

## Cross Keys Practice. Mabel Howlett

The start of our present Cross Keys practice was Dr. Summerhayes I never met him I might have spelt his name wrong, but I heard my mum and granny talk about his when my granny had her children (9 in all) usually only the village midwife attended but for some reason my granny had to have a doctor. My mum was one of the older ones, and she remembered coppers being put in the old teapot when one child was born to pay the doctor when she had the next one (no pill then).

The next doctor from Risborough was Dr. Cooper (father of our Dr. Dudley. He was partners with Dr. Wills. They had a surgery near the market square. Dr. Cooper senior came three times a week and held a surgery in Mrs Thompsons front room. We also had a Thame doctor who had his twice weekly surgery at Mrs Bigs who lived in a cottage under the arch in Station Road and a Watlington doctor who came to Mrs Morton in the High Street. Doctor Truscott. I can never remember paying for surgery visits but it was five bob (25 pence) when the doctor visited at home. The medicine had to be fetched from Risborough in surgery time. Many times when I was about 11-14 I was sent on the train for the medicine. Catch the 9 o clock train run like hell across the parks everyone knew who was in the waiting room before them and if anyone tried to go in before their turn all the ones who were there before created so much they soon sat down again. The doctor did not have anyone to call you in because the people waiting knew exactly when your turn was, but before surgery got under way the doctor would come to the door of the waiting room and say anyone for the train and in you would go. I enjoyed watching him make the medicine, white for tummy troubles and red for a tonic. Then under the tap. It was all for a standard price of half a crown. When you had the medicine (he would put a few others in for for people in the village it was a run back across the parks (a st... road with about six houses in those days) to catch the 10 o clock train back to Chinnor. If you were lucky you got  $\frac{1}{2}$  p a bottle for taking it to different families.

It wasn't long before Doctor Cooper senior had his house called 'Enniskillen' built n Station Road at Risborough opposite the Poppy Road turning. Doctor Wills had a house a bit farther on where Station Road meets Wycombe Road. When I started work at Risborough furniture I was sent up to Dr Cooper senior with a form and five bob (50p) to get examined and say I was fit to work in a factory. He signed the form took the five bob and said your all right. He stayed in the practice until he was quite elderly as he wanted Dr Dudley to have the practice. I was told that Dr Dudley would have been a surgeon but for that. I was about fifteen Dr Cooper recognised a spot on my dads nose as a rodent ulcer and sent him up to the hospital in London where Dr Dudley was working. He came back with a radium needle in his nose and a plaster to keep it there. Anyway it did the trick and dads nose was completely clear. Dads sister in law had a similar spot which was not treated and when he went to see her in a retirement home some years later it had made a complete mess of her face.

Next we had Dr Dudley Cooper whose partner was Dr Edwards who lived in the house where Cross Keys surgery is now. Both doctors were young and handsome and their wives envied by at least half their lady patients. My dad was trying to free a belt which brought bags of cement down onto the lorries when it suddenly started moving with dad's arm still there. It torn the muscles from the top of his right arm. They were about to ring for an ambulance when dad remembered it was Dr Dudley's day in the village and asked them to call him first. When he got there he put dad on the table in the canteen and with the works first aid man to assist Dr Dudley sewed all his muscles back, he visited dad and dressed his arm for weeks after that. Anyone working and paying a stamp was on what was called the panel and didn't pay the doctor. Towards the end of the time Dr Dudley was coming in regularly he said I reckon you owe me Bass I've saved you pounds. Dad said I reckon you've had that in Elsie's (my mum) cake and tea, but I think he did give him something. When I was pregnant with my daughter because I was being sick all the time while I was spending a week with my husband who was with the RAF in Wiltshire he gave my notice in at work. I was making rubber engine covers at the time and he thought it was causing my sickness so he brought my money and cards home saying babies were even more important than the war effort. That was in August and I didn't see Dr Dudley again until my daughter was due. I met him down the road and he stopped his car and asked e when the baby was due. When I told him in was in the next few days he said get back home and I'll come in to examine you. My husband was home on leave and when he had finished his examination he said to my mum and husband she's lucky this baby could be upside down or anything (didn't know) and of course my mum didn't she only had the district nurse in attendance when my sisters and I were born. In September 1942 Dr Dudley joined the forces and went abroad. At first Dr Edwards came out to Chinnor, but just before the war Dr Leverkus had set up practice in the village. At first in a cottage in the High Street, and later she had Hempton Field built where the nursing home is now. All the people on Dr Dudley's list had a letter telling them to go to Dr Leverkus for the duration of the war. My mum and me never needed a doctor while Dr Dudley was away so we didn't change but my sister and dad stayed on with Dr Leverkus after the war. She was a lovely lady who really cared about her patients. Then in 1946 the National Health Service started and the Cross Keys practice started in what had been Dr Edwards house. I think the first doctor to join Drs Cooper and Edwards was Dr Fordham he had been an army doctor. I remember we all had to go to Risborough on specified days for polio jabs. Dr Fordham would have about 12 people in a row right arms facing out then it was jab jab jab all along the row. I never saw him change the needle. I was told that a man who was killed by a train using a footpath that crossed the line at Saunderton was sewn up and made presentable before his wife was called to identify him by Dr Dudley Cooper. This seems the sort of thing he would have done. Then came Drs Gould, Macey, Jones, Hood and Durban who all came to Chinnor. Dr Gould moved surgery days from Mrs Thompson's front room over the road to the Reading Room. Not long after that the house next to the allotment gates was brought by the practice, Dr Hood lived there and Chinnor got its first full time practice with

Sheena as the full time receptionist. My mother was one of Dr Macey's first patients when she got cancer late in life. While she was ill, I worked part time and when I came home one lunch time Dr Macey had taken her prescription to the chemist so that it was ready for me to pick up directly I came in. Little kindnesses like this made such a difference. Dr Gould was her GP and she really loved both of them. After my mum died I had reason to go to the Dr myself. When I arrived at Sheena desk she looked up and said yes. When I said I had an appointment with Dr Macey she said Are you Mrs Howlett? They had no papers whatsoever for me. Sheena said I know you as Mrs Bass's daughter and Valerie's mum but I don't know your name. Much later my own husband Derrick had a lot to do with the doctor when at 61 Dr Jones diagnosed arthritis. Another lovely man. About 6 months before he died we went up to see him and there was a notice on the door saying Dr Jones was now at the Risborough side of the practice and we could carry on seeing him if we liked to go over there. Derrick thought about it, and said he didn't want to travel to Risborough, lets give the new man a chance and that's when we met Dr Neale that was nearly 8 years ago. Now I'm getting old I need regular visits to the doctor, and Dr Neale is my doctor another lovely man. who I hope will see me out. When I was speaking of Derrick forgot to say that the night he died Dr Neale had left a message that if anyone called from our house to call him and not the duty doctor. At a time like that it was so nice to see your own doctor and I hope friend rather than a stranger. All my family were pleased about that. The doctors from the Cross Keys practice have been there in times of illness for me and my family from both grannies and grampies all my life thank you all.

#### Foot note

Also helping to obtain prescriptions for Chinnor residents was Marjorie Jones nee Thompson who used to work in the Risborough chair factory and brought scripts home to Chinnor as Mabel has mentioned in her notes the surgery was held in their front room. Victoria cottage in the High Street.