RK 316 (1-10)

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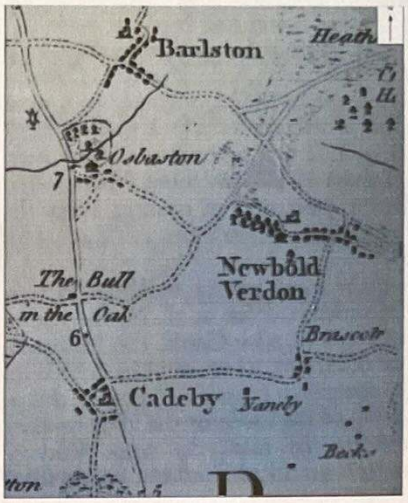
How the other Half Lived

The Heritage Walk takes you through predominantly the oldest part of the village, we are going to look at the other half. From Mill Lane, down Main Street to Desford Road.

There are some buildings that are of a similar age (Ivy Cottage for example) but the majority of buildings will be from the mid to late 19th century and then on in to the 20th century.

Let's start off by painting a picture of what we would have seen had we stood here at the turn of the 18th century.

Prior map of 1777 shows buildings on either side of Main Street leading up to the church and a few around where we are and on to the south of main Street. Maps then were more indicative than definitive, so take it with a pinch of salt.





By 1835 (first OS map) you can see a recognisable NV shape. Though there was not much on Mill Lane or on the north side Main Street.

The Chapel would be 2 years old. The cottages would not be built until 1892. There was a row of cottages known as Cabbage Patch Row where the bungalows are, but nothing beyond that.

Looking down Main Street from this vantage point you would have seen a house where we are standing, a couple of more after it and then a farm, known by the 20th C s Grange farm.

On the right would have been Liberteas and after this a row of two sets of cottages. The first eventually being known as Mary Ball's cottage and after this Abell's Row. More of this later.

What was the Village like?

1801 – 339 people and approximately 70 dwellings (some being at Brascote and surrounding farms) village 55-60. Today there are 3300 (2021 census) more accurately 3500 (new estate).

Hall Farm had only been a farm for about 25 years, it having been a Hall prior to this. Agriculture dominated employment and the poor eked out a living cultivating crops in their designated field strips, as well as grazing their limited number of animals on the 900 acres of remaining Heath Land. Homes were basic and predominantly rented.

This was ten years before the enclosure of those 900 acres and the removal of all rights to the common heath land, in effect privatising the land and turning peasants from semi-autonomous workers with ancient legal rights of pasturage, pannage (foraging of pigs), turbary (cutting of peat for fuel) or estover (collecting wood for fuel) on the waste land. into agricultural labourers, dependent for a living on the few landowners within the parish.

Framework Knitting was also a major 'cottage' industry in south-west Leicestershire with 75% of frames in all of the east-midlands. Newbold's heyday was at the turn of the 18th century but began to decline in numbers from about 1810. It supplemented the poor agricultural wages after enclosure.

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2. Opposite the Newsagents

From this point we can see more of Main Street of the early part of the 19th century . It is difficult to say how early in the century the houses were built but the 1835 OS map shows some buildings in this area.



1

The 'A' frame of the thatched cottages (now Liberteas) with the eye-brow windows would indicate an early 19th if not 18th C building.

Where the newsagent's now stands, there were two more cottages, and we know from the 1881 census that a Mrs Mary Ball was living in one of the cottages with her son, Harry. She at that time was a charwoman, taking in washing, but by 1901 she had managed to become 'independent of means' (self-employed) and was a carter. Moving goods within the parish and between the villages, and on a Saturday the cart was transformed into a people carrier, ferrying villagers on the 3 hour journey to Leicester, terminating at the Golden Lion on Highcross Street. It's possible that the cart in the picture is hers.



3. Facing the newsagents and Strand shops.

Imagine a row of four cottages running almost up to the current pavement edge. Probably built in the early part of the 19th century, and certainly on the 1880s OS map.

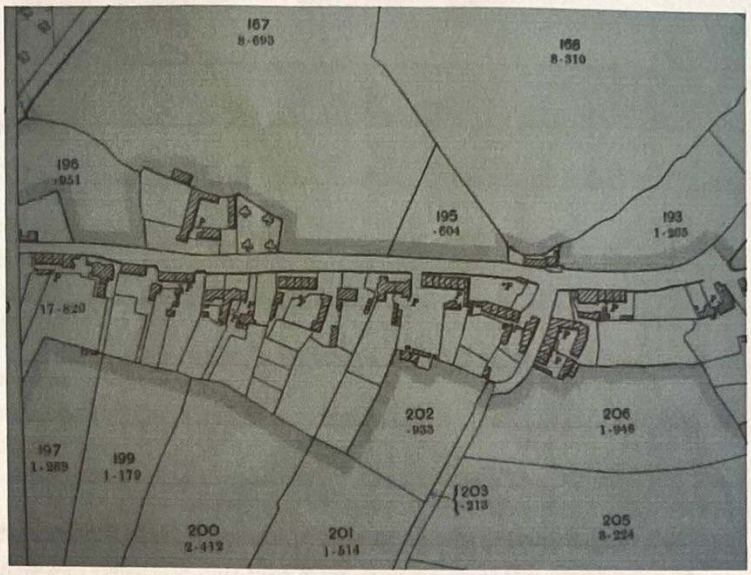
In 1901 a Rebecca Abell lived here, and next door was her son, John. She had been living there for many years and so the row had become known as Abell's row,

In September of 1841 it is possible that the very last house in the row was a drinking establishment called the Reindeer in the occupation of John Raven. He ran this establishment until his death sometime after 1881, when his wife ran it until 1884.

4. Standing at the rear of Abell's Row (outside the Strand)

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This collection of photographs is, in part, the backyard of Abell's Row it may be all of it. Though photographed possibly in the early 20th. century, it probably hadn't changed much since it being built some time in the early-to-mid part of the 19th C.

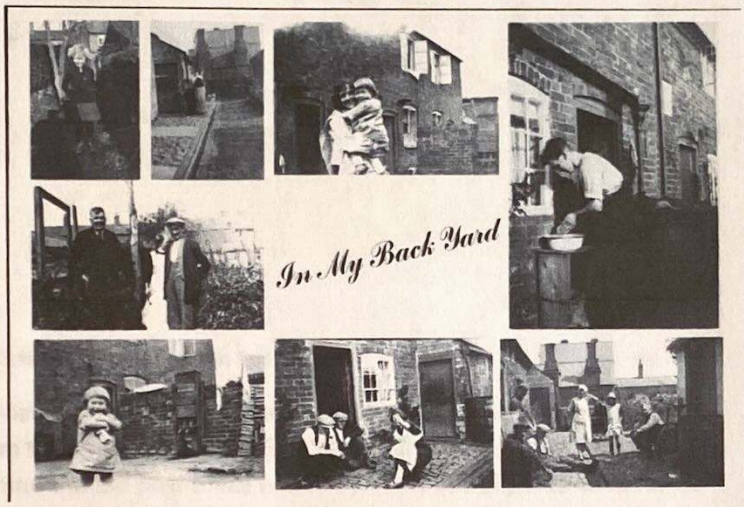


You can see the close communal living. The access to water through a pump, and for washing, through a rain water butt.

Looking at the map you can see this was a similar arrangement along the whole of Main Street: row of houses, communal yard, pump, out buildings.

Brian Cheshire described how he and his brother's weekly bath was determined by the day his mother washed the family's clothes.

'*We didn't have a bathroom; we had a bath tub hanging on the wall outside the back door. Monday was my mother's wash day because we were the first house of a row of five and each house had access one day a week to the washhouse at the back of our houses. It was a room which contained a large coal-fired copper for boiling the water and we used to have to cart our own mangle and washtub into the wash house before we went to school every Monday morning.*



Wash day was a big day because my mother did the washing and we had to have a bath on wash day because that was the only time we got enough hot water from the copper.

She used to drain the water from the copper, and it went into the bath, which today doesn't sound very good but the dirty water from the washing was the only time we had enough hot water.'

5. The Jubilee

The Jubilee was built n XXX to and owes its name to the celebration in 18xx of Queen Victoria's birthday. There is some conflicting evidence as to whether he Jubilee was a completely new public house or a replacement for an existing pub, the Reindeer though I believe it is almost certain that the Reindeer was replaced by the Jubilee.

It is possible to confidently state that the **Reindeer** became the **Jubilee** due to an entry in the Reverend Cole's letter book for the 1st. January 1891, where the rector was writing to someone telling them about the results of the petition requesting that a license not be given by the Market Bosworth magistrates for the 'new public house' in Newbold. Unfortunately for the petitioners it was not good news. The rector writes:

'... because the house was passed and built upon the old license premises so that it did not require any renewal. The magistrates were in consequence powerless in the matter.'

A later entry in November 1891 at the opening of the new pub (The Jubilee) the rector wrote that he had to step in and 'stop the dancing'.

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6. Facing Hornbeam and Grange farm – The Little Heath



P4

We are facing where Grange farm was. The photograph shows a young child (NAME) outside the farm house, which looks to have been built in the early 20th C. Looking at the maps, right back to 1835, there looks to have been some form of development, and certainly by 1880, a farm was established. But in 1835 that's it on this side of the road until you reach the junction with the Desford Road.

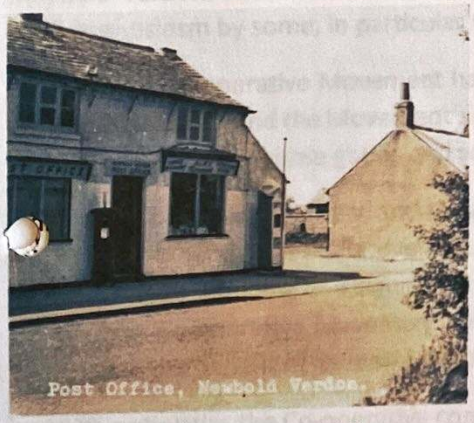
The commissioners who were appointed to oversee the enclosure of some 900 acres of land in 1811, gave these instructions about the assignment of existing tracks to become part of a public road system.

A Public Carriage Road and Highway called the Desford Road from the Village of Newbold Verdon over the Westward End of a Tract of Land called the Little Heath to the Turnpike Road passing over the same tract of Land. Minute book of the Commissioners.

In other words, prior to 1811 the land to our right was regarded as Heath. With Heath Land came certain rights (first comments) to the commoners. These would all be taken away. Interestingly, there was still little building on this side of the land until XXXX when Sparkenhoe was built.



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P5

7. Chadwick Close and the Post Office

Haines' car hire business had a coach that carried workers to and from the shoe factories of Earl Shilton and Barwell. His yard was behind the old post office and the private petrol pump used for his bus and taxis can be seen on the shop corner. The post office had once been a shoe shop run by Mr Haines' wife.

The Yard at the rear of the was at one point owned by a Mr Chadwick (mention here the Verdon Queen)

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8. Ivy Cottage



Ivy cottage is not listed. I don't know why. It would appear to be one of the oldest houses in the village. The last occupant, Janet Webb lived there for most of her life, and in particular during the 2nd WW. Janet told me a story about this time and what nearly happened to these railings.

As soon as war was declared, the government moved to mobilise the general population to support the war effort. Metals were needed for, amongst other things, the construction of war planes and the making of munitions. Farmers were instructed to bring into production as much land as possible and every piece of available land, including gardens, parks and playing fields, was turned over for food production. Every item of food grown at home would mean less having to be imported by sea, where ships were having to run the gauntlet of the much feared German U-boat submarines. It was not just land that had to be better utilised, scrap metal was highly sought after.

On Main Street, at Ivy Cottage, Janet Webb's grandfather faced a battle to retain his metal railings at the front of the house. Janet: I can remember grandad digging up both of the lawns at the front because he was told if it remained grass the iron railings would be taken. So, he dug up both lawns, planted potatoes, and the iron railings are still standing!

National Insurance number sewn into her knickers.

9. The Co-op

In July 1929 branch number 17 of the Coalville and District Working Men's Co-operative Society opened in Newbold Verdon. This would have been a significant event in the village, though not necessarily received with great enthusiasm by some, in particular the shopkeepers with whom the Co-op would be in direct competition.

The national Co-operative Movement had been established for over 80 years by the time a branch was opened in Newbold Verdon and the Movement's purpose was to allow working class people to co-operate together within their 'societies' to purchase goods and services.

Individuals joined as members, and they were rewarded for purchasing from their co-operative by receiving at this time a dividend of 2s 6d for every £1 spent - a 12.5 percent return. The 'divi', as it became known, meant the members were shopping at a significant discount compared with other retailers. Not only that, but by this time the national Co-operative Movement was producing much of its own food, baking its own bread and buying in bulk – all to the benefit of its members but not necessarily the local shopkeepers.

By 1939, nationally, the Co-operative controlled 25 percent of the milk distribution, 40 percent of the retail trade in butter and 20 percent in tea and sugar.[2] It could, therefore, be described as the TESCO of its day – loved by its members, hated by its rivals.

What do you think the local shopkeepers thought of that?

11. Working men's club (second venue)

The Working Men's Club we see today was built in 1936, but it was not the first in the village, a much smaller clubhouse had been sited adjacent to the Jubilee Inn - it would later become a shoe factory.

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Anyone visiting the club cannot fail to be impressed by its size. As well as a large lounge and skittle alley, it has a 200 capacity concert hall complete with stage and bar. For a village of just 1,200 people, it seems overly optimistic that a building of such magnitude could be sustained by its membership, but our contributors assured us that it did, particularly in the first 25 years or so of its existence.

John Hill's father was a committee member throughout the war years and beyond and John often attended with family and neighbours during this time. On reflection, John offered the following reason why, despite there being a war on and people having little money to spare, the club was so popular.

During the war years the club was packed at weekends. I think it was because it was a place to gather during a crisis. People needed each other. As a small child, I was always fascinated by the way the women would dress up for a night in the club. They all had on fur coats and lots of jewellery and big handbags. And years later, when I brought up the subject of the jewellery and handbags, my Mam would say they needed big handbags to keep their insurance policies in and they wore all their jewellery in case there was no house to go back to!

Even after the war, the club provided the villagers with an excellent night out, especially on Saturdays. John's father acted as the MC and sitting high on the stage above the audience, he would strike down his brass gavel, call for best of order and introduce each act. All members were issued with a membership card like the one shown. During the week, the club ran darts, dominoes cribbage and skittles teams.

12. Sparkenhoe (Bike race Track and Statham Shoes) and the older housing

New Housing Required: Sparkenhoe and Preston Drive Estates Below is a newspaper cutting from the Leicester Daily Mercury of Thursday, 3rd March, 1950[3] and it reports the approval of the building of fifty houses in Newbold Verdon at what would be later known as Sparkenhoe, with a further two hundred to follow at what is now known as the Preston Drive estate. Neither development would take place without the establishment of mains water and the related sewage works.

Development at Newbold Verdon

Because of the necessity of building off the coalfield in areas that are safe from mining subsidence, Market Bosworth Rural District Council have selected the village of Newbold Verdon for extensive housing development.

Councillor Edgar Beckett revealed this at a meeting of the Council yesterday, when a contract for the erection of 50 houses at a cost of £63,714 was sealed and it was decided to apply for a loan of £25,880 for sewage works.

The Council is also negotiating for an additional site of 22 acres for the building of up to 200 more houses in Newbold Verdon together with a shopping centre.

It is expected that the present population of the village, 1300, will be doubled and Newbold Verdon will become one of the largest villages in Leicestershire.

By the end of the war, half a million homes across the country had been destroyed and thousands more severely damaged, leading to a severe housing shortage. Over the next five years, four million council houses and flats were built, and by the mid-1950's nearly three million people had been re-housed. However, it wasn't just the war that prompted the building of houses - many of those whose homes had not been destroyed or damaged lived in squalid conditions.

The newspaper cutting also explained that Newbold Verdon was chosen because it had not been subjected to subsidence arising from mining. A somewhat ironic observation, given that only a few years later the north-eastern corner of the village witnessed considerable subsidence.

Once the houses were under way the process of selecting who should have one began. Market Bosworth Rural District Council invited people to apply for a house. In their submission applicants had to give reasons why they

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believed they deserved to be re-housed. The records of their submissions provide a telling insight into the sorry plight of families, both within the village and the surrounding district, for the need of decent housing.

Though the largest number of applicants came from Newbold, there were applications from virtually every village in the area, as well as further afield, including Melton Mowbray and Leicester. The two primary reasons given by applicants were either overcrowding or very poor living conditions and in many cases both reasons were cited.

One applicant from a nearby village explained that there were seven adults in his two-bedroom house and because of the overcrowding his 30 year-old son had to sleep in the same bedroom as himself and his wife. Two applicants were living in caravans with their family and another man and his family of five from Ratby were living in a converted cowshed.

Three other applicants were living at Lindley Hall Farm on the Fenn Lane near Fenny Drayton. The accommodation was World War Two huts that had been used by servicemen stationed on the nearby Nuneaton airfield and had, after the war was over, temporarily been turned over to civilian use. This 'temporary' situation lasted for five years.

aving the old houses to go to Sparkenhoe.

Sparkenhoe was opened in 1950 and the picture opposite shows the Chairman of the Parish Council, Mr Walter Preston, holding the ribbon for Mrs Lizzie Wildman, who, aged 78, was the oldest resident in Newbold at that time and so was asked to cut the ribbon. The residents of the new houses received their keys at the ceremony.

Mick Hill was a member of one of those families as he, his mum, dad and sister moved into number 31 Sparkenhoe. For Mick, aged fifteen at the time, moving from his house on Main Street was something of a mixed blessing.

Mick: *We were living in a large, old, thatched-roofed farmhouse opposite the Co-op on Main Street. My dad had bought it and two other connected houses some years earlier. There was also a half an acre of orchard, a three acre field, nine pig sties and two stables. Unfortunately, the local council had insisted that dad put mains plumbing into all three properties and re-wire them - something we couldn't afford and so we had to move. I was really upset at the move into Sparkenhoe. I had loved that old house and all the grounds, though the new house did have a lot of advantages. There were three good sized bedrooms; a large modern L-shaped lounge and a big hallway: two flushing toilets - one outside and another upstairs - and an outside wash house. We also had a*)throom, *and for the first time in my life I was able to have a bath with hot, running water. The rooms were also very spacious and although we didn't have central heating the house was much warmer than what we had been used to, but I still missed the old one.*

13. Pastures Lane

Throw back to a much older time.- Route to Brascote and Kirkby Mallory

14. Red Lion Lane (WW2 Bomb) also the footpath to Desford was probably the original main route.

Newbold's Bomb

Only four days after the bombing of Coventry, Newbold had its own bomb dropped on the village, as the head teacher recorded. 15th November 1940

During the night and early morning, enemy aircraft were very active, commencing at about 7p.m. and lasting until 7.30 a.m. Attendance this morning was better than expected, though some children failed to be present

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owing to the raids. 20th November 1940 Bomb dropped in Newbold. Attendance low, children having had a bad night. Register: 82/124 66%. Bombs blocked railway line from Coalville and no buses running. Mrs Hughes absent.

The high explosive bomb[3] had dropped in fields just south of Red Lion Lane, where Peters Avenue is today. The explosion blew out the windows of nearby houses on Main Street and Pastures Lane but no one was hurt. Derek Wilkinson believed that the bomb failed to detonate fully and that houses had to be evacuated until the bomb had been disarmed. This led to three members of the same family having to go to stay at his house on the Heath for several weeks.

Janet Webb recalls what happened the day after, as she went off to her school in Ibstock on the bus.

'I can remember our chatter on the bus when we realised an incendiary bomb (actually a high explosive) had been dropped on Red Lion Lane. You see, that was a big thing for us. Fancy, a bomb had dropped in Newbold Verdon; in Newbold Verdon! You think of places like London or Birmingham or Coventry, but now they are coming to bomb us. It felt very personal.'

The bomb was probably not actually destined for Newbold Verdon but may have missed its likely original target (on) Leicester. The 19th/20th November 1940 was known as the night of the 'Leicester Blitz' when the Germans targeted the city and over 150 high explosive bombs were dropped. Incendiary bombs were also deployed in an attempt to create a firestorm within the city. Compared to Leicester, Newbold got off lightly, but it left an impression on villagers and meant the war had become that much more real.

15. Christine's Home

Christine Hill (née Causon) lived at 206 Main Street in a house built in the 1920's, which by village standards was new. Despite its relative modernity, Christine and her family were deprived of the most basic of amenities.

We lived in a terraced house, but it was only attached to one other. This meant our 'front' door was at the side of the house and there was another door at the rear.

As you entered the house through the front door, on your right was the Front Room which was kept for best and only ever used on a Sunday and at Christmas.

The rest of the time our family lived in the living room at the rear of the house where we had a table, dining chairs and a small three-piece suite. Leading from that room was the kitchen and a pantry. There was a gas cooker in the kitchen and a copper which was used to boil up the water. On Friday night we took the tin bath down off the outside wall and had our weekly bath. I went first because I was the girl, followed by my brother.

Upstairs we had three bedrooms but no bathroom, which I wanted so much. The toilet was in the backyard next to the coal shed. This and the shed was knocked down in the late 1940's (when mains water arrived in the village) and replaced by a bathroom complete with bath and flushing toilet. We had arrived!

16. The Cinema

Two of our contributors, Janet Webb and Nancy Biggs, had direct knowledge of the Newbold's Picture Theatre and the proprietors, Mr and Mrs Chesterton.

Nancy : It was our Uncle Tom and Aunt Lilly who ran it.

Janet: My mother was the cinematograph projectionist.

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Nancy: The seats cost 6d, 9d and 1s and there was a double seat at the back for courting couples. Our Cousin Dorothy used to play the piano and Cousin Mont the violin to accompany the films because they were all silent.

Janet: Then Tom went on to build a cinema in Barlestone and one in Enderby.

Nancy described the experience of going to the cinema in the 1920's and 30's.

It was very popular, we used to really look forward to it. There were often queues to get in and we had to sit on wooden benches. It was big enough for about 100 people. I think it opened Fridays and Saturdays and after they had shown the films in Newbold, Aunt Lilly used to rewind them and they were taken to Barlestone to show.

A cinema every Friday and Saturday showing first silent and then later 'talking' films demonstrated, by its popularity, the hunger villagers had for outside entertainment. It is therefore surprising that Newbold's cinema closed down when, nationally, cinema going was at its highest.

17. Undertakers

Ron Gilliver was the grandson of Frank Gilliver and as a boy he helped his grandfather make the coffins. Ron's account describes how pressurised the making of a coffin was and how this often led to tensions in his grandfather's workshop.

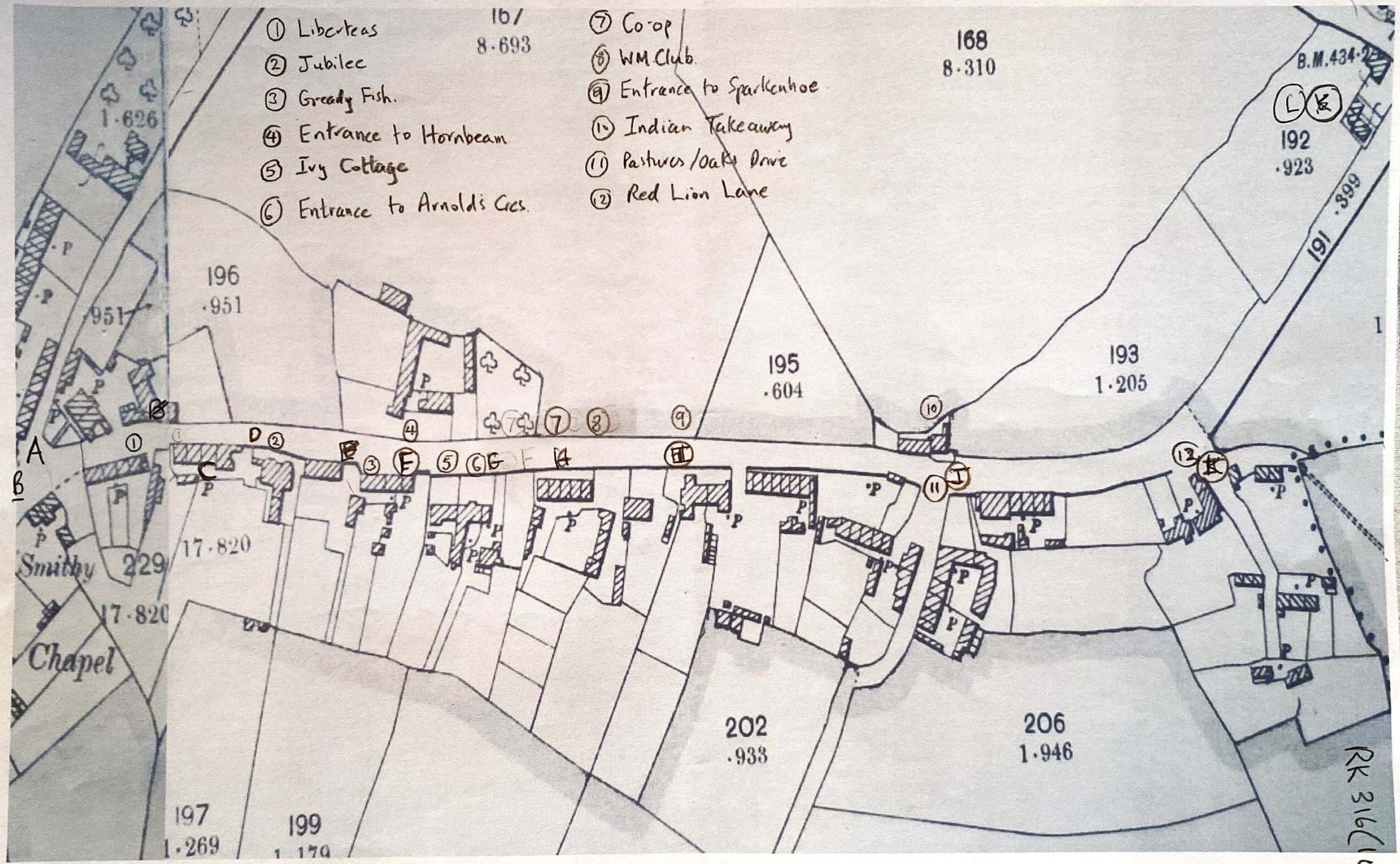
There were probably only five or six deaths a year in the village, so making coffins was not grandad's full time job, but when someone did die he would drop everything and get on with making the coffin.

Making a coffin demanded a high level of skill. The body had to be carefully measured and the elm, but sometimes oak, would have to be cut and shaped to fit. Then it had to be sanded and polished before the handles were put on. All of which had to be completed within a matter of days.

It was my job to collect the bier with my grandad from the church where it was kept. It was a four wheeled wagon mounted with an ebony and glass case with fine brass fittings. It was my job to polish up the brass whilst grandma polished up the ebony. Grandad was busy making the coffin.

Once he had put it all together it was time for me and grandma to help him line the bottom and sides of the inside of the coffin with pitch. It was Gran's job to boil the pitch up in the kitchen and when it was bubbling away she had to rush across the yard with the boiling pitch to his workshop where he and I were waiting.

Gran would hand the pitch to grandad and then get hold of the top of the coffin, and I would be at the bottom. Grandad would shout 'Pol, Up!,' that was his name for Gran. She would lift the top end up and he would pour the pitch in from the top to run down. As it began to roll down he would then shout, 'Ron, Up!' and it would be my turn to lift the end up. 'Roll It' was the instruction to swill the pitch around the sides. The pitch would flow down and around the sides and seal the bottom and the lower part of the coffin. This had to be done so that those carrying the coffin, the pallbearers, would not be covered in fluid from the body. But, if for some reason the pitch did not flow in the right place, he would go mad, throwing things around the workshop and swearing. And it would always be Gran's fault.


① Liberteas
② Jubilee
③ Greedy Fish.
④ Entrance to Hornbeam
⑤ Ivy Cottage
⑥ Entrance to Arnold's Ces.
⑦ Co-op
⑧ WM Club.
⑨ Entrance to Sparkenhoe
⑩ Indian Takeaway
⑪ Pastures / Oaks Drive
⑫ Red Lion Lane
167
8·693
168
8·310
B.M.434·2
192
·923
191
·399
196
·951
195
·604
193
1·205
1·626
951
17·820
Smithy
229
17·820
Chapel
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