

Memories of Snowed Up Winters

My first memory of a snowed up winter goes back to when I was a boy chap, being born just before the Second World War.

In the winter of 1947 we were living in Church Westcote, opposite the Church of England School. Much to our pleasure we did not go to school for six weeks, owing to there being no coke for the tortoise stove, which was probably the forerunner of wood burners. We

lived in the council houses, which had no electric or running water. The water was pumped from a well close to the cemetery, good healthy water you say. Heating and cooking was by a kitchen range and an open fire in the front room, fuel was wood, which had to be hand sawn, bearing in mind this was covered by snow, but there was a little help on the Burford Stow main road (a field away from the council houses). A big Yankee lorry had got stuck and was abandoned with a load of wooden blocks.

As you can imagine there was a track across the field and the blocks soon disappeared, no, it was not stealing - the Good Lord came to the rescue.

A Long Walk for Squashed Bread

The men of the village used to dig out the roads from both Westcotes to the main road only to find the next morning they were filled in again. They also used to take it in turns to walk to Stow-on-the-



Old Village Hall, Shipton 1947

Wold to get bread from Cox and Davis Bakers. On one occasion my father, Harry Burdock and Ted Connley Snr. went with sack bags (probably Hudson Sacks), called at The Farmers Arms at the bottom of Stow Hill for a beverage of cider, and then took a rest part way up Wyck Hill. They sat on the sacks and as a result the bread turned out like pancakes; a story which was to cause

amusement on many occasions.

Like Cattle, We Slept Warm

There was no shortage of milk as there were three milking herds in the village. Lorries from United Dairies, Moreton-in-Marsh could not get through. Most people had bacon and eggs as they kept pigs and hens, and the odd cockerel got his neck wrung. One thing that sticks in my mind, which fascinated us boys, was walking along the tops of snow drifts on top of the hedge rows. We used to go to the dug outs on Westcote Hill close to Rissington aerodrome and get the duck boards out and use them to sledge down tattle bank much to the annoyance of the farmer George Gibson. We made a gap in the hedge at the bottom of tattle bank which gave us a long sledging run, getting very wet and cold, and then going home to stand by the fire to dry out until the next time.

In our house there were 10 of us so you could say like cattle we slept warm, but it

Continued on page 7

still did not stop the old 'Guzunder' from freezing up, I wonder what our children's memories will be.

I was also told by Jack Busby that in Shipton the roads filled in as fast as they were dug out. The only transport was horse and cart across the fields; the wind had blown the snow off the fields and onto the roads.

And 1963

By the 1963 winter I was married and living in one of the tin bungalows on the Lyneham Road in Milton. We were visiting the mother and father-in-law at Hyde Mill close to Stow-on-the-Wold on Boxing Day when it started to snow, and knowing what the Stow to Burford road would be like and driving an Austin A30 we hightailed back to Milton with great difficulty, with baby Karen in a carrycot on the back seat. Of course the next morning we were snowed in. My wife remembers pushing the pram through

snow up to the Co-Op shop. How deep was it? I can tell you the snow ploughs eventually got through. Our neighbour Godfrey Pittaway came with me in the car up to Westcote to visit my mother and father and coming back along the Stow to Burford main road close to the Merrymouth was like driving through Cheddar Gorge, the snow was above the electric and telegraph wires. We were probably snow-bound for about a fortnight; there were a lot of frozen pipes.

No Wonder She Jumped Out!

We talk about falling temperatures; at the end of 1971 we had a party in our house and our neighbour staggered home and went to sleep on the doorstep. When he got into bed his wife jumped out; she thought it was a block of ice. Little Rissington aerodrome recorded 19 below that night.

What will memories be of 2010?

Arthur Hunt

The Boat Really Rocked!

When Bridget Walton asked me to help her organise another film and supper evening to raise funds for the *Friends of Guiding* my immediate thought was that we could never repeat the *Mamma Mia* evening.

We decided on a showing of *The Boat that Rocked*, recruited cooks, booked the hall and got on with selling the tickets.

A simple supper of cottage pie was served to more than 90 film-goers and it was so popular that not a scrap was left for lunch the following day. The film was good enough to have us singing along to the hits of the 60s, even if the story line was a bit thin and the language was a little ripe at times.

When all the bills were paid we were

able to send a cheque for £1,000 to the *Friends of Guiding*, which will help support Rainbows, Brownies and Guides throughout the County.

I would like to thank everyone who came along and supported us, David Trollope for setting up the equipment and showing the films and Jill Mavin, Judith Porter, Janet Groom, Anne Matthews and Bridget Walton, the cooks who produced such delicious food. And a special 'thank you to Gordon', my hardworking, never complaining, very supportive husband.

So successful was the evening that we will be holding another in aid of the **Wild Garden Fund** - watch this space!

Christine Halliday