

When we're 65!

What is it that makes so many Wychwood folk live such long, happy lives? We have featured several diamond wedding anniversaries over recent years, but this time it is a 65th anniversary that we are celebrating.



Born in a Field

Gladys and Innis Baldwin were married on the 15th July 1944 at the Methodist Chapel in Gladys' home village of Little Common, near Bexhill.

Gladys was born in nearby Hooe, in a row of tiny cottages known as 'The Workhouse', later moving to nearby Little Common. Here she grew up with her two sisters and three brothers, attending the village school until, at the age of fourteen, she went 'into service'. The family were evacuated to Wellington, Somerset, where Gladys was employed in a local mattress factory, Price Brothers, making 'biscuits' for Army bedding. When they returned to Sussex Gladys went to work for the Broom family. They ran a guest house at Thatcham in a house owned by Lady Delia Peels, a lady-in-waiting to Queen Mary. It was here that she met Innis, who was stationed with the RAF in nearby Greenham Common.

Innis says he was born in a field - Ivy Cottage used to stand in the field at the end of Green Lane. From there he moved with his family to No 5, Shipton Road,

when the new council houses were built. He started school at the Baptist Chapel when he was four, moving on to Milton School at five and then to Burford School, which was then in Priory Road. Leaving school at fourteen, Innis worked on the

land for Ridley's. He used to plough the field where their bungalow now stands in The Sands.

At that time Innis knew and could name everyone in the village - a far cry from how life is now.

Renewing Their Vows

With the outbreak of war Innis joined the RAF as a flight mechanic, doing his basic training at Blackpool and Morecombe. He served at Greenham Common, before the arrival of the Americans, and that is where he met Gladys. After the wedding they set up home in Milton, bringing up their children Keith and Mary. They now have four grandchildren and one great-granddaughter.

After all the celebrations on their 60th anniversary, when they renewed their wedding vows at Westcote Methodist Chapel, which was packed with family and friends, they are expecting to celebrate quietly, but who knows? Our congratulations go to this grand couple and best wishes for the years to come.

Christine Halliday