

ERNEST MARTIN MELLOR - UTTOXETER CHEMIST

MEMORIES OF UTTOXETER c 1880-1910 (recorded 1960)

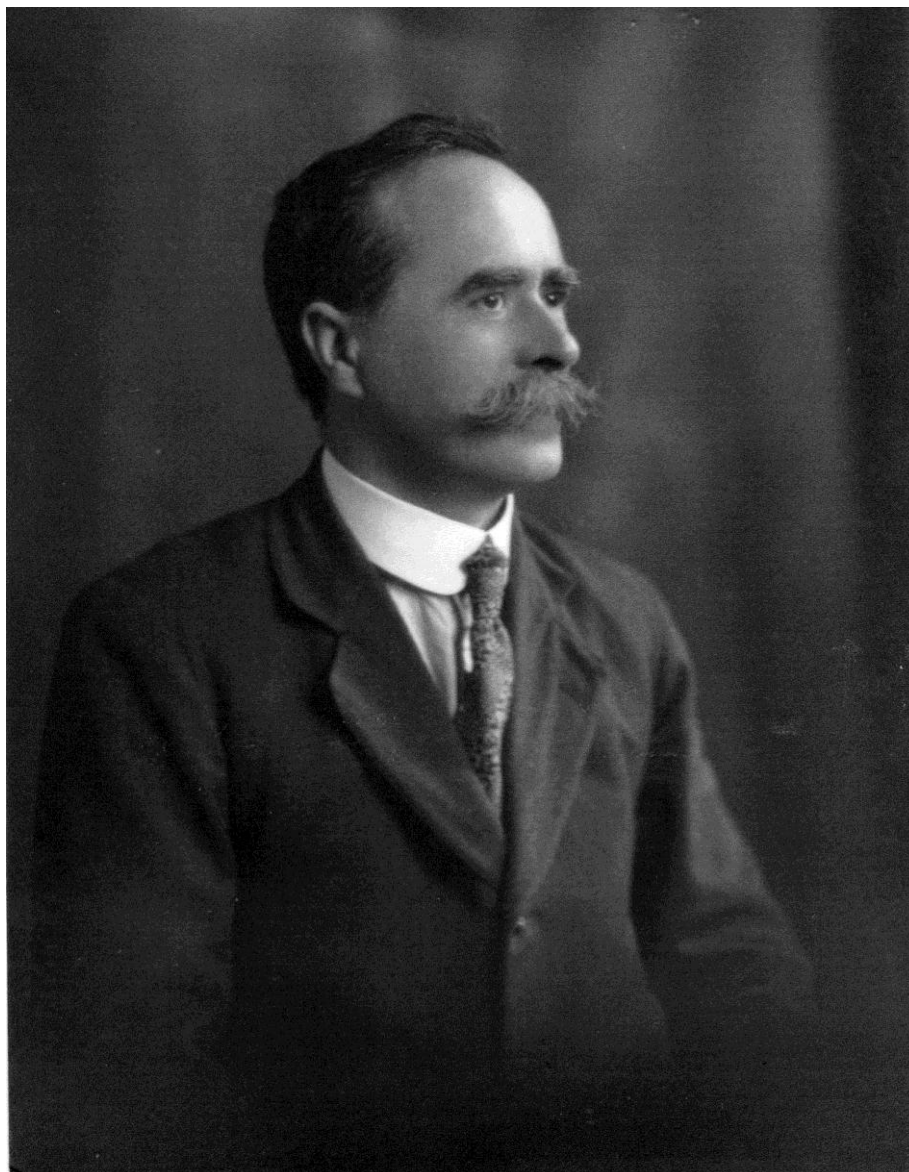


Photo courtesy Janet Cruickshank, nee Mellor

FOREWORD

One summer's evening in 1995 I was visiting the late Colin Deaville at his home in Uttoxeter to put the finishing touches to his story for my book *The Road To Chartley*. While I was there Colin's wife, Mary, introduced me to, Gwyneth Mellor, a friend who happened to be visiting. When I explained to her that I was collecting people's memories Gwyneth told me that her father Ernest Mellor, a well-known chemist in Uttoxeter from 1910 to the 1960s, had written down his memories of Uttoxeter from the late 1800s into the 1900s. He had entrusted his notebook to a friend and colleague Arthur Finníkin for safekeeping but Miss Mellor told me she had her own copy which she said I could borrow. A few days later a photocopy of Ernest Mellor's memories of Uttoxeter was waiting for me. When I read the memories I was amazed to find a fascinating account of life in Uttoxeter about ninety years ago. It must have been fate that brought me to visit Colin and Mary Deaville on the same night as Miss Mellor. Her father's memories might so easily have been lost. Ernest Mellor's memories were written in the late 1950s and in them he takes us back to his schooldays in Uttoxeter in the 1880s, the games he played, the businesses and shopkeepers in the town and some of the original names of streets which tell us the old industries that were carried on in or near them. But best of all are his descriptions of Uttoxeter characters such as Eli M, Crimea Joe, Paper Jack, Jimmy Danks and Hopping Anna to name a few. It is a fascinating story of life in Uttoxeter before the motor car. EMM as he was popularly known was born in Longton in 1876. He died on January 12th 1961 aged 84 and is buried in Uttoxeter cemetery. His father Thomas Mellor was station master at Uttoxeter for twenty years or more from 1880 to the early 1900s.

Jim Foley Summer 2002

An introduction by John Walker, retired Uttoxeter baker and author.

Ernest Mellor, a well-known and well-liked chemist in Uttoxeter had two chemist shops in Market Place. He was also a town councillor, a governor of Alleyne's Grammar School and was seen as a learned and fatherly figure in the town. His main shop, the top shop, E.M.Mellor, 32 Market Place, opposite Dr.Johnson's monument, had previously been a pub called The Crown Inn and to this day the yard at the back of this shop is known as the Crown Yard. The old buildings and site of the stables have been mostly pulled down. I have an old photograph of Mellor's Chemist shop showing an alleyway on the right. It is a right of way from Market Place to Church Street and as you go through you can see a grand example of medieval lath and plaster work. Ernest Mellor's second chemist shop, known as Mellor's bottom shop, was further down Market Place. It was a smaller shop and did not make up prescriptions like Mellor's larger chemist shop. The bottom shop seemed to specialise more in herbal goods. Mr Mellor also ran an optician's practice from this shop. One day my mother sent me on an errand to Mellors to fetch some Cayenne pepper. This errand remains fresh in my mind even after sixty years. Mr.Mellor himself served me and when he heard what I wanted he beamed at me and said, "Oh. Cayenne Pepper. Do you know where it comes from'?" By one of those amazing coincidences we had just learned in our geography lesson at school all about it. Mr.Mellor was obviously surprised when I replied British Guiana. He then asked me if I knew the capital and I was able to reply Georgetown. I then basked in Mr.Mellor's praise when in actual fact

my academic standard at school was very low. Mr.Mellor was a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society. Some years later on Market Days my bread and cake stall was just opposite Mellor's Chemist Shop so, of course, I remember it well with all its enamelled tin signs advertising all sorts of products. There were even signs on the wall above the shop front. One Wednesday morning during the market there was an almighty bang. A Tate and Lyle's sugar wagon had drawn past E.M.Mellor's to make a delivery to the Maypole Grocery shop next door. The end of an iron drainpipe running under the pavement and sticking out into the gutter at the side of the road had become so polished and worn over the years that it had become as sharp as a razor. As the wagon passed by Mellors its front tyre was sliced open by the sharp piece of iron - what a bang ! One of Ernest Mellor's apprentices was Vic Cartwright who later became a chemist and opened his own shop in the High Street.

John Walker
Uttoxeter 1996

Postscript to 2002 Foreword

In the summer of 2010 I had the good fortune to be put in touch with Ernest Mellor's only surviving daughter 98 year old Mrs. Janet Cruickshank, nee Mellor, a retired optician, who now lives in a care home in Scotland. Janet was delighted that her father's memoirs had been unearthed after lying unseen for fifty years and that they would at last be publicly available as her father had intended when he wrote them. She was able to supply me with background information on her father, her childhood and family life in Uttoxeter and is now writing her own memoirs. I am grateful to her cousin Mrs. Joy Dunicliff, author and writer of Uttoxeter, who put me in touch with Janet Cruickshank in the first place. It had originally been intended to publish Ernest Mellor's Memories along with the memories of other Uttoxeter residents including those of Mrs.Dora Fowles and John Walker but because of circumstances at the time this did not happen. Janet Cruickshank celebrated her 100th birthday in March this year.

Jim Foley December 2012

(written by Ernest Martin Mellor around 1960.)

①

Memories of Uttoxeter 60 to 80 yrs. ago

Uttoxeter eighty years ago was a very compact little town, & although industrialization had set in, it was still in a great measure self-supporting. As a market town it had since its 1st charter in . . . (and no doubt long before that) fulfilled its dual purpose of supplying the surrounding district with its needs, and of marketing the produce of the rich & fertile countryside, and was still doing this (as indeed it is doing to the present day)

. . . (?name) . . . Foundry, which had attempted to keep abreast with the modern methods of agriculture had failed financially some time before 1880. The building still stood, and still stands, at the corner of Wood Lane and the High Wood, and one of my early memories is that of gazing with wondering eyes at the remains of the travelling crane on its gantry just below the roof.

ERNEST MARTIN MELLOR'S MEMORIES OF UTTOXETER

Uttoxeter eighty years ago was a very compact little town and although industrialization had set in it was still in a great measure self-supporting. As a market town it had since its first charter in 1253, and no doubt long before that, fulfilled its purpose of supplying the surrounding district its needs and of marketing the produce of the fertile countryside and was still doing as indeed it is doing to the present day. A foundry, which had attempted to keep abreast with the modern methods of agriculture, had failed financially some time before 1880. The building still stood and indeed still stands at the corner of Wood Lane and the High Wood. One of my early memories is that of gazing with wondering eyes at the remains of the travelling crane on its gantry just below the roof.

Mr. Bamford's foundry occupied a strip of land across the brook from the railway. There was a wooden bridge over the line to a railway siding. By this time (1880) Bamfords was making good and continuous progress, with promise of further developments to follow. According to modern standards the foundry was small. So far as my memory carries me, there was a cupola (locally called the 'cupilo') - a furnace for melting the iron, a tin shed and a long brick building. The workmen numbered possibly 45 to 50. The foundry was turning out just what the surrounding dairy-farming district needed - chain pumps for raising water and spreading manure as well as mowers, tedders, rakes etc., all of course for horse traction. On this foundation and on this policy of providing what the district needed (which has been followed rigorously, only making the type of machine that suited the district and testing it thoroughly) has been built the firm of Bamfords Ltd. whose products are known and sold the world over. It would be difficult to find a finer example of growth and expansion through seeing the possibilities opened up by the special machines they eventually made for root cutting, food chopping and the provision many years later for power for providing electricity for isolated farms. Although this has nothing to do with 80 years ago, the result of the policy then adopted is shown by coffee mills in all the coffee-producing countries, by concrete mixers developed from the experience gained in pumps and then a tremendous advance in the manufacture of diesel engines - all machines having been developed from supplying first the local needs and then the vision to see a world market.

Other industries in Uttoxeter were two breweries, one in the High Street which I knew as Woods, and Stretch's Brewery across the level crossing at the bottom of Bridge Street, by the side of the railway. Messrs. Laskey had a cabinet works in Bridge Street where many beautiful pieces of furniture were turned out by craftsmen who knew and loved their work. The cork cutting industry was still represented by Shentons in Church Street, though I think an earlier cork-cutting business had just about finished. Coach-building was carried on by Messrs. Hall in the High Street and by Messrs. Richardson in Blade Lane, both employing a fair number of men. Messrs. Richardson also built floats. Wheelwrights were Messrs. Degg on the Heath and Tomlinson's down Dove Bank. They supplied and repaired farm carts. There were, of course, a number of blacksmiths who cared for the shoeing of horses and also the supply of certain metal parts.

One must not forget the important side line that Messrs. Bamfords operated - the dressing and curing of rindleskins, an industry that has vanished with time. A rindleskin was the inner coating of a calf's stomach, preserved, cured and dried and sold to the farming community for cheese-making - without it cheese could not have been made. A piece of the skin was cut off and dropped into the milk to promote the formation of the curds necessary in the early stages of cheese production.

Liquid rennet has now taken its place. I wonder if the question, "What is a rindle-skin?" were put in a B.B.C. quiz how many could give the answer?

An attempt to introduce the cotton industry into Uttoxeter had failed but was kept in mind by the name given to the triangle formed by Silver Street, Derby Road and Church Street - the Jinny Shop and by the farm still called The Cotton Mill, a mile out of the town on the Tean Brook. Walker's Timber Yard in Carter Street looked after the felling, seasoning and milling of local grown timber and supplied the needs of the town and district for English wood. Messrs. Critchlow had a large tannery at the bottom of Pinfold Street by the Stoneyford Brook, another of the then surviving old industries.

All the bread eaten in the town was baked in the town mostly in wood-fired ovens. The smell of the bread when baking was completed and the loaves were being taken out of the ovens on long wooden paddles was something to remember - delicious is a mild adjective to use and the taste was equal to the smell. The crust was crisp and delightful and the bread something to offer to a queen. Incidentally Gregory's windmill still stood with its great sails spread to the wind up on The Heath.

The meat eaten was all butchered locally but our butchers were master craftsmen. They did not buy old worn-out cows and those went to the big towns who wanted cheap meat. Our butchers went to Wellington or Welshpool or other known centres for cattle properly fed for eating. Also they knew when to kill and when not to kill, when they should allow the beasts time to rest and all the other fine points of the butcher's trade. The result was beef of the first quality, a quality we never see nor taste nowadays. Despite this the cattle market at Uttoxeter was a major feature of the town's life - largely dairy cattle, calves, sheep and pigs, but that will be mentioned later.

The old trades and crafts died hard. I remember the last of the rope makers, of the Ropewalk in Stone Road, the last of the rake makers, nail makers, hatters, cork cutters, maltsters, coopers, umbrella makers, besom makers, candle makers and whitesmiths or gunsmiths. Messrs. Coulsons had quite a large candle factory down their yard behind their shop, where I have taken many pounds of fat to go into the vats in which the candles gradually gathered round the wicks hanging down from the framework above. The candles were rather crude but they had a ready sale.

Then there were the old ladies who specialised in the making of black puddings that smelled and tasted of herbs and gardens; oatcakes and pikelets. I shall never forget as a boy going to the cottage down the Old Star Yard, where an old lady lived who turned out the very finest black puddings known in the district. I found her with her sleeves rolled up working wheat into a great bucket of fresh bullocks' blood, still steaming from the slaughter house in the next yard. She was a sight to see, with the blood splashed up to her shoulders. It was too much for any young stomach and it was a month or two before I wanted to eat any more black puddings, but the savoury smell as they cooked it with the bacon in a Dutch oven before the kitchen fire, cured me of my squeamishness. But wouldn't I just like to taste those old-time black puddings once more, with their little white cakes of fat and the compound of penny-royal and who shall say what other culinary herbs giving a savour never to be forgotten, but also impossible to get at any price today, for the exact composition was the old lady's closely guarded secret. Mrs. Broalch's Uttoxeter Wakes Cakes and Uttoxeter Gingerbread just melted in the mouth - the wakes cakes subtly flavoured with coriander and the ginger-bread golden slices that today would draw customers many miles but both cakes and gingerbread are other secrets that have vanished, at any rate so far as retail sales are concerned.

Messrs. Bell and Davis may still have been making clocks - clocks and clock cases were once a feature of trade in Uttoxeter, but I cannot really be sure of that. What I can be sure of is that if any article necessary for the house seemed to be unobtainable, someone soon got to work to make it. So the town found its wants supplied and in turn saw the countryside had its wants supplied too. The population of the town was more thickly concentrated than at present. Almost all the traders lived at their places of business and there were many families of six or eight children with their parents, living in very small houses and they lived happily in their close quarters. I can only think of three traders in the Market Place who did not live at the shop - the grocer Mr. Coulson who had a beautiful house on Dove Bank; the ironmonger Mr. Page who lived in the lovely Georgian house opposite the North Gate of the Church and Mr. Henry Hall, agent for the Burton Brewery Company, whose office and sales department was next to the Red Lion. All the rest lived and brought up their families above, below or behind their shop and the same applied to the other streets.

There were quite a number of 'yards' leading off the various streets with small houses for the poorer people. Amongst these were Brough Yard ,off Bridge Street, Allsebrook Yard, off High Street, Pitts Place, off High Street), Walker's Yard or Shaw's Yard, off Carter Street, another small yard afterwards known as Allport's Yard, off Carter Street, Blacksmith's Yard, off Balance Street; Golden Bell Yard, off Church Street and a few others scattered about the town. Almost all of the houses up these yards have been demolished and their occupants transferred to Council houses.

The limits of the town were very well defined. The toll gate at the junction of Wood Lane and the High Wood was the virtual end of the town. The top of Balance Hill with the few houses in Little Lane and The Slang was the limit in that direction. The Old Toll Gate House and the Cemetery Lodge across the Hockley Crossing ended the houses on that road. The junction of Stone Road and Smithfield Road, then called Smithy Lane, known as Mount Pleasant, marked the beginning of the country.

The Three Tuns Inn and the crossroads behind it, with the Workhouse at the junction of what is now Holly Road and Heath Road, marked the rough edge of the town in those directions. Beyond the Three Tuns down Ashbourne Road there was only one cottage and then fields, and Titley's Mill by the Tean Brook, until you came to Spath, with a row of three or four houses known as The Dockyard, a reminder of the old canal, standing isolated in the fields. On the Derby Road there were only about five houses beyond Dove Bank crossing until you came to the Noah's Ark - so named because two or three times a year the River Dove flooded the whole valley and the Noah's Ark was in the midst of the waters. Outside these limits there were only scattered and isolated houses.

Names of the roads and streets have altered but some had already changed. Tanners Lane, the road branching to left at the top of Balance Hill, had become Beg Lane - not a single house on it. It is now Leighton Road. The smaller road to the right at the top of the hill was Little Lane and off this a narrow side road was known as The Slang - now West Hill. Subsequent dwellers in The Slang disliked the name - they did not realise that it had nothing to do with coarse language but simply meant a narrow strip of ground. Tinkers Lane had become Stone Road. Salters Lane had changed to Slade Lane, now Park Street, but we still have The Wharf reminding us of the canal and its commercial importance to the town. Now unfortunately The Wharf has been included as the northern end of High Street and the old name is only remembered by the older inhabitants. What is now Market

Street was still The Sheepmarket and its continuation down to the brook, Petticoat Lane, changed for some unknown reason by the Council to Spiceall Street, a name with no meaning.

The Hockley was still The Hockley; why it should now be named Hockley Road no-one knows. Bradley Street was Bradley Lane. Church Street from the High Street to the church was Church Lane. Queen Street (what a name for this obscure thoroughfare) was Back Lane. The Pinfold was still in its place at the bottom of Pinfold Lane and I can remember seeing cattle impounded in it - but that has now disappeared and of course Pinfold Lane is now Pinfold Street.

Railway communications and facilities were very different to what they are today. Uttoxeter had three railway stations - Bridge Street, the town station; Dove Bank on the Churnet Valley Line and the Junction. Contrary to what I have seen stated, one stationmaster governed the three stations. I know this because my own father, Thomas Mellor, was Stationmaster.

The Churnet Valley Railway which was joined at Rocester by the Ashbourne branch, dropped its passengers at Dove Bank and then the train from Macclesfield and Ashbourne went on to the Junction where passengers for the direction of Derby, Burton or London were transferred to the Derby train on the main line platform and those for Stoke, Crewe and beyond took their places in the main line train for Stoke. There was no connection whatever between the town and the junction, not even a footpath. It was merely an exchange point. The various trains were timed as conveniently as possible to make the connections. My father as Uttoxeter Stationmaster would travel from Bridge Street station by the Crewe to Derby train to the Junction, and there he would superintend the transfer of passengers to and from the Churnet Valley and Ashbourne lines to the Derby or Crewe trains. Then he might accompany either the Churnet Valley or Ashbourne train to Dove Bank Station, see it pick up its passengers there, and then walk back across the town to Bridge Street. At that time the Stafford and Uttoxeter Railway connected Stafford with Uttoxeter - the junction being at Bramshall - the railway spelling being Bromshall. One of my earliest recollections is rushing from the Stationmaster's House just over the Pinfold Street crossing to climb the gates to watch the "Stafford Humbug", as the engine was christened locally, pass on its way to Stafford, leaking steam apparently at every pore, puffing and wheezing but generally managing to complete the trip. A few years later the Great Northern Company bought this little railway and secured running rights from Egginton to Bromshall, and that is how the green chocolate trains of the Great Northern came to run through Uttoxeter.



Photo courtesy North Staffordshire Railway Study Group

Thomas Mellor, Station Master Uttoxeter circa 1907 identified in May 2011 by his 99 year old granddaughter Janet Cruickshank, daughter of Ernest Mellor. Mrs. Emma Mellor is on the left.

The two town stations and the junction was a very troublesome and inconvenient arrangement and as traffic increased the North Stafford Railway decided to build a new passenger station to which all trains could come. Where was it to be? My father suggested that the new station should be built on the site of the Goods Station, which could be moved further east; that there should be an island platform with bays at each end for the Churnet Valley, Ashbourne and Loop Line trains. The Loop Line trains, the local trains that ran from Harecastle through the middle of the Pottery towns, were extended at certain times to run down to Uttoxeter and were very useful as stopping trains at the small stations between Stoke and Uttoxeter leaving the main line trains free for fewer stops and quicker timing.

To build the new station in this position would have meant widening the Sheepmarket and Petticoat Lane and building a bridge over the brook to the station. At that time the cost would not have been excessive and the new passenger station would have been only four or five minutes' walk from the Market Place. But the powers that be said, "We need not spend money that way - the public will have to come to the station wherever we build it" and decided to put the station where it now stands - outside the town. What a boon to the travelling public and what a fillip to passenger train traffic would this station have been today, with fast diesels available at the centre of the town and only a couple of hundred yards for the buses from all parts to connect with the Station! To bring the Churnet Valley trains into the new station necessitated the making of a short stretch of railway and this was carried out by a very sharp curve from near Dove Bank to the new station. Again against advice the new station was built with the junction facing Stoke instead of facing Derby. The idea was

to take the London traffic through Stoke. The folly of this was soon made evident but the mistake had been made and the railway working suffers to this day.

Roads were very different also. There may have been a horse-roller, I cannot say. In any case such a roller was very inefficient. What generally happened was that broken limestone from the local quarries was spread on the roads and the traffic ground it in. The Turnpike Roads or Toll Roads were still in operation and there were toll gates at strategic points to collect the tolls. One of these roads was the New Road and this got its name from the fact that it was a new section of road constructed to cut off the awkward and hilly detour that the road from Newcastle-under-Lyme to Uttoxeter made in order to pass through the village of Stramshall. This toll road from Newcastle to Uttoxeter was the work of Josiah Wedgwood who straightened out, widened and improved the narrow and ill-kept old road in order to have a good road to bring in his butter-pots for Uttoxeter Market.

Butter was then sold in coarse red earthenware pots holding 40 pounds of butter each. I have seen statistics that show that London merchants bought up to £900 worth of butter and cheese in one day at Uttoxeter Market, at the then value of the £ sterling that represented a lot of money.

Josiah Wedgwood was not only a master potter. He was a commercial genius. He ran four turnpike roads to facilitate the transport of raw materials for his potteries and the transport of finished goods in different directions. It seems probable that the profit he made on his butter pots, which incidentally appear to have been his first commercial transaction on a considerable scale, was used to finance his work on the finer side of ceramics. That is as it may be.

I remember five toll roads into Uttoxeter, that from Newcastle already dealt with, one from Derby crossing the Dove at Dove Brudge (sic), (Dove rhyming with 'rove' please), one from Leek and Stone, one from Abbots Bromley and Lichfield and one from the Forest area down to High Wood. I have a copy of the accounts of the turnpike road from Uttoxeter to Stoke, not Stoke-on-Trent but Stoke near Stone, and its branch road from Milwich to Sandon for the period October 29 1829 to October 1830. Kiddlestitch Toll Gate, one mile out of Uttoxeter, was set at an annual rent of £134, Hollywood Gate further away was let for £43.9.0. and the rent of all the gates in Milwich was £60. Presumably the toll gate keepers paid the rent and then kept the tolls they collected. I could not say. But from the general accounts at that date, the payment of interest on capital was much in arrears.

The toll road surfaces were none too good. Muddy in wet weather and with clouds of white dust driving before the March winds coating the hedges and indeed strips of the fields beyond in white. There were ruts on the main roads but the side roads were in very much worse condition - ruts four to eight inches deep, filled with mud and water in wet weather. One wanted good boots to walk those roads and the prevailing fashion of women's skirts trailing on the ground did not make walks in the country easy. But it was all taken as normal and to be expected. Of course, if a young couple were walking round the High Wood, it was an advantage, for what could the young man do but put his arm round the young lady's waist and hold up her skirt from the muddy road?

Exactly when the Staffordshire County Council took over the main roads will be on record - somewhere about 1890 I fancy. The advent of the steam roller and the expenditure of money on reasonable work soon altered the condition of those roads and gradually the local councils tackled the side roads. Only those who used the old roads in their condition 80 years ago can have a real

conception of the boon of the modern road system. There were of course no motor cars, no buses as we know them. The White Hart Hotel had a bus that met the trains at the station to take down clients and to pick up those coming by train, at a fee of 1/6d per person. The bus was also available for any resident who wished to be taken to or from the station.

There were frequent runaways of horses, in traps, carts or floats but these were taken as a matter of course. Certain shop windows got smashed, but apart from minor injuries, which were not then counted, serious injury to life and limb was extraordinarily small. We boys had a great time when Mr. Taylor's traction engine drawing the threshing machine he hired out to the farmers came through the town. We risked the cane for being late for school rather than miss the sight. First came a man with a red flag, walking well in advance to warn all oncoming horse traffic. Then came the heavy ponderous traction engine with the great fly wheel, puffing and groaning and screeching as it pulled the thresher behind it at a speed of quite three or four miles an hour. That was the only mechanically-propelled vehicle on the road.

The fastest thing on the roads was the bicycle - the old penny-farthing type with a great big wheel a little one behind, but it was not long before the safety bicycle appeared, still with solid tyres, then with thick solid cushion tyres, to be followed, for wonders would never cease, by the air-filled pneumatic tyre. By then the County Council had got the main roads at least in decent condition for cycling, but there were not many families that could afford the money for a bicycle for the boys.

Life in those early days was not an easy path. There was no out of work pay, no old age pensions, no widows' pensions, no Public Assistance Officers. There was Parish Relief and there were those who would rather die in a ditch than apply for that; there was the Board of Guardians, and in the last extremity the Workhouse - it had not attained the dignity of "The Guardians' Institute". If a man were ill and unable to work there were no wages for his wife to collect and there were no children's allowances. The workers that snow or frost or shortage of work put out of action simply had to tighten their belts and hold on. It was hard on the women and children. Some few of the workers were in a Friendly Society that gave them some relief when ill, but the plight of a woman left with a small family on the death of her husband was a nightmare existence. But the poor helped the poor, as indeed did many in better circumstances. It was amazing how much bread could be on the first crust cut off a loaf by the housewife for the children that she knew would be round for some spare food and there would often be a basin of dripping to go with the crusts.

If there was illness the neighbours did not wait for any appeal for help, they came to see what they could do and they did it, whether it was scrubbing the floor, doing a bit of washing or doing the shopping. Still it was a hard life and an anxious one. If the husband happened to be fond of drink matters were very much worse. Beer was cheap and many a man found oblivion for the time, only to regret it afterwards. Although wages were very low many a family having to pay its way on 18/6d. or 21/- a week, prices were also low and, given not too much illness, it was amazing how the people got along.

Amenities were not as they are today. The town water supply, a charitable gift, came from springs at Bramshall, brought by an open ditch to the reservoir and filtering plant near Mount Pleasant and then distributed through the town by a number of pumps. The main pump was at the conduit in the Market Place where there was also an underground tank to hold water for use in case of a fire. There were other pumps in various parts of the town: one in the Pleasure Grounds to serve Pinfold

Street, one in Carter Street, one in High Street, one at the top of Bridge Street, one in Bradley Lane by the National Schools and there were others. I have an idea there were about nine in all.

Each householder made his or her own arrangements about water. Some few had wells of their own. We discovered one in our kitchen when a table leg went through its casing and we found there was a deep well with about 10 feet of water in the bottom. That had to be filled up to prevent accidents. In any case most of the inhabitants preferred the town water which was very soft, having only about two degrees of hardness, and was of course excellent for washing. A favourite receptacle was a large clean watering can with a spout for pouring, kept exclusively for the one purpose. This was taken to the nearest pump and filled each morning for drinking water and cooking. Most houses had huge rainwater butts that collected the water off the roofs and this was used for swilling and for other household tasks.

There was, of course, no hot and cold water over the sink and I do not think that eighty years ago there were any gas stoves, though that came a little later. Until then all water had to be heated over the fire or in the boiler of a range and all cooking had to be done over the fire, in front of the fire, or in ovens. There being no electricity supply there was no electric light.

I do not think any house had an effective W.C. though Kirk House in Balance Street had a primitive arrangement of its own - an earthenware pipe discharging into a sort of well at ground level - the forerunner of the modern set-up. Instead of the modern w.c. there were the old earth closets, generally placed fairly far away from the house, for olfactory reasons, and whatever the weather, rain, hail, snow or ice, the journey outside had to be made. The refuse disposal was given out by contract and one family held it for years. The sanitary condition of its collection, transport and disposal are better left untold. It is little wonder that epidemics were a frequent occurrence. Those engaged in this work were not known as Sanitary Officials, but by the rather rude but descriptive local appellation, "Muck Hole Divers".

Thinking back on those times and the conditions under which we lived as regards roads, water, transport, hours and conditions of work, lighting, protection from fire hazards, education etc., I wonder sometimes what those who say they get nothing from the rates would have to say could they just have six months of a hard winter under those conditions. The extra expectation of life alone, not even considering the hardships of those old days, would be worth all they pay in rates today.

Education was compulsory but not free. In the elementary schools we had to pay 2d. each week for our schooling, more as we got higher in the school. The school leaving age was twelve and many children left at that age, and left generally with a good knowledge of reading, writing and arithmetic, and of grammar - the latter subject in my opinion one of the most valuable in the school curriculum. It was later dropped - a great mistake - but there are signs of a revival. It is the fashion to decry the old style methods of education but it was amazing how the knowledge that if you did not do reasonably well you got the cane seemed to improve the intelligence of even the duller scholars. The schoolmasters and mistresses made allowance for the children who were backward mentally and did not press too hard on them.

At our school we had not got a yard or playground and we had to play where we could, utilizing the narrow footway that passed the school to the hall for marbles and rougher games. We had to make

our own fun and we got plenty of that. For one thing the roads were not so busy. We used regularly to play 'Ringy' - marbles - in the street opposite the Wesleyan Chapel. We had to keep our eyes open - not for the Police, but for the 'Smugglers', generally two or three hefty Smithy Lads from the nearby Smithy Lane. They had their code of conduct. They never burst in without first crying "Smuggles" - then we each tried to grab what marbles we could. If we were lucky we might get more than two (our "dubs") and these would go to our less fortunate companions.

There was a season for marbles, a season for tops and a season for bowls - hoops. We used to race each other spinning tops from the top of High Street down to the Market Place and on to the bottom of Bridge Street - fancy spinning tops in High Street today! Occasionally, very occasionally, a flying top would break a window, but that did not deter us from going into a shop and begging a piece of string for our whip. We thought the shopkeeper who refused it, not many did, was a very mean sort of being. No doubt he had his own ideas as to what little nuisances we were.

Living at the Station House across the Bridge Street crossing, as we did after the new station was built, I had the advantage of the use of the large and long Ale Bank, just outside our house and most nights many boys joined us there. We played cricket with home-made bats, we could not afford to buy the proper spliced bats on sale, so we cut out our own from any convenient piece of wood.

The Ale Bank was so called because it was a long dock from which the barrels of ale, brought by the carters from the brewery in High Street, were transferred to wagons for despatch by rail. When the drays arrived on the dock the driver got down and went to the nearest point to the Goods Shed, which was across several sidings and the main line, and shouted as loud as he could, "Eel Bonk" with a rising inflection on the word "Bonk". He continued shouting until he got a response from someone at the Goods Station and a man was sent across to help him unload his barrels from the dray and load them in the railway wagon or wagons waiting in the dock. You will note that in the vernacular the "A" was "E" in ale and the "A" was "O" in Bank. Traces of this pronunciation, but only traces, still persist.

If we tired of cricket we played Duck Stone. Each of us had our own favourite cobblestone, lovely rounded flint pebbles, for flat cobble stones could be got from certain spots in the town. The game consisted in one player - who was 'out' - placing his 'duck' or cobblestone on top of a brick inside a circle drawn in the earth. The other players stood behind a line some distance away whilst another line - 'the home line' - was drawn at an equal distance the other side of the 'duck'. Then each player took it in turns to throw his own 'duck' at the one on the brick, crying out his own pet cry as he did so. "Duckstone, Fly Angel! "Duckstone Red Radish!" were favourites. If he moved to the side of the line to make his throw he called out "Groggs" and then he could throw from any angle. If his duck hit the one on the brick and knocked it off the boy who was 'out' had to rush and pick up his duck and put it back on the brick before he could 'tick' or touch the one who had thrown the cobblestone. In his turn that one ran for his own duckstone to pick it up and run for the 'home' line before the other could 'tick' him. If when throwing he missed the 'duck' on the brick he had to run and dodge to avoid getting 'ticked' or 'tack' as he had to pick up his own stone and the guardian of the ring was free to chase him and cut him off. There was great excitement as one player dodged the other. The one who got 'tuck' or touched had then to take his place by the ring, and put his 'duck' on the brick for the others to knock off. It was a good game, bringing into play not only muscles but mind, and kept us happy for a long time and did not cost a halfpenny.

Another game we played on the roads just outside town was "Shindy" - somewhat similar to hockey with goals at certain points on the roads. We could not afford hockey sticks so any old stick was used and many a rap was taken. Again, much fun at little cost. Tip Cat was frowned on by my parents as dangerous, but as they did not actually forbid it we played it. The tipcat was a round piece of wood about 3/4" or 1 inch in diameter and about 8 inches long, each end being pared off to a long point leaving a few inches of full diameter in the middle. The tipcat was placed on the ground and one of the sharpened ends struck sharply with a stick and if this were done smartly the tip cat jumped up into the air and the player then struck it with his stick as hard as he could and as accurately as he could, the game being to see who could drive his cat the farthest. A flying cat, if it struck anyone point first, could give a nasty blow but that only added spice to the game. We also played Stag a Stag a Bunting, a Bunting Stag. One boy stood with his back to a wall and the three or four boys on his side formed a line, the first one putting his head at the middle of the one by the wall, the next boy putting his head down against the buttocks of the boy in front and the others following on. Then the opposing side tried to break down the line. A good jumper went first, running and placing his hands on the rear boy in the line and jumping as far as he could, trying to land heavily on a weak spot, the neck being one of said spots. Each boy of that side took his turn to jump and if by reason of shock or sheer piled up weight the line of boys broke down underneath, then they had to be out and the victors took the wall and formed a new line. Looking back it seems a dangerous game, but nobody I knew came to harm.

A quieter game was Five Stones and this again necessitating only five little stones cost nothing. The little ones played Battledore and Shuttlecock, often with home-made bats and shuttlecocks, made from a cork with feathers placed in holes in its rim. The rag and bone man was a welcome sight to the children, who ran home to get whatever rags they could cajole from their mothers, or if very lucky a rabbit-skin or two. Racing then to the rag and bone man who popped their contributions into his box on wheels and hand them a toy windmill with which his barrow was gaily decorated. For exceptional contributions a real shuttlecock and possibly a battledore as well would be given. These simple games, along with a skipping rope which might be a piece of an old clothes line, a hoop for the boys and a game of hop-scotch for both boys and girls, gave us much or greater pleasure than the plethora of expensive toys lavished on children today. There was always of course the country. According to the season we gathered primroses and violets, forget-me-nots and honeysuckle. We fished in the brook for minnows and we sailed our home-made boats on its waters. Boats cut out of a piece of soft wood, shaped with our knives, rigged and fitted with masts, spars and sails - the sails cut out of calico our mothers supplied, along with needle and thread to sew and hem the sails. We had great fun with these home-made cruise boats which we loved as our own make, embodying our own ideas. As the year progressed we went mushrooming, travelled miles gathering blackberries and knew every crab tree within a wide area. In the few hard winters we had, we made sledges and had great times until the year when the police stepped in and prohibited our using the long hill at the end of Wood Lane under penalty of prosecution for furious and dangerous driving. One year we actually had a few days skating on the River Dove, between Dove Bridge and the weir, but the ice went within a week. But that was an experience never to be forgotten.

As said before, wages were low - a railway porter getting 18/6d. a week, plus tips, a signalman a little more, but no tips. Each, of course, was supplied with uniform, which saved expenditure on clothes. The signalmen worked twelve-hour shifts each weekday. On Sundays the hours were less, the work was much lighter. Their weekday hours with no half-day were 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. and 6 p.m. to 6 a.m.

The other railway men had long hours too. The carters who worked at the Goods Station delivering goods round the town were at the stables at 6 a.m. to groom their horses. Each man loved his horse and took great pride in it, as he had the right to do for they were very fine animals, so beautifully groomed that it was a pleasure to see them.

Two engines with their train of passenger coaches were stabled each night at Uttoxeter, and the engine cleaners did their best to turn out the finest looking engines on the line. I often used to go and spend hours in the Engine Shed and I know that every bit of machinery hidden under the engine was as clean and polished as the gleaming outside. Not a speck of dust could be found when those men had finished their work on the engines and the whole was finished off with their own pattern put on with an oily cloth, the gleaming paint telling everyone, "This engine was cleaned at Uttoxeter". Nowadays it is sad to see the dirty condition of the engines on British Railways and no wonder that defects develop. However, I suppose cleaners are almost unobtainable and anyway they would not spend the time or take the meticulous care the cleaners took 70 years ago. I may be doing them an injustice; possibly they have got so much to do that they cannot possibly cope with it and they clean as much as they can in the time they have. The other railway men had long hours and my father as Station Master was no exception, for he was rarely off duty down at the station by 7 a.m. until 10.15 p.m., with short intervals of quiet between the busy times. There were over 90 trains a day at the new station, known as the 7 o'clock, 9 o'clock, 12 o'clock, 5 o'clock and 8 o'clock trains, the last train coming in at 10.10 p.m., the others all being timed to make the connections as smoothly as possible. Staff were few but competent and each man took a pride in his job. The Ashbourne tank engine seemed to take a delight in coming off the rails on the crossover at the Dove Bank end of the Churnet platforms. Communication with headquarters was slow and besides no-one dreamed of asking for a breakdown gang. The staff got busy with packing - any old sort of wood, and before many minutes the engine was on the rails again.

Another favourite spot for trouble was the siding into Stretch's Brewery. Any engine and tender that went down there was asking for trouble, but again packing would be placed for the wheels that were off the rail, and on his knees almost under the buffer of the engine would be my father. At the right moment he would give the signal for the driver to slowly put on steam - there would be a grinding and crushing of wood, then a sharp "yapp" from the kneeling man, the driver would snatch the regulator back with a snap, cutting off steam, and down would come the wheels on the rails once more as cleanly as if they had been placed there by a crane. That was how railway work was managed in those days. As I said before, the pay was not high but it was a job for life - something to be valued highly - and the railway men responded, each of them making themselves master of their own job, but also taking a keen interest in the other man's job so that in an emergency they could carry on, taking a pride in their work and feeling enjoyment and reward in the work itself.

I have written at some length of railway work for it was that with which I was familiar, but I have no doubt that throughout the town the work a man took up in whatever trade, was not just a mere job to get wages but a way of life that brought satisfaction and contentment to the mass of workers.

Though wages were low prices of consumer goods were low also. Bacon was 6d. a pound, 5d. in the market, sugar 1 1/2d., rice 2d., bread 3 1/2 per 4 lb. loaf. Beef was 9d. or 10d. a pound for best cuts, down to 4d. for the poorer stuff. Fruits generally were cheap, apples 1d. per lb., 2d. for fine quality fruit. At the Damson Fair in the autumn a good price was 7/6d. to 10/6d. a strike - hamper holding

eighty pounds. In good years for fruit the price slumped. The cheapest I have known damsons sold at was 5d. a strike. They were loaded into trucks at the Goods Yard like slack to go to the dye works. Unkind people said that after the dye works had extracted the colour they desired, the residue went to the jam factories. Whether there was truth in that or not I cannot say. Some farmers tipped the fruit out on the street in disgust, not considering it worth carting home again.

Foreign fruit was scarce. We saw oranges a few weeks round about Christmas, but although an orange was a great treat they were often rather sour than sweet. Tomatoes, grapefruit, bananas and Jaffa oranges were unknown. Mr. Stanford Bagshaw, the founder of the firm of W.S. Bagshaw and Sons, Auctioneers, was one of the pioneers who started growing tomatoes in Uttoxeter. He lived then, in the late 1880's, down the Brookside and had a greenhouse which he put to the best possible use. The first tomato I ever ate, a yellow one like a plum, was given me by his son George, one day when we were off on some boyish relaxation together.

The first bananas I saw, and I believe the first ever to reach Uttoxeter, were brought by Mr. and Mrs. Orr, when they came from South Africa to spend a holiday in Mrs. Orr's home town. Mrs. Orr was a Uttoxeter girl and before she went to South Africa she was with Mr. George Orme, the draper. They had brought the bananas probably from the Canary Islands on the voyage home and I have never forgotten that great bunch of bananas as it was carried from the train at Uttoxeter Station. That would be somewhat before the end of the nineteenth century in the 1890s. Incidentally, Mrs. Orr was Mayoress of Kimberley - her husband being the Mayor - when it was relieved by the British Army in the Boer War and she had the duty and the pleasure of entertaining Lord Roberts on that memorable occasion.

We got dates from North Africa, packed solidly in wooden boxes; they retailed at 4d. a pound. Cheese Fairs were held at certain times. The carts loaded with cheese would back up against the pavement on the north side of the Market Place and the cheese would be inspected and sampled by the buyers. How the farmers made it pay I don't know, for if my memory serves me right, at one fair some of the cheese went in bulk at 3 1/2d a pound.

One actual experience of my own will serve to show the difficulties the working man and his family had to meet and the value attached to every penny. Over sixty years ago I was taking lessons on the organ. My master was Mr. Chatfield, organist at Doveridge, and to take lessons I had to walk to Doveridge Church. The problem was to find a blower. I had very little money but my teacher said his boy George, who was a little younger than me, would go with us to do the blowing for fourpence a time and so George did. Then one week Mr. Chatfield said that George would not be able to go the next week so I replied that we should have to miss the next week's lesson. "Oh, no!" said Mr. Chatfield who was a master builder in a small way. "We are short of work and one of my men", whom I will call Brown, for there may be some who would remember him did I disclose his name "will do it for you." "But that can never be", said I, "I cannot possibly pay more than fourpence - I simply have not got it to give." "Oh! That's all right. I have spoken to him and he is quite willing." So we went. Mr. Chatfield had another engagement after the lesson, so 'Brown' and I walked back together. I told him I was really ashamed not to be able to give him more than fourpence, but he replied, "Mr. Ernest, I am quite happy to do it and quite satisfied. I am out of work and have no money and fourpence is fourpence and my wife will be able to go to the butchers on Saturday night and buy quite a bit of leftovers with the fourpence, sufficient for a good meal on Sunday and a bit for

Monday too. There was a well-known poaching fraternity in Uttoxeter at that time and 'Brown', who was a bricklayer's labourer, let me into a secret that he did a bit of poaching too. He asked me, "If you had a wife and two or three kiddies and you had not got meat in the place, nor a penny to bless yourself with, would you think it wrong to go out and get a rabbit?"

My answer was prompt. "I should not - I should get the rabbit, two or three if I could." Fancy, a man with a family, willing to work but no work available, blowing an organ for an hour, tramping half an hour and more each way, there and back, over two hours for fourpence, and willing and even eager to do it. Those were the days! It was time something was done, but it was a long time on the way.

The highlight in the life of the town was, of course the wakes, Wakes Sunday being the first Sunday after the 19th of September. Eighty years ago, and for some years after, the roundabouts, swings, shooting galleries, peepshow booths etc. were set up in the Market Place. On Market Day, fortunately on only one day of the wakes, the stalls had to squeeze in where they could. There was considerable noise and not a little confusion, but nobody cared for there was also good fun. The great delicacy on Saturday and Market Day was fried fish and green peas. Some few years later the Wakes was held in a field at the bottom of Bridge Street and gradually got more elaborate, with more complicated machinery.

It was on the Wakes Field that Pat Collins brought the first moving pictures shown in the town. The field was always crowded and the sellers of "Ladies' Teasers" - small tubes filled with scented water, really brook water, did a roaring trade, for the boys and, I am afraid, the young men squirted the water on the hair or down the necks of the girls. We boys could not afford to buy teasers so we used a medicine bottle full of water with a cork with a groove cut in it and dowsed them with that.

One day I tried to spray a girl I knew but Mr. Bamford, the founder of the agricultural implements firm, accidentally came in the line of fire and got the water. He was getting on in years and carried a heavy stick which he promptly laid vigorously upon my shoulder. I could only gasp out, "Sorry, Sir" and make myself scarce. I daren't tell them at home what had happened. I would have got the stick again, good and well. That was not my first encounter with Mr. Bamford for he had several times walked along with me, when I was passing through the Goods Yard at Uttoxeter Station and always had a pleasant word, even if I was only a small boy.

At Christmas we had much the same thing, except that the Wednesday after Christmas was the hiring day for the farm workers, male and female. Its official name was Gayboys' Market but of course in the vernacular we twisted this into Gawbies Market. I tried several times when I was twelve to look like a country Gawby and get hired, hoping to draw a shilling to clinch the hiring, but I never succeeded. To this market came the country men and maids, not only to get hired - of course, many had already re-engaged themselves - but also to pay the tradesmen the debts they had run up in the year, generally for clothing. It was a busy day for the shops for the boys, girls and men had drawn their year's wages and many had a surplus after paying their debts, to spend as they desired. The girls had a great penchant for a bottle of scent, and the chemists laid in grosses of half ounce bottles, each with a spray of flowers to match the scent, for sixpence each. See what half an ounce bottle of floral perfume, and good perfume, would cost you today. You would have a shock. Again there was much noise and a lot of banter and a bit of horseplay before the young people made their way, often I am afraid rather unsteadily, down to the railway station or to the different

carriers or other conveyances for the countryside not served by rail. All this has gone - possibly for the better - but one cannot help a nostalgic feeling for those crude but decidedly individualistic days.

The Horse and Foal Fairs held in Balance were a real bit of Old England. Balance Street on fair days might have been a scene out of it Lavengro. It would take the pen of a George Borrow to do justice to it. There were the horses, with sellers and buyers crying the merits or demerits of the animals - then a groom or stable boy or just a hanger-on would take the halter and rush down the street to show off the paces, the action and the fire of the animal, which often pranced and kicked under the stimulus of stick or whip. Flying hooves and noise marked the day. There were always a few gypsies with their worn-out old crocks doctored to look to the unwary as quite serviceable animals. Those gypsies were by no means lacking in vocal powers. They could almost persuade you that black was white. The mares and foals were always a delight, particularly the foals and colts.

The town has lost these fairs with the coming of the motor car. The first motor must have entered the town just before the end of the nineteenth century in the 1890s.

The Cattle Market, in the Smithfield, was always the main attraction on market days and it was of course the centre of the life of the countryside as well as of the town. All the cattle used to come either by train or were herded along the roads from farms in the surrounding countryside. Every other week there was a Big Market Day. One or two special trains of cattle left the railway Goods Yard, where special pens were provided for keeping and loading the cattle. The sound of the drovers' sticks thwacking the cattle was like the sound of a few hundred women beating carpets. The way the poor cattle were driven and beaten was shameful and, of course, very detrimental to them. It took years before this kind of treatment was stamped out.

The Produce and General Market filled the Market Place, with stalls each side of the roadway. The Butter Market was held on the pavement on the south side. There, the different farmers' wives sold their butter, generally in round pats weighing one pound, gleaming golden out of fresh wet lettuce leaves in the summer. Each pat had stamped on its face the design favoured by the seller. The pound pats were moulded in beautifully turned wooden moulds with special designs on them. Prices would be generally 10d. or 1/-d. a pound. The pot and china sellers spread their wares over a large space on the ground. There would be great fun and excitement in the market when a pig escaped from a drove being driven through and dodged here, there and everywhere amongst the stalls. Almost always it got amongst the pots, earthenware and china. Breaking pots did not calm it down, nor assist in its capture but the stall-holders took it all as part of the game. Dead poultry, dressed and undressed, were dumped by their sellers on the pavement on the north side of the market along with rabbits shot or trapped, live tame rabbits, guinea fowls, an occasional guinea pig, or a few ferrets, or anything anyone wanted to get rid of. The pavement would be cluttered with them and with chattering buyers and sellers, so much so that it was often difficult to get along, for the stalls projected onto the pavement. The chattering and bargaining, the keen remarks and the ready answers that went on this pavement were great fun to those who had the time to listen. It is said country folk are slow - but anyone who spent a few minutes listening to the backchat there would soon see that they would have to get up early in the morning to get the better of the country folk.

I have not mentioned the old characters of those days. They were many and each had their own peculiar appeal. There was old Eli M, who appeared every so often with a sheet of foolscap appealing for a subscription to get him a new horse or hoss as he pronounced it - he was a carter.

Master Colishaw had started the list with 5/- or some other sum, and he wanted another thirty shillings to get him another hoss. The quality of the hoss you can imagine. Then there was Crimea Joe, said to be a veteran of the Crimean War, who used to dance outside the public houses and sometimes inside, for a drink. We lads used to love to watch him dance, but of course we had to pass rude remarks, until at last he would become angry and come at us wielding the pack he always carried on his shoulder so that we scattered like quails before a hawk but he never hurt us. Paper Jack! Give him twopence and an old news-paper and ask him to make you a hunting scene. He would put it behind his back, tear away at it with his hands and then bring it forward - and behold! there would be a hunting scene with deer and dogs and trees. He was good enough for the stage of the Colosseum in London but he was our Paper Jack.

Then we had dear old Jimmy Danks, a man with not too high a standard of intelligence, but very willing. He went about with a sack round his waist for an apron and would do any little job offered for a few coppers. Jimmy had at one time been in the Salvation Army. It had done him good but he still liked a little drink. So when he could either beg one, or some kind soul would give him one or two - it did not take much to make him happy-, Jimmy would sit down on some convenient step of a shop in the Market Place - he had his favourite step, - open his toothless mouth and lift his quavering voice in one of the hymns he used to sing - "Shall we gather at the River", or a more military army tune. Somehow or other Jimmy made a living and kept out of the Workhouse, and the police all credit to them, never ran him in but shepherded him home.

A different type altogether was "Hopping Anna", a little woman with one leg shorter than the other, a bitter and caustic tongue, but a good heart at bottom. She used to go to the railway station to do rough cleaning in the Refreshment Room, and coming over the brook one day, just at the entrance to the station drive she saw me sitting in the brook. Below the bridge the brook was contained by a stone wall which ended flush with the road by the brook. This made a grand jumping off spot and we boys used to jump over the brook and see who could land furthest on the island in the middle. That morning I had taken an extra good jump and instead of landing on the island I had cleared not only the island, but the further branch of the brook, landing on the far side. Unfortunately, though I landed on firm ground, it was a bad landing and I went backwards to sit down in the water. Anna came along at that moment, shoved her head over the parapet of the bridge and shouted "I see you, Ernie Mellor ! I'll tell your mother!" Of course, I loved her for her kind interest - but as I got older I found a new Anna - a woman with a sharp tongue but a hand for the underdog.

Big Emma was well known. She was a huge woman who liked a drink. When she was drunk the whole neighbourhood knew. One day she was kicking up such a row at Brough's Yard at the top of Bridge Street, where she lived, that the neighbours sent for the police. Big Emma promptly took off every stitch of clothing, but the Bobbies simply took a blanket, wrapped it round her and dumped her in a wheelbarrow and trundled her off to the Police Station where she was locked up until she quietened down. No questions were raised by anyone and the police were congratulated on a job well done. Black Bess was noted simply for herself. She was a perfect type of the old Gypsy clan - a strong old lined face that must have had an extraordinary wild beauty in her younger years.

Tommy Tune had a little shop down Bradley Lane and a stall on the market. He always had a tin whistle on which he regularly performed - hence his nickname. In my ignorance as a little boy I once

spoke to him at his stall calling him Mr.Tune. Very kindly but firmly he told me his real name. How he made a living out of the little knick-knacks he sold on his stall I don't know but he did.

Another character was the old man from the country who came in every Wednesday to lay in a week's store of provisions etc. He didn't bother with bag or basket, just tied a cord round his trousers at the knees and popped his purchases inside the top of his trousers and toted them home that way. The poaching fraternity could always be relied on to give a little variation to the night life of the town and district.

Looking back, life in those days was hard but it was full of colour. In case of need, a helping hand was rarely missing, sometimes it was found in the most unexpected quarters.

Life was indeed hard, but it bred initiative combined with a dogged determination to make good. Sometimes one wonders whether the pendulum has not swung too far today and everyone expects everything to be made easy - too easy. This seems to apply particularly to teenagers and adolescents, who seem to expect presents on a silver platter, though they are possibly only following the lead of the people who spend money like water, looking to the Welfare State to keep them if trouble should arrive

Time will show - but the problem deserves thought.

Mellor's Idealine Cream

FOR THE TOILET.

Quickly removes Redness and Roughness of the Skin, invaluable for the Irritation of Sunburn or Chapped Hands. Post Free 1/-

Mellor's Eczema Ointment—

Post Free 1/1½



CURES!



Departments:—

High-Class Dispensing	Toilet	Veterinary
Perfumery and Soap	Optical	Agricultural
Patent Medicines	Photographic	Seeds.

Photographic Apparatus of all kinds, Kodak Supplies, &c., always in stock.

ERNEST M. MELLOR, M.P.S.,

(From Mr. F. R. Squire, San Remo, Chemist to H.M. the King.)

Dispensing and Family Chemist and Toilet Specialist,

MARKET PLACE, UTTOXETER.

(Opposite Doctor Johnson's Monument.)



Sachet of Mellor's Shampoo Powder.



Photo courtesy Janet Cruickshank, nee Mellor

**A company outing for workers and apprentices from Mellor's Chemist, Uttoxeter circa 1928.
L to R: Mrs.Mellor, Ernest Mellor, Janet Mellor, Margaret Mellor and employees.**



Photo courtesy Museum of Uttoxeter Life formerly Uttoxeter Heritage Centre.

Unveiling of War Memorial plaque at Alleyne's Grammar School for Boys, Uttoxeter 1948.

L to R: Osburn Davies, Senior partner Merchant Seedsmen, Ernest M.Mellor, Chairman Uttoxeter Urban District Council, Mr.Whyte, Headmaster Thomas Alleyne, Sam Elkes, Founder Elkes Biscuits, W.G.Torrance, Senior Master Alleyne, Rev.Oswald Ede, Anglican minister, Arthur Fryer, Founder Fryers Garage, Henry Bamford, member of Bamford Agricultural Engineering family of Uttoxeter.

