

Memories of Chinnor

I was born in Bledlow just after WW and was christened in Henton 'Tin Chapel' (*now reconstructed at the Chiltern Open Air Museum*) during the harsh winter of 1946/7. However, Chinnor features strongly in my early years as set out below: -

My mother Nora Turner (nee Kingham) lived in Henton from 1928 until 1941. Nora and sister Helen, were educated at Chinnor School – a long- often muddy walk - from Henton! Mum left Henton in 1941 to live in Bledlow after she married Marshall Turner at Chinnor church. Their wedding reception was at Chinnor Red Lion during wartime. In 1948 our family (Nora, Marshall, brother Brian & I) moved to a new house in Princes Risborough where I lived until 1977.

An early memory is walking with my mother Nora Turner to Risborough station in the early 1950's. We caught the 'Watlington Donkey' train from Risborough sidings to Wainhill Halt where my grandfather Ernie Kingham collected us by pony & trap and took us to his tied cottage in Henton (called Hempton then). Ernest & Louisa Kingham lived in the right-hand half of the cottage pictured below. This was a simple farm cottage with no internal water supply and electric light only downstairs. My grandad Ernie was a 'farm carter' working with horses & employed by Ebenezer Thompson - not the most generous of employers! They lived there

from 1928 until 1955 when Grandad retired and they moved to an old people's bungalow in Princes Risborough.



The Kingham family in about 1934



The farm cottage – now as a single dwelling – but two separate units occupied by the Baverstock's & Kingham's in the 1920's to 1950's.

My next connection with Chinnor was my first job at Chinnor Cement & Lime Company. Back then it was an independent company owned by the Benton Family but soon taken over by the Rugby Cement Group. I had an interview with the works manager Cyril Hawkins and was offered a job in the laboratory. I started there in August 1963 where my boss was Roy Cooksey the Works Chemist. Other people in the Lab were Ted Putman, Derek Parslow (senior chemist), Chris Alexander, Harry Broughton, Bill Benham & others I worked mostly on the chemistry side of the lab where we analysed the raw materials, clinker, finished Portland cement and tested the quality of the Leicestershire/Nottinghamshire coal as used in the rotary kilns. Those kilns were a continuous process requiring a number of people on shift work. Some of the shift work Kiln Burners were: Alf Catt, David Rose, Nick (Paddy) Darmody and my dad's school chum Albert Eggleton. The foreman Electrician was Harry Dyball. The small Lime works was run by Bill Folley who was also the tenant of the Eagle ale house in Henton. The works gang – so important for kiln & mill maintenance – were led by foreman Jack Bass. The works canteen was run by Charlie Rutland. The middle & lower chalk quarries at the cement works had numerous fossils embedded in the rock. We had a display of large ammonites & sharks teeth in the laboratory. Some were passed on to the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford., We often showed school parties around the factory. I left the cement works in 1969 for a new job in the construction materials industry.

My older brother joined Chinnor Silver Band in about 1957. His practising the cornet must have annoyed our neighbours during his early attempts to master the instrument but he persisted. Brian soon was able to be with the band for concerts and brass band competitions. Later he also took up the drums and became the instrument secretary to look after the ordering & repairs various horns.

My other connection with Chinnor was to play Rugby Union for Chinnor RFC. This came about when two of my teachers from Princes Risborough Secondary Modern – Chinnor residents - Harry Cartwright & Cyril Perry were two of the founders of the club in 1963. I played in their first ever match against 'Old Henleyensians' as did a number of Risborough boys. I played for Chinnor RFC for several years. Happy days.....

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