

## Memories of Kibworth 1936-1960

*By Muriel Gilbert (nee Minors)*

I came to live in Kibworth in 1936 when I was thirteen. We had been living at Stocking Farm (now part of Beaumont Leys estate) when it was a farm, and I attended the Newarke Girls' School with 600 girls.

What a shock to start at Kibworth Grammar School and sit next to a boy! There were only 120 pupils, and we got to know everyone's name. Mr Elliot was a strict, but well-liked headmaster and the staff were Mr Shell, Mr Martin, Miss Calander, Miss Coates and Miss Williams. Part time staff were Miss Cornish for cookery, Miss Rudkin for PE and games, Mr Roberts for art and Mr Copelin for woodwork.

We lived in Main Street (Harcourt) and my father had a milk round, delivering milk twice a day by pony and float. At first our milk was supplied by B Rammell's farm at Smeeton Westerby, but later from Grange Farm. There were six other milkmen at that time (suppliers in brackets): F Bird (farm in Fleckney Road), B Briggs (Priory Farm and later Windmill Farm), N Bromley, R Porter (B Hill's farm in Smeeton Westerby), F Sturgess (farm next to the 'Old Swan') and J Waterfield (Moss Farm, Fleckney Road). There were also six butchers in the villages (shops in brackets): A Berry (Main Street in Harcourt), T Gardiner (corner of Leicester Road and Marsh Drive - now the pine furniture shop), A Robinson (opposite the 'Old Swan'), J Rudkin (High Street), T Sedgley (Fleckney Road - now the Falcon Fires store), and F Simons (High Street).

We moved to Grange Farm in 1940 (today still on the Harborough Road, Kibworth, but the house Beauchamp Grange was the farmhouse when we were there) and I took over the milk round - by then mechanised! - for one delivery each day, but still seven days a week. I remember the snow in 1947 when the A6 road was impassable for cars and we had to bring the milk into the village by tractor and deliver to the houses by sledge.

In 1944 the Kibworth Young Farmers' Club was formed with G Robinson the first chairman, Brian Briggs the first secretary, myself as the first treasurer and Mr Keay the Club leader. We enjoyed many years of instructive and social events.

Another wartime memory I have is of attending a concert in the Village Hall with our land girl Edna, and her boy friend Bert Davis, when it was announced that two German POWs had escaped so would members of the Home Guard report for duty. Off Bert had to go, and Edna and I began to cycle home. As we approached the railway bridge on the A6 there was a flashing light! We were convinced it was the POWs about to grab our bikes, but it was the police. We were relieved to hear the next day that the POWs had been caught by Sergeant Cave on a haystack in the Warwick Road. We had a resident police sergeant and constable in the village at that time. Sgt Cave lived at Harcourt Estate on the Leicester Road, and PC Bason lived in Harborough Road.



*Muriel Minors at Grange Farm*

After the war we sold the milk round to Roy Porter and Jack Cornish who eventually sold it to Kirby & West.

A funfair came every October to a paddock opposite the Rose & Crown Hotel and, later, to the recreation ground off Smeeton Road. A circus also visited the recreation ground with many of the usual circus animals. I remember my seven year old daughter and a friend sitting on one end of a seesaw with a large brown bear on the other end (this would be about 1960).

*Written in November 2008; revised February 2009*