

Memories of Escrick Evenings.

In 1983 two 'Memories of Escrick' Evenings were held in the Village Hall. They were chaired by Sadie Ashton who 'interviewed' well known people from the village at the time. They included

Mr Nigel Forbes Adam

Mrs Agnes Reader

Mr Cliff Tasker

Mr Earnest Saunders

Mr Jeff Tomlinson

Mr Stan Wells

Sadie's has kindly shared her notes of the evenings, rediscovered during 'lock down'.

Good evening Ladies and Gentlemen, may I welcome you to this evening of Memories of Escrick.

It is almost 16 years since I came with my family to Escrick and during that time we have been very happy here, made some very good friends and met some wonderful people.

*Our first guest is **Mr Nigel Forbes Adam** who is well known in the village and will give us a short history of Escrick Park. 'Mr Nigel' as he is known and still called by many villagers, now lives at Skipwith Hall. He continues to play a big part in Escrick and is chairman of the Parish Council.*

Mrs Agnes Reader from Leghorn House Escrick.

Mrs Reader came to Escrick about 1920 from Kent. She bred Poultry, hence Leghorn House. She was the village Postmistress for 24 years when the Post office was on Main Street opposite the Church, in strangely enough, Post Office Row.

Mrs Reader saw the church burn down in 1923. Her father-in-law was the blacksmith on the Estate and a smallholder. His sister was at the Black Bull.

From Agnes Reader

'On New Year's Eve the bells of the church would be muffled to let out the old year and then rung in all their glory to welcome in the New. Some folk would call on their neighbours to first foot for the New Year and would be welcomed with cake and wine. A dark haired man was the best to call to bring good luck to the family and would bring with him a piece of coal and a sprig of holly. A new baby taken to a friend's house would be given an egg, a piece of silver, a coin and a pinch of salt.

Before WW2, in the late 1920's, once a year a party of 6 coaches would take the children of the village and their parents to the coast, Scarborough for the day.

The first radio was introduced to the village by an electrician called Tommy Dunn. He lived in the first of the Fountain Cottages. He put the radio on a table in his front garden and soon had a crowd of people there to listen. It was wonderful. We got one and each morning when we had our 10 o'clock break we would listen to the quarter of an hour service.

On New Year's we had a fancy dress party and everyone who could would dress up for the occasion.

On Boxing Day, the Cricket Club always had a whist drive and a dance to follow.

About 1927, Hon Mrs Colin Forbes Adam produced a play, 'A Midsummers Night's Dream'. Nearly every child in the village was in it and Mrs Forbes Adam was Titania and her daughter Virginia was a fairy. It was displayed in the front entrance of the Hall, a good setting.

When Mrs C Forbes Adam left Escrick, they went to the next village and lived in Skipwith Hall. The Hall here was let off into flats which helped to bring work and trade to the village.

The Women's Institute was started by Mrs Forbes Adam. She was the President and Mrs CW Thompson was the secretary. It was well supported by the ladies from the village who could learn how to make gloves, jam, dressmaking and several other crafts.

A traveller from York would come out here with his wares, clothing and furnishing articles once a month and then twice a year he would bring a load of household linen, blankets etc and display them in the yard of the Black Bull.

It was difficult to get to York to shop as transport was either by pony and trap or cycling.

The first motorcar in the village was owned by Mr Claude Thompson, the estate agent.

A carrier cart would come once a week from Skipwith and would call on anyone here to see if they needed anything bringing from York. Eventually he changed to a motor and to save petrol, his wife had to call on the houses and run after the van to catch up with him. He was a greedy fellow!

Another electrician who lived near the Black Bull set up a bus service for us on Saturdays and would charge 6d single and 9d return. He got plenty of custom.

On Mondays another carrier would take folks to Selby to attend the market there, for a shilling return.

The Park is often referred to and this is not just the land behind the Hall which in the early part of the century, was grazing land, but goes much further back into the Hollicars woods.

Hay time and harvest had plenty of helpers. Some would work just for their 'drinkings.' (beer, sandwiches, pies)

One day when I was a little late going to our grazing field to feed some hens which we had there, to save time, I climbed over a little gate and was about half way across the Villa Park, now Wenlock Drive, when a lady and Gentleman accompanied by three dogs were crossing the Park and my dog barked. I was very anxious so I called out and asked them to call to his dogs so that there would not be a fight. I learnt afterwards that they were the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester spending part of their honeymoon at the Dower House!

Mrs Reader told the audience of the RAF camp in the Hollicars woods/Riccall and also of the ammunition dump there. The roads in the Hollicars were surfaced during the war. A bomb was dropped on Wheldrake Lane and also one on the Glade Area.

Mrs Reader recalled that after the fire in 1923, Church services were held in the Village Hall for two years. The Escrick Dairy was at the back of the Hall, later becoming a laundry. The Harvest Festival

was very important, the school master was the Church organist and choirmaster, the village provided the replacement bells through sewing and various collections, for example £10 was raised from making and selling Kettle holders.

The Summer Garden Fete was in the grounds of the Rectory, now the Parsonage and the Agricultural Show was held in the New Field from 1920 onwards, this is now the playing fields.

Mrs Reader celebrated her 85 birthday yesterday and had lived in Escrick for 62 years. She came to Escrick for one month to see if she liked it and never left.

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Mr Cliff Tasker was the chauffeur for Mr Wharton and had a flat at the Hall, I think he was paid £4.50 per week.

He lived at Chapmans cottage and then met his wife whose father owned the Saddlers shop next to the then Co op. (This later became the Post Office)

In 1934 Cliff left to drive in Leeds. In 1945/6 he came back to Escrick and was on the Parish Council.

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Mr Jeff Tomlinson was born in 1909 being one of 8 children and he lived at Mount Farm which is the first farm on the right past the Stillingfleet road turning.

He left school at 14. Mr Butterworth was the head and there were 5 teachers. Jeff was an errand boy and earned 10/s. He worked for the Co op. In 1937 he married Mrs Tomlinson who had been Miss Bass. Rent was £19 a year and 5s for a bath. In 1939 ice cream was made by Mrs Skilbeck.

He was the Rates collector for Wistow and Cawood. He also helped with the evacuees from Hull.

There were dances in the village hall and a New Year's Eve a Fancy Dress Party. Jeff remembered Mr A Skilbeck going as Mother Goose and there was a village Band. The Club looked after the village hall.

The East York's Yeomanry (later Yorkshire Hussars?) - There are some uniforms in the Castle Museum.

Jeff went in to the army and lived at the Estate Office (then at the entrance through the iron gates to Queen Margaret's School now) until 1948.

A boys club was started in 1926/27 which included Boxing.

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Mr Charles Oakland, with his brother Harry, took over and built up the Escrick Brick works. Mr Oakland was born in British Columbia where his father was in the brick making industry. He came to England in 1920 when he was 16 and was one of Dr Owens first patients. Since 1751 Bricks were made at the farm, creating the farm ponds. Balustrade and roofing tiles were made.

He lived on the Brickyard site.

During the war he was a driver. There was no modern machinery available in this country so automatic handling machinery came from German. He did half a scheme, Scheme helped by United Dominion Trust. The second half of the scheme was helped by United Dominion Trust 1965/66 About 40 people were employed.

Stan Wells was born in 1909 in Naburn, he then moved to Dunnington and came to Escrick in 1916/17 where he live for 40 years. He too was one of Dr Owens first Patients.

His father worked at Whinchat Farm.

He was a private investigator for 21 out of 23 insurance Companies.

The people of the village were well looked after. A boys club was set up which included boxing.

Jack Salter, the village carrier charged 2d to York and back. There was a tram from Fulford to York.

After he left school Stan went to work as a gardener at the Dower House then known as The Villa. The Villa was taken by Col Saunders and then Richard Leatham.

Stan was given 8/s a week. 20 years later he had 18/s per week. He left to go to Welburn Hall. Escrick Hall became flats.

He was a driver and then a Taxi driver in York.

Mr Earnest Saunders lived in Wheldrake with his wife.

Mr Saunders was born in 1904 in Escrick but brought up in Staffordshire and went on to explain how and why he came back.

His father farmed at Glebe Farm which is down the lane, past the Doctors surgery.

His father was an Army Sergeant Major. Colonel Lawley asked Sergeant Major Saunders to live in the Wenlock house and so he did and stayed for about 7 years.

He left Archbishops school and worked for 19 years, joined Young Farmers and then married. He lived at Tilmire farm for two years and then moved to York, then Heslington Lane and has been in Wheldrake for 8 years.

He travelled around in an Austin7, Monday to Selby, Tuesday to Leeds, Wednesday Edinburgh, Thursday Manchester and Friday York Market. He was a grain buyer and the MD of Byass.

He played Cricket for Escrick for 12 years, 5 times not out. He was captain in 1923 and joined York in 1948. He later left captaining and played midweek. He was a fast medium in swing bowler, played at Bootham crescent and moved to Wigginton Road and then Clifton.

At the end of the evening, Sadie said

'One could easily get the impression that things will never be the same, but memories will always live on in many different ways..... and you know..... in another 60 years' time our own youngsters of today will be saying , " Do you remember the New Village Hall being built and how wet the floor was? The houses being built on Villa Park, now Wenlock Drive, and the tarmac footpath being laid along Carr Lane, the new school being built, the Queens Silver Jubilee, the royal wedding, the coalfield, the revival of the Escrick Show (although only for horses and ponies), village concerts, the new surgery and so on.

These are just a few of the things that have happened since we, the 'new comers' came to this busy village. Long may it remain so!