

One Day in May - 2000: The Glemsford Local History Society

Anna Watkinson

Tuesday 9th May, 2000

6.30 Woken by my husband Sidney with a cup of tea. He is off to work at the Imperial War Museum, Duxford

7.00 Up and dressed. Woke my daughter Hannah. She has to go to College where she is doing a B.Tec Diploma in Public Services as a full-time student

7.30 Post arrived; received a Scan Photograph of my second grandchild due to be born in Melbourne Australia at the end of September

8.00 Breakfast, read Newspaper. Very depressing. N.H.S. in crisis. 12 yr. old boy stabbed to death in Covent Garden

8.25 Opened Potting Shed. I am trying to grow some tomatoes. Weather misty by day

8.35 Hannah left for college. Late as usual

9.0 Start work in house. Lots to do as I worked all weekend on night duty at Old People's Home. Cleaned Hannah's room

9.30 My sister Janice phoned from Whetton, Northamptonshire. She is off to Manchester with her son Stuart and his fiancée Helen to help with wedding arrangements, 10th May 2001

10.05 Sara Turner Parish Clerk phoned to arrange Gala Queen competition for Millennium Gala day, 25th June, 2000 Queen from Clare Middle School, Prince and Princess from Glemsford Primary School. Cleaned sitting room

10.45 Phoned Clare School re Queen; to phone back tomorrow

11.0 Cup of Coffee Clean bedroom and bath room Unpack summer clothes 'cos the sun is shining

12 noon Sara called in to collect book for Parish Council

12.45 Went to see Tony Mitchell re repair old water pump, Duffs Hill. Made jelly for pudding tonight

1.15 Lunch. Sandwich and Cup of Tea Sat down for an hour knitting shawl for New Baby

3.0 Prepare dinner

4.0 Went to Post Office to send parcel to Tyler, grand-daughter in Australia

4.45 Hannah arrived home from college; water pistols Bruno (Black Labrador was not amused

5.10 Sidney home from work

5.30 Dinner

6.30 Hannah off to A.C.F. She is a staff sergeant, soon to become an adult leader

7.45 Parish Council meeting and Sid working in garden. Election of Officers. I was re-elected as Vice Chairman

10.15 Home to bed after waiting for Hannah to come home. Sid already asleep.

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Maureen Stiff

One Day in May 2000, 30th May to be precise, I woke around the normal time at 6 o'clock. The alarm goes off just in case hubby and I oversleep, but we rarely do. After 10 years of waking at that time to go to work, it becomes a habit. However, this day for me was to be a bit different and hopefully another milestone in our time at Broadway Stores.

We purchased the business of "Carriage Butchers and Stores" in July 1990. Hubby had recently left the RAF after 30 years service and we had always fancied running our own business. Having dismissed running a restaurant or having a pub (hubby was in Catering), we heard about the butcher's shop in the village being on the market, and decided to look at it.

July 9, 1990 was Day One for us, and a day we will never forget. I had previously worked in Banking, or secretarial, having a 10 year break to produce and start to bring up 3 boys. But those jobs were mainly sitting down, not standing behind a till all day. However, we survived and are still surviving, despite the ever-changing retail business.

For the first 18 months we leased the premises, but were then given the opportunity to purchase them. After much thought, we decided to go ahead, as we could see we would be able to put a flat above the shop. In time, the flat was completed: a big milestone passed.

Another project was to obtain a licence to sell alcohol, and once that was achieved, we had a complete refit to the shop.

Year on year, our turnover increased, partly due to the fact that Peter and Ann Chubb at the Post Office nearby gradually stopped selling cigarettes, bread, ice creams, milk and then sweets, and we said all we wanted next was the Post Office business itself. It would fit nicely into our office.

And so it was that, on 30th May, I was interviewed at the Main Colchester Post Office, by the Retail Network Manager and another gentleman, for the position of Subpostmaster of Glemsford. Some 3 months earlier, we had to submit our Official Application Form, sending in an enormous amount of paperwork they required.

After 1 1/4 hours, the interview ended and I was told I would be advised the next day if I had been successful. However, at about 4. 30 p.m., I was telephoned with the news that the position was mine.

We've been keeping this news very quiet at the moment, but I don't suppose it will be long before it starts leaking out, especially once we start making the alterations. I wonder if this will cause "quite a stir" as it did in 1887 when the Post office was moved from Egremont Street to Fair Green.

In Mr Deeks' book of "Glorious Glemsford" is a picture of Snell's Tobacconist and Sweet Shop, Fair Green. That is now our store, which has seen many changes since then.

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Esme Smith

13th May 2000

Thankfully it was a sunny morning as this was to be "Plant Sale Day" for Glemsford Gardening Club and we wanted plenty of customers to turn out, so we can raise a little money for the club.

Members of the committee were at the Church Hall early to set up the tables and arrange what we had to offer. Members had sent along plants they had raised at home from seed or cuttings as well as plants from their gardens and bedding plants. We also had fertiliser and compost in small quantities for sale. Apart from plants there was a table of bric-a-brac and one of home-made cakes, also flower arrangements and a cup of tea or coffee if required.

Well before opening time, a small queue started to form and when the doors opened they were in with a rush. The first half-hour was very busy with all the bedding plants and most of the others being bought, and as for the cakes, well, they went like the proverbial "hot cakes"!

Eventually, it all slowed down and we started to pack the remaining items and leave the hall clean.

This is an annual event which proved to be well worth the effort as £100 was added to our funds

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Sue Bocking

On May 16th, 2000, I was on holiday at Southwold in Suffolk, having arrived in our touring caravan the day before. We woke up to sunshine and views across the marshes to the lighthouse and church, towering above the town.

Breakfast over, we put on our walking boots and set off along the harbour to walk to Walberswick, over the railway bridge and along the old railway line. The gorse was in flower and smelling of vanilla; skylarks were singing and a pair of swans were nesting by a creek.

As we walked into Walberswick, we passed several houses with beautiful Wisteria in bloom. At a cottage where we buy one or two herb plants most

years, we bought a scented geranium and a cotton lavender. We chatted to Annie for a while, who told us she was thinking of moving.

We had a cup of coffee in a timber built coffee shop that was displaying watercolours of the area by local artists. The beach is mostly shingle with sand dunes. Behind the dunes are some saltwater channels, part of a flood prevention scheme. This is where the annual Crabbing Championships are held.

We crossed back over the River Blyth by ferry - twenty pence to be rowed across the estuary and a short walk back to our caravan.

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Margaret King.

Saturday May 20th

The day dawned bright and breezy with fitful flashes of sun. I had breakfast and decided to spend some of the morning working on my planning for next week's lessons. John was spending his time betwixt the greenhouse and the garden. Having completed these tasks, I tidied away and heated up the 'leftovers' from the previous evening's dinner, for lunch. This had been a special meal shared with my son, Paul, and his wife, Helen, whose birthday would be next week. I had a stab at making a first-ever Middle Eastern meal, the star of which had been a large dish of tabbouleh, crammed full of fresh parsley! John and I finished this off alongside the residue from a rice dish, and some experimental chick pea and bean salad.

We spent the afternoon, which was quite hot and sunny, although still breezy, in the garden, generally weeding and tidying up before we go on our holiday to Devon next week. The flower seeds we had sprinkled some three weeks before had enjoyed the most supreme growing conditions, i.e. loads of rain and some warm sunshine, and yet they appeared to have been utterly and completely choked by a multitude of poppy seedlings which had sprung up from out of nowhere! The radical and systematic elimination of these evasive outsiders took an unprecedented amount of time, at the end of which a few, very few, straggly blue flax seedlings were discovered, alongside some unidentified

species which could or could not be malopes; anyway we left these to develop.

Later in the afternoon it became evident that 'something' was afoot, owing to an intermittent procession of smartly dressed men, women and children. Putting two and two together, almost literally, I guessed that a wedding was to take place at the church over the way. This was borne out and verified when Jean Boyes, (my neighbour Mrs. Eva Ford's hairdresser), arrived to park her car in Eva's drive - Eva herself being absent on a Norwegian cruise. Jean was on her way to the wedding of Claire Matthews - a Glemsford girl whose parents live over the road. A short time later I watched the wedding procession walk over to the church - the bride in a light gold dress, accompanied by an assortment of bridesmaids wearing gold dresses of a slightly deeper shade.

Following an afternoon cup of tea, John and I proceeded to get ready for what was, undoubtedly, the highlight of the day - the Glemsford School Reunion for pupils and staff who had attended the school during the ten year period, 1945 - 1955. This Reunion had been organised by Mrs. Janet Garwood and Mr. Brian Richer, both former pupils. John helped Mr. Andrew Garwood (neither being former pupils) with the raffle prizes which, like the rabbit population, multiplied rapidly, as the number of invited guests arrived at the village school, many bearing interesting, expensive and unusual gifts. The selling of the raffle tickets proved to be a full time job indeed!

Having arrived at the school about 6.30 p.m., and noticed that the large poster I had painted in blue, on a white sheet, looked suitably sturdy and permanent in the intermittent drizzle which was now falling, I went into the hall sporting my married and maiden names on a sticky label attached to my jacket. It was not long before animated conversation was the order of the evening, as long-lost friends and acquaintances were re-united. Amongst the many faces known to me, I was most surprised to be approached by one of my childhood friends who left the village in the early fifties, and whom I had neither seen nor heard from since. She was called Gillian Walters and I remembered that her father had been the St. Mary's Church verger before the family moved on to Bury St. Edmunds. She attended with her daughter and her older sister, Margaret, and had travelled down from near Huntingdon. Another 'face from the past' - and one which delighted many guests - was that of Mr. Richard Downing, the oldest son of the former headmaster, Mr. Downing. I had a long conversation with him, and reminded him that I had started school with his brother, David, one cold January morning back in 1949, when his father had likewise commenced his headship.

The evening was complemented by drinks, buffet snacks and some absorbing displays of log books, registers, school photographs and even some carefully preserved exercise books from former village pupils. Mr. Edward Hyde, a retired woodwork teacher, now in his nineties, was presented with a gift, as was Mrs. Elizabeth Steele, the present headteacher. The evening concluded with a very, very long draw for the raffle prizes - and I'm sorry to say I was not a lucky recipient! It was generally agreed that the event had been an unprecedented success, and that it might serve as a forerunner to future re-

unions of a similar nature. We arrived home by about 11 o'clock and so ended quite an eventful day.

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John King

A DAY IN MAY YEAR 2000

May 30th finds me not in my home village of Glemsford but in the Devonshire village of Marldon. Margaret, my wife and I have hired Rose cottage for a week, we have been joined by our daughter Caroline and her boyfriend Dave; they have come down from Bristol where they live. The village is approximately four miles inland from Torbay. It is a quiet and pretty spot but with a working rather than chocolate box feeling. Today, rather dark and heavy clouds did not portend an abundance of sun, so rather than head for beach or country, we decided to make our promised visit to Exeter. This was a novel experience for three of us but Dave had attended university there and so knew it very well. With his knowledge of the city, Dave was volunteered to drive the thirty odd miles to Exeter: this was a smart move as he knew every alley and back lane and so soon found reasonably priced parking close to the centre. I would have had to go for 'Park and Ride'. Our first port of call was the Cathedral area with its Green, and its assorted old buildings, many of which were shops. Fortunately we discovered a hostelry which is called the Abbey Well and faces the Cathedral.. We had a round of drinks .I remember mine to have been a pint of a local brew ,very fruity and flavoursome ,excellent cost 1.80. The younger generation decided to go their own way for the day, and so after arranging to meet at 5 o'clock back at the Cathedral, we duly split and started to explore.

Our first visit was naturally the Cathedral. It has very clean lines and an air of spaciousness; much of it has been rebuild and restored since the end of the war, when bomb damage was severe. In some parts of the woodwork shrapnel repairs are clearly visible. Exeter has many attractive buildings and as with many towns and cities the best architecture is to be found by raising your view above the modern shop fronts. The city centre and parks are clean, but wandering through the lanes there is evidence ,as everywhere ,of the constant battle with litter ,the result or non bio-degradable packaging and an ill-

disciplined 'Don't care a damn' society, which it seems likes squalor. How I wish the Government would take measures to tackle this blight .There seems to be less signs of ostentatious wealth than in some parts; that is to say the company Mercedes and B. M .Ws are thin on the ground .I guess their numbers fall in direct proportion to the distance from the south east and the M25 .Strange that wherever there is productive effort i.e. .working the land to feed us ,in contrast to say banking, there is less reward -no million pound bonuses here yet! Those in commerce could not survive for a minute without producers . Walking the city streets it is apparent that there is not the same mania for ripping out perfectly good paving here and replacing it with fancy stone , whilst ignoring decent road repairs . No. Here there seems to be none of that, but the roads are fine. I can't resist pointing to the staggering money wasted in Sudbury and Bury St. Edmunds to say nothing of the money poured down the drain in Long Melford a few years ago .Who can notice what they did, now that it is dirty and covered in cars, whilst our roads are full of badly repaired pot holes and the hedge rows are littered with drink cans , bottles and crisp packets ! Towards the end of the day we visited the old dockside area now a pretty basin very pleasant and well done. The old warehouses are now maritime museums and other public attractions, in common with most waterfronts in the majority of cities in Britain today. No working boats, but just close your eyes and imagine the past sights, sounds and smells of this area.: now it's nightclubs not night shifts. After our day exploring we met up and had a bite to eat before making our return trip. As I am not driving I am able to take in the changing scenery which is very relaxing ,as it is the quintessence of our green and pleasant land .For the record ,I notice the many petrol stations where unleaded petrol is 84 .9 pence a litre , the highest in Europe .What a rip off !

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Gill Leech

A Tree Planting Initiative for the Year 2000 Yews for the Millennium

Down the ages the Yew has played a significant part in our history. Some believe that the ancient yew at Ankerwyke by Runnymede was the place where King John signed the Magna Carta in 1215. Most of our oldest yew

trees are found in churchyards. Using measurements, planting positions and historical references it has been discovered that many pre-date the church, sometimes by thousands of years. The Saxon church at Tandridge was built in 1066 on top of the roots of an ancient yew, which was then some 1000 years old. Yew trees are exceptionally slow growing and as they become older their growth can slow down or even stop for long periods. It has been estimated that some ancient yews could be as much as 5000 years old, making them the oldest living tree in Europe. Known as the Tree of Life to the Celtic People, Yews have stood within the lychgate of many parish churches for centuries.

September 1996 saw the launch of a new conservation project which aimed to celebrate the new Millennium and help safeguard the place of one of the most significant trees in British history - the Yew. Yews for the Millennium had the support of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York. In 1997 our parish of St. Mary the Virgin, Glemsford registered for this project with the aim that a new yew grown from 2000 year old stock should be planted in this parish to ensure continuity of our living heritage into the next millennium - over 4000 parishes had registered by February 1998.

Services were held in the Dioceses across the country for the handing over of the young yew trees. It was the turn of the St. Edmundsbury and Ipswich Diocese on Sunday 21st. May, 2000 - my husband Brian and I attended the service being held at St. Mary's Church, Horham near Eye. Leading conservationist David Bellamy was in attendance to help hand out more than 250 young yew trees to be planted in parishes all over the county. Professor Bellamy is president of the Conservation Foundation which handed out almost 7000 yew trees across the country. The rooted cuttings had been propagated from ancient yew trees believed to be at least 2000 years old - St. Mary's Glemsford yew is from the Combe Florey Yew in Somerset.

More than 250 parishes were represented at Horham to receive the trees at this special service. The service was conducted by the Right Reverend Clive Young, Bishop of Dunwich, who was assisted by the Rev. David Streeter, vicar of St. Mary's Church at Horham. Despite the heavy rain the open-air service went ahead as planned on the village community field opposite the parish church. Music was provided by the Salvation Army and a sea of umbrellas helped create a memorable atmosphere. The service at Horham was the final distribution event in what had been a major Millennium project. Horham was chosen as the Suffolk venue for the handovers because of its conservation interest. The churchyard is run as a nature reserve, grass being cut only after wild flowers have seeded. It also has a very fine peal of eight bells.

(The yew was kept in its pot until well established and was planted in St. Mary's Churchyard, Glemsford (to the right of the footpath as you approach the south door) by the Revd. Patrick Prigg following the Harvest Festival service on the morning of Sunday 1st. October 2000.

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May Day 2000

Little Egypt Break with Tradition

As always, the Morris Men of Little Egypt were determined to greet May Day dawn in the year 2000 with appropriate dance and festivities.

This year, we moved the venue for the dance to a further outskirts of the village, namely Easty Wood.

These are the earliest images of that dance. I hope to be able to add more as they return from the chemist.



As can be seen, in order to greet the dawn, we have to get up while it is still dark.



But, by the time the intrepid dancers reached Easty Wood, they were able to greet the dawn in style.

There has been a lot of rain lately and, truth to be told, the white trousers became a little spattered with mud.

Not least, this was because one of the side, "townie" Dave Hartley, thought he could park his trusty camper van on a field, not realising that fields involve mud rather than tarmac. The result was that other members of the side had to push said van out of the mire.

Nevertheless, the dancing was good.



Another break with tradition was the move to have breakfast at The Angel, courtesy of Jan 'n'Dave.

On the way to breakfast, the merry crew could not resist dancing on Tye Green. We are not sure what the neighbours thought.



Talking of which, it has to be recorded that, for the first time in the history of the side, I was unable to take part in the celebration this year, for reasons attached to offspring, lack of sleep, university and the A1.

Just to make sure I didn't feel left out, the side made a detour to wake me up.

They succeeded. It was 6.45 a.m.. A neighbour came out to watch. He said nothing.

These early photos are courtesy of [Mike Hamilton](#). There were no more.

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Sid Watkinson

Monday, May 8th, 2000

I left Glemsford at 7 a.m. by car on that day for what was to be a rather special day at the Imperial War Museum, Duxford.

My ongoing task was to supervise the restoration of the Museum's Hurricane fighter and on this day we were to install the Rolls Royce Merlin engine. At 8.00 we started: after checking the lifting tackle and equipment, we began the lift at 8.30. It was an anxious time while the engine swung precariously 10 ft. above us but all went smoothly and it was lowered safely into place about 9 a.m..

After securing the engine we spent the rest of the morning preparing other parts of the aircraft for future fitment. After lunch at 2 p.m. the rest of the working day was spent telephoning orders for spares, liaising with other museum staff and administrative work.

I left at 4 p.m. and after a brief stop at an engineering firm in Haverhill, I arrived back in Glemsford at 5 p.m.. After catching up with my wife and daughter's day over dinner, I worked in the garden for 2 hours. Finally the remainder of the day was spent relaxing with a cool beer and writing this narrative before bed!

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From the School: 1

Georgina R.

Monday 15th May

On Friday I went to the museum in Battle. It was good. We walked round a big field. We had some phones. When you see a post there is some numbers on the post you can choose a number. There is some numbers on the phone. I pressed number 6. A lady was talking. She told us about the battle.

We saw a castle. We went in it was a bit boring. After we went in the real museum there was some real money. When we had been in the museum we went to my aunty Mels.

James P.

On Friday morning I went to school and I went on a school trip at a models and clocks. Then we went to Abbey Gardens and ate. Then we went to play and Jim got stuck in a big b eniw (??)

Hannah P.

I was surprised that we were going to the museum. I thought it would be different. The thing that really caught my eye was the mice. I liked the clock room the most because they had broken a clock apart so that we could guess how many pieces there were. I said that there was 99 bits but it was between 80 or 90. After we had been through the museum we went to Abbey Gardens it was nice there. We saw a squirrel eating a nut. After we had eaten our lunch we went to the park we went on the roundabout. I went on with Stacey. On the way back I didn't feel so good. I think I needed some fresh air. When I got home I told my mum all about it.