

**AROUND
KEYNSHAM & SALTFORD
PAST
AND
PRESENT**



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AROUND
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Editor: Barbara Lowe
Telephone: 0117 986 3510

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**Cover illustration:
Church Square in 1907. Keynsham**

**Requests for this or any of the Society's publications should be sent
to:**

**Dennis Hill
31, Walden Road, Keynsham BS31 1QW**

Two Chappell families of Keynsham

Local historians in Keynsham will be well aware there were two Chappell grocery stores in the town in the early twentieth century trading as "Chappell Bros" and "George E. Chappell". It has been suggested that the proprietors were related, but this is not so. The Chappell Bros antecedents were from Devon whereas George E. Chappell descended from true Keynsham stock. Note that both families' names were spelt Chapel, Chaple and Chappell at various times but here I will use the current spelling.

Chappell Bros. Grocers, 17, High Street, Keynsham.

It was my great grandfather John Chappell (1797-1878) who founded the Chappell Bros. store. His father, William (1771-1814) was originally from Crediton, Devon [ref 1] and having moved to Bristol, baptised John and his three brothers in Lewins Mead Unitarian Chapel, Bristol in 1802 [ref.2]. John married Sarah Cante, one of the many Keynsham Cantles, at St. Mary Redcliffe on 6th March 1821 [ref.3].

The couple settled in Keynsham where Sarah inherited property from her father, Job (1759-1837), [ref 4]. This property became the Chappell Bros. store and can easily be identified on the 1840 Tithe map and apportionment roll (Fig 1).

At the outset the business would have been a typical village shop probably selling everything including baskets which seem to have been a major Cante industry in Keynsham at that time. As the years went by, the shop became more of a traditional grocery shop and, by the time John died in 1878, it had become well established. John's youngest son, Edwin (1844-1930), took over when his father died, expanding the business when, by 1889, he is described as "Grocer and coal merchant and agent for W&A Gilbey, wine and spirit merchant"[ref 5], with additional premises at the railway station (Fig.2).

In 1906, Edwin senior retired and left his two eldest sons to run



Figure 1. Chappell Bros. In the High Street, until 1961

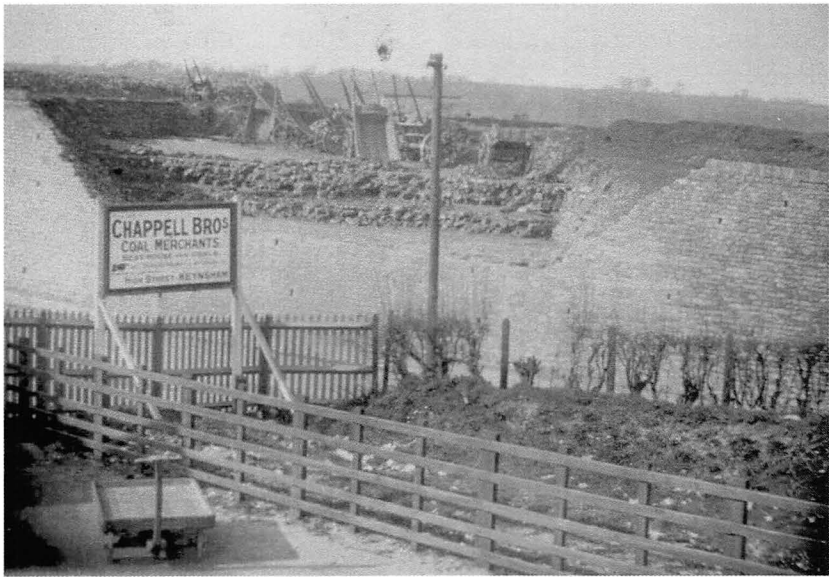


Figure 2. Chappell Bros. Coal yard at Keynsham Station

the business, namely Edwin Walter (1874-1930) and Horace Ernest (1876-1946) - the Chappell Brothers. The business continued successfully under the same name but, in 1961, after almost 130 years, the Chappell name disappeared from Keynsham High Street.

George E. Chappell, Grocer, 12, High Street, Keynsham.

George E. Chappell (1872-1950) was a latecomer to the Keynsham grocery scene. He started in about 1905, trading as "Central Supply", initially in Temple Street and, later, at 12, High Street (Figs 3,4,5).

George came from a long-standing Keynsham family; his great grandfather, Thomas, was born there in 1790 [ref 6]. Thomas married Hannah Purnell in 1814 and their son, George, (1819-1855) married Mercy Shore in Bristol in 1842. Mercy died in 1849, after having given birth to a son, George Edwin, in March 1848 [ref 7]. George Edwin married Matilda Harvey and their son, also George Edwin, the subject of this article, was baptised in the Keynsham Bethesda Chapel on 17th November 1872 [ref 8]. George's early life was unconventional to say the least and makes a fascinating story (outlined in the following article on Matilda Harvey). He was brought up by his cousin, Mary Ann Gullis [ref 9] where he started his career as a grocer's assistant, later becoming a Commercial Traveller, before starting his own business.

George married Laura Valentine Maud Brownsey in 1901 and went on to a successful business career. He died on 25th June 1950. His career is best summarized by quoting the Bristol Evening Post for 26th June 1950.

First Urban Councillor

Mr George Edwin Chappell of Newlands, Wellsway, Keynsham whose death has taken place, was for over 50 years associated with local

Government in Keynsham. He was awarded the MBE in 1949 New Years Honours List for his public services in Somerset. First elected to Keynsham Parish Council in 1898 he served on Keynsham Rural District Council, Board of Guardians and Bath-Avon Rural District Council as well as numerous committees. He headed the poll in Keynsham first Urban District Council's election in 1938 and was chairman of the Council from 1942-1946. Mr Chappell contested West Dorset as a liberal in 1929, 1931 & 1935. He was a former president of Frome Divisional Liberal Association. A magistrate since 1928 he was a member of Somerset Cricket Club and of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society. He was also chairman of the Cater Motor Co. Cheltenham Road, Bristol, now Henley 's Ltd and was former chairman of the Keynsham Gas Co..

Mr Chappell leaves a widow and two daughters, Mrs Philip Hopkins of Bath, wife of the liberal candidate for Bath at the last election and Mrs Edwin Maggs of Compton Dando.

References.

1. Report in the 'The Bristol Gazette and Public Advertiser' Thursday 21st July 1814.
2. Lewins Mead Unitarian Chapel baptism register BRO 3946 1/rla
3. St. Mary Redcliffe Registers BRO P. StMR/r/3/6
4. Job Cattle's Will in possession of the author.
5. Kelly's Somerset Directory 1889.
6. International Genealogical Index.
7. Keynsham Church Records Somerset Record Office D/P/Keynsham.
8. Bethesda Chapel records BRO 32748/BI/R2.
9. 1881 census for Keynsham.

Matilda Harvey

The former article gives a brief outline of George E. Chappell's paternal line. Little seems to be known about his background but it has been said he was an orphan; this is not so, although you could say he was abandoned as a young boy. This is the story of his parent's marriage with particular reference to his mother, Matilda.

Matilda Harvey was the sixth child of Edwin and Ann (née Hatcher) and was born in Child Okeford, Dorset in 1849. At the time, her parents were well established farmers but later moved into the licensed trade. After a time running the Royal Hotel at Abbas Combe the family moved to the Warwick Arms at Clutton where Matilda, now 22, met George Edwin Chappell. They married in Clutton Church in late 1871 and settled at Cottage Farm, Keynsham, where their first child, George Edwin junior (the grocer) was born. They became stalwart members of Keynsham Bethesda Chapel. A second child, Florence Eva, was baptised at the chapel in 1874.

Cottage farm was, and still is, well away from the mainstream of Keynsham life and, considering her background as a publican's daughter, it probably did not suit Matilda. They moved to Hersham in Surrey soon after Florence was baptised and in November 1875, a second daughter, Minnie, was born. George's occupation is given on the birth certificate as 'Bar House Keeper'. Perhaps this life was more to Matilda's taste! They later moved to Guildford where a third daughter, Ethel, was born in 1878.

Matilda's upbringing with the social life of a pub in the background was in complete contrast to that of her husband, George. George was an orphan by the time he was 7 and was brought up as a 'nursing child' by Luke Fray, 57, and his wife Mary, also 57. He was later sent to a boarding school in Weston-super-Mare. His unusual upbringing seems to have made him withdraw from society and he kept well out of sight of the census enumerator! There is no record of him in 1871 but he must have been in the Keynsham district as he married Matilda later in that



Figure 3. George E. Chappell's shop in Temple Street



George E. Chappell's shop at 12, High Street (after 1911)

year.

Matilda seems to enjoy a robust extrovert life, always giving her birth place correctly on the census and providing us with a fascinating story.

George and Matilda's marriage was not a success and two years after the birth of Ethel in Guildford, Matilda left and set up a new life with a Surrey man, William Woods, who lived nearby. Matilda and William moved to Birkenhead in Cheshire, Matilda taking her three daughters with her but Not George Edwin junior. No doubt his father had a hand in this arrangement, being prepared to 'give away' his daughters but not his son!

George Edwin junior was taken to live with the family of John and Mary Ann Gullis in Keynsham. Mary was a first cousin to George senior, so was probably the closest relative he had and would have been the obvious choice to care for his son. George junior remained with this family in Temple Street through the 1891 and 1901 censuses.

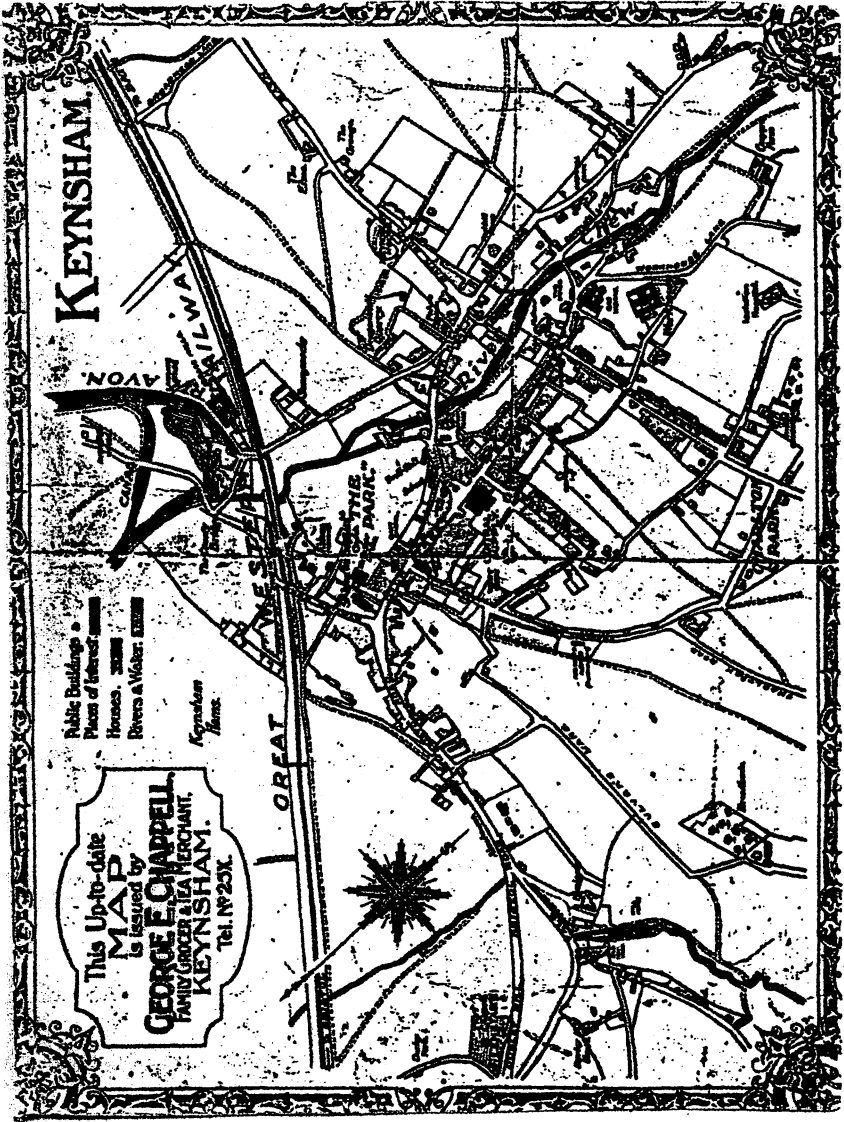
Meanwhile, to keep up appearances in the 1881 Birkenhead census, Matilda registered the Chappell children of the household under the surname of Woods. A son, Arthur, was born in late 1880-- naturally taking the name Woods, as did a daughter, Emily, born in 1886. Matilda was still married to George so could not marry William but this did not seem to worry them and they got on with their lives. Unfortunately, this happy state of affairs did not last too long, William died in 1889, aged just 42.

Matilda, seemingly not able to live without a man, quickly found one in Richard Garnett, a widower with one son. Probably thinking she had shaken off George, she took a chance and "married" him in Liverpool in September 1890. George may have turned up or communicated with her because somehow Richard found out that his marriage was bigamous and abandoned Matilda who escaped to Reading where she set herself up as a Dairywoman. Florence, Arthur and Emily Woods are still with her but she is now giving them all the surname Chappell! Despite all this, she has no desire to conceal her background, giving her own and her children's

birthplaces correctly. What happens next we do not know but the 1910 census will reveal more. Searching the death records I can find the deaths of two Matilda Chappells recorded. One in 1919, aged 69 years, at Wellington in Somerset, the other in 1922, aged 73, in West Derby. Given her birth year was 1849, either will fit. What a pity death certificates give so little family information.

And what of her husband, George Edwin? The only possible record of him after the 1861 census is in 1891. An entry in West Marylebone in London shows a George E. Chappell, 43, decorator, born Somerset, Caynsham (sic) with a wife, Annie, 43, born in Shipton, Shropshire. I cannot find a positive death registration, but of course there are many possibilities if just his first name was used.

John Chappell.



Map on paper in which tea was packed by Chappell Bros.

JAMES PEMBERTON (1847-1905)

A former Factory Manager of the Polysulphin Works, Keynsham.

The Factory.

The former Polysulphin Works are situated on the south bank of the River Avon at the northern end of Broadmead, Keynsham. At present, 2008, the buildings are leased to several small businesses, mainly light engineering, and comprise Broadmead Industrial Estate. The present owners are Mead Hurst Developments Ltd. The former Polysulphin Head Office was on the other side of the Avon, in premises now owned by Fred Matthew's Builders' Merchants.

Karl Friederich (Fritz) Ludwig Bartelt, born 1852 in Klien Leithen, Germany, came to the north of England in 1870's and joined a friend who was a chemical professor. He formed the Polysulphin Company to supply washing powder to laundries. The business flourished and, about 1883, they moved south. Their first factory building was at St. Anne's, Brislington (then called New Brislington) but then they took over a former Victorian corn mill (built 1881) at Keynsham which was near the river so that sacks of their powder could be transported by barge. Originally, the building is believed to have been constructed for the Avondale Iron Company Ltd. The Polysulphin produced the first ever washing-up powder, P20, to commercial undertakings at a time when most people were still using soda. In 1878, Fritz had married Rosanna Mary Hodgson of Sunderland and they had two children, Amy Isobel Lavinia, born 1879 in Durham County and Friederich Wilhelm (also Fritz) born 1887 at Corston. The family had moved to Corston Lodge (now St Theresa's Nursing Home).

Fritz junior married Gertrude Helen Isgar in 1910 and they had two sons, Richard and Peter. Sadly, Captain Fritz died in India in 1916, during the First World War, when Peter was just two years old. Every year, on September 23rd, the bells of Corston Church are rung to mark the birthday of Captain Fritz Bartelt, to fulfil the condition under which they were donated by his parents. Peter Bartelt, then aged 78 years, was a bellringer at Corston Church in October 1992 when Bunty Dunford wrote a news article about the family.

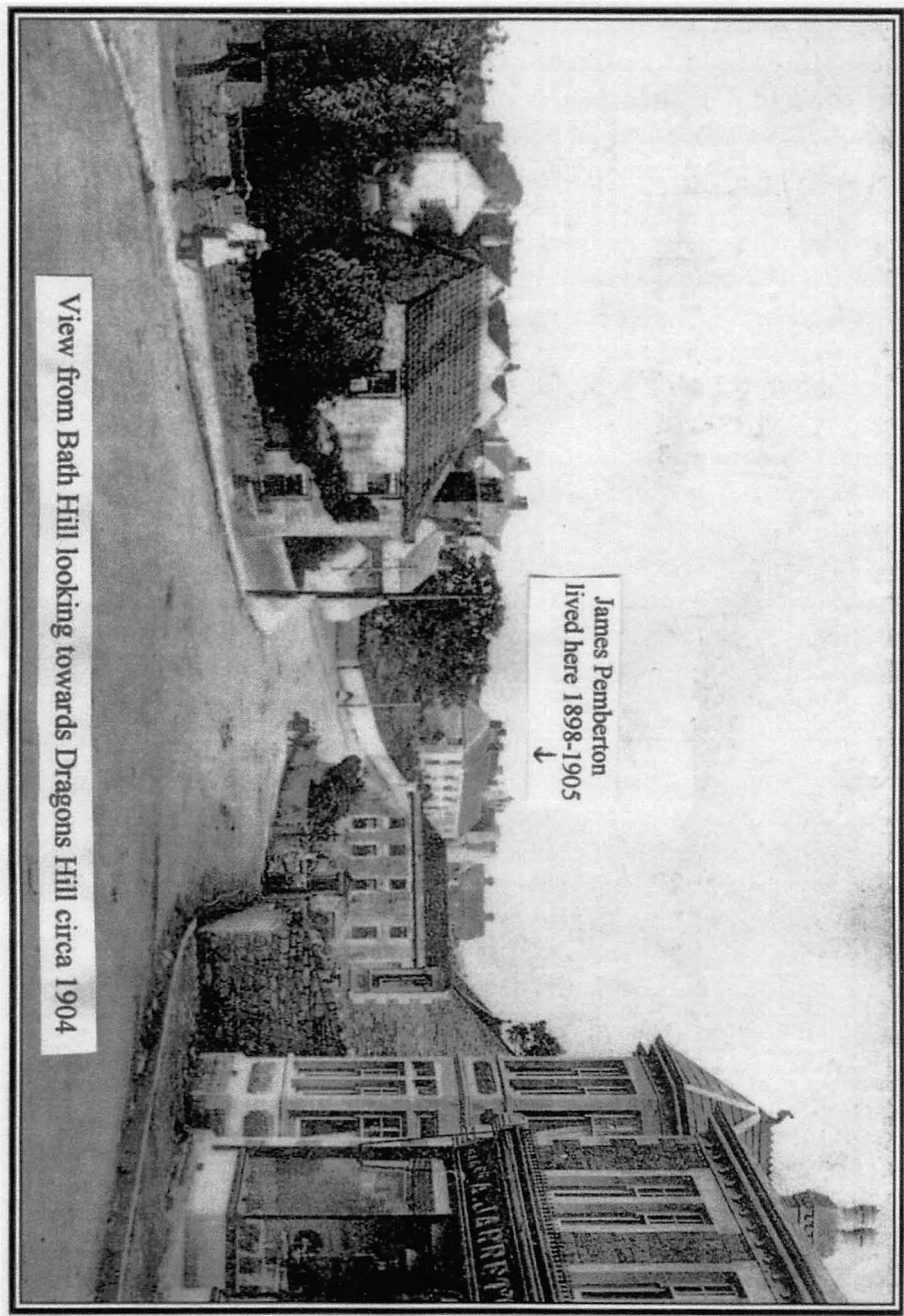
Amy Isobel Lavinia Bartelt married a German Lawyer, Adolf Ivo Peters, in 1902. the marriage was a very magnificent occasion, reported at length in "The Bath and County Graphic". The couple had six children, only the last being a son, Ivo Oscar Frederick. He was to become the last managing director of the Polysulphin Company which was bought out by Cussons in 1966. They acquired the share capital, closed the business and transferred some of the plant and the customer base to Gerard Bros of Nottingham, their then manufacturers. Ivo Oscar Frederick, or "Chips" as he was nick-named, was an officer in the Royal Observer Corps and won fame as a railway photographer. He died in June 1989.

James Pemberton, Factory Manager.

When, in 1988, my wife and I moved to Keynsham, we were aware that my great grandfather, James Pemberton, had moved south from Liverpool, remarried after the death of my great grandmother, Emma (Lowe), and lived in Keynsham. It was not until 2006 however, that I had a strong impulse to try to find out more about him. We knew not where he lived, worked or died. I began to research our family tree.

From census returns we traced his earlier life in the north of England, his first marriage and his first family, including my grandfather. Also we traced two generations further back. Later census reports gave James' occupation as a "soap boiler" and he is likely to have been employed by Lever Brothers on the Wirral. By 1891, his first family had all grown up and James had married again to Elizabeth and they had two sons, Alexander George and Joseph. Approximately 1896-7 they moved south, apparently first to Wembdon near Bridgwater, where there were "failed" soap works, possibly the Bristol Soap Company at Hawkhurst, or the Southgate Company. We think he moved to Keynsham in 1898 and worked at the Polysulphm until his death in 1905.

On the 1901 census, I found the family of four living in Dragons Hill (Bath Hill East), two houses up from the Fox and Hounds Inn and two houses down from the Victorian Police Station (Figs 6,7). I had been walking past his 17th century cottage for years without realising it. I was able to examine the admission and log books of Keynsham Parochial



James Pemberton
lived here 1898-1905
↓

View from Bath Hill looking towards Dragons Hill circa 1904

school when its 150th anniversary was celebrated in July 2007. Both of James' sons were registered and the eldest boy, Alexander George, first attended the Keynsham school on 19th September 1898 having previously attended Wembdon Primary School in Bridgwater.

James' occupation was listed a foreman/soap boiler but he must have been promoted later because on his death certificate he is described as Factory Manager. I visited the library to discover exactly where the Polysulphin was situated and I found James' grave in the Keynsham Cemetery - sadly, unmarked. I made him wooden cross with his name and RIP inscribed on a brass plaque. We wondered why the grave was unmarked and were soon to find out.

There were two James Pembertons registered for death in Keynsham, one in 1902 and the other in 1905, so we obtained the death certificate of the 1905 one as we thought that most likely - we were proved correct. We had a big shock when we read it, for James committed suicide whilst at work on Monday afternoon, January 2nd. He hanged himself in one of the lofts. In those days the Church frowned on suicides and that is why he is buried at the edge of the Cemetery in an unmarked grave. Endeavouring to discover why he did this I applied to North Somerset Records Office for a copy of the Coroner's report for the Inquest which, we later discovered, was held at the Talbot Inn. Unfortunately, all records prior to 1921 have been destroyed. However, I did find several newspaper articles in the Central Reference Library, giving accounts of it. There were two articles in the Bristol Daily Mercury on 4th and 6th January. In essence, James was depressed after a severe bout of influenza and was acting abnormally. We shall probably never know the facts. Until this discovery, no-one in the family knew anything about it.

James lived in a completely different Keynsham to the one we know. It was a small market town with many 16th, 17th and 18th century houses and cottages, notably in Temple and High Streets. The Victorians had built villas near the station, semi-detached properties in Charlton Road (Dans Lane), West View Road, and terraced houses in Albert Road etc. There were no council houses, no Old Age Pension, no sickness benefit. Doctors had to be paid by the patient, and insurance against illness was rare. Friendly Societies could help but generally, a family suffered if the bread-winner became sick. The elderly dreaded outliving the savings

they managed to put by. If the old folk had no savings or family to help them, there were a few almshouses built by private charity, otherwise they had to apply to the dreaded workhouse. James was 58 years old with a younger wife and sons (aged 11 and 9) to support. There would have been fumes from the chemicals he used for soap making which would have made his influenza more serious.

Looking at the 1904 Ordnance survey map, there was no easy way for James to get to work. He would probably have walked, or maybe, cycled, although his possible routes were not really suitable for cycles. He would use the shortest route possible. This would have been to pop out of his back door on to the then Avon Mill Lane (different from the present one), then turn first right to follow tracks or paths skirting the Broadmead strips to the factory. However, this route may not have been possible unless James rented a strip from one of the owners. (Broadmead Lane then extended only to the railway bridge. It has since been lengthened). His other, more likely, route would again be to come out of his back door, turn left and continue along Avon Mill Lane, past



Figure 7. Closer view of James Pemberton's cottage

the Brass Mill, turn right over the ancient County Bridge (completely destroyed after the 1968 flood damage), over the bridge with the White Hart on its left, and then turn right, past Polysulphin's head office (now Matthews). The tow path is on the north side of the Avon, so he could have used that, but at some point he would need to cross the river. Possibly the company provided chain operated ferry boats/barges for its workers. Horses towed the cargo barges using tow paths which alternated on opposite sides of the river and, at the points where the change-over occurred, horse and passenger ferries operated. However the nearest change-over points were at Hanham and Saltford. (See photograph page 22 of "Keynsham & Saltford in Times Past, 1535-1945", ed. E. White, published by K&SLHS 1990).

We were concerned what may have happened to Elizabeth and the two boys who, according to the school records, left Keynsham after 9th June 1905. Both boys were old enough to have served in WW1 and may not have survived. We could find neither natural deaths for them on the website nor were they listed on the war graves commission as killed in action. We placed a request on Ancestry website for information about Alexander George Pemberton (we knew there was only one such name on the data base). The next day we received a message from a lady called Esme saying she thought he was her father and that he had a brother called Joseph. We discovered that Alexander was involved with WW1 and escaped with his life in the Battle of Ypress. Had he not been in the 5th line he would certainly have been mown down like the first 4 lines ordered to go over the top; the cease fire order came and the battle was abandoned. He was in several other battles but survived the war and died in 1972. Joseph was not in the war and became a senior manager in a large Liverpool shipping company. He was married but had no children. He died c. 1960. Elizabeth died in 1931 and is buried in Anfield cemetery with her sister Mary.

Esme's father, Alexander, had told her quite a lot about James, including that, as a young boy, he learned to be a Hawker of liquid soap on the Wirral, on a handcart, perhaps at Port Sunlight. Census returns, however, show that he was a foreman in a copper business in Windle, near St. Helen's, for a while and that book keeping was his first profession.

Esme sent us a photograph of James, Elizabeth and the two boys, taken before they moved from Liverpool (Fig 8). We shall treasure it.

Edwin Rigg.

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Newspaper article by Bunty Dunford (16-104992).

Keynsham & Saltford Local History Society Archives.



Figure 8. James Pemberton, wife Elizabeth with children Alexander and Joseph c. 1897

THE EXONS and KEYNSHAM.

Many of you will recall Exon as being one of the more unusual names associated with "old Keynsham" and most would associate it with the Dairy that existed for many years at 4, High Street, opposite the Parish Church, before it was sold to United Dairies upon the death of its proprietor Herbert G. Exon in 1961 (Figs 9,10).



Figure 9. West End dairy with Exon's delivery van outside

However, he was just one of a large family bearing that name in the town throughout the last 150 years; but that was not always so as I found out when I investigated their history.

Herbert's grandparents, James Exon and Elizabeth Baker, had actually been born in Banwell, the offspring of prospering yeomen in the first half of the nineteenth century but in 1847, following the failure of the harvest that year (and the appearance of a bulge in Elizabeth's midriff), James and Elizabeth disappeared from Banwell and eloped to Bristol in search of work and, one suspects that as there is no record of

their marriage, anonymity. In the 1851 census they were found to be living on the Bath and Wells Road in Bristol with their four-year-old daughter, Mary, but later that year they took the road west to the small town of Keynsham. There, at the Font of St. John the Baptist Church, they Baptised the second of their ten children with the splendid name of Amanda Melvina Martha on 1st June 1851.

What offer of work tempted James to move is not clear but move he did into one of its less salubrious dwellings. In the 18th century the town was referred to as "Smokey Cainsham" and, in 1788, another writer described it as a "poor shabby place, consisting of one long street of miserable houses". By the time of James Exon's arrival, it still retained its original medieval linear street plan with narrow strips of land extending back behind the dwellings fronting the main street, High Street (which then included Temple Street). Whilst most of the High Street consisted of larger houses, the rest of the buildings in the town, dating largely from the 17th century, were miserable "two up and two down" damp, stone built cottages. Sanitation was taken care of by the "privvy" in the garden and water had to be fetched from one of the many wells in the town, the purity of which was often suspect. However, Keynsham did have gas lighting in 1857, the electric telegraph in 1865 and became one of the first places to benefit from electric lighting in 1889, courtesy of Keynsham Electric Light and Power Company.

Economically, the town was in poor straits. Most of the population eked out a living as agricultural labourers but farm labouring was one of the poorest paid jobs in the country, especially since the introduction of the threshing machine which did away with the winter work relied upon to tide the workers over the barren months. Payment was related to the value of the harvest brought in rather than to the efforts made to bring it in. True there were some very good harvest years during the 19th' century, 1874, 1885 and 1894 being amongst them, but there were also some terrible ones that spelt hunger and poverty for the agricultural worker. For example, 1879 was disastrous, as heavy rainfall in the Spring continued through until the end of September. That, allied to exceptionally low temperatures, meant that it was not possible to produce a decent hay crop. No barley was harvested and wheat turned black and shriveled up. On 4th December the temperature reached -23 degrees F below zero and was recorded as one of the coldest days of the

century. As if that were not enough, increased shipments of cheese and butter from Australia started to arrive, closely followed by large imports of wheat from America and Canada, all of which reduced the price of home produced foodstuffs. In 1886, conditions repeated themselves as the torrential rainfall that fell throughout April, May, June and early July meant that there was no barley, potatoes rotted in the ground and corn yield was negligible. Even more imports of wheat, barley, oats, beef, mutton, cheese and butter poured into the country - which was good news for the workers in the cities but spelt disaster for farmers and their workers. Hundreds of tenant farmers went out of business and many farms lay derelict. Whereas in 1877 wheat sold for £3 a quarter (of a hundredweight), by the year of Queen Victoria's Jubilee in 1887, it went for 32s 6d and, by 1893, just 26s a quarter. In addition, the style of farming employed in Keynsham was woefully out of date having been neglected by a generation of absentee landowners and as a result of this and the depression in the industry in general, there was a great deal of grinding poverty with an unusually high number of paupers seeking charity in the local workhouse. In fact, until the first payments of the Old Age pension were made in 1909, a third of all old people died in workhouses.

Some alternative employment was provided by the brass mills which were situated at the confluence of the rivers Chew and Avon, and by the Great Western Railway, which had been driven through the town in 1836-40, to connect the cities of Bristol and London. The railway station, one of the first to be built on the new line in 1840 also made it possible for a number of more affluent people to move to Keynsham and commute to their places of work. This, in turn, provided employment as domestic servants for some local girls. In 1858, when the Chandos estates at Keynsham were being sold off, the newly founded Western daily Press quoted that *"to those engaged in mercantile pursuits at Bristol what more could be desired than, by a journey of some fifteen minutes, per rail, at the expense of half a cab fare, to exchange the city, its business, and its cares, for the pure air and fine scenery of that charming locality, where the wearied merchant could not fail to restore his energies for the next day's battle of life?"* It also brought traders from Bristol who would

set out their stalls lit by naphtha flares each Saturday night and cajole the curious or gullible to buy their oranges, brightly coloured ribbons or confectionary.

Mary and Martha were soon joined by Lydia in 1852, John James 1853, Albert 1855. Thomas 1857, Nelson 1860, Harriet 1862 and Charles 1863 (who died in 1865) and another Charles in 1866. Still following his occupation of farm labourer, James quickly gained enough status within the community to be included 1854 amongst those deemed fit and proper to fill the office of unpaid Parish Constable,

Apart from those milestones in bringing up their family - Baptisms, weddings etc., little evidence remains of their daily existence but life seems to have progressed without great drama or crisis until the death of Elizabeth at the comparatively young age of 55, on 30th September 1878. She was buried a week later on 5th October. James himself carried on as a farm labourer until his death on 11th September 1894 when he was buried alongside Elizabeth in Keynsham Cemetery, and a white marble obelisk was raised over their final resting place, which seemed far grander than their lowly status would merit.

James and Elizabeth's family provide an insight into life in Keynsham at that time.

Mary, their first-born child, and the possible cause of their exodus from Banwell, was not to be amongst them as, sadly, she died ten years after the move to Keynsham, in 1861, aged 14 years. However, their eldest living daughter, Martha Exon, first attended the newly opened National School for the poor, run by the parish of St. John's on Bath Hill. The school was built in 1857 as a mixed establishment for 113 children. It consisted of three classrooms with a house provided for the master but later the school was enlarged to accommodate 353 children. She may still have been there on 24th March 1863 when the School Log records that "*the whole school went primrosing*". (What would the Ofsted Inspectors think of that as part of Key stage 3 today?)

By 1871, Martha had secured employment as a live-in domestic servant for Daniel Skuse who was then landlord of the Lamb

Lamb and Lark Hotel. It must have been during this time that she also started an unusual job for a woman, that of Sextoness, for which the Parish Overseers paid her the annual salary of £16-8s-Od. This was to be the start of a new career that she continued with her husband, George Williams, and was still employed as such in 1891. Although they were not to have children of their own, they seem to have brought up her brother John James' son, George. After her husband's death in 1922, Martha lived to reach the age of 84 years before she died, poverty stricken, at St. Clement's House (which was what the old Keynsham Union Workhouse had been more politely renamed in 1930) and was buried in Keynsham Cemetery on 2nd October 1935.

James' and Elizabeth's next child, Lydia, presumably died in infancy, but her brother, my great grandfather, John James Exon was destined to become an octogenarian. He was their first son and, following the Victorian tradition of handing down the same Christian name from eldest son to eldest son, he was named John from the Baker family and James from the Exon one. Like his sister, John James attended Bath Hill School before setting out to work, like most of his peers, as an agricultural labourer. To gain a little extra beer money and an escape from his humdrum existence, he enrolled in the 2nd Battalion of the Somerset Militia. He is described on his attestation papers as 17 years old, 5ft 4in tall with a fresh complexion, grey eyes, brown hair and illiterate (his short time in school had obviously been wasted!). Service in the Militia required attendance at weekly drills and at an annual 27 day training camp in order to qualify for the money. He continued his involvement with the Militia until his time expired and was awarded the Long Service Medal of the 1st Battalion of Somerset Light Infantry, as the unit had been renamed.

When he reached the age of 21 years, he married Emma Williams, sister of his sister Martha's husband, George, on 15th June 1873. They raised their family in Woodbine Cottages (which were not the fragrant idyllic havens their name conjures up, but purpose-built slums built down the slope between the New Inn and the River Chew). During this period, John James status rose from

labourer to mason and even today vestiges of his work remain, such as the wall around Keynsham Churchyard and that around the estate at Hick's Gate. In his later years, he worked in the stone quarries at Queen Charlton, setting off to walk there by way of the old priest's path at 5 am. He concerned himself with Church affairs, by both acting as a bellringer and voting on various resolutions put forward by the parish council (although this does not fit in with his reputation for being a bare-fist boxer, going twenty rounds in bouts in the Lamb and Lark yard and once felling an over zealous P.C. Vaughan who objected to the contest!). Like most townfolk at that time, he was an active gardener who kept his family supplied with vegetables that they could not otherwise afford and often won prizes at the local Flower Show. His granddaughter, Violet, remembered that in his old age he could be found in the evenings sitting by a roaring fire, contentedly puffing on a huge pipe. He died at the age of 87 and was buried in Keynsham Cemetery on 16th March 1940.

The couple had seven children. The first of these to be born was Baptised Rose Amelia on 29th March 1874 at Keynsham Church. On 12th June 1876, at just two years old, she was enrolled at the Keynsham Infants School, presumably to get her out from under the feet of her mother who was expecting her second child a couple of months later. Rose married Charlie Rayson, son of Levi and Thirza Rayson, on 2nd June 1894. Charlie followed in his father's footsteps working as a carter for Carpenters, a firm that had their stables in a lane leading off Temple Street. At first, Rose and Charles lived in Chew Cottages but by 1901 they had moved up to Temple Street. By then, Charles had changed his job and was employed in the colour mills on Bath Hill. However the family was always poor as Charlie was rather too fond of beer and his wages did not go very far. Finally they grew too old to work and the couple were given a place in the Milward Almshouses in Charlton Road which had been founded in 1885 in memory of Alfred Milward to house four aged, married couples. It was there that he died aged 79 and buried in Keynsham Cemetery on 16th June 1948. Rose survived him by three years dying on 23rd August 1951, aged 77. I remember Great Aunt Rose as a darting little sparrow of a woman with a face like a wrinkled Cox's Orange pippin who always used jam in her tea instead of sugar. Her husband, Charlie, I only knew as an unshaven invalid who spent his days covered by a fraying patchwork quilt on a well worn, black leather

horsehair chaise longue. A visit to Aunt Rose always meant a ride on her big rocking chair and to come home bearing a sprig of her monkey puzzle tree.

Next came their first son, George who was born in 1876. He worked on the railway in later life and moved to Wales. He returned now and again and I found him the most exotic of the relations as he talked very quickly in a strong Welsh accent pausing only to cough through the blue clouds of smoke which billowed from his huge, curved pipe. The ritual of filling, which took forever, involved the shredding of ropes of black tarry shag tobacco that he kept moist in his pouch with strips of orange peel. His hair was parted down the middle and the scar that separated his cheek from his nostril marked his huge, lumpy nose. The tale he never tired of recounting was that it had been cut off by a blow from a pickaxe whilst working on the railway but due to his promptness in retrieving the lost part and jamming it back in place, it had regrown as good as new. Whenever the pilgrimage to his birthplace occurred, my sister would give up her bed in the room we both shared and I would lie awake awaiting his return from beery reunions with his old mates and the inevitable snores that would follow. However, he never left without adding to my money-box and I was always thrilled by his wealth of tall stories.

The next daughter to be born to John James and Emma Exon was Kate who was Baptised on 29th September 1878. She appeared to be destined to remain a Spinster but on 21st September 1912, at the age of 34, she finally married the brother of her sister's husband Charles, Albert Rayson. Albert was a year older than her but he had already travelled far beyond the backyards of Keynsham. In 1895 he had joined up at Taunton for seven years in "D" Company of the Somerset Light Infantry (Prince Albert's Own) and had seen service on the Northwest Frontier of India. When WW1 broke out, he was 38 years old but he volunteered for the Army Service Corps and was sent to German East Africa to drive lorries. Inevitably, within a few months he had contracted malaria so badly that he had to be Repatriated and he was to suffer the effects for the rest of his life. Incidentally, Albert and Charlie's brother, Frank, was swallowed up in the mud of the Passchendael campaign on 9th October 1917. His name appears on the Tyne Cot Memorial to the missing, and their nephew, another Albert, was to die at

Basra in Iraq in the same year.

Kate was to survive another 30 years after his death as a widow and, as such, she qualified for one of the Bridges' s Almshouses on Bristol Road. Each Monday it was my job to carry a bowl of steaming stew the length of the town for her lunch (often spilling it on the way). In return she would force me to get through a slice of dry caraway seed cake which was accompanied by a cup of tea sweetened with condensed milk and reminiscences about the soldier boys marching off to the Boer war singing '*Goodbye Dolly Gray*'

After Kate, came Elizabeth. She was enrolled in the Bath Hill School on 4th March 1889 and left for work in service on 1st November 1895. Later she married Albert Portnall, the son of William and Elizabeth Portnall of 33, Brook Road, Bath but, tragically, their only child was stillborn on 10th June 1915 and Albert, who had joined the army as a Bombardier in 15th' Bn. Ammunition Col, Royal Artillery, was killed a year later, on Sunday 17th July 1916 at Vermelles, north of Lens. He was only 32. She remarried to Walter Mounty, a guard on the Great Western Railway and they moved into a cottage, 41, Bristol Road (demolished in 1960's). By then she was too old to have any more children so she spent her time working at the Saltford Paint Works which she reached on her trusty bicycle. Her nephew, Albert, remembers her as a devout follower of the Keynsham Town football team and often her fervour would lead her into great tirades at the referee and even physical assaults with her handbag!

Martha, who was to become my grandmother, was born 17th September 1884 and Baptised four months later on 4th January 1885 at Keynsham Church. Grandma herself was born handicapped with a cleft palate and was profoundly deaf. She was enrolled in Bath Hill School 16th February 1891 but left, due to ill health, 1st September 1896. It may have been then that she was admitted to hospital for the operation to close her cleft palate that left her with a lifelong fear of hospitals. She rejoined school on 15th November 1897 and when she left school it was to go into service like her sister Lilian. She earned a few pennies by laundering batches of roller towels from Robinson' s Paper Mills and so the house seemed to be constantly festooned with drying linen. The washing was done by ladling rainwater from a huge butt in the backyard into a cauldron which was set next to it above a brick fireplace.

A fire would be made under it with the smoke being led up a chimney built into the wall and the brew would be stirred with a bleached stick. She would often entertain me with tales of the "old days" when I was left in her care. For example, she would tell of the times as a child when she covered boards with clay and pressed in flowers to make a display for "May Day" and hawked them around with the demand "a penny to see the poppy show". She could remember the old stage coaches rolling into the yard of the "Lamb and Lark Hotel" and cows, sheep and various other animals being herded into wicker hurdled pens the length of Temple Street for the weekly market. On market days, the pubs stayed open all day for deals to be struck and this would often lead to drunken fights between drovers and herdsmen by nightfall.

Martha's brother Jack, I discovered to my surprise had actually been Baptised in 1887, Valentine John (probably to his later embarrassment), due to the fact that he had been born on that Saint's Day, 14th February. Throughout WW1 Jack worked at the Brass Mills, turning out sorely needed shell cases for the artillery at the Front, whilst also serving as a Special Constable. In the early 1920's Jack took up playing the double B tuba, which was one of the larger wind instruments, and became a founder member of the Keynsham Town Silver Band. Practice took place twice a week in the smoke room of the Lamb and Lark Hotel in winter and on the big lawn at the back of the Hotel in the summer. The Band was involved in every public event that took place in those days. They would play sombre martial airs for the annual Remembrance Day parade and jollier tunes for the Carnival. On Christmas morning at 6.0am they would run through their repertoire of carols beside the weighbridge in front of the Lamb & Lark Hotel (much to the chagrin of those trying to have a lie-in on one of the few public holidays of the year). From the collections taken at their performances, the band gave a Christmas tea every year for the children of the parish in the WI Hall that stood at the bottom of Bath Hill. In 1936, it had the honour of playing on the old football field at the top of Charlton Road for the Coronation of George VI and also that year they played a fanfare and the National Anthem at the grand opening of the Charlton Cinema. By then, Jack's occupation was as a foreman and fitter at the Downe Mill or Colour Mill where a huge water wheel drove a series of cogs and grinders to reduce rocks to fine red powder but when the water level was too low a steam

engine would be fired up to provide the power. After grinding, the powder was washed into vats and subsequently pumped into a kiln for drying. It was then removed to a smaller roller which crushed any remaining lumps. The finished article was then put into barrels lined with thick brown paper, sealed and, when a load was complete, it was taken to the G.W.R. goods station on Avon Road for dispatch. Some went to Colthurst & Harding, paint manufacturers in Bristol and more was sent up to Scotland to be used in the manufacture of linoleum. In its heyday, up to twenty men worked there (including Charlie Rayson) but conditions were primitive. No protective clothing was provided or masks to keep out the fine red dust. Bath time was after work using river water heated in oil drums and, in winter, operations were conducted by oil lamp. Apart from a late flurry when it was required for camouflage, the mill's output dwindled as demand for its products were met elsewhere until it ceased production altogether during WW2. Later, Jack became caretaker of the disused mill. From time to time, when he needed to check the place, I would accompany him and explore the ruins whilst he was pre-occupied with shooting the hordes of rabbits that threatened to overrun the grounds of the old factory. I would wander through the labyrinth of blood red tunnels and chutes and watch the migrating fish vainly leaping up the weir in their attempt to spawn. The white plumes of the dank, mal-odoured water hissing through the gaps in the rotting sluice gates and swirling into eddies over boulders on the river bed, sent shivers up my spine at the prospect of my own fate should I skid off the slippery green weed-encrusted weir that I used to cross from bank to bank. The mill was finally demolished in 1948 when the council bought the ancient abbey site to create the memorial park. Although the 17 buildings and the old steam engine were cleared away, the wooden water wheel alone survived and was reconditioned by Jack to be erected as a focal point. This wheel was later replaced by one from the Chew Valley. After his retirement, Jack devoted his time to various activities. He had been a member of the Bethesda Methodist Church in Temple Street for more than 65 years and he sang as a tenor in the Keynsham Male Voice Choir. He also became President of the Keynsham Town Football Club, having been a loyal supporter for more than 30 years and one of the main organisers who had kept it going during the difficult war years.

The youngest of John James' children to be born was given his name, James (but always known as Jim of course). This took place on 18th April 1889 and he also attended the parochial school from 10th February 1896 until 2nd May 1902 when he left to work as an errand boy, an important occupation before the introduction of the telephone. When he reached manhood he took a job at Robinson's Jam factory at Brislington where he worked for the rest of his life.

The 2nd son, born to James and Elizabeth in 1856, was named Albert after the Prince Consort. By 1870, he was working at the Albert Mill with other grubby-faced 14 year-olds. He stayed there for 8 years before setting off for Bristol to be a soldier of the Queen. He was duly enrolled in the 18th Hussars, a glamorous cavalry regiment, signing on for seven years army service and four years in reserve. He was 5ft 6.1/2in tall, 9 stone 12lbs, sallow complexion, brown eyes, dark hair of good physique with no smallpox scars. He was sent to India to take part in the Afghan War of 1879/80. No sooner was that over when the Hussars were sent to the Transvaal to take part in the first Boer War. Albert survived several "scrapes" and eventually returned to Keynsham in May 1886 and to his old job as a smelter at the Brass Mills. In 1887, he married Emma Wesley and they had a son Gilbert, born 1892, then three more children, two still-born and one who died soon after birth in 1903. Emma herself died two weeks later. Albert lived another four years and was buried with Emma in Keynsham Cemetery.

James' and Elizabeth's fifth child, Thomas, was born in 1857. By the age of 14 years he was working as a labourer but moved on to become a platelayer on the railway. On 15th November 1885, he married a mason's daughter, Julia Lord, from Farmborough and had four children, Herbert 1888, Mabel 1889, Reginald 1891 (died 1892), and Eveline 1894. By 1891, when he was 33 years old, he began work as a wire pickler at the same brass mills as his brother, Albert and he was still working there in 1894. However, Thomas was ambitious and by 1897 had amassed sufficient capital to set himself up as a confectioner with a shop at 7, Bath Hill West. Later, he became a dairyman with a shop opposite the Church at 4, High Street which was subsequently renamed 'The West End Dairy' when it was taken over by his son, Herbert, in 1923. His drays, drawn by white ponies were familiar sights around Saltford, Bitton. Bath, Keynsham and the surrounding area,

As he ladled pints and quarts of fresh milk from churns into jugs and other containers which were left trustingly on customer's doorsteps. He was fondly remembered for giving young children rides to school on his cart. Thomas continued working on the milk round and running his confectionary business until his death, aged 72, in January 1930 when his daughter, Evelyn, took over the sweet shop.

Thomas' s son, Herbert, saw service in WW1 with the Royal Garrison Artillery and returned to carry on the milk business at the West End Dairy right up to the 1960' s when it was sold to United Dairies shortly after his death in 1961. He was a sidesman of Keynsham Parish Church, a member of the Conservative Club and the Over 60' s Club. A founder member of the J. N. Fear Institute, he was, in turn, a committee member, chairman, and, at the time of his death, President of the organization.

I well remember my great uncle Herbert and found him rather intimidating. He bore his status with all the gravity of the self made man. He had climbed Keynsham' s social ladder by inheriting his father' s dairy business which supplied most of the town' s population with its fresh milk and which put the name "Exon" on everyone' s doorstep if not actually on their lips. He took an active role in Civic events and acted as a churchwarden, but to me he always appeared to be stern, gruff and distant figure during the short time I worked for him as a bottle washer in my school holidays. His only son, Reggie, went to Bristol Grammar School but later joined the R.A.F. Volunteer Reserve. When war broke out he was, of course, directed into the R.A.F. A friend of his, Monty Veale, remembered meeting up with Reggie on one of his leaves in June 1944 and they started out from the Talbot to do a round of the locals where they spent an *"unusually hectic evening"*. As he said - *"there was an intensity about it which is hard to explain but they were living for the day!"* That was the last drink the friends had together as flight Sergeant Reginald Herbert Exon was killed a few days later, on 30th June 1944. the 22year-old was serving as an air gunner with No. 180 Squadron and the squadron' s role was to perform tactical bombing missions in preparation for and after the D-Day invasion, with night intruder raids over Normandy. On that night F/Sgt Exon was detailed to take part in an attack on Thury Harcourt, in a B.-25 (Mitchell Bomber Mark II). The aircraft took off from its base at approximately 01.52 hours but crashed a few minutes later at Chiddingington in Sussex with the loss of all on board.

His death must have come as a terrible shock to Herbert and his wife Mary and what was left of Reggie's body was returned to his grieving parents who buried him in Keynsham Cemetery on 5th July. There would be no male heir to take over the business. In the following month, on 26th August, a Wellington Bomber crashed between Chewton Keynsham and Burnett and Herbert, ironically, was the one to discover the body of another dying airman, whose parachute had not opened, impaled on bean poles on the allotments at the rear of the High Street.

The next son to be born to James and Elizabeth was patriotically named Nelson (1860). By the age of twelve he was also working as a labourer but went on to become a carter for a short while. On Christmas day, 1890, he was married to Julia, the daughter of another labourer, Thomas Cox, and set up home in the Chew Cottages next to the river at the bottom of Dapps Hill (previously, these had been used to house the paupers of the village before the workhouse was built in 1836). In the following year, his first child, Beatrice, was born, to be followed by Harold 1894, Ethel 1895, and Victor 1897. by now Nelson had become a packer for the Great Western Railway for whom he continued to work until his death in 1925, aged 65, thus outliving his wife, Julia, by five years. During their later years the couple lived at 47, Temple Street. Harriet was the next child to be registered in 1860 but little information seems to be available about her. She was followed by Charles Henry in 1863 who died nine months later, so, when the last son was born to James and Elizabeth in 1866, he too was given the same names. After Charles Henry left school he worked as a labourer and, in 1889, married a blacksmith's daughter,

H. EXON
WEST END DAIRY
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3143**

Advertisement for the dairy

Lizzie Trebble, whose family had also moved out to Keynsham from Bedminster, Bristol. For a time they lived in Bath where he worked as a packer on the railway but by 1901, attracted by the plentiful supply of building work generated by the rapid expansion of the Victorian suburbs of London, Charles and Lizzie Exon had taken their family to rented accommodation at 24, Mayville Road, Leytonstone where he got work as navy's labourer and his children grew up as Londoners.

In spite of being such a familiar part of the life of the town for so many years, for various reasons there are very few Exons left in Keynsham and none at all in Banwell and that rare name is even rarer now.

Brian Vowles.

References.

"The Memories of a West Country Yeoman" by S.G. Kendall.

Military Records from the National archives at Kew.

COMMUTING. 1930's FASHION

A friend of mine thinks nothing of commuting 100 miles to Birmingham daily by car. A visit to Temple Meads early in the morning will find a train full of commuters to London.

How different it was 70 years ago. Most of the working men in my home village of Upton Cheyney in 1930's worked within four miles of home and either cycled or walked to work. For those employed in Bristol, commuting involved a cycle ride or walk to Bitton Station, a train (LMS) to Mangotsfield and a change of train to Temple Meads, and the reverse at night.

In 1935 my brother learnt to drive a Morris Cowley, the property of the Squire's wife who was not a skilful driver and managed to burn out the clutch. A venture down the hill from Upton Cheyney to Bitton or beyond was fraught with the difficulty of getting back up the hill again. He solved the problem by reversing up the twisty hill, the friction brakes operating fairly efficiently in that gear. The Morris, therefore, was a dubious starter for commuting, so when I joined him on the daily run to Bristol in January 1936, we bought an Austin 7 for £100 AHY 309. Our travel problems seemed over. Of course, they weren't.

There was the weather to contend with. There was no anti-freeze, so the radiator had to be drained every night and refilled with luke-warm water in the mornings. In less severe weather a paraffin lamp hung under the radiator sufficed. In severe cold the radiator needed a muffler to prevent freezing during travel. AHY 309 had a piece of cardboard jammed across its grill. After cranking the engine to life and letting it warm up, choke out, it was time to start the 10 mile journey to Temple Gate.

An early start was essential. If we left Upton at 8am we had a clear run through Bitton and Keynsham and along the A4. If we left at 8-05am we trailed along the Willsbridge . Keynsham road behind Farmer Clapp's cows, who, after milking made a leisurely progress, undriven, unattended to their allotted field, spattering the tarmac with "detrimental to coachwork" deposits. Apart from cows, horses posed commuting problems casting shoes and nails which led to punctures. There was a lot of horse-drawn traffic around Temple Meads.

On Tuesday 21st December 1937 we traded in AHY 309 in favour of

an Austin Big 7 CDF 845, list price £149-10s. The Big 7, still named a Ruby Saloon was a glorified Austin 7, with sliding roof, hinged windscreen for ventilation, trafficators, to save winding down windows to give hand signals, a self-starter if the battery was charged and a drop-down luggage carrier. Our first purchase was 4 gallons of Ethyl 6s-4d. Speeds were restricted through the gears and 30 mph was the maximum for top gear. On our first trip the dash lamp bulb burnt out. When replaced they kept burning out and ten days after purchase the whole electrical system failed. Loose solder in the fuse box was blamed and we had to resort to AHY 309 again, still sitting on Anstey' s Garage forecourt in Bitton.

At 500 miles CDF 845 needed an oil change, 5 pints Castrol 4s 3d. At 900 the gearbox and back axle oil was changed, 13/4 pints XL, 1 pint HP, 2s lid. Greasing the ten nipples was a weekly necessity.

Adcoids were a recommended additive to petrol at that time, a tablet for every two gallons. I remember ordering 4 gallons and 2 Adcoids at a Bristol petrol station, "Adcoids!", the attendant said as he wound the pump handle, "Wha' s want they for? I wouldn' t put them in my wheelbarrow!"

At mileage 2350 the car was decarbonised (£1-10s), the first of many decokes in its lifetime. The car was in daily use in the pre-war years. There were hazards on our journeys, floods, icy roads, fogs. There were no white lines, no cat' s eyes and headlights reflected off the fog dazzled the driver. Along the Keynsham to Bitton road where the fogs were often worst, I would walk by the grass verges where my brother could see me through the open windscreen and side windows and we would creep along in bottom gear, often leading a procession of other cars and lorries. A big hazard in Bristol were the tram lines in which wheels could become trapped and the trams themselves were a menace as they swung and lurched out of Brislington Tram depot. Trams had priority over other road users. We often saw Brooke Bond Trojan vans, whose wheel gauge seemed to be the same as the tram wheel gauge, getting their solid tyres trapped in the lines. Trojans were chain driven to the back axles and with no differential, they had the habit of jumping sideways and skidding on the cobbles as their drivers steered out of the tram-lines. We were careful following Trojan vans and swaying trams.

On the outbreak of war restrictions on lighting were introduced,

sidelights had a circular hole about ¼ inch diameter; headlights were fitted with metal hoods and the glass was blacked out to allow a 1 inch strip of light to pierce the gloom.

Petrol rationing was introduced early in the war, with industrial petrol dyed red so it could not be used in private cars. Private cars could get 4 gallons a month on special coupons if licensed. We kept the car licensed for use on our wartime leaves from the forces and for my brother's honeymoon in 1940 and my own in May 1941 we managed to get to Porlock and back. Otherwise the Big 7 was kept jacked up on wooden blocks in an old cartshed. By 1942 our circumstances had altered and the car was laid up until May 1946. never again did we commute together.

The war years had done the chassis and coachwork no favours, and the brakes, transmission and engine were in constant need of attention, but CDF 845 gave us good service into the 1950's.

I have no records of the car insurance, but in 1938 Annual car Licence was 15s per horse power, petrol was 1s 6p a gallon, average wage for men was £2 a week and parking in Bristol was free!

Jim Allen

**CHARLES BROWNE L.R.P.S.
1922-2008**

Charles was born in Kingswood and attended Kingswood Grammar School, leaving with an excellent Higher School Certificate in Science subjects. He was immediately recruited by the Ministry of Defence to test explosives such as Semtex at their site in Bridgwater. He was given his own concrete bunker in case he blew himself up!

He had an interest in Motor Cycle Trials and rode successfully for the Douglas team, winning many awards and trophies.

After the end of the war he became involved with printing and ran a small press. It was then he studied typography and, in particular, the type faces designed by Eric Gill. This experience was useful when in later life he became expert in the use of computers.

As a school boy he had become interested in Local History. This developed later into a fascination with Archaeology after attending lectures by Leslie Grinsell at Bristol University. This in turn led to taking part in an excavation with Bill Wedlake at the site of the Roman Temple at Nettleton. He became a member of Bristol Archaeological research Group (BARG).

He became a member of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society and the Prehistoric Society becoming assistant treasurer for a number of years.

He was an Extra Mural Lecturer in Archaeology for Bristol University and also gave a series of lectures in the subject for the W.E.A. He organised several visits to Brittany and the Dordogne for his students.

Charles was a member of Bristol Folk House Archaeology Society and took part in their excavations at the Horsefair Bristol, Bristol Cathedral and the rescue dig on the site of Keynsham Abbey as a by-pass was cut through it. He joined a party from this group, led by Ted Mason, on visits to the Pyrenees based on Foix, and to Northern Spain to study Prehistoric cave paintings. This led to a deep interest in the subject and many holidays were spent travelling in his camping van visiting many caves, some of them in remote areas and difficult to find. This knowledge became the subject of several courses that he ran.

In 1964, he and his wife moved to Keynsham. In spite of regarding the Romans as rather modern, he found himself more and more involved

with Roman Archaeology. He became curator of Fry's Factory Gatehouse Museum which housed the artefacts from the Keynsham and Somerdale Roman Villas. He catalogued and photographed them and supervised their removal to the safe keeping of the Local Authority (then Wansdyke) when the building was closed and later demolished. The most important items were the nine portions of very fine mosaics from the Keynsham Villa, which are highly acclaimed but, alas, in store and rarely seen.

It was largely due to this that Charles became a member of the Association for the Study and Preservation of Roman Mosaics (A.S.P.R.O.M). As one who enjoyed a challenge he took on the editorship of "Mosaic", the Journal of A.S.P.R.O.M. until shortly before his death. He enjoyed visits abroad with this group to study mosaics in Tunisia and Sicily and many sites in this country.

Living in Keynsham, it was natural that he became a member of Keynsham & Saltford Local History Society. He was its first Chairman and, later, President. Charles was also a founder Trustee of Keynsham Heritage Trust.

One of his quests, over many years, was to discover the site of a Roman settlement called Trajectus. This was known to be a crossing of the River Avon between Aqua Bonum and Aqua Sulis (Sea Mills and Bath). It had been believed to have been sited on the north bank of the river. After seeing work done on the Fry factory site to level the rugby pitch in 1991, which exposed the remains of buildings, a road and many Roman artefacts, Charles came to the conclusion that Trajectus had at last been found on the south side of the Avon.

Bristol University ran a training excavation at the Roman farm site at Row of Ashes Farm, Butcombe over several years. This attracted students from overseas as well as the U.K. The Director was Peter Fowler with Charles as Assistant Director.

As Editor and printer of "North Wansdyke Past and Present" he published twelve annual editions. He was also a member of the C.B.A. and was Editor of the Newsletter for many years.

A founder member of the Association for Roman Archaeology, he enjoyed many visits to archaeological sites including several to Hadrian's Wall and one based on Naples.

In 1968, one of his Extra-Mural students, Dick Knight, noticed some

bones sticking out from a trench being dug for a gas pipe-line at Tormarton. He rang Charles who went to investigate. He recognized them as being human and did a rescue dig. These proved to be remains of Bronze Age skeletons and very rare. They are now in Bristol City Museum. In 2000 AD the BBC produced a programme in the "Meet the Ancestors" series, featuring the Tormarton skeleton and funded an excavation of the site.

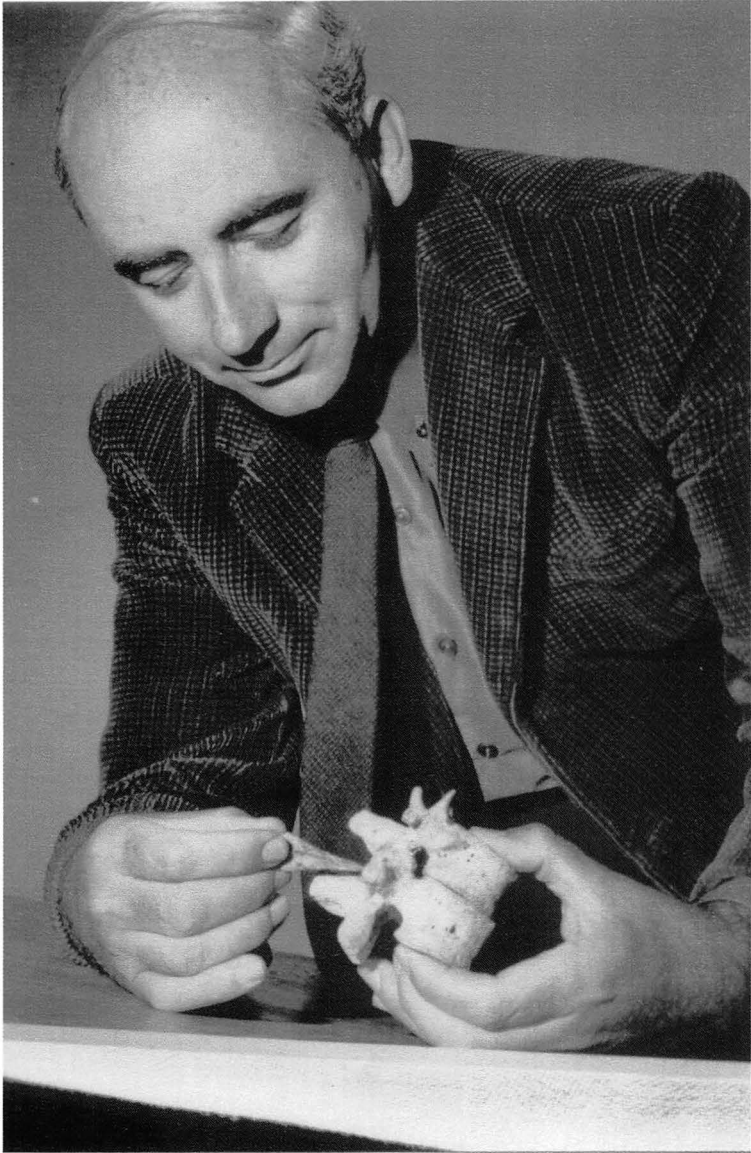
A keen photographer all his life, he was a Life Member of the Royal Photographic Society. He was awarded a licentiate ship for his work with digital photography (L.R.P.S.) and was one of the first to gain this honour.

He used his photographic skills in recording Romanesque Sculpture, spending one summer holiday in France travelling and photographing examples in the Churches and Cathedrals, large and small. He also took photographic records of his wife's paintings.

Charles had a deep appreciation of Classical music, particularly of the early period and of the 20th century. He arranged pieces for Brass Band and annoyed the cat by playing Bartok on the piano. He used his computer recently to compose work himself.

One can say that Charles lived life to the full and always gave of his best in whatever he was involved.

Gwyneth Brown
21/3/08



Charles Browne examining vertebra from a Bronze Age Skeleton
found at Tormarton

