

Gorse Cottage Triggers Memories

I have received e-mails from my cousin Kath (Kathleen Field), now 92 years old, who has lived for many years in Milton-Under-Wychwood, as well as from Victoria Orr-Ewing (née Cameron), who said that she remembers my family and me very well. Her family's property backed on to our garden in the lane (now a path) to which I referred in my article. I mistakenly wrote that I was five, in fact it was my sister who was five and I was almost nine when we left. **Stanley Goscombe**

...and from Phyllis Clarke

I was born in February 1944 in a small, one-bedroom cottage adjoining the Post Office in Fifield; it was through a gated wall. We were lucky; on the left through the gate,



behind a huge laurel bush, was the old wash house, the remains that Stanley asks about. This was a stone building with a water-closet and running water, installed by the owner, builder Stan Davis. Stan's builders' yard was opposite our house and his parents ran the small Post Office.

The Old Wash House

Our little house had no amenities, just a small hall into the kitchen/living room with its black stove. In front of the fire a tin bath would be placed for the weekly family bath. The water was heated in a copper in the outhouse (a stone-built sink with a fire lit underneath to heat the water). Dad would carry the galvanised buckets of hot water across the yard to fill the bath. We two children were washed first, followed by mother and then Dad, all together in front of a roaring fire.

Mother put us to bed while father carried out his ablutions.

The room held a scrubbed wooden table and a couple of wood-backed chairs. We

went up through a latched door, round a spiral staircase to the bedroom, with a rosewood double bed, a small bed at its foot and my cot in the corner. The room had low,

black beams and a small window under the eaves, removable to take large objects, such as a bed or coffin, from the room.

A Magical Space

I remember Father's small garden, laid out with a little pond and rockery, a vegetable patch with fruit trees at the rear and his precious flowers. There was a rose climbing over the gateway and a couple of prize dahlias with flowers the size of dinner plates. Few photos were taken then; I recall seeing one of mother and Pratley babies with my sister and me, but we cannot now trace it.

I would go down to the farm to see my mother's second cousin, Auntie Crona - up the hill, past my god-parents, the Gees, past the church to the vicarage, where my sister and I would play with Vernon, the vicar's son. Sometimes we had a look at the hurdle-maker, on the main road, making hurdles for the local farmers.

Phyllis Clarke