

**KING'S CLIFFE HERITAGE COLLECTION ITEM NO. 2531**

**THE MEMOIRS OF MR JAMES ROBERTS**  
**Transcribed and Printed by Canon John Bryan, 1996**

*Introductory note by Canon John Bryan:*

*Mr James Roberts was a native of King's Cliffe, born 20<sup>th</sup> November, 1883 and died aged 101 at Lincoln on 9<sup>th</sup> April, 1985. He left his native village in about 1906 to take work in Spratton, near Northampton, and then moved to Lincoln about 1909. His trade was that of professional gardener. He frequently returned to King's Cliffe, particularly in his later years and after retirement. Possessed of an acute memory as he was, I persuaded him on several occasions to write down his memories of village life and village people as he had known them at about the turn of the century, i.e. 1900, perhaps sometimes earlier. Here follows a narrative which he wrote at some date early in the year 1974. I reproduce this manuscript exactly as he wrote it.*

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11 Wragby Road,  
Lincoln.

Dear Rector,

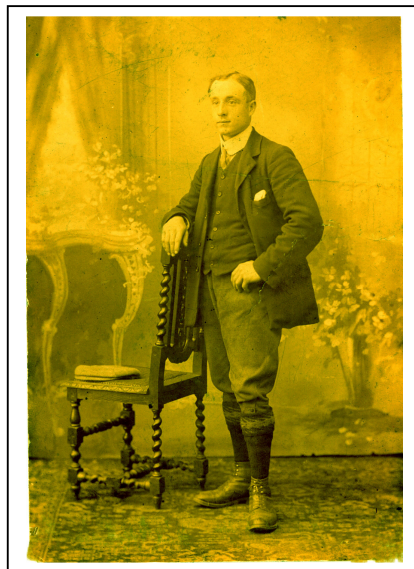
Thank you for your kind wishes for 1974.

It has been a great pleasure to me to try and remember all those dear people of the old village where I spent my young days. The dear, young and elderly people. It was always [good] to be with them, they always had a kind word with you. All those names in the list were good and genuine people, I do hope you may find this list suitable. I knew all those personally, if you require further knowledge I will do my best to answer.

Yours sincerely,

J. Roberts

P.S. I am enclosing a photo of me which was taken in Northampton 1907-1908, when I lived at Spratton. So if any use to you, please keep it as I am in my 90<sup>th</sup> year. J.R.



James Roberts, 1883 – 1985.

Photo referred to as 'enclosed' by James Roberts. The studio portrait was made into a postcard which had been written and post-marked 1907. [King's Cliffe Heritage archive]

## Part I

Re Mr Geo Saddington of West Street, King's Cliffe, Blacksmith. His shop and business was a going concern, he did all kinds of work in iron, repair of tools and all kind of mending and repair work, a great workman and very helpful to anyone, always willing to carry on the great work. I used to see him helping a Mr W Palmer, Joiner and Wainwright, what he called 'shoeing' cart wheels. Mr Palmer would take the woodwork down the Malting Lane against the river Willowbrook, then they would make a great wood fire and hot the iron wheel then lay the frame of the wheel against the fire and then lift the frame of the wheel round the frame of woodwork and nail or bolt them both together and cool it down well with water from the river and then take it to Mr Palmer's workshop and fixed the wheel on to the cart or wagon or what was required. His son did not follow in the business. I think his shop, or part of it, is still near to the Wheel Inn Public House. He was a good singer at concerts, also a member of the Sick Club. He lived opposite Butcher Brown's shop. This was a one- man business.

Blacksmith, Wheelwright, Joiners, Coach Builders, Undertakers by Mr Stokes.

This business was one of the largest in the village in Park Street. Employed several experienced men. I think those days you had to serve a 5 year apprenticeship before you could get a job of this kind. At the departure of Mr Stokes, a Mr F Portess took it over. What a great work they turned out, their coaches were wonderful to look at painted and varnished, one could stand and admire them for hours. Mr Portess was a great worker and his son helped later. He also employed a Mr A Robins and Mr H Gimber and a few others. Mr Robins was the Blacksmith, he did the ironwork and used to shoe the horses – hunters, farm and carriage horses - down the yard. I used to go and see them shoeing. It was great and the men always had a kind word for everyone, also employed was Mr H Harker, Wheelwright.

The Gas Works in Bridge Street was worked by a Mr Clifton and then by Mr G Close. It was hard firing those retorts, putting small coal into them, they used to take their clothes off down to their waist about twice a day, it was great to see those furnaces then. They would pull the coke out and drench it with water to cool it down and then you could take your barrow and buy the coke for about sixpence as much as you liked, of course all coal and coke was very cheap those days. Then Mr Close would go round the village lighting the lamps and then later he would have to put them out, he would carry a little ladder, then get ready to work again. Very hard work in winter time. Then if there was a leak in the pipes up the street he would have to dig down and repair them. Following Mr Close was a Mr "Banker" Cunnington.

Building and Slating. Mr Mr W Sharpe, the only one Slater in the village who lived in Pig Lane with his family. I consider he was a great workman, he did his work well with great skill when he was slating a house or barn or anything. It was a pleasure to see him at work stripping and replacing those slates. It was dangerous work carrying all those slates up those tall roofs of a barn etc., but what great pleasure it was to look at them when finished. A little later he was helped by two of his sons, Bill and Herbert. They all took a great pride in their work, they had to carry all slates and tiles up those ladders. He carried on a great many years then his sons took over the business until their departure. Also in the village was a Mr Coupland, he employed a few men such as Mr Herbert Green and W. Cade, occasionally a few more when busy. He used to do a lot of work at Blatherwycke Hall and for Col. Tryon at Bulwick Hall.

Re Cobblers & Boot Repairers. Mr John Harlock, Mr Close, Mr Bullimore, R Little, they all did a great work all done by hand, one could get a pair of boots soled and heeled for a shilling or two.

Carriers by horse and cart – sometimes covered in. Mr John Roberts, West Street, used to bring your orders from Stamford on Monday and Fridays, used to do your shopping and charge a small fee for same. Helped by his daughter Lydia and son Harry, [any]one could go in and do their own shopping by paying for the ride for a few coppers.

Re Plumbers Painters, etc. Mr W Coleman of Bridge Street. He kept a few men and would do any decorating. He used to do work for Squire O'Brien, Blatherwycke Hall. Anyone could employ Mr Joe Clifton or T Sauntson.

Gardeners. The Butts, Little Butts – Mr John Chapman he would do most of the Big House gardens, all in the village – such as Miss Sarah Law and J T Law, Dr Pink, Miss Dennis. The Big Butts was done by Mr Fox and son John to grow and sell flowers and vegetables round the village, make wreaths and crosses for weddings and funerals, etc. and sell fruit at the cricket field on feast days.

I remember Mr Jackson, gardener to Mr & Mrs Howes on the bottom back way, then after his departure Mr W Woolley came to take over and what a great gardener he was, fruit, flowers, vegetables. A Mr J Todd used to help him, and I also used to help in the garden and do all kinds of work. Mr Woolley was there a great many years, he was one who used to sing and help at concerts in the School Rooms, he was also our Band master, what a great time we used to have going to play at village feasts and garden parties and all round the villages.

Re Pubs & Hotel, the Cross Keys was kept by Mr & Mrs Fane, part of some rooms was kept for the farmers and businessmen to do their business – such as Mr J T Law, Mr W Dainty, Mr Geo Miles and Mr Nibloe Hare, Mr T Cleave, Mr Wright and a few select people. There used to be a nice photo hanging in the bar against the bay window of most of those people. Other pubs – the Travellers Rest, West Street, was Paddy Wragby. Wheel Inn Mr & Mrs Hill, Eagle Tavern Mr H Dixon, Maltsters Arms Mr Weatherington, Turners Arms Mr W Bailey, Golden Ball Mr R Dixon, Wheatsheaf Mr Sharpe, Red Lion a Mr Dixon then by T F Richardson.

Re Butchers. Mr Richard Brown, West Street. Mr Robino Goodwin was the slaughterer, killing sheep, pigs and beasts. We often used to help to pull the beast down and Robino would pole axe them which was very cruel. Mr T Walker used to do the same or similar but we all got good English meat, etc.

Re Bakers, Mr Slingsby, Mr John Skinner, Mr Featherstone, Mr Kingston, they all used to make their own bread and cakes etc., deliver it round the villages and lodges to Blatherwycke, Bulwick, Apethorpe.

Re Timber Fellers, Mr Miles used to employ several men to cut down trees, etc. Mr Gimber and H Weatherington, Mr Compton, Mr Wootton, also the Marquis of Exeter used to cut down some Oak Ash Trees etc. during the months of April, May in King's Cliffe Forest, Collyweston and Easton Hornstocks. Mr Geo Coles was head woodman and then other men were Mr Joseph Roberts, Mr C Roberts, Mr John Roberts, Mr Blake, Mr Langley and others, one had to be skilled men to axe those large trees. Two or three men would use the axes with skill, it used to be great to see these men at work, of course all the under growth used to be cleared away before cutting and they were all bundled up and sold for pea and bean sticks and firewood, then when finished the trees would be sold by Auction to the highest bidder. The bark of the trees was peeled off and sold for making leather.

Re Shopkeepers. In Park Street Mr Edgson & Son who used to sell all kinds of goods: tea, sugar, bacon, sweets, treacle, some underwear, shirts, pans, towels, etc. Mr J T Bailey at the Cross – tea, sugar, sweets and this was the Post Office where Telegrams and letters used to come. Mr Bailey was a great man would help anyone, he was helped by his son Bert Bailey and his daughter Ethel and I can remember him taking a few pinches of snuff. Another in West Street was kept by a Mr Fryer and another at the top end of West Street, all sold about the same things. The Chemist Shop was kept by Mr Ellis, a great man, a great cricketer and concert entertainer. What a good show used to be held in the girls schoolroom, helped by Miss E Miles, Miss Hawkes, etc.

Gamekeepers. Cliffe Forest – the Keeper's House used to be outside the woods and the Head Keeper was a Mr J Gutteridge. My father, J Roberts, used to help him rear the pheasants just outside the wood near the great Beech tree and I can remember going with him to feed them in coops, etc. when they got older they used to let them go into the Forest.

Women in Trade. The only women I knew to go to the Skin Factory in Bridge Street. There was not any work for women and girls only going in service as cooks, housemaids, kitchen maids, washerwomen and a great many of them used to help one another.

As we boys used to leave school at 13 years of age there was no work we could go to, only go to farmers and go with the ploughmen to lead horses in the fields, drive them in harvest time, etc., but most of boys used to leave the village and get work elsewhere. Mr & Mrs J G Howes used to send a good many to work in London at 22 St Pauls Churchyard – Cook & Son in their warehouse, offices, etc. and live in. I can assure you that Mrs Howes was a great lady, she used to help the poor old people in the village, if anyone was ill or wanting. I remember we used to write to her at Porchester Terrace, she help me get a good situation when I left home.

Brewers. Mr Libbeus Dixon, Golden Ball, used to brew his own beer with Malt and Hops at the Golden Ball, used to sell it about one and a half penny a pint, and then later on Mr Papillon came and bought Dr Dain's property and started to brew beer of malt and hops only. The three people who did the brewing with a Mr Brown were Mr Jim Sharpe, George Roberts and a G Skinner, with the help of Mr Burge. Mr Pappilon was a great cricketer and John Chapman used to do the garden and I used to help Mr Chapman, they were very good people. (*Dr Dain's house now the Manor House, J.B. Ed*).

Ropemaking. I think of only one person who used to make rope and it was a Mr Bill Wade in Park Street not far from Mr Walker's Butcher Shop, he also used to sharpen scissors, shears and all tools.

Saddlers. There was only one shop in the village owned by Mr Luke Blake, he and his son were always busy repairing harness for horses for farmers and private people so that they could get on with the farming work. They did all repairs for anyone, mending leather gloves for men so that they could cut and layer hedges, a very skilled work to lay those hedges.

Re Tailors. Mr Davison in West Street he used to make and repair your suits and clothes, first class workman, lived in that thatched cottage (West Street). He had two sons, one school teacher in the village along with W Brooks. Mrs Davison used to make pork pies, brawn and faggots for sale at a small price, they were very good.

Re Wood Turners. King's Cliffe was well noted for Wood Turners the country over. I think the Bailey family were the largest people, they would make all kinds of utensils, egg cups, pepper pots, salt plates, dishes, bread plates, anything you wanted in Turnery they would make large or small. Then there were the Ventross Green family and the Sharpe families, wood turning was a great art. Also that man Levi Dixon in Park Street, what great work they turned out.

Veterinary Surgeon. Mr A Eudall was resident in the village, he used to do local work if cattle or any animal were ill. Then I think another one came from Oundle – a Mr Gooch.

Doctors. Dr Pink, Dr Lewis in house in Park Street near the Cross.

The weather report. Most people when you met them in the village going to work, they would always rely on looking towards Blatherwycke Park and if it was a cloudy morning over the Park they would say going to rain or get a thunder storm, which was fairly correct.

Railway Workmen. Mr F Bould, S Woodin, Mr J Elliott, John Catlin, C Catlin, J Saunders, C Kirby, Mr Fawkes, Mr W Stanger, J Scotney.

Farm Workers. H Britten, T Goodwin, C Goodwin, W Britten, C Britten, E Smith, F Cunnington, Harrison, J Scotney, J Moisey, T Hector, H Giddings, I Smith, J Mason, G Sauntson, H Cunnington, W Kerfoot, Mr E Dolby.

Roadmen. Mr H Broughton used to empty dust bins, toilets, etc. helped by his son T H Broughton, West Street.

Threshing Machine owners. W Wootton, H Wootton, J Wootton – portable and steam engines, drums, elevators.

Grave Digger. W Dixon – Sexton, Bell Ringer.

Rat Catcher. Tom Roberts (my grandfather).

Transport. Bicycle, most people used to walk miles to work until they got a cushion tyre bike (no punctures) solid tyre. Penny-farthing, big wheel and small wheel. One boy from Law's Lawn (Stamford Road) used to come to school on a penny farthing bike, named John Mason.

Retired Gentlemen. Mr Gist, West Street. Mr W Sharp, Park Street. The Rate brothers John, William and George, West Street.

Most of the businesses were on a small scale, they did not employ much labour, so a great many men had to walk to other villages, also to West Hay Farms, Apethorpe, Woodnewton, Bulwick. I knew of two or three men – the Pollard family – would walk to Deene morning and night.

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## **Part II**

My father was James Roberts, who married my mother Emma Coles, both of King's Cliffe. My grandfather was Thomas Roberts. He was the village rat catcher and afterwards went away to Yeadon and Idle in Yorkshire.

The father of Emma Coles was George Coles, his wife was Lucy Hales. He was a woodman for the Marquis of Exeter. George Coles had a brother Tom Coles, also a King's Cliffe man. George had a daughter Rose, who married a journey-man maltster named Lee of Burton on Trent.

My brother George Thomas Roberts went to Hurstbourne Priory as a gamekeeper. My other brother Albert Roberts was apprentice gardener at Apethorpe Hall, under Mr Fitt. He went to World War I and after the war he returned to gardening work at Broadstairs, and then came to Lincoln. He had one son, still living in Lincoln. I came to Lincoln in 1909.

Grandfather (Coles) was head woodman for the Marquis; he had Collyweston Great Wood and Easton Hornstocks. The oak and ash felling took place in May, the oak was then peeled for bark, the bark was stacked to go after sale for leather tanning. Undergrowth was bundled up into faggots and pea sticks. King's Cliffe people used to collect dead wood in the forest, the women especially would make up "bottles" of sticks – they called it "sticking" – they would carry these bottles on their heads down home or to sell for about three pence in the village. The men would use their flag baskets for chopped up logs or anything else not required.

On the Duddington Riding there was the "Fair Tree", I think it was oak. We lads would go nutting in the woods. I used to take Grandad's dinner every Saturday to him in his hut on the mile straight riding. In those days most 'Cliffe men used to walk to work along the many footpaths. They would go to Oundle by way of the Keeper's Lodge at Morehay Lawn, and from there to Southwick and then along the Glaphorn Road.

The old folk lived in fear and dread of the Oundle Union Workhouse. My uncle, Jim Kerfoot, lived at Bulwick Lodges, we would go to see him on a Sunday by way of Rush Hill and Blackmorethick. In the woods and forest we used to see all sorts of animals; stoats, weasels, snakes – there were many snakes in the forest. Men could do anything in those days, turn their hands to anything in the country way. My father was the best hedge-layer I ever saw, he finished as foreman for Arthur Groome Howes at the Alders Farm. He died in 1919, had an obituary in the Peterborough Standard. Lizzy Harker was the correspondent for the Standard I remember.

Poverty – well we didn't call it that, working folk used to help one another every way they could.

Midwifery – Cinderella Green brought me into the world, but the married women helped one another in that line.

Poaching: 'Cliffe men did a certain amount, but people from away were the chief offenders.

Thomas James Law was the leading farmer. He would gather his men and boys in his kitchen on a Saturday evening about 5.30 (there were no half days then) to pay them the wages. He would deal out the money himself, there was no pay for wet time, which could mean a wage of 9/- for a week. George Close was the Gas Works Manager, and he lived in the Gas Works yard. His uncle lived up West Street.

Most men kept a pig, say 8 out of 12 men did. We used to keep two pigs, one to salt and one to sell. A special pot was kept for boiling the pig potatoes, you mixed in some barley meal with these to feed the pig. There was a Pig Club which met at the Golden Ball, an insurance for the pig. One of the best pig keepers was Will Stanger, a ganger on the railway. Those days you could get a "wreckling pig" for a shilling, feed it on a bottle of milk, my father bought many one. When a pig was killed by anyone they would share out the "fry" with friends, the leaf was over the fry.

Our village was kept very clean. There were no steam rollers, wagons and carts rolled down the stones and chippings. The road men were Tom Coles and Charlie Green. Grave digging was done by "Puff and Dart" William Dixon, his father was Gamble Dixon. William Dixon as sexton used to ring the fifth bell three times a day; the last being the 8 o'clock curfew. He would ring the fire alarm as well clanging the tenor and the treble bells together, when we would all get up if it was night time and watch for the 'Cliffe Fire Brigade. Stack fires were the usual thing.

I remember Frank Bould emigrating to South Africa.

Sam Roberts ran the Carrier's Cart. He kept it in the yard behind his thatched cottage, where Norman Embleton has his yard now. After Sam his son John Thomas Roberts took on the business from his place up West Street. Below Sam Robert's cottage were the two thatched cottages in which first Sarah Elderkin and then James Kerfoot lived. (*These two thatched cottages were replaced by the bungalow now no 9 Bridge St, KCH, Editor*). Sam Roberts also had timber drugs along with his son Daniel Denton Roberts. Our schoolmaster was "Teddy" Brookes.

'Cliffe was a great place for village concerts, all got up and played in by we ourselves, in the Schools. Albert Bailey, Ida Chapman and the Misses Annie and Nelly Hawkes provided the music for the concerts and the dances that were often held. We started a village band in 1899, Walter Woolley was the band master and Lady Westmorland fitted us out with "Baden Powell" hats, which you can see in the band photograph I gave to your collection down at your Church Hall, it was the time of the Boer War. There was a good Church Choir in those days, over twenty men and boys I remember. We used to parade round the Church at Sunday evening church, which was the chief service of the day. Our parents took us to church and we always sat in the same seat. After church we would go for a walk in the light evenings, then home to a supper. And the church bells would be rung before that service. We boys loved to walk along the Workhouse Lane, now Morehay Lane, to hear the nightingales singing in the trees along the lane.

I can remember the Water Mill working ever so busy, a Mr Smith was the Miller there, a Mr Slingsby had the great Windmill up West Street behind the Windmill Inn and against Mr John Groome Howes' garden, with maltings below it. When we went gleaning in harvest time, folks would take their gleaning to one or other of these Mills for grinding into flour.

'Cliffe had good Cricket and Football teams in those days. Tuesday in Feast Week was the day for the XI versus the XXII cricket match in the Cricket Field, where tents would be set out for the festivities. "Cliff'east" we used to say and it was the holiday of the year for we village folk.

Every 'Cliffe man in those days had a nick-name. There was "Puff-and-dart", "Knacker" Blake, the saddler and pig killer with his workshop in Park Street, now "Boscobel" I see, there was "Old Sorrow" Kerfoot and Jim "Tit" Dixon, the man who cut the throat of Tom Law's pig the afternoon he died.

The village people then all helped one another through life's stresses and strains. Women went out washing clothes for a shilling a day's work. There was the beautiful scenery when you cut up Willow

Lane to walk through to Stamford, then across Vigo to Easton and Stamford – none of that now. Libbeus Dixon used to hire out bikes from the Golden Ball Inn he kept for those who could afford them. Up West Street was the Brewery, Papillon's Brewery. Doctor Dain lived in the big house there, it became a brewery after him, he was a stocky gentleman, died 1890. Then there were two other Doctors in the village, Doctor Lewis in Park Street and Doctor Pink. Dr Pink was what you would call a "lad", he would extract a tooth for a shilling with pliers and his knee into your chest. Against the Schools there was a paddock which had an old barn on the right and a Spring on the left – Dr Pink had it for his pony.

It was all horses on the farms in those days. The horses of T J Law were in his stables in the big barn in Hall Yard, against the church wall. It had several horse standings and the yard was used for the manure heaps. Opposite was a very big barn, now Mr Browns, with the crew yard for wintering beasts. Corn was stored in this barn which had a big winnowing machine in it, worked by hand. Lawrence Law had the cart shed built there with iron roof. In the back yard at the Hall Farm there would be some stacks and out in the field, with the great barn in between. Miss Sarah Law's Wellington House in Pig Lane had barns and yards worked by Tom Law. The barn off Park Street near the schools was another stackyard with stacks built up on stone staddles. Tom Law's horsemen were "Dorky" Goodwin and William "Bildad" Britten.

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### Part III

Mr T J Law was the largest farmer in the village and employed the largest number of men of the farmers in the district. He also owned "Law's Lawn" off Stamford Road, opposite West Hay Lodge Farm. His farm foreman was J Mason. All work was done by horses and men: ploughing, drilling, hedge cutting. It was a mixed farm: wheat, barley, oats, mangolds, swedes, etc. His stables were in Hall Yard; in the first stable two horses were kept, then came the chaff cutting house. Chaff was cut by two knives working in a cutter driven by a hand-wheel, the cutter fed from a box behind the wheel. A man or a boy would feed hay and straw steadily into the cutter. The chaff was then mixed with oats or some other corn and then fed to the horses. In the middle stable were 5 or 6 horses, in the end stable some 3 horses. When the horses returned from work in the fields they were unharnessed and led down to the Hall Well and Horse-water for drink, when their legs would be cleaned of clay and mud, then led back to the stable for their "dinner". Then the men would go to their own meal, return afterwards to groom them, to cut chaff, to clean out the stables and oil the harness in order to keep it soft and clean. Then the men went home again until about 7.30 p.m. when the head horseman would take charge of bedding down the horses for the night. They would spread good clean straw and "supper" the horses; all this was done by the light of paraffin lanterns. Next morning the men would come to prepare the early breakfast for their horses. I recall the head horseman was named Tom Goodwin, nick named "Dorkey"; then there was William "Bildad" Britten to assist. Mr Law had barns and a yard at his sister's place in Pig Lane, Miss Sarah Law of Wellington House. Here he also stabled horses and kept beasts in a crew-yard there. More of his cattle he kept down Brock's Close, next to where Mr Lucas Blake had his harness and saddlery shop. Mr Law also had the yard against Church Walk; this was behind two houses which stood on the edge of the street there, almost up to the Church gates. Tom Law had these two houses demolished in 1897 and the site given to the church wardens to commemorate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. There is still a plaque on the wall there, and the open space is where the two cottages stood. This made a great improvement to the approach to the Church; it did away with steps up to the gates. Here in that yard Mr Law kept pigs and beasts and had a large barn there for storing corn, hay and straw. He also had a yard and various buildings in Bridge Street, opposite the old Gas Works; these have been demolished but you can still see them in your old photographs of Bridge Street. He had a flock of about, I would say, 300 sheep feeding on his grass fields. His shepherd was Mr Tom Brown, father of Mrs Elizabeth Ainge. He had a game keeper named W Goodwin who lived in what is now called "Calvehay Cottage" on School Hill [*now Bridge Street*] and quite close to where we once lived. Mr Law also had some harness horses for taking him round his farm. He was a very big stout man and too big to keep getting out of his trap, so he would give us boys sixpence to open the gates for him. He used to pay all his men on a Saturday about 5 p.m. He employed about 15 to 20 men and boys. A man's wage then varied from 10 to 15 shillings per week, according to his particular job.

Now to other farmers around the village. In Park Street there was Mr Lucas Wade. He had fields on Stamford Road, Willow Lane and Apethorpe Road. He kept good class horses, milch cows and cattle. Unfortunately he died quite a young man, his widow kept the farm on and later married a Mr John House from Peterborough. They then kept a dairy herd; the herdsman was C Pettifer; the milking was done by some of the men. When the milk was taken down to the dairy it was put through a separator to separate the cream from the milk. I remember Herbert Green and myself turning the wheel of the separator for about an hour each night and morning. The skim milk was sold for about a penny a gallon. Otherwise given to the pigs. Mr House was a great rose grower at Peterborough so he then made a lovely rose garden down the yard in Park Street which is how the place came to be called "The Rosary". Village folk used to go and view this garden after church on Sunday evenings. The horseman was Charles Fawkes and Edward Fawkes; their father was a railwayman and Charles himself later went on the railway line.

George Roberts and others were carters, timber leaders and fellers. Most of them cultivated land for hay making and corn growing in a small way to feed their horses. They had to keep the best of horses for to haul their timber drugs. Now these timber drugs were on four wheels with a pole running through the centre line, with a pole about 30-40 feet in length. For loading trees on to a drug they had strong balks of timber fastened to the side of the drug. Leading chains ran from the drug under the tree over to the other side of the drug where a horse was hitched to each chain and so each tree was hauled up on to the drug. Three or four trees would be loaded this way and chained secure, all ready to move through the woodland to the timber yard or saw mill, wherever, or they would be stacked to dry out in the yard. Mr George Miles was the great timber merchant of King's Cliffe with his yard and house at the end of Park Street. His timber leaders were Fred Culpin and John "Peddler" Sharpe. George Miles had his fellers from 'Cliffe go into our forest and to different parts of the country to fell trees he had bought. These fellers were experts with the axe, all axe work at that time. These were the skilled fellers who worked for George Miles: H Weatherington, the Wootton brothers, James Kerfoot, a Compton and his sons.

A William Kingston was another who did much the same work. He had fields and grass lands at the Alders, his yard and stables were on the Top Backway. Then there was Daniel Denton Roberts who kept the Wheel Inn and kept his horses and drugs at the top of the Wheel Yard, on Back Way. He was assisted by his sons; his father was a Mr Samuel Roberts who kept his drug on the Apethorpe Road down in the saw pit he had in the hollow there, against what is now the cemetery. He used to lead timber and do hauling jobs for different people. James Kingston and his brother Frank were small farmers, bakers and confectioners; their bake house was in West Street, they had fields at Kirk's Lodge and near the forest off Blatherwycke Road up Watson Lane and near the Iron Bridge at the railway line.

Mr J G Howes had some fields on Bottom Back Way, also the Hills and Holes and off Workhouse Lane. He kept a cow for house supply; Isaac Todd did the milking. I helped him. W Woolley was the gardener for Mr Howes and lived on Church Lane.

Now to the owners of private carriages. Mr & Mrs John Groome Howes kept hunters and carriage horses at their home in West Street. Mr Arthur Howes, their son, also kept his polo ponies in West Street; these he used to send to polo grounds and games all over the country. His ponies were managed by Ted Harker and the hunters by W Holmes. Mr & Mrs Howes would take people for rides in their carriage around the country roads. Their coachman was a Mr Warner and their footman Mr J Saddington; they would be in neat uniforms. The sons and daughters of the Howes went hunting with the Fitzwilliam and the Pytchley Hunts and hare coursing with the Burleigh Harriers.

Horses and carriages could be hired at the Cross Keys from Mr Tom Fryer Richardson, landlord, for such affairs as weddings and funerals, etc. You could hire a pony and trap to get you to Stamford or Oundle if required.

Now for the Inns. The Cross Keys was the most special Inn, kept in my young days by W H Fane, later by T F Richardson. Mr Fane had a large family of boys and girls; we all went to the same School and Church together. After Mr Fane, Tom F Richardson moved from the Red Lion in Park



Street to take the Cross Keys where he stayed a number of years. A special room there was reserved for the farmers and trades people. Here they could talk business and no one was allowed in the room until they had left. Such persons were T J Law, W Dainty, J Ellis, John Thomas Bailey, R Brown, John Nibloe Hare, Tom Cleave, Lucas Blake, Thomas Walker. The Golden Ball in Bridge Street was owned and kept by Libbeus Dixon. He brewed his own beer there, assisted by Reuben Dixon, sold at a penny or twopence a pint. The Turners Arms was kept by a Mr John Bailey, before his son Bill kept it. This was the main house for the wood turners and carvers. These turners and carvers made anything you needed in the line of wood ware; bread boards, bowls, platters, butter pats, candlesticks, egg cups. The chief men were John Bailey, W Bailey, A Bailey, H Bailey and John Ventross Green. The Maltster's Arms on the corner of West Street and Pig Lane [*Forest Approach*] was kept by George Weatherington, this had one of the village pumps in front of it. The Windmill Inn further along West Street was kept by Charles Catlin; the Wheel Inn, also West Street, kept by Mr John Hill, then by Dan Roberts. Almost all these inns had large rooms for meetings and dances, Friendly Society meetings, etc. The Travellers Rest in West Street was kept by Wm. Kingston; the Wheatsheaf in Park Street by Charles Sharpe, who was also the farm foreman for Huskisson's Lodge Farm on the Stamford Road. The Wheel Inn was the headquarters for the Wheel Inn Club and the Golden Ball for the Old Amicable Club, both Friendly Societies. Each of these "Sick" clubs held their feasts on Easter Monday, when the members paraded the streets with bands and banners. Each public house had a "Sick & Dividing" Club into which working men would subscribe a few pence each week to save up for either some sick or unemployment benefit or for a Christmas share out.

Then the village had Reading Rooms, run either by the Conservatives or by the Liberals. The Conservative Room was in Park Street, where newspapers could be read, billiards and cards played. Its leading lights were T J Law, G Miles, L Blake, L Dixon. The Liberal Reading Room was in the old High Street [*now part of West St*]; the leading lights here were J Elliott, Wm Bollans, C Stanger, J Close and Fred Edgson.

GENERAL. The Village Schools were situated in Park Street, boys, girls and infants separate. The Headmaster in my time at school was Mr "Teddy" Brookes. His wife was head of the girls. Men teachers I can recall were Mr T Dixon, Wm Harrison and – Moon. On School Hill were the Law and Hutcheson Almshouses, where the old widows and spinsters used to live rent free and receive help at Christmas time. When they went to church they all wore bonnets.

I can recall the gypsy folk who came to settle in 'Cliffe, they were all decent enough folk. I remember one of them in particular; Tom Smith. He used to come each year for several weeks and then move on, making his quarters in Miss Dennis's field, just inside a tall hedge where now you go up to the cemetery. In later years Miss Dennis sold this field for a song to the Parish Council for a cemetery. The two Misses Dennis were related to the Howes family. Tom Smith was respected by all, he and his family members would travel for miles around selling pegs, wooden spoons, tapes, boot laces, etc. and tell fortunes. There were other gypsy folk settled in the village or perhaps they were only gypsies so called. They did everything they could for a living, including I recall selling Yarmouth Bloaters for a penny apiece. Then occasionally we would get German Bands playing through the village.

For Old Saint Luke's Day pigs and sheep were penned for sale in Pig Lane [*Forest Approach*] and at the same time the paddock there would be ground for an amusement fair every year. Pig Lane then had houses either side and I seem to remember a sort of barn at the top end, on to Back Way. [*This had been the old National School for Boys, started by Archdeacon Bonney in 1812. It was closed 1867, J.B. Editor.*]

The village Carrier was Samuel Roberts, followed by his son John Roberts. He lived in a thatched cottage in Bridge Street where later on William Coleman the ironmonger had his yard, opposite their shop. That business had at one time belonged to the Stanyon family.

The leading lights of the three chapels were as follows:-  
Congregational Chapel; the Edgsons, Stanyons, Robert Green, James Elliott, George Close.

Wesleyan Chapel; the Slingsbys, James Moisey (Salvationist), Lydia Slingsby the organist, the Emertons (who came from Northborough), the Breams (Mr Bream managed Siddons' coal yard at the station weigh bridge).

Calvinist Chapel (in the Hollow, West Street, behind a small house), this had dwindled in my time to Robert Little the bootmaker and James Elderkin, cobbler and preacher, from Spout Hall out in the fields against the railway.

Noteable persons I recall:-

Mr John Groome Howes, had his linen warehouse in St Paul's Churchyard, London, where he gave several 'Cliffe boys their first job. Kept very much to himself when in 'Cliffe; Mrs Howes very much in the lead in village affairs.

Elijah Dixon, shopkeeper, lived and had his shop against J G Howes's gate, long since demolished.

William Raven, on the corner at The Cross, where Mr Elliott lives now [*no 1 Bridge Street*]. This gentleman was a retired Exciseman, his nephew was the writer William Le Queux who often stayed there. He was a fine man often dressed as a Turk. He put King's Cliffe into some of his writings.

"Gentleman" John Rate lived against the Old Rectory gateway with his brother William Rate. They didn't work but seemed to have money. Another brother, George Rate, lived in the thatched cottage in the Hollow. There was another Fred Rate living in Park Street, in the house at the corner of what is now Howard's yard [*Howards Meadow*]. He was a higgler.

Behind the Windmill Inn in West Street there was a large Club Room. Dances were often held there and one of the fiddlers was Joe Smith, who lived in Workhouse Lane with his wife Eleanor. Eleanor played a banjo and went round by day with a basket of odds and ends.

Dances were usually held in the Boys School and the musicians were Albert Bailey, violin, Emma Miles, Annie Hawkes and Nellie Hawkes, piano Harry Bailey, clarinet and piccolo. The schools were also a great place for the splendid village concerts we had in those days. Dances also used to be held in the bottom room at the Cross Keys Inn.

I hope this may give some pleasure to 'Cliffe people and it has given me some very happy hours to write it.

JAMES ROBERTS

November 25<sup>th</sup>, 1975, aged 92 years.

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### **Attached to Part III**

"I came to Lincoln from King's Cliffe in 1909. I was born in one of two cottages at the top of School Hill. These two cottages were situated at the front of what is now the Cornforth Homes, fronting immediately on to the street, which was much narrower than it is now. My grandfather Coles lived in the other cottage.

Where the cemetery now is, and in the field above it, were allotments – many of them. My father had one there and in summer droughts my brothers and I had to carry water from the Willowbrook to the allotment. We collected it from the brook at "Calvey" Drift – the 1st drift on the Apethorpe Road.

In the cottage below us [*"Calveyhay Cottage" J.B. Editor*] lived a man called William Goodwin, keeper to Mr J T Law.

As you went along Workhouse Lane, at the end of the old cottages facing the brook and the bridge there were two cottages "end on" running down to the brook. These had been an old workhouse.

When I was a boy they were inhabited by two brothers, Giddings, one of whom had the nickname of "Pennix".

Mr & Mrs Foster lived in the Library House.

The two Misses Dennis lived in "The Barns" [*aka Park Villa, The Walnuts*] along the Apethorpe Road. They were very withdrawn ladies who kept a lot of cats.

In the old quarry against what is now the cemetery old Sam Roberts kept his timber drugs and did some sawing against the hedge line where the Police Station now is [*40 & 42 Bridge Street, no longer a Police station*].

The police sergeant I remember as a boy was named Hustler.

There were two men labelled "gentlemen" in the 'Cliffe of those days, besides the Rector. These were a Mr Sharpe who lived with Libbeus Dixon in his house opposite the school and W Gist, senior.

*[Thos. Sharpe (on whose gravestone in the S.W. corner of the churchyard you will see "Gent" after his name) was connected in some way with Libbeus Dixon as also was T H Cleave who used to come to stay there. J.B. Editor]*

W Gist, senior, was a wealthy eccentric connected with the Rector the Rev. E Du Pre. He was known as "Squire Gist". His son also lived in 'Cliffe, at least for many years and was called "Cracky" Gist being thought somewhat unbalanced. He married Edith, one of the daughters of Hy. "Shittle cum Pooh" Cunnington.

In those days everyone in 'Cliffe had nicknames in order to identify them. So many were related and bore the same surname. It was a wonderful community, with a vigorous social life all of its own.

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#### Part IV

*An introductory note by Canon John Bryan 1997:*

*Amongst the multitude of papers concerned with the past of King's Cliffe I have lately discovered (January 1997) more of James Roberts' memoirs which he compiled at my insistence and encouragement as far back as 1973. These are, therefore, prior to the compositions of 1974 and 1975, transcribed by me as Memoirs I, II and III. There are two sets of papers for 1973 which I now reproduce just as Mr "Jim" Roberts wrote them. I recall that I had walked the length of 'Cliffe village streets with him and over several days to learn who had lived where and what the character of the dwelling houses had been, many of them long since demolished or rebuilt. The reader must remember that in his mind (he had amazing memory recall) he was ranging over the years 1880 to 1910, approximately. The reader will discern also that there is a measure of overlap with the narrations of 1974 and 1975; nevertheless I believe that the whole of these reminiscences constitutes a valuable picture of King's Cliffe as it was in the last two decades of the reign of Queen Victoria. I think it will be of help if from time to time I interpolate brief explanatory remarks in brackets (John Bryan, Editor).*

Let us begin with a letter dated 24<sup>th</sup> September 1973 addressed to myself:

"11 Wragby Road, Lincoln, 24th September 1973.

To Revd. Canon P J M Bryan

I am sorry I have not answered yours of the 11<sup>th</sup> September as I have been away in the country for a change ..... in a lovely part of Lincolnshire between Leadenham and Fulbeck a great view across those lovely fields for several miles. Yes, I am quite satisfied with what you have put in the Gazette re

my memories, I find it very interesting to look back on those wonderful days. I trust King's Cliffe is not to be spoilt with cars and lorries, etc. I think 'Cliffe is a wonderful place to live in, fairly clean and quiet.

Re Mr John Rate – the most I knew of him and his brother they were very select people and lived a very retired life (in the Hollow either side Rate's Lane). My sister Susan Pywell when she left school lived in as maid to help with their housework. The Rate brothers were very reserved. They used to have a field or two at Cook's Pits where they used to get a bit of shooting game, etc. .... I well remember Bonney's Hill, as it was called, where the (Old) Rectory was, also the rise from the Hollow called Windmill Hill because it came up to where the Windmill Inn was, with the great old Windmill, worked by Joseph Slingsby, down the yard there. You have a good photograph of the old Windmill in your collection.

Now for the pumps and wells of the old village. I think 'Cliffe had a very good supply of water those days. On Apethorpe Road there used to be a well in the gardens opposite the Cemetery gates for the few houses there. In Workhouse Lane there was a well for the houses there and on Bridge Street there was a (public) well and pump near the Wesleyan Chapel. Near the Mill Dam there was the Hall Well with beautiful spring water. On West Street there was a (public) pump against the Maltsters Arms. Folk went down Eagle Tavern Lane to fetch water from the Bee Well. There was another pump near the Traveller's Rest Inn and another pump near the Stanyon's house top end of West Street. On the Back Way both of the Butts houses had their own supply with a pump and then for Pig Lane there was a pump in the yard of John "Buzz" Nichols. Miss Sarah Law at Wellington House had her own supply. Park Street most had their own wells with pumps, but there was a (public) pump near Thomas Walker's butcher's shop. Then there was a good spring down Brock's Close and another in Dr Pink's field near the schools. People used to get their water for every purpose from these springs, fetching it with yokes and buckets. I hope this may be a little help to you, any further details I will be pleased to answer. I think your September Gazette is great.

Yours very sincerely,

J Roberts

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We continue with the 1973 manuscript.

In 1887 (Golden Jubilee of Queen Victoria) there was a Wheel Barrow Race from the Windmill in West Street down to the Cross up Park Street round by Miles' Wood Yard along back way, then down Pig Lane back to the Windmill Inn. This was won by my father James Roberts and I can remember him taking my brother and me back to our home up School Hill in the new barrow which he had won First Prize. Later I can remember the Mill Dam being cleaned out and all the mud being put on the banks from the Mill back to the Stone Bridge. Also I can remember the death of T J Law of Hall Farm (1898). It took 8 men to carry him to Church as he weighed 20 stone; he was a prominent man in the village, sadly missed by all. I often had pleasant rides in his pony trap going round his farm to open the gates for him and being given the large amount of 6d., a lot of money in those days. Many of us boys used to go spudding for Mr Wright of West Hay Farm, about 20 of us would go with our own spud hoes on a Saturday, from about 7.30 a.m. until 5.0 p.m. for 6d. per day. You took your own food and drink and one of his men used to walk behind us to see if we had missed any thistles. We used to like Mr Jim Moisey to look after us; he was very good to us, a good living old man. We also had Bill "Durrie" Cunnington but he was very severe with us.

In School Holidays we used to go with the men in the harvest fields leading the horses and bring the wagon loads of sheaves to the farm yards to be built into stacks. What a great joy it was to be with the horses and wagons and when the last load was taken in it used to parade the village with branches of trees, the men on top of the load and the villagers would throw buckets of water at them and all sing Harvest Home, people used to love it. Then to a good Harvest Supper all hot and steaming at one of the pubs. We used to finish our holidays by going to the Forest for nutting, for wood etc. Then back to school to meet the Headmaster William Brookes. He was very strict with us but we all loved him, a great man. When we were young boys my mother and father used to send

one of us across to the Almshouses up the steps to take Sunday dinner to Sylvia Elderkin. Those gardens were kept in good order and I can now smell the lovely flowers; the old people there were greatly respected. It was great fun for us to go to see the men washing the sheep near the stone bridge, as you go over the Hills and Holes [*the official sheep wash allotted in the Inclosure Award of 1813, J.B. Editor*]. One or two men stood on a barrel to hold the sheep while another would scrub their backs and give them a good soaking, after which they would be off to the field to drain. Shortly after that the sheep were shorn. Thomas James Law was the largest sheep owner. When the harvest fields were cleared and the corn taken to the stack yards, we used to go a- gleaning the cornfields. The farmers allowed us to go to glean what we could find, we used to take pillow cases, etc. and when these were full off home we went with it. Then after harvest we would take our gleanings to either the Water Mill or to the West Street Windmill, for the miller to grind. Mr Joseph Slingsby was miller at the Wind Mill. So we could make our own bread and the offals were to feed the pig. Most people kept a pig or two in the sty.

Somehow today people don't appreciate that lovely country life. Of course we didn't get all the attractions of today, but I think our lives were more contented and happy. We all used to look forward to 'Cliffe Feast which began the Sunday after the 25<sup>th</sup> July (*St James-the-Great Day, J.B. Ed*). There were two days of cricket, lunch under the trees on the left of the stile into the Cricket Field. Mr Libbeus Dixon supplied good lunches and teas. Those two days were great for us all, and ended with dancing on the Cricket pitch with either the 'Cliffe band or the Nassington band to supply the music. Then there would be a play in the Girls' school room in Park Street, many people used to come to that from other villages.

We boys and girls used to have great time watching the 'Cliffe Fire Brigade practising with the engine in the Mill Field, just over the stile there. The engine was kept in the shed in the Hall Yard, you can still see it there. Mr E "Teddy" Hawkes was engineer, the firemen under him were Lucas Blake the saddler, H Bailey, John Ventross Green the wood turner, Alf Eudall and several others. The engine was pumped by hand, 4 men each side. It was pulled by horses supplied by farmers. I remember following it one day to Apethorpe as two thatched houses there were on fire. I was playing truant that day and got a good reprimand next day at school. Several of us boys ran after the engine, we seemed to get a lot of farm yard fires at 'Cliffe, also corn fields alongside the railway line set on fire by sparks from the trains.

I also remember when Libbeus Dixon of the Golden Ball Inn used to brew his own beer in the brewhouse against Stanyon's Lane, now called Law's Lane. A Mr John Chapman used to brew beer for Mr T J Law at the Hall Farm. Mr Law's men used to have a large barrel of beer for their own use, what they called small beer, when they came home with their horses after ploughing, etc. Leading men of the village were Dr Pink, Dr Lewis, Mr George Miles, "Squire" H W Gist in West Street, also Revd. Du Pre, Rector. Then there were these: Lucas Wade, farmer at the far end of Park Street, W H Fane, landlord Cross Keys, Mr John Nibloe Hare, Mr Tom Cleave and Mr Sharpe, the gentlemen of Park Street, Mr Richard Brown and Mr Thomas Walker, butchers; Mr John Tom Bailey at the Post Office; Mr & Mrs John Groome Howes. At Wellington House there was Miss Sarah Law, sister to T J Law, a great and kind lady. She had two fine trees outside her back door, a quince and a medlar, these had excellent fruit, they were tended by her gardener John Chapman of the Butts. At Easter time she used to give us boys and girls oranges, etc. Another great day in the village was the first of May, with a May Pole. Most of us boys and girls would parade the village with our garlands; people used to give us coppers for it .....

What a great time we had when we started King's Cliffe Village Band in 1899 during the South African Boer War. We had Mr W Woolley for Band Master and started to learn in the (Old) Rectory Yard over the stables. We made too much noise there, so then we went to the Pitchill near the church. I remember the first March we played round the village was "God Bless the Prince of Wales"; after that we played for several weeks before Christmas carols and hymns at different stops. People used to give us a good welcome and after we improved we used to go to other villages. We always had a great welcome at Barnack Rectory where we would be given tea, I remember.

We boys used to amuse ourselves playing cricket and then football. We called our football team the Rush Hill Rovers because we played on some flat ground up Rush Hill and after a game we would go and drink at the Spa in that well (still there) near Cooks Pits. People used to say the water there was good because it had a lot of iron in it, good for the eyes also.

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## Part V

*Introductory note by Canon John Bryan:*

*In the summer of 1973 James Roberts and I spent a day or two walking the streets of King's Cliffe so that he could tell me what had been, or still were, the dwelling places in the King's Cliffe of his youth and who had lived in them, together with the work shops and other functional places. I think one can safely assume that his recollections are those of the period 1885 to 1910, with emphasis on the 1890's. Will the reader please remember that James is taking me back and forth across any one street as he tell his story, and that I am writing as we proceed. We start at the far end of Apethorpe Road near the present cemetery and then progress westwards towards the Cross at the village centre.*

First there were the two Misses Dennis living in the house now known as "The Walnuts" but then as "Park Villa". Above the present cemetery were allotments. In the old quarry Sam Roberts had standing for his timber drug, Gypsy Tom Smith made his winter quarters there as well. In the cottages on the north side of the road lived "Ducket" Taylor who had been a seafaring man. Then James Saunders, railwayman, and Joseph Roberts, forest worker. Mr George Miles' field came next with its footpath down to the Willowbrook and across to the Cricket Field. The level area at the bottom of this field was often used in summer time for horse races. Mrs Palmer and her daughter, Mary, who married the younger Joseph Slingsby, baker, in Park Street, lived in one of the next two-together cottages against the Law Almshouses. Across the road, where the Cornforth Homes are now, were the two thatched cottages where lived James Roberts, woodman, and father of James Roberts himself who was born there. In the other cottage lived George Coles, also a woodman, and grandfather of our James Roberts. The Cornforth Homes were erected 1891/2 by Mrs Cornforth of Birmingham. She had been a poor girl of King's Cliffe named Catherine Carrington. In what is now "Calvehay Cottage", then thatched, lived William Goodwin, gamekeeper for Thomas J Law. On the opposite side the Law and Hutcheson Almshouses – Mrs Foster occupied the Law Library House and a notable alms person was "Blind Mary" Harlock, a great singer in church who knew all the psalms and hymns by heart. School Hill in those days was much steeper and narrower. When the Cornforth Homes were built the steep grade was evened out so that now you can see the exposed rock on which Calvehay Cottage was built. George "Hoddy Doddy" Howes' ancient windmill once stood in the field behind that cottage and an ancient dovecot.

There were several cottages along Workhouse Lane. There were two at the far end at right angle to the lane which had been the old parish Poorhouse [*prior to the establishment of the Oundle Union Workhouse in 1836, J.B.*]. In Workhouse Lane lived Joe Smith, the fiddler, with his wife Eleanor; "Lilo" and "Pennix" Giddings, John Kirby and William "Durrie" Cunnington, all farm workers. On the opposite side at this time were the buildings which had been a maltings but at this time were a Fur and Skin Factory. Later, about 1896, Joseph and Robert Chapman, wheelwrights, from Apethorpe, turned them into large wagon and cart workshops with sawpits and a blacksmith's shop.

Once over the bridge, we had the Gas Works on the right and the Gas House where George Close the manager lived. Opposite stood about three or four very old thatched cottages, below the Wesleyan Chapel. Thomas Barnes, a shepherd, Mr Clifton a chimney sweep and Enoch Smith lived there. On the other side, just above the Gas Works, were two old thatched cottages stood on the street; "Grampy" Hill lived in one, James Kerfoot a woodman lived in the other. The street became quite full hereabouts; there was Coleman, painter and decorator who had the shop next to the chapel, Libbeus Dixon at the Golden Ball Inn, Athanasius Carrington in the next little house against the pub [*formerly the house and Mass-centre of the R.C. priest, the Revd. Wm Hayes, who died 11<sup>th</sup> July,*

1855, aged 81, after 52 years service in King's Cliffe, J.B. Ed.]. There were two houses actually in Stanyon's Lane (now Law's Lane), made out of the old Oratory of the Revd. William Law. In one of them lived Tommy "Dorky" Goodwin, horse keeper for Thomas Law. Just below the corner of Bridge Street, opposite side, was a shop kept by a Mrs Hand. Then right at the corner was the residence of Wm Raven, retired Excise Officer. His nephew was William Le Queux the writer who often stayed there and put King's Cliffe and the Forest into his books. As you turned into Hall Yard there were the two cottages on the rights [afterwards a barber's shop, J.B. Ed.] then two cottages since demolished in which lived a Gaudern and Wm Berridge. In the Yard itself there was first Hall Farm, home of Thomas J Law, then the Mill House with two small cottages built on to the lane side of the house, George Smith worked the Mill and had a bake house below the Mill and built on to it.

Now we start at the Post Office at the corner of West Street. At this time the Postmaster there was John Tom Bailey who also did telegrams and kept a general stores there. You can still see the slot for posting letters below the bay window there. Opposite was the Cross Keys Inn, kept by W H Fane, after him by Tom Fryer "Buck" Richardson. In the next house across the entry to the top stable yard lived William "Puff and Dart" Dixon, the Church Clerk and Parish Sexton. He had the job of ringing one of the church bells three times a day to let all know the time of day. Albert Bailey took the Post Office and shop after his father. A little brewing was done at the Cross Keys but Libbeus Dixon at the Golden Ball brewed all his beer. He had the freehold there, as his father Reuben had before him.

Moving up West Street there were the Gimber brothers, timber fellers, a Carrington who was a cattle drover, Mr Wm Wootton who owned thrashing tackle, Mr John Bailey at the Turner's Arms, then Mr C Gregory at the house with the carriage entry, against Gaudern's Lane. In what is called "Englands" lived Mr & Mrs Gilford, connected by marriage with T J Law. Then Mr H Bailey's turner's shop then the Revd. Edward Du Pre, Rector, at the Rectory. Down Gaudern's Lane and in Woodcock's Pitchill, John Ventross Green had his turner's shop. On the west side there was the Maltster's Arms with a parish pump at its front, kept by George Weatherington. Next was John Saunders, a railwayman, in a little cottage, and then through the next entry was John Skinner's bakehouse. Vine House was next, lived in by a Bailey. The tall house was called "Clive House" and there lived Mr Henry Westenra Gist. He came from Wormington Grange in Gloucestershire. Mrs Du Pre was his sister and when Rector Du Pre retired from 'Cliffe in 1896 he went back to Wormington and died there soon after.

Here we are on "Bonney's Hill" (named after Archdeacon Bonney, Rector of 'Cliffe 1810-1862) and we come to the "Hollow" just before the rise of "Windmill House". They are not really hills but it is nice to keep the old King's Cliffe names. In the Hollow were John, William and George Rate, living in the two houses, one thatched, either side of Rate's Lane. Then old Elijah Dixon, a great Liberal, had a small cottage and general shop against the main gate into the large "King's Cliffe House" where Mr & Mrs John Groome Howes lived. Opposite was a grocery shop, kept by Mr Bonfield first, then by a Mr Fryer. The next long fronted house was a school for young ladies, Drayton House, run by the Misses Fryer. Later William Dainty lived there when he retired from West Hay Farm. Next to it came Henry Weatherington and then, where there is the entry to an old farm yard and barns the house where much later a John Setchell lived.

Back to the Windmill Inn on the other side of the road. First Charles Catlin kept the Windmill Inn then next to it was a farrier and blacksmith who was named William Lattimore. Across the road was the workshop and thatched house of Henry Davison the tailor. Next door was Mrs William Walker, widow. She was the wife of William Walker who had been a currier. Her daughter Bertha married Fred Edgson the grocer at Park Street. Against the Wheel Inn there was the blacksmithy of George Saddington, but before this there was first the shop of William Eayres "Tittie" Burrows, he was a tailor and shop keeper; second, the Kingston brothers' bakehouse.

Starting again at Mr Richard Brown's butchery [now no 43 West St], there were two cottages next to it, John Wakelin lived in one. Then the very old farmhouse which Frederick Henry Broughton had next to the top Chapel. Where the Co-op is now were two cottages, on the corner of Eagle Lane and here lived a James Sharpe and James Binder Skinner, I think he was a stonemason for the railway. Half way down Eagle Lane there was a beer shop called Eagle Tavern, kept by a George Dixon. Then came the large house now called the Manor House and here lived the great Doctor Frederick Dain. He was the leading doctor of the village and had practised in 'Cliffe for over upwards of fifty

years when he died in 1890. You can still see his memorial cross at the very corner of the (south) funeral path of the church.

After the lane is the cottage where John Close, father of George Close, lived. He was a shoemaker. Then came the house set back from the road with its barn of Mr John Mays. He was the fellmonger of the district. After that came the ancient cottage of John Roberts the village carrier; it is nice to see how this cottage has been preserved and done up. Then there were quite a few cottages either side of the road, here at what we used to call "West End". There was Charles "Robino" Goodwin, a butcher's man so well known in the village; William Kingston at the Traveller's Rest, Paddy Wragby, Henry and Emma Britten; George Goodwin, William "Bildad" Britten, James "Poddler" Sharpe, Mrs Charlotte Smith lived hereabouts; she had a timber drug business along with John Henry Goodwin her son. They stabled the horses up their yard in the old Zion Chapel and kept the drugs in the yard on to the Back Way. Next was Henry Harker the joiner for Stokes of Park Street, then John Harlock the crippled shoemaker and mender, Charles Stanyon, retired ironmonger and a big Top Chapel man opposite [*Congregational Chapel in West St.*]. Nearly all the houses at this West End were thatched in those days and there were two such thatched cottages on the wide greensward which sat at right angle to the street and which caused the street here to be quite narrow. [*This narrow stretch had once had the west gate into the Open Fields of King's Cliffe, probably removed at the Inclosure in 1813, J.B. Ed.*]

Also at West End lived such people as Jeff Henson, Isaiah Smith, "Bush" Hector and Tom Coles the roadman. Going on to the Back Way from West End you came, first on your left to the "Big Butts", where John Fox a gardener lived and then to the "Little Butts" where John Chapman, gardener and greenhouse man lived. Further along on your right and near the back entry to the Travellers Rest were three cottages, now gone, where George "Marter" Goodwin, the mole catcher, lived also Tom Blake and "Bildad" Britten. But now we go back to where Pig Lane turns off West Street at the Maltsters Arms.

At that time Pig Lane had houses on both sides. There were thatched cottages on the right, William Wootton's house first on your left then a block of three brick built houses and at the very top an old ruined barn [*formerly the old National School for Boys, a Church School managed by the Rectors from 1812 to 1867, J.B. Ed.*]. Mr Wootton kept his thrashing tackle and engine near his house. Also in the lane lived John "Buzz" Nicholls engine driver and wood sawyer, William Sharpe the Collyweston slater, Edw. Blake and R Gore. Then at Wellington House sometimes called The Dial House because of its sundial on the main chimney lived Miss Sarah Law. She was the sister of Thomas Law and he made use of the barns and yard there for his farming. In those days Pig Lane was very narrow and so was the Back Way which is now called Wood Road, but never then.

Now to Park Street starting from the Cross. On your right "The Fisheries" where Doctor Thomas Lewis lived and Dr Thomas Pink. Next to them Edward Edgson had his grocer's shop and tailoring business. You can still see his name in the threshold there. T Goodwin was in the lane there, as the coachman for the Doctors he would answer the Night Bell which hung in the gable end of their house. There were many cottages in Park Street, many of them thatched in those days, particularly after the corner at John Ellis the chemist's shop. At the School House there was Mr W Brookes, Head Master for the Boys and Mrs Brookes for the Girls. Next to them was Joseph Slingsby with his bakehouse. Soon after that was Ellis the chemist at the corner. Back down the street there was the Conservative Reading Room then Mr W Sharpe at what much later was Lib. Dixon's home and much later in our time the Post Office with Mr Gilder, Wm Sharpe was very much the gentleman. Then came the workshops and house of William Bollans [*now Bumblebee Cottage*], he was a wood turner in a big way and employed several expert turners. Then came the three Thorpe Almshouses. Back on the other side we must not forget Lucas Blake's house and saddlery (*now "Boscobel"*), with the entry to Brock's Close next. Glebe Farm was after the corner on the other side with Coleman's yard just before it. There were several homes up this yard, Messrs Coleman and Pell had their turner's business up there. After Glebe Farmhouse, which Thomas Miles had, there were cottages, "Tatty" Herson, a stonemason, lived in one of them. Then came the butcher's shop of Thomas Walker. This had a yard at the back with its entry from Back Way and the slaughterhouse. After Ellis's shop came cottages with men such as Mr Bosette the painter and decorator, who worked for Teddy Hawkes, Mr E Dolby a gardener and Mr Fred Culpin a shepherd and horsekeeper. Next was the big yard and



workshops of Mr Charles Stokes, this was a big business making carriages, wagons, carts and vans, undertaking etc., employing a lot of skilled men. Later on Charles Stokes and his son Frederick Stokes went bankrupt and then the business was taken on by Mr Fred Portess. Mr Henry Harker was employed here as carpenter. Mr Arthur Robins was farrier and blacksmith here when F Portess had the business. Further up the street on that side was Levi Dixon, notable turner and carver with his workshop, then came the Wheatsheaf Inn kept by Charles Sharpe who was also farm foreman for Mr Smalley at Huskisson's Lodge. After that there was Robert Little a boot and shoemaker, then his son Robert Little who was fishmonger. Fred Rate lived in a cottage near to the Rosary Yard and in the Rosary Farm lived Mr Lucas Wade. When he died his widow kept on the farm herself until she married John House from Peterborough. His father had been gardener for Archdeacon Bonney many years before, now he himself made the famous rose gardens here at Rosary Farm. On the opposite side and on the corner of Royce's Lane was the house and business premises of Mr E J "Teddy" Hawkes. He was a builder, plumber, glazier, painter and decorator, Engineer of the 'Cliffe Fire Brigade, a big man in the Church Choir, etc. In the next house towards the Red Lion Inn was Mr Alfred Eudall the veterinary surgeon for the village. Tom Fryer Richardson kept the Red Lion Inn, then there was an old thatched house in which lived Tom Clarke and his son Obadiah Clarke. After that was a large dignified ancient house in which Mr George Miles the timber merchant lived, you can still see its large gate pillars there at the front of "Rockbourne". George Miles had the old house demolished in 1900 and his new house called "Rockbourne" built in its place. Next to Rockbourne was the large timber yard for Miles's business, this employed many men. It had an engine house and steam saws. John "Buzz" Nicholls was the engine man. There would be a good many trees stacked here at any one time. At this corner was the road up to the Railway Station and Mr Wm Dean was the Station Master, living in the Station House. He was a prominent churchman. Royce's Lane had that name because Royce the plumber and glazier had his business there before Teddy Hawkes came into it after his master Mr Royce.

We finish off with houses, etc. on the Back Way and with the various lodges. On Back Way there was the long building which had been the Salvation Army Barracks for King's Cliffe. In one of the houses end on to the road lived "Bobby" Brown, shepherd for T J Law and in the little house at the corner of Royce's Lane lived Jim "Tit" Dixon, a notable 'Cliffe character. On Church Lane [*Church Walk*] W Woolley lived in the gardener's house, he was in charge of those beautiful gardens which Mr & Mrs Howes had there, reaching down to the Willowbrook. Much further along just after "The Bee" bank was Malting Terrace with 4 or 5 poorish houses, J Moisey lived there, I remember. [*The "Bee" or "Bay" is the very ancient dam which held up water both to flood the adjacent meadows both for fish stocks in winter and to give an early flush of much needed grass in early spring time, all this in mediaeval and later times of the Open Field agriculture of our village. Up river of the Bay we still have two fields called "The Fish Pools", J.B. Ed]. West Hay farm was farmed by Mr William Dainty, his farm foreman was Rowland Knight. At Law's Lawn there lived J Mason, a farm-foreman to T J Law who owned the Lawn. Way out towards the forest was the ancient Keeper's Lodge for the forest, a gamekeeper called John Guttridge lived there. At Huskisson's Lodge on the Stamford Road was Mr Smalley, farmer, and in the cottage lived the Sauntson family.*

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