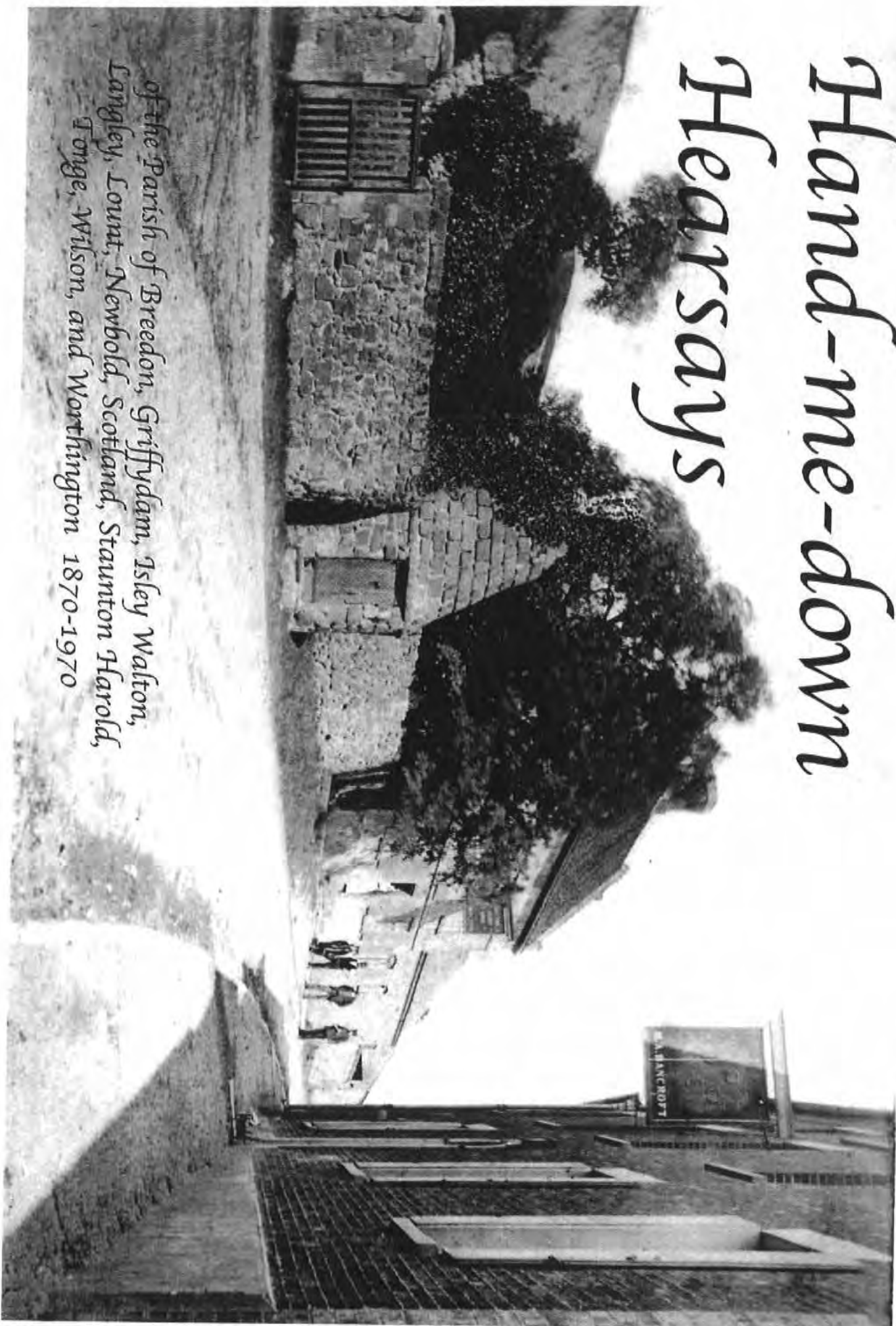
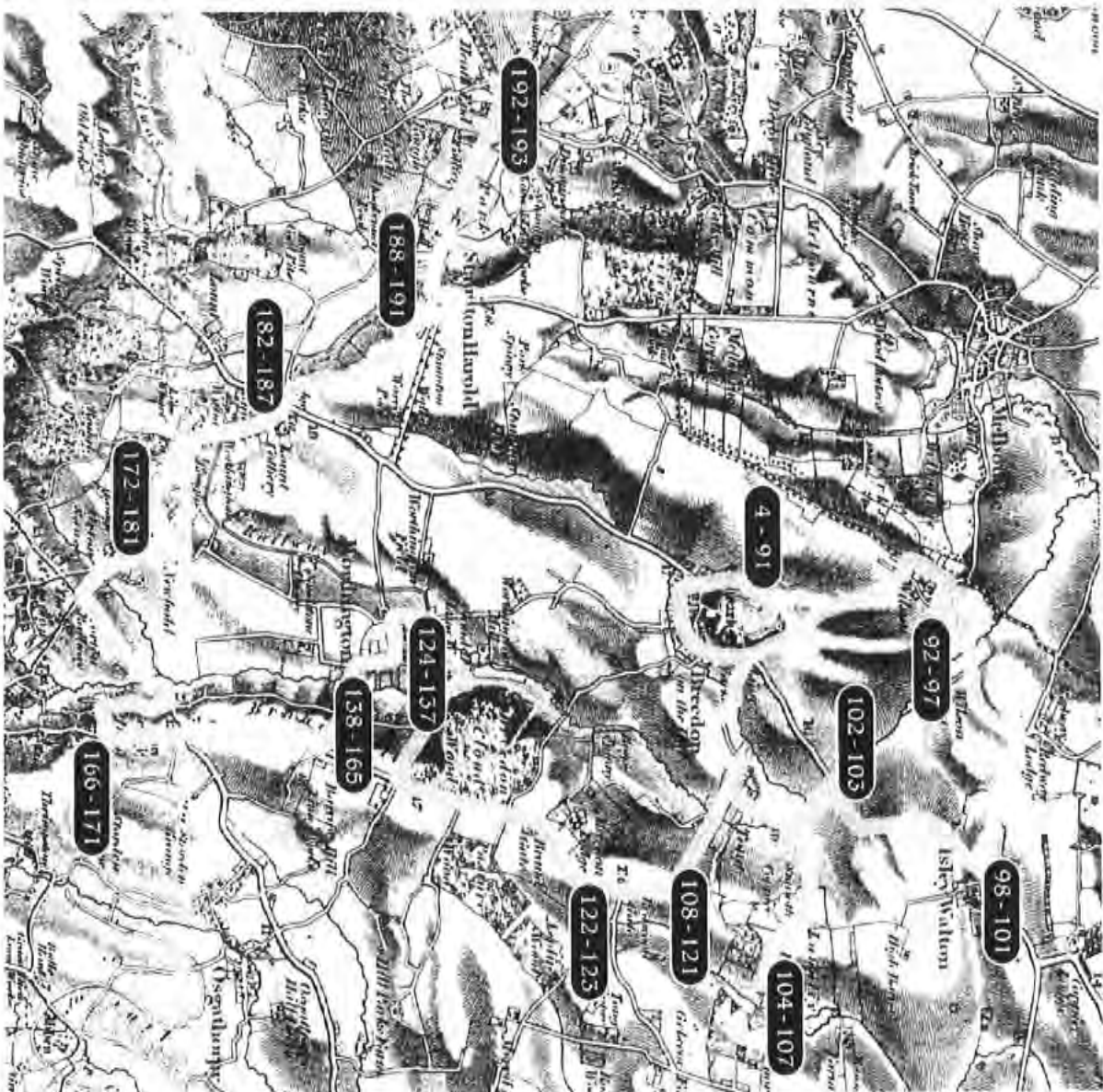


# Hand-me-down Hearsays

*of the Parish of Breedon, Griffyddam, Isley Walton,  
Langley, Lount, Newbold, Scotland, Staunton Harold,  
Tonge, Wilson, and Worthington 1870-1970*



# Contents



Welcome to Hand-me-down-Hearsays.

Hand-me-down-Hearsays is an album of photographs, stories and anecdotes collected from parents and grandparents, friends and neighbours in the Parish of Breedon cum Worthington during the summer of 2002.

The aim of the book is to provide a reference work for local people to learn or remember what life was like in this area during the 20th century and has been produced by local people for local people.

To help you navigate your way about, the pages have been arranged along a circuitous route around the parish starting at the area's most prominent landmark, Breedon Priory Church and ending at the Saracens Head public house, which sadly closed during the summer, at Heath End.

The yellow line follows the route travelled and the numbers in the black lozenges correspond with the page numbers.

We do hope you enjoy your journey.

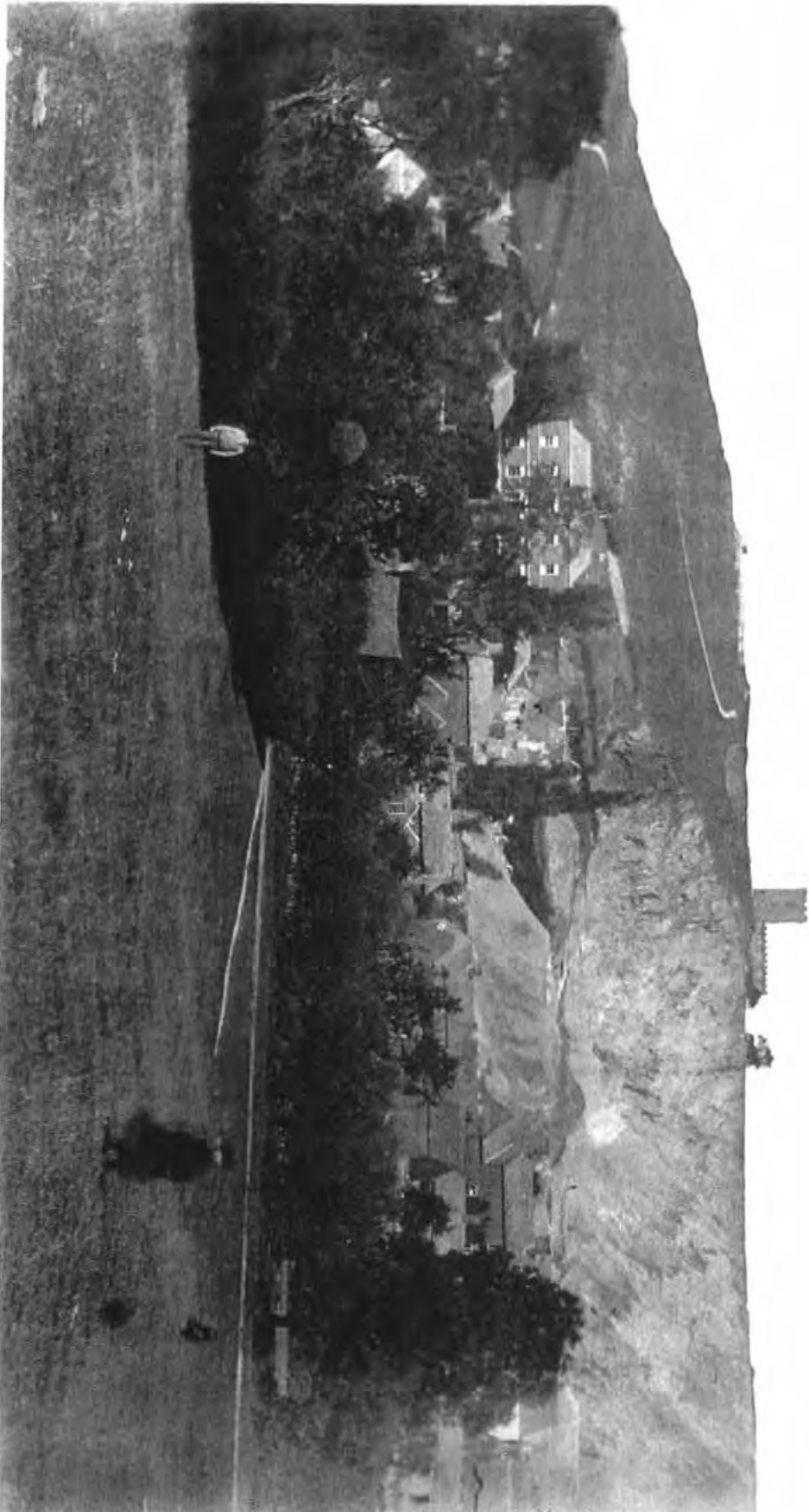
The Ordnance Survey map of the area showing the Parish of Breedon cum Worthington.  
1835

Taken by Nathaniel  
Curzon, this  
photograph shows  
some interesting  
historical features.

In 1880 the hill was  
still being grazed by  
sheep and so is not  
overgrown with  
shrubby as today.

The quarry was not as  
extensive as it is now  
and the area to the  
east of the church  
known as Barley  
Close, the Market  
Steeds and The  
Plachetts has not yet  
been quarried away.

Nathaniel's home,  
Breerton Hall is  
clearly visible in the  
left centre of the  
picture  
1880



# Breedon-on-the-Hill - Some historical facts

Breedon has been settled for many years.

A Stone Age polished axe head dating back to 1000 BC, the new stone age or early bronze age, was found when the new St Hardulph's School and Community Centre was being built. It is now in Leicester Museum.



*A polished stone axe head, showing how it might have been fitted to a haft.*

Iron Age remains have been found there and in 300 BC a hill fort was constructed. It remained in use until the 1st century AD. Part of these earthworks known as The Bulwarks, can still be seen on the west side of the present church. Those which were on the north, east and south of the hill have been lost to the quarry workings.

During the seventh century the now vanished Kingdom of Mercia was converted from paganism to Christianity and in 675, a Saxon Benedictine monastery was founded from Peterborough and built within the old hill fort. Stone carvings from the Saxon monastery dating from the end of the eighth century when, under King Offa, the Kingdom of Mercia was at its peak, can still be seen incorporated into the walls of the current church. There are over thirty stone fragments including scrollwork, saints, humans, birds and animals. Simon Jenkins in "England's thousand best churches" describes the unique collection as being "like the stone equivalent of the Lindisfarne gospels." The Bede referred to the place as "Brindun."

By the end of the 9th century Danish raiders had sailed up the Trent and destroyed the monastery.

In 1050 the church became a Catholic place of worship.

After the Norman Conquest, King William gave Breedon to Robert de Ferrers and in 1175 the monastery was re-founded as an Augustinian priory. Parts of this building can still be seen in the tower of the present church. At this time, Hugh Candidus, a 12th century chronicler recorded that Sanctus Aerdulphus Rex was buried at Breedon. He may have been a sanctified member of the Mercian royal family.

In the 13th century, a new wide chancel was added to the east of the tower, and much of this remains today.

In the 15th century, (1441) Bishop Alnwick visited Breedon and found the place dilapidated and in debt.

In the 16th century, (1555) came the dissolution of the monasteries, and a wealthy local landowner, Sir Francis Shirley bought the Priory as a burial place for his own family. It later became the Parish Church for Breedon within the Protestant Church of England. The church registers date from 1562, they are continuous and in a good state of preservation. The churchwarden's accounts date from 1672, are carefully bound and are well preserved.

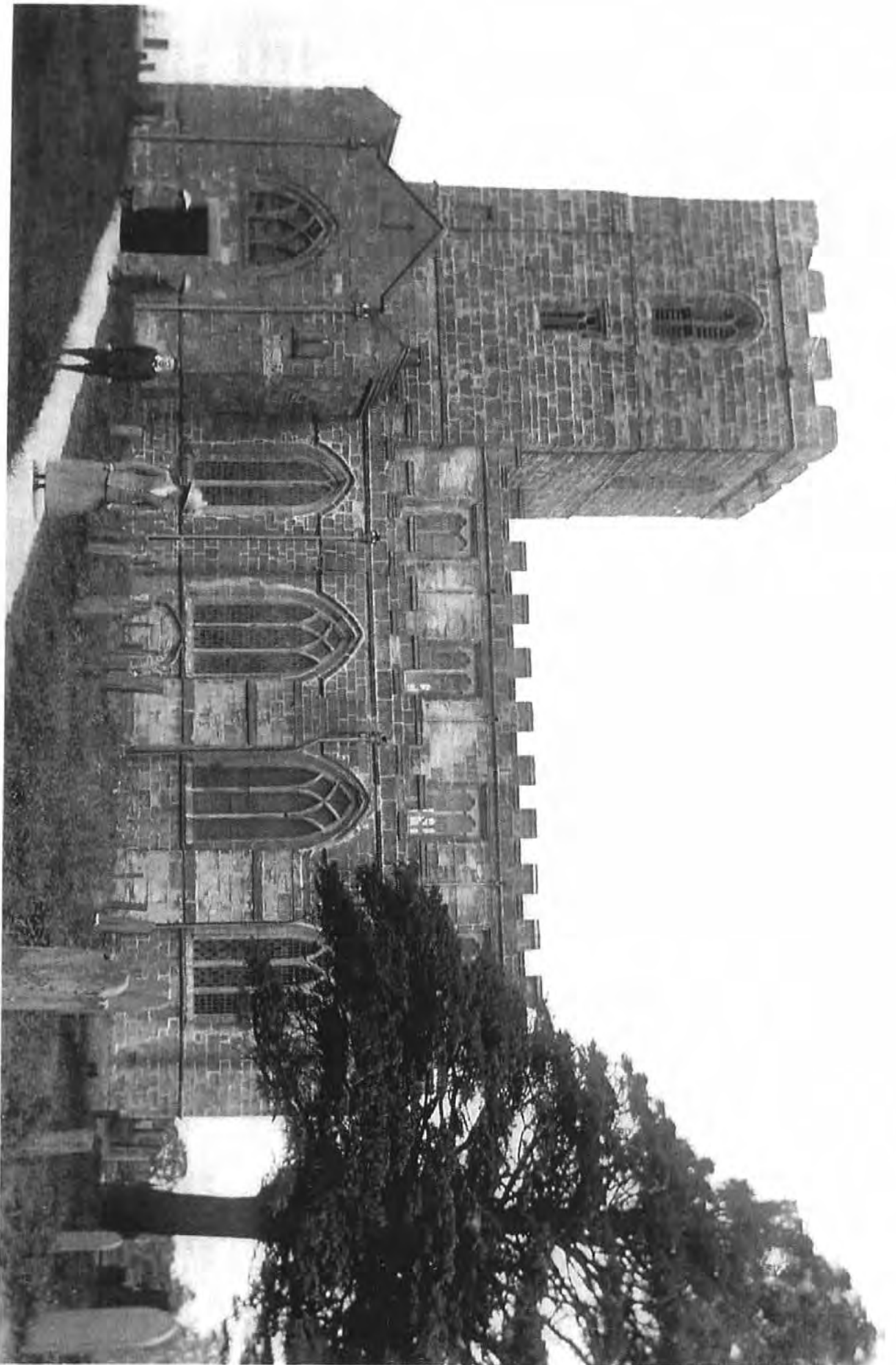
During the 18th century the church became a centre for Methodist evangelism, its curate, Walter Sellon, being a colleague of John Wesley.

In the 19th and 20th centuries, repair and renewal of the church was undertaken and the economy of the parish began to move from being mainly agricultural to industrial with mining, clay pipe and quarrying enterprises.

By the 21st century the pipes works and mines have closed and the parish has started to become a dormitory area for Ashby, and the surrounding towns and cities.



*By 1920 the Sarncombe lime kiln, whose tall chimney is visible, had been in use for more than twenty years. Barley Close is being quarried away but the original profile of the hill is still visible. At this time quarrying was done by hand and involved men climbing the rock face, drilling holes, setting charges, blasting the rock down and filling the tubs by hand. The hill is still free of bushes. Summer 1922.*

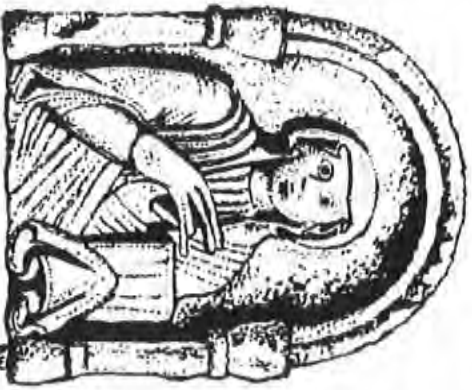


Leaving the church in 1905.

Bredon-on-the-Hill Church is dedicated to Saint Mary and Saint Hardulph. It is an unusual dedication and is believed to be the only such one in England. St Mary is the Virgin Mary, but who is St Hardulph?

The earliest reference we have to St Hardulph is in an ancient book in Lord Kenyon's library. "Saynt Hardulche of Bredon" is reported to be a contemporary and associate of St Modwena. St Modwena founded the Abbey of Polesworth in Warwickshire and is the patron saint of Burton Parish Church. We know she was buried at Burton in 518.

Lord Kenyon's book records that "One time dwelled an holy hermit whose name was Hardulche in a place named Bredon. He had heard tell of Modwyr's holy living and went oft to her and bore books of Holy Saints' lives." Saynt Hardulche must have been in the habit of taking his books with him whenever visiting Modwyr as on one occasion when he did not take them she asked, "Father, why bringest not thy book as thou wert wont to do?" "Madame" replied Hardulche, "I have forgotten."



Is this stone figure in Bredon church either St Hardulph or Saint Mary? The person is giving a Greek blessing - with the first, second and little finger raised, and not in the Latin manner with the thumb and two first fingers. This eighth century carving is also unusual as it shows one of the earliest examples of a knitted garment in English art.

*Lord Kenyon's book records that "One time dwelled an holy hermit whose name was Hardulche in a place named Bredon. He had heard tell of Modwyr's holy living and went oft to her and bore books of Holy Saints' lives." Saynt Hardulche must have been in the habit of taking his books with him whenever visiting Modwyr as on one occasion when he did not take them she asked, "Father, why bringest not thy book as thou wert wont to do?" "Madame" replied Hardulche, "I have forgotten."*

Only this fragment survives in the binding of a book dated 1541, in Lord Kenyon's library, of a much older book, which names St Hardulche of Bredon.

The text tells that St Hardulche lived in a cell in a cliff a little distance from the Trent and Modwyr sent two of her maidens in a boat to fetch the books from his hermitage. "On the way there arose a great tempest and their boat overturned in the river. When St Modwyr and the hermit had long tarried the coming of the virgins they went both on their knees beseeching Almighty God to show them what was become of the two maidens. Then they arose and looking toward the water saw a fairway in the midst of the water. The water was divided marvellously asunder in two parts and stood steadfast on both sides as a stone wall. And therein entered the hermit and St Modwyr and they went so, till they came to the place where the boat lay. And there the boat lay dry and bottom upward." The hermit tried to lift the boat but could not, but when St Modwyr lightly applied her hands she raised the boat with ease as if it had no weight at all. "The



Members of the WI on their hazardous expedition to find St Hardulph's hermitage at Ingleby, Summer c.1960.

the knowledge that the hermitage of their patron Saint Hardulph had been located. Alternatively it had been suggested that St Hardulph may have been the 9th century Prince Hardulph, a local ruler who, some allege, was responsible for the death of the young Northumbrian prince St Alkmund around the time of the Danish invasions in this area about 800-819AD.

We prefer to think our Saint was the earlier Hardulph, a good and saintly man and contemporary of St Modwena of Burton, who lived in this area and did good works during the 5th or early 6th century.

Mrs Connie Hallam enjoying the same view of the Trent that St Hardulph would have gazed upon from his hermitage over 1,500 years ago Summer c.1960.





*Breendon Priory  
Church 1880*

*The old  
Italianate east  
window was  
replaced in 1900  
with three lancet  
windows.*

*This photograph  
can be dated  
quite accurately  
as the white  
gravestone has  
only recently  
been placed  
over the grave.  
It is dated 1880.*



*Bredeon church with the new lancet east windows. 1905*

The visitor to Bredeon Church has first to ascend the Hill either from the north, south or east side, but when once on the plateau, a grand view of the majestic buildings may be obtained. Sublime in its loveliness, peaceful in its surroundings, no sound of busy life is there, and nothing seems to disturb the solemnity of this sacred spot except an occasional bleating of the sheep, or the blasting of the rock beneath. For nearly 800 years it has been a very conspicuous object of the landscape, and can be seen for upwards of twenty miles distance. The thought naturally occurs to the mind – how came the church to be placed in this position, far away from the village? Some have stated that the village was formerly on the hill, but no trace whatever can be found to bear out this statement; but the most common assertion is that the position of the church is due to the designs of the Evil One, who mightily destroyed the work done during the day when attempts were made to build a church in the village. His Satanic Majesty carrying each stone to the summit of the hill.

In 1144, Robert de Ferrars, Earl of Nottingham, gave to the Priory of St. Oswald of Nostell, in Yorkshire, the manor of Bredeon, and a priory of Augustine canons was founded here as a cell to the Nostell Priory, the cell consisting of a prior and four religious. Of this Priory of Bradune no remains are existing, excepting the chapel and sculptured stones in the interior of the present church. These stones are of very good device and are inserted at regular intervals between the



*Carved dragon-like beasts from a cross shaft fragment. These are typical of Saxon/Danish art and are from the old monastery. 8th/10th century.*

division of the arches; there is also a beautiful beading line below the east window. The exterior walls of the church also display a number of well-executed designs of the stonemason's skill. These are all supposed to have been taken from the ancient Priory. The church consists of a central nave, with north and south aisle, and a tower at the west end. There does not appear to have been any additional building in an easterly direction, but on the western side there have been found foundations of a building measuring 10 yards in length by 7 yards in breadth. Probably the building was originally of the cruciform shape, the tower being in the centre.

At the suppression of the Monasteries, 1536, Bredeon Priory was purchased from Henry VIII, by Francis Shirley, Esq., as a burial place for himself and his successors; and on the petition of the inhabitants of Bredeon, the chapel was granted to them for their use instead of their parish church thereto adjoining, which was in a ruined state. Of the old parish church no trace now exists. The present parish church of Bredeon is therefore the chapel of the monastic building.

*F Taylor, Bredeon, Ashby. 1906*

In the tower there is a ring of six bells of which the largest weighs 9cwt (almost half a ton). Before 1951 there were only four bells. One, the old monastic bell dating back to 1300 bore no inscription, another said "1604, God save the Church," another



*The Reverend C.M.K. Parsons flanked by churchwardens Frank Wakefield (left) and Billy Smith (right) with the recast old monastic bell and two smaller new bells prior to hanging in the belfry. 1951.*

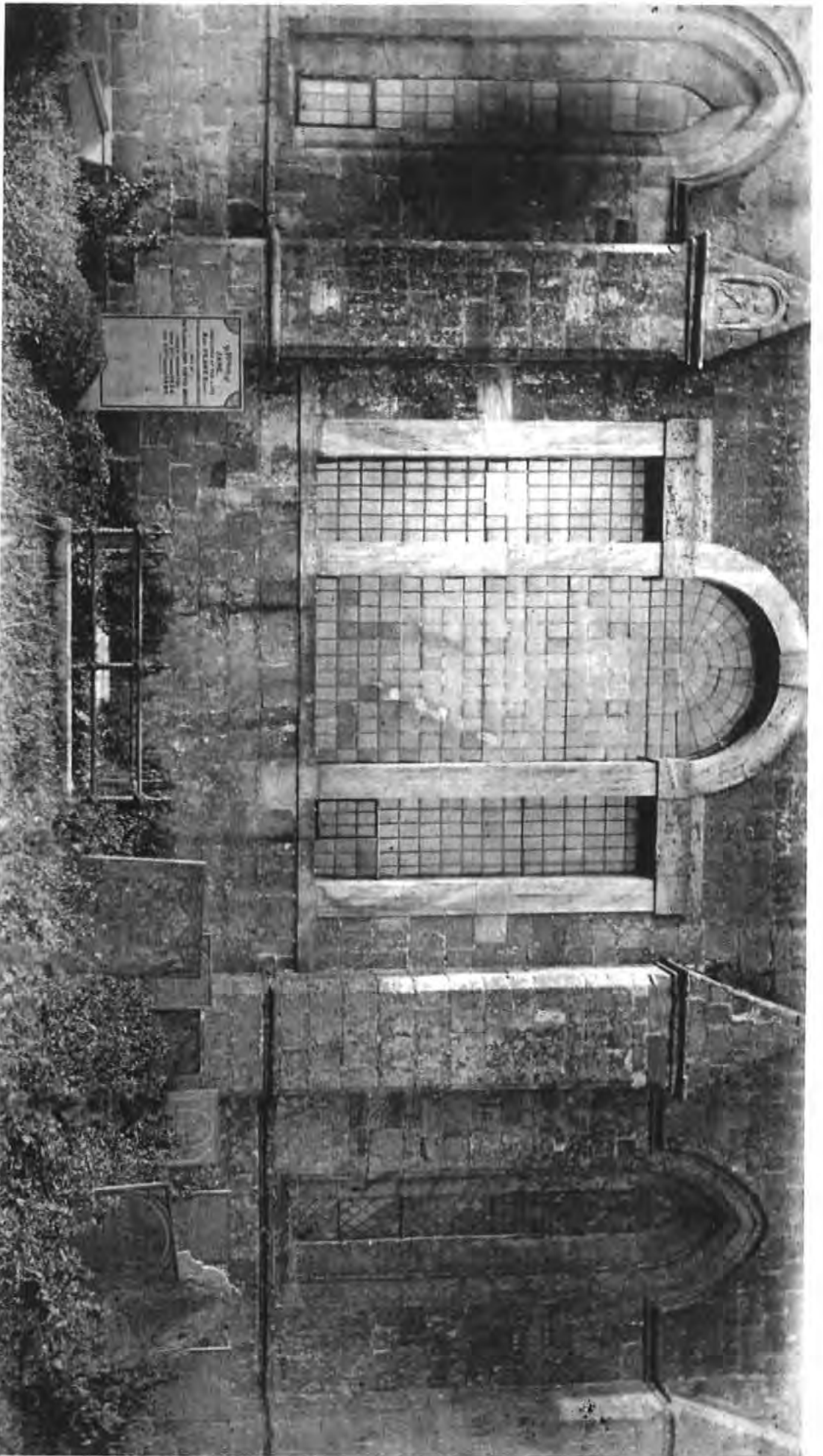
carried the date only "1847" and the fourth "this bell was recast and all four were rehung in 1912 in memory of Thomas and Sarah Ann Earp, the gift of their son George Hextall Earp." In 1951, as a memorial to Mr & Mrs JG Shields, the old monastic bell was recast by John Taylor's at Loughborough and two new smaller bells cast and installed, bringing the peal of the church to six. At the same time the organ was rebuilt.

The whole peal of six was rehung on ball bearings. A service of dedication for the rebuilt organ and bells was held on 20th December 1951 by the Lord Bishop of Leicester.

*Bredeon Bellringers. c.1950  
L to R, Sam Hicklin, Jim Robinson (two bells) Bertie Silis, Alan Bird and John Hale.*







The old "Italianate" altar window seen here in 1880, was replaced in 1900 by Mrs Earp. Tragically, Mrs Earp died before the work was completed. In memory of his mother, Mr G.H. Earp her son, had the whole of the interior walls of the church cleaned and re-pointed. The graves and gravestones seen in the photograph were removed to the west side of the churchyard in 1970 to allow remedial work to be undertaken on the damp east wall.

Behind the altar there was until very recently a large window of Italian design, entirely out of harmony with the rest of the church; this has now been replaced with a magnificent stained glass triple lancet window, erected by Mrs. Thomas Earp of Staunton Harold, in memory of her parents and children. This window has greatly added to the beauty of the edifice. Beneath the window may be seen the following plate:- "To the glory of God and in loving memory of her parents, John and Mary Ann Asher, of Brendon, and of her children, John Daniel Earp and Hannah Mary Earp, all here asleep: the central east windows of this church were restored and adorned by Sarah Ann, wife of Thomas Earp, of Staunton Harold, in this parish, A.D. 1900.

*F Taylor, Brendon, Ashby, 1906*



Looking North towards Wilson and the Trent, 1970



This is a copy of the note inserted in a bottle in the stonework of the new window at the east end of the church.

The field to the North of the churchyard, Holy Close, is new and made up from the soil overburden which was dumped there from the Market Steads when they were quarried away. As I watched the quarry machines stripping the soil, I was astonished to see an old road being revealed which seemed to run on a north/south alignment from the direction of Wilson and the River Trent. It ran up the gentler northern slopes of the hill towards the church and the thought occurred that this was almost certainly the route that the stone used in the building of the church would have travelled from the river wharf.

M Shaw, Bredon, 2002

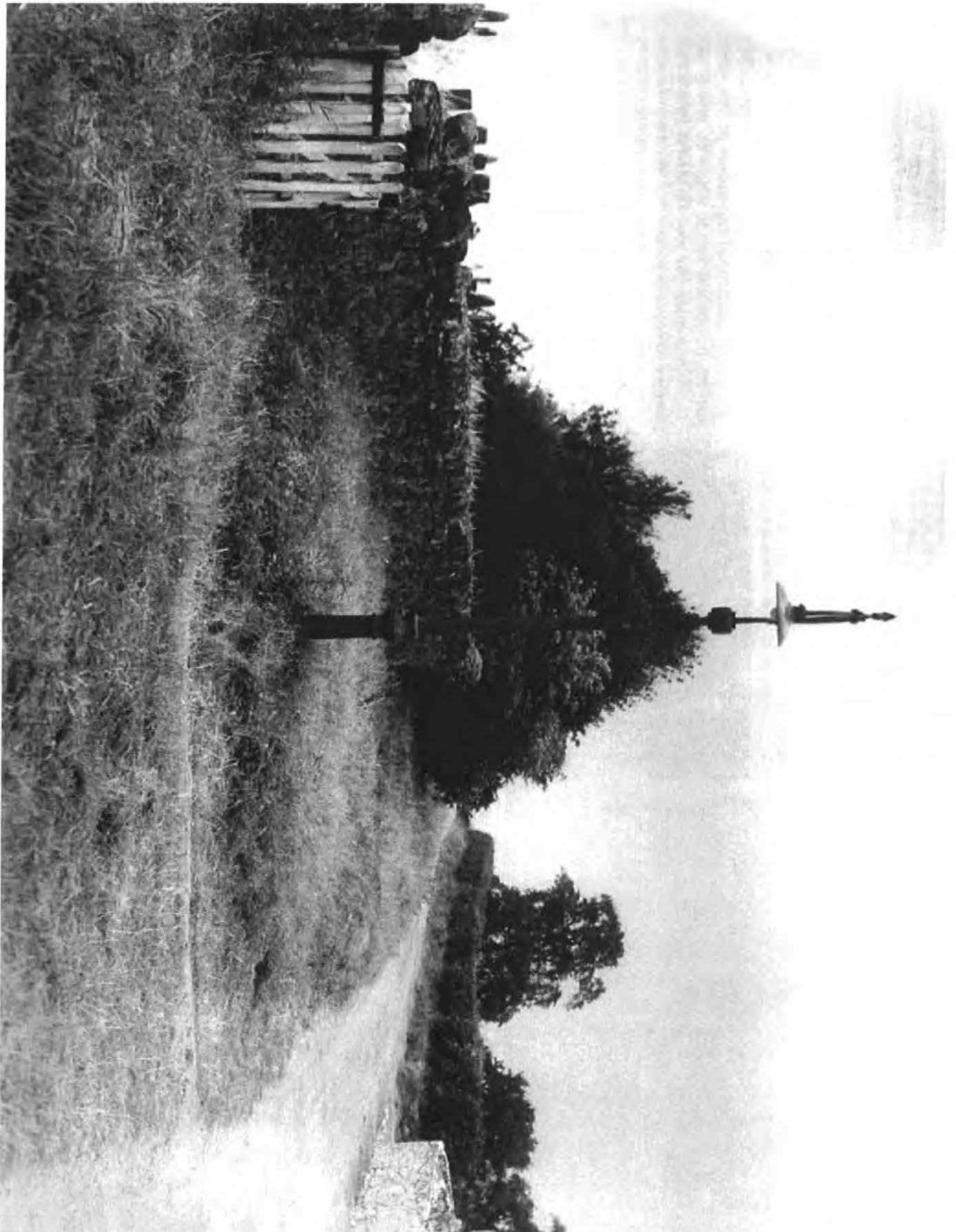
The hill is not without its fables: to the north-east of the hill is a field called "Hobbes' Hole," from which a hidden cave is said to run under the rock, where in olden times lived a mysterious person named Hobbes. (a field to the north of the church was known as Hobbs' Hole, but sadly has now been lost to the quarry workings.) The villagers say that once a week, during the stillness of the night, Hobbes used to visit one of the inns in the village, and do the churning for them. A clean linen apron was left for him, and the next morning when the family awoke the butter was made: but one night, instead of the usual clean linen apron being placed ready, another made of some other material was left, at which Hobbes took offence, and never repeated his nocturnal visits.

The large piece of level land to the east of the church (now lost to the quarry workings) is known as the Market Steads, and from this part turf is allowed to be taken for covering the newly made graves in the churchyard. To the east of the Market Steads are the Bulwarks (now also gone), commanding an extensive view, and here the visitor may start for a pleasant walk (sic) round the rampart and ditch, about which history is so silent.

F Taylor, Bredon, Ashby, 1906



This ancient boat loaded with stone was found at Shardlow. The stone for Bredon Church could have travelled this way, 1998



The road leading up to the church. 1965.

The new stone wall on the right indicates the extent of the quarrying. Barley Close has gone together with half of the Market Steads.



*This circular tree seat in Holy Close - seen during its construction - was made to commemorate the Silver Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in 1977.*

Prior to quarrying, the soil overburden was cleared from the Market Steads and re-distributed to a number of sites in and around the village but most was spread around the east and north of the churchyard. The effect of this new soil on the land levels may be seen in this photograph of the church seats.

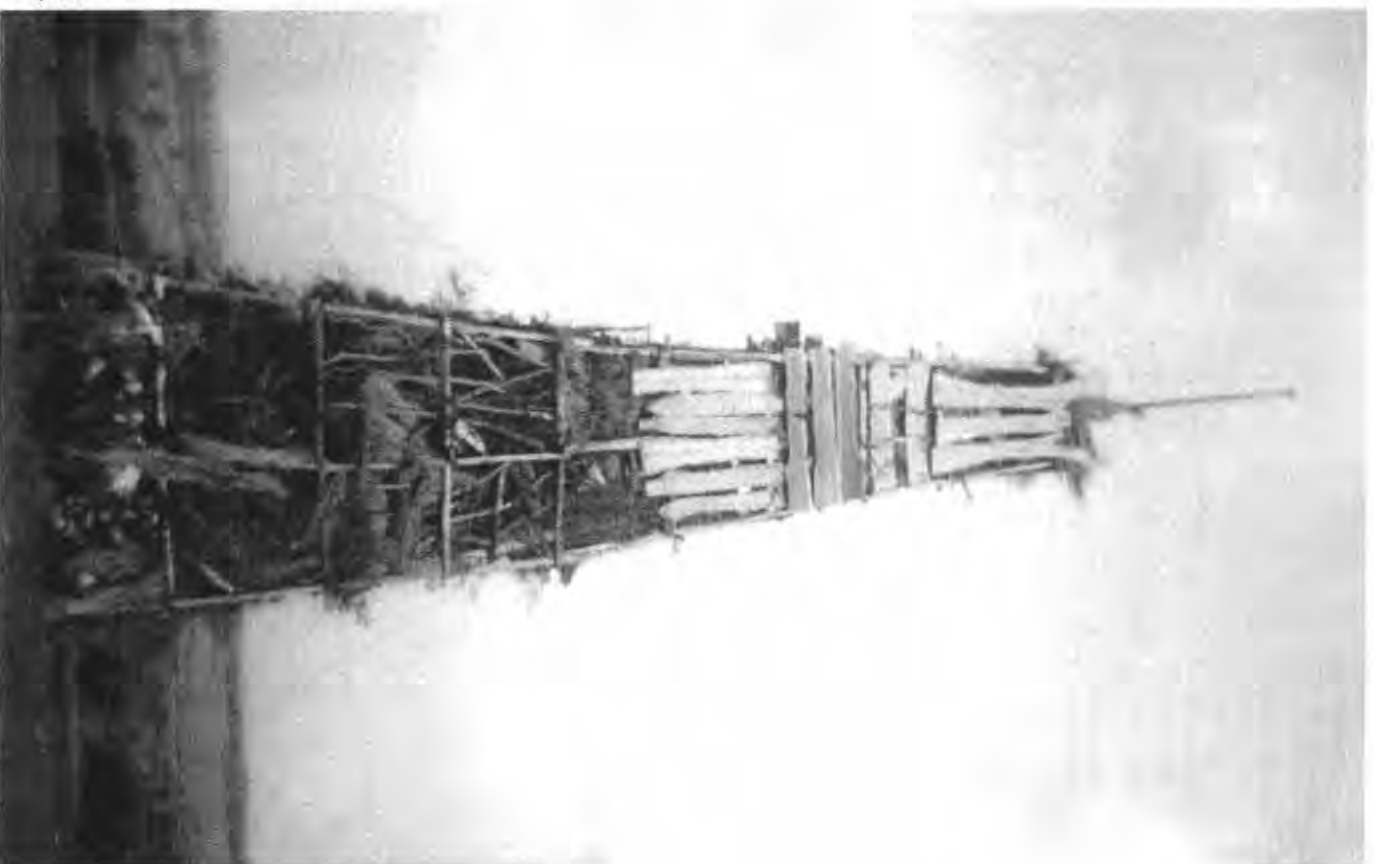
*M Shaw. Bredon, 2002*



*This bonfire was built for the Silver Jubilee celebrations in 1977. Working hard on the structure are Bert Kidd, Charlie Shields, Charlie Wardle, Alan Hawkins and Anthony Buck*

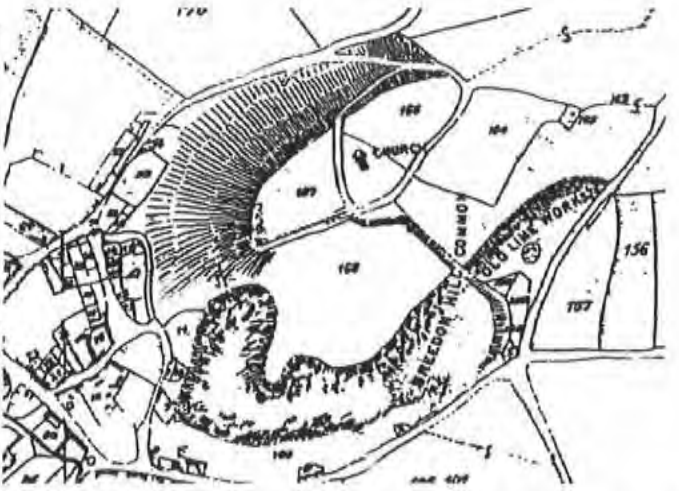
*This bonfire was built for the coronation celebrations of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953.*

Measured to the top of the flagpole, this bonfire stood a staggering 120 feet high. To gain some idea of scale, look at the three men at the base who are absolutely dwarfed by the structure. Fred Shaw and Jack Kinsey were nightwatchmen and slept by the bonfire to ensure it was not lit prematurely. It burned very well but at one point in the proceedings the top half of the burning bonfire fell to the ground. Fortunately no-one was hurt and the festivities continued well into the night.





Earthworks of the Iron Age hill fort, near the Piacchets on Breendon Hill c. 1945. At the foot of the slope on the left were very old quarry workings. The earthworks on the crest of the hill were known as the Bulwarks. Where the people are standing is the footpath down to Deepwell. This was a lovely place to go for a walk and less than 100 years ago, one could follow the fortifications all around the hill. All of this has now been lost to the quarry.



Comparing the ordnance survey map of 1873 with an aerial photograph of 1950 shows the rapid progress made by the quarry particularly during the last 40 years. Much of the land quarried was designated common land on the 1873 map, and even in 1950's the footpath from the church to Deepwell on the A453 crossroads with the Tonge Lane and Wilson Lane was still intact.



As children we used to play on the Barley Close which lay to the south of the Market Steads. As the field was quarried away it would be quite a common sight to see human bones and skulls lying around on the ground as the Anglo Saxon cemetery was destroyed. This would probably not be allowed to happen today.

We used to play football on the Barley Close. On one occasion the encroaching cliff came to our rescue. We were playing against the lads from the pit and quarry, and they were wearing their pit boots with steel toe caps and hobnails - no fancy football boots then. At half time there was no score but we were taking terrible punishment from their boots. Rather than lose, we accidentally kicked the ball over the cliff and the match was drawn.

On a warm summer evening just as night was falling I used to love walking up to the church and sitting in the churchyard watching the bats swooping around and seeing the countless thousands of glowworms twinkling in the grass. It was absolutely magical.

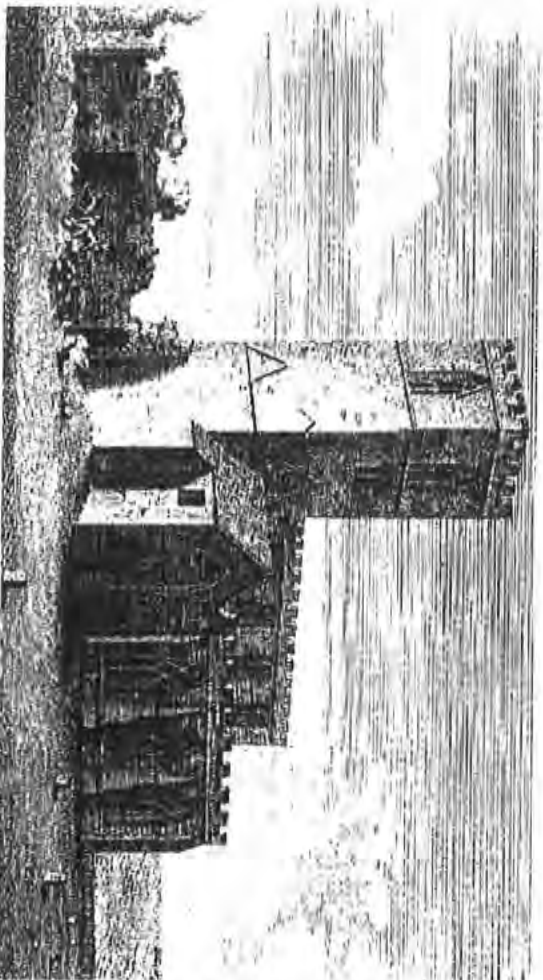
*M Shaw. Breton. 2002*

*These skeletons were unearthed by archaeologists working on the Barley Close. Two in particular were remarkable being almost 8 feet tall and very broad too. Real giants! They are now both in Leicester museum. 1946*



*It was a common sight to see human bones lying around on Barley Close as it was quarried 1945*





Breaddon Priory Church. c.1790

About the year 1325 the stone-groined ceilings in the nave and south aisle were removed, and the large windows were introduced into the aisles in the place of the earlier lancet windows, and it became necessary in consequence to strengthen the walls by the addition of more massive buttresses.

There is one door on the north-west side of the church which has been assigned by antiquarians to the Saxon period, and the marks of high-pitched roofs on the face of the west side seem to point to buildings of a much more imposing sight than any which now remain.

"In a brief dated Jan. 12th, 1784, it is stated that the parish church of Breaddon, a large, ancient structure, was in a very ruinous state and condition, in particular the walls and roof of the north and south aisles: and the Tower of the Church in such a state as to require their being speedily taken down, and the other parts of the church in general are much out of repair and that although the inhabitants had within the last ten years laid out and expended about £340 in repairs thereof, yet the same were in such danger of falling that the inhabitants were afraid of assembling therein for the worship of Almighty God, and in consequence thereof divine service had not been performed therein for several months past, and that by the oath of Joseph Wyatt, an able and experienced architect who had carefully viewed the church, the charge of taking down and rebuilding the same would amount to £3,340, exclusive of the old materials."

During the following ten years the church was repaired, the square pews put in, the present choir gallery erected, and also the pulpit. There was also in the Parish Chest

a bill receipted on March 27th, 1748, paid by the churchwardens to Thomas Woodcock for making a sundial, the price being six shillings. The sundial may now be seen near the door of the church.

The church has been greatly marred of its beauty from the great variety of styles it exhibits. It has been truly called an architectural "olla podrida," yet, notwithstanding the many changes that have taken place, the building is picturesque.

The history of the church would not be complete without reference to the Rev. Walter Sellon, who from 1758 to 1770 was curate of the parish. Coming to Breaddon at the age of 43, he spent the next twelve years of his life in the spiritual welfare of the district. He was the personal friend of Wesley and of Fletcher, the latter of whom frequently visited him and preached in the church. About the year 1756, by mutual consent, Fletcher came to Breaddon and Sellon went to Madelay for a few Sundays.

While Mr. Fletcher remained at Breaddon crowds flocked from the neighbouring villages to hear him, and the church was crowded. The parish clerk was very offended at these large congregations, because of the extra cleaning they caused, and on one Sunday he placed himself at the door and refused to admit persons from other parishes unless they paid one penny each. A man, feeling annoyed at the conduct of the clerk, went down the hill to meet Mr Fletcher and told him about the charge being made. Mr Fletcher remarked "I'll stop his proceedings," and hastened to the church, but the clerk, seeing his approach, left his post at the door and hastened to his desk



Breaddon Priory Church. c.1880

under the pulpit, no doubt thinking he had escaped a reprimand; but not so, for after the service was ended, the reverend gentleman, turning to the congregation said, "I have not felt my

Norman Taylor and Amos Bird, two well known local farmers leaving the church, 1968. Norman worked for Old JG Shields at Manor Farm and Amos took over Manor Farm after JG's death in 1943. Amos was also a fine cricketer.



spirit so moved these sixteen years last past as I have done to-day. I have heard that the clerk of this parish has demanded, and has actually received money from divers strangers before he would suffer them to enter the church. I would desire that all who have paid money in this way for hearing the Gospel will come to me, and I will return what they have paid: and as to this iniquitous clerk, his money perish with him."

In the Wesleyan Methodist Magazine for 1850, the Rev. J. Edmondson, M.A., who travelled in the Ashby-de-la-Zouch Circuit refers to Breedon Church:- "It was in this Circuit that the Rev. Walter Sellon preached with so much success. He was curate of Breedon, but a real Methodist. Hundreds were turned to God by his instrumentality. I have often walked up to Breedon Church and venerated the place where Sellon had preached. On that hill I often renewed my covenant engagements with God, when no eye saw me but His eye and no ear heard me but His ear."

The churchyard which is now about 2 acres, surrounds the church, and was recently enlarged by one acre on the north side, the land being bought by Sir Matthew J. Joyce, K.G., who also bore the expense of removing the whole of the north wall and rebuilding it. The new part was consecrated by the Bishop of Peterborough on October 5th, 1903. About the same time, the churchwardens, by the liberality of the landowners and friends of the church were able to have the other walls of the churchyard repaired and repointed at a cost of £40.

*F Taylor,  
Breedon, Ashby. 1906*



*The Reverend Alfred James Meakin, 1904-1912, standing by the back door of the church, 1906. The stone arch over the door is Saxon in origin and most interesting to the historian.*

The Rev. Kenneth Wayne was Vicar of Breedon for 12 years and a very keen amateur archaeologist. He was for some years chairman of the Vaughan Archaeological and Historical Society. In 1970 he initiated a dig with the help of Mrs Foster, a bishop's wife from Hong Kong who was staying at Griffydám. Mary Sowter from Tonge was also invited to attend and asked to bring a shovel and trowel with her! Mrs Foster mapped out the area to be excavated in a field off Burney Lane. As Mary dug, watched carefully by the others, she came across this Roman pot. Having made the discovery, Mary was replaced in the hole by Mrs Foster and the Rev.

Wayne set off for the vicarage to report the find to Leicester museum.



*The Reverend Kenneth Wayne,  
Vicar of Breedon 1965-1973  
1970*



*A storage jar almost two feet in diameter from the second century, possibly earlier, photographed just as it was found only two feet and six inches below the surface by Rev Kenneth Wayne and Mary Sowter 1970*



*The Reverend Herbert E Moxon, Vicar of Breedon 1922-1930 with his wife and children, Joan and Hilary. Tragically Hilary, their son, died of scarlet fever aged 9 and is buried in the churchyard. His monument is a wooden cross with a tiled wooden roof, 1930*





*The interior of Breendon Priory Church looking towards the altar. The three lancet windows above the altar were installed just five years before this picture was taken. 1905*

The nave of the church is separated from the isles by four arches, and at the east end of the north isle is a chapel railed off from the other part of the church, preserved as a burial place for the Shirley family. In this part are several very beautiful monuments, erected centuries ago to members of this historical family. The visitor should not omit to

examine the well-executed figure of a skeleton lying under a monument of alabaster, erected in 1598. The figures of a man and woman, each in an attitude of prayer, are placed under the two arches: the a gentleman in armour, a lady, her daughter, two infants, and two sons in prayer.

A little to the east of the monument hangs a rusty sword, shield and helmet.

In front of this monument, at the north east corner of the chapel, is an altar tomb, on which are sculptured images of Francis Shirley, Esq., and his wife Dorothy.

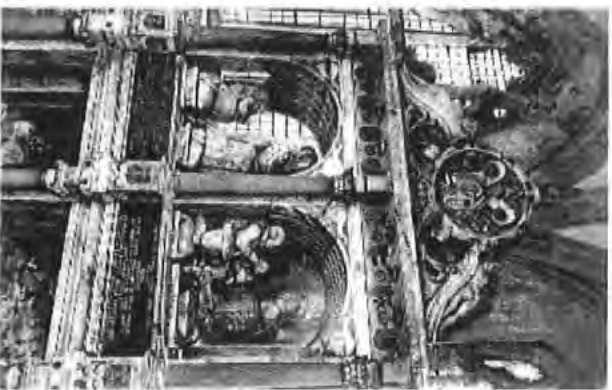
In front of the tomb is carved seven figures - three sons and four daughters. "This monument is erected to the Mr Shirley who purchased the Priory Church of Breedon from Henry VIII for a burial place for himself and his successors. He died in the reign of Queen Elizabeth and was buried in the church. Twenty years after his decease his body was taken up to remove his monument to a more suitable place, when the body was found to be so well preserved as to be able to be bound in a new winding sheet, the only mark upon the body being a slight bruise on the top of the great toe, caused by the pressure of the coffin. His corpse was again interred in the same church."



A helmet, shield, sword and crest which hung in the church near the Shirley tomb. These items are now on display in the Bell Tower, 1970

In the south-east corner of the chapel is another altar tomb, on which lies a fine sculptured image of one of the Shirley family. The image represents a Knight in armour. This tomb bears the date of 1570. Another interesting object to all visitors to the church is the beautifully-carved canopied oak pew in the private chapel. This was erected by the Shirley family in the year 1627, and was used by them about that time. It is a splendid specimen of wood-work, supposed to be one of the finest in the country.

In the vestry may be seen painted on a large wooden frame the skeleton of a man, with a spade in one hand and an arrow by his side. The first view of this on entering the vestry is better imagined than described. The words "Vive memor lethi" are plainly printed upon it, and as it is placed in the vestry, it is evidently meant to



The Shirley monument 1536.



The interior of Breedon Priory Church looking towards the Shirley tombs, 1910.

remind the clergy of their high calling and to encourage them to "live mindful of death."

The beautifully carved chair placed on the north side of the altar rails was presented to the church about fifteen years ago by the late Canon Parker, of Burnley.

The visitor should not omit seeing a slab in the belfry, about 2ft. wide by 21/2 ft. in height, on which is a well-executed figure of a Saint holding a crook. This is in a very good state of preservation. Other specimens of chisel work are to be found in this portion of the church, and also over the southern porch.

*F Taylor, The History of Breedon.*  
1906

The church plate, consisting of chalices, patens and flagons, which was stolen from the church in 1990. Some items were recovered from the river two years later and are now in Leicester Museum for safekeeping.



1857

Some late Wife

JOHN JOHNSON  
of

Maunton Harrold  
who died the 25th of December

1757

1757

Relieved from the Burden of this frail World  
In pious expectation of the reward of his Virtues

JOHN JOHNSON

Departed this Life, Jan. XIX MDCCCLXXV

He was many years

The esteemed and faithful Servant

of

The Hon<sup>ble</sup> LAURENCE SPURLEY Esq<sup>r</sup>

With unshaken Integrity

He continued in the office of Steward

to

and for the late R<sup>ts</sup> Hon<sup>ble</sup> LAURENCE EARLE Esq<sup>r</sup>

Till near the fatal period of his life

Therewith corrupted by any vision of selfishness

No longer to fear

Could divert him from the fatal pursuit of his passions

His duty to God and Man pursued with

His duty to himself and his family

His duty to his country and his fellow creatures

His duty to his friends and his neighbors

His duty to his superiors and his inferiors

His duty to his equals and his inferiors

His duty to his inferiors and his equals

His duty to his equals and his inferiors

His duty to his inferiors and his equals

His duty to his equals and his inferiors

John  
Johnson's  
Tombsone,  
Breedon  
Churchyard

On 17th January 1760, Lawrence Shirley, 4th Earl Ferrers of Staunton Harold Hall shot his steward, John Johnson. The following day Johnson died of his wounds and Earl Ferrers was arrested, tried, sentenced and hanged for murder. It has been suggested that the trial and execution of Lord Ferrers may have been a factor in ensuring there was no equivalent of the French Revolution in England - on the basis that, if a Peer can be hanged like any other common felon, there cannot be much wrong with the law.

Ferrers was not a popular man. He led a dissolute life, drank heavily, neglected his estates and was accustomed to having his own way in everything. He was "of ungovernable temper, at times almost amounting to insanity" and this caused him to be ostracized by his fellow members of the nobility, who preferred not to have to meet him. Horace Walpole referred to him as "this horrid lunatic." Ferrers had both a wife and a mistress and used both ill. Lady Ferrers so ill that she obtained a separation from him by Act of Parliament.

The same Act of Parliament was also the basis of his disagreement with Johnson. The Act provided that the Ferrers Estates be vested in Trustees and that Johnson, who had been steward to the Ferrers family for many years be appointed receiver of the rents. Ferrers became jealous of Johnson and served notice on him to quit his farm in Lount by 25 March 1759. Johnson with the support of the Trustees did not comply with the request and remained in possession of the farm. Towards the end of that year Johnson negotiated coal contracts with two local landowners named Burslem and Curzon which Ferrers regarded as detrimental to his interests and he was not the kind of man to accept such a situation.

He called at Johnson's house on 13 January 1760 and asked him to come to the Hall to settle some outstanding accounts on the following Friday. Ferrers had arranged for the Hall to be empty

except for three servant girls. He called Johnson into his room and locked the door. After about an hour Ferrers was heard shouting "Sit, down on your other knee, and declare what you have against Earl Ferrers." The girls then heard a pistol shot. It transpired that Johnson had been shot in his left side immediately

*The Earl Ferrers shooting John Johnson.  
17 January 1760*



below the ribs. He was able to regain his feet and was taken to lie down on a bed. Ferrers followed him and taking hold of Johnson's wig, exclaimed "I'll send a bullet through your head." Johnson replied "No matter how soon." The local surgeon Thomas Kirkland was summoned and, after making the patient as comfortable as he could, dined with Ferrers to ensure he did not leave. Ferrers was drinking heavily and told the surgeon that he had said to Johnson "if you have anything to say, speak quickly, for you must die." He had then aimed carefully and fired. When eventually Ferrers retired to bed, Kirkland moved Johnson back to his home in Lount lest he be shot again. Johnson died at 9am the following morning.

Public indignation was aroused and a crowd of local people gathered at Staunton Harold and arrested Ferrers. The local Coroner's Jury, consisting of twelve jurors from Ashby, Breoton, Worthington and Coleorton, returned a verdict of wilful murder and Ferrers was committed to the County Gaol at Leicester on 21 January. As a nobleman, he could not be tried at Leicester Assizes so the trial was transferred to the House of Lords. He remained in Leicester Gaol until 11th February when, in his own landau and six, he travelled to the Tower of London, arriving on 14th February.

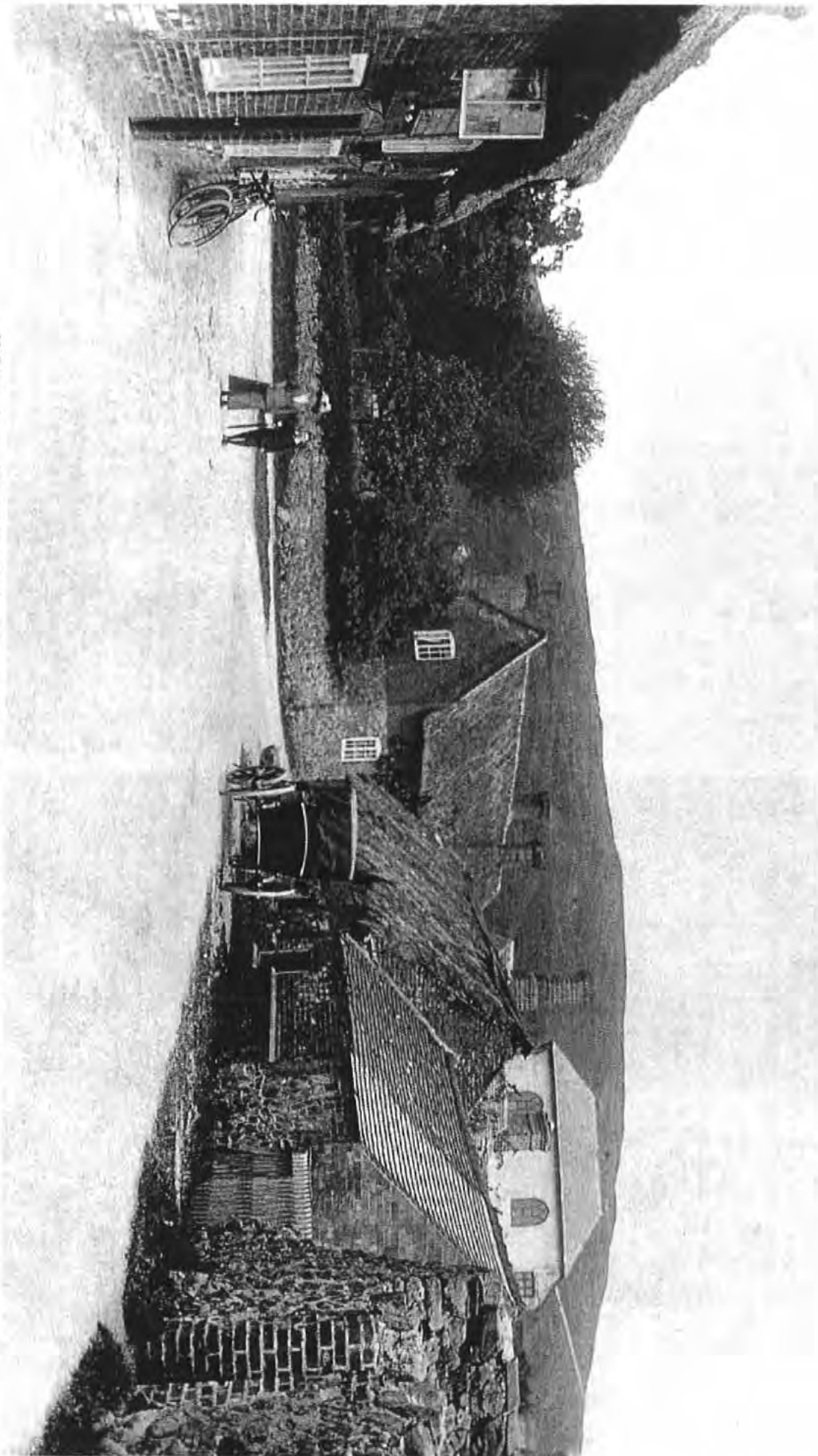
His trial opened on 16 April and Ferrers pleaded not guilty, on the grounds of partial insanity. The Crown maintained the facts were not compatible with temporary insanity and, after much debate, each Lord was asked for his verdict. Individually, all replied "Guilty upon my honour." Sentence was passed on 18 April and Ferrers, aged 40, was executed on Monday 5 May 1760. He was hanged at Tyburn dressed in his wedding clothes which were white cloth embroidered with silver and white silk stockings. He travelled to the scaffold in his own landau and six. A black coach and six and a hearse and six followed. The 4th Earl's body was buried at St Pancras Church, London but, in 1782, it was removed to a vault at Staunton Harold. His younger brother, the Honourable Washington Shirley succeeded as the 5th Earl.



*Execution of Laurence Shirley, 4th Earl Ferrers, Tyburn, London.  
5 May 1760*



*The Earl's body was put on public display at the Surgeons' Hall.*



*Melbourne Lane outside the Holly Bush public house. Lilac Cottage stands on the corner with Hollow Road. The Boys' School is the white building on the hillside. 1905*

Before 1834 the vestry of the church was used as a day school for the education of local children. In that year, a national school was erected by the Earl of Stamford and Warrington on the southwestern side of the hill for 72 boys. Later it was also used for the education of girls. In 1874, a separate girls' school was built at the foot of the hill on Main Street, and it reverted to a boys only school. The school was heated by two open fires and one of the boys would be given the job of filling the coal bucket.



In the garden of the Holy Bush. Summer 1912. In the background are the cottages on Melbourne Lane. Standing behind the group is the landlord, Tom E. Hodgson. Those seated are, complete with nicknames, from L to R- George "Natty" Shaw, Wilfred "Pug" Adkin, John "Stibsey" Shaw, Edgar "Young Neg" Barsby, George Attiwell, Harry "Manny" Mason, John Gadsby the first Breendonian killed in the 1st German War, Frank "Shacker" Kinsey, George "Shob" Kinsey.



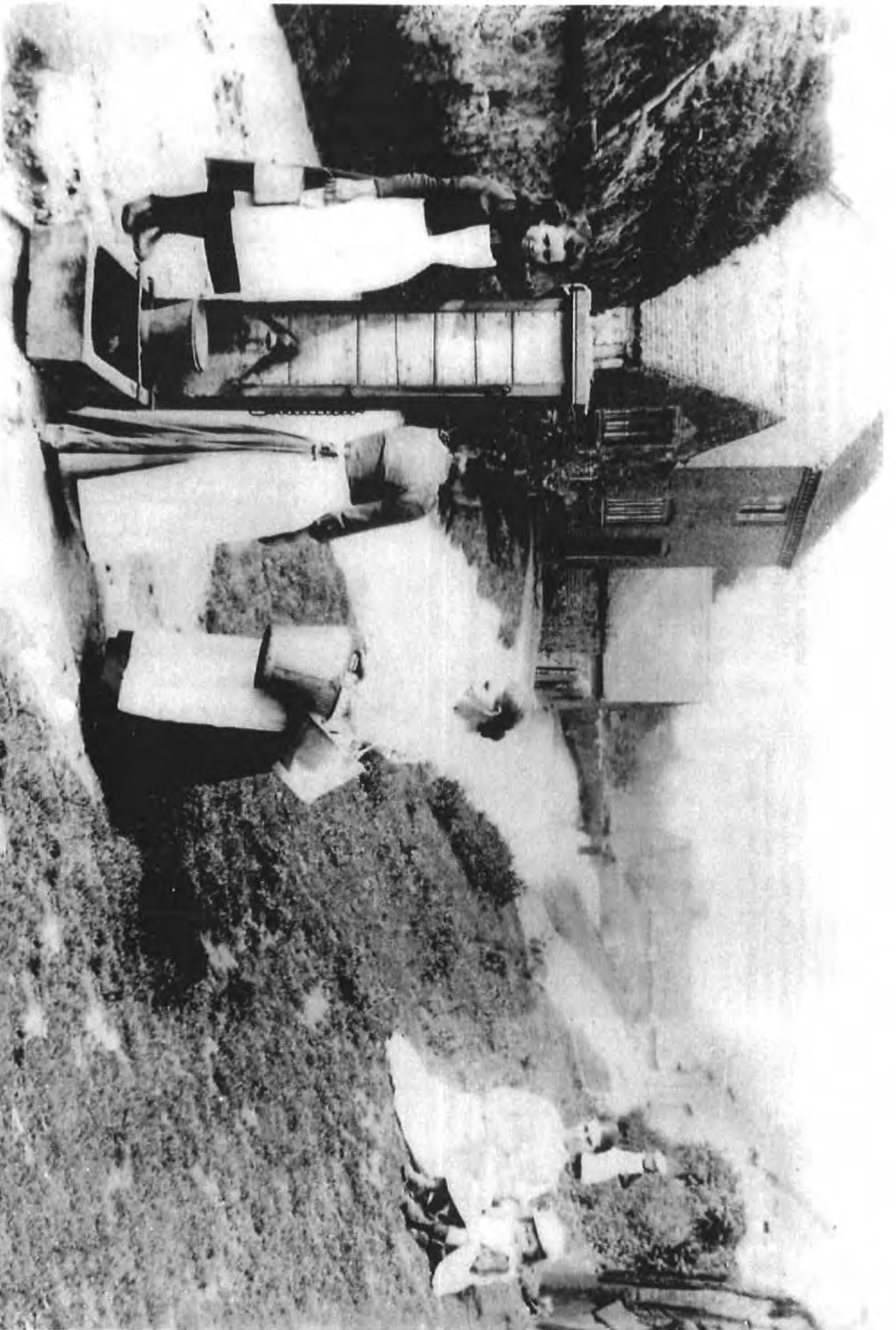
Charlie Shields driving past the Holy Bush public house. 1968



Tom Beresford and Enoch Lowe of Long Eaton with pony and trap at the Holy Bush. c1900



Lilac Cottage on the corner of Hollow Road and Melbourne Lane. 1928 Mrs Mason is holding baby Len in her arms and daughter Irene is standing at her side.



*Women of the village collecting water from the pump at the corner of Cross St. and Hollow Road. This pump served the west end of the village c. 1890*



*The Oddfellows Society marching along Hollow Road led by Mr Kinsey, Whitsuntide. 1904*

### **The Society of United Sisters**

This society has been established since 1813, and formerly was held at the Bull's Head (a public-house which has long passed away), but is now held at the "Three Horse Shoes." The officers consist of a President, Secretary, and four Stewardesses. No female is admitted under sixteen years or above thirty-five years of age, or without a medical certificate. After being proposed and initiated, a copy of the laws is presented to a new member and she is entitled to the full benefit of the sick and funeral fund at the expiration of one year. The sick pay is 5s. per week for twelve months, and then 3s. per week for the next twelve months. The payment at death is £4. and every member in case of a death has to pay to the common fund 6d. In case of a birth the mother is allowed 6s., and each sister is called upon to pay 1d. to the fund for each child.

The laws respecting the conduct of members are very strict, and any member proposing to divide the stock of the Society is to be at once excluded. Each member is provided with a doctor. The feast day is Thursday in Whitsun-week, when all members must answer the roll call for Church and march there two by two or forfeit 6d. The late Vicar, the Rev. George Crossley, M.A. was for many years President and also Honorary Secretary of this Club.

### **The Breerton Order of Oddfellows**

This is the largest club in Breerton, and was formerly a lodge of the Nottingham Ancient Imperial United Order of Oddfellows, but about thirty-two years ago the members ceased to belong to the Order, and established themselves as "The Breerton Order of Oddfellows." The membership numbers about 150, and the capital of the Society is valued at £1,009; of this £334 6s. 4d. is invested in pasture and allotment land, and £664 18s. is a deposit in the London, City & Midland Bank, the remainder being cash in hand.

The balance sheet of the Society for 1903 shows a decrease of capital of about £280, this being caused by the land being re-valued and entered in the Balance Sheet at its present value. The land was purchased many years ago at the absurd price of £120 per acre. The members of the Society pay 1s. 6d. per month, and after being members for a year they are entitled to 10s. per week during sickness, a free doctor, and 10s. is paid to the nearest relative on proof of death. There is also a widows' acknowledgment fund, by means of which the widow of a deceased member, by payment of 6d. per year, is entitled to £5 burial fee for herself. There has been a juvenile branch established in connection with the adult lodge. The annual feast is held on the Wednesday in Whitsun-week, when the members are expected to attend Divine Service in the Church.

*F Taylor, The History of Breerton. 1906*



*On the Wednesday after Whit Sunday members of the Breerton Order of Oddfellows would hold a divine service at the church and then march with banners and a brass band down from the church along Hollow Road and The Delph to the Hastings Arms for their annual feast.*

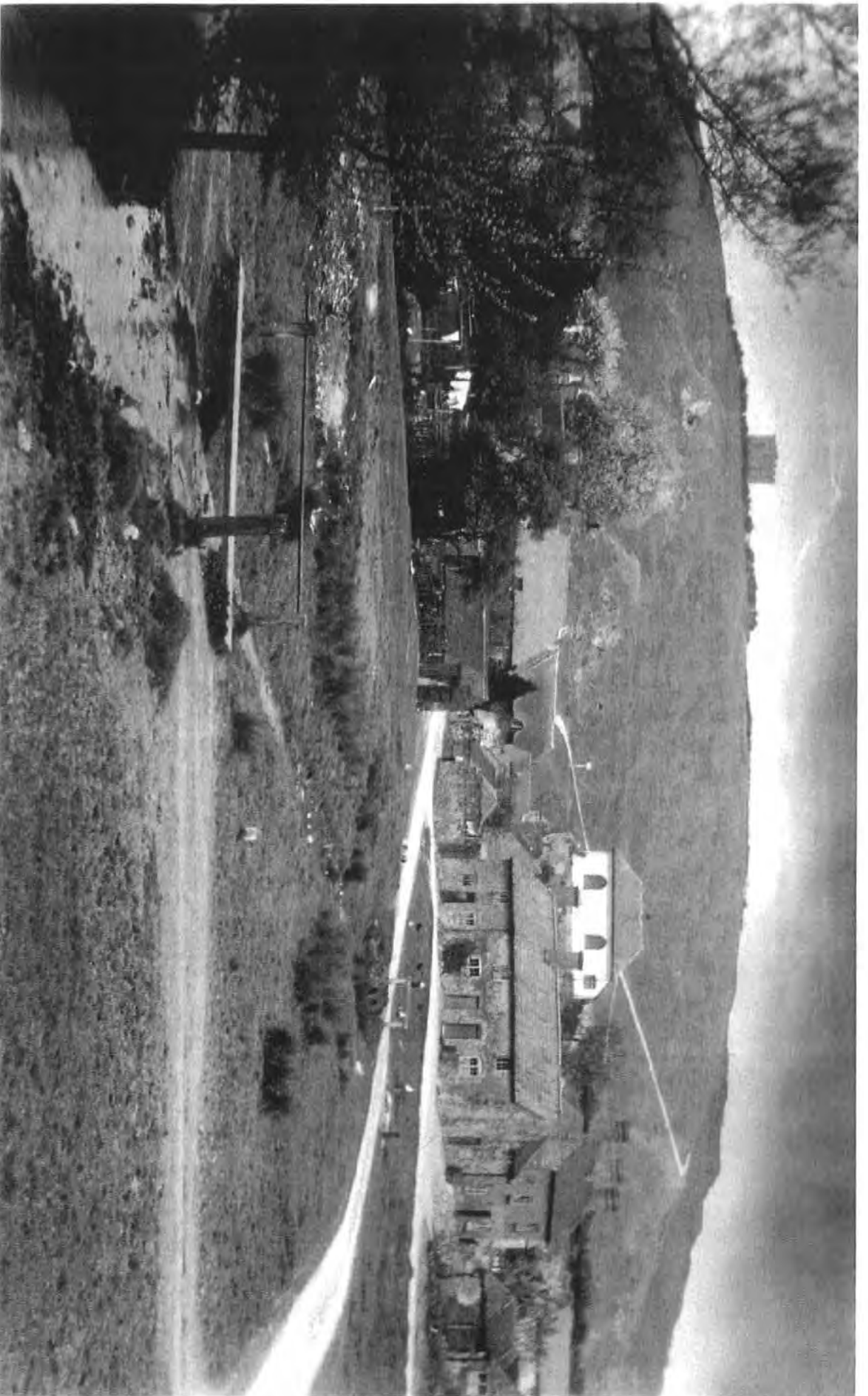
*The Oddfellows Society Feast Day. 1904*



*A marquee was erected in the garden of the public house, furnished with lecture tables and chairs and decorated with flowers, to accommodate all 150 members. The advent of the welfare state in 1947 removed the need for people to belong to these sick clubs and they were soon afterwards voluntarily disbanded.*

*The Oddfellows Society Feast Day. 1904*





*The west side of the Green was known as The Fishpools and it is here that monks are believed to have farmed fish in pools they had constructed for the purpose. Brendon, c.1910.*

The west side of the Green near the open fields was always a little wilder than the east side. This was the area known as The Fishpools and was fairly boggy and most liable to flood. The lane forded the stream here and pedestrians crossed on a couple of planks laid between the banks. Grazing cattle would go there to drink.

Along the west bank of the stream piles of earth have been dumped, presumably in an attempt to fill in the boggy fishpools area. The old boys' school is up on the hill on the right. For this photograph, the pupils have been allowed out of school and are sitting on the rocky outcrop just to the left of the school building.  
1900



This is Ginny Johnson, a much respected member of the community. She could usually be seen sitting in the open doorway of her cottage, rain or shine, summer or winter and no-one went up or down the lane without a friendly word from her.  
c. 1980



The Green remained picturesque until the early 1930's, after which it was neglected by public and private bodies and deteriorated.

During the 1930's domestic rubbish was dumped in the Fishpools and the area was referred to as the 'Trippit'. As boys we used to scavenge here for those bottles which had a marble in the neck - for the marbles!  
1932



Random tipping of soil and rubbish in the Fishpools soon made the Green an eyecore, a tangled mess of weeds and brambles.  
1947



Breendon Boys School, 1919

On the left is the headmaster, Frank Taylor, and on the right his daughter Nell, an assistant teacher. During the First World War all of the school teachers joined up and Frank's daughter, stepped in to help.





Jack Foster, here aged 85, was a parish constable in Brendon for over 20 years. A parish constable was the forerunner of today's special constable. 1959

On 15th August 1886, PC 123, Thomas Barrett of the Leicestershire Constabulary was brutally murdered on Brendon Green by James Banton.

"It was all caused through poaching" said Jack Foster. Jack was 11 years old when the murder took place. "In those days fines for poaching were 5 shillings, and nets and other poaching equipment were confiscated until the fine was paid. James Banton's nets had been confiscated by Constable Barrett but Banton did not have sufficient money to pay the fine. He insisted that the policeman return the nets but the policeman refused. Later, when Banton was leaving the Lime Kiln public house they met. There was an exchange of words and a fight occurred near the brook by the chapel."

Constable Barrett's body was found at 4.30am, on Monday 16th August by John Hickling, a Brendon farm labourer, whilst making his way to work along the side of the brook. The body was lying on the east bank of the stream - which would place it behind the woman on the right of this photograph. Mr Hickling reported that suddenly he came upon the body of the policeman lying partly in the brook and partly on the steep bank. His helmet lay about a foot from him. The body was that of a police constable he knew named Barrett. When he called to him he got no answer. Hickling examined the form. The constable, dressed in full uniform with lamp, belt and cape was lying on his back with his feet and legs in the brook, and his head and shoulders on the bank. His truncheon and handcuffs were in his pockets and from the appearance of the body of the unfortunate man - the head had



Mr Hickling, Jim Wartle and Doggy Hickling with two female relatives sitting on the parapet of the bridge on The Green. Behind the woman on the right is the spot where Mr Hickling's grandfather, John, found PC. Barrett's body lying in the brook. 1959. The stream has since been diverted and the bridge demolished.

been terribly cut or kicked - it was obvious that a brutal murder had been committed. Hickling at once informed the parish constable and together they carried the body to the home of the deceased man some 100 yards away on Main Street (See page 46). Dr Knipe of Melbourne was summoned and gave the opinion that the constable had been dead for some hours. Enquiries were instantly made, the result of which was that suspicion fell upon two labourers, James Banton and Joseph Gadsby. PC Barrett's

son was aged six at the time of his father's murder and remembers Banton shouting outside the police house where the family lived on Main Street "I've killed the bloody bobby" and how terrified his mother had been. He too joined the police force, eventually becoming Detective Sergeant TC Barrett in Warwick.

Gadsby was arrested quickly, charged with being an accessory and removed to Ashby. Banton was followed by the deputy chief constable Mr Edward Holmes to Littleover, where he had relatives, and arrested. On arriving at Borough Police Station, Derby, Mr Holmes said "Now, Banton, I want you to take particular notice of what I am going to tell you. I am going to charge you and do charge you with the murder of PC Thomas Barrett at Brendon last night. This is a most serious matter for you and it is my duty to caution you that anything you may say to me about it I must repeat when the case is heard." In reply he said "I don't understand you. I am no scholar." I said "I charge you with killing - you know what killing means - Thomas Barrett." He replied "Me kill a man! I never killed a man in my life. I'm as innocent as a child."

Detective Inspector Wainwright then testified that while en route to Ashby from Derby on the evening train, Banton who was handcuffed to him said "I done it, I killed him. I had been drinking at the Lime Kiln all night with Joe Gadsby. He paid for 3 or 4 pints of ale and I paid for 3 or 4 pints of ale. We left there together at turning out time. We got into the street. I saw the policeman and we walked together. I said to the policeman "How did Freddy get on yesterday?" He said "You know all about it" and struck me on the back with a stick. I then turned on him and struck him. We rolled down the bank together and went into the water. He bit my thumb and I let him have it. I wish I was going to be hanged tomorrow morning. Gadsby was with me but I done it."

Gadsby and Banton appeared before Mr Justice Grantham at the Leicestershire Winter Assize on 11th November 1886. Gadsby was acquitted but the jury found Banton guilty of wilful murder and on 30th November Banton was executed at Leicester prison. Gadsby later became insane and was certified.



Breendon Green 1885  
PC Barrett's body was found lying on the right hand bank of the stream. His feet and legs were in the stream and his head and shoulders on the bank. He had received fatal head injuries.



*The neglected village green, complete with stream. 1950*

As a result of indiscriminate tipping and lack of maintenance during the 30's and 40's, The Green became a tangled mess of weeds and brambles and the stream flooded the Fishpools at the slightest provocation.

In 1955, Captain Charles Shields, managing director of the quarry decided to do something about it. Captain Shields said, "We are robbing the village of the rock which has made it famous, but in return it is the aim of the company to repay the village with a share of the prosperity, a share to which we think it is entitled, by providing amenities beneficial to everyone and by replacing its lost beauty where we can."

*The Green used to flood frequently, and even when it wasn't flooded many parts would remain quite boggy. 1950*



The company's efforts are there for all to see. Neatly laid roadside gardens, beautiful walls, rockeries and shrubberies, boulevards and young trees, an attractive village green with war memorial and a number of houses bought and modernised by the company to house their employees.

*Loughborough Monitor. 1959*

In 1956, the quarry company carried soil to the Green from the sugar beet factory at Colwick to fill in the boggy land. The stream was diverted and culverted by means of four-foot piping which was concealed underground. The Green became a smooth expanse of well kept grass and near little fences and tree planting completed the reclamation.

This began a complete transformation of the village and in 1978 Breardon was awarded the supreme accolade of Best Kept Village in a competition run by the Leicester Advertiser.

*Reg Frain worked tirelessly for the community of Breardon and was for many years chairman of the parish council. 1958*

*A tree is planted to his memory in the grounds of Breardon community centre*



*The Parish Council receiving the Best Kept Village Award on behalf of the residents of Breardon. 1978*



*Breedon Green with villagers' livestock given free range. The single storey building in the centre of the picture with posters above the door is Mr Roberts blacksmith's shop. 1900*

Breedon Hill or Common consists of sixty two acres of land, of this fourteen acres are arable and forty-eight acres pasture; about twenty-nine acres are enclosed, and on the remainder the inhabitants of certain houses have the right to run three sheep and lambs to September 29th; after that date lambs are considered as sheep, and must either be taken off the hill or the owner must hire the right from tenants who are making no use of their privilege. There were thirty-three houses in the parish that had this right.



*Mr Kidd's cows, the last herd of cows in the village, returning to the fields after milking. 1977*

and consequently ninety-nine sheep could be placed on the hill: but as many of the houses are now down, the owners of sheep "walks" or "gates" as they are commonly called, claim the right for the land on which the houses formerly stood. Of late years only about half-a-dozen people have grazed sheep on the hill, and, therefore, many "gates" have not been used. The average price paid to a cottager for his "sheep walk" is 5s. per annum. The sheep are allowed to go down to the village to drink, but are liable to be "penned" if they stray far from the hill. The "Lord of the Manor," in conjunction with the other owners of "sheep walks," has the power to prevent any encroachment, erection on, or destruction of any part of the Common.

At what period the inhabitants obtained the right of allowing sheep to graze is uncertain, but Nichols states "that in 1166 Robert de Ferraries, Earl of Derby, gave to the Canons of Breedon Priory, in addition to what his grandfather had given, pasturing for six score ewes and four rams and the pasture for nourishing their lambs, and about 1173 the heir of the Robert gave the Canons three messuages on Breedon Hill." This pasturage right was probably retained by the Priory until the time of the Dissolution of the Monasteries, and since then has been used by the parishioners; and in the Act of 1759 for enclosing the open and common fields of Breedon, Tonge, and Wilson, in the Manor of Breedon, it is stated that Breedon Hill is not to be included.

*F Taylor, Breedon, Ashby. 1906*

As with much common land throughout the country, the ownership and precise extent was never written down. From the 1920's as the great estates began to be broken up much of this land was enclosed by new landlords and therefore acquired - when it should have remained in public ownership.

The situation is no less confused at Breedon and the Hill is a very good example. It is believed that the rights and ownership of the land were contained in the Parish Award, a document that was entrusted to the safekeeping of the Parish Clerk and kept in the Parish Chest. In 1938 the parish clerk died. He had served in this post for decades. The then chairman of the parish council collected all the minute books, account books and other documents and approached another person whom he thought might fill the vacancy. This person was duly authorised by the council to act as its clerk. Several years later, upon the passing of the chairman and recently appointed clerk, the new clerk was asked to produce the Parish Award and Plan. Sadly these documents were not to be found. Despite strenuous efforts to locate it the Parish Award remains lost and so the extent of the common land could not be defined.

In 1965, under the terms of the Commons Registration Act the parish council applied for ownership of the village green, the round house and penfold and the unenclosed areas of Breedon Hill. The hearings, appeals and registrations took over twenty years but the Parish was finally granted ownership of the village green and the round house and penfold, but only right of common on the unenclosed areas of Breedon Hill.

*Ralph Walker. 2002*

*A villager with "a gale" on the hill was allowed to graze three sheep plus their lambs there. However, on 29th September the lambs were considered to be sheep and any excess numbers had to be sold or removed to other pasture.*

*1920*





*This is one of the earliest photographs we have of Breendon Green, taken by Nathaniel Curzon of Breendon Hall. Many villagers are in the photograph and Henry Robert's blacksmiths' shop is centre picture. 1870*

I left school at 12. You see for 3 or 4 months of the year we didn't have to go to school as we were loaned out to farmers to help with the harvest and that sort of thing. The authorities had the idea of giving the farmers the kiddies to help with the potato picking but you were loaned for other things, harvesting and helping out. When the war finished I reverted back to doing what I had previously done - helping on the farm and helping in the blacksmiths shop. My father had the blacksmith's on the Green. Henry Roberts' blacksmiths and horse repairer shop. I was brought up as a blacksmith.

*Ralph Roberts*



*The Green cottages 1910. Alec Platts lived in the left hand cottage of this group. His son, also called Alec, lives in the middle cottage today.*



Alec Platts lived in a cottage on The Green and was a remarkable darts player. In one competition held at Loughborough Town Hall in September 1938 during the Hospital Carnival, an audience of over 600 people saw him beat all comers. It was the first time a contest of such dimensions had been organised in Loughborough and the first prize was a silver cup valued at £50 and £10 cash. Entries were received from all over Leicestershire.

Alec progressed smoothly through the early rounds, beating H Summerfield of Coalville in the quarter finals and H Dormer of Loughborough in the semi-finals. In the final he was matched against C Bramley of Leicester. Alec won after an epic battle. The Loughborough Echo reported "In the opinion of authoritative darts enthusiasts it was the finest game they had ever witnessed." The newspaper continued "A more brilliant exhibition of the art of throwing a dart, than was shown by Bramley and Platts the finalists, would be difficult to see. Repeated pleas for silence were ignored by the crowd in its praise of the skill of opponents who indulged in a wonderful rate of scoring."

"The Corn Exchange of the Town Hall was filled almost to capacity, but every member of the large audience was able to have a full view of the competitors when in action. A raised platform had been erected at the foot of the stage and the board had been mounted in an elaborate cabinet which housed hidden lights."

"Platts, wearing a brown trilby hat cocked upon his head at a jaunty angle wore an expression of careless abandon. Speaking over the microphone, Platts suitably expressed his pleasure at winning the contest, while Bramley said that it had been the best and most efficiently organised competition he had ever competed in."



*Alec Platts, the celebrated Breendon darts player with his granddaughter, Janice Murray, and Spot the dog. Spot was as good at catching rabbits as his master was at throwing darts. 1970*

Harry Roberts, the Breendon blacksmith, at work in his shop. 1934

Breendon Wakes were held on the second weekend in September on the Green. There were swingboats and coconut shy's, a carnival and fancy dress competition. It was great fun. 1929.

When the Green was renovated in 1956 the Wakes moved to the Dovecote Field. In 1962, the new school was built and the event ceased.



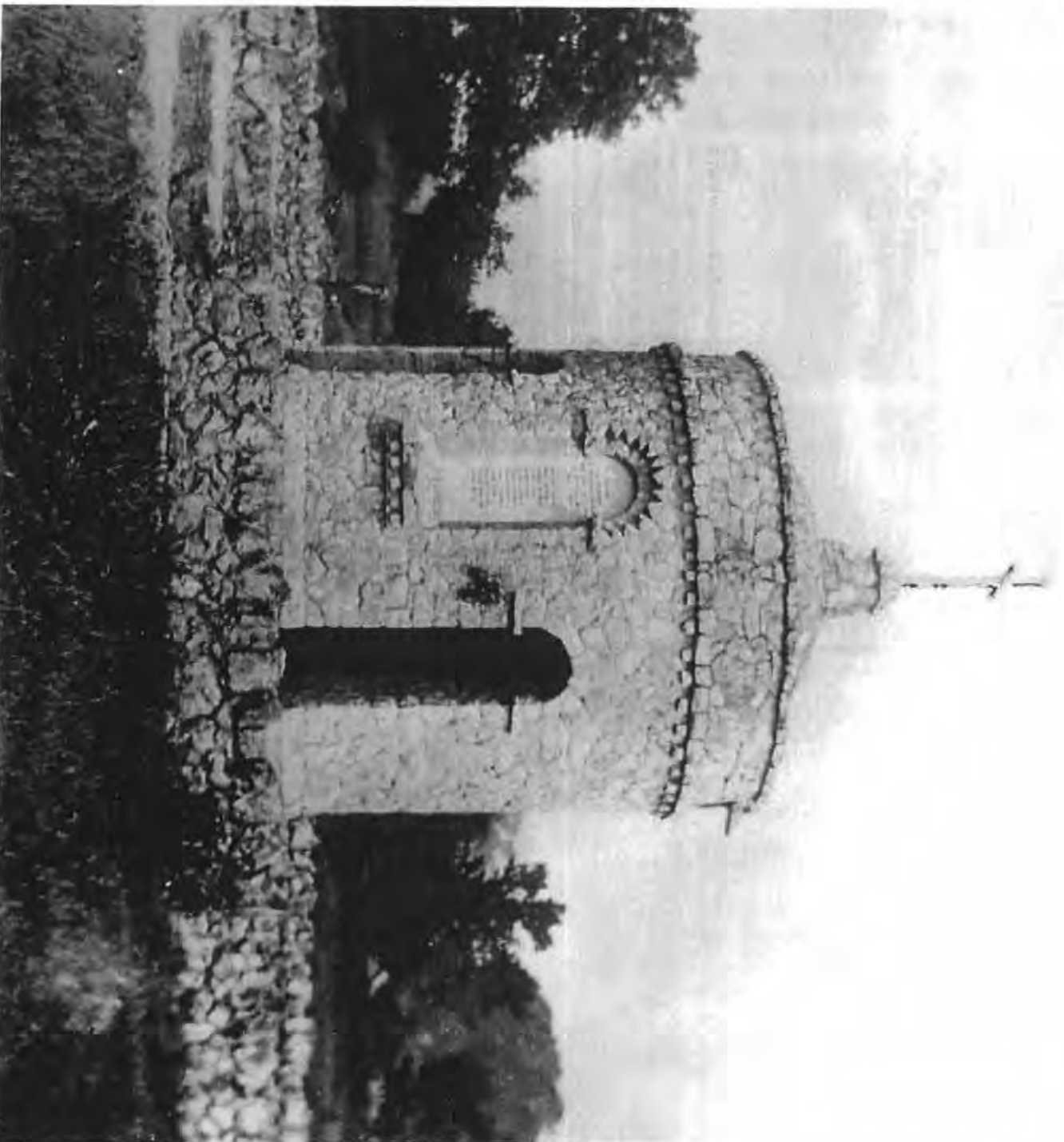
The parish war memorial at Bredon-on-the-Hill is situated in an area of the Green known at the time as the Fish Pool. It is built of local stone and is of an unusual design.

Mr Salt of Belton built the memorial and was given a free hand in its design. He was assisted by Mr Edgar Barsby and his son and by Mr Lester. The stone was donated by Mr JG Shields and the cost of other materials and labour was met by a public collection which raised £150. The unveiling and dedication of the war memorial took place on Sunday 28th November 1921 before a crowd of about 500 people, amongst which were some 50 ex-soldiers of the parish.

The names of the fallen are inscribed on a slab of Aberdeen granite set in the front of the memorial. Mr William Rouleston read out the names and the Countess of Loudoun then unveiled the monument. Mr Collier of the Wesleyan chapels in the circuit gave the address. The Rev. ET Finch, vicar of Bredon, dedicated the memorial after which Mr Taylor read out the names of all the ex-soldiers of the parish. This was followed by the sounding of The Last Post and a rendition of the national anthem, God Save The King.



The Melbourne Town Prize Band provided the accompaniment to the hymns at the dedication of the war memorial. 28th November 1921





*Dedication of Breedon War Memorial. 1921. Standing with the little girl is Mr John Spencer, the butcher, from Worthington. The girl is Ada, his granddaughter and mother of our parish priest, John Dawson.*



*The War Memorial shortly after its construction. 1921*

*A stone paved area surrounded the memorial, edged by a low, circular stone wall. Curiously this was removed during the refurbishment of the Green in 1956*



*A photograph taken from a newspaper showing the War Memorial after the service of dedication, 1921*

*They shall not grow old as we that are left grow old.  
Age shall not weary them nor the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun and in the morning  
We will remember them.*



*The Remembrance Day programme and memorial trees. 1957*



*On 10th November 1957, another service of dedication was held in memory of those men of the parish who had died in war for their country and its cause. New gates on the memorial and 15 newly planted trees were dedicated to their memory. As each name inscribed on the memorial was read out, a plaque bearing that name was placed at the foot of one of the trees. The wrought iron gates fitted to the four arches were made by Bob Harvey and Dick Cox in 1956.*



*Ernie Hickling representing the British Legion during the Coronation celebrations. May 1953. The service is being led by the Reverend Robert Leader.*



Cottages at the west end of Main Street. 1968



*Accidents on Main Street were quite common during the 60's and 70's when the A453 was a major trunk road but fortunately casualties were few. Here a lorry failed to negotiate the corner on the Green and left the road, narrowly missing the West End cottages. 1967.*

On a warm night in May 1932 Breedon suffered very severe flooding especially on the Main Street and the lower parts of the village. I remember my dad waking me to tell me we were surrounded by water. I looked out of the bedroom window and the Main Street looked like a river. Dad and I rushed downstairs to see water squinting through cracks in the front door. We had recently bought two small pigs which were

in the sty at the bottom of the garden and went to rescue them. On opening the back door we were almost swept off our feet by a two foot high wall of water sweeping into the house. Barely hesitating we waded on down the garden. The pigs slept on a raised board and they were standing on it, almost swimming. There was a large sack tied to the ceiling of the sty which was used to store straw for the pigs' bedding. We placed the pigs in the sack and secured it to the ceiling. They survived, none the worse for their ordeal. As we waded back to



*The front end of the same accident. 1968.*

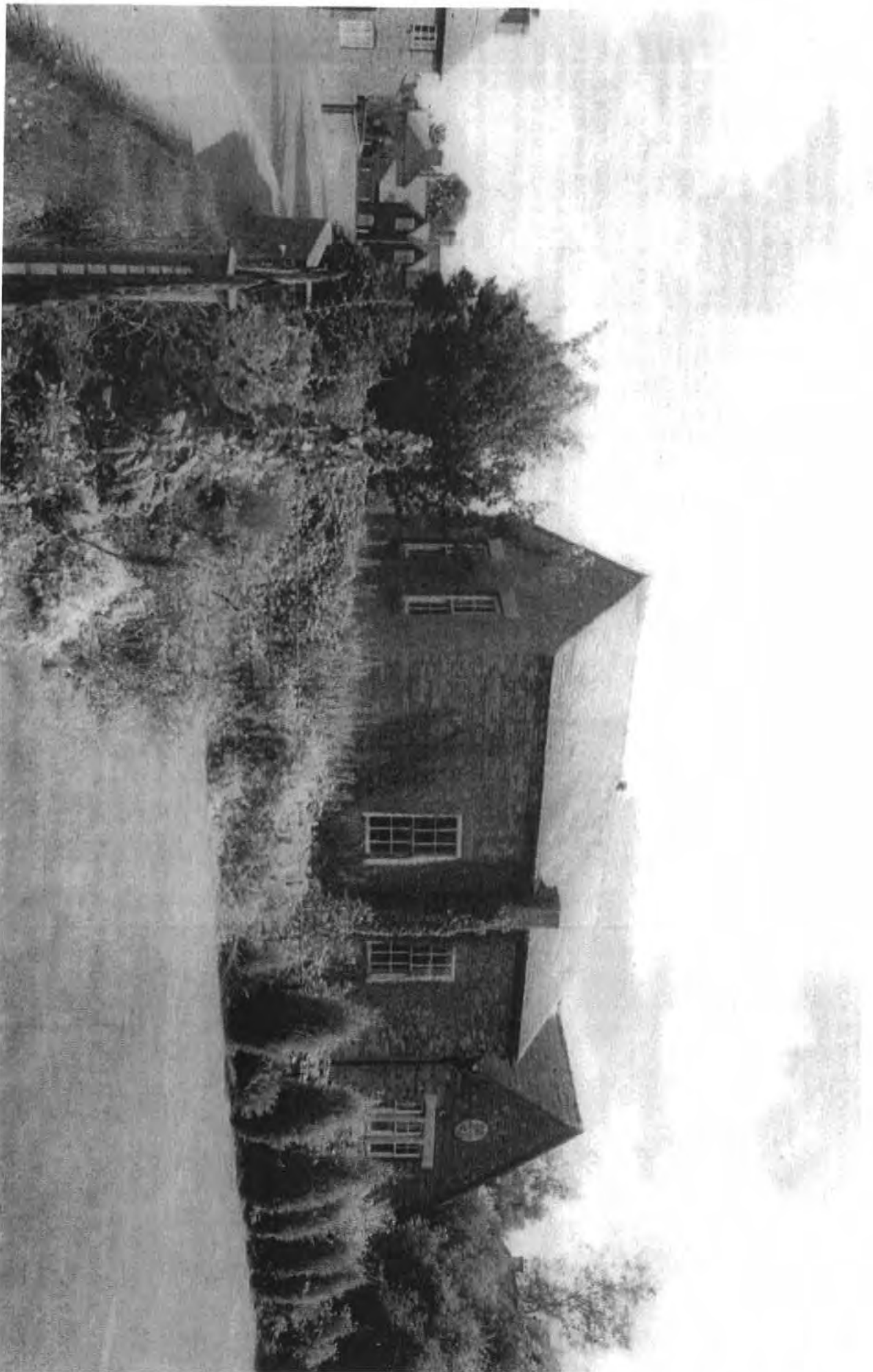
the house we saw all kinds of objects floating down the Main Street. Back inside the house, we could not make a cup of tea as the water was up to the fire grate some three feet above floor level (no electric kettles then - or gas cookers even now!) and was even lapping over the fourth of our ten stairs. Luckily no-one was injured but the loss of household materials was a nasty blow to many families. Although there were no fitted carpets in those days the loss of the popular pegged rug was a disaster for many. Nothing was covered by insurance then. Like the good people of that era they just joked about it afterwards. Sawley Bridge over the Trent was carried away in this flood and the quarry worked three 18 hour shifts to supply stone for the repairs, carting it to the site on steam powered lorries.

#### *Anon*

*The pavement outside the cottages on the corner of the Green and Main Street was washed away and debris was scattered down Main Street for many hundreds of yards. May 1932*



*Debris was scattered down the length Main Street. May 1932*



*The Methodists' Chapel, 1985. It is now a beautiful dwelling house.*

The Wesleyan Methodists have had a chapel situated at the west end of the village for a very long time, but no date can be ascertained as to when the original chapel was erected, probably about 1780. Several alterations and improvements have been made in the building owing to the spread of Methodism, the most important being the



Breerton Methodist's Chapel, 1968

addition of a large schoolroom, which can be thrown open to the chapel when necessary. The contract for the school was £325; the land was purchased from "Leawood's Trustees," and the foundation stone was laid by Mr. Burton, of Breerton, in 1879, the debt being paid off by collections and subscriptions, the last £25 being paid off by the "Joyce's family," who had previously liberally subscribed.

In 1874 the sum of £300 was handed to the chapel trustees by Mr Thomas Dunicliffe, of Breerton-on-the-Hill, being money placed in his hands by his sister Elizabeth Dunicliffe, to be by him appropriated and disposed of in such a way as she had directed for the benefit of the Ashby-de-la-Zouch Wesleyan Methodist Circuit. The trust deed directs the trustees to invest the £300, or any part of it, in any of the public stocks or funds, or Government Security in England and Wales, with power from time to time to vary or transfer such, or any part of it, for other securities; the fund to be known as the Dunicliffe Trust Fund." It further directs that the sum of £3 shall, out of the rents, profits, or interest, be paid annually to the treasurer of the Breerton Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, for the purpose of warming and lighting the said chapel, and the residue shall be paid to the treasurer of the said society of the Wesleyan Methodists at Breerton, to be by him paid over to the stewards or treasurer

of the Ashby-de-la-Zouch Circuit, in which the said Breerton Chapel is situated, in augmentation of the quarterly payments made by the Breerton Society to the general fund of the Ashby Circuit; and in case Wesleyan Methodism shall at any time cease to exist in Breerton, then the said £300 shall be applied and disposed of for the benefit of the poor of the village of Breerton, in such a way and form as the trustees shall in their absolute discretion direct.

This money is now invested with the Oakthorpe Chapel trustees. In 1898 the Breerton Chapel was renovated and re-seated at a cost of £100, the amount being collected the same year. Services are held twice each Sabbath, and also evening services during the week; the Sunday school has a roll of over eighty children.

*F Taylor, The History of Breerton.*  
1905



Breerton Methodist's Chapel,  
March 1898.

The last service before closing was held in the chapel on 28th August 1983



Members of the Methodists' Chapel on the grassy bank at the triangle on Hollow Road. The group includes Jack and Lil Bentley, and the chapel organist, Mabel Foster. The other five are visitors from chapels in the Ashby circuit who came to sing at anniversaries. 1925.



Breedon Main  
Sireel, 1888

The shop on the left of the street is Rouliston's. It became Mr Shawcroft's shop in 1958.

From the state of the road it is still being used for moving cattle and there is a great deal of stone in evidence in the walls of the buildings - probably robbed from the monastery.

Andersill cottage was situated on the left behind the stone wall.

Liz and Jim Wardle, the newsgents, lived in the cottage on the right with a figure in the door. During the 1939-45 war Liz would help by catering for the troops stationed in the village and it was a common sight on a Sunday to see soldiers, John Willie, Tommy Two-bob, Little Doug, Harry Proctor and Vin McGardle sitting patiently on the pavement waiting for their tea,



*Mr Roulston's shop. 1919*

Before 1926 the Post Office was at Percy Taylor's shop near the Three Horseshoes but then moved to Mr Roulston's at the west end of Main Street. Frank Roulston was the village baker and his hot cross buns, baked to his own special recipe, were truly wonderful. My sister Ida and I would walk the mile from Tonge to the shop on Good Friday to buy hot cross buns. Still warm from the oven. I remember one year we arrived at the shop to find they were sold out. We were disappointed and walked all the way back with nothing to show for our efforts. Sadly when Frank died he took his recipe for hot cross buns with him.

*John Weston*

I remember being sent on errands to Mr Roulston's shop in my childhood days. This shop sold everything required for village life except fresh meat, greengrocery, clothes and footwear. You could get anything from a packet of pins to a roll of wire netting in the hardware line and from a quart of paraffin to a pound of black



*The view from the back of Mr Roulston's shop. 1919*

treacle from bulk in the liquid line. The shop had a wooden counter with a white tiled top and a pair of brass beam scales at each end. On shelves behind the counter were a number of round green containers with the contents, Rice, Sugar, Tea, etc., printed on each. On the customer's side there were numerous tins of biscuits and a bank of small drawers from floor to ceiling, each one labelled with its contents. Most commodities were weighed out in front of the customers on the beam scales. Butter would be weighed to the customers requirements from a huge block then it would be patted into shape before it was wrapped up. The shop had a smell of its own. It was a mixture of newly baked bread, mature cheese and bacon and on a winter's evening when it got dark the smell from the paraffin lamps was added to the mixture

*Ernest Hodgson*

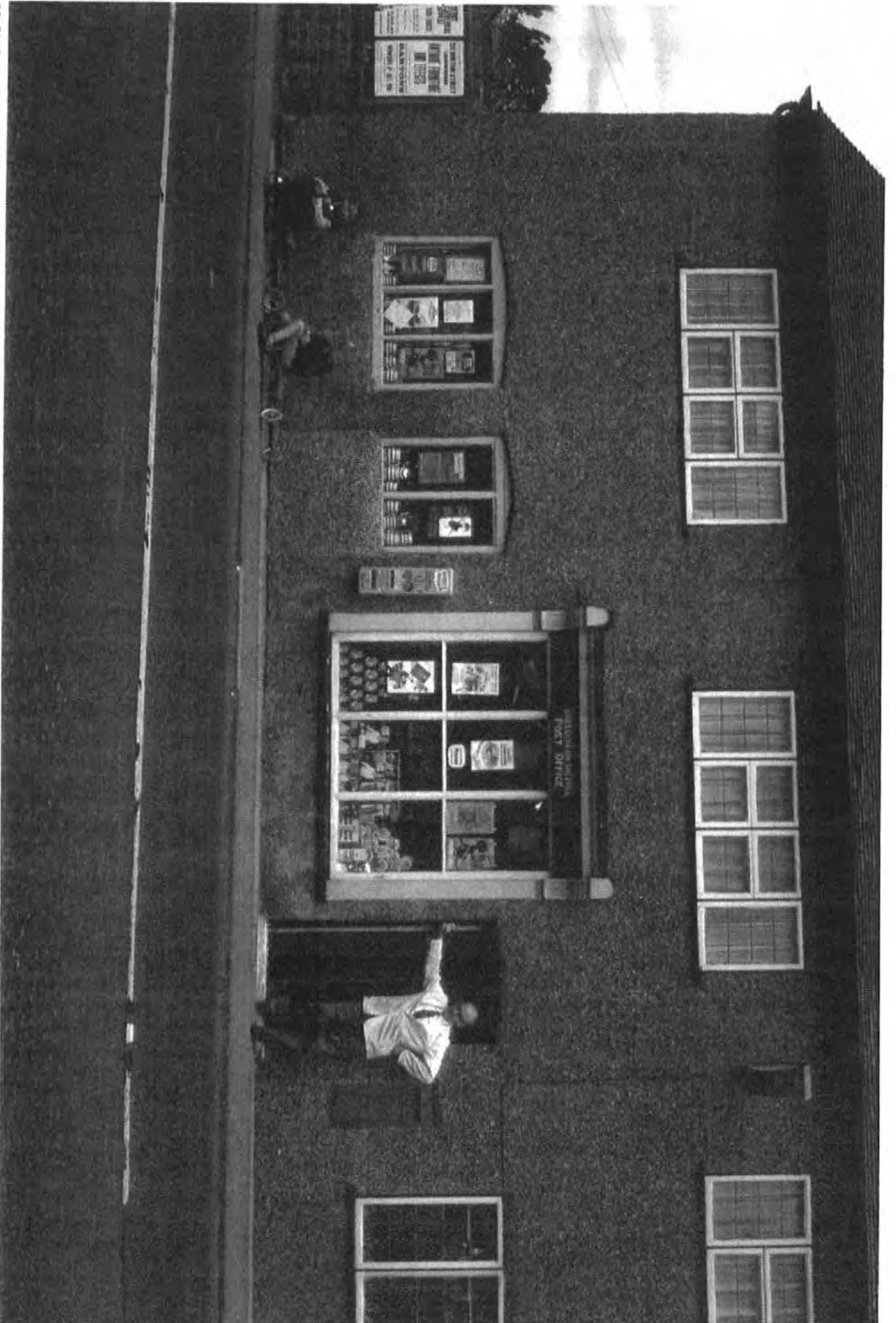


*Andersill cottages. 1919*



*Andersill Cottage 1932. Mick Shaw's father, Fred, is standing at the door reading the newspaper. The cottage stood a little way back from Main Street near Mr Roulston's shop and there were more cottages to the left. Mick and his brothers George, Gerald and Derrick grew up here. It was a source of some pride that Sir John Turner, the coal industrialist, was born in one of the tiny houses next door which later became their pigsty. The cottage was demolished in 1956.*





Mr. SH Shawcraft standing at the door of his village shop and post office on Main Street, 1966  
The business occupied three different rooms. The shop was in the left and middle rooms and the post office in the room on the right. On the pavement two village lads with their "trolleys" watch the photographer.



Les Fisher's father's original timber butchers' shop gave sterling service for more than 40 years. It was demolished in 1999. Les's new shop and flats were built on Foster's farmyard in 1972.



Liz and Jim Wardle: 1950  
Jim and Liz ran the village  
newsagents from their cottage  
opposite the Post Office

Jack Bentley by the cowshed  
on a visit to see his future  
wife, Lil Foster: 1920



**BREEDON HOME FED  
MEAT CO.**  
(A. L. FISHER & SON)  
Manor Farm Butchery  
Telephone: MELBOURNE 2707



Providers of the finest quality  
home killed meat, etc.  
Deep freeze supply a speciality

Mr & Mrs Shawcroft took over the shop in 1958 and ran it until they retired in 1976. The shop closed and and was converted to a dwelling house. Mr Shawcroft was a special constable in the village for more than 10 years and Mrs Shawcroft was instrumental in re-establishing the WI in the village in 1963.

Mr & Mrs SH Shawcroft.  
Postmaster and postmistress. 1970



Mr Foster and his daughter Lil in their farmyard, c.1920.  
The Main Street ran parallel with the cowshed, to the right of the puddle. Les Fishers shop and flats were built on the site in 1972.





*Looking south over Breedon village from the hill, 1930  
On the left is the rear of Breedon Hall with its walled garden. Running down the centre of the picture is Cross Street and on the right of Cross Street is the Stud Farm.*

At the time of this photograph the Hall was occupied by Major Johnny Shields, his wife Eva May and their children, Gillies, Donald, Kathleen and Geraldine. The Hall however was still owned by the Curzon family of Lockington and was not sold to the Shields family until 1944 when Major Johnny moved from the Hall to Isley Walton to his late father's house and Captain Charlie Shields and his family moved to the Hall from Worthington Manor.



Looking up Cross Street from Main Street, 1968. The cottages in the foreground were demolished shortly after this photograph was taken. The next building, jutting out slightly, is Stud Farm with adjoining cottage. The gap from there to the white house is where the cowsheds once stood - now Stud Farm Close.



An aerial photograph of Cross Street. On the right is Hillside Farm and bottom left is Stud Farm, 1968

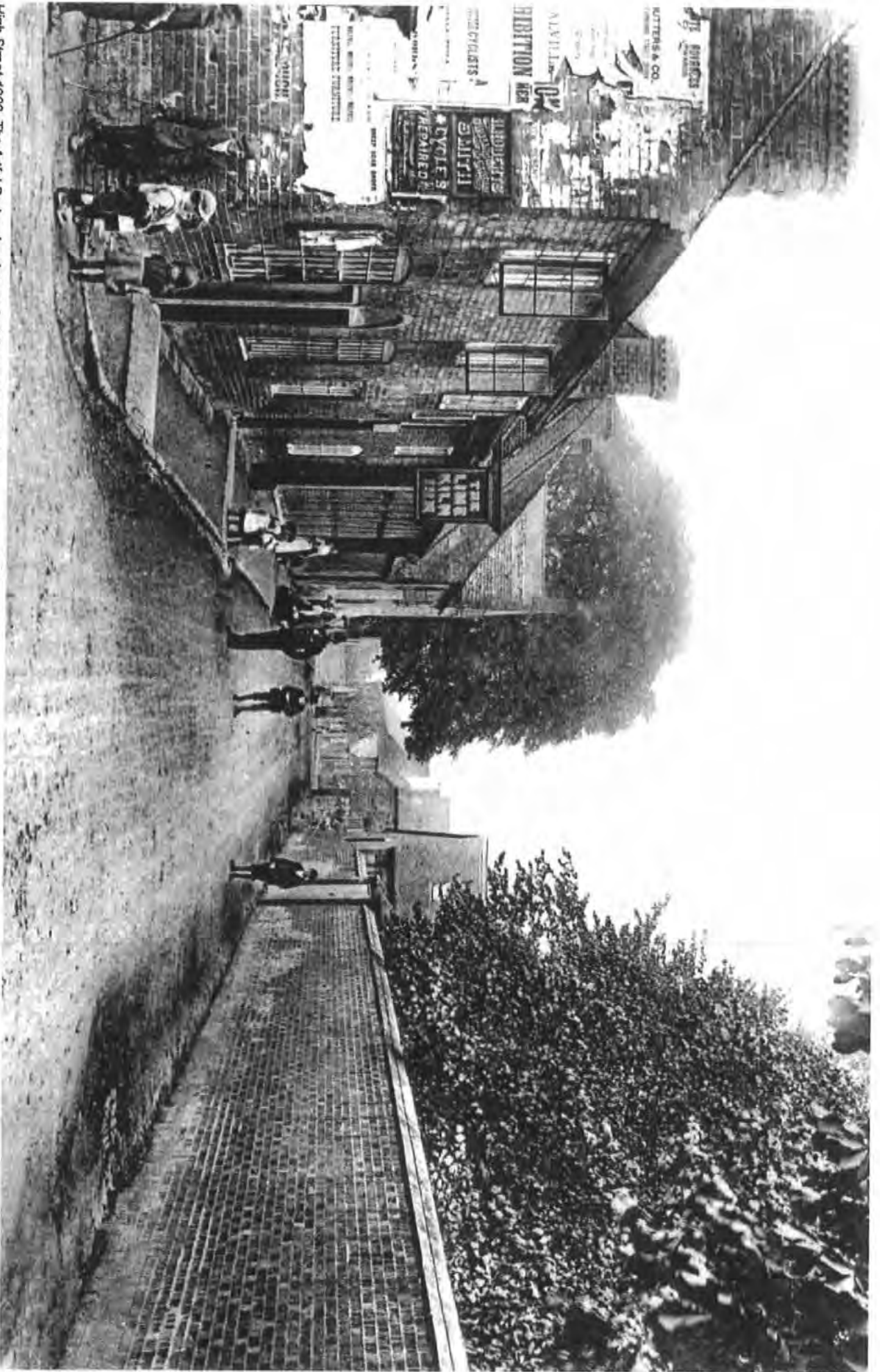
Hillside Farm on Cross Street c. 1930. Jimmy Clifton farmed there until 1945 when Herbert Mason took over. Herbert was the knacker man to whom sick and broken down livestock were taken for disposal.



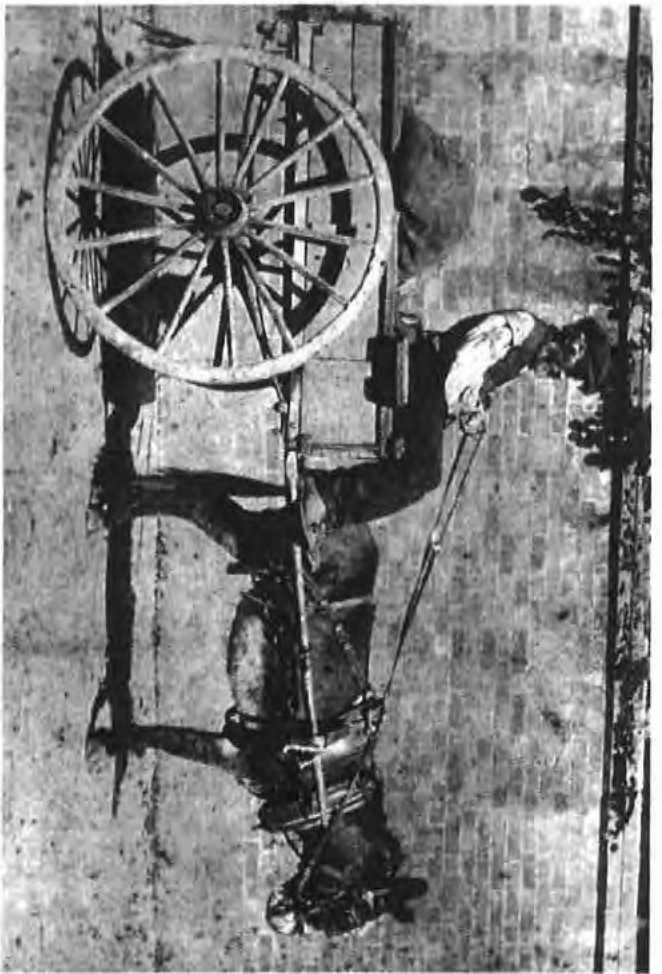
Mabel Foster with her hens and geese c. 1920. Mabel's cottage was on Cross Street and the stone garden wall behind her runs alongside Hollow Road. Mabel, like most villagers, was largely self sufficient, keeping poultry, a pig, some sheep and growing her own fruit and vegetables.



Looking down Cross Street towards Hillside Farm, 1968. During the 1970's the farm stood empty, its fine, listed staircase went missing and the building was vandalised. The Quarry Co. then demolished the farm and replaced it with a bungalow and some smaller retirement bungalows.



High Street 1900. The Artful Dodger leaning against the wall on the left is Harry Roberts. Harry's father was the village blacksmith on The Green and Harry became the blacksmith at Melbourne. The small girl on the corner is Beatrice "Bear" Thompson who later married Mr Hinks to become Beal Hinks. The police house was the first house on the left and it was to here that PC Barrett's body was carried from the Green on that fateful day in 1886. The Lime Kiln public house was closed in 1998 and converted to offices. The next building along on the left is the semi-timbered barn and gateway to Limes Farmyard. The tall roof gable in front of the large chestnut tree belongs to the Limes Farmhouse. On the right is the Hall wall which was demolished in 1968 and rebuilt 10 metres back from the road to make room for a footpath and to improve visibility.



*Ready-money Jim, the rag-and-bone-man from Melbourne parked opposite the Lime Kiln, 1880.*



*Thomas Thompson the landlord, with Sam Bradbury who worked at the quarry and George Rouiston who's farm was on the corner of Worthington Lane on a winter's afternoon outside the Lime Kiln. There is snow on the roof and ice on the pavement. On the right is the semi-timbered barn of Limes Farm. January 1925.*



*Limes Farmhouse. Main Street. Brendon. c.1900*



*Miss Cooper, a local teacher, with her pony and trap at Limes Farmhouse. Main Street. 1900*



*Women standing outside Percy Taylor's shop on Main Street. 1909*

Percy Taylor's shop supplied haberdashery and some provisions. At the time of this photograph his shop was also the village Post Office, but in 1926 the Post Office moved to Mr Roulston's at the west end of Main Street. The stream can just be seen running across Worthington Lane at the bottom of the hill.



The junction of Worthington Lane and Main Street, 1968. As you can see the road ran around both sides of the white building.

As lads we'd play football in the alley on the left. Our teams would be West End v Worthington Lane. Other games we'd play were Tick, Hide & Seek, and Fox & Hounds. Fox & Hounds was also known as Holler if played at night. The person nominated as fox would set off and we would try to follow him. If he lost us, we'd call out "Oiler, oiler, or the dogs won't follow."

A large white house, known as Thompson's farmhouse, stood on the Worthington Lane junction but was demolished in 1968 to improve visibility for traffic pulling out into Main Street. Billy Smith was the last farmer to live here. June 1954.



Playing Husky-bum, a form of Leap-frog, in the alley. 1916



The brook ran across the Worthington Lane near the junction with Main Street and often used to flood, as seen here in May 1932. It was eventually culverted to flow beneath the road in 4 foot diameter concrete pipes.



The Hall garden wall at the edge of the road is being demolished and rebuilt ten metres back from the roadside to improve visibility for traffic on the blind corner and to allow a footpath to be created. October 1969.



Road accidents were commonplace in Bresson in the 60's, 70's and 80's when Main Street was the main trunk road between Nottingham and Birmingham. Traffic was so heavy it could sometimes take residents 20 minutes to cross the road. c. 1980



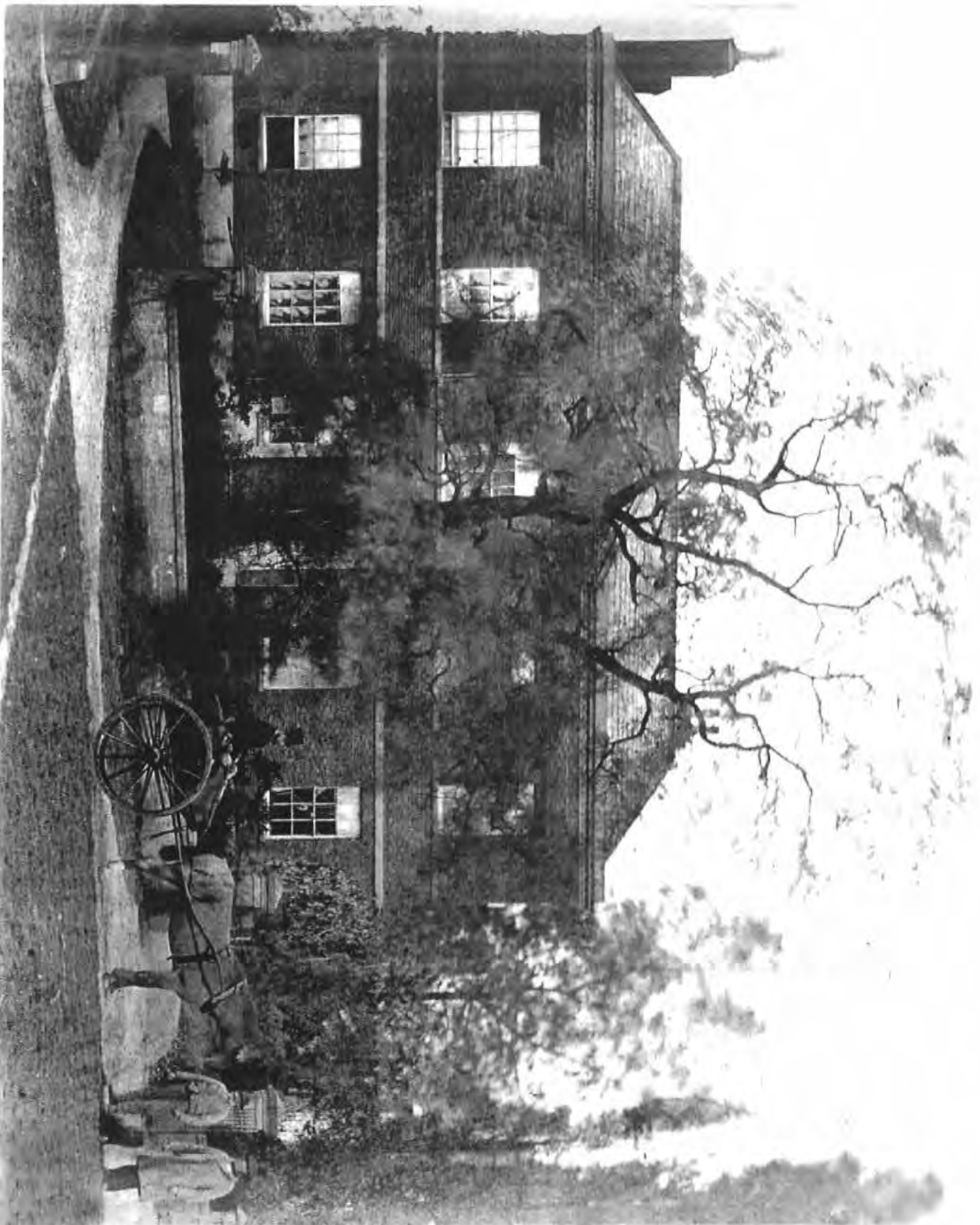




Jenny Kinsey at the bottom of Worthington Lane, 1916.

We are looking from the Main Street towards Worthington. At this time the stream ran across the road near the junction of Worthington Lane and Main Street then turned South and followed the road gutter around the stone wall before continuing eastwards, across the fields behind the Three Horseshoes through the osier beds where the school playing fields are now, towards Tonge. The stone wall has since been removed and the stream has been culverted below ground in huge four foot diameter concrete pipes. The farm behind Jenny was thought to have once been owned by Rustat's Charity, a significant local charity started by Mr Tobias Rustat, in 1688 with the object of the better maintenance of any vicar or vicars residing in the county of Leicestershire. In 1927 this land was sold and money raised was re-invested in stock, the dividends from which the trustees still distribute every year.





Breerton Hall was never the manor house for Breerton. That was located somewhere near the corner of Doctor's Lane and Main Street.

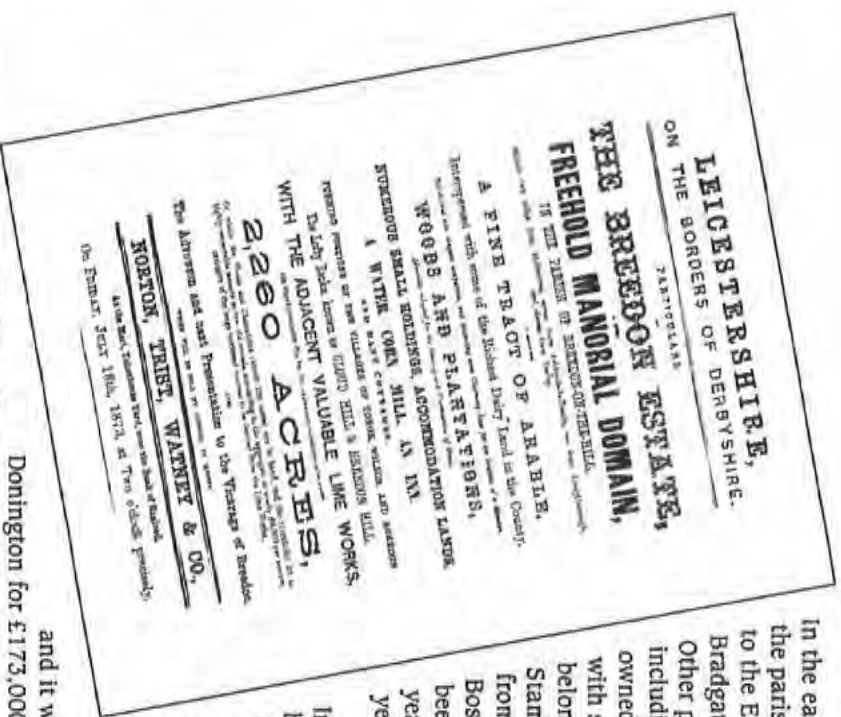
In 1620 the Hall was a small timber framed cottage. It was bought by the Curzon family and enlarged, and further enlarged in 1680. In 1777 it was given a new Georgian front.

In 1870, Nathaniel Curzon, seen here on his pony and trap, lived at Breerton Hall. Nathaniel had inherited the Hall and a good deal of land in the area from his father - who was also named Nathaniel Curzon and is buried at Breerton church. This photograph is one of the earliest we have.

In 1872 Nathaniel bought the Lockington estate and moved to Lockington Hall. The Hall was let to Mr & Mrs Partridge and after their death, their daughter continued to live there. In the 1920's the Hall was let to Major Johnny Shields, who remained there until 1943 when his father JG Shields died. Johnny moved to his father's house in Isley Walton.

In 1944 Captain Charles Shields, Johnny's younger brother, bought Breerton Hall from John Curzon and moved in.

Breerton Hall 1870



In the early 19th century most of the parish of Breedon belonged to the Earl of Stamford, of Bradgate Hall, Leicestershire. Other parts of the parish including Breedon Hall were owned by the Curzon family, with some small portions belonging to freeholders. Lord Stamford let the lime works from year to year to the Bostock family, who had been his tenants for 200 years. The rent was £500 a year.

In 1872 Lord Stamford had knowledge that both Lord Donington and Nathaniel Curzon were very anxious to purchase his Breedon property. He put it up for sale by auction in London in July 1873 and it was bought by the Lord

Donington for £173,000. The following day Nathaniel Curzon offered Lord Donington the sum he had paid plus £10,000 if he would sell the estate on to him but Lord Donington declined. About the same time Nathaniel Curzon bought the Lockington estate and left Breedon Hall for Lockington Hall. Lord Donington had the Breedon estate valued with a view to increasing the rents of farms and quarries, and he was advised that the quarries should pay £1,500 a year. Mr Bostock refused to pay the increase and the quarries were let to a Mr Fieldingmore of Leicester. Mr Fieldingmore paid the rent for only one year but worked the quarries for a further two years and then went bankrupt. So in the end Lord Donington received no more than his original £500 a year for that period.

About this time, Lord Donington was a frequent visitor to Scotland and on one of his visits to Stewarton met Mr John Gillies Shields, a farm labourer. Mr Shields created such a good impression he was offered the position of farm bailiff on his Lordship's estate at Isley Walton. Mr Shields accepted the post and with his wife and one year old son John, moved to Isley Walton, which became his home for the rest of his life. Following the bankruptcy of the previous quarry tenant, Lord Donington decided to run the quarries himself and engaged as a manager a Mr Stapleford, of Coalville.

Stapleford managed the quarries with ever decreasing success from 1880 to 1886. The net profit was never more than £400 a year and in one year sank to £3 8s 4d. The caustic Lord Donington wrote a letter addressed on the outside of the envelope to *£3 8s. 4d. Stapleford, Coalville.*

However, Lord Donington had been well pleased with the services of John Gillies Shields and promoted him to the position of estate agent. In 1886 he asked Mr Shields to also take control of the quarries, which he did, engaging another Scot, Thomas Jamieson, as manager. "Mr Jamieson was a very good man" wrote Mr Shields, "and he did a great deal of good to the quarries." A number of improvements were made and between 1886 and 1895 the quarries paid an average annual profit of £800 to £1,000.

In 1895 Lord Donington died and Mr Shields took a 30 year lease on the quarries, some cottages and land from the estate's trustees at a rent of £1,000 pa. Now in complete control of the quarries Mr Shields began an investment programme in plant and machinery and was able to improve productivity dramatically to meet the growing demand for roadstone and lime.



Mr & Mrs JG Shields on the works outing. JG Shields is seated centre picture between Lady Flora Hastings and Lady Betty Hastings on the lawn behind the Rawdon Terrace, Ashtly. He met the whole cost of the outing himself. The wagon carries a banner saying "Long live Mr & Mrs Shields" - 1903.



Breedon Hall front steps, Sunday morning 1952. Standing in the doorway is Charlie Shields (junr). The others in the group are:- from left to right, Mr Bevin, Alec Blunt, Manton Blunt, May Shields, Captain Charlie Shields, Fred Craner, Mary Marshall, John Shields and Douglas Marshall. The three children are Sally Shields, Linda Shields and Anne Marshall. Manton and May are sisters. John and Charlie (junr) are Captain Charlie and May Shields' sons. Douglas Marshall was Scottish and worked in the quarry office and Mr Bevin was the quarry's Birmingham depot manager. Fred Craner started the original race track at Dornington Park.

Captain Shields moved to the Hall from Worthington Manor after his father, old JG Shields, died in 1943. At the same time his elder brother, Major Johnny who used to live at the Hall, moved to their father's house at Isley Walton. Captain Shields died in 1968 and his widow Lily May Shields continued to live at the Hall until her death. Their daughter Jean and her husband Peter Johnstone then took up residence and continued to live there until 1980, when the Hall was converted to flats for quarry employees.



**Breedon Hall, June 1958.**  
The giant accacia tree on the roundabout in front of the Hall was, by then, being supported by metal props and had become unsafe. Some years later it was cut back to ground level and miraculously a firm new trunk began to grow from the old roots. It is today once again a fine specimen which enhances the appearance of the hall. The quarry company converted the Hall into four lovely flats in 1980.

**The Sunday School, 1887.**  
Miss Partridge (centre back row) lived at Breedon Hall and ran the Sunday School.  
George Henry Barber from Tonge, aged 12, is in the centre of the front row.



**John Gillies Shields, later Major John Gillies Shields T.D., sitting on his Icelandic pony on the drive of Breedon Hall. The pony was a gift from his grandfather, old JG Shields, June 1933.**

**John was born at Breedon Hall on 17th September 1919 and died at his home on 20th July 2001. A prominent local figure, four hundred people attended his memorial service at Breedon Priory Church on 10th August 2001.**

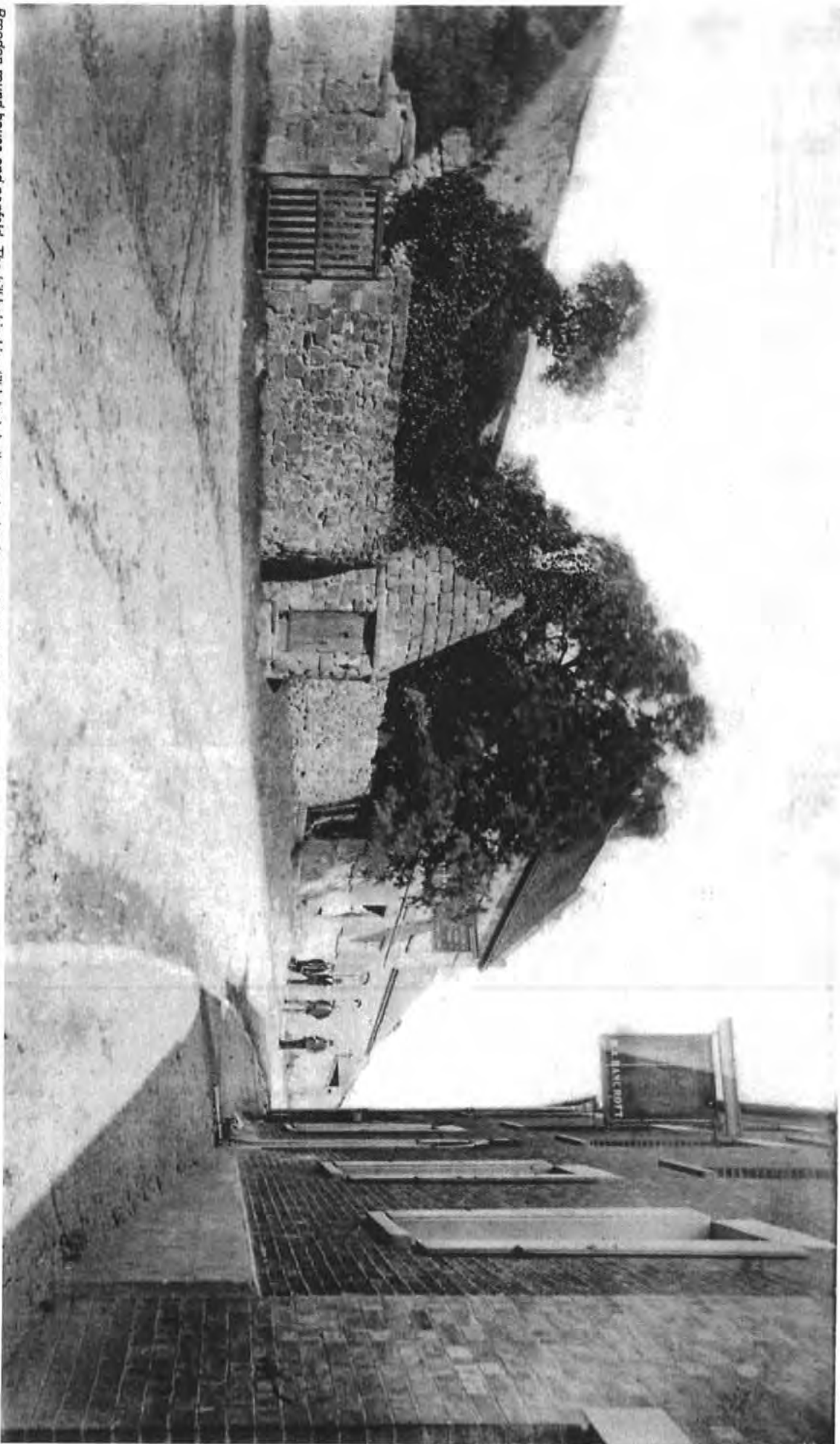
**Known locally as "Gillies" he was well respected and a man of many parts. A philosopher, writer, poet, fine sportsman and truly good gentleman. Many consider themselves privileged to have known him and he did much for the local community.**



**Breedon Hall seen from the air, 1968. The secluded, walled garden behind the building can be seen. The stables and Blue Room are in front of the Hall and parked outside the front door is Captain Shields' Rolls-Royce.**



**Eva May Shields with her first child, John Gillies Shields, and her sister-in-law Mary (Louise May) Moore with her daughter on the front steps of Breedon Hall, June 1921**



*Bredon round house and penfold. The hill behind is still intact. In the centre background is the Haslings Arms and in the right foreground, the Three Horseshoes public house. 1875*

There still remains in the main street of the village a relic of old times in the form of a "round house," which was formerly used as a "lock-up" for the detention of rogues until they could be removed to a town. These were frequently known as "blind houses," being quite dark, except for the little light let in by an iron grating in the door. In some cases the inside of the door was studded with iron spikes to prevent prisoners from damaging the door by kicking.

*F Taylor,  
Bredon, Ashby. 1906*



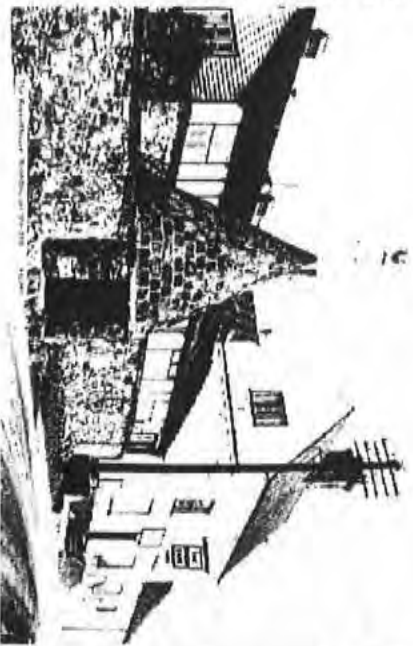
Inside the Cafe at a dance. 1952. The cafe was also the venue for concerts and filmshows.  
In this picture, from L to R, are:-

Standing behind:- Robin Hunt, Ian Marshall, Alan Bird, Mick Shaw, Charlie Wardle, Fred Danvers, Joan Hickling, Joan Frain.  
Standing in front:- Mrs Atkin, Mrs Fisher, Rosie Deayton, Mrs Bradbury, Mollie Stanforth, Mrs Pepper, Mary Parker, Nanette Hunt, Lois Crossbates, Alec Blunt, Nora Cluer, Elsie Hickling, Mrs Hudson, Peggy Platts, Shirley Roberts, Mary Stone.  
Kneeling:- Tabsy Moore, June Harris, Mr Smith, Tony Moore, Mente Kinsey, Zylph Kinsey, Mary Foster, Flo Mason, Mary Frain, Margaret Jordan, Barbara Makin, Shirley Pearce and Janet Makin.

The Breedon Cafe in 1968

A single story cafe extension was built around a walnut tree, which grew within the cafe as a feature, but sadly after some years the tree died and was removed. The cafe was used for village dances and functions during the 50's.

Tragically the cafe closed in 1973 and the extension has since been demolished.



The Breedon Cafe. 1955

The kornes can be seen in the car park as can the well worn path from the quarry. In the foreground is the Nissen hut which the village hall committee erected - but it proved to be too cold and was sold to the quarry for use as a store.

The landlord of the Hastings Arms, Mr Sills, arranged working men's outings starting from the public house. Here is an outing about to set off. In the 20's instead of buses, charabancs were used for group outings and were thought to be a little more comfortable and sociable. They had five rows of upholstered bench seats across the width of the vehicle but no central aisle. Each row of seats had two doors, one on either side of the vehicle. They were quite slow but great fun to ride in.

1920.







*The Three Horseshoes complete with archway and championship crown bowling green behind. In the foreground, the Hastings Arms cafe/meeting room is still standing. 1955*



*This photograph was sent by sisters Kitty and Beatrice to their aunt, Mrs Taylor of Hugglescote, in 1909. The two girls are standing by their bicycles and their brother Frank is watching from the pavement. "Can you recognise us with our bikes" wrote Beatrice, "we hope to cycle over some day before long."*

The quarrymen would always have an old makeshift metal brazier full of burning coals during cold weather and this would provide them with a hot breakfast. One inch thick slices of bread were toasted - properly toasted - and then either broken into mouth-sized chunks and washed down with a dish of tea, or broken into large chunks and dunked into a dish of tea or even dropped into the tea and then fished out and eaten. This meal was called "Colliers' Knobs." It was marvellous.

*Mick Shaw*

*Teddy Rice on The Delph 1952.*

*Teddy Rice was the resident tramp at the quarry. He was known as Teddy Pudding and was very popular locally. Teddy, along with a number of other tramps, used to overwinter near the Sercombes lime kiln - because it was warm - and would do a few odd-jobs. He was a well-educated, pleasant man. Captain Shields used to take him his Christmas dinner personally.*



During and after the war there were no street lights and the village bobby was very keen we should have lights on our bikes at night. When he was on his rounds in the evening, we would take it in turns to pedal past him at speed - with no rear light showing. "Oi!" he'd shout loudly and begin to run after us. Then we'd pedal back up the Delph to the Green and by the time he caught up with us all our lights would be present and working.

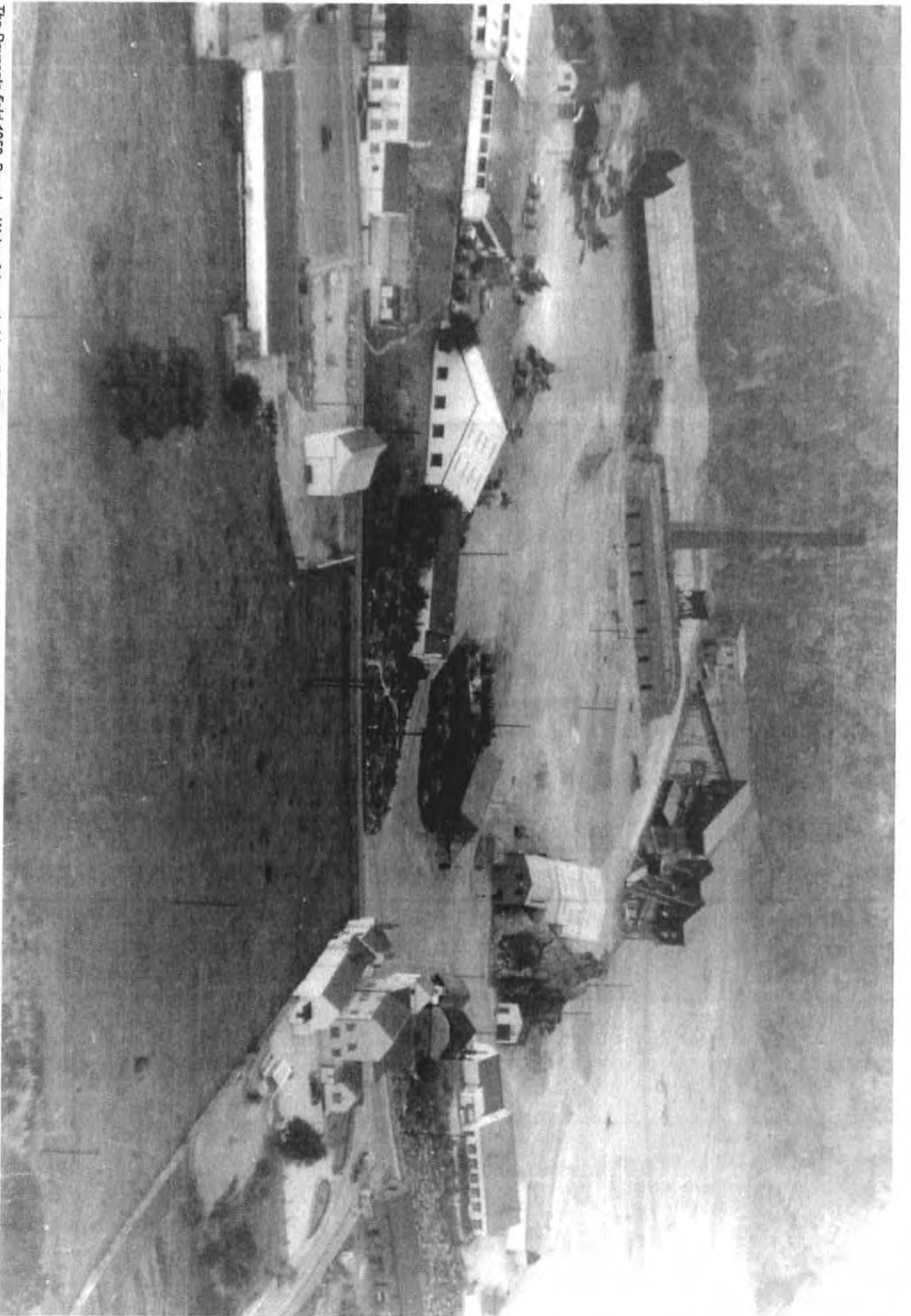
He must have been really good natured as we would get only a short lecture and have a bit of a laugh.

*Mick Shaw*

*JG Shields funeral procession on Main Street, Breedon. The service of remembrance was held at Breedon Church and the funeral cortege, seen here passing the Three Horseshoes, moved slowly back through the village on its way to Isley Walton for the committal ceremony at Isley Walton Church. 1943*



*Looking back down the hill along Main Street to Worthington Lane junction, 1909. The two cycling sisters, Kitty and Beatrice, are in the centre of the photograph and their brother Frank is watching from the entrance to The Delph.*



The Dovecote field 1952. Breerton Makes fair was held on the Dovecote field, as was the fund-raising Infirmary Show. In 1962 the new school was built here.



Ada Mason, Kay Hinstley and Ina Cox in fancy dress enjoying themselves at the Infirmary Show, 1935



Violet Powdrill in fancy dress with decorated perambulator at the Infirmary Show on the Dovecote field, c.1930. The purpose of the show was to raise funds for the provision of one bed at Derby Royal Infirmary for a villager who may require hospitalisation.

This was in the days before the NHS. If you could not pay for your healthcare then you didn't receive any.

Popular fund raising activities included fancy dress competitions, tea and cake stalls, tombola and win-a-pig raffles.

Left: Mabel Foster with her decorated two wheeled baby-carriage at the Infirmary Show, 1932



From 1956, the Breedon Wakes fair moved to the Dovecote field from the Green and the event continued here until the new school was built in 1962 when it ceased. Here the fair is setting up in 1956.



Flo Mason, Linn Shaw and Margaret Biers enjoying the Golden Gallopers, Breedon Wakes, 1957.



Breedon Home Guard. 1944.

They are:- from L to R  
 Back Row: Wilf Fairbrother, Ken Thorley, Jack Mason, Charlie Cooper, Bill Stanforth, Stan Fairbrother, Bernard Stevenson,  
 3rd Row: Sam James, Herbert Mason, Les Fisher, Frank Dirmmock, Mr Wood, George Kinsey, Dennis Hickling, Fred Beltany, Charlie Kinsey,  
 2nd Row:- Corporal Harold Kirby, Len Willemann, Charlie Robinson, Bert Bonsor, John Bird, Frank Cluer, Vic Willmore, Dick Cox, George Granger, Herbert Lock, Corporal Reg Frain,  
 Front Row:- Corporal Ernest Barsby, Sergeant Albert Robinson, Sergeant George Barber, Alf White - officer-in-charge, Sergeant Wilf Bradbury, Corporal A Monkman,



**Breedon Ladies: 1950**  
 These formidable ladies are:- from L to R, Mrs Deighton, Mrs Aull, Kit Cook, Geri Frain (Reg's mother), Mrs Davis, Mrs Robinson and Maude Barsby. Maude has the unusual distinction of being the only person known to have gone to Ashby, bought a pig and brought it back on the bus in a sack bag.



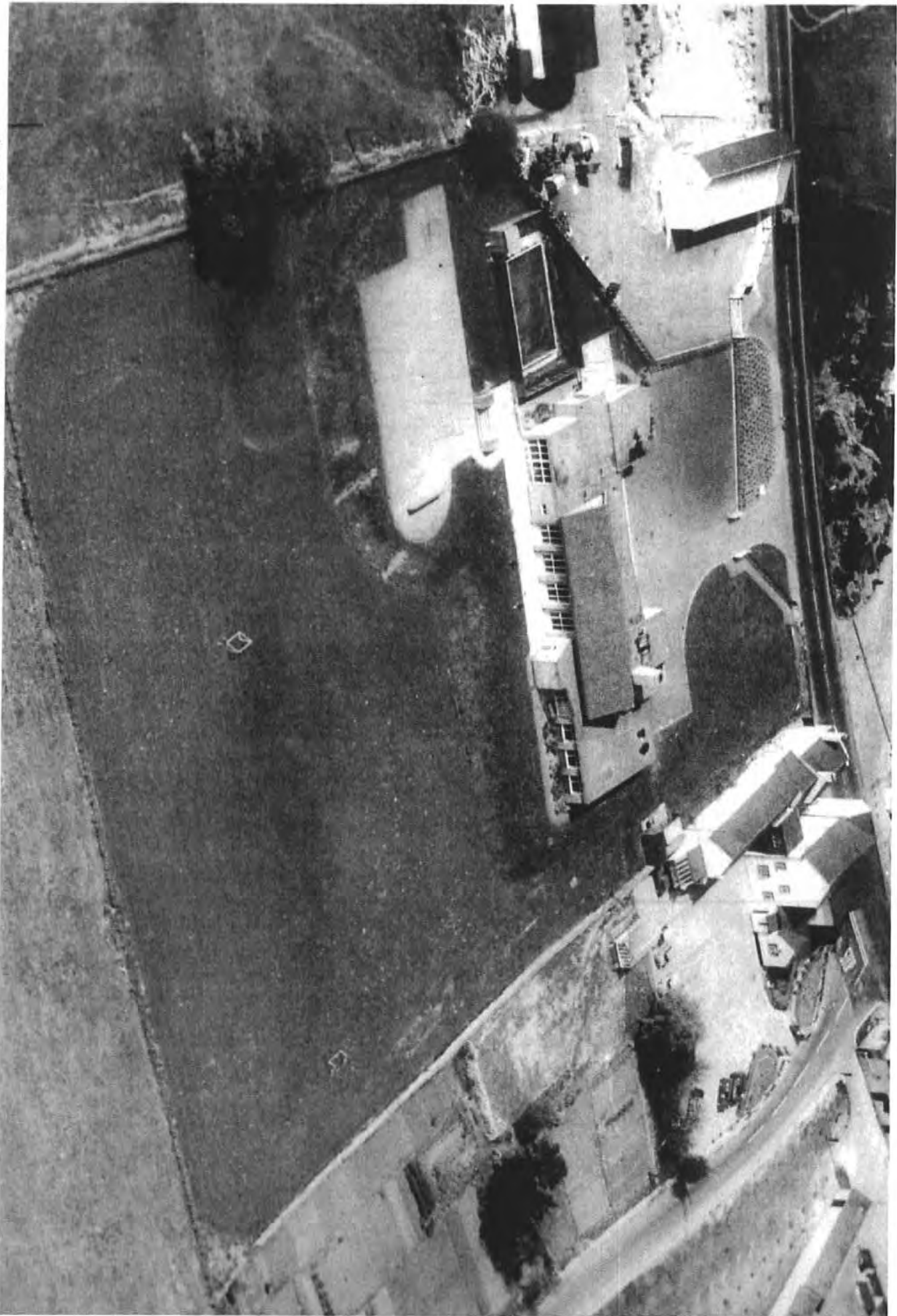
The Breedon tug-of-war team was formidable. As you can imagine, men who worked with stone all day were very strong and had enormous reserves of stamina. They won many many trophies. 1914



The Breedon Tug-of-War team with their prizes after winning 1st prize at the Donington Park tournament in July 1914. They are from L to R, Jim Barber, Unknown, Hubert Cross, Billy Barsby - the coach, Edgar "Nag" Barsby, George Waldron and Fred Shaw



Breedon women and children potato picking. 1950. They include:- from L to R, Kitty Cook, the Arnold lads, Ivy Arnold, Margery Crossbates, Margaret Dinnock, Cynthia Briers, Mrs Pounder, Gladys Crossbates, Flo Mason, Mrs Frost, Madge Wilman and others.



An aerial view of the school in 1968. The swimming pool is on the left of the picture within the fenced enclosure. The brook and osier beds used to run along the bottom edge of the playing fields.



*David Stanley aged 14, wearing his Ashby Grammar school cap, baling straw on the Dovecote field. 1956*

The new Breendon Church of England primary school and community centre was built on the old Dovecote field and opened in 1962 with three full-time staff and 90 pupils. It was a magnificent new building and everyone was delighted with it. Behind the school was a new playing field and the slope across the football pitch foxed many visiting teams and proved to be a major advantage to the home side.

On the west of the site there used to be a three foot deep open-air learner swimming pool which was very popular with the children. In 1973 there was a proposal to build a cover over the pool. The foundations were dug - sadly too close to the pool, the retaining wall broke and the pool emptied. It was never repaired.

Having a community centre in the school was the suggestion of Mr Stuart Mason, Director of Education at Leics CC. He knew we did not have a meeting place other than the Breendon cafe. In 1946 the village hall committee had bought an ex-army Nissen hut for £300. The huge structure was erected and a concrete floor laid - and then came the problems. Heating was impossible. Capt. Shields at the quarry bought the Nissen hut from the village allowing them to recoup their money and donated

£1000 to the fund to build a village hall. Whist drives, dances, fetes, and jumble sales raised more money - and then Mr Mason made his suggestion. So the new school was built with a community room and a kitchen attached to it. "The advantages are marvellous" said the headmaster Mr Hallam. "No heating bills, no caretaking problems, no cleaning bills, no rates to pay and no repairs to be done." Monday nights are for the Youth Club; the Womens' Institute meet every other Tuesday and Wednesday is Young Wives. Thursday is dressmaking and keep fit and Friday is Junior Club. On Saturdays whist drives and occasionally dances are held and on Sunday morning is Sunday School. In addition, a local history evening class meets there regularly. Apart from being used by local organisations, the room is frequently taken over by individuals and groups for gatherings and fund raising events. A great success!



*The headmaster of the school, Mr RL Hallam with some of the children at the Swimming pool. 1970*



*The Rev. John Cowperthwaite awaiting the opening of the new school. 1962*





*Breddon quarry workmen in 1898. Work in the quarry was hard and these men were extraordinarily tough and resilient. These are the grandfathers and great-grandfathers of many of today's residents.*



*This is how the quarry face was worked. Each man had a tub, a large metal container on rails, adjacent to the rock face where he was working. He had to fill twenty tubs or more a day with loose stone from the face. The face was blasted in gullies as the photograph shows. The resulting pronouncements could then be brought down with relatively little explosive. This method of working was more efficient than moving the whole face back in one line. Berry Avenue has not yet been constructed. 1934.*

The rocks of Breerton and Cloud Hill have been worked from very early times. They are formed of what is commonly known as dolomite, or magnesium limestone, and were undoubtedly at one time under water, as a study of the fossils found will show. Dr Erasmus Wilson, writing in the early part of the last century says: "Whoever will inspect with the eye of a philosopher the limestone mountain of Breerton, on the edge of Leicestershire, will not hesitate a moment in pronouncing that it has been forcibly elevated by some power beneath it, for it is of a conical form, with the apex cut off, and the strata which compose the central parts of it, and which are found nearly horizontal in the plain, are raised almost perpendicular and placed upon their edges, while those on each side decline like the surface of the hill."

The limestone is largely used, when broken, for macadamised roads, and in its smaller state for footpaths and carriage drives; for the latter purpose it is known as "Celebrated Breerton Footpath Gravel," and is largely used in all parts of England, as it rapidly sets and forms a path both clean and durable. The paths at Buckingham Palace are made from Breerton stone. But the greater part of the stone obtained is

used in foundries and blast furnaces for fluxing the iron, and the demand for the "flux stone" has so rapidly grown within the last ten years, that hundreds of tons are daily sent away by rail to the iron districts. The cause of the great demand for this kind of stone is that of late it has been proved that a magnesium limestone makes a better "flux stone" than a pure limestone.

The Works used to run annual outings for the workers. Between 1955 and 1962 they visited Rhyll, Scarborough, Blackpool, Weston super Mare and Llandudno twice each.

In 1968 the Transport & General Workers' union called the men out on strike. It was a futile and misjudged action which most men did not want. The union convenor had been to see Mr Shields and instead of discussing, started demanding. When Mr Shields responded by asking him to leave the convenor called a union meeting in the cafe and reported that "the management wouldn't listen to him." He proposed strike action and the motion was carried. The strike lasted just two weeks and the only concrete things it achieved were the removal of the martinet union official and fundamentally altering the special relationship enjoyed by the quarry company and the village. The quarry ceased sponsoring the cricket club and it closed as did the quarry cafe, garage and shop. Works outings ceased, as did double pay at Christmas and log deliveries to pensioners. It was all very sad.



*The Transport & General Workers' Union called a strike at the quarry. 1968. Here on the picket line are:- from L to R, Robert Hicklin, Trevor Fry, Donald Crossbates, Keith Freeer, Charlie Coxon, Roger Fairbrother, Eric Pounder, Pete Hickling, Geoffrey Cuff, Edgar Bowie, Walter Gill, Vincent Atkins, Johnny Kinsey, Harold Kirby, Cyril 'Simo' Smith, Harry Wardle and David Arnold.*



Amos Bird (left) and an unknown soldier discussing something with Captain Shields seated in his Bentley Mk 6 at the quarry entrance. In the top left of the picture is the old farmhouse to Manor Farm which became the quarry company's offices in 1945. Before the office car park was constructed in the mid-50's, Captain Shields used to park his car in the quarry entrance and walk across the road to his office. 1949



One of the tramps that lived in the vicinity of the lime kilns standing outside quarry offices - in the newly refurbished Manor Farmhouse, 1957.

The kilns were a popular place for tramps to live because they were always warm. The tramps lived in the chambers of the Sercombe kiln moving on to the next as the previous one was used. They lived quite well as the workers used to bring them sandwiches and drinks. The ironwork in the gale was made by Mr Laurence Harvey.

Following the death of Old JG Shields in 1943 his eldest son, Johnny, who inherited the farms and Donington Park moved from Breedon Hall, which was rented from John Curzon of Lockington Hall, into his father's house at Isley Walton. Captain Charles Shields who ran the quarry business and lived at Worthington Manor then bought Breedon Hall from John Curzon, and moved in.

The only difficulty with this was that the quarry and lime works offices were still at Isley Walton and had to be moved to Breedon. Captain Shields acquired the old Manor farmhouse from his brother and converted it into beautiful offices for the quarry. A new farmhouse was built at Manor Farm for Amos Bird, the tenant farmer.

The old Manor house for Breedon stood on or near the site of the old Manor farmhouse. And it is here that the Dovecote was situated and the Berry Fields.

During the 1950's the quarry bought some Dodge lorries which were powered by an extraordinary Perkins P6 diesel engine. One of the idiosyncrasies of the engine was that if it ever stalled, then more often than not it would start running backwards at ever increasing speed. Diesel engines do not have an ignition system to switch off and so if one wasn't pretty quick at pulling out the engine compression release - then the engine couldn't be stopped very easily.

This idiosyncrasy caused a bizarre accident one Thursday morning when Tom Pounder pulled his Dodge under the crusher hopper to load with stone. He left the lorry in gear to prevent it rolling back, climbed out of the cab and operated the hopper chute release. The stone tumbled into the tipper body causing the lorry to jolt backwards a few inches. The Dodge engine must have been on a firing stroke because it began to run - backwards.

Away went the lorry across the quarry, fortunately turning just before the entrance, and coming to rest against the loading ramp and quarry stores. Fortunately no-one was hurt but considerable damage was done to the lorry and the stores.

Mick Shaw

During the 1939-45 war Mrs GMT Parker became secretary of the Breedon comforts committee. This group was formed to keep in touch with members of the British forces who came from the parish. She wrote informative letters to members of the armed forces to keep them in touch with their families and also giving parochial news. Parcels of food and knitwear were also sent to all individual members. She was a very capable seamstress and looked after the Breedon church linen and lovingly worked materials to enhance the church altars. Gertie and her mother, Elizabeth Ault, initially also looked after the tea arrangements for Breedon Cricket Club when it resumed in 1946 after the war years.



Mrs GMT Parker, affectionately known as Gertie, aged 21, in her costume for the "Gondoliers" - 1925. Gertie worked as a secretary at the Breedon & Cloud Hill Lime Works.



*In the centre left of the picture is the "Sercombess" lime kiln which was able to run continuously. In front of it and to the left are the two old round "Hoffman" kilns. The round kilns were changed from the top, with limestone and coal. Only when the fire had gone out and the kiln cooled could the contents be emptied into the waiting tubs. In right centre is the pinnacle with garages grouped around it. 1946*



The Sercombes continuous kiln in the background was built c. 1900 and in the foreground is the Pinnacle. 1910. The Pinnacle was left on the instructions of Lord Dorington to show the height of the hill before quarrying began. Today it is less than half the height it was, due to the effects of erosion and weathering, but, even at reduced height, it still stands at a height of 40 feet near the quarry entrance.

The stone has been burned into lime for very many years, and disused kilns may be seen both at Cloud Hill and Breddon at a long distance from the present workings. In 1896 the works were leased to Mr. J.G. Shields, of Isley Walton, for thirty years. Under the guidance of a new quarry manager, Mr Thomas Jamieson, who was also from Scotland many alterations were made to increase output. The open kiln was very shallow and the first thing he did was to rebuild two new round kilns (seen opposite), increasing the height and building bridges for the stone to come over from the quarries.

In 1900 he built two continuous or "Sercombes" kilns, one at Breddon and the other at Cloud Hill. Mr Shields wrote "We never could prove that the lime was any better in these continuous kilns for building purposes, in fact we are not so sure that it was quite so good, but it made the lime more eyeable, as it came out in bigger pieces and, being more confined needed less coal to burn it." These two kilns are capable of turning out weekly nearly four hundred tons of lime, in addition to that obtained from the old-fashioned kilns.

In the process of burning the limestone into lime there is a loss of 47.35(%), so that nearly two tons of stone are required to produce one ton of lime. The lime is largely used throughout the Midland Counties for building purposes, and also as a fertiliser

by agriculturists. The newly-burnt lime is now ground into a flour, and delivered in bags, and in this state many farmers prefer it instead of the old fashioned way of slaking the lumps and spreading the lime on the ground. It is considered that the lime, being newly burnt and ground at once is quicker in its action on the soil and a better fertilizer than when slaked.

Nichols gives the following interesting account of the lime kilns: "They are all drawing kilns, being never let out during the burning season unless to repair, drawing four or five loads from each kiln daily. The price at this time at the kiln is 18d. a quarter, with a perquisite to the burners of meat and drink.

"The cost of five loads stands thus:-

	£	s.	d.
Thirty quarters at 18d	2	5	0
Lime men 2s. a load and 2s. over	0	12	0
Total	2	17	0

or 10s. 5d. a load of five quarters, namely, about a cauldron and a half, common lime measure. The cost of fetching fifteen or seventeen miles may be estimated at a guinea, with turnpikes near 5s. a load, together with watering, turning, and spreading. The whole amounting to 40s. per acre for the dressing."



The Sercombes lime kiln in use. 1920.  
The old stationary steam engine in the foreground was used to power the screen which was used to grade rock into different sized particles.

The two new Sercombes lime kilns, at Breddon and Cloud Hill, dramatically increased the output of lime from the company compared with the four Hoffman kilns which had been previously used. One of the old Hoffman kilns is in the foreground with the Sercombes kiln in the background 1910





These are the steamer drivers and their mates (stokers), c. 1928.

L to R. Back Row:- Jack Roberts, Fred Fretwell, Jock Donkin, George Ayns, Harry Danvers, George Tunnicliffe, White.

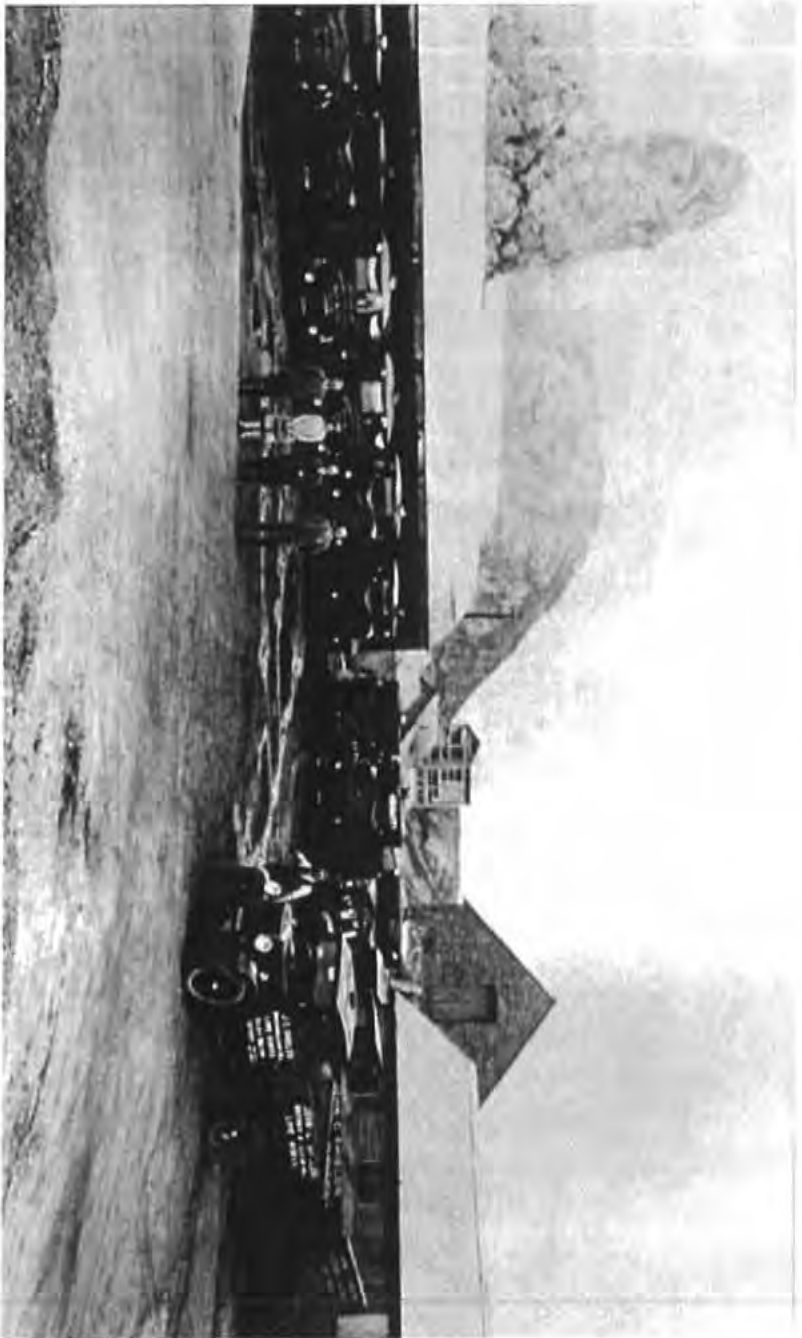
Middle Row:- Vic Willmore, George Philips, Billy Smith, Urknown, C Kinsey, Sid Barsby, Arthur Moore, Jim Robinson.

Front Row:- Tom Gadsby, F Janzer, Andy Perry, Arthur "Witty" Barber (Quarry Foreman and brother of Jimmy, the Cloud Hill Foreman), F Johnson, Tom Kinsey, Stan Morgan, George Cox, Arthur Tunnicliffe.



The stone was carted by horse-drawn vehicles to the Ashby canal wharf at Willesley for transport by barge to Coventry.  
The steam lorries and eventually the petrol and diesel vehicles transformed the business and enabled output to be increased.

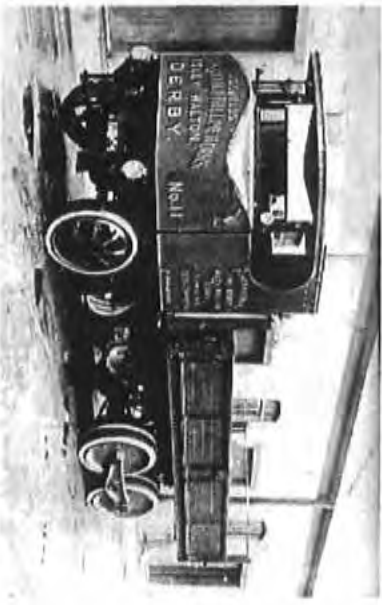
To meet growing demand, the quarry took delivery of a fleet of ten new Ford Model T trucks. The Model T trucks. The advertising hoarding on top of the cab says "Celebrated Breedon Footpath Gravel for Carriage Drives." c. 1930's



The quarry garages below the pinnacle. 1932. Standing in front of the hovel, from L to R are: Mr Arthur Barber (quarry foreman), his daughter Alice (who later married Henry Danvers), Fred Craner (who supplied the new Ford Model T trucks to the quarry from his garage at Burton on Trent) and Mr Walker (quarry manager). On the right standing by his truck is Andy Perry, one of the drivers.



Vic Willmore with a Foden steamer at the quarry. 1938



One of the early Sentinel "Super" steamers with solid tyres standing outside the quarry garage. 1915





*This photograph shows the extent and depth of the quarry. 1975*

The rock face at Breedon ranges from 40ft at the foot of the hill to 140ft near the summit. During the 50's and 60's the old method of tunnel blasting was superseded by a new method which involved drilling vertical blast holes to approximately half of the height of the face. Each hole is 7 inches in diameter and spaced at 12 to 15 feet. At the foot of the face toe holes are drilled at 3 inches diameter to a depth of 20 feet at 5 feet spacings. ICI Ammanol or Vickers Armstrong Thamite explosive is used. The vertical

and toe blasts are not simultaneous - and generally there are two to three toe blasts for every two vertical blasts. With this method 20,000 tons of rock can be brought down at a time.

The rocks possess many interesting geological features. Breendon Hill rises abruptly from the low grounds of Kemper marls like a buttress and, in conjunction with Breendon Cloud, forms a continuation of the Pennine Chain. In a strictly geological sense the hill forms an outlier, being surrounded by the newer Triassic marls. In all probability it had been worn into its present form before Triassic times.

The Breendon limestone is very hard, and almost semi-crystalline in character. Its composition has been determined as follows by Mr H Woods, M. A., of the Sedgwick Museum, Cambridge:- Carbonate of Lime 58.4. Carbonate of Magnesia 39.4. Oxide of Iron 1.8. Silica 0.5. Total 99.9. Owing to its great hardness and crystalline character, the rock does not easily weather, so that it is not a happy hunting ground for fossils. Most of the fossils exist as "casts" only of the original shells.

*F Taylor, Breendon, Ashby. 1906*



*Getting the Ruston Bucyrus RB27 drill to the hilltop was not easy, requiring two towing vehicles. 1950.*



*A Ruston Bucyrus RB27 well drill (also known as a bonging iron) was used to make a hole to half the depth of the face for the explosive charge. This method speeded up rock blasting significantly. 1952.*



*Retire to a safe distance. Each blast brings down c.20,000 tons of rock. 1958*



Manor Farm, 1952. The new farmhouse for Manor Farm built in 1924 is on the right of the picture and the old farmhouse, converted into offices for the quarry is the white building on the left of the picture.



*The clearing of the Osier beds and construction of the school playing fields just off Doctor's Lane. All of the civil engineering work was carried out by the Quarry free of charge. The 4ft diameter concrete pipes were sunk into the ground to carry Breecon stream below the surface of the fields. 1960.*

In years to come if Stone Age and Saxon artefacts are found on the school playing fields they may well have been transported down from the Market Steads in the thousands of tons of earth that the quarry company carted down to fill in the ground.

Doctor's Lane was so called because the doctor lived there. The 1841 census records Dr John Robinson lived on the lane but at the next census in 1851 there is no mention of him.

John Hamilton was the only farmer to live at Charly Farm which he occupied from 1926 until the late 1960's. He bred pedigree Red Poll cattle and enjoyed great success at local agricultural shows.



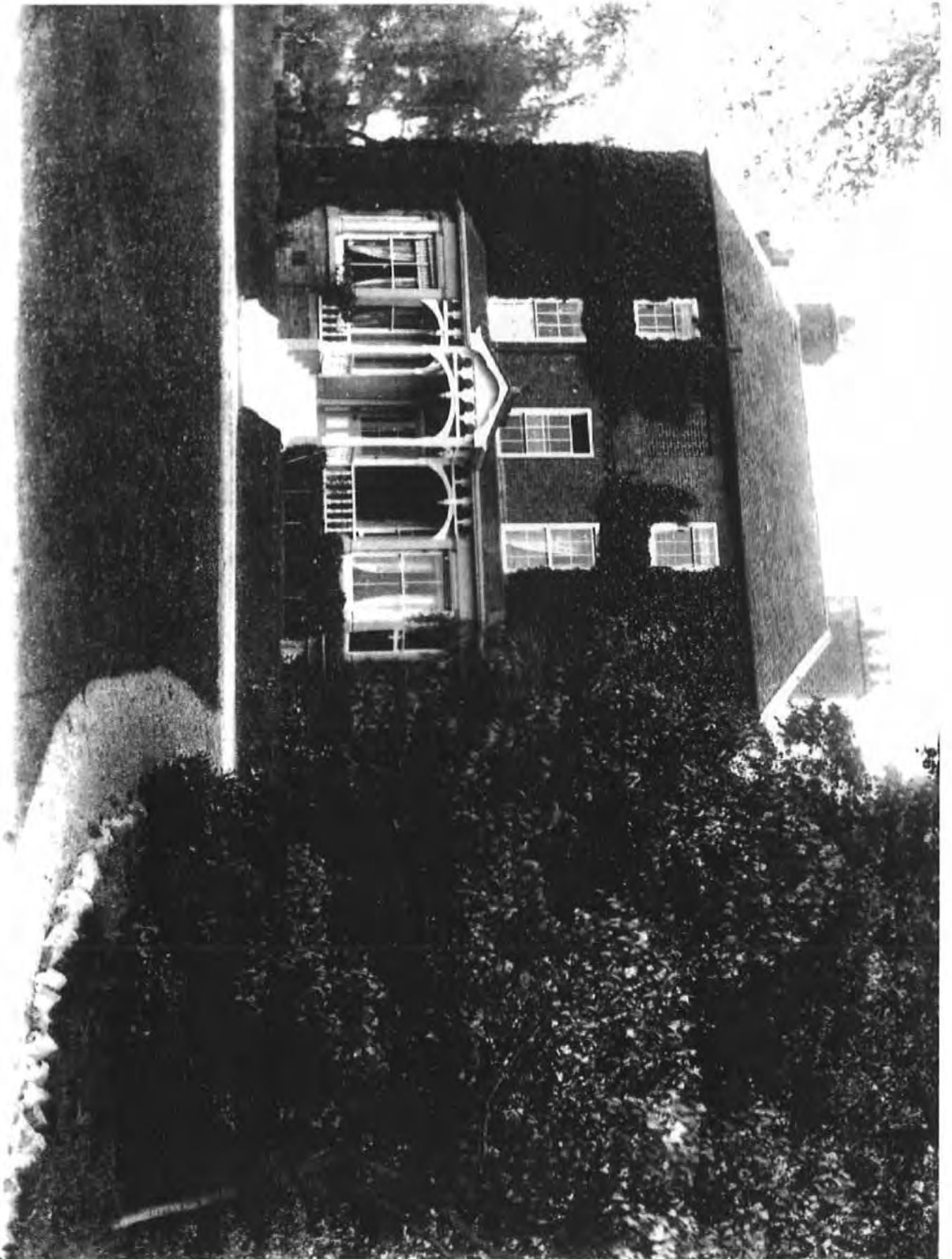
*Charly Farm, Doctors Lane. 1935*



*Charly Farm, Doctors Lane. 1935. The farm was built by JG Shields in 1926 as an example of what could be done with Breecon stone. "Charly Farm," he said, "will be my memorial." The building work was done by "Salty" Salt of Belton and "Neg" Barsby of Breecon. The farm was so named as it was constructed on land formerly owned by Rustat's Charly.*



Loaded steam-powered quarry vehicles queuing for the weigh-bridge at the start of another busy day. 1935



Isley Walton Hall  
which was the  
home of JG  
Shields, from the  
time he arrived  
in Leicestershire  
in 1894 until his  
death in 1943.  
1900.



Wally Smith was a progressive farmer, seen here on one of the first Ferguson tractors in the district. 1935

Out of 12 entries in the competition for the Best-managed Farm of over 100 acres in the Ashby district, he won the cup nine times and was second three times. As a result of his efforts there was always a steady stream of visiting farmers from all parts of the county - often numbering over 1500 visitors a year.



The milking parlour at Wilson Hall Farm. The cows were pedigree Friesians. June 1958



Wally operating potato sorting machinery in a barn at Wilson Hall Farm. June 1976



Inspired by Mr Hatton, a near neighbour, Wally Smith developed an interest in tropical fish and built 12 fish tanks into one wall of the farm office. 1967



Living near to the shop and Hall Farm were Mr & Mrs William Smith, two of Wilson's best known residents. 1967

Close neighbours of Wally Smith in the Square were Mr & Mrs William Smith of Hill View, a pretty little cottage.

William Smith spent many years in public service including 26 years as a special constable, 27 as a churchwarden and 7 on the Rural District Council. He was also president of the North Leicestershire Group of the British Legion. Most of his working life was spent in Breckon where he was a coal merchant, a haulage contractor, ran a charabanc and latterly farmed 60 acres.



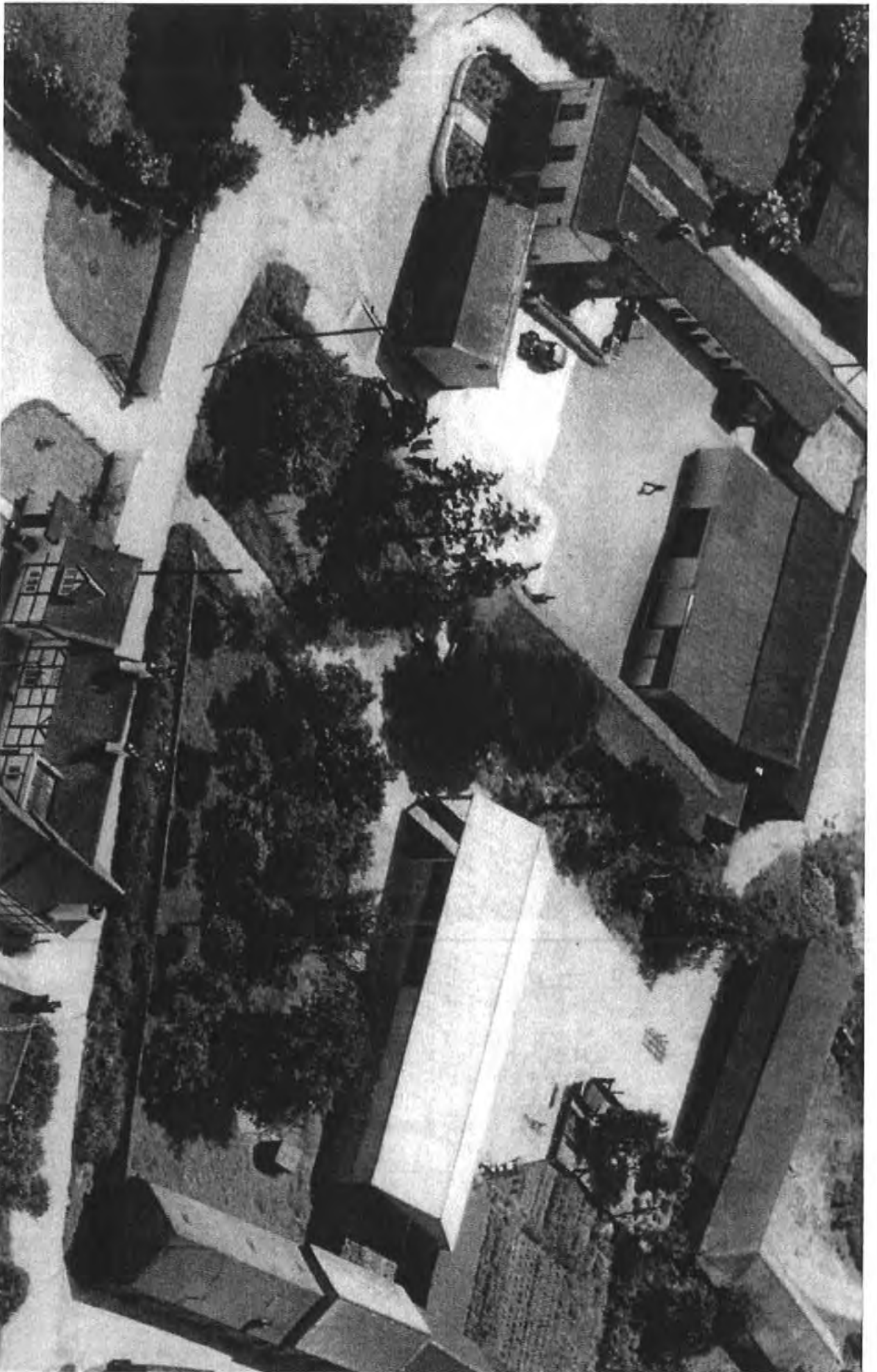
Hill Farm 1955



Wilson Station was delightfully situated in the valley bottom but was very little used. Summer 1947



A goods train passing Wilson Station, by then converted into a private house. 1972



*Just across the square from the shop was Wilson Hall Farm run by one of Leicestershire's most go-ahead farmers - Wallace Smith, June 1952. Brook House is in the foreground.*

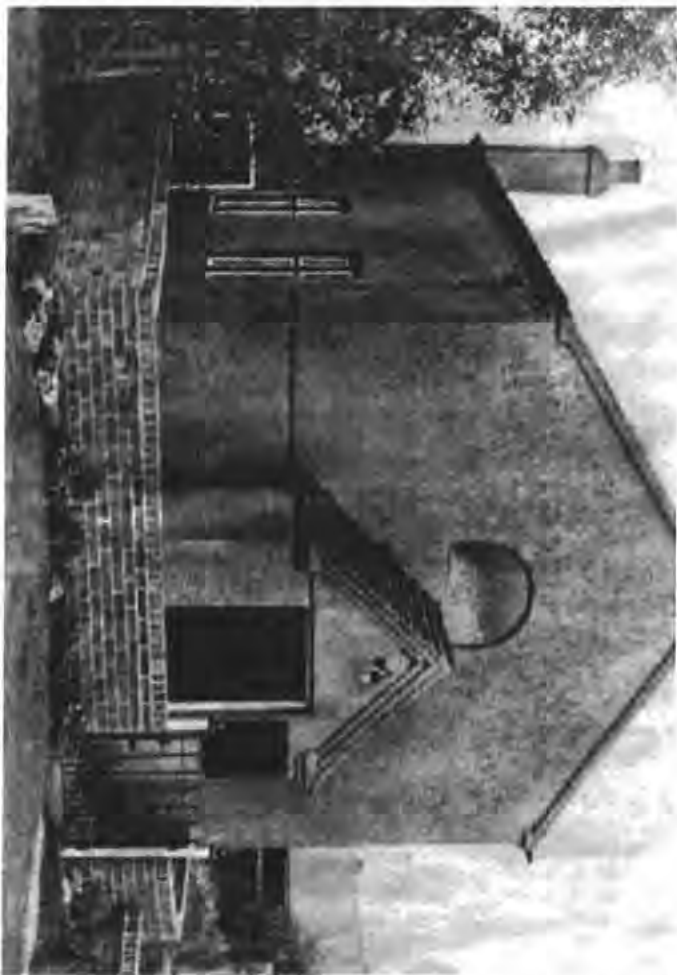
Wallace Smith farmed Wilson Hall Farm for many years before handing over to his son Malcolm. Wally started his farming career in 1936 working as a labourer for a wage of two-pence (d) an hour. Eventually because of his ambition he had farm of his own - renting his first piece of land of less than 1 acre. By 1967 he was farming 350 acres.



Each day was so carefully mapped out, and the method and order were so perfect, that the reproduction of the plan may even in these days of hurry and bustle be in many ways copied with advantage (11).

The Diurnal Plan: "He rose about five in the morning, and retired about ten - both in winter and summer. From five to six he washed and dressed, read his Bible, and prayed; from six to eight he studied languages, particularly Greek and Hebrew; from eight to nine he breakfasted and engaged in family prayer, filling up the time with reading; from nine to ten he wrote on some particular subject, never passing a day without a line; from ten to one he either mounted his horse, if he had a journey, or visited the people from house to house, filling up the interval of that time with a regular course of select reading; from one to two he dined, and spent some time in private devotion; from two to three he studied some art or science, going through a regular course; from three to six he walked or rode to his appointed place, drank tea with his friends, and filled up the time, whether he went or remained at home, with his course of readings; from six to seven he either studied or composed a sermon, or answered some letter; from seven to nine he preached, met the leaders, or held some other meeting - filled up the time when he had a vacant night with reading; from nine to ten he walked home, supped and prayed with his family - or, if from home, did the same in other families. He then retired, reviewed the day, wrote a few lines in a journal when necessary, and committed himself to God in prayer. The principal part of Saturday was spent in preparation for the pulpit, and the whole of Sunday was devoted to the work of the ministry."

*F Taylor Breedon. 1906*



*Wilson Methodists' Chapel. 1967. The chapel closed in 1985*



*Mrs Enid Hutton, seated at the organ in her home, Hilltop Farm. 1967. Her husband, Mr G A Hutton was organist at the chapel for more than 30 years*

Wilson had a Methodist chapel, and a thriving Sunday school run by Mrs Enid Hutton. She was a very dedicated lady who did much for the village children. Tragically she died at far too young an age, and the Sunday school was sadly abandoned. In 1967 the chapel had 16 members and 22 children attended the Sunday School.

The chapel was built in the year 1826 by William Brooks, who purchased the land soon after the death of John Wesley from a Mr Sutton, of Wilson.

It finally closed in 1985 and was bought by Mr Charlie Shields.

Mr Charlie Shields was a great character and could often be seen driving his coach and horses around the district. He and his wife Nan were very kind to the village children. Anyone who wished to ride a horse was made welcome at Brook Farm. They taught the children to groom, saddle and ride a horse correctly and the children loved it.



*Helen Shields and her two dogs, Brook Farm. 1967. Helen is the daughter of Charlie and Nan Shields*



*Mrs H Dow in her village shop. 1967.*

The village had a shop until the 1980's; Dows on Slade Lane, but this was forced to close with the advent of supermarkets and the like. Before 1930, the village shop had been a public house and was known as the Loudoun Arms. Its original name was the Ro'n Ferrer (the Rat & Ferrer) but the name was changed c.1870. When Mr & Mrs Dow came to Wilson in 1931 the pub had been closed for about 10 months and the building was standing empty. "We turned it into a shop and have been running it ever since," said Mrs Dow in 1967.



*Brook House, Short Hill, Wilson, 1930. Before the Methodists' chapel was built in 1826, religious services were held in this house, which was then the home of William Brookes.*

"Before the chapel was built, services were held in Mr. Brooks's house, a farmhouse now the property of Mr. F. Gretton, and tenanted by Mr Limb (1906). Here it was that the ministers were entertained, and a portable pulpit was kept, from which the Word of God was preached with great zeal and eloquence. In the parlour of this house the Rev. J Edmondson wrote his "Diurnal Plan" when he was thirty-five years old, and this plan, called by him the "Wilson plan" was the guide of his life.

I had a bungalow built in 1961 opposite the Bull's Head. It cost £2,650 and my mortgage repayments were £17 10s. 6d. per month. My mother was quite concerned that I had taken on such a responsibility. "How on earth will you manage to pay for it?" she said.

At that time Wilson was a really rural habitat with lots of lovely character. Cows would be driven through the village when farmers changed their grazing or when required for milking. Their droppings were eagerly sought after for the garden – especially for the rhubarb! Sometimes young beasts, in winter months, would escape from the fields and wander into back gardens. Cabbage and Brussels sprouts were a particular delicacy. Alf Ashmore wasn't very pleased about this – he grew the finest vegetables anyone could wish for..

Thinking of Alf I am reminded of Thursday evenings, during the winter months, when I arranged a dominoes foursome at the Bull's Head. At 7pm, I would pop into the pub and prepare the table – four pints of bitter, a set of dominoes and a table near to the fire! Then I would go and collect Alf, Toby and Arthur from Bull's Head Row. Alf was quite deaf; Toby had a wooden leg and Arthur, with Father Christmas whiskers, couldn't see very well. I was the only fellow with all faculties. However, for a couple of hours we would enjoy the dominoes and as we played I would avidly listen to stories of rural life in the early 1900's. Often, poor-sighted Arthur couldn't see his



The bar of the Bull's Head with Mrs Ruby Hamilton and the landlord, Mr Geoffrey Smith, 1967. Mr & Mrs Smith extensively altered the public house after they bought it in 1961, removing the small serving hatch, adding a bar and knocking the three rooms into one. Before 1899, the Bull's Head was known as the Fox & Hounds.

## THE BULL'S HEAD WILSON

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An advertisement for the Bull's Head  
1967.

dominoes and would open his hand and say, "Can I go?" Similarly, Alf would come back with "What's he say?" Toby, with the wooden leg, didn't mind if I kicked it when he made me "knock." He would say, "You can kick as hard as you like me mon, it donna hot me." – lovely!

In those days in the Bull's Head, the landlord might be sitting in the "best room" chatting to someone when we arrived. He would say "Jug it out yourself, I'll be there in a minute". At this time there was no bar, only a serving

hatch and the beer was kept in wooden barrels. The landlord would collect the beer in an enamel jug from a barrel and then serve it into a pint pot – crude but adequate. On Saturday evenings, wives came along with husbands and they usually used the "best room" which had a piano. A villager played the piano and for this he received free drinks all night.

Times have changed somewhat over the years. New properties have been built and naturally there has been an influx of new people. The village though, is still lovely and rural and I'm sure will still produce its characters as time passes.



Ida Pass and niece, Beryl Earp, outside their cottage, Main Street, Wilson. 1950

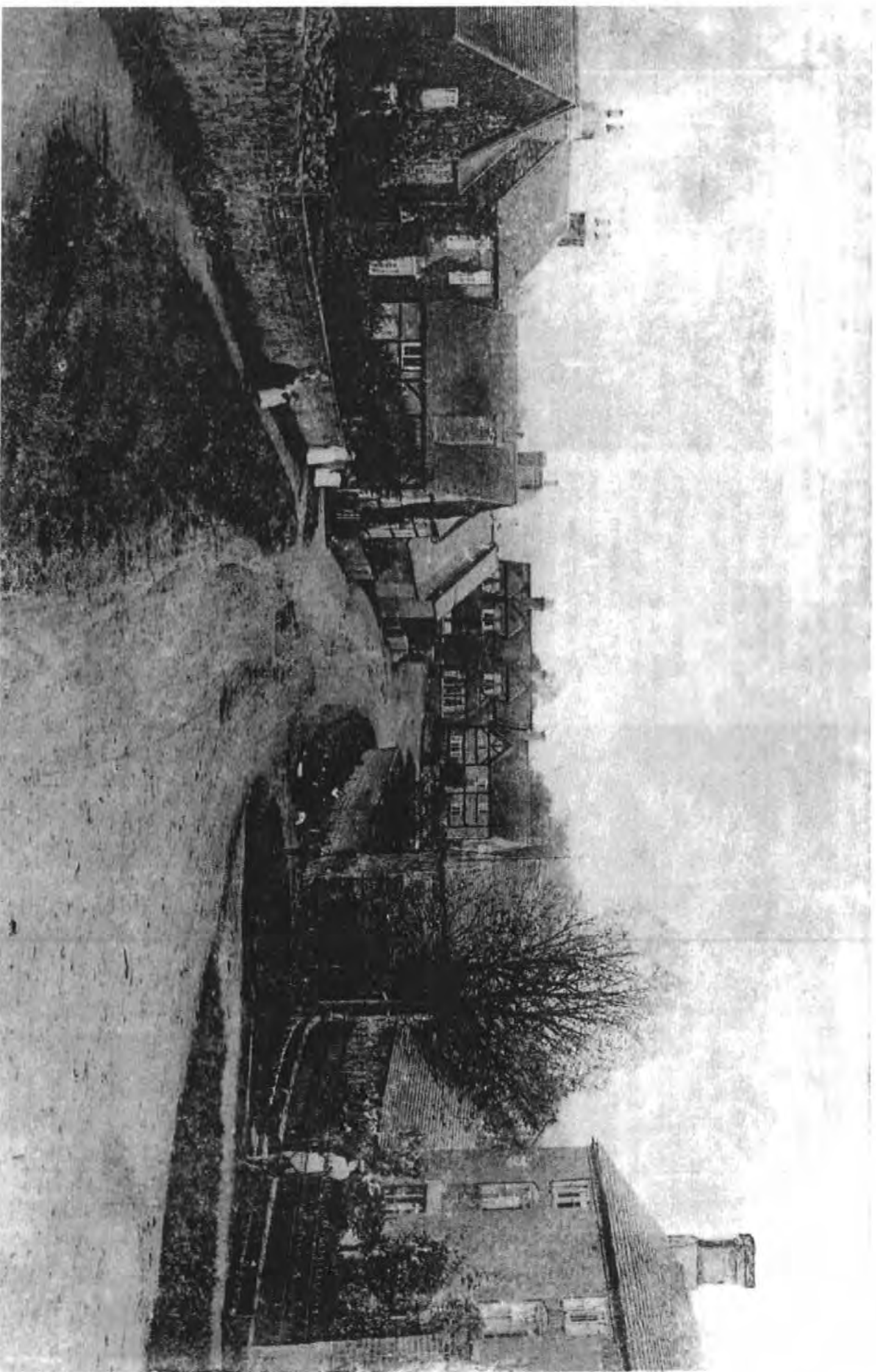
Wilson was again in the Best Kept Village winning frame, taking the small village title. Attending the trophy presentation were Mr WE Smith, Breedon Parish Council chairman, Mr A Clarke, chairman of North West Leicestershire District Council, Mr Anthony Stuart, secretary of the Leicestershire Rural Communities Council, and Rev. Raymond E Snowsell, vicar of Oaks in Charwood. October 1974

There were many interesting characters in Wilson. Ron Wallace was a farmer and always wore flat cap and wellies and had a perpetual dewdrop on the end of his nose. Each morning he would collect his Daily Mirror newspaper from my doorstep. One morning, when Harold Wilson was Prime Minister, Ron saw the headline "Wilson to have atomic submarines." "Where are we going to put these?" he asked. "In the brook?"

Also Mr Street, a very devout Christian who supplied fresh flowers for the Lady Chapel at Breedon every week - a task he did with love and care.

Maurice Harvey





Looking down Short Hill, Wilson, towards The Square and Slade Lane. On the left halfway down the hill is the semi-timbered Brook House. At the bottom, looking back up the street is the Loudoun Arms public house which closed in 1930. Before 1870 it was known as the Red'n Ferry. In 1931 Mr and Mrs Dow started their shop in the empty premises and continued to run it until the 1980's. Still at the bottom of the hill, just around the corner to the right is Wilson Hall Farm. Many residents have come out of their houses to see what the photographer is doing. In a small village with little passing traffic he would have created quite a stir, taking some time to set up his tripod, load the plates, compose the picture and expose the emulsion. The onlookers were doubtless politely asked to stand still whilst the picture was being taken. 1900.



*Plachett's House which later became Kirbeon Kennels on the lower slopes of Breedon Hill. 1964*

Mrs N Kirby ran a dog breeding kennels at Plachett's House. She specialised in breeding miniature Bull Terriers, Scotties, Westies, Wire-haired Fox Terriers and Pugs. She also showed her miniature Bull Terrier "Pip" and he brought fame to her establishment by winning three challenge certificates - thereby becoming a champion.

The house was owned by the Breedon & Cloud Hill Lime Works who had a policy of buying up any properties which surrounded the quarries to safeguard their later expansion. In 1966 with the assistance of the company, Mrs Kirby relocated to Breedon and Tonge Station.

*The extent of the quarry a few years after the Plachett's was demolished. June 1972. The quarry now runs closely adjacent to the Wilson Road.*



The quarry company converted the station, then closed to passenger traffic, into a bungalow with 40 heated boarding kennels making it one of the most modern kennels in the country.

Plachett's House disappeared into the quarry. At the same time the footpath that ran from "Deepwell" to the church across the Market Steads was re-routed around the north end of the quarry.



*Champion bull terrier Kirbeon Bandmaster. He won a record 24 challenge certificates in 15 years and was 3 times Best of Breed at Crufts dog show. 1970.*

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**BREEDON - ON - THE - HILL**

TELEPHONE: HARBORNE 2261



*Trevor Fry at Plachett's House which is disappearing into the quarry. 1967. On the front wall was a plaque saying "rebuilt in 1770." The stone walls were so thick one could sit on the window sills.*



Plachett's House stood on the lower, eastern slopes of Breedon Hill and looked east over both the Wilson road and the A453.

The A453 is in the foreground and the Wilson Road runs alongside the hedge on the far side of the first field.

On the left, the quarry is gradually encroaching on the farm. Eventually the farmhouse was demolished to enable more stone to be quarried and the boundary of the quarry now runs closely adjacent to the Wilson road.

Summer 1964



*The Reverend Wayne was one of the last vicars to live at the vicarage on Tonge Lane. It stood empty for a number of years and began to deteriorate. 1979. It was eventually sold into private ownership and is now, once again, a lovely dwelling house.*

Jim Robinson was a lovely and capable man. He lived in Breedon most of his life and was always willing to help anyone. He was a cheerful person and would sometimes recite his simple and straightforward philosophy:-

If you want to be happy for 1 day - get drunk,  
 If you want to be happy for 3 days - get married,  
 If you want to be happy for 6 days - kill a pig  
 and eat it,  
 But, if you want to be happy forever - make a  
 garden.

*Jim Robinson, c.1985. Jim drove Sentinel and Foden steam lorries for the quarry during the 1920's & 30's, later in the 40's converting to petrol driven Manchester's. During the 1950's & 60's versatile Jim became gamekeeper for Cloud Hill wood and Captain Shields's estate and devoted much of his time in the 1970's & 80's to gardening*



*For some reason I cannot fully recall, Capt. Shields once asked for all the quarry vehicles to be washed and polished and arranged on the Berry Field for a photograph to be taken. I think the photograph was to be used for publicity purposes in the quarry trade press.*

*Captain Shields organised the display and his Rolls Royce is parked in the middle of the field.*

July 1964



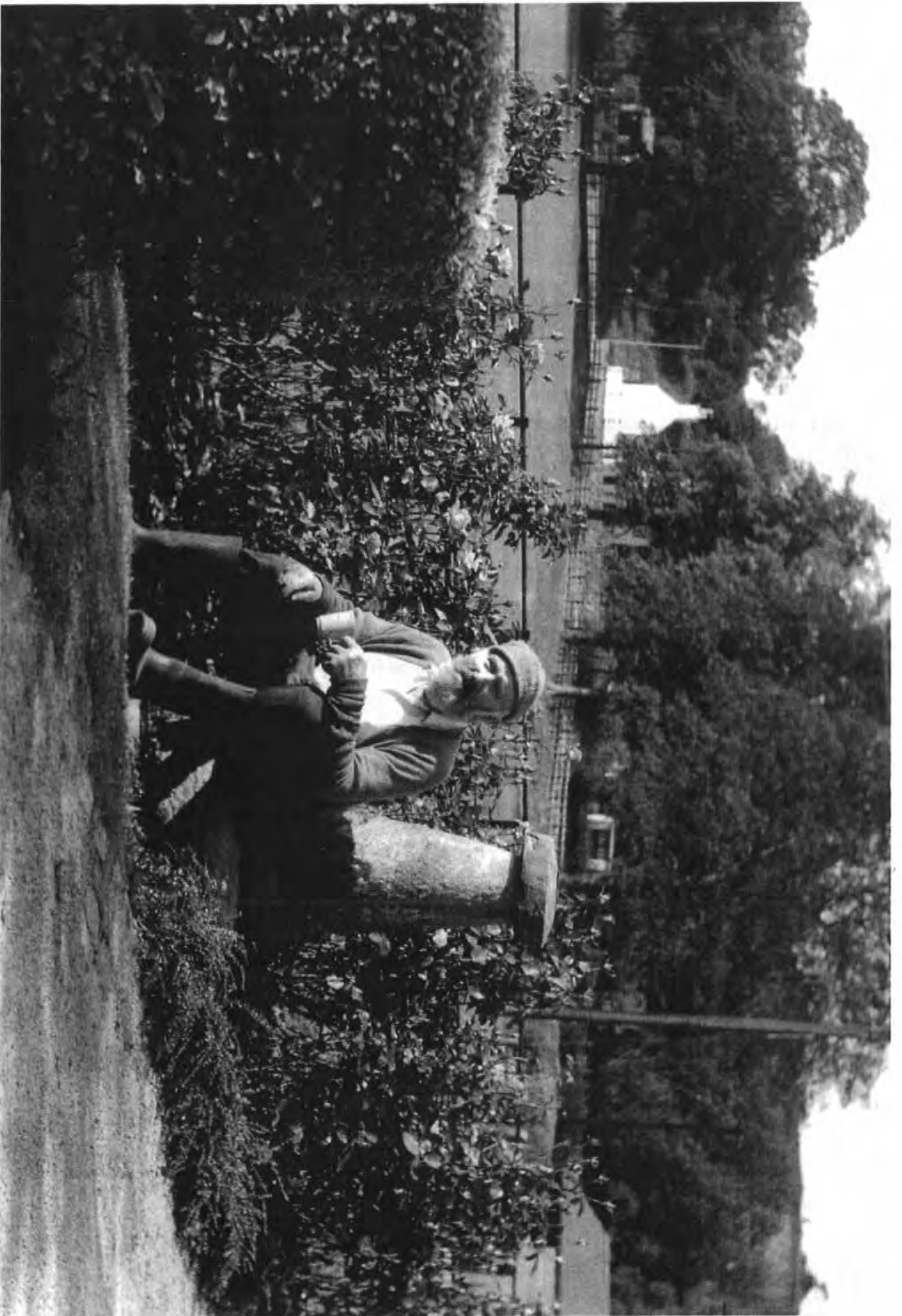
*One Sunday morning, all of the quarry vehicles were lined up on the Berry Field for a photograph.*

*The old schoolhouse is in the background.*

1964



*The Reverend Wayne at the vicarage with a restored charabanc, giving rides to parishioners. 1971*



*Jim Robinson taking "five minutes" with a cup of tea in the garden he helped create and maintain for Mr. & Mrs. John Shields at Barley Croft. c. 1965. Deepwell cottage is in the distance.*





Berry Avenue, 1948

In the 1940's, I was a young lad living in Berry Avenue. There were several other youngsters and we all got along with each other very well. The lads soon formed the *Avenue Gang* and we had many adventures together. There were two other gangs of lads in the parish. The *Tonge Gang* and the *Breedon Gang* and there was a great deal of friendly rivalry between us. On one occasion the Breedon Gang raided the Avenue Gang and I was taken prisoner. They took me up to Manor Farm and locked me in the slaughterhouse chimney. My dad had to come and rescue me and wasn't very pleased about it.

One summer holiday we made a raft at Cloud Hill Quarry. The bottom end of the quarry was disused and had become flooded to a depth of two feet or so. We collected old oil drums and wood and made a fine raft to play on. We behaved ourselves and the quarry management allowed us the privilege of playing there.

We played various games on Berry Avenue, - football, cricket and a form of hockey whereby the Avenue was the pitch, the ends of the road were the goals and willow sticks were hockey sticks. Everything was in short supply during the war years so it was usually a case of "make-do and mend." For example, when the rubber bladder inside our football burst we couldn't get another and so tried a pig's bladder instead. That didn't last long so in the end we stuffed the ball with wool and cloth, which

made it very heavy, but at least we could play. We were able to roam without fears and our parents had no reason to be anxious about our safety. The *Avenue Gang* made a camp beside Tonge brook - built into the bank. On Sundays we wore our best clothes and were forbidden to visit the camp on this day - but against the rules we still met up there on Sunday evenings. All was fine until one Sunday I fell in the brook and returned home wet through and covered in mud. Mother was not amused. For this I received a "tanning" and was confined to base for a week!

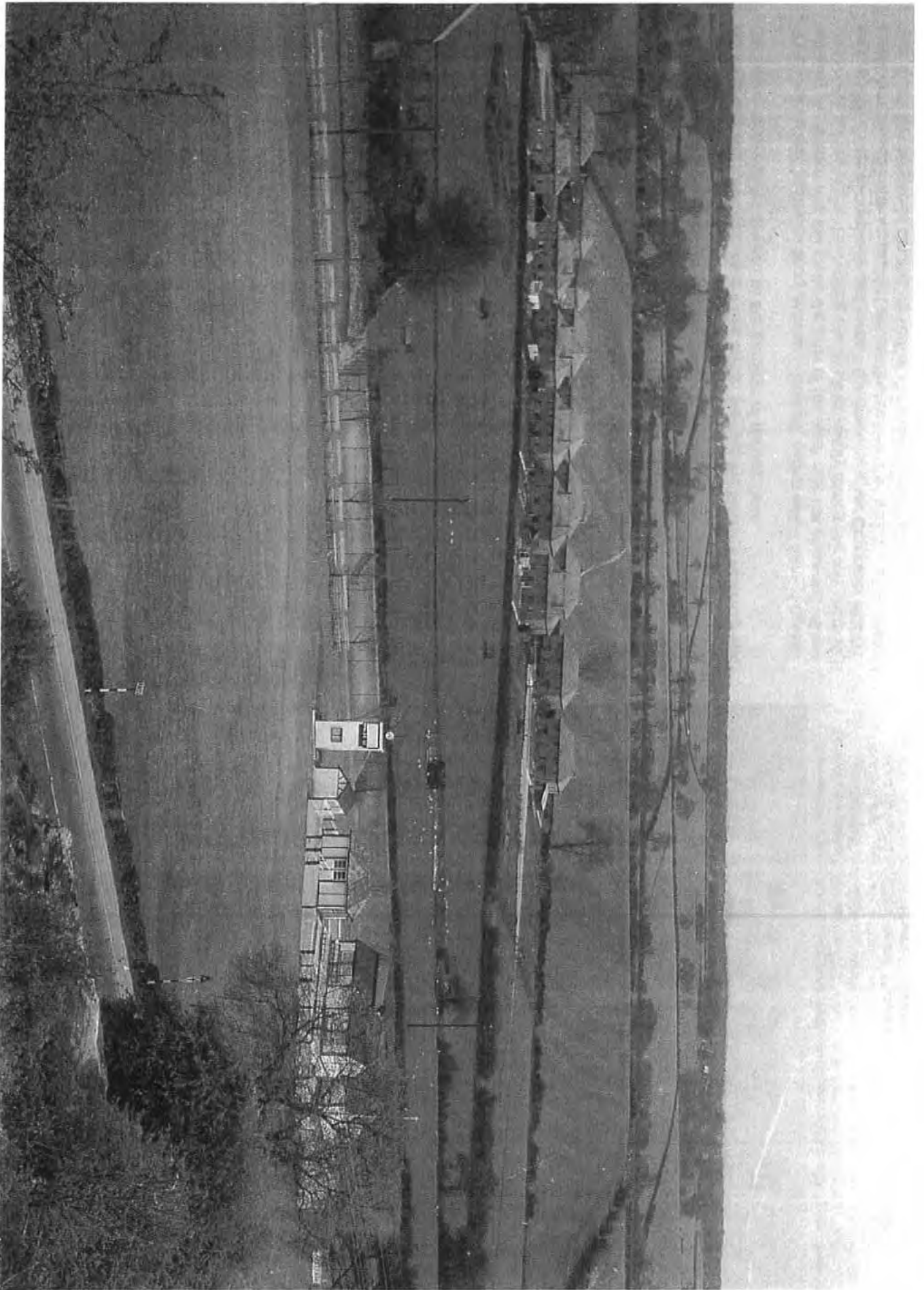
*Maurice Harvey. Parish Times, November 2000*

Berry Avenue was built in the early 30's to house the quarry workmen and their families. Rent included an electricity supply from the quarry between the hours of 5pm and 7am. When the quarry had finished work for the day the supply would be switched to the Avenue by Fred Shaw at the compressor house in the yard of Manor farm - and switched back in the morning. Residents of the Avenue developed the habit of leaving switches on, so all their lights came on as soon as the supply resumed. As a result, the Avenue earned the nickname "the Golden Mile" as when the quarry switch was thrown, all the houses in the street would light up.

*Mick Shaw*



*The menfolk of Berry Avenue enjoying a drink with Captain Shields after he had finished judging the Berry Avenue gardens competition, 1936. From L to R, Back row:- Ernest Barsby, Bill Cluer with Tony, Mr Wakenfield, Jack Goodard, Gerald Storer, Cliff Wakenfield, unknown, Dennis (Dandy) Wakenfield, Ron Fairbrother, John Bird, Jim Shaw with Donald, Dennis Hicking. Front Row:- Mr Riley, Albert Springthorpe, Dennis Moore, Stan Pearce, Pat Johnson, Harry Danvers, Bill Moore, Captain Charlie Shields, John Shields, Harold Kirby, John Danvers, Dick Staham.*



*Berry Avenue was an avenue of 30 houses built in 1936 by the quarry for their employees. In the foreground is "The Berry" cricket ground. John Bird's poultry can be seen in the field between. 1947*



Deepwell cottage being renovated and a bathroom added. 1970

Deepwell cottage was also known as Barsby's after the Barsby family who lived there or Corner cottage. The hand pump in the garden supplied water not only to Deepwell but also the school and to the Grainger family who lived at Platchetts Farm. In the 50's Brian and Mick Johnson used to help fetch water for Mr & Mrs Grainger and at Christmas Edgar Grainger would slaughter a pig and give it to the boys as a thank-you for all their hard work

When cricket resumed in 1946, Mr Tom Carter, representative for Breedon Quarries, was appointed captain. Players were drawn from the parish and members of the stone company. I first played in 1947 whilst still at Ashby Grammar School. I had been coached by George Geary, a former England player, who was also coach with



The Berry' cricket field and pavilion from Tonge Lane with a match in progress. It really was a most delightful setting. June 1954



Maurice Harvey (player) with parents and children outside the cricket pavilion before the tree naming ceremony. To commemorate the opening of the playing field the boundary had been planted with trees named after the youngest child in each employee's family. Each child is holding a stake which carries their name. Each stake was driven into the ground next to their tree. May 1949

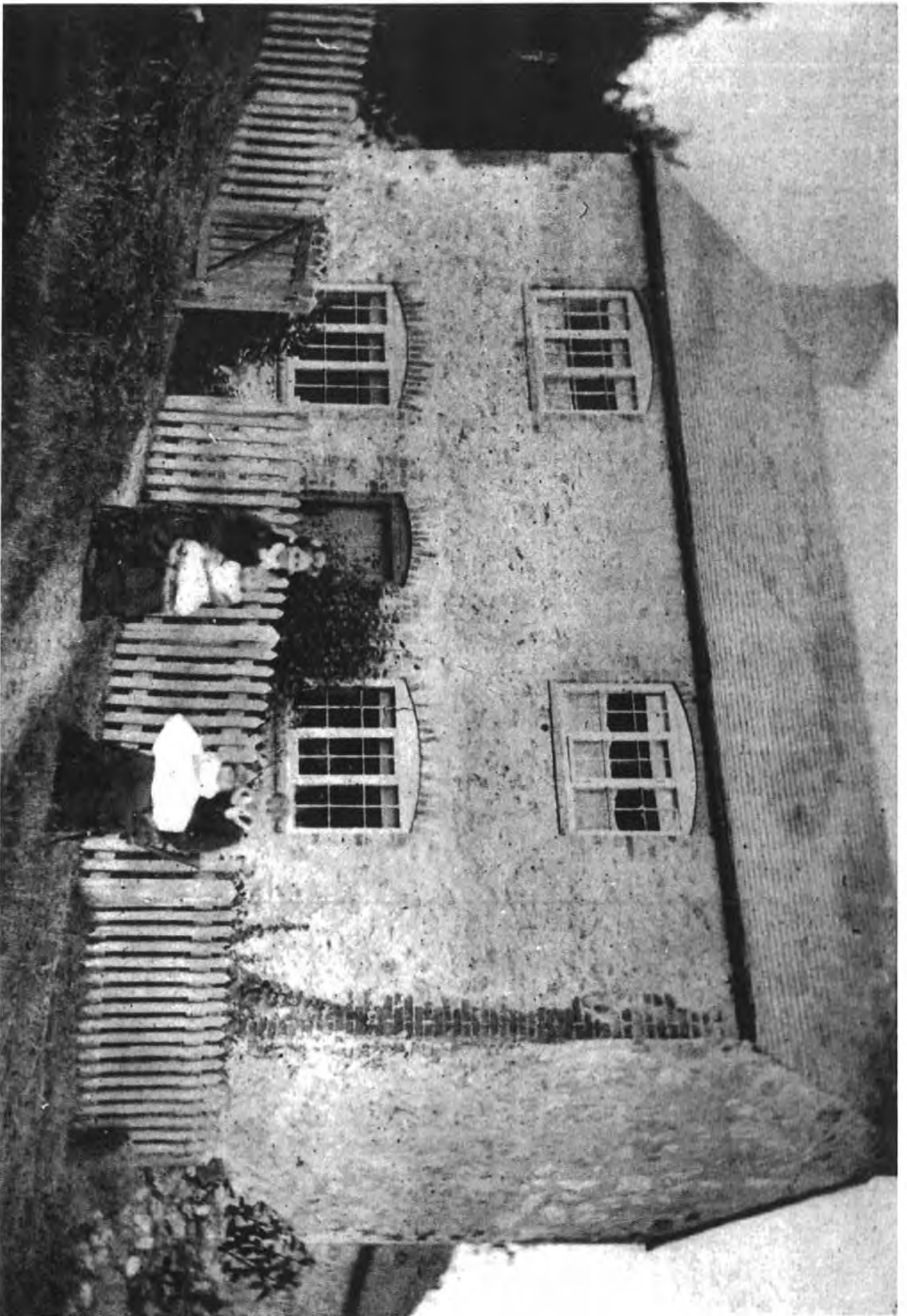
Leicestershire CCC. Initially Breedon CC played against local clubs in the area, and because of our great facilities, it wasn't long before clubs from a wider area of the Midlands wanted to visit Breedon. By this time John Shields, son of Capt. Charles Shields, became captain, and what a fine leader he proved to be. Mr Frank Wakefield was honorary secretary, the chairman was Robert Harvey and Albert Atkins, treasurer. Going into the 1950's there was not a better run cricket club in the whole of England.

Many local lads became fine players, even verging on county standard. Names like the brothers John and Ken Danvers come to mind. Ken was a batsman of very high quality. He had time to play shots and time to alter his strokes when necessary - this is a natural instinct and a quality rare in a batsman. John his brother, was an all-rounder who always merited his place in the side.

*Maurice Harvey, Parish Times, March 2001*



Grenville Gadsby positioning his named stake against the free with a little help from his sister Hazel. May 1949.



*Deepwell cottage standing on the crossroads of the A453, Tonge Lane and Wilson Lane at the eastern extremity of Breendon Hill, Summer 1900.*



*Will Atkin and others watching the cricket game at Breedon, May 1948. The grandstand and pavilion gave a superb view of the cricket field. There was nowhere nicer to be on a warm summer's afternoon than here with a cool drink in one's hand listening to the reassuring crack of willow on leather and the occasional ripple of appreciative applause from the large crowd.*

Before 1939, Breedon and Cloud Hill Cricket Club had its headquarters at "The Poplars", a cricket ground adjacent to what was Tonge station. I can just recall matches being played there since my father was a team member. During the 1939-45 war, cricket was suspended and only began again in 1946. Since "The Poplars" was well outside the village, cricket was resumed on the "Berry Field" situated on the corner of Tonge Lane and Breedon Main Street. As before, the local stone company sponsored the game and the ground was levelled as much as possible and a square made. Initially the square did not wear well and the wicket was covered with cocoa matting. The problems were thought to be due to limestone being too close to the surface but following consultations with the senior groundsman at Derby County Cricket Club, a superb grass square was laid and a first class wicket produced.

At the same time, other ground improvements were made - seats all the way round for spectators and a grandstand pavilion with lounge facilities. All of this was due to Captain CF Shields who was managing director of Breedon & Cloud Hill Lime Works. He was fanatically devoted to the game of cricket and spared no expense on ground improvements.

He never missed a 1st XI Sunday game and would drive on to the ground in his beautiful Rolls-Royce, park and watch the match. The ground was further enhanced when a large tea shop was built together with swings and a paddling pool for the children. There was ample parking space for cars and a nominal 10p per car charge was levied. Collections were made each Sunday and the money obtained was given to a worthwhile charity. There were no membership fees to pay and all a player had to do was provide his own whites. All other equipment was provided by the club and the B&CHLW even bought a bus to take teams and their guests to away matches - these were played on Saturdays. All Sunday matches were played at home.

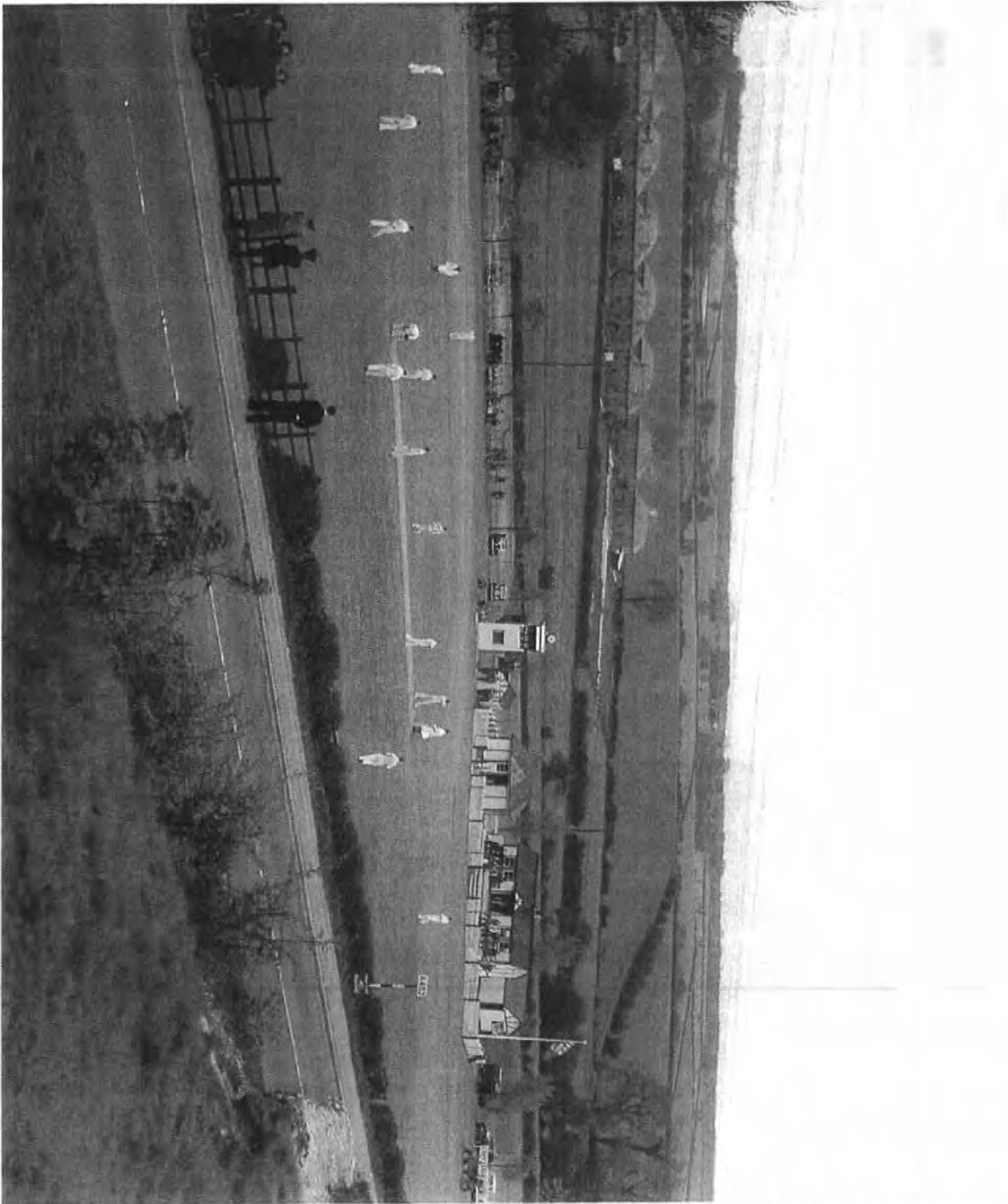
We could always expect a crowd of 2-3,000 spectators. People came from as far away as Nottingham, Tamworth and Derby. The ground became a miniature county ground and was the envy of local clubs. Because the ground was quite small it was not unusual to see 4-500 runs scored and Breedon won most of its matches. It was great entertainment and the crowds loved it. Sixes onto the hill, into the vicarage grounds, over the pavilion into adjoining fields and many into the spectators. Visiting teams had to be of a very high standard otherwise it would be "no contest."

*Maurice Harvey, Parish Times, March 2001*



*Breedon & Cloud Hill Lime Works Cricket Club 'A' Team.*

*Back row L to R: Umpire - J Trvey, W Watts, F Wakefield, Captain - JGG Shields, R Hallam, T Carter, H Chelwyn, Vice-Captain - M Harvey.  
Front Row: G Jones, G Wright, L Wakefield, D Mason.  
May 1949*



Albert Jordan, the groundsman, keeping the children cool in the padding pool. 1950.



Enjoying the sandpit. 1962.



Granville Wright with his son Joe on the swings. 1962.

"The Berry" cricket ground was a superb facility and admired all over the Midlands. There were seats all round the ground, adequate car parking, pavilion and cafe. Home matches regularly used to attract crowds of 2,000-3,000 spectators. And the team was very good too. Unless the opposition was first class it was usually "no contest." May 1947



*Pupils and mistress from the girls' school sitting on the rocks behind the schoolhouse 1910*

memory of his wife. The building is of Breedon limestone, and was used for evening service during the winter months on account of the position of the church.

One day old Mr Shields came to see us at school and gave us all a shilling each. As John wasn't at school that day I took his. We went across the brook and over the field home. On the way I lost my brother's shilling in the grass. I told my mother when I got home. I don't know what happened to the shilling but when I told my teacher next day she laughed and said, "How did you know it was his!!" "I had looked at the date" I said. "But you will give him half of yours won't you?" she said. "Yes" I said, realising I'd just had an important lesson in what is fair and right.

*Ida Wright*

The old stone school at Breedon on the Hill was very cold in the winter. The windows, being very high were not cleaned very often and this made the classrooms very dark. The cloakroom was very small with pegs close together, and if it had been raining on the way to school the wet woollen coats would be hung over each other and produce their own peculiar damp smell. There was no mains water supply. Drinking water was collected by pupils in little white pails from Deepwell, the home of Miss Barsby the infant teacher and a kettle of hot water used to be collected from Mrs Chester's for the teacher's lunchtime drink. Miss Barsby devoted her whole life to local children. She never went out of the village. Her routine was to go to school every weekday and to church on Sunday to play the organ. The playground was on the hill to the side and back of the school. We were not really supposed to climb up

the rocks but we did and would slither down on our bottoms - which would ruin our pants. The playground was always very dusty from the quarry dust. The quarry would blast twice a day and stones would rain down on the roof of the school. Later the Berry field was used as a playground and sports field and we were shepherded across the road and back.

*Mary Sowter*

Children in fancy dress being marshalled into position by Miss Barsby at the start of the carnival parade. Albert Johnson is wearing the policemen's uniform. The parade was a highlight of the "Infirmary Day" fundraising activities which took place on the Dovecote field, where the present school stands. 1926



*The very small thatched cottage next to the Girls' and Infants' School is still standing. It was demolished in 1948 and the area levelled for use as a playground. 1938*



*The house on the left is now demolished. Further down the road the old girls' and infants' school, now disused. 1960*

The house on the left of the photograph was demolished in 1990 and behind it, where the white building is standing, stood a thatched cottage which was demolished in the 1940's. The fine girls' and infants' school was built in 1874 by the late Baron Donington of Donington Park and Lord of the Manor of Breddon, at the foot of the hill to the





*Breedon Rockery was one of the quarry initiatives introduced by Captain Shields to help make Breedon a prettier village. 1959*

Much of the stonework in the rockeries, and the low stone walls which skirt the roadside through Breedon are the work of Laurence Wakefield. The work was entirely freehand and not done to a previously agreed plan. He learned his craft in the quarries which at the time employed eight other members of his family. The gardens and rockeries were laid out by En-tour-cas of Syston.

The allotments seen in the bottom left corner of the aerial photograph of Manor Farm were sold for redevelopment in 1997. One of the keenest allotment holders over the previous fifty years had been Reg Frain, who during his life worked tirelessly for the people in the parish. As the sale of the land coincided with Reg's death the new housing development was named Frain Gardens in his memory.

*Manor Farm was JG Shields livestock unit. The farm had a fine herd of Highland cattle bred for meat. The farm used to slaughter their own animals in the single storey building with the chimney. Amos Bird farmed here from 1943 until the mid 1960s. The farm ceased to be a working farm c.1990 and has now been sold for redevelopment.*

1951



*Mr Albert "Tabsy" Moore, who was never known to divulge his age, but thought to be about 89 in 1966, still cycled the three miles from his home in Belton to the quarry where he worked as a painter. A keen sportsman in his younger days also had an unbroken record of 60 years of public service. He regularly attended meetings of Castle Donington RDC, making the journey as always on his bike.*

1966



*Ida Wright's brother George is in the front passenger seat. The car is on the main road by the quarry entrance. Behind are the chimneys of Manor Farm slaughterhouse. 1927*



*John Gillies Shields being driven in his Darracq. 1902*

In 1902, Mr Shields's quarry manager, Mr Jamieson, retired. "But," wrote Mr Shields "my sons were growing up and they came in and helped me a great deal to develop the quarries. His firm continued paying rent to the Donington estate under the terms of their lease for 25 years and in 1920, was able to purchase the quarries and other land in the parish outright. In 1927 another Scot, Mr Robert Walker joined the firm as manager for the quarries. In 1930 Mr Shields also purchased the Donington Park estate and later developed the



*Isley Walton Church. 1980*

park into a motor racing centre. In 1933 the quarries were turned into a limited company which Mr Woolley-Hart bought and the Shields family retained a certain number of shares in the enterprise. In 1939 Mr Shields' wife Helen died and was buried at Isley Walton churchyard. Mr Shields died four years later, aged 86, on 12th May 1943 after a very short illness. He was buried beside his wife at Isley Walton. They were survived by five of their nine children.



*The staff of the Breedon and Cloud Hill Lime Company offices at the Isley Walton headquarters. c. 1939. They are, from L to R:- Back row, Stan Pearce, Charlie Pickford, Tom Carter, Frank Wakefield, Joe Hudson. Front row, Mary Sower, Jack Holbrook, Annie Allen, Dorris White and Lottie Brakewell.*



*Mr Shields in his office with one of his two Pekinese, Togo or Billy. 1943*  
*Mr Shields had one of the first telephones in the area and his number was Castle Donington 6*



*JG Shields and his wife, Helen, and seven of their children at Isley Walton Hall. On the left is Johnny and sitting on the grass is probably Charles (later Captain Shields). 1894*