

## **HARRY COOK 1914 - 1998**

February was a very sad month for the village of Ascott.

On the 16th February Harry Cook died.

Harry was unquestionably the best known figure in Ascott whether it was in his white hat and coat delivering the milk or wearing a Panama in summer whilst cutting the grass in the Playing Field, The Green or roadside verges or Chairing the monthly Parish Council meetings.

Born on the 14th May 1914 in a cottage just outside the gates to the Churchyard, Harry attended the village school until the age of 14 when he left to take up employment in Heritage Lane as an egg packer. Various jobs followed in Hungerford, Stafford and Kidlington and eventually back to this area to work for Cornbury Park. He remained there until the Bothy closed because of the outbreak of the Second World War.

He then moved to work for a short period at Cirencester Park before being called up into the Army on the 14th November 1940 when he served with the Gloucestershire Regiment. During his training period he was based in Street in Somerset where he was to meet Dorothy his wife to be who was working in the Clarks Shoe Factory on munitions work.

Harry and Dorothy married in February 1942 and after Harry was demobilized they worked on various estates including Glymton Park. In 1953 they moved into Corner House Farm in Ascott where they remained.

Although Harry had a fiery side to him the lasting impression one got was of a cheery person who always had a wave and a smile. He always enjoyed to take a breather from what he was doing to have a chat with anyone. Always willing to help he never ever expected any thanks or praise.

Harry was elected on to the Parish Council in May 1968 and became its Chairman in 1973, a post he held until his death. During his period on the Council he only missed two meetings – what a record! In addition to this mammoth achievement Harry still found time to give his valuable services as a member of the Tiddy Hall Committee for many years.

The other aspect of Harry's life that deserved a long service medal was the milk round. Come rain or shine Harry would be up at 4.30 in the morning so as to leave his yard by 4.45 a.m. to deliver the milk. And he did this for 45 years. As with all things you could always rely on him. A story that well illustrates this point was a few years ago when there was a fire at the farm in the middle of the night that destroyed the supply of milk in the cold store. Whilst the firemen were still damping down Harry was off to Kidlington to get fresh supplies for his customers later that day.

Harry, a kind, genial, hard working honest man – an Ascott man – you will be sadly missed.

Mike Pearce.