

Memories of Brook Street in 1939

In 2016 Ken Branigan reflected on his childhood

I remember Brook Street when I was a small boy. My grandparents were Albert and Annie Field and they lived in the Chapel House to the left of the picture. It had a well just outside the back door and the water was so nice.

I remember the tin shed, which was a garage. We used to look through gaps in the doors and could see a little old black car, but which never seem to leave the garage.

I well remember Eva Saw who ran the shop beyond that garage, and she was indeed a character! She always seemed to have a Woodbine cigarette hanging from her mouth, and sometimes gave us a sweet. She also sold cigarettes, tobacco, tinned food, biscuits, meths and paraffin for the old Primus stoves. Grandad got his baccy and snuff there, as well as the brown boot polish for the beautifully polished leather leggings which went up to his knee cap.

Across the road ran the brook of course. I remember so well Grandad used to walk over to it with his fishing rod, and more often than not catch a nice brown trout for breakfast. Trout were far more plentiful in the brook then than nowadays.

Paddock House, out of the picture to the right had a large and very well kept garden, belonging to a very grand lady called Mrs. Stubbs. There was a thicket of bamboos where Grandad cut me my first fishing rod to catch more trout.

Further up on the right and side was Mr. Frank Cherrill's farm yard, and I remember him putting his milk churns in the brook to cool, awaiting collection. Grandad and his neighbours used to take their jugs to Mr.Cherrill and buy their milk direct from him. The cows would be driven down the High Street daily, turn left down Mill Lane, to graze in the fields beyond. Plenty of cow muck all down the road! As a young boy I was given the task of driving the cows. I had a stick, but of course the cows knew exactly which way they had to go!

A bit further up on the left, opposite Bert Passey's house was the Lamb and Flag pub. It was owned by my other grandad, but I can't remember much about him. I think he sold it to Bert Passey.

Finally, back to the Chapel House well. At the start of each day, regardless of the weather, Grandad would go out in to the garden in his trousers and vest, fill a pail of water, and give himself a good wash down.

What great memories that picture has brought back for me!