RK168

couple of timber framed farmhouses and the original hamlet cottages are Newbold's main claims to antiquity.

What would a villager of the past think of Newbold today? Would they look in vain for 'Snip' Stewart's stores at the junction of School Lane and Melbourne Road? Remembering when the shop used to open at 4.30 am to serve the miners their 'thick' and 'thin' twist (tobacco), polo mints and carbide for their lamps as they joined their shift across the road at New Lount Colliery. Would they marvel at the silence and desolation that now surrounds this self same mine since its closure and demolition in 1968? Like that of its brother employer, the pipeworks on Worthington Lane.

Passing along School Lane and into Worthington Lane it may be thought that progress has not been too kind to Newbold. The Cross Keys has long ago lost its thatch as have, one by one, the other older properties. George Crabtree, who buried so many of Newbold's residents, is himself buried along with the business he ran. Even Crabby's pond that bears his name is filled in and grassed over.

The well, at the junction of Ashby Road and School Lane, has met a similar fate. It exists now only in local vocabulary, though surprisingly enough, the Bush well, on Melbourne Road, is still extant and is used regularly to water sheep in nearby fields.

As would be expected from a mining village, Newbold has had its tragedies, such as the case of Edward Williams, who survived the horrors of war only to become the first miner killed in the newly opened New Lount Colliery. Or the 'black damp' that seeped through Newbold Glory killing amongst others, five members from the same family.

The lovely old bluebell woods that once surrounded the village have now fallen victim to the open cast mining and sadly are mere shadows of their former selves.

As a small consolation, however, the pit spoil heap which once towered over the village like a malignant blister, is now a green and pleasant hill, landscaped and set with trees and containing the remnants of Spring Wood pool.

Newbold Verdon

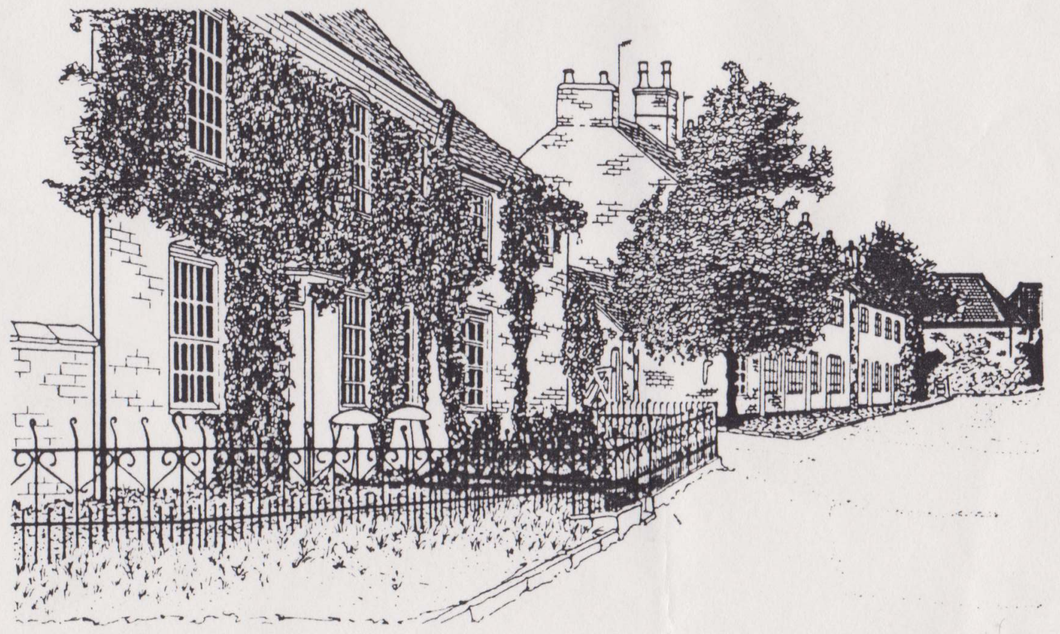
The name Newbold Verdon is of Norman origin. It relates to one Bertram de Verdun, who had the tenure of the village in the 12th century. The prefix Newbold means new-built or new buildings. Over the years Newbold Verdon has grown into a large thriving village, not picturesque, somewhat scattered, but for friendly character it takes some beating.

Gone are the days when half the village had the surname of Statham and you had to add a nickname (Whiskey Statham esq, Main Street) if you wanted to be sure a letter was delivered to the correct person. But the older inhabitants mix well with the new and so the village boasts a variety of clubs.

A church was first built probably in the late 12th or early 13th century. St James' church was rebuilt in 1898 in celebration of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, at the estimated cost of £2,786. There was not enough money to build a tower at the time, so this was finally put up and dedicated in 1960.

One village character who became important during the Second World War as an ARP warden was Walter Preston. His job was to blow his whistle whilst riding around the dark village streets on his trusty bicycle, first to warn of an approaching air raid, then to blow the 'all clear'. He and the headmaster of the primary school ran the local 'Dad's Army', with the headmaster as Chief Fire Officer.

One of their joint manoeuvres was to see how long it would take to put out a large fire, so one was built and lit during daylight hours on the Dragon field. By the time Walter, cycling furiously round to collect the men together, actually had them on the spot, the fire had gone out! Only three bombs fell here during the whole war, so perhaps speed and efficiency were not needed to any great effect. After the war Walter was Chairman of the Parish Council along with some of his fellow ARP men. They helped the village expand with the first two large housing estates. They also purchased the playing field, making friendship and sport the heart of the Newbold Verdon of today.



Main Street, Newbold Verdon