

THE COCKPIT

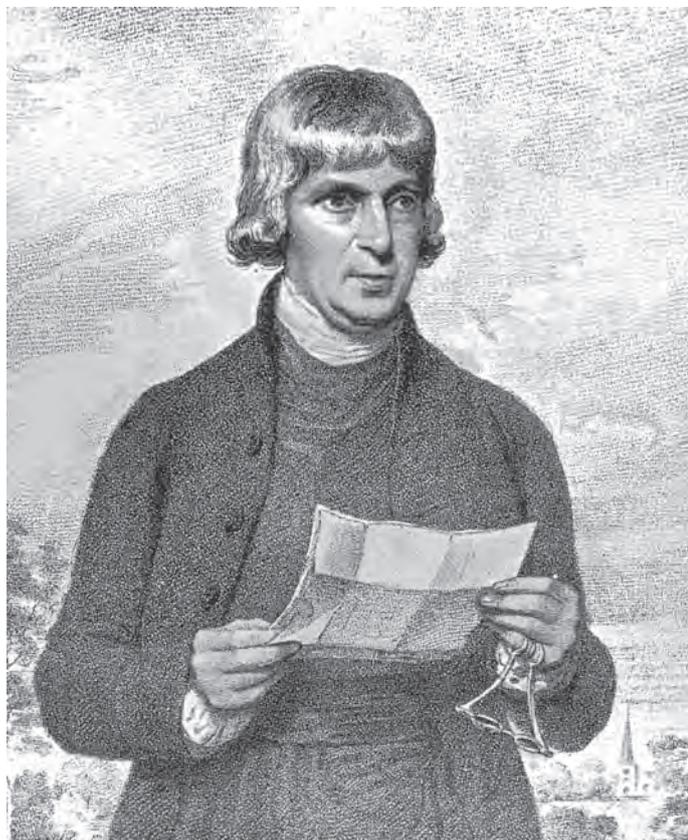


A Publication of the Chislehurst Society (founded 1934)

The Cockpit, on Chislehurst Commons, has been the traditional meeting place for the Chislehurst people on all great occasions from time immemorial

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Francis Wollaston, LL.B
Rector 1769–1815

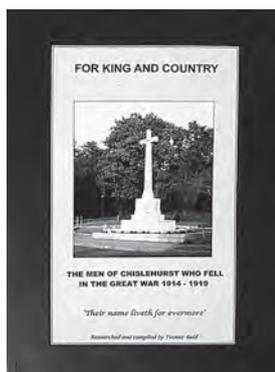
In this edition of *The Cockpit*:

- Edward Miskin, Parish Clerk, 1750–1822: Part Two,
- Fire Brigade memories,
- Mystery pipe on Chislehurst Common,
- Personal memories of Chislehurst.

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Edward Miskin, Parish Clerk, 1750–1822: Part Two, by Paul Miskin

As before, Editorial comments are in {...} to distinguish those in [...] or (...) made by the author

{This part is more to do with the workings of the 18th-century version of local government in Chislehurst, as a rural parish. Paul Miskin gave us some idea of this in relation to Edward Miskin's duties, and as Editor I have added a little more to enhance the picture. It was very much driven by local people, chosen or elected to serve their fellow parishoners}.

{In the mid-18th century the parish officers consisted of two churchwardens, two overseers of the poor and two surveyors of highways. The churchwardens, one nominated by the Rector and one by the Vestry, usually served for two years in succession. At first these officers were from the yeoman class of prosperous working farmers below the rank of gentry, who were also often prosperous farmers. There was a disinclination to serve on the part of the gentry, but in 1773 an Order of Vestry decreed 'that all the gentlemen in the parish are to have notice that they will occasionally be chosen as officers'. A gentleman could buy his way out of this for £10, and all did, until Charles Townshend, son of the Hon Thomas Townshend of Frognal, was chosen as an Overseer in 1790. Webb's *History* tells us that Charles, who lived at Farringtons, 'set an excellent example to his class by accepting the post cheerfully, and conscientiously performing its duties'. After that date, there were no more applications for exemption! I think this is a reflection of the Townshend family's attitude to public service. It is also interesting to note that Charles was a grandson of Charles, 2nd Viscount Townshend, of Rainham in Norfolk, widely known as 'Turnip Townshend', the gentleman farmer who devised a system for feeding cattle on turnips during the winter}.

{The following gleanings from Orders of Vestry illustrate some of the varied business of the Parish. These are very detailed, and as they convey a clear idea of the way

in which our 18th-century form of local government thought and worked, they are printed in full}.

On 9th June 1778 there was an exceptionally detailed Order covering the theft and replacement of church plate. *'Whereas the foregoing Church Rate of February 25th was agreed upon in order to enable the Churchwardens to purchase a new set of Communion Plate in the room of that which had been stolen in December last, and to defray the charge of bringing the offenders to justice, and whereas --- Ewer, Richard Hatch, Inigo Sayer, Stephen Player and --- Harris have been apprehended on the confession of Benjamin Jetham, one of the gang, and brought before Sir John Fielding* and the other magistrates of the City of Westminster, where also Henry Barnett and --- Lyon have been brought, the former of whom confessed his having bought the plate of some of the prisoners and sold it again to the said Lyon; but the Parish Officers were discouraged by the said magistrates from proceeding, though they were willing for the benefit of the publicity to be at the trouble and expense of Prosecuting the offenders to conviction; and whereas the Rev Francis Wollaston our Rector has procured us a set of Plate and raised the money by a voluntary subscription among the Nobility and Gentry of our Parish, that it may not fall heavy upon the parishioners in general, so that the whole of the foregoing rate will not be wanted; he has called a Vestry at the recommendation of the Rt Hon Lord Camden to propose reducing the Parish Rate, and it is accordingly agreed by the parishioners present that the Churchwardens shall be authorised to collect only half the aforesaid assessment on the parishioners, and that those who have already paid the whole of their assessment shall receive half of their money back again.'* [This order was signed by Francis Wollaston, Rector, and others, including Richard Gravett.]

On 10th April 1787 the Vestry noted that *'Richard Barwell Esq, as an acknowledgement to the Parish for permitting him to turn aside a common footpath from some ground on which he was making improvements, has paid into the hands of the Revd Francis Wollaston the sum of sixty pounds for the purchase of a clock or any other use to which the parishioners shall see proper to apply it.'* [Perhaps this

was an early example of what we now know as a Planning Agreement with Planning Gain.] The Vestry agreed to the installation of a Church Clock and in due course Edward Miskin's responsibilities as Parish clerk included the winding up and oiling of it. {Mr Barwell lived at Homewood. This incident is detailed in Webb, pp 88 & 272, with reference to Clock Path, in the Hoblands area – Ed.}

On 4th May 1788, *'On account of the great increase of vagrants it has been recommended to the Churchwardens and Overseers of this Parish to put the Vagrant Act in execution and the Gentlemen of this present Vestry promise to support the said Officers in that business. It is therefore ordered that a watch-house be erected on a convenient spot for that purpose.'*

On 18th August 1808, *'It having been mentioned that the typhus fever has been prevalent in this parish, both this and last year, and it being thought necessary that every possible mode of prevention should be immediately put into execution; Resolved, that it be recommended to the inhabitants of all cottages to have their houses whitewashed with quicklime and all the furniture and bedding cleaned and fumigated and for the encouragement thereof, that this be done at the expense of the parish and also for seeing this necessary precaution executed, that a committee, consisting of the Rev Wollaston, General Swift, Mr Taggart, Mr Bonar and the Overseers of the parish, be appointed.'*

On 17th October 1808 the Vestry resolved to appoint Thomas and Catherine Nicholls as Master and Mistress of the Poor House {site of St Michael's today – Ed.} at £25 per annum and 10% of the profits of all the labour of manufacture in the house. Terms included that *'they engage to employ themselves in the economy of the house and to teach to spin, sew and other necessary employment to the people in the house. Mr Nicholls will weave if required, also for the advantage of the house.'* This appointment did not prove satisfactory and the couple were dismissed by Order of Vestry on 1st April 1811, after an investigation.

{*Sir John Fielding was the half-brother of Henry Fielding, the novelist.}

{These Vestry records are held at Bromley Local Studies Library. It is advisable to contact the Librarian in advance if any reader wishes to study them. They are written in a variety of 18th-century hands, not always very easy to read – Ed.}

Fire Brigade Memories, by David Morris

These memories relate to the period between the late 1960s into the 1970s. They convey some interesting details of the life of a fireman in those days, but with personal names omitted. The opinions expressed are those of the writer, and relate strictly to that era. They do not necessarily reflect conditions in the modern fire service. It includes an account of the fire at the Cedars in April 1970, illustrated with an image from a slide of this incident, donated by the Bushell family, in place of the rather fuzzy news-cutting originally provided, showing the scene at the Cedars almost as described, including a 45-foot ladder, and firemen on the roof, hacking at the tiles with an axe to ventilate the roof space.

In 1968 when I joined the London Fire Brigade (LFB) there was a generation change. Southwark training school was full with new young recruits. Some of the instructors had seen wartime service and all the horrors that went with it. We were shown a film about the Blitz, and at the end, it was explained to us that, as a percentage, the National Fire Service (NFS) lost more personnel than the combined total loss of those in the armed forces, during the War. The purpose of this was to point out to us, in no uncertain terms, what might be required of us, and let us know what our duty was, in case we did not fancy the Fire Brigade as a career.

The Fire Service in those days was a very different institution to what you see today, and perhaps requires a brief explanation of the conditions and thinking of that time.

Health and safety, whilst important to the individual and crew-members working on fire stations, was not always uppermost in the minds of some senior officers. Getting the job done at personal risk to uphold the traditions of the service was all-important to them. Entering a building without breathing apparatus was the norm, termed 'smoke eating'. Pension fund actuaries loved it. Life expectancy after retiring was about five years. Changes to equipment and procedures

would only come about with the deaths of firemen.

Much of our personal equipment in the 1970s had not changed much visually since Victorian times, with the exception of the helmet, from brass to cork, and they gave us a pair of rubber gloves, coloured red, for body handling. To solve the problem of cut hands the powers that be insisted we wear these red rubber gloves at fires, to reduce cuts, and renamed them 'debris gloves'. It was not realised that they melted when we touched something hot. Most of us went to Millets and bought our own pair of leather gardening gloves.

Even the fire escape ladders in London had changed little since the beginning of the 20th century. Whole trees, seasoning under the railway arches at Lambeth workshops, were a common sight, as the London Fire Brigade built its own ladders. There were some 45-foot aluminium extending ladders, used mainly by rural brigades in Kent and Surrey, which were cheaper than the escape ladder. This had come about because in 1965, when the Greater London Council was formed, the new Boroughs took in parts of the surrounding counties to form the new enlarged area. Places like Sidcup, Chislehurst, Downham, Orpington, Biggin Hill, Bromley and Beckenham, once within the Kent Fire Brigade area, now became London Fire Brigade overnight, and as a consequence the type of equipment inherited remained in service with LFB for some years, until the aluminium ladders were replaced with escape ladders. Realising the cost-effectiveness of aluminium ladders in the late 1970s, and the diminishing



Firemen on the roof of the Cedars

number of wheelwrights to repair escape ladder wheels, LFB updated and we see the 'Son' of the 45-foot ladder, the 13.5 metre ladders now riding on many fire engines today. The term 'fire appliances' has now replaced the older 'fire engine'. We disrespectfully just called them 'Big Red Lorries', much to the annoyance of our officers.

Whilst this does sound somewhat cynical, Bromley and its surrounding stations did eventually get an all-steel Merryweather Escape ladder. A superb piece of kit, as one man could at a push slip it from its mountings, counter-balance it, i.e. bring it to the upright position and commence pushing it towards the fire. Whilst this was the pinnacle of escape ladder design, its downfall was that, in the event that you bent it, it required specialised craftsmen to straighten it – and we did bend a few!

Working hours in the LFB, circa the 1970s, were 48-hours week plus eight hours compulsory overtime, so a 56-hour week was worked. This was arranged on a three-watch shift system of two days, each from 9am to 6pm (nine hours), two nights, each from 6pm to 9am (15 hours) and two days off. The watches were described by colours, as Red, White and Blue.

On the morning of the fire at Camden Park Road the White Watch, H21 Bromley (as it was then), to which I was attached, was finishing its second night duty and looking forward to going off on its first leave day, with the Blue Watch arriving for its first day duty. Light snow was falling outside the station, as the first members of Blue Watch started to arrive at about 0815hrs. A thing called mutual exchanges was soon under way, and was allowed up to 08.45hrs. This allowed men from the off-going watch to leave early, so long as they were relieved by an on-duty man of same rank and qualification. Once permission was granted by the Officer in Charge, the duty man in the watch room would make an entry in the station log book and change the name on a small board, carried on the appliance, called the nominal roll board, which listed all men on board that particular engine, and their responsibilities, (e.g., PL, Pump Ladder; P, Pump; TL, Turntable Ladder), so that they could be accounted for in the event of a road accident, or collapse and entrapment at a fire.

When the call came in for Camden Park Road at about 08.50hrs there was a mix of Blue and White Watch members on the Pump Ladder and Pump, with Station Officer J. H. in charge. The drive to Camden Park Road

was uneventful, although it was snowing, and on arrival smoke was issuing from the first floor. Whilst Station Officer H. tried to establish if anybody was in the building from the small crowd that had gathered, the crew started to get to work.

For my part as a rookie fireman, I entered the building via the front door, and with nothing to hand, started up the rather grand staircase quite swiftly. On reaching the top a dense layer of thick black smoke was rolling out of a corridor towards me. In those brief moments my lungs felt as if they were burning inside. It soon became obvious to me that with any further progress into the corridor, I was going to end up a casualty. Coughing and spluttering I returned downstairs and reported the upper floor was heavily smoke-logged and that breathing apparatus was required. Before I could finish the sentence, two members of Blue Watch had rigged themselves in Siebe Gorman self-contained oxygen breathing apparatus (BA), grabbed hold of the hose reel and brushed past me. The photograph shows that BA crews had opened several windows internally, *before* the ladder was pitched. As the fire had progressed into the roof space, firemen had now entered the first floor without breathing apparatus as the smoke had now cleared, and were trying to knock out the fire above them, as some of the ceilings had collapsed. Three others and I were charged with pitching the ladder and ventilating the roof to make conditions on the first floor more bearable, hence the dramatic picture of me hacking off the tiles. Unfortunately, a flying tile caught Jimmy H.'s helmet and embedded itself a few centimetres from his scalp; a pity the cameraman didn't catch that!

On return to the Station, I hung my fire gear up in the drying room; it was in a bit of a state. Reporting for Parade a day and a half later, and not having time to sort myself out, I stood among the ranks, rather dishevelled, whilst Station Officer H. gave us the once-over. 'What happened to you, Morris? You look like a walking disaster, and I've seen vagrants look better than that.' Sniggers from the ranks, as others had been on the end of Mr H.'s sarky tongue. I was about to reply when he asked me how many days I had been off duty. 'A day and a half, sir', I replied. 'Plenty of time to get that mess sorted out, then!'

I didn't get caught out again!

BA tallies were introduced following the fires at Covent Garden and Smithfield markets between 1949 and 1954, as they were unable to establish which firemen

from which crews, had died in the fires. There followed a whole raft of BA procedures by the Home Office over the years. In 1987 the capital suffered the King's Cross disaster in which Station Officer Townsley died. During his career he had been stationed at Croydon, and many men from this area knew of him. During the enquiries that followed, a review into the protection afforded by fire gear, worn by fire fighters of the day, in particular the fire tunic, made from Melton, a woollen material made by Hainsworth and introduced into the LFB in the 1920s, was studied in depth. It concluded that whilst this fabric had served well in the past, new materials were now available which were much better able to cope with flash fire situations, and so the fire-fighters of today wear a rusty red coloured uniform, with layers of underpadding, comprising Nomex and other materials, which can resist disintegration and afford better protection in such situations.

(Whilst to my knowledge the article is technically correct, there is, I suppose, someone out there who will disagree with certain aspects of it.)

Mystery pipe or pole on Chislehurst Common

A Society member, Andrew Belsey, has raised an enquiry about a large pipe or pole sticking up through the trees on the edge of Ashfield Lane, between Rush Pond and Kemnal Road. He remembers it from the 1950s. It still stands, opposite 24 Ashfield Lane, and is still obscured by trees, undergrowth and ivy. But the top can be clearly seen against the sky, with its characteristic sunflower finial, some 25 to 30 feet above the ground (see illustration, right). A plausible guess is that it is (or was) a ventilation pipe for a drain or sewer, and there is what looks like a sewer inspection cover a few yards away on the footpath beside Ashfield Lane. Mr Belsey asks: does this explain why the pipe is there? And how long has it been there? And are there any similar pipes in the Chislehurst area or elsewhere? Does any reader have any information about, or comments on, this pipe?

The Editor recalls seeing similar pipes in various places as a boy, and believes them to be sewer ventilation pipes, but would like to add to Andrew Belsey's question: why has this one been left when others seem to have disappeared? If sewers still need ventilation, how is it now achieved?

Answers, if any, should be addressed to the Editor, *The Cockpit*, Chislehurst Society. (*Contact details on last page*)

Personal Memories of Chislehurst, by David Lockton

Readers will recall the memories of Daisy Foreman, published in *The Cockpit* Summer 2009. Her brother is David Lockton and he has written his own historical memories, in the form of a lively imaginary walk around the village (excluding Royal Parade), in the 1950s and '60s, recalling various shops and other businesses and some of the personalities who lived and worked here. Trying to turn these notes into a coherent article would have destroyed their originality, and they do fall into a logical geographical order. Mr Lockton divided his notes into three parts and numbered each subsection, and this method has been preserved here. Editorial intervention has been kept to a minimum. Some punctuation has been inserted and helpful comments *in italics* added in brackets [...], but otherwise these memories have been transcribed verbatim and little attempt has been made by the editor to verify or correct statements unless it seems really necessary. Readers are invited to respond with their own memories of that time.

Chislehurst history. First part.

1. From Elmstead Lane to Cranmore Road once lived a sister to Lord Haw-Haw, 'Germany calling' on radio. [*William Joyce, Second World War*] Also on the corner of Cranmore Road lived a doctor (Doctor Groom) who became a police doctor for the area.
2. On the other side from Elmstead Lane was a farm owned by Spooner, long before Cold Harbour estate was ever built (fields).



Whatever is it?

3. From Hillview Road an electrical shop, a grocer's, off licence, butcher's and a sweet shop and newsagent. [*The butcher's was Eastlake's*]

[*Going on up the hill and down into village*]

4. Bug Hutch cinema owned by a Mr Fletcher then a Mr Cripps where the [*R.C. St Patrick's*] church is now.

Then a row of houses, then a used bookshop-cum-sweet shop owned by a Mr Gardener.

Next door was Westhurst Dairy shop, at the rear delivery horse and carts, then electric floats, run by Harland family, then Maxwell's barbers' mens' only.

5. Battle's the baker's shop, at the rear bake house and delivery vans owned by Mr Arthur Battle and family, then Clapson's the butcher's, next door Surfing's linen shop, then Barkway and Clark ironmongers [*now Workshop*], then Dixon's paper and sweetshop, then an optician's shop. Down the side was an alley to the rear of the shops [*no car park then*].

6. The vicarage, almshouses, then the church, Vicar at the time Rev [*Canon Reginald Sowray*] Greaves.

Next door where the doctors' stand today was a Garden

of Remembrance, then a small garden centre owned by Batchelors family.

7. [*Here is*] Park Road. White & Bushell's corner shop, ironmongers, etc, next door Express Dairy shop, then Mason's gravestones, etc., next Eve Bull, women's shop, then Thompson's jewellers.

Ince and Mason's fish shop, then Staple's greengrocers, then Hyde's petrol pumps and repair shop to the rear. Hydes' car showroom, then Cullen's grocers (see picture below).

Between Staple's and Hyde's was a sweet shop. Between Cullen's alleyway then Brown's sweetshop, next door Chester jewellers, then Creamer's hairdressers ladies then Mascot Cafe owned by a Mrs Baker.

Queen's Head public house, owner used to do pony trekking, then Prickend Pond.

8. Going into Ashfield Lane, Rush Pond, Heathfield estate, then Doctor Todd's new residence.

[*Here is*] Kemnal Road.

Fallowfield Nursing Home [*on right*], then, towards Sidcup, Foxbury playing fields used as M.O.D. premises



Chislehurst High Street in the 1950s. looking north, showing Cullens on the right,

during the war. [*Coed Bel, not to be confused with the other one in Lubbock Road*] Beaverwood Road Girls' School [*was Chislehurst & Sidcup County Grammar School for Girls at first*], cemetery, council yard, Chislehurst & Sidcup [*U.D.C.*], Western Motor Works showrooms and repairs. Froggnal Farm [*Frogpool is meant*], two thatched cottages [*they were separate until fairly recent times*] before traffic lights, before it changed.

9. Going back towards Chislehurst, Scadbury fruit shop, suppliers from Scadbury orchards, Fyffe's Banana Store, Old Perry Street, Sydney Arms public house in [*Old*] Perry Street, last house on right, Joan Regan, singer, once lived there. On the roof of her house was a stone cat on the chimney pot. [*The modern estate of Felix Manor stands on this site now, between Old Perry Street and the (new) Perry Street*].

Then going back, Farrington's Girls' School into Shepherd's Green [*at No.5*] once lived Lord Ted Willis who wrote the series Dixon of Dock Green, Jack Warner, then into Holbrook Lane, Tiarks family once lived there At the present time Hale and Pace live there [*only one of them, we believe, and also in a Shepherd's Green house*] and they both drink at The Bull Hotel.

10. Going towards Leeson's Hill, Richmal Crompton, writer of 'Just William' books known as Miss Lambourne [*Richmal Crompton Lamburn, lived in a house named Beechworth: see biography by Mary Cadogan*]. In Petts Wood [*woodland area*] William Willett Memorial and Sundial [*in the Willett Memorial Wood*].

Over the bridge to Birchwood Road, General de Gaulle French President, supposed to have lived at No.36 Birchwood Road early part of World War II. [*It was in fact No. 41; see Peter Waymark's History of Petts Wood*]

My father was a serving police officer for a number of years at Chislehurst Police Station.

Chislehurst history. Second part.

1. From New Eltham end: Montbelle Road; a road leading off was Brownspring Drive [*there*] was supposed to be a group of singers called The Radio Revellers. Going down Edgebury Road was a school called Edgebury Central [*School*] for Boys [*and Girls*]. Row of houses from top to bottom, behind these houses were fields long before Edgebury housing estate was built.

2. From Edgebury Road top end, going towards

Chislehurst, Green Lane, was a farm. Just before Westhurst Drive going down was a road [*on the right*], Degema Road, called Coppers Alley. On the corner of Albany Road was Barrett's Car Hire. The British Legion [*was*] opposite sweet shop owned by Elsie Tanner, then [*on*] Belmont Parade was a sweet shop and newsagents and Post Office called Briggs'. Next door was a hairdresser's men [*and*] women, owned by 'Deafy Bill', as he was known to the locals.

3. Next door was Quilter's Jewellers, then over a period of time became a greengrocer's owned by same people. Then Alan de Maid opened his first Estate Agency business. Next door was Playford's the bakers, then Poxon's the butchers, then a greengrocer's, then became an electrical shop. Williams' the grocers, then Woodside Avenue.

On the other corner was Grants' car showroom, Bocock's the chemist, then a women's shop, Edwards'. The sweet shop next door was empty then became a cafe owned by the Slegg family, then a fresh fish shop also a fried fish and chip shop, then an alleyway leading to the Chislehurst Scout hut and Kemnal Road. Coming back to Belmont Parade was allotments then Cannon's grocery and greengrocers.

4. Going up Green Lane was Mead Road. At the top on [*the*] left side was a school [*now Mead Road Infants*] coming back down was a house owned by the Richardson family, friends of the Kray brothers. Going back down Green Lane there stands the Gordon Arms public house where the Allen family ran it. Next to it was the 227-bus terminus. Also as I mentioned, Slegg's cafe on Belmont Parade used their own home for teas, sandwiches, etc, etc, for all the bus drivers long before opening the cafe.

Now [*we are in*] Park Road, shoe repair shop, fish and chip shop, then a bric-a-brac shop then the mineral waters bottling plant plus delivery lorries opposite Goddard's tailors and men's shoe repair shop, then next door a cafe owned by Mr Wright, his son [*Douglas*] played cricket for Kent, believed to have married one of the Beverley sisters, a well-known singing group.

5. Queens Road going from Park Road was an alleyway going back to Green Lane, Wooster and Steele builders' merchants. Top of Queens Road was George Ward's removals depot, also just past it was a chemical factory and old cottages going back. On the corner of Queens Road was Pepper's betting shop.

6. Going back to the late fifties and early sixties, Lionel Davis opened a departmental store on the waste ground next to the Co-op butchery shop, then going into Willow Grove [*in*] the same year, where the school playground was, the Maintenance Garage opened up using one of the school classrooms for a repair shop [*which explains its appearance very nicely – Ed*] plus other buildings were erected for the same purpose, also two offices and in the front was a car showroom and a petrol sales office and a store room and the manager's office, plus in the front a forecourt and petrol pumps. The owner was Mr Frank Draper and family. Later on another garage opened opposite with petrol pumps and a large car showroom also owned by Mr Frank Draper. Going down Willow Grove, on the corner of Willow Vale, a vet's. Farther along was a Convent [*where Livingstone House is now – Ed*] then down Yester Hill was the Greatwood Hotel, down the side was garages and above one of them lived a cricket commentator? [*sic*], Peter West.

7. Down Yester Hill, then a turning before the bridge, to the left, this road [*Lubbock Road*] led you into Lower Camden where Andrew Gardener the ITV newscaster once lived with his wife and family. Also a very famous man called Smokey Joe used [*to*] drive around on his old push bike with no tyres on it plus he also had a fire in a bucket on his handlebars and his old tin can for his beer [*on*] which he toured all the eleven pubs in Chislehurst. He used to sit outside waiting for the locals to fill it up. He used to swear a lot but he was a very popular guy. He travelled everywhere. Somebody told me someone took a photo of him and it landed in the Royal Academy. Also Arthur Battle, the baker's in Chislehurst High Street, gave him a bag of stale buns every day and filled the can up with tea.

Chislehurst history. Last [*Third*] part.

Some that I missed. One shop between Victoria Road and Bushell Way, a general store.

1. Sir Malcolm Campbell was buried [*1949*] with his parents in St Nicholas' Churchyard.

2. Also a Mrs Fehr used [*to*] live in Lubbock Road, who had coachmen and horses and carriages, just like royalty in her day. [*Confirmed by Dorothy McCall on p56 of her Patchwork of the History of Chislehurst. These mention a Victoria and a Brougham.*]

3. Also in Belmont Lane once lived a bodyguard to Mr

Harold Wilson when he was Prime Minister.

4. Also a Mrs Everest organised the May Queen [*in*] which I and my brothers and sister took part.

5. Also Mr Cox the Commons Keeper once lived in Park Road. He also carried a shotgun. Also he organised the huge bonfire for the Guy Fawkes Night on Chislehurst Common every year. [*This was before the Second World War, and was a long tradition going back into Edwardian days, possibly before – Ed*]

6. Also there [*were*] three ponds, Prickend, Rush Pond and the Overflow, which dried up.

7. Not forgetting Chislehurst Caves, where thousands of people slept during the Second World War, mainly Londoners stayed there, plus a lot of well-known people entertained them although there was a cinema, hospital, etc, etc, down there.

8. Also on Chislehurst Common were a lot of film crews taking shots and scenes of famous stars.

9. But at the end of the day Sainsbury's shop was put up in the High Street. This spoilt the place once and for all. Chislehurst hasn't been the same since.

10. A lot of people who were born and bred there, including myself, moved out, mainly to Orpington. As a boy I helped out as a van boy with Battle's bakery. Sam was the driver. Also I worked Saturday mornings for Clapson's butchery, Dixon's paperboy, worked a number of years for Dean Brothers, [*and for*] Westhurst Dairy as a milk roundsman. Then in '62 I worked for the Maintenance Garage.

11. My sister and I are the only two people living [*surviving members of the family*]. We both had the best parents in the world. Also we had five brothers who were taken from us. My sister still lives in Chislehurst. Over the years I met some lovely people as I served the public all my working life. My sister worked in the sub-Post Office in Belmont Parade. My brother-in-law was a window cleaner, my sister-in-law also worked in a newsagents-cum-sweetshop. My brother was manager of Dean Brothers' Grocery. So over the years I met some famous people from TV and radio whilst working in Chislehurst all those years ago. So that's the story of my life, those days were the best, never to be repeated ever again.

From David R Lockton, aged 77 years old. [2008 – Ed.]