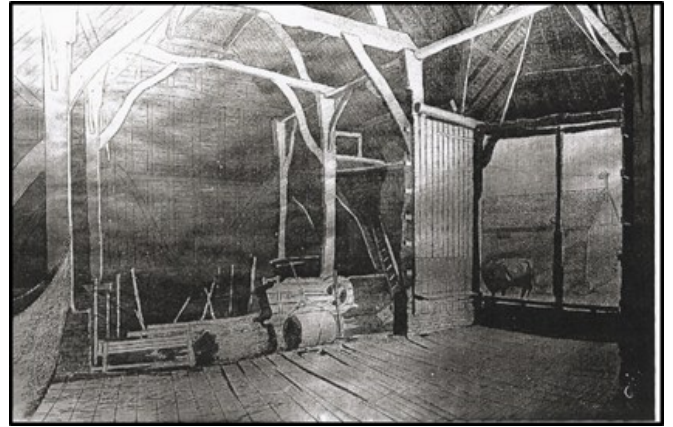
See previous entry dated 1969 about Parfitt Orchard's elm trees and the building of this new house.

The Old Chapel School turned into house 1972 bought by Mr Dalton.

This reference is to the conversion of what was the British School in Spring Lane - founded by the Presbyterian Chapel and congregation in 1827 and closed in 1907. It was bought by Philip Neale Dalton and his wife Virginia Frances "Pearl" Dalton (nee Foster). Pearl was the mother of Susie Dalton who married

Freddie Wilcox. Philip Dalton was born in 1909 and died in 1989 and Pearl was born in 1924 in Nairobi, Kenya and died in Aston Tirrold in 2010.

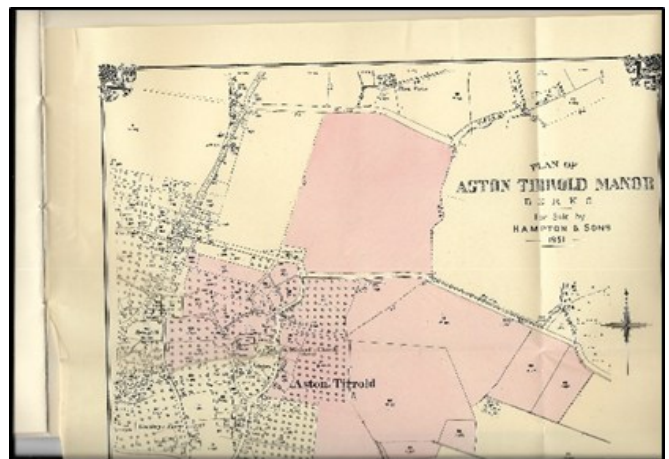
They lived first in what is now Abbey Thorn Cottage in Aston Street and later in Thorpe Farm House in Thorpe Street. They were the first owners after the farm's barns were converted to residential use. When they left the Astons they left a marvellous collection of material from the farm's history – left to them by the previous owner.



Sketches of Thorpe Farm barns, artist unknown.

Crosses move out of Manor House 1950. Bought by Lady Helen Smith, sold to Popes. They sold to Mr Hall, then sold again in 1975

This sale must be that one following the death of Frank Cross (Francis John Kynaston Cross) born 14 Dec 1869 in Eccles, Lancashire, who died 31 Dec 1950 at The Manor, Aston Street.



Title and estate map showing the extent of the Cross estate, 1951.

His wife (who predeceased him) was born Eleanor "Nellie" Mary Phillimore on 4 Feb 1876 in London. She died 30 May 1949 in The Manor, Aston Street. Their eldest son Phillip Kynaston Cross died just six days before his mother on 23 May 1949 in London.

Both Frank and Nellie had played a huge part in village in village life, and beyond - Nellie played a major part in women's rights organisations during the suffrage movement - and were much missed.

We know that the surviving sons, Michael and Geoffrey Cross, continued to live and farm in the Astons after their father's death, moving into Copse Stile and Upper Hill Barn. (*See earlier entry on the death of Mrs Alison Cross in 1975*).



Francis "Frank" Cross



Eleanor "Nellie" Cross

So we know from this entry that The Manor and additional land was sold in 1950. Duncan Kent, the grandson of Francis Cross, made contact with us during a recent visit from Canada and has very kindly donated the sale documents from the 1950 sale to the Astons History Group archive.

"We had an opportunity to spend some time with Peter and Janet Backhouse and see parts of the old farm. I worked with Peter on the farm in the late 1960's when I stayed for a while with my grandmother when she was living at Suggetts after my grandfather passed away. It was great fun remembering some of the things we got up to!"

The purchaser sold off the orchards north of Aston Street and the Manor's kitchen garden for new housing in the late 1960s. The Manor was sold separately and for a time was owned by Christine Lee, a well-known sculptress and the sister of 'Call the Midwife' author Jennifer Worth.

Planted trees round village 1975

This was a nationwide programme to replace trees lost by Dutch elm disease. Reference to this can be found in the Parish Council records for that year under an initiative called 'Plant a Tree in 73'.

Trees were planted under this scheme lining Moreton Road as you leave the village towards South Moreton, and also along the west side of The Croft. This happened between 1973 and 1975.

Commander Morgan bought Carrimers Farm and came to live in Copsestile House 1972.

This refers to the purchase of Carrimers and Copse Stile farm houses plus lands on the Downs bought by Commander John Morgan and his wife Meg, who played an important part in the farming community and village life for many years. After John died his widow Meg carried on living at Copse Style and farming the land for several years.

Mrs Cross went to live at Suggetts House where she died

Although this does not have a date, I think it must refer to Mrs Alison Cross widow of Michael Cross who died in 1975. See his other earlier entry about her. The Cross family had played a large part in Tom's life as his wife Win and his father in law Stephen Elliott had been born in Cross estate houses and worked for the Cross family.

Air Commander Ludlow lived in Forge Cottage, Fuller Rd, died 1973

There is no one of this name in Forge Cottage on the 1939 Register - so his stay in Forge Cottage must date from after 1939.

Mr and Mrs Margetts gone by bus trip to India and back. Set off on 28 Sept 1976. Returned safe.

Had telephone installed 3-6-1974 in my house No 9 Aston Street.

An interesting entry showing how late some village houses had phones installed.

Mrs Lugg's house Aston Tirrold (Upthorpe) was sold to Mr Silvestor in 1976. Headland House she left to be a museum for old fashion clothes.

Miss Starks old house.

Paulise Lugg (nee De Bush) was a very significant resident in the village from the mid 1930s until her death in 1976. Together with her husband Herbert Lugg she established the Stockwell Players who performed Shakespearian and other plays in the garden of her home, Stockwells.

In 1964 she built the village hall in Thorpe Street, the village having been unable to raise funds despite

fundraising since 1945. After her death the troupe continued as the Blewbury Players, who continue to this day. Her historic costume collection was left to the National Trust and is housed at Killerton House in Devon.



I found the following entry reported in The Reading Mercury for 7th April 1900 relating to Miss Stark:

"Mr Thomas Buckner of Aston Tirrold was charged with an aggravated assault upon Miss Elizabeth Stark of Aston Upthorpe alleged to have been committed on the footpath leading from Blewbury to Aston on the evening of Tuesday March 27th. Mr Slade his employer was called to give evidence and an alibi. Miss Stark seemed to offer confusing evidence about her alleged attacker's identity. Case dismissed".

I looked on the 1901 census and found this for Edlins:

Jessie Stark, living on own means, widow aged 77, plus two daughters Agnes aged 51 and Elizabeth aged 41, both unmarried. All three were born in Scotland. So the "old" Miss Stark's of Headlands must refer to either Agnes or Elizabeth Stark who Tom must have known. The two daughters Agnes and Lizzie were still living there in 1911.

It is interesting that Edlins was once referred to as Headlands in censuses and that Tom Powell seems to be calling it by this old name.

10 new houses built up Croft Road 1976

These are the new houses built down one side of The Croft by the Aaby brothers Philip and Peter on the ground gifted to their father, Herbert.

The Manse sold 1972. Built new one

The rambling and expensive to maintain Manse on Baker Street was sold in 1972. The new manse was one of two new houses built in 1973 next to The Old Bakehouse in Baker Street.

The old Off License in Baker Street was closed when Mrs Buckner left in 1936. It belonged to Gundy's brewers in Goring

Gundy's Brewery of Goring was established in 1838 and shut down and sold off after the death in 1940 of Ann Gundy, the owner's widow. Gundy's owned a considerable number of local pubs and off licenses in the area, including the following which were listed in the closure sales of 1940, which were sold to Brakspear's of Henley.

- * Off license Aston Tirrold
- * The Boot, Aston Upton
- * The Red Lion, Blewbury

There is an Alice Buckner listed in the 1939 Register as a laundress and living in Pear Tree Cottage in Aston Street.

Was this perhaps the same Mrs Buckner who used to run the off license in Baker Street mentioned by Tom.



Old Gundy brew-house and buildings in Goring

There was no off license shown on Baker Street in the 1939 Register so I am unable to identify exactly where it was (*occupations often moved with individuals as they moved to different properties*).

There were three unmarried Buckner brothers living at Hill Barn Farm - Walter, aged 46, Thomas aged 43 and John aged 40 in 1911 - all three were farm labourers. I suspect it was probably this Thomas Buckner who was charged with assault in 1900.

The Old Bakehouse shop was closed about 1937 in Baker Street. Mrs Griffiths died

The Old Bakehouse was still operating as a bakery and shop in the 1939 Register. James Griffiths, master baker, lived at the Old Bakehouse with Mary J Griffiths - who I assume was his unmarried daughter - born in 1871 - probably the Miss Griffiths mentioned by Tom Powell. She died around 1937.

Mrs Price and Miss Turner started a coffee works at Griffith's House. They built a new works place in 1932.

Employed quite a staff of girls to grind and pack coffee.

They shifted to Horsham, then to Watchett. Came back to

Childrey and started to grind coffee and make sweets

(written as sweate) The Aston Coffee works were run by

her son Tom Price

The 1939 Register shows Ernest and Henrietta Griffiths living at The Cottage in Aston Street, now Tirrold House.

Maybe they were related to the Griffiths family running the coffee packing house next door. In the Register Sheila Turner and Rachel Price are listed as living in a house called Four Elms - there is no house of that name now so I assume it was the house that is now called Freelands.



Coffee packing house in Aston Street.

Vida Adby wife of Charlie Adby died 21 Oct 1976. Lived at Watlington. Great Friend of mine

Vida Adby (nee Butcher, born in Henley in 1904) was married to Charlie Adby, the older brother of Herbert

Adby mentioned by Tom Powell, below. The Adby brothers were born in Buckinghamshire, sons of Cornelius Adby and his wife Kate (nee Webb). Charlie was born in 1904 and his younger brother Herbert in 1909. Cornelius Adby in 1911 was a carter on a farm in Wargrave.

I think Tom Powell's connection with the Adby family must stem for his close friendship with Herbert Adby. This gives us the date when Herbert and his wife Mercy "Alice" (nee Timms) came to live in the village.

Herbert Adby died 8.30 Tuesday 16 Nov 1976 in Hospital at Oxford. Great friend of mine. We had been friends since he came to the village in 1937. 38 years of friendship. A nicer man you couldn't wish to know. Him and his wife Alice looked after me when I lost my wife Win. I have lost the greatest friend I ever had. Dear old Bert. God rest him.



Vida Adby

Edwin George Wadley died 22 Nov 1976. Buried 25 Nov at Aston Tirrold. Nice young man. Worked for council. Aged 63 years old. Died of cancer.

Edwin George Wadley was born 1913 in Wallingford and lived for most of his adult life in Aston Tirrold. He married Violet Louisa Wilkinson in Brightwell in 1937. In 1939 he is living at Sheephouse Farm and working as a tractor driver and labourer. Later on he worked for the local council.

His older brother was Edward Thomas Wadley (1902 -1968) who was married to Elsie Ray – a longstanding village family. In 1939 Edward T Wadley is living at Upper Hill Barn and working on the Cross estate as a cowman. After Edward Thomas died in 1968, Elsie his widow married Gilbert Corderoy.

Herbert Adby's will left £52,649 pounds. All his family shared.

Mr and Mrs Withall gone to live at Blewbury. Bought a house. Stayed in Mr Smelly's house Crossways.

The Withalls rented Crossways from the Smellie family when Craig and Diana Smellie went to an overseas posting in Greece.

Radio Oxford started. 29 Oct 1970. First broadcast 5 O'clock at night.

The History Group archive holds a recording of conversations with village residents – including Frank Cundell and Paulise Lugg – dating from this first year of broadcasting.

Mrs A Cross sale 1976. They sold the farm implements at Lower Hill Barn. Allen's of West Hagbourne bought some of the land. Hill Barn House was sold on its own. Commander Morgan bought Copestle Farm and land from Turnpike Down. That's the end of the Cross era. Farmed it for 71 years. First father and then Michael

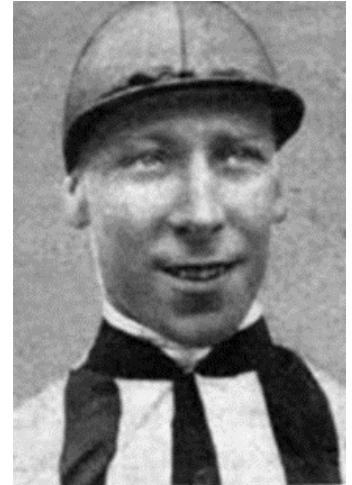
This is the death of Mrs Alison Cross, wife of Michael Cross, whose death in December 1975 led to the breakup of the Cross estate. The 71 years of farming referred to above is a tiny bit inaccurate as Frank Cross bought the estate in 1900. See Tom Powell's earlier entry where he mentions her death. I think this sale was when Peter Backhouse bought Upper Hill Barn Farm and sold Blacksmith's Cottage. It also mentions the Allens for the first time, after they bought Carrimers Farm

The Fullers and Slades farmed in the village. The Fullers owned Aston Tirrold and the Slades farmed Aston Upthorpe. The Slades sold up 1912 and it was bought by Major Morris. He owned Aston Upthorpe. He was the race horse owner and trainer. He died 1933 and his estate was taken over by George Duller who trained horses for him. Emanuel (*Emanuel?*) of America. He trained States Man for the Derby – he came in second.

He gave up and sold estate to CUNDELL, race horse trainer. He sold it to Sir William Piggott Brown. Frank Cundell gave up training 1976 April

This is an interested potted history of who owned what and when in the racing history of the villages, from pre WW1 to the 1980s and the time of Piggott-Brown. Piggott-Brown was a colourful character who by the early 1980s had had to sell his estate, which was broken up into separate packages (*One of these was the White House, Moreton Road, which Stephen and Jancis Smith bought in 1982. They later bought the Old School House in Aston Street, in 1997*).

George (b 1892 - d 1962) was the son of George "hoppy" Duller and was champion jockey in 1918. Some claim he was the best jump jockey of all time. His career as a trainer was peripatetic. He took out a licence in 1929 to train for Mr. Victor Emanuel (Tom Powell's reference above to "Emanuel of America") and succeeded his father-in-law George Hyams at Down Cottage. In 1930 Emmanuel moved him to Letcombe Regis in Berkshire, but Duller found the premises too small and moved to Aston Tirrold. By the end of 1934 he had moved back to Epsom to train at Heathcote House - where owners included Prince Aly Khan - followed by a spell in Beaconsfield Road, where George's patrons included Lord Rosebery. He was also a keen racing driver and took part in events at Brookwood and other circuits.



George Duller

Winifred Jervis died on Christmas Day 1976. Died in hospital. The police had to get in through the window. Found her by the fire. She had a heart attack and laid there all day. Neighbour never went to see until 8.0'clock at night. She was an infant's school teacher. She taught at Wittenham School for a good many years and then came to Aston School where she retired. Her father kept the Boot Inn, left and lived down The Croft. Buried 3-1-77 in Aston Cemetery.

I wondered if this was the Jervis family who may have given their name to Jervis Cottage in Aston Street, but I think not. The 1939 Register entry shows Winifred Alice Jervis, born 30 March 1901, as school teacher living at 4 Croft Road (now The Croft) with presumably her father Charles Jervis, listed as a retired gardener. Her death is registered in Oxford for December 1976.

Margaret T Maynard died Jan 4 1977. Ashes buried in cemetery 3 Feb 1977. She used to live at Aston Tirrold. Her parents kept the shop and post office top of Croft Road. She worked for Turner Price, the coffee and tea firm. She came and lived with us 1943 and stayed for some time and she went to Childrey with the coffee people 1948.

This must be the sister of Richard Maynard, and daughter of Percy Maynard, who Stephen Elliott mentions in his diary for 4 August 1923, both killed in a motor bike accident. Percy the father died on the day of the accident (August 4th 1923) and her brother Richard five days later.

Mrs C Colin died sudden collecting her library book. The wife of Bill Colin

Cannot offer any insight into who this was, however there was a lending library housed in the village hall's committee room at this time (still called the Library Room). Maybe she was returning from here.

Mr and Mrs W Bradshaw came back to Aston Tirrold to live. Bought Springfield House 1977

William 'Bill' Bradshaw and his wife Jill (nee Hayward) rented The Old Bakehouse in Baker Street before buying Springfield House. Bill made a name for himself during his working life at British Rail, and became

the 'go-to' talking head on Radio 4's Today programme in the turbulent post privatisation era. Bill and his wife moved to Wallingford, but sadly Jill died of cancer; he married again, to Diana Avris, in 2003. Bill was made a Liberal Peer in 1999 and sits in the House of Lords as Lord Bradshaw.

10 new houses built Croft road 19 (year not completed)

These would be the houses built down one side of The Croft, between 1976 and around 1981. They were built on the land inherited by Herbert Aaby when he was left Croft Cottage and the orchard lands along that side of the Croft by the lady who owned Croft House. They were built by his two sons Phillip and Peter Aaby.

The building of these houses made quite a big social difference to the village. At that time in the village there were large privately owned houses, tied or occupation linked cottages, plus some post WW1 council houses in The Croft and Moreton Road – but there were few smaller houses available to buy at the end of the 1970s.

When my parents moved into the village in 1971 my mother had been rather appalled by a feeling of 'them and us' in the village. The new influx of mainly professional couples from outside the village with young families helped bridge that gap, and within ten years there was a broader demographic in the village. There were two other factors that added to this change:

- * the first was the selling off of the tied cottages from the Cross estate between 1966 and 1976 - such as Abbey Thorn Cottage, Apple Tree Cottage, Jervis Cottage and Pear Tree Cottage - which added to the influx of new families. (There were still some tied cottages at Carrimers, and a few in Moreton Road and Thorpe Street owned by Upthorpe Farm, but there were not many).
- * the second was the sale of council houses by the Thatcher government, which also helped erode that previous social divide.

George Brewington left Aston Tirrold to live with his daughter August 1977

Cannot add anything about this person.

James Mohr died 22-4 -77, Ivy's husband. Aged 65. Lived at Barking Side. Cremated. His daughter Angela gave birth to a daughter on 26-4-77

James Mohr was married to Ivy Powell, Tom's older sister. See his earlier diary entry about his sister Ivy.

Mrs W Waters, Claude's mother in law was a 100 years old May the 2-5-77

Cannot add anything about this person.

Mr and Mrs Smelly came back to Aston Tirrold to live at Crossways 29-6-77. Been away for 2 ½ years.

Mrs Lewis sold The Manse.

Mr and Mrs Hester retired, left The Rectory 30-6-77, to live at Grove, nr Wantage. He was vicar of Aston Tirrold and Upthorpe for 7 years (in fact he moved initially to a village near Wantage, possibly Charney Bassett).

The Bradshaws came back to live in Aston Tirrold June 1977. They bought Springfield House.

As mentioned earlier.

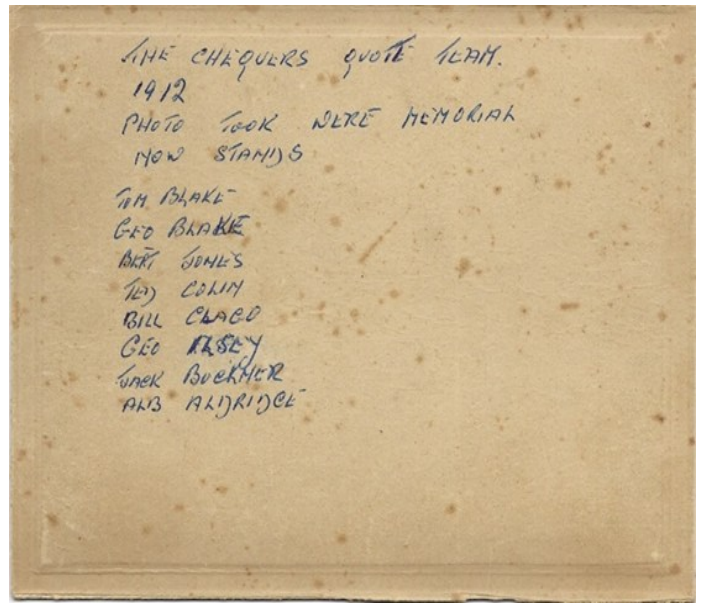
Mrs Beck sold her house and furniture. Mr F Wilcox bought Thorpe House for 49 thousand pounds and some

of the furniture.

Mrs Beck lived in Thorpe House (now Thorpe Farm) in Thorpe Street, and later sold it to Freddie and Suzie Wilcox for the amount stated. They also bought some of the furniture off Mrs Beck. The 1939 Register lists Grace B Beck, and her husband, Henry J Beck, a Director and Manager, Insurance Brokers Office (Lloyds). I assume he was deceased in 1977.

Two houses being built on Bags Piece 1977

These are two more houses built by the Adby brothers, Peter and Phillip, on what was known as Bagg's Piece. This was the piece of land lying behind the war memorial. It had been owned by Michael Cross and it is assumed it was also sold as part of the Cross estate sales in 1976.



The village quits team seated/standing on Bagg's Piece in 1912. From Tom Powell's collection. On the back of the photo some players are named (Tom's handwriting). Several are names mentioned in the diary.

John Watts, Lily's husband had an operation in Jersey hospital. Going on alright. 1977 July 31st

This may be a family connection, but not related to anyone in the village as far as I know.

August wettest month for quite a few years. Made harvest late

Mr Michael Cross's old mare Gypsy was put to rest today Sept 8th 1977. The old girl was 30 years old. Had a job to get about

Agincourt Field, a play was held in Manor Grounds, Aston Tirrold, Sept 6th 1977. Son et Lumiere

This extravagant Son et Lumiere performance, starring Bob and Michael Danvers-Walker plus a full village cast, was performed to celebrate the Queen's Silver Jubilee and was devised by the local theatrical fraternity. It was directed by Peter Sheldon helped by his wife Shirley, and with Mike Page (my father) as the narrator. (See also entry for December 1977).

There were horseback riders in costume and a large cast, with music and special effects. The Icknield Way Morris Men provided some of the live music. It was a roaring success. The performance was recorded, but unfortunately it is not known whether there are any copies still in existence.

JUBILEE 1977

Minutes of the Public Meeting held on 20th October in the Presbyterian Hall at 3 p.m.

Present: The Rector, Cadr. Morgan, Messrs. Baird, King, Lord, Batts, Barron and Sheldon; Mrs. Haines, Mrs. Hester, Mrs. Starkey, Mrs. Lord, Mrs. Barron, Mrs. Wear, Hon. Mrs. Penny and Mrs. B.E. Isaac,

Apologies were received from Mr. Page, Mr. Whitwell and Mrs. O'Neill.

Mrs. B.E. Isaac was in the chair and opened the meeting by inviting people to suggest ideas for celebrating the Queen's Jubilee in 1977. Some of the ideas are as follows:-

1. Some event which would remain in the minds of the children.
2. Special sports events.
3. Party for the children and one for the old people.
4. Coronation film.
5. Special service in church - bells - flags.
6. Bonfires.
7. Coach trips to special events.
8. Jubilee postcard design competition.
9. Jubilee mugs, badges, book-marks etc.
10. Book similar to the W.I. Year Book.
11. Special tree.
12. Special Jubilee editions of the Village News.

The Pageant to be held in August 1977 is being organised by Mr. Sheldon. It was decided to write to the different village organisations asking them to elect a representative to serve on the Jubilee Co-ordinating Committee, and the Rector, Revd. C. Hester, kindly agreed to act as its convenor. The meeting closed at 8.50 p.m. after a vote of thanks from the chairman to all those who attended at such short notice.

Programme for the 1977 Son et Lumiere.

[Had Vet to Sandy the cat. Bad front leg job to get about.](#)

[Mrs Winnie Margetts fell down stairs and broke bone in her knee on Friday 23 Sept 1977](#)

Leslie Margett's elderly mother Winnie came to live with him and Wendy at Appletree Cottage.

[Mr and Mrs Smelly grandson was born 1 Oct 1977. Name William](#)

Craig Smellie's only daughter from his first marriage married Martin Watts in 1975. Martin worked for the National Trust and they lived in a tied cottage in Yorkshire. This was the birth of their first born son William.

[The Rectory was sold for £52, 500 to a Mr Williams](#)

This was Frank Williams of Formula 1 racing fame. His race manager Patrick Head also moved into the village, buying Popes in Fullers Road. In addition one of the red brick semi-detached houses down Baker Street were rented for some lads working for Williams. For a while, Aston Tirrold was both a car and horse racing village!

The worst gale blowing 11-11-77. Worst in living memory. Blowed Jackapple tree in my garden down. 14-11-77 Gale blowing very rough.

I can only find one reference to a jack apple tree, which gives it as a country term for an apple used mostly for making scrumpy cider. There is a picture in Mike Wheeler's book 'The Wheelers of Aston' of Manor Barn being called "Old Jacks apple barn."

Fire services on general strike. Army taken over 14-11-77

Godfrey Lewington died. Found on the Downs. Died of heart failure (failure) Buried at Aston Tirrold 1-12-77. Rung muffled peel on church bells



Old Jack's apple barn

Godfrey Hubert Lewington born 1910 was the son of Hubert Lewington (1885-1961) and his wife Alice Parsons. Hubert the father was the brother of the two Lewington brothers killed in WW1.

Godfrey never married, and in 1939 was living with his mother Alice and father Hubert at Carrimers Farm, working as a tractor driver.

Had coloured tele put in 16 Sept 1977

Wendy Margetts went into hospital to have her appendix out. 1977 5 Dec her birthday

Harry Wigley died Aged 96. Born in South Moreton born in The Old Anchor pub

Miss Deacon died in hospital. 13-12-77 Lived Aston Upthorpe

Cannot add anything about this person.

Mr and Mrs Wilcox shifted from Chalk Down Cottage to Thorpe Farm House Aston Upthorpe 15-12-77

Bob Danvers Walker moved into Chalk Down Cottage 16-12- 77.

Bob Danver-Walker was the 'Voice of Pathe News' during the 1940s and 50s and also a well known BBC broadcaster. He owned a car and a campervan with the number plates RAD 10 and the TV 1. How much would Chris Evans pay for those? It was he who re-named Chalk Down Cottage, Abbey Thorn Cottage, named after a 'Glastonbury' thorn tree he planted in the front garden.

His daughter Susan married John Twine, and together in 1976 they bought the village school - directly opposite Abbey Thorn Cottage - from the county council.

Originally known as the National School, it was built in 1847 by the Reverend Hoskyns. It is now called The Old School House. John spent many years converting it, using reclaimed fireplaces and doors from Cleeve House in Goring, which was being demolished at the time. He also collected flints from the Downs to build the brick and flint walls to the front and side of the building.



John Twine working on the Old School House

Rev G HARRIS leaving Aston Tirrold. Going to Cholsey to live 21-2-1978

This marked the end of the Presbyterian (URC) minister living in the village.

It was Gordon who had started the Astons Village News in 1968, and his wife who started the Astons Playgroup at about the same time. These were very important initiatives at a time when the village was fast changing its character – with the new influx of families and in the context of the loss of traditional village amenities such as shops, employment and schooling.

People moved into The Rectory House 2-3-78. Mr and Mrs Williams came from Basingstoke

Andrew O'Neill passed his driving test. 6-3-1978

Son of Ruth O'Neil (nee Adby).

Mrs W Tappin gave up her bungalow and gone to live at Ladygrove,, Didcot, Old Peoples Home

The Tappin family (of Tappins Coaches fame) were a well-known Aston Family. The last, Rosita Haynes (nee Tappin), leaving the village in 2016.

John Watts, Lily's husband died 14-4-78 at nine o'clock. Lived in Jersey C. I

Mrs Beck, late of Aston Uphorpe died. Buried in Aston Tirrold cemetery 27-4-78

As previously mentioned, Mrs Beck who used to live and own Thorpe Farm House.

Mrs S Wilcox gave birth to a daughter May 13 1978 Sophia Thorpe Farm Aston Uphorpe

Mr Backhouse pulled down the old shed at Blacksmith's Cottage, Aston Street 1978. Mr Backhouse shifted back to Hill Barn. Sold Blacksmith's Cottage Oct 1978.

May Didcock died 10-11-78 Wife of George Didcock. Lived in Croft Road.

The Didcock family had lived in the Astons for many years. Two brothers (Mark and George) were killed in WW1. Mark's name is on the Astons war memorial. Edwin Didcock and his wife Deborah (nee Pope) lived in a cottage on Chalk Hill, and later on one in The Croft. Their son Peter Didcock and family also lived in The Croft. Some of his descendants lived in the village right through to the 2010s.

30-11-78. The coldest night for fifty five years. Its been frosty for a week.

Mrs Saverger (*Savagar*) died. Lived in Peartree Cottage. Buried 4 Dec 1978.

The Saverger family are another family with long connections to this village. Fred Saverger was killed in 1914 and was the first of the sixteen men of the villages to die in the war.

Their names are listed on the village war memorial, which was refurbished by the Astons History Group in 2014 with grants from English Heritage and the parish councils, to mark the centenary of the starting of the 1914-1918 war.

Tom Powell's photos included two photos from the 1921 unveiling ceremony of the war memorial that we had not seen before. One was of ex-servicemen congregated at the memorial (companions in arms of the fallen) and one of the wreath that they laid at the memorial, here seen resting on Croft House's gate.





Ex servicemen at the unveiling ceremony of the war memorial.

Jayne O'niel (O' Neil) confirmed at Cholsey Church 3 Nov 1978

Daughter of Ruth O'Neil (nee Aaby).

Heavy snow Sat 30th December. Sharp frost 31st Dec. We had hard frost all week. Gale force wind 4th Dec in Devon worst . in living memory. 4 Jan heavy snow in Jersey worst weather there in living memory on 5th January

Mrs Phoebe Baker daughter of the late Rev Curry Presbyterian Minister of Aston Tirrold died on Jan 4th 1979. Burial 10 Jan 1979. Aged 98. She lived at Crossways Aston Street for a long time. She leaves one daughter Diana who lives in Holland.

See previous entry about the Baker and Curry families who lived at Crossways Aston Street.

Mrs Winifred Margetts of Apple Tree Cottage, Aston Street died in hospital 10-1-79 aged 63 years. Was cremated in Somerset, her home town.

21-4-79 snow fell 6" deep quite a heavy storm, worst snow storm for years.

John Gilkes died in fire in home South Moreton. He was 80 years old 26-1-1979.

John Gilkes was one of a South Moreton family well known to Tom Powell.

Ruby Money died at Moreton. Aged 81. The last of the Money family. One of the oldes (*oldest*) family in South Moreton.

As Tom Powell had been born and brought up in South Moreton this was a family who he would have known well.

Started to snow 9.30 Thursday morning and kept snowing till 9.30 Saturday morning 48 hours without a stop. 15-3-79 to 17. Longest snow storm I can remember.

30-3-79. Airey Neave MP for Abingdon killed in IRA bomb at the House of Parliament car park. War hero of the 1939-45 war. DSO MC OBE Lt Col R Artillery. Escaped from Colditz Castle, Germany. Prisoner of War.

We had a long hard winter the worst I can remember sharp frosts right into May. The cuckoo was late coming. Heard it for the 1st time on a Sunday morning on the 6th May 1979

Sunday 27th May 1979. The bells of St Michael's Aston Tirrold. A service of dedication of the bells. By archdeacon of Berkshire after being rehung.

Monday 27th August 1979 lord Mountbatten killed by IRA terrorist in Ireland on his fishing boat.

Jim Wadley died at ¼ to twelve on the 21st of May 1980 in Didcot Hospital. Friend of mine. Worked for Mr Cross for 60 years on his farm at Aston Tirrold. A quite (*quiet?*) living man, all ways pleasant, and always a smile.

James "Jim" Wadley (born 1903) was one year younger than his brother William Wadley (born 1902). In the 1939 Register James is given as living at Lower Hill Barn (unmarried) with his widowed mother Rosie, and working as a farm labourer (heavy work). His brother William was married to Elsie (nee Ray). After the death of William Wadley Elsie would marry Gilbert Corderoy. William Wadley and his wife Elsie were living next door to Jim at Upper Hill Barn - both were tied Cross estate cottages. Peter Backhouse bought Upper Hill Barn when the Cross estate was sold in 1976.

The church fete was held at The Chestnuts on the 24th May 1980 at Mr Page's house

In times past the annual church fete was held in various people's gardens – in this entry at Chestnuts, but often at The Rectory (right), sometimes at the recreation ground on Chalk Hill. By the early 1980s it had moved to a permanent home at the recreation ground.

Mr Mike Page and his wife Faith moved into Chestnuts in June 1971 after Cyril Parfitt and his wife moved out to their new house in Rectory Lane. At this time Chestnuts had in its grounds The Studio, a small single storey building built by Boshers of Cholsey in 1906, and used originally as an artists' studio.



Church fete at the Rectory in the 1960s.

The Studio was separated from Chestnuts in 1986 and sold to the Page's daughter Judy Dillon. Judy married Mike Barradell-Smith in 1989 and together they considerably enlarged The Studio. The Page family continued living at Chestnuts until they moving to Somerset in 1994. Mike died in 2010, and Faith, aged 100, in 2018.

Buried Jim Wadley 27th May by Rev Tony Otter assisted by Jeff Cross

William Blake died 29th December 1980 . Buried Monday 5th August 1981 at Aston Tirrold. Aged 66. Son of Frederick Blake.

In 1939 Frederick Blake, born in 1874, and his wife Charlotte born in 1883, are living at No 2 Croft Road (now The Croft) together with their son William Blake, single, born 1914. Frederick is shown as a gardener, William as a cowman.

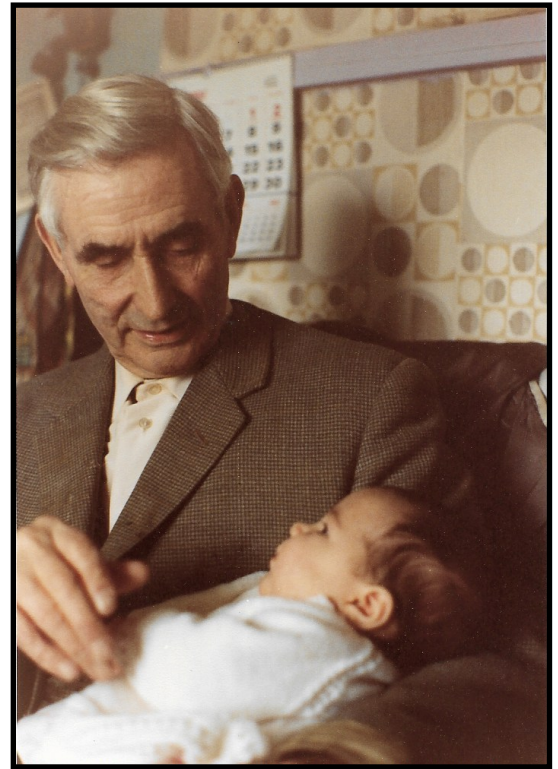
Major Craig Smellie OBE Crossways Aston Tirrold died sudden 1981. Retired from the Foreign Office 1980

Curtis came to live at Blacksmith's cottage 1981.

Wendy Margetts had a baby daughter 14-11-81. Robyn Elizabeth
Deep snow and hard frost. Snowed all night and all through the
day till five o'clock on 11-12-81. It's the deepest snow I've ever
seen. 8 " in my lifetime. The trees and hedges had 6 " of snow on
them. There was no drifting, no wind blowing

That winter was indeed a harsh one and the village was cut off
for a few days, but luckily there was still a shop in Baker Street,
now the Old Post Office, and of course two pubs. *The Boot public
house in Thorpe Street was closed by Brakspear's in 1992.*
Although Tom uses the symbol " I think he means feet rather
than inches as six inches of snow would not be that much for the
UK. I remember that winter well, and there were very high snow
banks of at least 6ft deep in the village to my recollection.

Frank Mace of South Moreton died 8-12-81 aged 79. Buried at
South Moreton 16-12-81



Tom with Robyn.

Ben Mace was the shoeing smith who worked with Stephen Elliott and features in the Rev. Curry slide of
The Smithy. Tom Powell's mother was a Mace.

Frost down 17 .. 12-12-81

Tom is using two dots side by side after the figure 17 in his diary, denoting degrees of frost. So he is saying
it was 17 degrees below freezing point. He is using Fahrenheit not Celsius.

Frost down 21 .. 13-12-81. The coldest night for 100 years. Snow falling again and a blizzard blowing and
drifting snow. Blocked road and brought trees and hedges down with weight of snow. At night about nine
O'clock started to rain. A bit of a thaw started. All the electric went all round the villages. Came back on
twelve O'clock.

All traffic came to a stand still and the wind blowing gale force. No body has ever seen such caos. Snow falling
We have had 3 weeks sharp frost and snow. White Xmas. Started to thaw on 26-12-81.

Kathleen Blake died 1-1-82. Been bad a long time. Buried at Aston 7-1-82.

One of the Blake family of whom there were a number living in Aston during Tom's lifetime. She must have
married into the Blake family, but I cannot immediately trace who she was. She was born in 1909, and her
death is registered for January 1982 in Oxford.

8-1-82 Started snow 1-30 in the morning. The wind blowing a gale causing deep snow drift. Snowed all day
Friday and still snowing on Saturday about a foot of snow and still snowing hard. Roads are blocked. The
outlook is bad

Sharp frost 9th 9..

Sharp frost 10th 10..

Sharp frost 11th 12..

Sharp frost 12th 8..

+ thick fogg. Sharp frost thick fogg.

14 degrees frost 13-1-82

Severe frost 20.. and thick fogg 14-1-82

Train drivers on strike for two days. The roads are blocked with motor traffic owing to the snow on roads. Some are impassable owing to the snow drifts.

Air crash in America. 13-1-82. 74 people killed. Train crash on America's under ground line 3 people killed 13-1-82.

14-1-82 Sharp frost 21 degrees of frost. Very cold night. All taps froze foggy, thick

15-1-82 Sharp frost 23 degrees of frost all taps froze up, very cold night, little fogg.

16-1-82 The thaw has set in, snow going well, much warmer.

The Manor was flooded out with burst pipes, filled the cellar. Had fire engine to pump out

The detailed recording of these low temperatures shows a keen gardener's interest in the weather.

Broke my left leg on 29th December 1981 coming down stairs. Went into hospital 2-2-82. Had plaster put on my left leg. Had a piece of bone taken from my right thigh done. Came home 12-2-82. Went back to hospital 10-3-82. Had plaster cut off leg 11-3-82. 12-3-82 had plaster put on again. 22-3-82 came home. 5-4-82 going into hospital had plaster cut in half, had bottom part put back on leg and bandage on for support. Came home 15-4-82. Went back for check up on leg, left the plaster off, good report by doctor

Arthur Turner died 30-3-82. Buried 2-4-82 at South Moreton

Michael Houseman came head keeper to the Duke of Norfolk, Arundle Park

21st 6- 82 at three minutes past nine Prince of Wales wife Diana gave birth to a son

Peter Sparks Muriel's son in law died on the 14-9-81. Left wife and two daughters at Earley

Aunt Beat died this morning 3 July 1982 aged 92 years old. Wife of William Powell. Lived in Appleford for years. They lived in Sutton Courtney with her daughters. Buried at Appleford Church on 7th July 1982. Me and Mary went to funeral

The person referred to is as Aunt Beat is Tom Powell's aunt Beatrice Ellen Powell (nee Herbert born 1890) who married his uncle William George Powell (1883 -1935) in 1911 in Abingdon. This older Powell generation were all born in Aston Upthorpe. Tom's father was Henry "Harry" Powell (see photo on page 17), born 1873 in Aston Upthorpe, died 1946. Harry married Kate Agnes Sarah Mace (born 1880 – died 1952) in 1904. Harry and Kate Powell had eight children of whom Cyril Tom Powell was the second born.

The Mace family was a well-known South Moreton family. Kate Agnes Sarah's mother was Eliza Mace (born 1860), one of seven children. Her younger brother Benjamin, "Ben" Mace born 1867, was a blacksmith by trade. He worked with Stephen Elliott and can be seen bending over the foot of the horse in the Smithy picture at the start of this diary.

Two bombs went off in London in Regents Park band stand. The Royal Green Jackets band was playing. 9

bandsmen were killed and wounded. The other bomb went off outside Knightsbridge Barracks killing 7 horse. 4 men of the Blues and Royals died and 5 horses badly wounded. Sefton was the worst. It was a nail bomb. 38 wounds. The IRA done this 20-7-82

Harry Hamond died 12-8-82 1982 he worked for C.E.B. Lived at 10 The Croft

I assume CEB stands for Central Electricity Board rather than the initials of a person.

Mrs Halet died in Wallingford hospital 1982 aged 86.

Evelyn Elsie Hallett born 4 Nov 1896. Although I remember her name, I cannot remember who she was or where she lived?

Mrs B Miles in hospital . Had a stroke. 1982

If my memory serves me right, Mrs Miles was the postmistress at the Old Post Office in Baker Street (now Rose Cottage). I think she gave up the post office after having a stroke. The post office then moved a bit further down Baker Street to where Neil and Cynthia Cox took it over in their new purpose built house and shop, now the Old Post Office.

Hoddy Blake in hospital, had a slight stroke.

Violet Batchelor died 1983. She was a Warwick from South Moreton.

Arthur Turner died 1982 South Moreton Lived all is time.

Bill Massey died in Feb 1983. Lived down Moreton Road.

John Brown broke his leg 2 March 1983.

William Cordrey (*Corderoy*) died in fire at his home The Smyth (*The Old Smithy*)Aston Upthorpe April 1983, aged 80 years old

William James Corderoy, born 3 Oct 1902 at the Smithy, Thorpe Street, was the older brother of Gilbert Henry Corderoy, mentioned earlier.

Morris Tugwell died April 1983 aged 80. Done good work for the Blind Dog Assocation

11 April 1983. Monday. Not feeling to good. Thursday left foot and leg all swollen up. Had doctor on Wensday. Got a virus in my foot. Job to get about. Feeling better 9 May

Handwriting of Tom Powell deteriorates quite markedly at this point.

Charlie Adby died at Watlington on (no date written)

Another of the Adby family. He was born 19 April 1903. The family originated from Buckinghamshire.

Had operation on my hand 16th May 1984

Charlie Weir died July 1984

Mrs Douglas Penent died July 1984

This was the wife of Rodney Archibald Douglas-Pennant (1913 – 1993) who lived in Skirmers, Aston Street. He was married three times. His first wife Rosemary Delap whom he married in 1945 died in 1946. In 1947 he married Agnes Nydia Brailey who was well known in the village and known as "Nancy." She was a leading light in the local Conservative party. It is her death that is mentioned here. In 1985 Rodney married Olivia Herbert, who lived in the village.

Tom's handwriting improves back to normal from this point.

Bill Bradhaw and family left Aston Tirrold to live at Wallingford

Edith Mary Brown daughter of Stew and Rachel Elliot died in Canada 24 June 1984. Died aged 98. Lived in Canada all her life. Leaves one son Bert. She was born in Aston Tirrold 1885. She was my wife's sister.

Edith Mary Brown (nee Elliott) was born in 1896. See earlier entries about her and her marriage to Albert Edward Brown and their later emigration to Canada.

Bert is mentioned earlier on in Tom's diaries when he visited them in Aston Tirrold.

William Didcock died 26 March 1984.aged 80. An old Aston family.

Bomb at Hotel Brighton where Mrs Thatcher and all her cabinet were staying 1984.

Gladys Wheeler died, Jacks wife. Aged 83 25-10-1985

The Wheeler family are well known in the Astons. In 2010 Mike Wheeler wrote 'The Wheelers of Aston.' His father survived his service in WW1, so Mike was a fascinating *'first-hand'* source for the Group's researches.

Bob Danvers Walker fell out of his apple tree and broke his shoulder 17-10-1984

Tom Powell went into hospital at Didcot with pneumonia 29-10-1984

Mr Page, The Chestnuts had new garage built 1984.

Wendy Margetts had fire wood stoves put in.

1985 January first to 21st sharp frosts and snow bitter cold

Mrs Edna Welsh died on 29th Dec 1984 buried the 4th January 1985 aged 60

Mr Gower died Church Service 16th Feb

Deep snow Feb the 9th 1985 and sharp frost cold gale force wind blowing had sharp frost down to 10 cen. Coldest night 28 years ago.

Alice Elliott died 27 -2-85 aged 92. She married Fred Eliott my wife's brother. Lived in London

Alice (nee Haywood) wife of Frederick William Elliott (who was born 30 Dec 1887 in Aston Tirrold and died 1963 in Wood Green London) was married in 1913. They had four children - two sons followed by two daughters.

Ernest Blake died 27th 1985 March. Died in hospital.

Well known in the village. He was the road man in Aston Tirrold and Upthorpe.

Ernest (Hoddy to his friends) was another of the many interconnected Blake family in the Astons. The 1939 Register shows him as single, living in Baker Street and employed as a county council road man.



'Hoddy' Blake, from an Oxford Mail article in 1965.

Phillip O'Neill joined the Police force 1984 stationed at Reading

Jayne O'Neill got her car for work

Tom's last entry in this diary. He went on to write other diaries but they were kept more in date order rather than this one where many of the entries jump about all over the place.

Tom died on 3 June 1991, and is buried in the United Reformed churchyard in Spring Lane.



Tom Powell with Wendy Margetts' mother (left) and friend.

We think this booklet shows the marvellous serendipity of local history research – how memories, documents and photos, drawn together, give a wider picture of village life than any one element by itself ever could.

On her first reading of this work Tom's niece Judy Powell said, "I am certain that Uncle Tom must have hoped that someone, somehow, one day, would make good use of it all, and make it useful to the villages. So, on his behalf, thank you and Judy for taking so much trouble with his little tatty book that could have so easily been discarded".

We thank all those whose kind contributions have made this work possible – in particular of course Tom's niece, Judy Powell, whose kind donation of her uncle's collection made this all possible.

Photos kindly loaned for scanning by: Sue Newman, Mike Wheeler, Wendy Margetts, Judy Powell, Jancis Smith, and Judy Barradell-Smith.

Astons History Group. 2019.