

There have been more changes during the life-time of those people who went to school in the early years of the 1900's than during any other period in history of 60 to 70 years - from horse-drawn traffic to flights to the moon and from morse code messages to colour television, to name but two aspects of change.

Something that has changed almost unnoticed is the life of the village. Before the 1914/18 war villages were almost self-supporting and self-contained for the normal requirements of daily life. Now the shops are going, if they have not all gone, and everyone is obliged to go and struggle in the supermarkets of the nearest town or hope to catch the mobile grocer's shop on its way round.

Recently we had a walk round Chenies with Mr. Frank Smith who was born at Little Green Street Farm and went to school in Chenies before the 1914/18 war. His recollection of life at that time is very vivid and we have noted down how some of the existing buildings were occupied during his school days. Although some buildings have been altered, the only new ones are the school and the houses in and near Bedford Close. Now there is only one shop - an antique shop and a post office!

The following descriptions of the buildings in Chenies are in the order that Mr. Smith would have seen them on his way to school in the morning and are given in Mr. Smith's own words:

Shep Whites

Residence and office of the Duke of Bedford's estate agent who had approximately 10 men working on the estate to check up on the property and put things right if possible. Farmers came to pay their rent to him in a room at the Bedford Arms!

No. 58

Mr. Salmon the baker lived here from 1905 to 1972. He served teas in summer in the front room and in the garden. He made bread (naturally); jam, lettuces (grown), milk and eggs (produced) - he only had to buy tea and sugar. It was a very pleasant walk across Chorleywood Common from the station - they were lovely teas.

Here is the Horse Pond, much larger in those days - horses could walk in and drink.

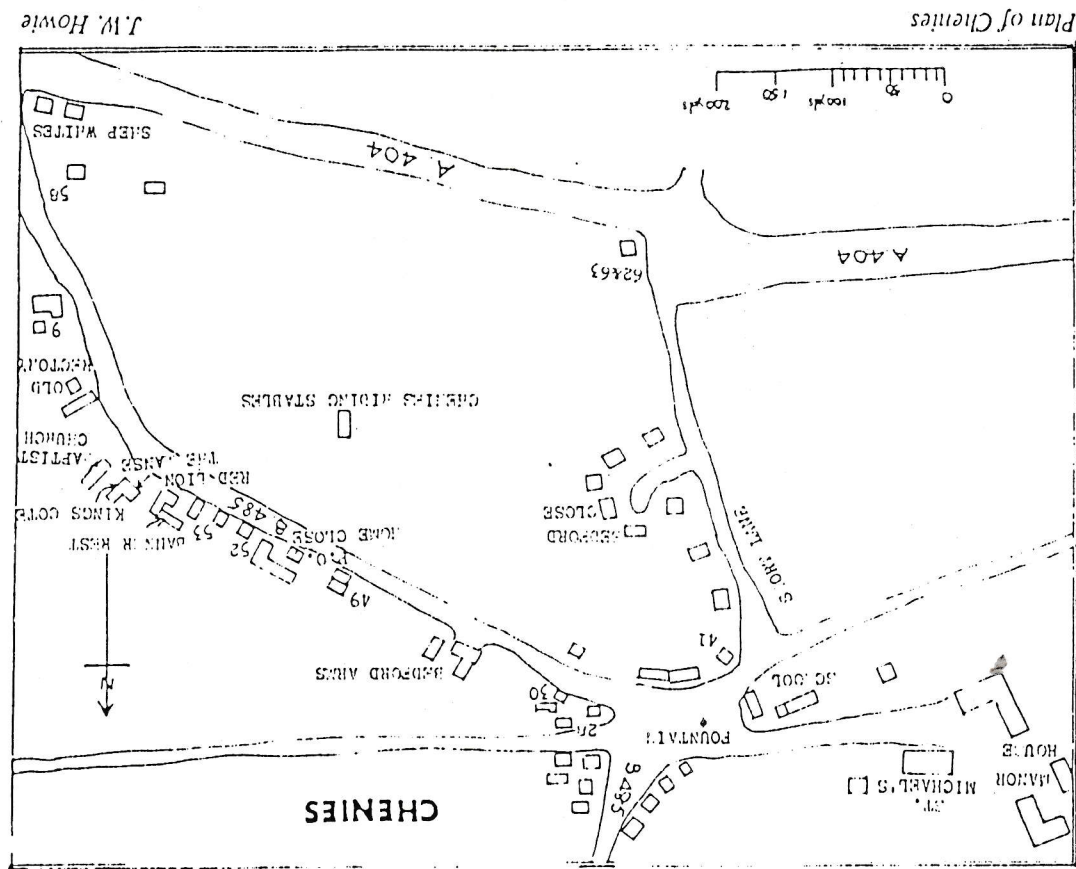
No. 9.

These four cottages were the last to be built by the Duke of Bedford in 1867. Old Rectory.

This was occupied by the rector until the new and more modern one was built near the church. The first floor of the building at the side (now a garage) was the parish room where many a party took place years ago.

Baptist Chapel.

Just the same.



Kings Cote.
This was the Manse.

The Manse.

This was occupied by the church organist.

Red Lion Hotel.

This has changed little. Casual labourers would often spend all day when it was wet in the tap room at the rear. During the harvest on such occasions they would ask for a sub having spent all their money the day before here or at the Bedford Arms.

Banner Rest.

This was the village store that sold everything and was run by Clara Kentish and her mother. There was grocery of every kind, haberdashery, oil for lamps (my bicycle).

No. 53

I moved here when I was married in December 1932. It had a front and back room with kitchen at the rear; upstairs there were two bedrooms; stairs led down to the cellar: the loo was outside.

No. 52

Many years ago this was The Plough public house.

Nos. 51/52 at rear.

At one time the small cottage was occupied by a poacher (part time); one day the house was searched by a constable, but they found nothing as his wife had several joints of mutton tied up under her bustle. This was in the days when the punishment was transportation to Australia.

Home Close.

Mr. Hughes the butcher lived here and the single storey brick building at the side was the shop with slaughterhouse behind — used for the odd sheep or pig.

Post Office and Antique Shop.

This was the dress shop which sold material, bed linen and haberdashery. The post office moved here about 1910.

Chenies Riding Stables.

This was the Home Farm which was part of the butcher's business opposite and included two meadows, two fields and the glebe land adjoining the Old Rectory. Mr. Hughes and the Bedford Arms supplied the whole village with milk, while butter was churned at the Bedford Arms twice a week.

No. 49

This was the infants' school where my mother went between 1865 and 1870. They played in the shed at the side which has long since been demolished.

Here was the meadow where the village team played football.

Bedford Arms.

Rooms were always reserved for the Duke of Bedford's guests in the fishing season when they went down to the mill stream on the Chess.

The Berkeley Coach drawn by four horses stopped at the "Bedford" on its way from Croxley and Rickmansworth to Amersham. The single storey building at the side used to be the stables and coach house where there were broughams, victorias and waggonettes.

The old tap room (now the darts room) used to be frequented by the casual labourers who could not go home to lunch. They could cook their food on the fire; on wet days at harvest time they congregated in the tap room as there was nowhere else to go out of the rain. As casual labourers were often paid daily they would ask for a sub, because those who spent all their pay the evening before at the Bedford Arms would have nothing on the wet days for food or drink.

No. 30.

This was the Post Office until 1910 and also sold sweets, soft drinks and some groceries and haberdashery; Miss Glenister who ran it often did not get up very early in the morning and on such occasions the maid would serve the children with sweets on the way to school when they received very good weight — she would tip up the jar to fill the bag — a good farthingsworth of "dolly mixtures"!

(Note the letter box on the ivy covered wall on left in the photo.)

No. 28

The blacksmith's cottage which was occupied by Mr. Owl who was also the grave digger as he had the right name! He was unfortunately rather deaf but his eyesight was good otherwise he could not have worked as a blacksmith — or been an owl! The foundry is the long brick building at the rear which still has the old forge chimney.

The Green

The small open-sided building used to be a fountain which was turned on when important guests were expected at the manor. The lime trees along the drive were planted by various members of the family.

No. 41

This used to be occupied by Mr. Kelly the butler to Miss Russell.

This road up to the A.404 used to be known as "Short Lane".

School.

This has been considerably modernised since the 1800's.

Behind the council houses in Bedford Close there used to be a foundry which moved to Aylesbury early in the last century.

No. 62 and 63.

Previously called "Claypits Cottages" and were believed to have been occupied many years ago as a "Rest House", the entrance of which was under the arch in the middle of the building and is now bricked up.