

CARDALL'S CORNER

April 2016

Warwick Road by Robert Sherriff



Having lived in 3 houses on Warwick Road I thought I would comment a little on my favourite route into town.

Drifting downhill from Ufton one crosses the River Itchen thereby entering the Parish of Southam. A few yards further on the right hand side is the site of the Woodbine Inn which gave the name Woodbine Hill to the following rise which was considered steep years ago but is now taken in their stride by modern vehicles. Immediately before turning left into Warwick Road is Brooklands, a modest farm where once the Mumford family kept a small string of race horses. The smooth timber sided loose boxes in the stable are still there in original form.

Now in Warwick Road, and before the right turn into Kineton Road was Eddie Berry's car repair premises although the access was in Kineton Road behind the cottages facing onto Warwick Road. Here Eddie's pals gathered for hours of gossip and joking and a little less car servicing!

Opposite the Kineton Road turn was Bert Shayler's yard. Bert started working life on the stone train locos at Ufton quarry for Blue Circle Cement and graduated into his painting and decorating business through working on the cement company's housing stock in Deppers Bridge and Bishops Itchington.

A little further down on the same side of the road an elderly white building butts on to the pavement. The far end of this was Mr Blewitt's shop where he and his assistant Alec Baldwin presided before relocating to more centrally located premises in High Street. Mary Williams remembers taking accumulators there for recharging.

Mr Fred King moved into the vacated shop for his television & radio business F C King Ltd, becoming the area Bush TV retailer and most things electrical. His commute to work was short as he lived next door.

Just before Warwick House, Wattons Lane leaves the main road to the left going down to The Brook (River Stowe) where it originally crossed via a ford, this used to be the main coach road into Southam from Warwick.

Prior to being named Warwick House the premises traded as The Stoneythorpe Hotel and before that, it was the Parish Hall. Here plays and pantomimes were performed, dances held and a weekly film show, the latter being "policed" by the formidable Mr Horace Fell who greeted all with "the eye" to ensure good behaviour prevailed. The building was originally an historic hospital and as such is commemorated on the adjacent monument. With the Parish Hall taking up only the right hand portion of the structure the remainder was private housing.

Opposite Abbey Green was the Labour Exchange managed by Mr Jack Sabin of Long Itchington. This wooden structure still stands but has an uncertain future. Mr George Hill

could recollect a time in the depression of the 1930's when the queue of men looking for work stretched from the Labour Exchange down to the brook bridge.

(Robert Sherriff was born on a farm in Deppers Bridge and his family moved to Southam in 1944 when he was 5 years old. His early years were spent living in Warwick Road. He moved away in 1969, but returned to Southam in 2009. Next month, Robert continues his reminiscence journey into Warwick Street.)

Southam Heritage Collection is currently housed in the basement of Vivian House, Market Hill and is open on Tuesday and Saturday mornings from 10am to 12 noon. Contact: 01926 613503 email southamheritage@hotmail.com visit our website www.southamheritage.org or Facebook: Southam Heritage Collection.

