

East Brent Parish History Group 6th July 2011

The second group meeting was held on Wednesday, 6th July 2011 in the Village Hall and there were a few additional people with John Barnstable and Margery Baker representing some long-term residents – John was in the Home Guard. Again, much discussion took place regarding specific memories and it was great to see that these are still vivid. We all agreed that these memories of the Parish's past are essential to note and record. John Barnstable remembers 'Noddy' Hart in the Sweetshop (was The Goat House, now Acorns) and that he sold rationed food but was stumped when he once had 20 pounds of butter left and didn't know what to do with it. The triangle of land between the Village Hall and the War Memorial is owned by the County Council and approaches have previously been made about selling/donating it to the Parish. However, the cost was too great - perhaps this should be revisited?

Jenny Binning has also begun obtaining copies of the 1808 Tithe Map for the Parish and had some copies on display.

It was very interesting to hear how significant to East Brent Parish, the railway station at Brent Knoll (formerly South Brent) was to the area. Apart from passengers, it provided newspapers and movement of milk, livestock and farm supplies.

Funding

Nigel Lloyd-Jones presented an introduction to potential sources of funding for provide storage facilities, website provision and design, voice recording equipment etc. as well as copying of documents from personal and other sources. These ideas varied from personal donations, Charitable Trust and the local Parish Council. As there were Parish Councillors present some initial ideas and views were gratefully received. The possibility of forming a formal Society with subscriptions was also proposed and discussed.

Rita Thomas's Memories

Rita was able to take us on a tour of East Brent through her mind's eye of her earlier days.

- Rita began her tour at Brent House (Carvery) by remembering when John Barnstable's mother began serving Cream Teas.
- Lake House – legend has it that there was a tunnel used by Monks which ran from the house to the Church. (a subject for further investigation maybe?)
- Picking blackberries in the East Brent/Rooksbridge area. These (or at least the remaining ones) were sent to Robertson's Jam Factory.
- James Stores was owned by 'old Mr. Martin' who was something of a hermit and very intelligent. Sadly, one day he was found dead. It is possible that Mrs. Martin died by taking tablets? The Stores then was run by Mr. & Mrs. Harris followed by their Son, Emrys. Rita worked in the Paper Shop for 9 years.
- Rita then 'took us' along the Old Bristol Road and remembers, families such as the Hams, Sid Huett (spelling?) who serviced cars at a garage on the A370 and the two Miss Gamlens at The Grange whose brother had Chapel Farm.
- Houses & cottages in the Strowlands area where Ern Francis, Ham & Phillips families lived. One cottage was hit by a bomb during WW2 which Margery Baker also remembered.
- Families living in The Mead were the Taylors with their daughter Dorothy - their son was killed in WW2. The Tremletts and Edwards – Mrs. Edwards made puddings for the

Harvest Home and never passed on the recipe and Mr. & Mrs. Long who wore a large hat and cleaned the Chapel.

- The Knoll Inn which was originally 2 houses (pubs) and became one in 1880. The local W.I. used to meet there.
- Cottages between the Knoll Inn and the Village Hall were lived in by Miss Lloyd, Muss Mur..., Mrs. Jackson and Miss Macey. Mr. Watkins ran the tobacconist shop. The somewhat legendary PC Wilcox lived in the Police House. Children were frightened by him and typical of the time, wore a long cape.
- Manor Close was built in 1930 probably on land once owned by Manor Farm. Manor Farm was owned by Metford Popham who children were also frightened of. He would come out with a 12-bore shotgun grinding his teeth.
- Moving across the A370 and along Brent Road is the Methodist Hall which was built on bare land and was opened in 1963 by Mrs. Lang. Once there were stables to one side and a garden. The nearby Stores were owned/ran by the Saturday, Kingdom, Davies, Lee (lived in Manor Close) and Day families. The land opposite was a warehouse for sweets and tobacco. Ern Francis made beautiful wooden toys of garden/farm equipment particularly as gifts at Christmas.
- Anvil House (now Brent Area Medical Centre) was once a Smithy where Mr. Ward worked in Iron. Mrs. Ward was notable for wearing Victorian dress. Mr. Ward's son gave money to the Village Hall for improvements where a plaque refers to this. A building existed to the left (facing Anvil House) part of which was a library where Rita recollects changing her books on Tuesday/Thursday.
- Further down Brent Road is Aston House/Cottage lived Vic Preece (spelling?) who was something of a recluse was well-educated and hoarded bicycle parts. There is then the Cottage Rita knew as 'Bullseyes' because of the nature of its windows followed by The Nook now re-named Bemstone.
- Into Church Street, Rita remembers the slaughterhouse and the Market Garden run by the Hodders on Church land well-fed by natural springs. The Rigs were formerly 2-3 cottages where a Dentist lived in one. Rossholme moved to its location from Weston sea front.
- On the opposite side of Church Street, Mrs. Ford worked at the school and usually dressed in black. Norbett House was once owned by Sir George White of Bristol Motor Company and in 1910 founded the Bristol Aeroplane Company after seeing Wilbur Wright flying in France in 1909 (another area for research). Blandford House was owned by the Hodders.
- At the Old Post Office back in Brent Road, Miss Hudson lived downstairs and Mrs. Gibson lived upstairs and at one time sold clothes. The White House definitely was a garage with pumps at the front and farmer R.Hill lived in Ash Trees and delivered milk pouring it into a jug. Marion Hill lived in Wayside.



Further notes :-

- A Voice Recorder is now available for use.
- Ann Keegan has copies of St. Mary's Church's Monumental Inscriptions and is investigating copyright so they may be made available. Ann is willing to investigate the Family History of East Brent Parish residents.
- John Rigarlsford provided copies of a CD containing the names of East Brent Parish people and copies can be obtained from me for a small donation. John also agreed to co-ordinate information relating to the Parish's businesses/shops etc.

The next Group discussion will be on **Wednesday, 7th September 2011 at 7:00 pm in the Village Hall**. Everyone is welcome.

Colin Loader

3 Johnson Close

East Brent, TA9 4RZ

Tel. 01278 760713

Mob. 07931 429927

e-mail: cloader2@tiscali.co.uk