

A Walk Through Time

From Milton to Shipton and Back Again

Our walk starts from Wychwood Drive in Milton, towards the fields and across Dog Kennel to Shipton. We decided to do this walk after my sister, Diana, read the articles about Dor Thomson in the last edition of The Wychwood and the Wychwood History Society Journal. Dor was a school governor at Bampton Primary School where Diana is school secretary and she also served as a governor with her at the school.

Picking Blackberries

It was a lovely Sunday afternoon as we passed The Sands on our left, entered the first field, through the second field and over a stile. There were some lovely blackberries along the hedgerows, which reminds me of my grandmother coming down from London in September and walking with her up the A361 to the Taynton Road, less traffic in those days. We would get told off for eating blackberries before they had been washed!

At the top of Dog Kennel the fields on our left, once meadows, are now arable; trees have been planted in recent years on the right. We talked about Sunday evening walks with Mum and Dad, pushing our youngest sister Julie in her pram from Shipton to Milton returning via the road.

When you reach the gate look back on Milton and admire the view, then through the gate and continue down the track. When we reached Digger's Wood on our right, we intended walking through the woods to New Road and back to Milton,

however, we decided to continue along the track and take a detour to the ponds in the Wild Gardens to see if there were any ducks or water lilies out.

The Days of Hockey

We entered the woods on our left - at this point you could continue along Dog Kennel and come out by the A361, and follow the Cricket Club wall before turning down Plum Lane. It doesn't matter how many times I walk through

the garden the shapes and colours of the trees are outstanding and all the colours blend in. This was one of our favourite childhood walks, to feed the ducks and it still is today. From the ponds we walked along the avenue towards Shipton Court with the cricket field on our right. We both played hockey for

Wychwood when the pitch was on those grounds. The team now plays at Carterton and I don't think there is a Wychwood person any longer playing for them!

Unfortunately, Shipton Court is being worked on so you can't appreciate the view as you come out of the Avenue. We then turned right towards Burford. We were going to continue past the Lamb to see our childhood home and then up Little Lane (Simon's Lane to most people now), but we wanted to see the Dovecote mentioned in the History Society article, so we turned left down Plum Lane. With the Dovecote on the left, *(pictured)* we had a look at the barn conversions, beautiful houses, so different to the barns housing the combine harvester, bailer and



other farm equipment used by our father when he worked on Coldstone Farm. As we continued down the Lane we reminisced about picking up the beechnuts that used to fall off the trees, and admired the Court gardens; you could only peep through a keyhole in the wooden gate when we were children. On the right behind a high wall used to be the Court greenhouses (this is now Court Close). It was always very dark. As we continued up towards Five Ways we passed Home Farm Close and thought how lovely and clean the air is now; there used to be a corn drier in the barn directly on the road and in the summer as you passed, dust would be polluting the air. On the right Turkey Barn houses used to be large barns.

Mount Pleasant Cottages

Turning right at Fiveways into the Swinbrook road are Mount Pleasant cottages where our grandmother lived (and I spent the first six months of my life). The cottage has a very long garden and we ate many a plum off the fruit trees. Gran had a large wooden table in the middle of the room and an open fireplace, where she did her cooking. There was a washhouse on the right before you entered the cottage. The cottages have all been altered and have been extended on the front. Turning right across the allotments, we were hoping to see someone who could give us a nice fresh homegrown carrot, but the ladies we spoke to said theirs were no good. Dad had three allotments at one time and we spent a lot of time picking vegetables, as they were always ready for harvesting, when Dad was busy on the farm. I also remember picking dandelion heads for Ivy Avery to make wine and the

allotments were always a good place to go. The path along the allotments has changed and you now walk diagonally to the corner to follow the path on to Chapel Lane. We used to love running down the hill, but were always told not to run on to the road.

The Conker Tree

As we walked down the slope we looked right towards Court Close and saw the 'conker' tree in the field. We used to swing on a rope hanging from one of the large branches and the roots formed a tunnel which was big enough to play in (apparently years ago this was bricked out and used by the Court to store ice); we also used to collect the conkers for contests. We have played many a game of cricket and rounders in the field and tennis on the road without too many cars interrupting the game.

At the road we turned left up Chapel Lane and then right along Fiddler's Hill. We passed the copse on our left where there used to be a tin church, on the right past Little Lane and approached the A361. Crossing the road we intended to walk back to Milton along New Road, but, half way along we saw the sign post on our right to Digger's Wood, so decided to walk down the field and into the wood (there is a seat in the wood just right for taking in the view).

At the gate we turned left and retraced our steps back across the fields to Milton. We really enjoyed this walk and it was good to talk about our childhood in Shipton and see how things have changed over the years. It took about two hours, but we did stop quite a few times. Dog Kennel can be quite wet, so sturdy shoes or Wellingtons would be advisable if walking in the autumn/winter months.

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