

*Werrington etc.  
and Wetley Moor*  
.....  
*also Werrington*  
*Shortly after the start of*  
*The Millennium*



*Painting by local artist Jean Fryer*

*Compiled by - Tony McNicol*

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## **WERRINGTON Etc**

It is said that the name Werrington is thought to be Anglo-Saxon in origin, and is named after a Chief called Wherra or Werra who settled in this area with his followers, but on a 1670 map, Bagnall, Hulme, 'Rounall' and Wetley Moor is shown but not Werrington. So I cannot see that it can be named after the Chief Wherra or Werra because he would have existed hundreds of years earlier, so it would have almost certainly been shown on the 1670 map.

Werrington is first recorded on a 1749 map and is spelt Wherington, also Ashbank Road is shown (although not named). It is also spelt Wherington on a 1798 map. It is first spelt Werrington on an 1890 map.

Although they have now gone, Werrington, until the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, had several small industries. Extensive quarries existed in Washerwall and Wetley Moor. In fact, St. Philip's Church is mostly built out of Werrington stone. The village was also known for coal mining, weaving, and nail making. Being a mainly rural community though, many Werrington people past and present have had some involvement in farming.

### **The Parish of Werrington**

Many of us tend to look back at the impact the years have had on the world. In Werrington we can look back upon a century that has changed our home almost beyond recognition. Not much over a hundred years ago the village of Werrington consisted mainly of the houses around the windmill, Washerwall Lane, and some farms. Now it has expanded to include all Washerwall, Wetley Common, Withystakes, Ash Bank, Armshead, Cellarhead, Hulme, some of Brookhouse Lane, and part of Eaves Lane, and Kerry Hill This quite rapid expansion increased around 1925, when the Meigh family broke up and sold their Ash Hall estate after Mr. and Mrs. Meigh had died. About the same time, expansion of local services such as transport, electricity, gas, water, and sewerage reached Werrington. It now consists of nearly 2500 homes, and the population has increased from a few hundred people to about 6000.

Werrington's relative isolation in time gone by meant that it became a fairly self-sufficient community. Its leisure facilities have been developed and built by its residents. In 1938 the Village Hall was built, and the early 1970s saw the building of the Clarkson Hall (Scout Hall) in Bridle Path. Werrington boasts its own Playing Fields, Scout and Guide Troops, Boys' and Girls' Brigade Companies, as well

as many varied groups using the Village Hall, and in the year 2000 a bowling club was opened on Meigh Road Playing Fields.

In the last hundred years or so, Werrington has grown into a thriving, well-populated community with much to commend it. It has its own leisure facilities, medical centre, chemist, business community, and its own churches. Werrington has not stood still during the last century, and is still a growing community.

Werrington was originally part of the Parish of Caverswall, and was known as Caverswall with Werrington, but Werrington became a Parish in its own right when it split from Caverswall in 1988 because Werrington had grown large enough to become its own Parish, and have its own Parish Council.



Old Maps of Werrington



1798



1890

### Washerwall

In the mid 1800 hundreds there were two main wells in Washerwall, a hard water one for drinking, and a soft water one for washing. One was a long stone well that they say was used for washing bodies in, and was known as the coffin well, but no longer exists.

Water from Washerwall well was taken by horse and cart in barrels to Hanley for selling at a half penny per bucket until around the 1850's. It was very popular water, and they could sell every drop that they took.

In around 1810 it was proposed to pipe the water to Hanley because it was said to be pure spring water of exceptional quality, and it was thought that there was enough to supply Hanley and all the surrounding area, but the idea never materialised.

The well that still exists at the common end of Washerwall was used mainly for drinking water, and a man named Sherwin who was known as peg leg because he only had one leg, lived by the well and used to look after it, and keep it clean, and people had to pay a shilling a year to be allowed to draw water from it. A well called Wash Well is recorded on a 1775 map of the area.

The present structure was built in 1874, but over the years it fell into disrepair, and was cleaned out and renovated to its present condition in the late 1980's by the then Parish Council Handyman. It has the letters S.R.S.A. engraved on it, which stand for **Stoke Rural Sanitary Authority**, because Werrington, Caverswall Bagnall, etc. were all in the Stoke Rural Area when the wells around this area were built in the early 1870's.

There are also Well at Kerry Hill that has the same letters engraved on it.

There was also a Well, known as Tickle Well, in a garden in Washerwall Lane where it is said that a small child drowned

### **Cross, commonly known as a butter cross**

There is an old 'butter cross' (Which I am given to understand was moved quite a few years ago) .in a hedge-row at the end of Washerwall Lane almost opposite the well.

A cross is a symbol of Christianity & the earliest crosses may have been erected before churches, & were built as preaching crosses, marking the places where religious rituals were practised.

The commonest type of standing cross has a stepped base with a cross-shaft set into a socket stone which forms the uppermost step. Occasionally the socket stones were decorated, & the cross shafts are usually square or octagonal. The cross-heads took many forms, from simple crucifixes to elaborate lantern shaped structures, & could have stood as much as 15ft high. Because a cross is a holy place, and they became used as locations to validate deals or transactions. Some crosses were used to mark boundaries between parishes, properties, or settlements, and it has been known for people to go out at night with shovels & rope to move the boundary stones a little further outwards.

The cross gets its name 'Butter Cross' from the fact that they were often associated with market towns & dating from medieval times where they were located in the market place & people from neighbouring villages would gather to buy locally produced butter, milk, & eggs. The produce would be displayed on the stepped base of the cross. In some towns they were in a covered area.

Many years ago there was chip shop on the end of a row of four cottages, near the Common end of Washerwall on the right hand side, (just before where Moorland Ave. now is), and a shop called Mifflin's on the other end. They only had two toilets between them that were communal toilets (across the other side of the road) one of which was a 'flush type' but with no running water so they still had to take a bucket of water with them when they went to the loo. (they kept a bucket in the house at night to save going out). They disappeared many years ago.



Also there was a shop called Dales in the middle of the row of cottages on the left that closed only a few years ago.

### *Draw-Well Lane*

There was a well in Draw-Well Lane where it is believed that a woman tried to commit suicide by throwing herself in to it, but she had a crinoline dress on that filled with air and stopped her from sinking. It has been covered over and is now under one of the extensions of the Elizabeth House Nursing Home.

When I was young at the Armshead road end of Draw-Well Lane near to where the railings are just before Moorland Ave there used to be a large wooden shop that sold bits of everything

### *Armshead*

There is a Little Armshead, and a Great Armshead, both are mentioned in an account of a perambulation of the boundaries of the manor of Bucknall in 1803.

The 'story' is that Armshead got its name from the Civil War, when some of Cromwell's troops were billeted in the village of Bagnall. It's said that there was a fierce battle in the area, and that after the battle was over there were 'arms and heads everywhere' so that is how it got its name, but I cannot find any documented evidence of any civil war battles being fought anywhere in this area.

The nearest battles to us appear to have been at Nantwich, and Hopton Heath, near Stafford.

### *Deadmans Grave*

Deadmans Grave gets its name because it is said that a man hath been waylaid & murdered here. This is mentioned in the 1803 perambulation, and also in a citation of the boundaries of Stoke and Caverswall in 1689, from which the area gets its name,

There is a 'stone' in a garden hedge close to, which it used to be thought was the headstone for the grave of the man that was killed there but it is actually an old boundary stone. It has the letters B & B engraved on it which almost certainly stand for Bucknall Boundary but could stand for Bucknall/ Bagnall, because many years ago Werrington was in the Parish of Bucknall which was 'aligned' with Bagnall, and they were known as Bucknall- cum- Bagnall, but which ever it is, it means that it is almost certainly the boundary stone between Bucknall and probably Caverswall or Cheddleton.

The story is that an old man lay dying by the boundary Stone. And the law at the time was that whichever parish he died in was responsible for the cost of his

burial, so he was shunted a few yards from one parish to the next until he died. Another story is that a man named Deman died there. (but these are only stories.)

Looking east from 'Deadmans Grave' there used to be two long huts where an American firm drilled for oil around 1920 but with no success  
The main road from Bucknall to Cellarhead, before Ashbank was opened up around 1750, used to run from the top of Brookhouse Lane along the common to Washerwall Lane, up the southern edge of the common, down past Dead Mans Grave, down what was Lordshire Lane (until all the new houses were built but is now known as Armshead Road), to Withy Stakes, and on to Cellarhead.

### *Jubilee Well*

There is a well in Hulme Lane called Jubilee Well. It had fallen badly into disrepair so it was restored in the early 60's, but people kept throwing rubbish into it so the hedge has been allowed to grow over it now to stop that from happening.

It is dry now but it was not a 'natural well', it was fed by a cast iron pipe that ran from a spring behind the farm house near to called Springfield House.

The spring is still there but the pipe must have corroded away or be blocked now.



The original well was in a field and it was a 'right of way' which meant that by law anyone was entitled to use it. It was on the land of a Thomas Bettaney Brassington, but to stop people from crossing his field he used to lock the gate which meant that no one could use the well.

Mr Smith a local Magistrate lived in Hulme and knew the law, so every Easter he would break the lock off the gate, and go to the well too draw a bucket of water because he knew that by law it had to be used at least once a year or the right to draw water was lost.

So in 1887 partly to celebrate Queen Victoria's Jubilee but also so that people did not need to cross his field Mr Brassington had a well built at the side of the road .

On the well it has the letters V. R. (Victoria Regina) 1887 Presented by T. B. Brassington

#### ***Newspaper article - 1805. A child drowned in Jubilee Well.***

A Doris Bickerton six years of age from Hulme whilst getting water from Jubilee well in Hulme fell in. She was rescued, and Dr. Owen was sent for but on his arrival at Hume Bank he found that the child was deceased.

## Coyney Arms (Candlesticks)

It's said that it got its name 'The Candlesticks' because when electricity first came to Hulme all the houses had electric fitted except the pub which was still lit by candles for ages afterwards.

## Gypsy Lane

Many years ago there was a road that joined Salters Lane to Malthouse Lane that was known as Gypsy Lane because the Gypsies used to camp there when they were in the area.

But over the years it had become overgrown and eventually reduced to just a foot path.

It had been used for at least fifty years as an unofficial footpath, then in 1997 the owner of the land decided to block it off, so we fought it and won, but we did a too good a job, because it is now classed as a 'high way open to all traffic' even though it isn't passable for vehicles

## Cellarhead

There used to be four Public Houses at the cross roads. The Hope and Anchor, The Spotted Cow (changed to the Bowling Green in 1905), The Red Lion opposite, and on the diametrically opposite corner from the Bowling Green The Royal Oak.

Every May and November around the 1850's a fair took place for the sale of cattle and horses etc. and every Monday people came from far and near to watch or join in sporting events that took place so the inns would be packed.

One of the attractions was cock fighting which took place at a place known as Fireman's Rest.

## Red Cow

Its history has been traced back to 1720 when it used to be a Coaching House

## Post Office

The original Post Office and shop is now a hair dressers (next to the new Post Office). The Post Office was closed when the new Post Office was opened in 1960, but the shop stayed open for a number of years. It had been in the same family for over 80yrs.



The original Post Office (Cir 1930)

It was used by the Home Guard during the 2<sup>nd</sup> world war, to store their rifles and ammunition in the cellar.

It was held up at gun point around 1970 by three men from Liverpool. They demanded the keys to the safe but the Post Mistress would not tell them where they were, (she was actually sitting on them).

Before it was the Post Office it was a public house called The Blue Ball which is thought to have closed down around 1890.

### The Windmill

The Windmill which stands at the highest point in Werrington approximately 880 ft (268meters) above sea level, is thought to date from around 1730, and is recognised as the main feature of Werrington, it is also the insignia on the Chain of Office of the Parish Council

The last miller was a Mark Greatbach around 1851. Towards the end of its life it was used for the grinding of coal to make briquette. During the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War it was taken over by the local platoon of the Home Guard, modified, and used as their headquarters, and a lookout post



Original Windmill Pub

It was taken over by the M.E.B. in 1952

The original Windmill Pub was situated in a row of cottages that were demolished long ago, right next to the old windmill

The present Windmill Pub was opened around 1930

### Village Hall



Logo in main hall



Building the Village Hall



Original Village Hall sign

*(Designed by children at Moorside)*

The village hall came about when; in 1930 a local Playing Fields Committee was formed to raise funds to establish recreational facilities in the district. After twelve months work, they had in hand the sum of £18. There was a good deal of correspondence with the local and national Playing Fields Associations and visits of inspection of possible sites by officials and committee.

Progress however, was so tardy and unsatisfactory that the committee decided to abandon the project and to set up a new organisation whose function would be the provision of a Village Hall. This decision was approved at a public meeting held in December, 1931

To the £18 from the Playing Fields Committee was added £15 from another defunct organisation, the Ash Hall Social Club. Draws, concerts, whist drives and other money raising activities saw the fund steadily but surely grow.

Around £30 was raised by the local choir, for carol singing, and in 1935, a printed illustrated appeal was issued and raised around £100.

Early in 1937, it was decided to build. Plans were ready, and were submitted to, and approved by, the National Council of Social Service. They were very helpful and made a grant of £230 and lent £350, free from interest and repayable in five years. (It was repaid in four!)

By this time £650 had been raised of which £75 had been used for the purchase of the site. The foundation stone was laid by Mrs. J. D. Johnstone in July 1937, and the Hall was opened in the following September.

It was designed by the Committee and Mr. Jervis Madew, Architect, and built by Messrs. Baddeley Bros

The building cost just over £1,100 and the furniture about £60. Gifts in kind and labour were valued at £130: these included the stage curtains from the Women's Institute and the stage lighting from the boys of the Approved School.

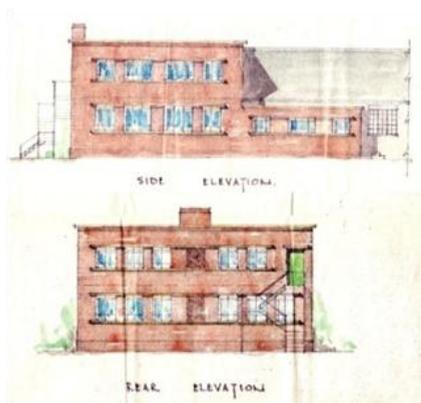
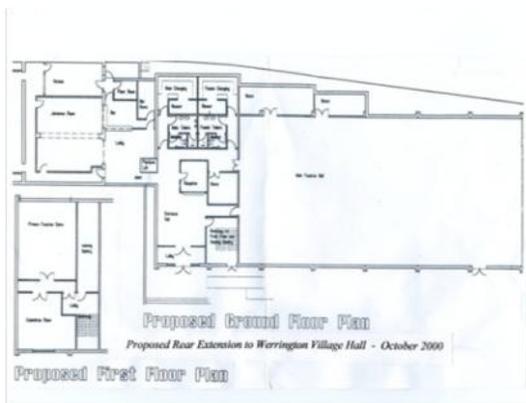
During the War, the hall was used by all of the War organisations for both technical and money raising activities. Since then, it has become the social centre of the district, even housing the Doctors Surgery for several years. It has fulfilled all of the functions for which it was built, and more.

Today, it is used for a whole range of activities including the children's Play-group and meeting place for the local Parish Council. The Committee has met monthly throughout, and its work and personnel are recorded in its minute books.

A rear extension was built around 1955 consisting of a kitchen, and two function rooms, one of which was named the Johnstone Room (with oak panelling all round the room on the walls), in memory of J D Johnstone who was the main instigator behind the building of the hall, and an upper store room.

The biggest alteration since the rear extension was built was when it was found that the hall was having to turn away bookings because the two rooms at the rear were too small, and the main hall was too large for some of the bookings, so the two rooms at the rear were knocked into one in 1996, but there were a couple of problems when this was done.

The building inspector decided that the ground was very unstable, and insisted that the builders went down two meters deep with the concrete that carried the two pillars that supported the roof and floor above, and when the dividing wall was removed it was found that one of the floors was half an inch lower than the other, so a skim of concrete had to be laid to level the floors.



Floor Plan for a rear extension 2000

Plan for a rear extension 1949

*(just two of many plans drawn up over the years for extending the Village Hall)*

The names of the founder members of the hall are recorded in the original Governing Document, they are:-

- Russell Edward Jones*, of Ash Grove, Ash Bank Bucknall. - Meat Inspector;
- Noel Vincent Craddock*, of School Farm, Werrington - Farm Bailiff;
- George William Addison*, of Quinson, Werrington - Retired Printer;
- Eleanor Kirkham*, East Avenue, Ash Bank, Bucknall - Wife of Richard Kirkham;
- Matilda Pace*, of Wayside, of Ash Bank, Bucknall - Wife of Frederick Pace;
- Alice May Weston*, of Bank House Farm, Hulme, - Wife of Sidney Weston;
- George McNicol*, of Torestin, Armshead, Werrington - Quarryman;
- Tom Hothersall*, of Phildor, Armshead, Werrington - Plumber;
- Nellie Johnstone*, of Werrington School, - Wife of Douglas Johnstone;
- Ethel Sheldon*, of Bank Villas, Werrington - Wife of Thomas Sheldon;
- William Woodward*, of Morwin, Werrington - Mill Hand;
- Benjamin Capper*, of Sunnyside, Werrington - Colliery Sawyer
- William Henry Hewitt*, of Ash Grove, Ash Bank, Bucknall - Clerk;
- Frank Ernest Shenton*, of Little Brookhouse Farm, Bucknall - Farmer;
- Thomas Ernest Moore*, of Werrington - School Master;
- Harold George Mayer*, of Cote Hill House, Werrington - Handicraft Instructor

The land for the rear car park was acquired by the Village Hall Committee in 1973 from a John James for £2900, and it was tarmaced in 1979 at a cost of £6640 with the aid of a grant of £3250 from The Department of Education, £1300 from Staffs County Council, and £325 from The District Council.

There have only been eight Chairman of the village Hall in over 65 years:- Douglas Johnson 1938-59, Bill Hewitt 1959-60, Bill Stevenson 1960-64, Roland Hawley 1964-70, Albert Baxter 1970-74, Peter Moulton 1974-90, Jeffery Fal-lows 1990-94, Tony McNicol 1994-2006

## *Methodist Church*

The religious feeling must have been very strong in Werrington because the area was remote and sparsely populated then but there used to be quite a few Chapels.

There has been a Methodist Chapel in Werrington since 1812. There was a Primitive Methodist Chapel at Cellarhead built in 1870 but it is now a glass making business. In fact Werrington has a quite famous connection with English Methodism, because Hugh Bourne the carpenter and builder who founded Primitive Methodism at Mow Cop was born at Ford Hayes Farm in 1772

A chapel known as Mount Zion was built in 1812 at the highest point of the main road on the same side, but a bit further towards Cellarhead than the windmill, (where an electricity substation now is). The main door was right opposite the Mile Stone Marker that is still there. Seat rents in 1873 varied from 9d to 3 shillings & 9d It had some large alterations done in 1878 that cost £145.00.

A Sunday school was built at the side of it in 1868.

The Chapel is thought to have been demolished in the early 1950's

There used to be a Primitive Methodist Chapel along Washerwall Lane almost opposite No.118. . A round 1860 a woman named Emma Sherratt brought it, and paid for it with silver sixpenny bits that she must have saved for years, and converted into a house that was demolished when the houses at Moorland Ave were built.

In 1918 it was decided to start fundraising for a new chapel, and by 1934 the sum of £500 had been raised, so it was decided to increase the fundraising efforts, and so successful were the efforts that on Thursday 3rd September 1937 a stone laying ceremony to place, and the Chapel was opened on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> September 1938.

The new Chapel and school were built, and equipped at a cost of over £5,100

The amount was raised in four years by, £500 already raised, £250 from the sale of the old chapel, £1400 from fund raising, £600 from subscriptions, £850 from stone laying, and opening ceremonies, and the remainder came from Headquarters grants.

## *St Philips Church*

There has been a church in Werrington since the early nineteenth century. Both the Anglican and Methodist traditions have been represented here for nearly two hundred years.

There was a resident clergyman in the area from around 1878, but in the 1890's a Lay Reader was appointed a Mr. Hopkins who carried on until he was ordained as a priest, during that time the idea of building a church was formed, and a working party set up to raise money for it.

The land that the church stands on was a gift from Mr. W. M. Meigh of Ash Hall. The committee applied for a grant of £200 to the 'Bishop's Million Shilling Fund' but it was later withdrawn when it became known that the church was to be dedicated instead of consecrated, so the vicar of Wetley Rocks the Rev. E. H. Nash stepped in and provided the £200.

The foundation stone was laid by the Countess of Harrowby on the 6<sup>th</sup> September 1906. The following June the church was dedicated by the Bishop of Lichfield. There was a dept of £700, and a Mr. W. E. Bowers of Caverswall Castle offered to give the last £100 to encourage the efforts to raise the money.

The church was built from stone from the local quarries, except the stone for the windows which is Hollington stone. Messrs Godwin built it, and Messrs Scrivener & Sons were the architects.

The services were taken using a small harmonium at first, but once the church was free from debts plans were put in place to acquire an organ, which was helped by a grant from the Carnegie Trust of half the cost towards the organ

It required special efforts from such a small community to build, and equip such a large church. The whole cost was raised by sales of work, and subscriptions, except for the sums already mentioned, and some small gifts.

The church at Caverswall gave the altar, and the lectern and pulpit were provided by the Industrial School staff and boys. The Industrial School used to give £100 a year to the church on condition that there was a resident curate there.

A white marble memorial tablet was placed in the church in 1921 in memory of the local men that died in the First World War.

### Schools

Before State education came into being parents from Werrington had to send their children to either Caverswall or Wetley Rocks.

However there were three schools in Werrington, a Farm House near to where the Y.O.I. now is which was also used for night classes which for sixpence a week taught the Three R's, and one in the stone cottages that stands back from the main road near to the Windmill Pub. It was run by a Samuel Cooper who was said to be a good Schoolmaster, but liked a drink; it was believed that he tended to favour pupils whose parents also liked a drink, It is said that he had a stick that he called 'tinker' which he hung on a hook by the door, and when a boy left the room he had to take the stick with him, and put it back again when he returned, but I do not know why.

Also a School in an old stone house at the side of what is now the Chip Shop There was also a School at Withy Stakes which was kept by a Mrs. Edwine Hasle who charged three pence a pupil. per week. The School in Salters Lane which was the 'Caverswall, Hulme, and Werrington County Primary School, later known as the County School. Then Salters Lane School; was built in 1878 by the School Board of Caverswall. It catered for children of all ages until Cellarhead County Modern School was opened in 1939 (now known as Moorside High School) then children over eleven years of age went to the new School.

For many years there were no facilities in Werrington to hold church services so when the new School was opened the Vicar of Caverswall used to hold his services in it on Sundays, and it was known as the Werrington Mission. Portable church furniture was used, alter, pulpit, communion table etc. and the desks were used as pews. The old school is now used as a base for the Ranger service.

Many years ago the Parish Council looked at the possibility of purchasing the school to use as a community centre, but decided against it because it required too much to be spent on it, and it was down a narrow lane with no pavements.

### *The YOI*

The YOI as it is now known was established in 1868 as an 'Industrial School' in what was a farm house with two adjacent cottages, also a barn that had been used as a 'chapel of ease' in which the vicar of Caverswall had held his services, was incorporated into it

It was a Mr J.E.Davis, Stipendiary Magistrate for the Potteries who first came up with the idea of an Industrial School, supported by a Mr James Edwards who gave £200 to help to get it established.

It was first opened in January 1870 with just two boys and was managed by a Mr Benjamin Horth with his wife Emily as Matron until he retired in 1911.

By 1881 it had 104 inmates from all around the area; including a Samuel Sumner age 14 from Werrington.

It was controlled by the Potteries Quarter Sessions until the new Staffordshire County Council took over the running of it in 1889.

It became the responsibility of a newly formed Staffordshire Education Committee in 1902, a sub committee of which took charge of the administration .

The school was called an Industrial School until the Children's Act in 1933 changed Industrial to Approved.

By about 1945 it had an intake of around 120 boys from young juveniles up to the age of 15 yr

The industrial school was purchased by the Prison Commissioners in 1955

In 1957 it was opened as a Senior Detention Centre. After the Criminal Justice Act was implemented in 1982 it became a Youth Custody Centre, and then it became a Juvenile Centre in 1988.

At the turn of the century it had 106 inmates  
By 2004 it had a capacity for 140 boys aged between 15 and 17 yrs.  
It has been enlarged quite a lot over the last few years and by 2008 it accommodated 160 inmates aged 15 to 18 yrs.

### *Meigh Road Playing Fields*

The area of land that is now the Meigh Road estate and the Playing fields was sold on the 10<sup>th</sup> May 1923 by Anite Maria Meigh, William Alfred Meigh and Walter Henry Meigh, to Ernest James. The area of land that is now the Playing Fields was sold to Elijah Cotton Ltd. by George and Ann James 7<sup>th</sup> January 1943

The Playing Fields, consisting of 9.5 acres were a 'deed of gift' to Caverswall Parish Council on 10th April 1972 by Elijah Cotton Ltd. on the understanding that the Council shall not allow the land or any part of it to be used for any purpose other than that of a public recreation ground open to the inhabitants of Werrington, and shall not erect any building on the land without the permission of the donor, other than that of a single story pavilion of a type suitable to a public recreation ground or any other additional single story building of an ancillary nature.

### *Armshead Quarry*

My father used to be the Forman at the quarry along Armshead, and when I was a lad I used to go along sometimes during the school holidays to help the men to quarry the stone.



*Workers outside the drying shed*



*The quarry from Armshead Rd.*



*A truck being hauled up the gully*

It was 'blasted' out from the rock face, whilst they were blasting a man had to go onto Armshead Rd, and stop the traffic (although there weren't a lot of cars in those days) because small pieces of rock would sometimes land on the rd. After it had been blasted out the stone was loaded into small railway trucks, which were then hauled up a gully from the quarry by a steel rope connected to a winch engine into the drying shed at the top of the slope



*Workers in the quarry*

The stone was then piled onto some very large - long metal plates, which had a fire underneath them & then left there until it was dry. It was then put into a machine with large metal rollers which crushed it into very small stones, then into another machine of the same kind which crushed it Into Sand

The sand was then shovelled into a storage bay until a lorry came to collect it, the lorry reversed right up to the storage bay, then the sand was shovelled onto the back of the lorry (the storage bay was situated so that it was higher than the backs of the lorries, so the men could shovel the sand 'down' onto the back of the lorry), it was then taken to Harrison's in Lichfield St. Hanley for making pottery.

There was also another very long shed running east to west that was used for the making of paving stones and concrete ornaments, (a few of which I still have around my yard), and a very small 'hut' near to the big rock but away from any of the buildings, that was used for the storing of the dynamite for blasting.

See *Werrington.org* web site ([Armshead Quarry](http://Armshead Quarry)) for photos

The quarry was closed down in April 1954, and has been filled in with refuse, and then levelled out so that you cannot tell that there was ever a quarry there now. I estimate that the height from the top of the quarry to the bottom would be approximately 40ft

This was one of at least two quarries that were in Werrington, another being situated in Washerwall, at the bottom of the Moor.

### **Wetley Moor**

Wetley Moor is an ancient area of Common Land and Lowland Heathland with open public access, lying to the north of the village of Werrington, and about 4 miles east of the 'Potteries'. A striking feature of the Moor is its high elevation which allows for uninterrupted views over Werrington to the South, the Potteries to the West, the Wrekin and Welsh mountains to the South West, to the North West Biddulph Moor, and the Roaches, Hen Cloud and Leek to the Northeast.

On the 1775 William Yates map the moor is much larger and manorial records etc. suggest that it could actually have consisted of some 5.000 acres, and lay within a number of manors such as Weston Coyney, Dilhorne, Caverswall, Cheddleton, and even Bucknall, but most of the manor records have been lost.

Once remote, the common is now close to large populated areas attracting visitors, both local and further afield, and is now an area of land surrounded by agricultural land, and provides an environment that attracts many passing birds

The current area of the Moor is about 173 acres (69 hectares) of open common, and about 90 acres (36 hectares) of enclosed plots

About 70% of Britain's Lowland Heathland has been lost in the last 200yrs. so Wetley Moor represents a rare, and threatened habitat, and is important because Britain holds approximately 20% of Europe's Heathland.

Two thirds of Wetley moor lies on lower lying coal measures which give rise to a wet peaty type soil, and is one of the largest areas of lowland heath in the

Midlands, moreover it is especially valuable since most of it is 'wet heath', a type of habitat now found very rarely in the County, and the vegetation consists of Heather, Purple Moor Grass, Mosses, Soft Rush, and Cotton Grass.

The lower ground to the south of the moor consists mainly of coal measures, and shale, this gives rise to heavy waterlogged ground

The higher ground at the eastern part of the moor occupies about one third of the moor, and consists of mainly Millstone Grit Rocks giving a free draining sandy soil, ideal for Heather, Gorse, Bilberry, and Wavy Hair Grass.

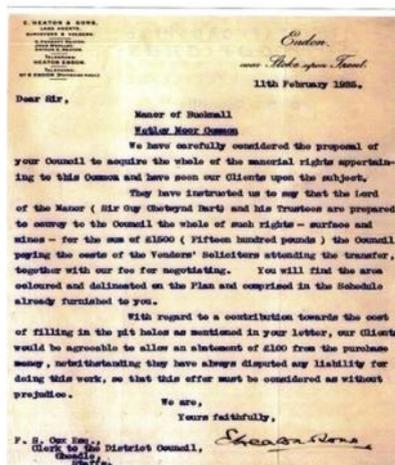
About 173 acres (70 hectares) has been designated as being a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) because of its Lowland Heathland, (SSSI status is land of high nature conservation value in England and Wales) and represents approximately 10% of the Heathland in Staffordshire.

Areas of Heathland date from Neolithic times when trees were cleared on poor soils, and then cattle allowed to graze so restricting the growth of trees and the areas become dominated by heather and grasses.

At one time the Moor must have been a dangerous place for travellers, not just because of 'robbers' but because it is riddled with old pit shafts, and stone pits, and it is said to have been frequented by 'undesirables' and robberies were not infrequent, even murders were known to have taken place

Many farmers on their way back home to Bucknall etc. from the markets were Waylaid, and relieved if their takings and it is said that there was a gang who specialised in this.

It is said that a Rev. E Powys the Rector of Bucknall was riding over the moor one day when his horse stumbled, and he was thrown over it's head, and when he got up his horse was nowhere to be seen. It had fallen down an old sixty foot deep mine shaft.



*A copy of the document for the offer of sale for Wetley Moor*

Stone to build St Philips Church was quarried from the moor; also the stone to build the Abbey at Abbey Hulton was almost certainly from the quarries on the moor.

Bilberries and Blackberries can be found on the moor. Wildlife known to have frequented the Moor are Linnet, Skylarks, Woodpecker, Reed Bunting, Woodcock, snipe, Stonechat, Raven, Grasshopper Warblers, Kestrels, Curlew, Sparrow-Hawk, Wagtails, Partridge, Meadow Pipits, and Barn-Owls, but there is not a lot of wild life on the moor now mainly due to walkers, dogs, and horse riders disturbing it and scaring it away

Cotton plants once grew on the moor, they were said to have been introduced by two 'Weryton Worthies' who had served with the British Army in America during the war of independence.

Most of Wetley Moor is between 750-900ft (227-273m) above sea level, one of the highest points in Staffordshire except at its highest point which is near to the 'big rock' which is approximately 940ft. (284m) also there is a 'Triangulation Marker stone' (Trig Marker) approximately 500ft (150m) to the West of the big rock that was an Ordinance Survey reference point, but is obsolete now due to modern technology

There is documented evidence of grazing on the moor up to the 1970's with at east 70 cows being let out to graze

Wetley Moor Common was offered for sale to Cheadle District Council by the Lord of the Manor (Sir Guy Chetwynd Bart) and his Trustees on the 11th February 1925 for the sum of £1500.

In 1928 the 'ownership' of Wetley Moor Common was transferred to the joint ownership of the City of Stoke-on-Trent, and the Rural District of Cheadle, (now Staffordshire Moorlands District Council) and a Wetley Moor Joint Committee was set up as custodians of the moor consisting of 6 elected councillors from each authority, who are responsible for the management and control of moor.

In 1975 there was a serious fire that destroyed a large area of the moor, and its heather.

The area known as Dead Mans Grave at the junction of Armshead Rd. and Draw-Well Lane was still moorland as late as 1925. (but no longer part of the Moor).

### *History*

In Mediaeval times much of the land was owned by the Lord of the Manor, and it would seem likely that the Moor was managed, and disputes settled by the Lord of the Manor as land owner. Ordinary cottagers however enjoyed a variety of rights over common land, such as the right to graze their animals or to gather wood or cut turf etc. for fuel, and these rights enshrined in law were held 'in common' by the villagers.

Established references to Wetley Moor are linked to Abbey Hulton in 1220

The earliest known record of enclosure of the moor dates from 1226 in the form of a grant of 5.5 acres of waste in the ‘Wythemor’ along side his land by a William, Abbot of Hulton to a Henry Smith, and indicates that in the 13th Century the moor was considerably more extensive than it is today.

A Rev. Thomas Loxdale in 1735 stated that in the ‘Parochial Antiquities of Staffordshire’ that “Wetley Moor included all of the Hulme, and lay open to Caverswall, and Cuney”.

Records state that in 1540 ‘forty and over, riotous and evil disposed persons with force and arms in a manor of war, did break and enter into waste ground or moor called Watley More being parcel of the manor of Chedylton’

There are records of legal proceedings with reference to similar ‘forays’ concerning ‘Wetley More’ and neighbouring manors.

Other references to the Moor suggest that it was a wild and desolate place occasionally frequented by ‘undesirables’ and was not a safe place for lone travellers.

In 1529 it was recorded that the manor called Wetley Moor covered approximately 1000 acres of which approximately 320 acres to the south were part of the Manor of Weston Coyney and known as ‘Weston Moor’ and the other 680 acres to the North was part of the Manor of Caverswall.

In 1689 a Captain Parker (probably of Weston Coyney) quarried Millstone Grit for building material, and in 1925 fire-clay was extracted at ‘Moorside’ on the moor.

Case law relating to the exercise of residual rights by the owner of common land after the commoners have been satisfied.

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The case of Arlett v Ellis 1827 “The Lord has rights of his own reserved upon the waste; I do not say subservient to, but concurrent with the rights of the commoners, and when it is ascertained that there is more common than is necessary for the cattle of the commoners, the Lord it seems to me, is entitled to take that for his own purposes.  
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Over time however the moor has been steadily reclaimed until it has reached its present size of about 265 acres. It has played an important role in the local economy providing grazing for the animals, also turves and wood for fuel etc.

Other collieries known to have been in the vicinity of the moor were Bridle Path colliery in the south west corner, Moorside colliery further east and towards the centre, and Kerry Hill colliery immediately to the north-west of the present moor boundary.

It was recorded as early as 1689 that stone was being quarried on the moor for the construction of buildings, an activity that continued as late as the Second World War, and stone was quarried for cruising into sand and casting of slabs and stone ornaments at Armshead Quarry at the Northern edge of the moor until about 1955

The Quarry has now been filled in with refuse, so that you cannot tell that the quarry was ever there except for the big rock that was right above the quarry, and the 'gully' where the railway lines on which the trucks ran that were loaded with stone, and then hauled up to the drying shed is still just visible.

During the 18th century coal was mined at a mine known as Handley Hayes Colliery, and during the late 19th, and the early 20th centuries a lot of the area of Wetley Moor was fenced off, and claimed by the cottagers for agricultural purposes, and some plots mainly around the edges of the moor were enclosed, and built on, and that steady encroachment has reduced the moor to what it is today.

A lot of amateur and professional miners sank pit shafts on the moor during the coal strikes of 1921 and 1926 and extracted hundreds of tons of coal. The old shafts known as Bell Pits of which there are approximately 60 or more are scattered over certain parts of the moor, and animals have been known to fall into them. Most of the coal mining occurred in the south-west quarter evidence of which is the number of disused bell pits, and mine shafts in this region.

There has been no mining of any consequence on the moor since 1926

People used to cut grass for thatching or for bedding for their animals, also rushes for thatching.

It's said that Gypsies used to camp on the edge of the moor at Armshead, and there is a story that in about 1890 a boy named William Gordon fell in love with a young gypsy girl, and when the Gypsies moved on he disappeared, and was never heard of again.

If you stood at the top of the Moor, up to a few years ago you could still distinguish the route of the old main road at the southern edge of the moor which ran from Bucknall to Cellarhead, until Ash Bank Road was opened around 1765.

### *Present Day*

The number of commoners that had the rights to graze animals on the moor has slowly decreased until there is now only one left, (Nathan Dale from Brookhouse Lane) so the vegetation and therefore the character of the moor has changed a lot and the moor is now under threat from Silver Birch, and coarse grasses leading to a loss of heather, and if left would probably become a wood in time.

Development on the moor is not an option, because permission would be required from the Secretary of State, and could only be granted if the development was to the benefit of the neighbourhood, and after consultation with the residents of the area surrounding the moor.

In 2000 it was proposed by the Wetley Moor Joint Committee to fence boundary gaps in an area of 10 hectares of the Moor at Kerry Hill and introduce cattle for a trial period of five years to control the Purple Moor Grass which is choking the heather to see if it would help the heather to re-establish itself.

There was a lot of opposition to the idea of fencing, and a public inquiry was held in 2001. The inspector at the inquiry decided that some of the boundary fencing of the surrounding properties was not adequate and would need to be replaced before the trial could go ahead; the Secretary of State picked up on this, and decided that the application should be refused.

There still remains a need to control the grass but how this is to be achieved is still to be resolved, so the idea is still under consideration whilst the Moor in deteriorating even further.

It has been decided recently to dissolve the present Wetley Moor Joint Committee, and a new committee has been set up from different organisations involved in the moor to look after it, although SMDC & Stoke-on-Trent will still have overall joint control.

### *Murder on the Moor - June 1841*

The victim was a poor man upwards of 60 yrs of age named William Hewitt, a former collier

The body was discovered by John Holland, a labourer, of Eaves Lane, who was going to collect sand for a house that he was building, at around 7.00am last Sunday morning June 19<sup>th</sup> in a stone pit on the moor about 200yds from the road side, and about half a mile distant from his house.

It was lying on its back with its head resting on a rock, and having two deep head wounds. The body was described by Holland as being stiff and cold. The Constable was called..

The body had been seen laying there on the Saturday evening by some young women walking from Lane End, but they had just thought that the old man was drunk.

There were several severe wounds upon different parts of his head from which a quantity of blood had flowed, evidently inflicted by a blunt instrument, his left trouser pocket had been cut off and his purse was missing. In his right pocket there was one shilling and sixpence, and four pence in copper. Later when the jury examined the pit they concluded that there did not appear to be signs of a struggle having taken place.

The body was recognised as that of William Hewitt that lead a mendicant life, sleeping in the open or where he could find shelter with friends after his small hut that he had built on the common at Armshead had been pulled down by unknown parties whilst he was serving time in prison with his brother for stealing fowl.

He was described as being 'frugal and disreputable' and had last been seen alive on the Saturdays morning at about ten o'clock sitting on the moor by a clod fire, and the man later suspected of his murder was near him.

A stone was found nearby about 5 inches across concealed amongst other stones, much stained with blood, and having human hair on it,

The body was conveyed to a nearby public house in the neighbourhood.

The surgeon that examined the body determined that Hewitt had been beaten with a stone, and that his death could not have been caused by a fall as the cause of death was a fractured skull caused by two heavy blows to the back of the head.

The inquest was held on the Tuesday at the Dog & Partridge public house, Wetley Moor. Robbery appeared to be the motive as the victim was known to have had a large quantity of silver and sovereigns on his person that he no longer had when found.

From evidence given suspicion fell on a William Simpson, who was living with his mother on the moor, a labourer of about thirty years of age, and of intemperate habits, who was apprehended on the Sunday morning shortly after ten o'clock at Bucknall in an empty fodder bin, sleeping off the effect of the previous nights drinking, by Samuel Allin, the constable of Bucknall.

When apprehended a purse was found in his possession which has been recognised by one of the witnesses as belonging to the deceased, also a waistcoat identified as belonging to the prisoner was found to have fresh blood on the left sleeve. When asked how the blood had got there Simpson claimed that he had a nose bleed in his cell, but there were no signs of blood on the new straw that he had slept on.

From witness statements it was established that the accused had been seen in Hanley with a large quantity of money on his person, buying clothes, retrieving a jacket from William Hill, pawnbroker, that he had pledged on the 7th April for fourteen shillings paying off a debt, and buying a smock frock for eight shillings, also he had met an old drinking companion named Lunn, and offered to lend him a shilling.

When the prisoner was asked what he had to say he said "I have this to say, the last time that I saw him was on Friday night, and about having the money, I had it off Mr. Hall, a timber merchant at Newcastle, and I have nothing more to say"

His mother gave evidence at the inquest and was hysterical as she realised that if he was charged with murder he faced death by hanging.

The jury returned a verdict of wilful murder, and the prisoner was subsequently committed for trial at the ensuing Stafford Assizes.

### *The trial for murder of William Simpson - July 1841*

In those days ordinary people could not afford lawyers, so at the trial the following month Simpson conducted his own defence, and he was to demonstrate some skill in self advocacy.

The odds were stacked against him, and the prosecution made great play that the evidence was circumstantial, but put strong arguments why they believed that Simpson was guilty

The only evidence that seemed to help Simpson is witness's inconsistency over the material and ownership of the purse that Simpson had on him when arrested, and there was an inconclusive attempt to link the purse to Hewitt. All that Sampson said in his defence was, I am as innocent of the charge as an unborn child, I have no witness here as I know of.

The jury took only 10 minutes to reach a verdict, and found the defendant 'not guilty. There was astonishment in the crowded court, and even the Judge was unprepared for such a result.

However it does not end there. Simpson went on a heavy drinking bout in the pubs around Stafford on the night of his acquittal, and whilst drunk ranted and raved, and was heard by Constable Thomas Stone of Bagnall to say "I will never kill another man, if I had killed him, if Lunn had gone with me to Kingsley Wakes I should have taken the six sovereigns, and should have hanged, and nothing would have saved me. He was rearrested, and a trial date fixed for the following March.

The following spring Simpson faced the lesser crimes of manslaughter and robbery. The trial was played out again with little new evidence, and again Simpson was found not guilty of murder, whilst admitting that he had taken the purse from Hewitt's corpse.

A third trial was a formality, and was over in minutes. Simpson was found guilty of robbery and was sentenced to be transported to Australia for seven years.

### *Darby and Joan*

The first meeting took place at the Village Hall on 25<sup>th</sup> October 1950 with just a handful of members. The clubs aim was to provide a fortnightly meeting of the senior citizens in Werrington to get together and socialise for a couple of hours.

The club was formed by a small group of ladies from the village who raised funds by baking and selling cakes, organising raffles etc. and donations. The first recorded donation in the accounts was for ten shillings from J D Johnstone.

In 1953 a Coronation Party was held, and a coronation mug presented to each member. (Corned beef sandwiches, cakes, and trifles were served for afternoon tea), Day trips, concerts, and dances were organised, and an annual visit to the local pantomime (seats cost 4 shillings and sixpence each) was organised.

In 1958 the first 'package holiday' was arranged, - 41 members enjoyed a week in Clifftonville at a cost of four guineas each.

The club celebrated its Golden Anniversary in 2000, and a commemorative mug was presented to each member. Afternoon tea was provided for 10 members

### W.I.

The Werrington Woman's Institute was formed on the 9<sup>th</sup> January 1923. Meetings were first held at the School in Salters Lane, and the first president was Mrs Johnstone

It is understood that the members had to carry lanterns to light their way down the lane. (This is depicted on the original W.I. banner). The W.I. were one of the first groups to hire a room at the Village Hall.

Various fund raising activities were held to help local causes. A bench was donated to the village in the 1930's and placed near the cross roads, also jam was made during the war.

Various classes, such as Art, Flower arranging, Dancing, there was also a Drama Group that put on plays, and concerts.

For a number of years some functions were held at Werrington House (Detention Centre Hall). The Spring Fayre, Bring and Buy events, and coffee evenings. Members also made tea for the visitors to the Detention Centre, and days out were organised by the social committee.

The Institute celebrated its golden jubilee in 1973 and a small dish was presented to the members.

### A pony named Dolly

In October 1943 a farmer, Mr. Sydney Weston jokingly remarked to another farmer from Stallington that he fancied a few days holiday in Blackpool, and that he would travel there in his pony and trap.

The farmer Mr. William Carter was sceptical that the pony could even get to Blackpool, but Mr. Weston said that it could, and that he could also do it in less than twenty four hours.

Mr. Carter said that in his opinion such a feat could not be done, so a wager of £100 to £80 against it being achieved within the time was made, and was accepted by Mr. Weston.



*Dolly & Company*

The pony was named Dolly; she was six years old, and stood between 11 and 12 hands high. Dolly left Werrington at 2.30 pm on the Saturday afternoon pulling a light trap carrying Mr. Weston, and his friend Mr. Alfred Adams

An employee of Mr. Carter Mr. Reginald Brown rode behind the trap on a bicycle, thought to have been loaned to him by Werrington's local Policeman, P.C. Whitehouse (more commonly known as Bobby Whitehouse) to act as an umpire. (The feat of Mr. Brown must have been almost as a feat of endurance as that of the Pony). Dolly was fed and watered (she was also given barley wine & whiskey) during the trip, and was allowed four rests of between half, and two and a half hours. During the rests she was wrapped in a blanket to keep her warm.

Dolly settled the issue by trotting past Blackpool's Central Station at 11.15 am on the Sunday morning having completed the journey in twenty and three quarter hours. All three men and Dolly returned by train on the Monday.

It created a lot of interest in Werrington and the surrounding area, and a lot of bets were placed on the outcome. Dolly died around 1964 at the age of 27yrs.

### **More Recent Werrington History**

#### **Burial Ground**

All the villages surrounding Werrington have a burial ground. Werrington has two churches but no burial ground so in 1994 after public demand the Parish Council looked at the possibility of providing a burial ground for Werrington.

A number of sites were identified, tested, and found to be suitable but none of the owners would sell any land to the Council, compulsory purchase was considered but a lot of the Councillors were against that so the idea never materialised

#### **Present Schools**

There were two schools in Werrington, Saltway Junior, and Werrington Infants presided over by a joint Governing Body, but in August 1995 whilst I was Chair it was decided to close Werrington Infants School in Russell Grove and move the children to Saltway junior school in Washerwall Lane because of falling pupil numbers.

It was debated whether to call the amalgamated school Werrington or Saltway County Primary School. It was an even split between the Governors, so as Chair I had the casting vote, and I voted for Werrington, so it is now called Werrington County Primary School.

## **Shops in Werrington in the mid 1990's.**

Top of Ashbank Ash Wines - Brea Balti, Restaunt - Fallows G, Family Butcher (211) - Four Seasons, Fruit. Veg & Flower Shop (213) - Quality Butchers (215) - Welsh & Arthur, Newsagents (217)

Washerwall Lane - John & Cathy's, Off-Licence - Spar, Supermarket - Just Jeff's. Hair Dressers.

Johnstone Ave. Davenport A & M, Newsagent - Baddeley, Haberdashery - - Connoisseurs, Delicatessen. - Inspirations - Joanne, Hair Fashions - Gwen's Greens, Fruit & Veg – Brian Roberts Butchers - Burgess A & L, Pet foods and hardware.

Between Draw-Well Lane and Johnstone Ave Bevvy Corner, Off- licence and Video shop - Country Kitchen, Bakery - Snooker Sports North



Bellway Homes (Oak Mount Rd.) Est.— Taken from Draw-Well Lane 2nd April 1992

### **When I was a youngster**

There is a stone marker in my neighbours hedge, which when we were children we believed was the headstone of the man said to have been waylaid and murdered here, from which the area gets its name 'dead man's grave', but it is actually an old boundary stone, probably between the parishes of Bucknall and Caverswall.

We used to have a bonfire on the edge of the common nearly every year when we were kids, near to where the picnic area is now, and in the summer we used to play cricket and football there.

The common was our play ground; we seemed to spend most of our holidays playing there during the summer.

We used to build 'gang huts' on the common by the side of the nursery, and there was an old bus where somebody used to live, in a field near to the nursery, (where Kaydor Close is now

One day we 'borrowed' a couple of spades from a hut by the side of the bus to build a gang hut, intending to put them back after we had finished with them before the people that lived there came home, but the owner returned before we had

finished, must have discovered that his spades were missing, heard our voices, and came to investigate. Realised that we had got his spades, loaded all four of us into the back of his van and took us down to the Police House opposite Ashbank Garage, where we ended up bending over and having 'six of the best', but we didn't 'borrow' any more spades after that.

We once lit a fire at the side of our 'gang hut' to make ourselves a cup of tea, but the fire spread, and set the common on fire. The fire brigade came and put it out before it spread too much. They never find out it that we started it, but we didn't make any more cuppers after that.

We also broke some branches off a tree once to build a gang hut, the owner told the Police, the Police came to my house and told me off and told my father so my father gave me a 'good hiding' as well

There is a large rock at the 'top' of the common that I believe is now known as 'dead man's rock' but when I was a lad it was just known as the big rock

My sister told me that she has sat on Wetley Moor Common at nearly midnight in the summer during the war and watched the sun set when they had double summer time.

When I was a lad we seemed to have very heavy snow falls every winter, and most winters Lordshire Lane (now known as Armshead Rd.) was blocked with snow drifts at some stage during the winter and there has been quite a few times over the years that the drifts were so deep at the junction with Draw-well Lane (known as Deadmans grave) that we have built 'dens' in the drifts that have lasted for days until the a snow plough has managed to clear a way through.

When I was about 15, I sometimes drove my father's car up the back lane and down the side of the common to Washerwall to buy things from Mifflin's or Dales shops on Washerwall lane. It was only a cart track, but there is now no sign that it ever existed

I remember that one winter morning about 1964/ 65 it had snowed for most of the night and the next morning the wind was still blowing very hard, and I could only see about 10yds.down the lane. I managed to clear my yard enough to get the car out to go to work in those days you went to work no matter what the weather..

I could not see much at all down Lordshire Lane due to the wind still blowing the snow very hard, I knew that there would be some drifts across the road, but I thought that they shouldn't be too bad.

So if I take a good run at them with a bit of luck I should be able to force my way through, so I put my foot down, and started off down the lane. I got about 20yds, and then came to a sudden stop, I had hit a snow drift, I couldn't reverse out again, so I had to leave the car there, and go back home.

Later on in the day after the wind had dropped I went to try to dig my car out, and with the help of a farmer who had somehow managed to get through with his tractor by cutting across the fields, (there were no housing estates then) we managed to tow it out.

When I looked at the drift there was an almost perfect impression of the front end of my car (a Morris 1000) embedded in the drift.

### *Family History*

My family came from Liverpool to Stoke-on-Treat in about 1840. They were living in Hot Lane Burslem in 1840. My Grandfather was born in Norton in 1874 and my father in Longton in 1900. His sister was born at No. 31 Washerwall Lane in 1910, and two brothers one in 1914, and one in 1916, which means that my Grandfather must have moved to Werrington some time between 1900 and 1910, and my family have lived here ever since.

My Grandfather built a bungalow on the edge of the Common at Washerwall where he lived until he died in 1952. My father married and lived along Armshead, then moved to a house, which had a well in the garden, at side of the Red Cow, (there is a new bungalow there now), he then moved into a bungalow in Draw-Well Lane in 1932, which is where I still live.

### *My father – George McNicol*

My father was a member the NFS (National Fire Service) and the AFS (Auxiliary Fire Service) during the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War, because he was too young to serve in the 1<sup>st</sup> world war, and too old to serve in the 2<sup>nd</sup> world war, (He was born 1900).

I remember my elder sister telling me how my father almost froze to death one night. It was in the winter and it had snowed all day He was walking home from the Hope and Anchor Public House at Cellarhead, and got almost to the top of Lordshire Lane (now known as Armshead Rd), when he got stuck in a snow drift.

It was getting late, and he hadn't arrived home so my mother and one of my sisters went to see if they could see him, but they could only get a short way down the lane because the drifts were so bad.

They could not see him, but they could just hear him shouting for help. So they somehow managed to get word to the local bobby, and somehow he managed to get a gang of men together, so they went down the lane and managed to dig my father out, but he was so frozen that he couldn't walk so they had to carry him home over the drifts.

When they finally managed to get him home he was covered in frozen snow, and had icicles hanging from his coat so they had to put him in front of the fire until he had thawed out again.

My father told me that one winter the snow was so bad that he had to walk down to Brookhouse Lane with a sledge to collect the milk and bread because the main road was blocked.

The drifts were so deep that in places he was walking above the tops of telegraph poles. He took my elder sister, and brother with him, with them walking in front, all tied together by a rope.

My sister was the lightest so she was in the lead, then my brother pulling the sledge and then my father, if the drifts held my sisters weight, my brother went over them, pulling the sledge, and then my father. The idea was that if either of them fell into a drift my father would be able pull them out again, but if he fell in they might not be able to pull him out, but if the drift held their weight, and the sledge, then it would probably hold him.

My father used to tell me about what it was like living in the countryside during the war. Country folk were a lot better off than people living in the towns and Cities because people were allowed to keep animals for food, but the animals had to be 'registered' with the Government, so that when they were killed the authorities could 'claim' their share of the animals.

So my father used to keep three pigs, and he had an 'arrangement' with the man that killed them and the local bobby, (Bobby Whitehouse) so that only two of the pigs were 'registered' then when they were killed the three of them shared one of the pigs between them

.We quite often had sides of pork hanging up in the hallway from large hooks set in the ceiling, and I have played football many a time with a blown up pigs bladder.

I only took the 'Anderson type shed' down where the pigs were killed in about 1980, which had still got a 'channel' in the floor so that the blood could run away into the drains.

He used to keep, Pigs, Hens, Goats, and Geese, and he used to grow all kinds of vegetables such as peas, carrots, potatoes, cabbage, sprouts, etc. so we were never short of eggs or chicken or vegetables etc. for dinner.

He had blackcurrant, redcurrant, and gooseberry bushes, strawberries, and rhubarb. Also a large greenhouse where he used to grow tomatoes, and cucumbers, and it had a grape vine in it so we had plenty of grapes to eat in the summer.

He also had an 'arrangement' with a bus conductor on Proctors buses that he used to 'trade' eggs or vegetables etc for cigarettes, and tobacco, and there was always the local farmers that he could 'acquire' apples, pears, milk and sometimes a rabbit from.

So the country folk lived a far healthier life than those in the towns because they didn't really go short of much in the way of food, except perhaps cheese or butter, and even those he could sometimes get from the local farmers.

The one thing that he could not get except on the very rare occasion was bananas



*Photos of the old Windmill & the original Windmill Pub*



*The Post Office (Cir 1930)*



*The Post Office Cir. (1920)*



*The A52 looking from the Post Office towards what is now the Chip shop (Cir 1928).*



*The A52 looking towards the Post Office from the entrance to the YOI (Cir.1952)*



Looking up Draw-Well Lane from Deadmans Grave



Looking Down Draw-Well Lane towards Deadmans Grave



Looking up Lordshire Lane towards Deadmans Grave



Cir 2000

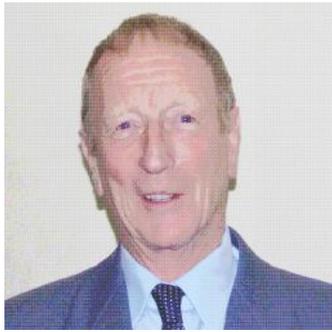


Looking down Arm head Road towards Deadmans Grave



Lordshire Lane Cir 1958

Cir 1958



### *About me*

My Grandfather came to live at 31 Washerwall Lane around 1908 and my family have lived in Werrington ever since

I was born in the bungalow where I still live. I attended Wetley Rocks Infants School, and then Moorside High.

I have been Chairman of the Parish Council, Village Hall Committee, and School Board of Governors all at the same time for five years (no one has ever been chairman of all three, let alone at the same time and for five years).

I have served on Werrington Parish Council since 1991, and been its chairman on eight occasions, (once for five years in succession)

I served on the Werrington School board of governors for 10yrs. and was Chairman from March 1995 until September 2001 (6.5 Yrs)

I have been a member of the Village Hall Management Committee since 1991. & was Chairman for 12 years.

I have been a District Councillor for the Cellarhead/Windmill ward since 2003 and had the honour of being Chairman of the Staffs Moorlands District Council in 2008/2009

*Tony Mearns*