

Memories raised when transcribing the Cemetery MIs By Betty Ward

I have recently joined a group recording the inscriptions on the gravestones in the Kibworth Cemetery. What an interesting pastime! For me especially, as having lived in Kibworth Harcourt all my long life, and having gone to school and joined in every activity possible in Kibworth Beauchamp too, I remember many of the people now 'resting' in the graveyard. The following are a few of my memories.

ALAN TIMSON

The first stone we examined recorded Alan Timson. There was a character! Old Alan was known all over the village as he rode about on a large 3-wheel bike. Alan was deformed you see, having (so the story goes) swallowed a safety-pin when he was a baby!! He wore large horn-rimmed specs. But Alan was kind - he kept a bookshop opposite the Post Office, and this also acted as a sort of lending library before we had an official one in the village. (I cannot ever remember any payment) and he was kind to the elderly and disabled as he would come round the village and deliver his books, carrying them in a large basket on the front of his old bike. How nice for such as my old mum to have a new romance brought to your door every week. She, being an avid reader, was a good customer of Alan's.

Poor old Alan had a job getting on and off his bike owing to his deformed legs, and when he dismounted outside his shop he used to 'throw' the bike against the wall. There is a groove in the brickwork to this day.

JOHN SHELL

Further up the row we got to grave number 502, JOHN ROBERT WILLIAM SHELL. More memories! John Shell was my French master when I went to the Kibworth Beauchamp Grammar School. Dear old Mr Shell - I remember him with affection as most of us did. He was rather a portly gentleman, and he used to "bomb" about the corridors with his gown always flowing. So much so that it got caught on many a knob, and thus was somewhat tattered in places!

Dear old Mr. Shell (I keep calling him that but the gravestone says he died at the early age of 39). I would never have dreamt that he was so young, but through the eyes of a child all grown ups seem old - and especially school teachers. He was not the sort of teacher to keep your nose to the grindstone, and later, when I reached the sixth form, and we were trusted to study unsupervised, many is the time we skipped the lessons altogether, and got up to something far more entertaining! But Mr. Shell would never "dob" you in, bless him. He must have done something right though because I passed my French oral.

Also on the gravestone was recorded John Hamilton Shell, died aged 5 years. This was tragic, and an event I am afraid I do not remember. Mr. Shell died in 1944 and later his widow, Jane, married the local medic, Dr. Macbeth. Were eyebrows raised I wonder? I cannot recall, but they left and went back to Dr. Macbeth's native Scotland on his retirement.

Jane Macbeth returned, however, and is recorded in the year 2000 as sharing the same grave as her first husband.