

PRESS CUTTINGS AND ODDS AND ENDS

Local Press - "Two cottages were bought by Major Dimsdale in Meesden for £750 - date unknown.

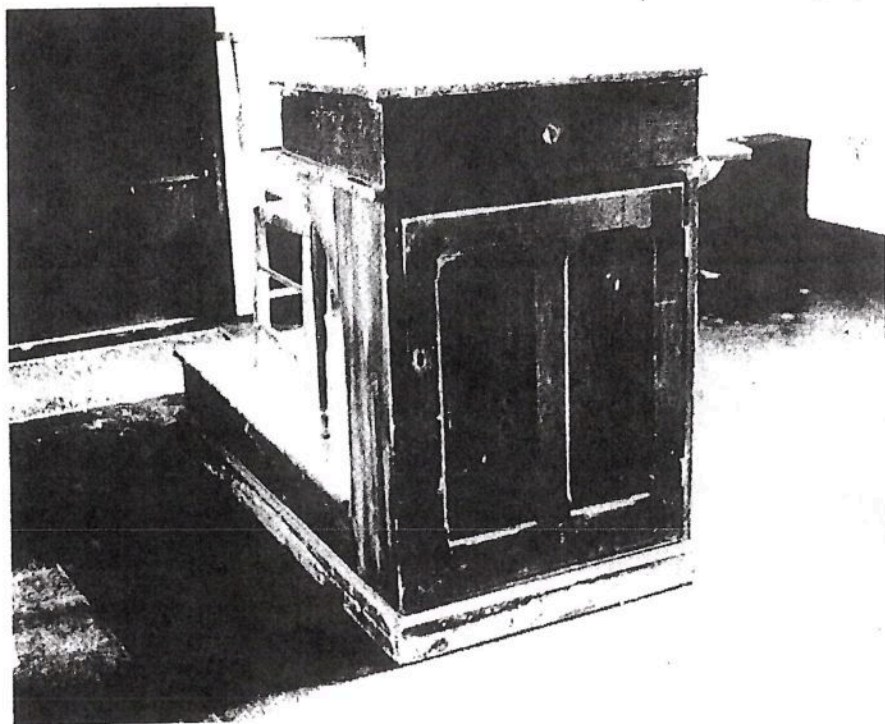
Local Press - Sale of Mill Field (5½ acres) in Meesden for £900 in 1964.

Herts and Essex Observer - "Three killed as Airliner Crashes in Flames. At about 11.15am on Tuesday 1st April 1958 a Hermes four engined airliner crashed and caught fire in a field at Manor Farm, Meesden. The plane, owned by Skyways Ltd, was on a test flight from Stansted Airport."

Royston Crow - August 16th 1974

"Every household in Brent Pelham, Meesden and Anstey will be asked to fill in a detailed form with such questions as how often they use public transport, where they travel to, why they don't use buses more frequently, whether they find services reliable and what improvements they would like to see."

The existing water pipes were replaced through the three villages during 1989-90, and we were finally connected in September 1990.



The Schoolmistress' Desk  
(still in the Parish Room)



Walker's Farmhouse



Manor Farm

## CENSUSES

The first census was recorded in 1841, from which we gleaned the following information. Most of the occupations were connected with agriculture.

Farmers	2
Agricultural labourers	29/30
Gamekeeper	1
Farrier	1
Servants	7
Army	1
Victualler	1
Clergyman	1

There were 92 males, 89 females, 37 inhabited dwellings and 1 uninhabited dwelling.

Within the next ten years the occupations increased and there was now a thatcher, a shoemaker, a housekeeper, a shepherd, a cowman and a bailiff. The word pauper appears in this census, perhaps an unemployed person. As the village school had not been built and scholars were also mentioned, presumably they were taught at Rectory Farm where there was a school room.

In 1851 the population was 185. The 'traders' were listed as:

Charles Brand	Farmer
Joseph Martin	Farmer
William Morris	'Beehive'
Ellen Pomfret (Mrs)	Farmer
Betsy Robinson (Mrs)	Mistress of Church School
William Rolfe	Farmer
John Smith	Carpenter
Edward Watson	Farmer
William Watson	Farmer

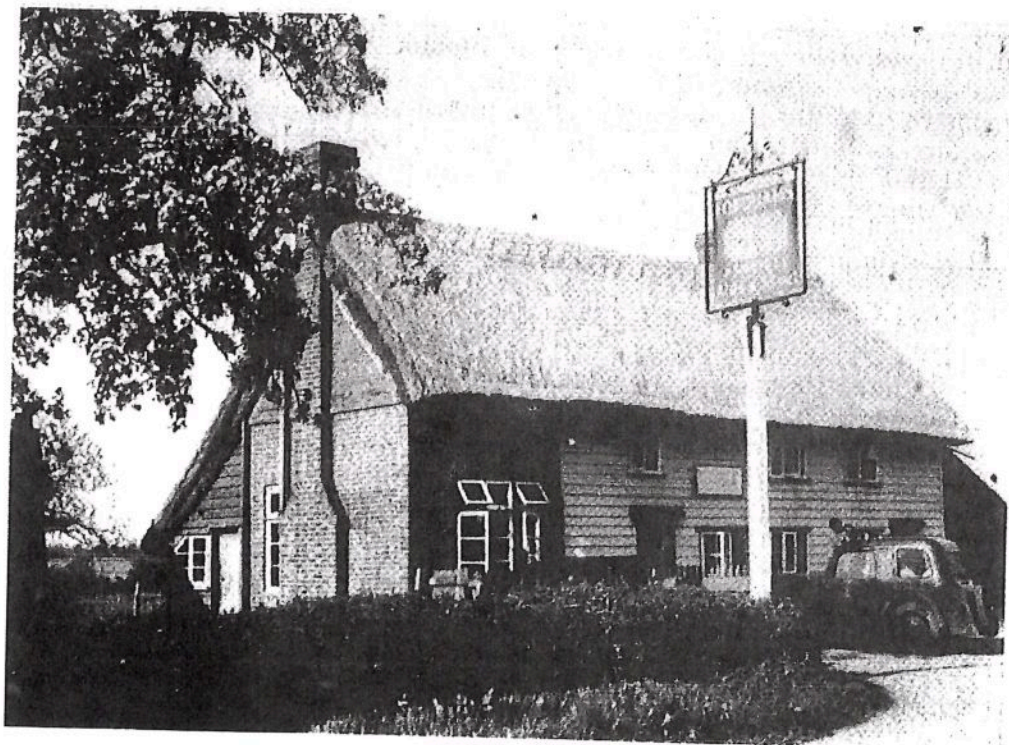
The Living was a rectory, value £229. Rev Armytage Gausson was the Rector.

Between 1861 and 1871 the number of scholars had increased from 18 to 36 and the number of houses from 36 to 41. It was noted that, although the number of houses had increased by five since 1841, the total number of residents had remained the same.

By 1871 the Beehive and Fox Public Houses were mentioned by name.

The census of 1881 was the last we were allowed to peruse so it is worth a special mention. The number of occupied houses remained at 42, but the occupations had altered considerably. They now included an engine driver, police constable, coachman, gardener, draper, carter and a national school mistress.

If we were allowed a look at the census of 1991 we would find a vast difference in the occupations. There are now four residents who actually work in the village, two farmers, an architect and a part-time gamekeeper.



The Beehive Public House  
(date unknown)

ITEMS FROM HERTFORDSHIRE SESSION ROLLS REFERRING TO MEESDEN

1623 The inhabitants of Anstye (Anstey) stand indicted for not repairing some two miles of common highway, and it was to be considered that other towns should contribute towards the amending of the said highway, Measden being one of them.

1648 Order that the constables of Meesden be bound over to the next Sessions to answer for not paying 3s:4d to William Nutting, one of the High Constables of the Edwinstree 100, towards the repair of Wadesmill Bridge and the 18s:4d for the gaol King's Bench and Marshalsea.

1649 Anthony Creed and Lewis Chapman sworn petty constables of Meesden in the places of Richard Osling and Robert Pomfret.

1653 Order that the churchwardens and overseers of Meesden shall provide for Mary Creed a bastard child in the keeping of one James Bawcock all arrears due to him for keeping the said child or show good cause to the contrary.

1653 The differences between James Bawcock of Meesdon and the inhabitants thereof are referred to various justices.

1657 Upon the complaint of Mr Francis Rawley of Brent Pelham, concerning many felonies and thefts committed there orders are issued to the petty constables and head boroughs of several parishes (Meesden being one of them) to make diligent search for stolen goods etc.

1661 Indictment of John Freeman of Meesden for keeping John Oliver as an inmate in his mansion there.

1661 Presentment. That William Herbert of Meesden, husbandman, received John Oliver as an inmate.

1664 That a cartway in Meesden leading towards the town is in decay and that the inhabitants of the same ought to repair it.

1667 Licence granted to Isaac Totman to keep an alehouse in Meesden.

1671 That the highway leading from Meson (Meesden) to Voyolett Lane, in Brent Pelham Parish, is in bad repair and ought to be mended by the same parish.

1676 Presentment "of the widdow Osburn" of the Parish of Meesden "for not keeping her ditch with scouring which is in the lane, which leadeth from Meesdon to Puttock, and which causeth the lane to be out of repair".

1682 Among a long list of non-attenders at church were George Hill and his wife of Meesden, labourer, Francis Rossington and his wife of Meesden, labourer.

1693 ..... "the court appoints George Banston of Meesden and .... to be county surveyors".

ITEMS FROM HERTFORDSHIRE SESSION ROLLS REFERRING TO MEESDEN

1623 The inhabitants of Anstye (Anstey) stand indicted for not repairing some two miles of common highway, and it was to be considered that other towns should contribute towards the amending of the said highway, Measden being one of them.

1648 Order that the constables of Meesden be bound over to the next Sessions to answer for not paying 3s:4d to William Nutting, one of the High Constables of the Edwinstree 100, towards the repair of Wadesmill Bridge and the 18s:4d for the gaol King's Bench and Marshalsea.

1649 Anthony Creed and Lewis Chapman sworn petty constables of Meesden in the places of Richard Osling and Robert Pomfret.

1653 Order that the churchwardens and overseers of Meesden shall provide for Mary Creed a bastard child in the keeping of one James Bawcock all arrears due to him for keeping the said child or show good cause to the contrary.

1653 The differences between James Bawcock of Meesdon and the inhabitants thereof are referred to various justices.

1657 Upon the complaint of Mr Francis Rawley of Brent Pelham, concerning many felonies and thefts committed there orders are issued to the petty constables and head boroughs of several parishes (Meesden being one of them) to make diligent search for stolen goods etc.

1661 Indictment of John Freeman of Meesden for keeping John Oliver as an inmate in his mansion there.

1661 Presentment. That William Herbert of Meesden, husbandman, received John Oliver as an inmate.

1664 That a cartway in Meesden leading towards the town is in decay and that the inhabitants of the same ought to repair it.

1667 Licence granted to Isaac Totman to keep an alehouse in Meesden.

1671 That the highway leading from Meson (Meesden) to Voyolett Lane, in Brent Pelham Parish, is in bad repair and ought to be mended by the same parish.

1676 Presentment "of the widdow Osburn" of the Parish of Meesden "for not keeping her ditch with scouring which is in the lane, which leadeth from Meesdon to Puttock, and which causeth the lane to be out of repair".

1682 Among a long list of non-attenders at church were George Hill and his wife of Meesden, labourer, Francis Rossington and his wife of Meesden, labourer.

1693 ..... "the court appoints George Banston of Meesden and .... to be county surveyors".

1702 Order dismissing the appeal of Braughing against a warrant removing John Patmore from Meesden. He had been a servant with .... Davies of Braughing, farmer.

1708 Order that the County Treasurer shall pay £100 to .... and Mr George Banson of Meesden for rebuilding Ford Bridge.

1734 Order allowing the appeal of Yardley against a warrant removing William Hansell, and Mary his wife from Meesden.

1736 Order allowing the appeal of Wallington against a warrant removing John, the son of John Clarke and his wife Elizabeth from Meesden.

1754 Order that £700 of public money shall be raised in the county by a proportionate rate and distributed. (Meesden would have received £1.19.1d).

1756 Order dismissing the appeal of Barkway against removing James Wright and Mary his wife from Meesden. (He had been a servant with Edward Kimpton of Barkway, yeoman, at wages of £3 per annum).

1764 Indictment of William Chappell of Meesden, labourer, for stealing two turkeys to the value of 7s, one drake 6d and one duck 6d. Found guilty and ordered to be transported for seven years.

1784 The issue of game certificates began in this year.

1807 Maintenance order. Mary Brooks of Meesden, spinster, and William Willes of St John, Hertford, a turnkey at the gaol, for their daughter Rebecca.

1811 Maintenance Order. Elizabeth Richards of Meesden, spinster, and John Clayden of Clavering, co. Essex, labourer, for their daughter Lydia.

1816 An ancient highway leading from Meesden through Brent Pelham and to the village of Furneux Pelham, part of which through Brent Pelham, is in decay and that the inhabitants of Brent Pelham ought to repair the same.

1823 Indictment. William Appleton of Meesden, labourer, for stealing a gallon of ale, value 1s from James Clark, farmer.

1827 William Halden, miller, and Daniel Brand, farmer, both of Meesden to keep the peace.  
James Clark of Brent Pelham and William Ansell of Meesden, labourers, fined 12s each for ill-treating a sheep.

1828 Richard Brooks and James Flack, both of Meesden, servants, sentenced to two months hard labour for leaving their service before their contracts were completed.

1833-43 Indictment. Elizabeth, wife of John Dellow of Meesden, labourer, for stealing a maple pole, value 1d from William Hayden, farmer. (One week in gaol).  
Conviction.

Vagrant. John Evans of Meesden (1 month hard labour)  
Thomas Brown of Meesden (2 weeks and 1 day hard labour)  
John Downie of Meesden (1 month and 2 days hard labour)

Taken from Hertford Records. Calendar to the Session Books.

Edited by W Le Hardy and Geoffrey L Reckitt.



Meesden Village Well Circa 1900

Mary Robinson (nee Carmen)  
(Lizzie's mother)

Lizzie Robinson

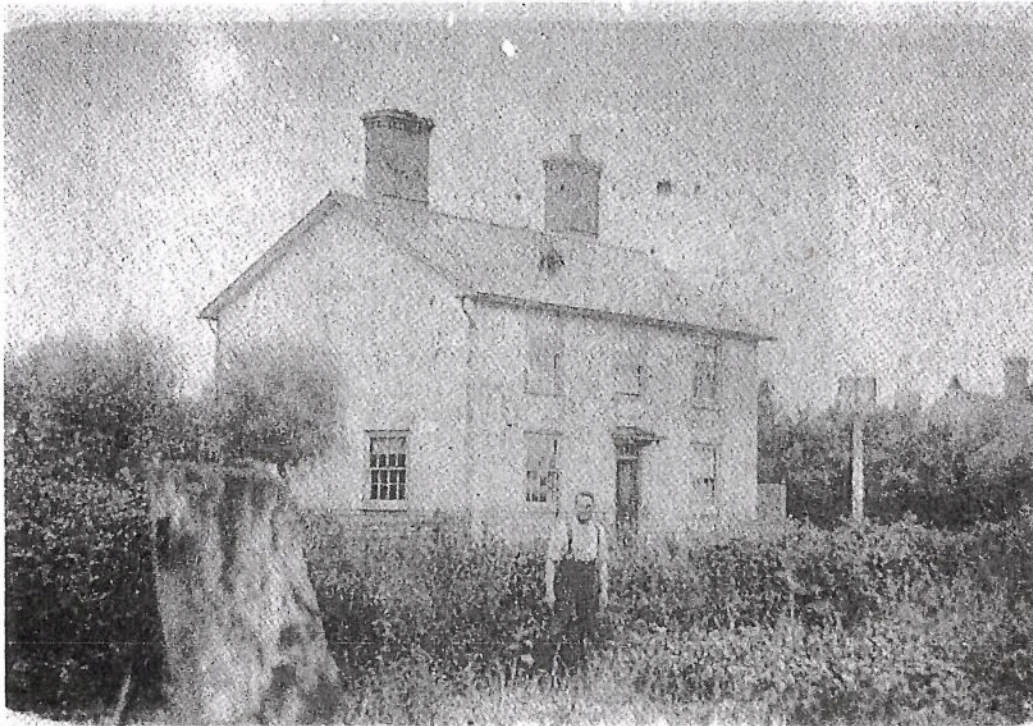
Mrs Dodkin  
(Grannie)

## THE FOX PUBLIC HOUSE

Isaac Totman was the alehouse keeper in Meesden in 1667 and Francis Rowlington in 1711. The origin of the Fox is unknown with all early references describing it only as a cottage and it is not shown as licensed premises on a map of 1840. Mr John Philips of Royston acquired it in 1855 and it later became a Rayment's house before the amalgamation with Green King. Some cottages adjoining the pub were incorporated into it in 1958.

Josiah and Mary Robinson were licensees before the first world war. During the past fifty years licensees have included; Mr and Mrs Bill Dyer, Mr and Mrs Francis Sell and Mr and Mrs Chris Wilson. When the Fox closed in 1980 the licensee was Mrs Violet Prosser who was helped by her husband Tom.

Information from W Branch Johnson's book "Hertfordshire Inns" and from a press cutting.



The Fox Public House  
(date unknown)

## WARTIME REMINISCENCES

Nuthampstead Aerodrome (as used in the 1939-45 war). Construction began in 1942 on 365 acres. It was first used by a fighter group, the Eighth Airforce in September 1943. In April 1944 the B17 Fortress group was stationed there. The airmen flew 195 operations during the next twelve months.

"I worked on the camp at Nuthampstead. It was hard work, very hard work clearing up in the library. The Americans had too much money. We were taken to work in an old taxi by Tibbles at the Beehive".

"Lots of young fellas were in the Home Guard. My brother was in. They drilled with Brent Pelham and Meesden and Anstey. Workers were on the land so they were not in the army. We also had the Land Army Here".

"My sister and three little girls went with us to Alma Cottage for company when there was an air raid. Jerry dropped flares and it was like daylight. We heard the ack-ack and bombs ..... it was terrifying as we watched dog fights. We saw planes, flying fortresses, come back over the Beehive with parts shot away".

"The GI's bought rusty old bikes. Some women had a good time".

"The English army was down there (at Smaley Lodge), and the Canadians. I was asleep at the Beehive and heard the doodlebug cut out and there was a huge bang".

"The Americans moved out the day after the bomb fell".

"There were German and Italian prisoners of war there. Eric drove them onto farms to work".

"We used to have lovely times in the war because we were such a close knit family. It used to be terrifying because often we stood in the garden and saw a dog fight and tracer bullets. The fighters came and dropped flares for the bombers to come and drop bombs because they knew Nuthampstead was there".

Some facts about the wartime use of the Manor (Smaley Lodge). The British army had a driving school there with trucks and motor cycles. The soldiers changed over every two weeks. After that there were the engineers. They printed maps. When they left it was empty for a while. Then the American Military Police came. They built a concrete roadway and had a detention camp where the plantation is. The prisoners were taken on route marches and the sergeants rode bicycles. The trustees had red tags on their arms. After the Yanks there were Italian prisoners of war. Dozens of them used to stroll round Meesden. Then there were German prisoners. It was used by Displaced Persons between 1947 and 1948. The women

were at Letchworth but they were brought together at the weekends.

"We had a pig at the top of the garden. We had to give up our meat coupons. Jim's mother made butter and we got milk from there. We turned the handle to separate the milk from the cream".

"I went to Meesden school during the war. My mum taught there (Ken Thorogood). The school was opened because of the refugees. We had two".

"Nippy's uncle had a little hut in the woods at Scales Park. A Liberator landed at Scales with bullet holes in it, before it was an airport".



Ernest Wilson (Nippy)  
Died February 1992 Aged 71 Years  
Photographed 1980

EXCERPTS FROM MINUTE BOOK OF THE PARISH OF MEESDEN 1894-1983

The Local Government Act, 1894, stated that the annual assembly of the parish meeting shall be held on 25th day of March or within 7 days before or after that day.

At the annual meeting of the Parish of Meesden on March 25th 1894 the following items were on the agenda. Mr Samuel Kimsey of The Rectory Farm was appointed overseer of the poor. John Shaw and Sons were paid 16s.3d for cost of minute book. Thomas Tinworth of Brent Pelham was paid £3.6s.6d for work done to the well.

In the following years there was concern about repairs needed to the well. At a special meeting held in January 1902 it was proposed "that all householders using the village well should be called upon to contribute one shilling a year towards maintaining the well in good repair and that any further expense incurred should be paid out of the rates". The overseer (treasurer?) was ordered to pay Mr C Johnson £3.5s.0 for repairs to the well. In the same year at the annual assembly there was a list of "voluntary contributions in payment to the overseer under agreement made in 1901...."

Mr Prime	£1. 2. 6½
Baron Dimsdale	16. 7½
Rev H Cockerton	11. 3
Mr Kimsey	4. 6¾
Mr Wisbey	4. 3
Mr Lawrence	3. 0
Mr Watson	3. 0
Mr Johnson	1. 8
Mr Bentley	1. 4½
	<u>£3. 7. 9½</u>

£3.0.0 was paid to Mr Kimsey, the balance was held by him in reserve".

1903 It was decided that the well buckets which had "received rough treatment" ought to be replaced.

1906 "Mr Cockerton said that both he and Baron Dimsdale were sorry that Meesden cottagers took so little trouble to exhibit garden produce at the Pelham and District Cottage Flower Show".

1907 "It was suggested that a notice board be placed outside the Parish Room".

1919-22 "A discussion was held on the question of sites for the cottages proposed to be erected at Meesden by the District Council. Two sites were selected:

- 1) ground the property of Mr Newman and Baron Dimsdale lying between cottage occupied by Mr Martin and the school; and
- 2) meadow the property of Baron Dimsdale's trustees opposite the school".

1923 "Town Close Charity ....that all married couples residing in the parish for one year should receive a share which amounted to 2s.2½d per couple".

1924 "The Parish Meeting objects most strongly to the proposed Saturday half holyday for the postman engaged on the afternoon collection in this Parish".

1933 Two representatives were chosen "to meet Housing Committee with a view of selecting the most desirable site for erection of cottages suitable for agricultural workers".

1934 "the most probable site for the cottages would be in Fox Meadow".

"the question of the school buildings should be deferred for six months".

"the railings round the school garden could now be removed".

1943 Braughing Rural District Council asked "if any additional cottages would be required after the war. After discussion it was decided that no cottages would be needed".

1951 "Mr Thorogood asked if further action could be taken to have a telephone call box erected in the village".

1952 An Extraordinary Parish Meeting was held in February in order "to consider the offer by Major Dimsdale to convey to Trustees on behalf of the village, the school land and buildings". After discussion the offer was accepted and Major Dimsdale "was heartily thanked for his very generous offer".

In April at the Annual Meeting the following resolution was agreed. "That this meeting approve in view of existing circumstances, of the proposed amalgamation of the parishes of Brent Pelham with Meesden and Anstey". The circumstances mentioned were the pending retirement of the Rev Slater and the fact that Brent Pelham and Meesden would only be able to offer £311 pa to the new incumbent. Therefore it was resolved that the three villages amalgamate.

Also at this meeting it was proposed that the money from the Town Close Charity should be distributed to each of 31 persons the sum of 1s.2½d.

1956 It was agreed that there would be no automatic distribution of funds and the charity money "will be used to relieve any cases of hardship which may arise in the village".

1957 Alterations to the County Electoral Divisions were proposed and "it was suggested that .... Braughing Rural District should form one electoral division with one

representative thus giving .... the community direct representation.

1958 A village committee was formed to deal with the upkeep of the Parish Room and village green. At another meeting in 1958 the demolition of the school buildings was discussed but a decision "should be deferred".

1959 It was decided to repair, by voluntary labour, the old school building.

1961 As no tenant could be found for the land at Town Close, it was proposed that the land be sold with planning permission for one house. A circular "was deposited with every householder setting out the situation regarding Town Close".

1963 The land was sold for £750 which, after expenses, left £631.2.4 for investment.

1964 Baron Dimsdale "explained the scheme proposed for vesting the ownership of the Parish Room in the Trustee for Public Charities who would hold it in perpetuity for a Committee of Management of the village". The following year the documents had been received and signed.

1967-68 The village green was registered as Commonland under the Commons Registration Act 1965.

1968 There was a flourishing Youth Club held every week in the Parish Room.

1969 Nuthampstead had been included by the Roskill Commission as a possible site for London's Third Airport. An action committee was formed to promote propaganda and fund raising to help the Nuthampstead Preservation Association.

1972 The Youth Club was disbanded. The Meesden, Anstey and Brent Pelham Over 60's Club was in existence and would meet in the Parish Room. Concern was expressed at "the decision to downgrade the Herts & Essex Hospital and transfer many of its functions to Harlow".

1973 After requests from the Parish Meeting, the ditches in the village had been cleared. Rose Cottages had had protective spraying.

1974 Elm Cottages were sprayed. A volunteer working party had planted trees in December 1973. Mr Harold Smith volunteered to get a supply of paint and to spray the weatherboarding. Several trees had suffered due to prolonged drought. It was proposed that a joint Parish Council should be formed with Brent Pelham.

1977 The Joint Parish Council was now in operation, with three representatives from Meesden. Fund raising events were taking place to provide activities on Jubilee Day. Meesden's special event would be a service in Meesden Church followed by tea at Meesden Hall, by kind permission of Mr and Mrs Tyler. It was hoped to provide each child in the three villages with a Jubilee mug. Sports and free tea were planned to take place at Brent Pelham Hall.

1978 Mr Prosser (landlord at The Fox) was thanked for "all the good work instigated and encouraged" by him in getting the pond dredged and tidied.

1980 It was hoped that name signs for the village would be erected soon.

A Table Tennis Club met weekly in the Parish Room. An electric cooker had been installed in the Parish Room. An "Up Market Sale, Christmas Draw and Pie and Punch Evening" helped with the funds. An enquiry was made as to whether the Water Authority would improve the water pressure.

1981 Name signs "had been installed, not really including the entire village, but at the compromise points agreed". The Table Tennis Club was flourishing with about fifteen members. The cost was 35p per session including coffee. A Summer Fair was to be held in the garden of Walkers Farmhouse. Mr and Mrs Simpson were working hard to muster attractions. "It was very quickly decided not to enter the Best Kept Village Competition". It was proposed that a pink chestnut be planted on the former bonfire site to celebrate the Royal Wedding. Mr Robert Dimsdale explained to the meeting about the pheasant shooting syndicate. He was "anxious that this should not prevent the people of Meesden from using the pathways for walking".

1982 There had been a brief run of a Keep Fit Club.

1983 Mr Berriff announced his retirement as a councillor. He had been a tireless worker for Meesden holding the posts of chairman, secretary and treasurer at various times. Mr Finney had, at his own expense, provided and planted a red chestnut tree on The Green. A petition was drawn up to complain about the poor water pressure "whenever there was a period of only a few weeks without rain". A successful Garden Party had been held at Westley Farm, kindly hosted by Mr and Mrs Pigg. Meesden Market - an event to be held on The Green in June. "It was planned to have a wide variety of stalls and side shows".

REMINISCENCES BY RESIDENTS PAST AND PRESENT

"I left school and went straight into service as a kitchen maid at Smaley Lodge. I lived in servants' quarters with a half a day off each week and one Sunday afternoon every two weeks. Then I went to Meesden Hall (the old rectory) as a housemaid which was one step up. I got up at seven o'clock and took tea all round".

"We had camp meetings on the village green. The Chapel parson spoke. Once a month we met on the village green opposite Mrs Welch's (Home Farm) with an organ and had chapel hymns and talks. We sat cross legged. It was somewhere to go. It was really good that was".

"We had a Maypole and had the time of our lives. That was opposite the Fox (public house). We made daisy chains for the May Queen for her wrists, head and ankles".

"There were lovely wild milk maids, orchids and daffodils down towards the Manor".

"There was a stable next to the Beehive. Long ago horses were kept there. Dad kept turkeys for Christmas in there. We went to the Georges and Welches for milk in a can. I fetched it home (The Beehive) on a fairy cycle".

"Granny made her own bright yellow butter in a butter churn and made butter pats. She lived at Alma Cottage. They had a pony and trap to take people out".

"We went to Buntingford by pony and trap, then Drayton's buses started up and went to Bishop's Stortford on Monday and Tuesday, Royston on Wednesday, and London on Thursday and Friday".

"Mr Savage came from Buntingford on his bike with a big box with underclothes and towels and things. We loved to look through his box and pick things out. We called him 'The Pack Man'".

"Cyril Westwood lived at Alma Cottage. He had a shed at the top of the garden and mended boots and shoes".

"We got our water from the well on the Green except after rain because we had a land drain. I used to come to the well with an old pram with an old tank tied on. Then fill it up and push it back to the Beehive. The roads were rough and I spilt a lot of it. We used pond water for washing".

"We moved to Elm Cottage in 1947 when they were built. We had electricity then".

"When we had heavy snow, you could fall in the ditches. Ivy's house (Mill House) couldn't be seen because of drifts".

"There was a pond near the water tower where we got water for wash day".

"The old Baron lived at Smaley Lodge. He was a lovely old man with a beard. He used to give the kids a party and throw sweets and give baskets of oranges".

"There were three houses across the Green. Now there are two".

"In Rose Cottages we used a copper for washing on Monday and had a tin bath by the fire. Then we had a bathroom where coal had been kept, and electricity".

"There used to be an old hut on a piece of land near the water tower. The postman came in the morning with his horse and cart and delivered. Then he stayed in the hut, then cleared the box, then went home. The postman drove through Hormead and Brent Pelham, leaving letters on the way. Then back to Buntingford by horse and cart".

"The hut was called Bill's Hut and Billy's Place".

#### Deliveries

Greens Stores from Stansted.

Caton's from Clavering.

Coal brought and fish once a week.

Baker with horse and cart then "Funny old van".

"We used to walk to Anstey. Jo Chappell and his wife drove a four wheeler to Royston market on Wednesday, then back to Anstey, then we walked back to Meesden. Later on Smiths from Buntingford came with the "prison van". It turned round at the well. It cost us half a crown return to Bishop's Stortford on Thursdays. The road surfaces were big pieces of granite rolled down with a steam roller".

"Mary Thorogood (the first school teacher) would be Ken's grandfather's aunt".

"There was a thatched cottage down the back of the Fox. It backed onto the George's garden. It belonged to the Fox. It was pulled down in 1927. There were two cottages at Doll's Corner, but not within living memory. There was a bungalow built of clay pats in the corner of the garden between the Thomsetts and Thorogoods. We played in it but no one lived there. There was also a house on the site of Sunnyside but that burnt down. There was a house in the field near the Beehive but that also burnt down. Hence Burnt Meadow".

"Three ponies were kept on the Green by Mr Dodkin, Mr Clarke from the Fox and Mr Widdle".

"I worked at the 'Pickle Factory' in a building at Du Boulay's house. Barrels of white turnips and cauliflowers were brought from the fields. We had to sort them out. The swedes were cut into squares then taken to London to 'do' into pineapples. In June we sorted and weighed strawberries that went to Chivers for jam. We removed bad peas from the conveyor belt."

"We went to Wembley Exhibition in 1924. We had a charabanc from Smiths with solid tyres. Twenty four people went."

"The Beehive had a thatched roof which burnt in about 1970 but Mr and Mrs Berriff were safe."

"Mr Winston lived in the thatched cottage opposite the Beehive. We called him Wagonwheels because he had a little shop and sold drinks and biscuits called Wagonwheels."

"Mr Staples lived at Rose Cottage. He cycled to Royston to work every day."

"There was a ditch went past Home Farm and in front of the council houses and down to the Manor but it's been filled in. All the ponds drained into each other."

"Electricity came in 1948-50. We went to bed with candles before that."

"There were allotments at Willoughby Lane."

"My father's father bought the three houses (now converted to two) across the Green for £85."

"My mum (Flossie Thorogood) played the church organ for forty years."

"Sunnyside was built by Charlie Goodman in 1932. They came from London at the weekends."

"Two bakers came round. Stock with a little wagon and Bernard Law from Clavering. He came through Brent Pelham to Anstey and Meesden. I used to go in his basket nearly all day. I was about five years old."

"There were two butchers, Piggott and Howlett."

"There was a slaughterhouse behind Black Hall."

"There was a two roomed bungalow between 2 Ivy Cottages and Rose Cottage. It sold sugar and dried stuff. Later a garage was also built in that space. The village school teacher lived in 2 Ivy Cottages."

"The well dried up in 1921 because of the drought and we had

to get water from the well at the Manor ."

"We weren't allowed in the grounds of the Manor and were chased away by the butler ."

"We lived down at Meesden Manor when the Dimsdales moved to Catterick in 1937, until the army took it over in 1939. My dad was the caretaker ."

"My grandmother sold sweets at the Fox. I was born there."

"Jubilee Cottages used to be called New Council Cottages."

"There was a piece of waste land with a big pond where Lawers stands now. Ivy's dad (Charlie Martin) kept pigs on it. We liked to play round there. It was called Quick Hedge."

"There was a mushroom field at the end of Town Close until it was ploughed up a few years ago ."

"There was a meadow behind Kit Lathbury's with goal posts. We played football and cricket there. Mr and Mrs John Welch lent us the cricket bats and stumps."

With thanks to Joyce Cooper, Joyce Smith, Ernest Wilson (Nippy), Auntie Doll, Ken Thorogood, John Robinson, Jim George, Charlie Brooks.



Mrs D Pinnock (nee Dodkin)  
Aunt Doll

Mrs Doreen Thorogood

## YOUNGE'S CHARITY

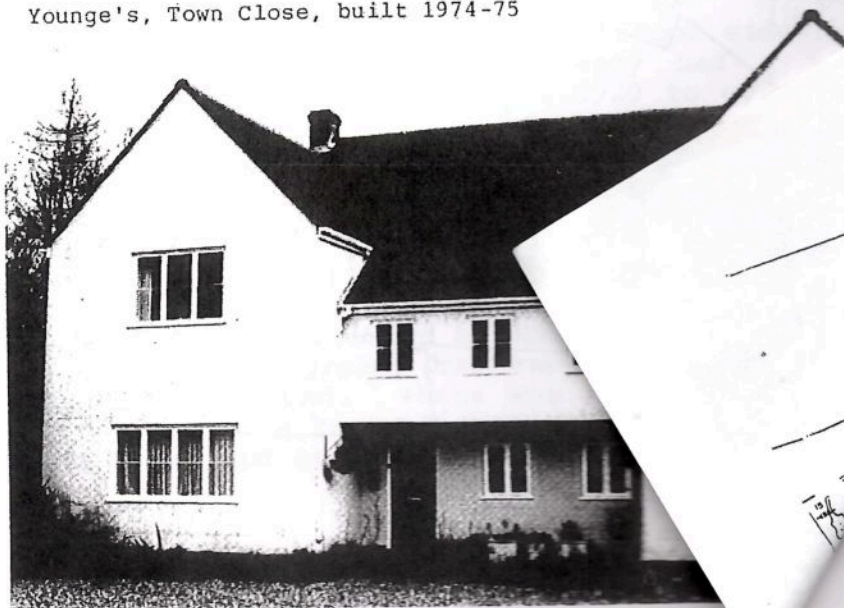
The following information was obtained from Clutterbuck's History of Hertford Vol III.

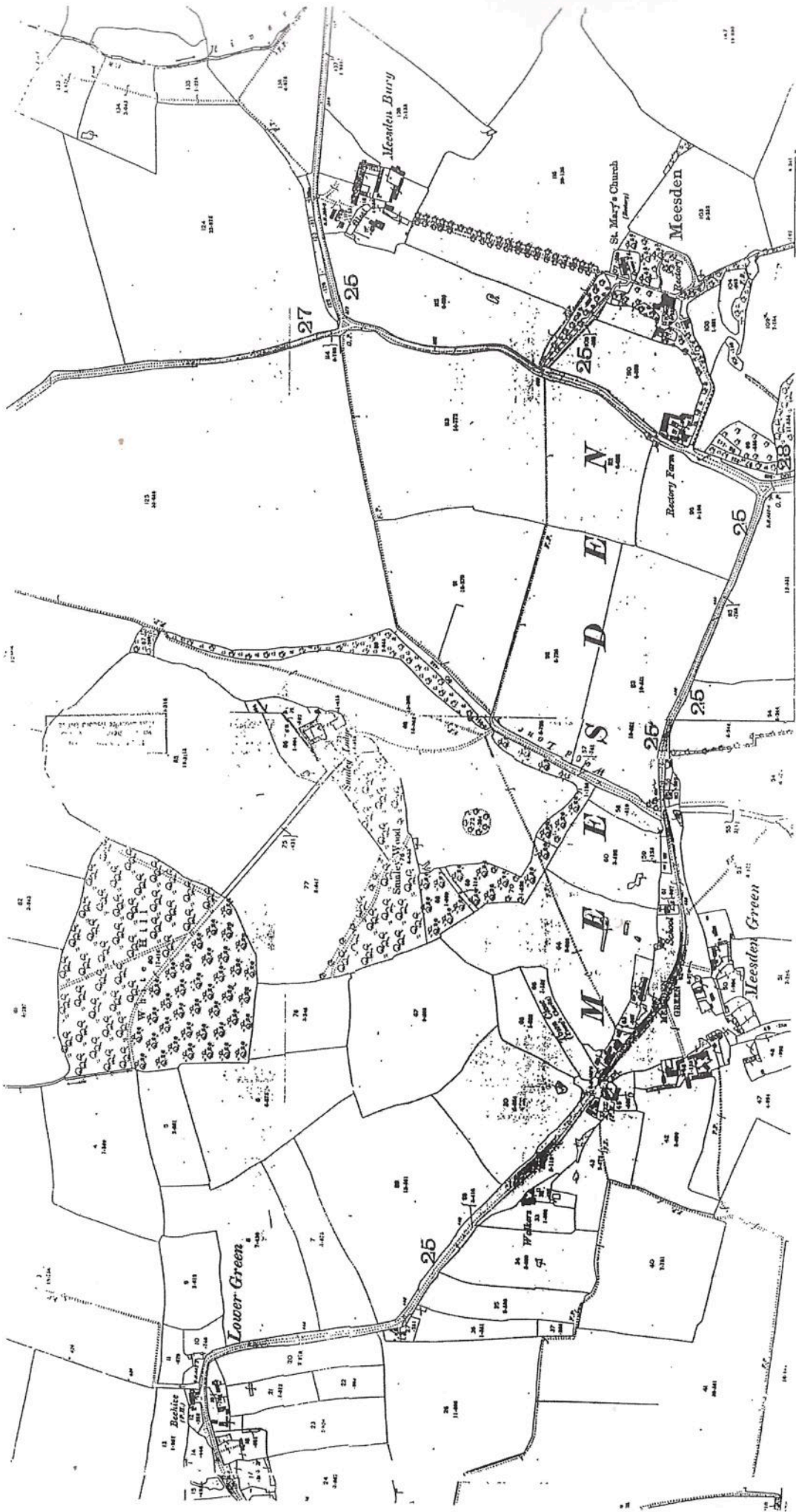
"Edward Younge, Dean of Exeter, by his Will dated 6th June 1663 directed his executors to lay out £250 within the space of 2 years after his death, in the purchase of a rent charge, or of land of which the rent might yearly amount to £12. Twenty shillings of which he gave to the poor of the parish of Meesden, to be distributed by the minister and chief inhabitants thereof, upon the 29th day of May forever, and the remaining £11 to be disposed of according to the tenor of the said Will. The executor refusing to make the above purchase, a suit was commenced and tried in the Court of Chancery and a decree obtained in the year 1684, in pursuance of which, a piece of land was bought on 23rd May 1693, of John Osborn, and settled in trust, viz, a close or parcel of pasture ground, with its appurtenances lying in Meesden, containing by estimation five roods abutting South and West upon Meesden Green, and North and West upon a piece of ground called the Kangle, upon this trust and confidence, that the minister and chief inhabitants of this parish, their heirs and assigns, should from time to time receive and take, yearly at the Feast of Communion of the Blessed Lady Mary, of the rent of the said premises 20s to be directed as above".

The Kangle, mentioned in the article is still known as such and is now an area of trees adjoining Town Close, the piece of land purchased.

Bringing our information up to date we learn that Town Close was sold to Mr W Berriff in the nineteen sixties and the money invested. The land had been grazed meadowland. The rent was distributed among the people of Meesden. Mr Berriff resold the land and there is now a house called Town Close on the land. The vicar and church wardens manage the charity, distributing money to the village pensioners at Christmas.

Younge's, Town Close, built 1974-75





Ordnance Survey Map of 1878 (Revised 1896)

IVY COTTAGE (ALSO KNOWN AS FOX COTTAGE)

home of the Hill family

Woodley Body-Hill and his wife Esther moved to Meesden from Buntingford in the first decade of the new century. They brought with them their first two children, Alfred and Mary. Four more children were born after they took up residence in Meesden; Levi, Esther, Coral and Margaret. Woodley had grown up in Buntingford, whereas Esther came from Chesterford near Saffron Walden.

As a young man, Woodley had been brought up in the old Globe public house, which was situated in the High Street, and it was here that he developed his interest in horses, and probably learnt the basics of wheeling and dealing. He watched the drovers and the carriers on their way to London along what was then one of the main routes into the City, and he eventually joined them. He would hitch a lift on the hay wagons as they passed through the town and then he would attend the markets and horse sales, often in the Elephant and Castle area. The horses he purchased he would then bring back to Buntingford, riding one and leading the rest. Whilst in London he developed a love of the music halls and for the rest of his life, especially after a pint or two in the Inn next door, he would recite and sing the ditties he had learnt in his younger days.

In one lodging house where he was staying the night, he was put in a damp bed and this resulted in a bad lung infection, which eventually led to the removal of one of his lungs, and this prevented him from going into the Great War.

One night coming back from London with his newly acquired horses, he got as far as Knight Hill, on the outskirts of Buntingford, when the horses refused to go any further and stopped dead. Upon investigation he discovered a sleeping man in a ditch beside the road, accompanied by his dancing bear.

Two cottages stood on the plot of ground next to the Fox pub, and Woodley purchased these for £40. To begin with the family lived in the cottage that stood sideways to the road because the other cottage already had a sitting tenant. Eventually it was necessary in 1920 to get a Court Order to remove the occupant, Alkanah Brooks. Accommodation was found for her 'Up Hens', towards Nuthampstead and Langley. The family were then able to move into what became known as Ivy Cottage. The old cottage became stabling for the horses and home for the chickens, goats and other livestock. Eventually it was pulled down during the last war.

Most people kept animals in those days and many were tethered on the village green, but especially scary were the geese that roamed around. There was no need to cut the grass as the many animals kept it cropped short. Indeed all the grass was coveted and at hay making time many a squabble took place

over who was going to have the grass from the roadside verges. Food was precious for the animals to see them over the winter months; the nearest mill for meal and oats was at Clavering and this could prove a difficult journey when the weather was bad.

Also on the village green was the well and the water from this provided everyone with their sole supply of fresh drinking water. This was collected in pails or cart. It wasn't until just before the last war that a standpipe was erected near the cottage and it was after the war that water was actually laid into the house. Needless to say the water was never wasted and water for cleaning and washing was collected from the nearby ponds and heated in a large copper in the garden.

Light was by oil lamp, with electricity being laid on after the war. Milk was collected by can, twice daily, from George's Farm. Tradesmen called with their wares; the butcher, baker, fishmonger, grocer and pedlars and travelling salesmen with all sorts of goods. All to eventually disappear. Woodley would go off with his horse and cart every week to the market at Royston to do a bit of wheeling and dealing and to bring back bargains that had caught his eye, from oranges to household items.

Attached to Ivy Cottage was a single storey building which was known as the Meeting House. Before the public houses were built it was thought it acted as an ale house. The gully that ran through the centre of the room helped the water run away when the bare floor was washed down. The village soon boasted two pubs, the Fox and the Beehive at the bottom of the village, both scenes of great activity when the GI's arrived in the area.

The village school was the place of learning for the children, who fitted their lessons in between helping tend the animals and the household chores. There was little time for idleness in those days. Mrs Thorogood ended up teaching three generations of local children. Outside the school was a plot of land where the children were introduced to the rudiments of vegetable and flower growing. School concerts were arranged and the money raised funded a trip to the seaside or the Zoo. Holidays were unheard of in those days and the special days' outings were looked forward to with great expectation. The big old-fashioned bus would arrive from Smiths at Buntingford and the mothers and children would pile in greatly thrilled at this treat.

Twice a year Baroness Dimsdale, who then lived at Meesden Manor, would hold a special party for the village children. They would be invited down to the Manor House for tea and games and everyone loved it when a handful of sweets was

thrown onto the lawn, resulting in a mad scramble. One Christmas Esther was given a book called 'The Great Adventures of Bonaparte'. This book was read over and over again and caused many sleepless nights imagining the French coming and taking everyone alive in their beds.

The Baroness was a tall, elegant woman, who nearly always walked with a parasol. During the war the Manor House was hit by a flying bomb and had to be pulled down. The grounds became the site of many nissen huts that housed soldiers and eventually displaced persons.

There was no doctor in the immediate area and often it was necessary to go to Furneaux Pelham for medicine. In the Winter when Dad was ill, and the roads were too bad for the horses to travel, Mother would have to walk, the route taking her through Violets Lane, renowned for ghosties and other mysterious goings-on.

Scales Park was another place of high adventure for us children, and in those days it was a short cut through to Nuthampstead. We always kept an eye out for the gamekeeper, whose cottage stood in the middle of the wood. Hung at various points along the pathways would be the dead bodies of stoats and weasels, magpies and rooks. During the war Scales Park became part of the American Airfield and housed all the bombs and other secret items. It was always thought that the flying bomb that hit Meesden Manor was directed at Scales Park.

Meesden Church stood removed from the village but was a focal point for everyone on Sundays; Sunday School in the morning and church in the afternoon. The nearest chapel was at Anstey and Mr and Mrs Welch were staunch supporters. They would pass through the village on their upright bicycles and woe betide anyone caught working on the Sabbath.

Opposite Ivy Cottage was Fox Meadow and this was the most wonderful old fashioned meadow filled with wild flowers; especially at buttercup time, the sight was simply glorious. The pond in the meadow provided not only water for the grazing animals, but also water for washing. Dad also hired the meadow opposite the cottage called Townes Close and this too provided hay, grazing, a vegetable plot and somewhere to store the faggots and wood for the Winter.

Ivy Cottage was sold when Mother died in 1964. It was sold to an antique dealer from Hertford, but during the course of renovations the builder undermined the footings and the house was pulled down.

Sunnyside Bungalow was occupied by my brother Alf and Mary, his wife. The bungalow was built by Charles Goodman for his

mother and family as a weekend retreat. But when things got really bad in London during the war, Mrs Goodman and her daughter, Dorothy came to live there permanently, and this resulted in Alf and Mary meeting, Mary being the other daughter. They lived there until the death of Mary in 1981. Alf had a dreadful accident as a young man. He fell off a tractor that was pulling another loaded on a trailer. This ran over him and crushed his leg and for the rest of his life he walked with a limp. Both he and brother Levi were keen followers of the local hunt, a pastime frowned upon nowadays, but then very much part of country life.

Coral Darlow



The Hill Family circa 1926

Mary  
Coral Mrs Hill Margaret Mr Hill Esther

BARON DIMSDALE 1712-1800

Thomas Dimsdale, born 1712, died 1800, married three times, firstly Mary Brassey, secondly Ann Isles in 1746 and lastly his cousin Elizabeth in 1779. Thomas Dimsdale was created Baron of the Russian Empire in 1769.

The Baron published a book in 1766 entitled "The Present Mode of Inoculating for the Smallpox". It attracted great attention throughout Europe.

In 1768 he went to Russia to inoculate the Empress, Catherine the Second against smallpox. This had been prompted by the death of the daughter of Count Panin of the disease, the Empress then courageously submitted herself to the operation as an example. The operation itself consisted of being infected with smallpox itself, the method employed being to have matter from an infected person inserted under the skin of the person to be inoculated. Very minor symptoms ensued, and with a regime of fresh air, healthy eating and exercise the patient usually recovered. However it has to be born in mind that the patient was very infectious, the disease being passed by the breath of the sufferer.

On his first visit he inoculated the Empress and her son, who was to become the Emperor Paul, as well as many other members of the aristocracy. In 1782 he returned to inoculate the Empress' grandchildren, Alexander (he of Tilsit) and his brother Constantine. Dr Dimsdale's wife Elizabeth kept a diary in which she recounted a memorable scene in which the Grand Duke Paul and his wife left for their European Tour.

Wilfrid Dimsdale

(In 1813, by Royal Licence, the Doctor and his descendants were granted the right to use the title of Baron Dimsdale. But the British Government doesn't recognize foreign titles of this kind.)

MEESDEN MANOR (SMALEY LODGE)

This was purchased in 1833 by Charles John 5th Baron (1801-1872) Grandfather of C R S Dimsdale 7th Baron (1856-1928). Prior to living at Meesden the family had lived at Essendon Place, they moved in the early 1900's being finally settled in 1906. A very small house already there was enlarged, eventually finishing as a very large bungalow indeed surrounded by a lovely garden upon which a large amount of effort was expended. There is still a glade through Smaley Wood which could be viewed from the library window which would seem to have been influenced by Gertrude Jekyll and her book "Wood and Garden" published in 1899. Elsewhere around the site of the house the structure of the garden is still very evident. C R S Dimsdale married twice, firstly to Alice Monk by whom he had two children, Edward Charles who married Katherine Joan Barclay of Brent Pelham Hall daughter of Edward Exton Barclay. Edward Charles was killed in France on May 7th 1915 while serving with the Monmouth Regiment. His second son, Reginald was also killed, unusually he was torpedoed in a submarine which he was commanding in the North Sea by another submarine (German) on the 28th April 1916. The two brothers are commemorated on a memorial in Meesden church. Alice died in 1886, and he married Mabel Sophia by whom he had two daughters, Ursula and Cecilia who are also commemorated in Meesden church.

On the death of C R S Dimsdale in 1928 the house was not really lived in full time ever again. Edward Charles' son Thomas Edward (8th Baron) was a regular officer, serving in India prior to the second world war. During the war the area around the house was requisitioned for use as a camp for delinquent allied soldiery, mainly American. The house was not used for this purpose, however the most awful bad luck struck, in the form of a V1 flying bomb, a "doodlebug", aimed at London Bridge which fell upon it in 1944. The remains of the house were demolished after the war.

Smaley Lodge (photographed Spring 1937)

Wilfrid Dimsdale



## THE MANOR HOUSE

The Manor House, in the village of Meesdenbury, was mentioned as far back as 1418. We presume this refers to Meesden Bury Farm. It was reported that the timber of the chamber and bridge over the moat had disappeared. Also the dairy house, wheel barn, hay barn and stables were in need of repair. At this time profits of the manor were made from the sale of underwood in Smaley Wood, of pasture on the 'hedgerows' of the common fields and of the multure of the mill.

There is a large gap in our information until the nineteenth century. The following article has been written by Mr Wilfrid Dimsdale, the present owner of the farm.

### MEESDEN BURY

In 1801/02 Mr Samuel Gaussen of Brookmans Park bought the Manor of Meesden Bury from John Archer Houblon.

Samuel Gaussen died in 1812 and was succeeded by another Samuel, the next year Samuel married his first cousin Cecilia Franks. Samuel had two brothers and two sisters, the youngest being Armytage, and his portion was the Manor of Meesdenbury to which he succeeded when only 15. As with many younger sons at the time, young Armytage was destined for the Church.

In 1815 Meesden was handed over to trustees, with the Reverend Peter Wish having been presented to the living in 1812 by Samuel to keep it "warm" for Armytage.

At that time the present Meesden Hall was the Bury and the present Bury was the Rectory surrounded by the bulk of the Glebe Land.

In 1816/17 arrangements were made to exchange the Bury and the Rectory and about 100 acres of Glebe Land from the demesne farm which was until 1987 Rectory Farm.

Mr Gaussen must have planted the Lime Avenue as well as erecting the large barn at the Bury once the area he farmed justified so large a building. When it was the Rectory, only 100 acres would have been farmed.

In 1819 everything went according to plan, Peter Wish resigned, and Armytage Gaussen (22) was ordained and appointed to the Living, where he remained until his death in 1857. He married but had no children.

In 1866 the 2nd Marquess of Salisbury purchased Meesden Bury from Charles Frederick Adams of Barkway House for the sum of £12,000. Mr Adams was a Land Agent and of a speculative nature, and he had purchased Meesden Bury from the Gaussen family in 1861.

Mr Frank Prime took over the tenancy from William Rolfe on his death in 1892. Frank Prime was able to purchase Meesden Bury from Lord Salisbury in 1918 for the sum of £6,000.

On the death of Mr Prime in 1929 Meesden Bury, which by then comprised of 630 acres was put up for auction at Bishop's Stortford, where reserves failed to be met. It was then split up between the Barclays, Dimsdales and various other purchasers the holding itself being reduced to 270 acres bought by Mr Lawrence.

In 1947 the 8th Baron Dimsdale (1911-1985) bought the farm from Mr Lawrence having sold Langley Lawn, the purchase price being £17,500 which gave him the House, four cottages and 270 acres.

Wilfrid Dimsdale



Mr and Mrs Prime  
at Meesdenbury late 1890's