Recollections of John Wright

John was born in Newbold Verdon and lived there until 1971**.** He has many happy memories of living in the village, and in this short recollection he shares several pictures of his family and the stories behind the photographs.

Mum and Dad (Bill and Gladys Wright)



Mum and Dad met while working at Ward's shoe factory in Barwell. They were both very young, mum being only fourteen, when they started courting, as they would call it then; Dad was a little older. They were very keen on each other right from the start, but Mum's older brothers did not like it. They would chase dad off if they caught him down in Barwell with my Mum.

This did not deter either of them, and they continued to see each other right up to getting married. Here they are in about 1938, looking exceedingly well dressed.

This next picture shows my mum and dad (first two on the left) enjoying a day out at the seaside some time in the late thirties or early forties.



Dad served during the 2nd World War and the story of his getting married whilst in the army was quite eventful.

He was based at Litchfield when he went AWOL (absent without leave) to cycle 30 miles to Newbold to marry my mother.

They got married on the Saturday, he spent the Sunday with her, and then cycled back to Lichfield.

They let him off!

He didn't see mum for two years. Initially he was in Shetland and then posted to Italy. He didn't do any fighting because of his hammer toes, so he was excused the infantry. When he first joined up he told them he could drive, but he couldn't. He had never driven anything in his life. The instructor realised this immediately. He said, "You can't drive can you lad? " Dad said, "No". So, he said, "Well then I had better show you, hadn't I lad."

Dad actually ended up driving Captain Ryan Price, who later became a racehorse owner. So, dad went from not being able to drive to becoming a full-time driver for an officer.

Mum's Family (The Bills)

The photograph is of my mum, her parents and brothers (the ones who chased dad) and sister.

Back Row: Left to right
Elsie, Wilfred, Bernard, Jack, Arthur, Gladys, my Mother.

Sitting:

Grandad John William and Grandma Gertrude (nee Smith)



Dad the Coach Driver

This photograph is of a group of Newbold Verdon ladies off on a day out, driven by my dad.

I can't name all of the ladies but here are the surnames of some I recognise.

Wardle, Westerby, Crowfoot, Kenney, French, Sharrot, Marlow, Hurd, Corbett.



41 Dragon Lane – Where I grew Up

My grandparents were the first occupants of 41 Dragon Lane when it was first built, and my mum and dad carried on the tenancy when my grandma moved to the bungalows on Montague Close. Elsie was born on Red Lion Lane.

Uncle Walter and Aunty Elsie

The next picture is of my Uncle Walter Salisbury and Aunty Elsie's war-time wedding in 1940.

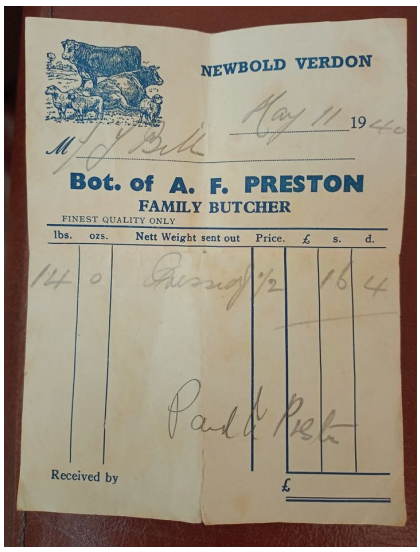


This is a photograph of them on their wedding day. They are standing in the garden of a house just up from the Miners' Welfare Hall where they had their wedding reception. My uncle was born around 1911, so he would be in his late 20s. Originally, he was from Heather but had come to Newbold to work at Hall Farm. He was not called up for the forces because he was a farm worker.

The page boy and bridesmaid were the children of Mr Milner, the farmer at Hall Farm and my uncle's employer.

I have often wondered how my uncle, a farm worker, was able to have at his wedding, the children of his boss. It might be because he seemed to get on with so many people. When he went to work at the Heath driving one of Wilkinson's lorries, he and my aunt became good friends with the owner, Len Wilkinson and his wife.

Below are some of the bills for the meat, bread for the sandwiches and wedding cake.


NEWBOLD VERDON

May 11 1940

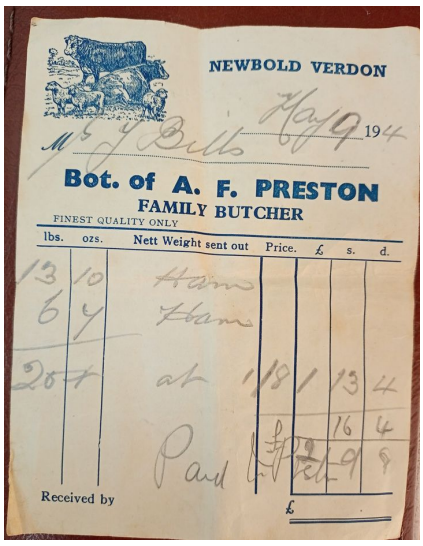
Bot. of A. F. PRESTON

FAMILY BUTCHER

FINEST QUALITY ONLY

lbs.	ozs.	Nett Weight sent out	Price.	£	s.	d.
14	0	Pressed	½	16	4	

Received by


NEWBOLD VERDON

May 9 1940

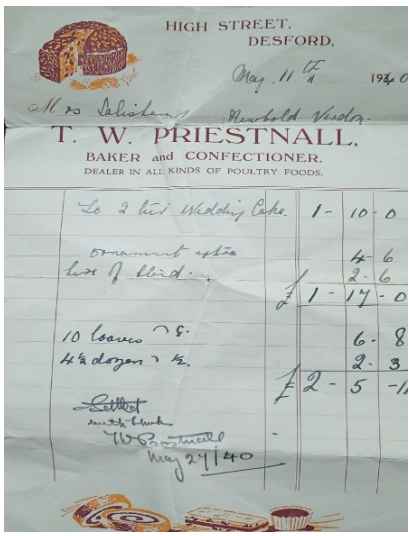
Bot. of A. F. PRESTON

FAMILY BUTCHER

FINEST QUALITY ONLY

lbs.	ozs.	Nett Weight sent out	Price.	£	s.	d.
13	10	Ham				
6	4	Ham				
20	4	at	1/8	1	13	4
					16	4

Received by


HIGH STREET,
DESFORD.

May 11 1940

Mr. Salisbury Newbold Verdon

T. W. PRIESTNALL,

BAKER and CONFECTIONER,

DEALER IN ALL KINDS OF POULTRY FOODS.

To 2 tier Wedding Cake.	1	10	0
Ornaments extra		4	6
Use of Stand		2	6
	£	1	17	0
10 loaves ~ 5.			6	8
4½ dozen ~ ½.			2	3
	£	2	5	-1

Settled with Mrs Priestnall May 29/40

Before they were married, Elsie, my aunt, was living at 41 Dragon Lane. My uncle also lived on Dragon Lane, in a tithed cottage owned by Hall Farm and I think when they got married she joined him there.

My aunt worked in Earl Shilton or Barwell in the shoe trade, but the minute they got married she never went to work again, which wasn't unusual then. They never had any children, that's why they made such a fuss of me and my brother.

The End of the War: VE Celebrations in the Village

On V.E. Day, the village organised a big outdoor celebration complete with a huge bonfire that had been constructed by farm workers at Hall Farm. It stood on Main Street directly opposite Brascote Lane. The person who had the honour of lighting the fire was Uncle Walt, a man said to be liked by all that met him.

My Uncle the Farm Worker

I used to sit on my uncle's knee when they were ploughing. When they lived in the cottage on Dragon Lane he would drive the tractor along the back field, pick me up from their garden and take me ploughing, I would be four years old then. Health and safety didn't exist then.

In 1953 he gave up his job at the farm because he was fed up with the tithe cottage and he moved on to the new Preston Drive estate, at 29b Preston Drive.

My Uncle the Lorry Driver

He worked then for Wilkinsons at the Heath, lorry driving. He had never passed a test in his life, but he could drive. One of his jobs was collecting milk churns from farms in the Leicester Forest East area and I used to go with him to do that. My dad also worked for the Wilkinson's as a coal delivery driver.

Here is a photograph of my uncle and aunt when they were probably in their fifties.

