

# PUBLIC HOUSES

## The Lamb, The Greyhound, The Shepherd's Hut and The London Road Inn

### *Tape 1 - Herbie Winfield*

**The Lamb** – used as a tea house when playing team games in fields now owned by Cottesmore Farm.

### *Tape 3 - Doreen Reason*

**London Road Inn** – thatched roof burned down.

Remembers walking up to take numbers of cars on the main London-Oxford Road – sometimes the motorists would throw the children sweets.

### *Tape 5 - Bill Stanbridge*

**The Greyhound** - known as the skinny dog.

**The Shepherd's Hut** – Run by Amy Reeves, Fern and Amy's mother (Mrs Strevens) it had a snug bar beside the main bar now where the fruit machine is.

### *Tape 6 - Marjorie Miners*

**The Lamb** - her father, took over the Lamb in 1927. It didn't make much money until the airfield was being built. In 1932 Mrs Miners married Leslie Miners a blacksmith/farrier/wheelwright who worked for her father in a forge next to the Lamb. He took over the pub in about 1927. Morlands Brewery owned the pub. It was 200 yrs old and looked much the Greyhound. Her father made a beautiful garden. When the station was being built they had 8 Irish labourers living in, breakfast, packed lunch and dinner for £1 a week!

**Shepherds Hut** – was a beer house, did not have a spirits licence.

**London Road Inn** – top storey destroyed by fire in 1943.

### *Tape 8 - Cynthia Winfield*

**The Lamb** - opposite Cottesmore Lane supplied the Shepherds Hut with beer and probably the Greyhound. A very popular pub and demolished to make way for RAF Benson [extended runways in 1942].

**The Greyhound** – Remembers it was kept by Nellie Webb who was also the mail lady. The beer was brought up from the cellar on trays. Nellie was a great character.

All four pubs were well patronised.

Her father would go to the pub every night and would come home singing and quite mellow. The children would go and sit outside until they were told to go home. Sometimes they were given lemonade as a treat.

**London Road Inn** – remembers it burning down. [1942].

### *Tape 9 - Moira Calvert*

**The Lamb** - was a lovely old pub with Les Miners as publican [Tom Dymond was publican]

**Shepherds Hut** – Mr and Mrs Strevens ran it.

**London Road Inn** – rebuilt during the war [after the fire in 1942].

### *Tape 10 - Amy Reeves*

**The Lamb** - this was an Inn so one could ask for a glass of water. Couldn't do so in an Ale House. The Lamb was run by the Hanscombes, the Dymonds and the Miners. Morland Inn.

**The Greyhound** – Nellie Webb and her mother ran it. Nellie always walked about in wellies. The father ran a taxi service. Their car was a green one with a folding roof.

**Shepherds Hut** – was an ale house. Got its name because the shepherds would stop there en route to market when it was a private house. When her father moved there they did not have beer on the premises and had to buy in it enamel jugs from the Lamb and carry them over. Then they had it delivered from Diamall Brown & Sons of Queens Street, Reading. They then got a wine licence. When the Lamb was pulled down the spirit licence was transferred to the Shepherds Hut. The Ministry made them use Morlands in the war due to the petrol shortage – they felt it was a waste to have two places delivering to the village. When they moved in there were oil lamps and the buildings were bigger than now. On the right hand side there was a coach house for the grooms. They served watercress teas as a speciality and Smiths Coaches brought parties for tea. Her father found when he took over the pub that the Club money (Christmas Club) had been stolen so he replaced it. She remembers it being very dirty when they got there and she hated it. Later when she was 14 or thereabouts waited on for her father. There were annual suppers of ham boiled in the copper with the broad beans and potatoes cooked in the liquid in sacks. They always sang afterwards.

Her father Joe took old men on outings ie to Southsea. Some had never seen the sea before and asked where all the water came from.

Dominoes, darts and shove halfpenny were played in the bar which was men only in the Public Bar. They had earth closets which her father said needed emptying frequently when there were ladies darts matches!! Football team used the Hut and the cricketers used the Greyhound. The Hut prices in 1930 were 4d for a pint of beer. 20 Players were 11 1/2d and Woodbines were 5d for 10. The Club room in the Hut has been a tailors shop, a fish and chip shop and a tea room.

The previous owners were Mr and Mrs Leather. Blossom, a WAAF at RAF Benson during the war became Max Bygrave's wife. Used to drink pints at the Hut.

**London Road Inn** – Gardners lived there (Cecil Gardner Avril Dix's grand father) and had children at school. Parkers were there when it caught fire, Mrs Parker was in the bath at the time.

**The Greyhound** - Nellie Webb and her mother ran the Greyhound – they always walked about in wellies. The father ran a taxi service. Their car was a green one with a folding roof.

#### *Tape 11 – Bill Edwards*

**The Greyhound** - Farmers had a syndicate shoot every year which was held at the Greyhound, run by Nellie Webb. Had a meal about 4.0 pm and stayed until late evening.

**London Road Inn** – Remembered when the thatch burnt. In early 1940's Brakspears demolished the top storey but kept the bottom. Mr Gardener lived there.

#### *Tape 14 – Barrie Blakeley*

**The Greyhound** - In the 1960's the cricket team met there. It had 2 bars with a hatch in the middle by the front door. In the summer the local children would gather together there to buy lemonade etc as they could buy without actually going into the pub. The owner in the 1960's was a butcher and it then changed hands a lot until it closed down in 1987 and converted to a house. The Royal & Ancient Order of Buffaloes (RAF) would meet in an upstairs room.

**Shepherds Hut** – The football team met at the Hut. In Amy Reeves time there were 2 bars – a snug bar and a public bar. Locals used it and some RAF. Oliver Medley, who farmed at Cottesmore would go there.

**London Road Inn** – popular with the RAF.

#### *Tape 15 – Barbara Blakeley*

**The Greyhound** - Remembers being on a Parochial Church Council and meeting upstairs when she first came to the village circa 1962.

### *Tape 17 – George Cannon*

**The Greyhound** - PCC meeting held there.

### *Tape 19 – Norah Harwood*

**The Lamb** was pulled down and Mr Miners lost his blacksmiths shop which was situated there.

**The Greyhound** – was popular – Nellie Webb let it go.

**Shepherds Hut** – did very well when the camp was built.

### *Tape 22 – Lucy Tuckwell*

**The Lamb** was run by the Hanscombe family. Mrs Hanscombe had pleurisy and then got TB. She spent days on a bed in the garden for a bit and then went to Peppard which used to be a TB hospital. Lucy went to visit her on her bike. Their eldest daughter used to be a patrol leader in the Guides.

**The Lamb** was then taken over by the Dymonds, parents of Marjorie Miners. It was demolished during the war.

**The Greyhound** – used to also sell meat – her mother bought some there. [When Garlicks had it].

**Shepherds Hut** – Army Strevens (now Reeves) and family lived there. Pubs weren't approved – nice girls didn't go into pubs. Lucy's father was teetotal, but her brothers drank like fishes if they had a chance, especially her brother Bill. They went to the village pubs, but any further away, ie the London Road Inn, was considered too far to walk back!

### *Tape 24 – Mick Gilbey*

**The Lamb** was a favourite venue for the children to accompany their parents and have a bottle of 'pop' and a bag of crisps as Les Miners was working at his forge there. The children were intrigued when he put a red hot metal rim on a wooden wheel and to watch him shoe horses. The Lamb was demolished for the runway extension and also 7 bungalows which were 2 metres too high for the approach to the runway. 'Dusty' Winfield owned them and Edgar Winfield stayed in the remaining one - now Mr and Mrs Dixon's home.

**The Greyhound** - ran by Nellie Webb who had a deformity in that she could not raise her head. Used to have her chin on her chest and had to physically raise her head to look at her customers. Had to get the beer from the cellar and often slipped and fell. Had to be 'rescued' by the customers. Had a walnut tree in the garden and allowed the children to gather them.

**Shepherds Hut** - mostly used by the service people. Mr Joe Strevens had it, a Royal Marine, when he died he was buried at the church with full military honours, drum and Colour Party present. Amy Reeves took over after her mother. He remembers standing outside when a little Trojan van delivered the cigarettes. The driver used to give the children a small toy of two pieces of cardboard on string, which when rotated- whistled.

**London Road Inn** - burned down in 1938 or 1939. [1942. The Parkers ran it in those days. Tony Parker was a school colleague we had a gang called the London Road Gang and Tony was the leader as he supplied us with 'pop' and food.

### *Tape 28 – The Winfield Family*

The Reeves and Cox's, landlords of the time were considered characters and really got involved in village events, such as the Jubilee [1977].

**Shepherd's Hut** - The girls sometimes go to the Shepherd's Hut but it's a bit of an old mans pub, Sarah doesn't like it. Not a young pub. Farmers Man is a young persons pub and it is quite good.

Greyhound - Richard used the Greyhound before he was 18 and it was always full with RAF people. The pubs were at the centre of his leisure time in the village. No-one watched TV much but most of the men went to the pubs to drink, play dominoes, cards and darts. Mostly he went to the Shepherd's Hut which was

packed. He was 17-18 sitting with 50-60 yr olds. He drank mostly beer. Others of his age drank there particularly with kids from RAF Benson.

**London Road Inn** - He drank at the London Road Inn too, which was frequented by RAF people. Called the 'Air Pub'.

### *Tape 29 –Alan Benson*

**The Greyhound** - Went to local pubs. Used Greyhound. Went to Benson (Farmers Man). Pubs at opposite end of village - convenient to drink in closest pub. Get used to local and people who frequent it. Social life changed with money to spend. Went to local pubs. Worked in Greyhound as a barman occasionally. The cast of Paradise Postponed gave the landlord signed photographs A lot of opposition when pub sold as a pub or a house. We can't lose one of village pubs. Most mostly from people who didn't use it. They worried more than those who used it. Another facility lost to the village.

### *Tape 33 – Bob Quixley and Brian Orpwood (Interviewed by George Cannon)*

**The Lamb** - I know there were some evacuees living at the Lamb. I spoke to Wallace Miners last evening and he said that Eric Knowles still comes from Liverpool to visit his mother and he and his sister Carole were billeted at The Lamb in 1940/41. The blacksmiths shop was still operational at that time at The Lamb.

BO Yes Les Miners was the blacksmith there. There's a photo in there of the two of them. A Mosquito crashed up where the bungalows were by the side of where they had been. The road through the aerodrome was closed during the war. You had to get a permit to go out in the field behind the Old Gymnasium. That was next to a bomb stores but it wasn't a bombing station I think they used to keep the old films in there. After the war the bus used to come round the airfield from Wallingford what is the sewer farm now, round the peritrack and through the camp.

Bob Quixley remembers the London Road Inn on fire- said he rescued some bottles and laid them on the verge. [Not as John Young remembers – he said they took bottles and tried to drink them – first taste of alcohol which was horrible]. See File 59.

### *Tape 35 – Eric Knowles, Wallace and Marjorie Miners*

**The Lamb** - Eric - I liked the layout of the Lamb. The centre of activity was the kitchen and the wireless was on nearly 18 hrs a day for news bulletins. Had a plate rack all around the room and had all the jam from all the seasons. Every fortnight the Irish navvies who were building the runways in the aerodrome were paid and they came into the Lamb and drank themselves wet. There was a coal fire and they would get a poker hot and dip it into their beer. They would be in the next day wanting to cadge another drink but they had got no more money. Leslie Miners used to say "Go and drink God's Whiskey, its good for you." It was very nice lodging at the Lamb. Irish navvies lodged there for £1 a week. In the lounge was the crockery cupboard, the piano and pictures on the walls and they never vandalised a thing.

The brewers (Morlands) didn't bother about finding accommodation for the Dymonds, they were given £100 compensation for losing their home. Miss Maxwell's cousin, also Miss Maxwell, approached them and asked if they would like to live in Saffron Close.

Outside the back kitchen there was a yard wall and pump and right next to that a walnut tree. Grandad (Dymond) used to come out about 12<sup>th</sup> July, push a knitting needles through the walnut and if it was soft he would pick them and pickle them. When the Lamb was pulled down it had a wines and spirits licence which was passed on to the Shepherds Hut which was only a beer house at the time.

Next to the Lamb the farmer Winfield had his dairy cows and the Lamb was built in such a way that he side of the house which bounded on the field was a long brick wall where the cellars were, it meant that part of that wall was below ground level. There was a small kitchen window only just above ground level. We had a big radio and it had to be earthed it went out through the window and out into a jar up against the side of the house. When the cows grazed they would go with their heads and horns and knock the earth connection out and the radio went dead. So Wallace had to go round and put it back in the jar.

### *Tape 41 – Herbie Harris*

**Pubs** - Favourite pub was The Greyhound - was run by the Webbs. Nellie Webb was also the milk woman for the Winfields. It sold Ushers Beer.

Brakspears had the London Road Inn I believe. I remember it being burnt when I got home at night. Remembers the KCB Cafe.

### *Written Notes –Eileen Mencarini*

Simon Witherick wrote – “My mother always referred to Granny Dymond with great affection. She stayed at The Lamb with Wallace and the ‘gang’, including Eric and Carol Knowles and Roy Dickinson. When The Lamb was demolished in 1942, her and Dolly moved to Saffron Close with Tom and Louisa. I have seen the outside of Saffron House as it is now but not the inside. When you look at the main house from the front Eileen and Dolly stayed in the front upper room on the far right. Dolly worked at the munitions factory at Cowley, now the BMW site. She would ride her bike to the bus stop and then travel to Cowley. I know Wallace refers to her as Auntie Dolly and remembers her returning with comics. Eileen became close friends with Kathleen Miners, Tom and Louisa Dymond’s youngest daughter as their ages were only 7 years apart. This is the girl in the picture with Tom outside The Lamb in the village book “Glimpses of an Oxfordshire Village” They kept in touch on a regular basis well into later life. Indeed it was this friendship that saw Eileen invited back to the village after the war to be a bridesmaid at Kathleen and Marjories’ sisters wedding. I cannot remember her name. Anyway you can see them all in the wedding pictures outside the church and the reading room.”

### *File 44 – Jack Wheeler*

On down the village we come to the **Shepherds Hut** public house, frequented by Yours Truly and friends in the 1950’s. One of my friends (who will remain nameless) used to carry most of the seating outside and leave it there when we left for the evening.

Driving on towards Fyfield we pass the end of the short runway to Benson Airfield where once stood **The Lamb** public house which was pulled down when the airfield runways were constructed in 1942. From there right down to Benson were huge elm trees which were all taken down during the War.

### *File 51a/b – Julie Evans and June Evans Sawyer*

The name ‘**The Greyhound**’ conjures up to us a picture of Nellie Webb, a great character. She ran The Greyhound public house under the supervision of an aged mother who was the licensee. Nellie took great care of her mother whom she adored, kept bees and delivered the post. Our father and grandfather enjoyed many a liquid refreshment and game of dominoes in the Greyhound.

### *File 57 – John Cleverley*

**The Greyhound** – The landlord, my grandfather Cecil Cleverley had been in the Royal Hussars (7<sup>th</sup>) and when he was the landlord, he used to host the BUFFS in the room above the bar where his name is etched on the window. I think that my father probably cut the engraving on the window with a diamond ring.

### *File 58 - Aubrey Gilbey*

**London Road Inn** - Remembers cycling back from work in Wallingford with Geoff Young from Cottesmore – saw the London Road Inn on fire. Went up to watch. The bottles of spirits were exploding.

### *File 59 - John Young*

Went up to watch it burning with his pals Eric Townsend, Dennis Belcher, Norman Winfield, Bob Quixley – salvaged some bottles which they opened at the top of Days Lane and it was ‘horrible’. [Wallis Miners said they opened bottles of sherry by the War Shrine – being brought up in a pub he couldn’t understand why it would be horrible if the corks were still intact!].

### *File 60 – Keith Wheatley*

The Greyhound was the after church venue, we were given a lemonade and unusually for a pub a bag of Maltesers (sweet rationing hadn't yet happened) they were 2d for an open bag just like Smith's Crisps used to be in. (Nothing yet has beaten Smith's for taste).

## ***File 72 - Roger Kent***

Played darts at The Greyhound and London Road Inn – away against the Shepherds Hut team.

### **Miscellaneous – The Lamb**

1. Phone contact (2005) from Miss J Etheridge, 13 Ruskin Close, Didcot, OX11 8TN – she is the grand daughter of William Pryke who left The Lamb in the early 1900's. Brother Brian Pryke. Her mother went to school but finished at Didcot.
2. Letter contact 13/5/06 Mrs J M Thorne – Greystoke, St Ives Close, Theale, Berks, RG7 5DP – grand daughter of Richard (obit 1947 and Bridget Cripps (obit 1948) who had the tenancy. Her mother went to the school in 1895 and became cook for Sir Robert Fleming at Joyce Grove, Nettlebed. Her brothers were Sidney of Bunkus Farm, Ewelme, (wedding photo in archive) and A T Cripps killed in WW1.
3. Verbal conversation with Aubrey Gilbey May 2006 – One of his brothers used to go on errands for Mrs Cripps to The Shepherd's Hut - to buy several bottles of her favourite tippie milk stout, which she would consume without her husband's knowledge.

Brakspear Brewery – Verbal information from Felix Bloomfield – A manager of the Brewery lived at The Views and kept barrels of beer in the cellars for distribution to the local pubs to save the dray having to come from Henley.