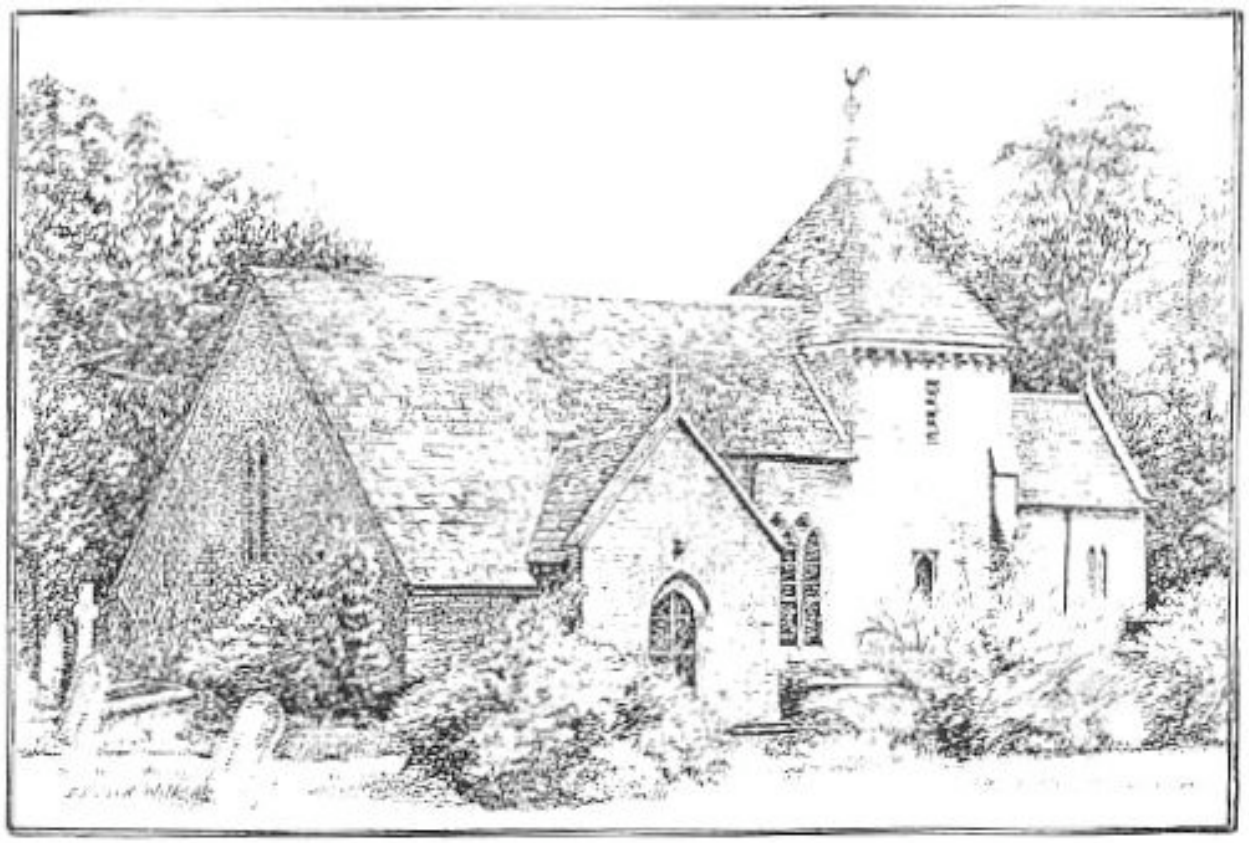
Hewelsfield



Our Village

By P.A. Michael - 1964

Hewelsfield as I have known it over the last sixty years

The Church and Vicars

In Hewelsfield in the early 1900 all the life of the village was centred round the Church and the Vicar. When you look back today you wonder where all the people are gone. I well remember having to help carry chairs over out of the Little School to seat the people in Church at Easter and the Harvest Festivals and the Choir Stalls full. In those days Hewelsfield had a fine Choir and no trouble to find two changes of Bell ringers. Over the years as a boy being under the late Mr Enoch Selby, who was Choir Master (what a lad), and how we boys used to enjoy going round at Xmas Carol singing round the farms with the Choir. We were not allowed to have the wine and cider but by the end of the evening it was fun for us going across the fields to see the men stumbling along. Always parsnip wine at the Bonds, Hewelsfield Court, plum wine at Blunts, Poolfield, then across the fields to Cowsale Farm, cider and finish round the Church at the Local the first night. Always going down round the Common the second night, it was down there where we boys came in, a quiet night down there for the old boys as nearly all gave money and oranges or sweets to us lads.

There was always enough money collected to pay for out yearly outing to Weston, Choir and Bell Ringers. We all walked down to Tintern Station in morning, then to Chepstow on train, and caught the boat to Westward Ho at the slipway. (It's 52 years ago that the last boat sailed out of Chepstow till last year.) What a day we always had. I call to mind two of the older lads trying to buying 'gold' watches off the cheap jacks on the sands but sorry to say when they came back to Church a week or so after the colour had gone. Coming back on the boat our choir Master, Mr Enoch Selby used to get us together and start a sing song and collect off the people on the boat. I can picture him now standing by the funnel of the boat with his bowler hat and stick, singing 'Sweet Belle Mahone'. It was a sad loss to the church when he passed away. Some of his descendants are still around the district and are still great helpers at the church.

The Vicars I can remember in the Parish

First was the Rev. Shawcross but not to be able to say much about him. Next came the Rev. Saunders and family. He was a fine man, always trying to help and do anything good for the Parish. He had three sons and three daughters all who helped and took an interest in Parish affairs, all willing to

help anyone. The boys were all Bell ringers and Miss Gwenne was the Church Organist till her father left. Miss Trixie, the second girl was a practical joker always up to some nonsense and full of fun which did not go down well with some of the straight laced girls. Miss Popsie was the Lady but always helping someone. Mr Tye was a clever engineer. He had been to U.S.A. on some big contracts. The second boy (Dudley) died in World War 1 from wounds and is buried in Hewelsfield Churchyard. It was the last time that I helped to ring a muffled peel at his funeral. Ivor the other son followed the Ministry. None of them ever married. They went to live at the Brooklands on the Brockweir Common, but I am sorry to say all passed away. People who knew them can say, 'What a sad loss to the Parish'.

The Rev. Fernandez and Mrs Fernandez

After the Rev. Sanders came Rev. Fernandez who when he came first was a bachelor, married after. He was a good Minister and a good help in the Parish as also was his wife when she came. He came to the Parish just as the 1914 War broke out and stayed all through the War. He was a great cricketer playing for St Briavels after the war . During his stay in the Parish he was always getting up concerts, whist drives and dances at Brockweir School and in the School by the Church for comforts for the Troops, or anyone who fell on hard times. I expect some of the young people will remember him singing 'Six o'clock in the Bay' and Mrs Fernandez 'Maggie the cows are in the clover', and Mrs Dickens the School Masters wife with her fine alto voice with her many songs. During his time in the Parish Miss Ciss Townshend was the Church Organist and her mother took a lot of interest in the Choir. It was during their time that the Choir used to go to the Choral Festivals in the Forest. I remember when they won at Newland Church and the concerts they used to get up in the School room before the 1914 War. All sang a song to help make it a jolly evening. The one that sticks out, it was just after the War broke out :-

Rev Fernandez: 'Six o'clock in the Bay'
Mrs Fernandez: 'Maggie the cows are in the clover'
Mrs Townsend and Ciss who was the pianist: 'If you were the only girl in the world'
Willie Townsend: 'I'm following in fathers footsteps'
His brother Harry who was one of the lads who never came back from Flanders, and who there is a memorial tablet in the church in memory of: 'My little grey home in the West'
Fred Whittington: 'O Geneviene'
Charlie Voyce: 'Speak to me Thora'
A Michael: 'Ain't you got a big black moon up there'
Fred Voyce: 'Now the moon shines tonight on Pretty Redwing'
Frank Townshend and myself sang a duet: 'There goes my Soldier Boy'

Little did we think that night that we should all be going separate ways before long.

How true, and the years passed by and the fun passed as well. I have left till last a grand old character. The late Charles Hill who always gave a fine rendering of 'Molly Mahone' and 'Mush Mush Toral I Haddy'. Mr Hill was a staunch Church man and took a great interest in Parish affairs. A Parish Councillor and on the District council for years. No buses and few cars in those days. He always walked to Lydney and back and knew how to keep his council about matters that should not be disclosed (a thing that is lost today by many). Our Organist Miss Ciss Townshend married one of the Shotton boys, now the late Captain Shotton. She is still alive and well having lost her oldest son in the Second World War. He was lost at sea following the family tradition, there are only four left and the pianist Mrs Shotton who were at the last concert in Little School that I mentioned, that took place in the Little School, 1914.

The club Rev. Fernandez, Mrs H Townshend, Mr Hill & committee formed

These and a committee opened a club in the Little School so that there was somewhere for the boys to go in the evenings. The old Captain Shotton of the Grange gave a Billiard Table and there were all kinds of Games, and Boxing in the Big Room. We used to get quite a few from St Briavels over but it was all good fun. In those days if you got knocked you took it and good friends after (No boot like today), and although Mr Hill was getting on in years and not much weight, he could make all step lively. He descended from the Hill family, the show people, whose sister and brother Marshall Hill brought up Billy Butlins now the Holiday Camp King.

Another fine man was Mr Henery Townshend who would always have things run straight and gave good support. The fetching of the Billiard Table sticks out in my memory. Frank Townshend and myself went over to the Grange with two horses and trolley and the old Captain got some of his men, when it came to lift he started to bawl 'Heave ho', and we two started to laugh so got some real Navy language, but the old boy soon cooled down and took us round his Museum. I still have the present he gave me. Now the Grange is no more, the fine old Mansion has been demolished. The old Captain has passed on so are all the seven sons, all Sea Captains including the one Boy skipper, who brought home the Boat who the Book 'The Boy Skipper' was all about; his only daughter has also passed away, (the late Mrs Dibden' whose two children got on well). The daughter is married to a businessman in London and Harry the son, who after winning a scholarship to Monmouth

Grammar School went on to University and is today Director of Education at Stoke on Trent. All the Shotton boys were good sportsmen.

In the Rev. Fernandez time at the vicarage, he always had a cook and two maids and although during the War food was scarce they done what they could for the poor of the Parish. While the War had been, a lot had been away and what a difference to the look of things in the Parish. When we came back the Rev. Fernandez had retired and gone and the Rev. Howells had come. He remained in the Parish for a number of years as Vicar, then retired and went to live on Brockweir common where he passed away having been made Canon before he retired. I often wonder if it was the fault of the War or the loss of the Rev. Fernandez that had made the change. Things seemed upset all the way round with the Church, the Choir had gone all beside a few girls. The Older Bell ringers had left and the Club at the school closed, I am sorry to say the Vicars wife was a very awkward person to work with - the ladies used to do so much for the church had left, and the end for those that had been away, they never went back.

The next Vicar to come to the Parish was the Rev. Elphick and wife and son and daughter about 1930 till the Second World War. He was a very good man and his wife used to take quite an interest in affairs in the Parish. He took up the Ministry after being wounded in the First World War and when the Second World War started he went back as Chaplain to the Forces in the R.A.F. But the congregation had been lost to the Church and not much doing in the village it was like with the Rev. Howell only the other way round. Mrs Elphick was easy to work with, the people of the Parish did not take to the Rev. Elphick like his wife. She took up War Works and used to go round the gun site and camps with a large Army van with comforts for the troops. I remember her coming down to me one morning when she had a puncture; she said she had a spare wheel but could not get the other off as it kept going round. It was a real joke after about it there were two men that lived by her, she had jacked up the wheel off the ground and one was trying to hold the wheel against the other, she had not thought to loosen the nuts before jacking it up. She used to laugh about it years after she had left the Parish when I met her. While the Rev. Elphick was in the Forces, Canon Lloyd took over, he came out of retirement and carried on till he came back. He was a kind old gentleman, he afterwards retired and went to live on St Briavels Common where he passed away. He is buried at Hewelsfield.

Next came the Rev. Grey but he did not stay long. After him the living of Hewelsfield was transferred to come under the St Briavels Vicar, and a curate put in at Hewelsfield Vicarage.

Now we come to the Rev. Burlton, a curate then but now has gone over the River as Vicar at Cromhall. What a great pity that the living of the old Parish had gone. Here was a man that knew what was wanted in a country village

and if he had come before I am sure we would have seen a big improvement to the Church the little time he was in the Parish. He did much with the help of the late Sammy and Mrs Fowler and a happy band of helpers. Mr Fowler had retired as Post Master and come to live at Bryne House down on the Brockweir Road from St Briavels Post Office. He and Mrs Fowler were a grand pair and had always helped in all goings on at St Briavels before coming in the Hewelsfield Parish. The Rev. Burlton and Mrs Fowler and helpers started off Whist Drives and Socials in the Little School and it was surprising the money they got for the Church and good causes. The Rev. Burlton was well liked St Briavels and the Church congregation had improved. Now the Vicarage is sold, so it is the passing of the Vicars of Hewelsfield.

So I have come to the end of the Church and the Vicars I have known. I should like to say how we miss the sound of the bells and the singing that was heard in the lovely old church and the people we have met there over the years. How we lads used to play up Mr George Bond when he was Churchwarden and used to bring his young lady to Church and stand in the Porch outside so as to say 'Goodnight Miss'.

Across the road from the Church stands the Little School. It was here many of the Parties for the children and other events used to be held and many Wedding Receptions held, also the Sunday School. During the Second World War it was the Headquarters of the first L.D.V and then the Home Guard (One of the things that stopped Hitler invading) (Hewelsfield Home guard 16 strong) (5 Ross Rifles and 5 rounds of ammunition). It did get better later on and it was somewhere to meet and make a bit of fun at nights when we were on duty. It was in this school that the small children started up, till 1900 then all had to go to St Briavels or Brockweir. The first Master at St Briavels I remember was Mr Pogaloss, after Mr J.H. Thompson. First I remember at Brockweir was Mr Phillips after came J.J. Dicken who wrote the books 'Hewelsfield in the 17th and 18th Century'. Mr Dicken was a great help in the Parish. He was Chairman of the Parish Council for many years and well supported by a number of good men at different times over the years. These men always saw the Paths and Rights of Ways were kept open and the Free Woods left as they should. Now I see the Little School is going to ruin.

Above the school stands the Old Chapel now in ruins. I can remember when they held services there, and later years they always held a service there on Flowering Sunday mostly by Mr J Walker who has always been associated with the Chapels at St Briavels. He is still alive. How sad to see the chairs rot away now it is used by the Council to store snow breaks. By the Church stands the village pump now condemned. When you look back and think of the people that you have known to have drank the water from there all their lives and many who lived to be 90 you wonder. By the pump was the stores kept by Mr H. Townshend. It was here we used to get our few sweets and

groceries and the Post Box was in the wall by the steps that are still there. When the Townshends left the stores all had to go to St Briavels to shop or down to Brockweir, no shop where the Triangle is today. I can always remember walking to St Briavels on Saturday night, the shops used to keep open till 9 o'clock in those days and we always got the Sunday paper from Mr Hughes on the corner on the Saturday night and I had to take it up to Poolfield for Mr Blunt on the Sunday morning. When the Townshends left there they went down to Valley View on the Brockweir Road before returning to Oakdine.

Nearly all the farms in the District and most of the houses and cottages came under Clanna or Sedbury Estate. Clanna Estate was owned by Captain Marling and Sudbury by Sir Percival Marling. The dividing line between the two estates was the Woolaston Road, Clanna Gardens and house were thrown open to all that rented under them on Rent Day and well I remember the lovely lunch and teas and the stalls with ice cream and sweets for the children that Miss Marlings and staff used to provide and the lovely greenhouses and gardens and also the big black horses, some of the largest heavy ones I ever saw, and four lovely carriage ones. I can call to mind that it was a Mr Tom Page looking after the heavy ones and Mr Marrid the others.

Others I can think of in those days in the gardens, Mr Cooper, Mr Joseph, Mr Smith, Mr Simmons who was the Head Woodman. Mr Nicholas (Carpenter), Mr Tampton and Bill and Mr Dick Williams (Masons) and the two Collier families, Mr Merrick and Pattle were the Keepers. There was always a few days work in the Winter season, when the shooting parties used to meet at Clanna, for some in the Parish beating the woods for the guns, never no trouble to get beaters it used to be a grand day out and a lovely lunch for all.

Mr Merrick the one keeper got drowned in the Clanna Ponds one morning after a shoot. He was trying to get out a bird that had dropped in the Pond the day before and must have slipped and his waders filled and no one about. It was a sad loss. He was always so full of life and a good man with dogs. Always remember his two small sons coming up to home with a brace of birds that the Marlings' always sent to tenants. The one lad was six and the other eight years old with two lovely black retriever dogs up to their shoulders and walking one each side of them. The one lad is a Police Sergeant today and the other is in Chepstow District.

After the death of Captain Marling the Clanna Estate was sold, some farms sold off, then Pryce Jenkins of Raglan bought the remaining part of them and along came the Second World War and Clanna House was taken over for the Troops from the U.S.A. This was the start of the finish of Clanna Estate. Now all the farms sold off the lovely Mansion demolished, the gardens and stable going to ruin. The Old Saw Mills and Workshop with the Water Wheel falling down. Many a time have I been down there with horses and cart to

fetch building material for the men to come to repair the buildings and houses and how well the places were kept. Now the woods have been taken over by the Forestry Commission. What a shame and loss to the District to see the lovely buildings, gardens and greenhouses go to ruin.

The largest farm in the Clanna Estate in the early 1900 was Hewelsfield Court, 365 acres, farmed by the Bond family. I do not remember Mrs Bond, only daughters, one daughter was married and the youngest son, Fred went farming down in Essex and one girl was away in Sussex House-Keeping. After the father died it was farmed by John and two of the girls. George Bond also lived there at home but did not help in farming the Court. He had the ground and stables down on the Common at Wye View and Pentery and used to travel for Morris and Griffin manure Company. He was a great horseman, winning all over the country with his racers and trotters. He used to think nothing of driving up to Gloucester and back, I used to ride his horses always at the old Lydney show on Whitsun Monday and up at Goodrich in Herefordshire in the August. Not many left that can remember 'Gamecook' 'Sleepy Tom' and 'Hewelsfield Flash' all lovely animals. He was a devil to play jokes and always up to some nonsense - was the Church Warden for years before he married Miss Mutton of Holmes Farm, Lydney and went to Close Turf Farm. The Bonds farmed the court till 1915.

I shall always remember going as a boy to help in the Summer holidays with the hay and the corn. No combines or tractors in those days and the few reaping machines heavy and if the corn was laid had to be cut with hook and crook. We boys used to bind the sheaves. Wages were low in those days. What a man on a farm got was from 15/- (75p) to £1 and his cottage. Hours to work from six till six with breaks for food and in the Summer go on till dark for very little overtime, but on most farms plenty to eat and drink, always a meat tea and how we used to love the lard and apple cake the Miss Bonds used to make. I have sat down there with as many as 25 men and boys and the cider some of those old boys drank! In those days all the farms baked and killed their own pigs, doing the hams in the baking oven and like I remember my mother doing great lard cakes about 2ft across so you could cut and come again.

The Bonds always kept a staff of 9 or 10 regular and a lot that went wood cutting in the Winter came on the farms in Summer and quite a few that had been in the Army and on the Reserve used to travel around doing odd work in Summer, haymaking and corn harvest then go hop picking. There was a couple that came round shearing every year, sleep in the wool one side of the barn with the sheep penned in the other waiting for it to come light. It was a grand sight to see the teams of horses, as many had seven teams in the same field. When I look back and think of those men that came round and slept in the buildings how they were always clean and good men in their way of life, always ready to work and help anyone.

Fifty and more years after, when I used to go in the Staff Room at the Army Training School for tea break and sit down with men that were training boys there, and listen to conversation, language and their way of life, I thought of those men that were supposed to be country yokels in their estimate who as man and boy sat down with in the fields to meals, how they would not allow us boys to use bad language and of their conversations although they had no chance to learn much, but always ready to help anyone that needed it. They were Natures Gentlemen and satisfied with life. I always remember August 1914 being in the rickyard at the Court helping with the hay. No wireless or TV in those days, at 10 o'clock in the morning, Mr Bond going in to get the tea break and coming out and saying War was declared on Germany. In the rickyard that morning were 9 beside Mr Bond. Three were on the Reserve, two that used to come every year and Sgt Jenkins that lived down by Barnage in the Little Wooden House. How the three of them said we are going straight away to Lydney to report. That was the last we saw of two, they were killed in the First battle of the Somme but Sgt Mozen came back at the end of the War. He died in 1932. Before the end of the War all had gone and all the best of the horses. I remember taking eight over to the George, St Briavels for them to inspect, early 1915 and coming back with four.

After the Bonds left the Court Mr John Bond married Mrs Nicholas, the widow of Mr Nicholas the miller of Rodmore Mill and went to live at Bullo. The girls went down Essex, all are passed away. The Hewelsfield Court Farm was taken over by the Roberts family of Day House, Tidenham. It was first run by the father, a fine man always willing to give a helping hand. He let two families of Belgium refugees have a large cottage till the end of the War. After World War I the second son Jack took over till about 1929 then he moved to Herefordshire and Tom his brother farmed it. Tom lost his life through an accident in the hay field.

The farm was then taken over by Mr. Simmons of Poolfield, whose widow and son are still there. Mrs. Simmons was the daughter of William Blunt of Poolfield she married Mr. Simmons of Longley Farm in about 1910. I can well remember her wedding at Hewelsfield Church. The carriage and pair of lovely black horses. After living at Longley she returned to her old home at Poolfield about 1922 and went to the Court about 1938, Mr. Simmons was like the Roberts family (Yeoman Farmers) always willing to help and do good for the Parish and good company, always right for a joke and laugh and the boys are following him. Barnage Farm on the Clanna Estate was farmed by Mr. Martyn after the Rymens left. He was a good man to help in the Parish with anything going on. He had the misfortune to lose his wife and only daughter, a very jolly girl. Some of the family are still round Lydney.

Along at Rodmore Mill lived the Nicholas family. Mr. Nicholas was a very strong man with bushy whiskers; he was the last to use the Mill up to about 1911. It was reputed that he could throw a sack of wheat over his shoulder and carry one under each arm. Some feat as wheat in those days weighed 2 ½ cwt. The two boys Harold and Reg were bell ringers and in the choir at Hewelsfield Church. Today looking how far away Barnage, Rodmore Mill and Royal Reddings from Hewelsfield is its something to look back on and think how those people came summer and winter and always enjoyed life.

There is a bridle path down to Rodmore Mill from Hewelsfield, we used to walk down there in the summer and you can get to Royal Reddings across under the Free Woods and go back up the Dingle by St Anne Well on up pass where the Bore Hole is now and under the field known as Sinkaway, there was two big ponds storing water for the Mill there are only the Banks there now as the brook has gone underground now and comes out lower down. If you follow on up the brook you will come to the Ponds at Aylesmore Court go on up, and you will find the source of the water comes out in the yard at Ghyl House. Now the water is pumped back up from the Bore Hole to a reservoir about 350 yards from where it started across the field on Harthill. Poolfield Farm was on the Sedbury Estate, as also Cowsale Farm and White Walls, and cottages by Vicarage and all the land down to Brockweir Farm.

The first farmer I can call to mind was the Rugmans, not for long. After came the Blunt family, three sons and one daughter. The youngest son emigrated to Australia, he was a good runner and I call to mind how he ran and won the mile race at St. Briavels Fair, the same day he went on the midnight train at Chepstow before World War I. The other sons helped run the farm, I remember being sent up by my father to help with the corn harvest, we lads used to load the wagons with the sheaves not much trouble, as the men putting them up used to see they were right and going in to dinners in the old kitchen at Poolfield and Mr. Blunt walking round with the cider jug, filling the glasses saying "Drink up boys its not the vitals or the drink I begrudge you, it's the time". A fine farmer and good man to help the Parish.

The first Cowsale Farm was Mr. Burres, nicknamed Betty, he left and went to live in Pentory View. Then came the Lea family. He did not take much interest in the Parish, took in part of the Free Wood by fencing straight up and blocked up the right of way across the fields, but was made to open up by members of the Parish Council and Public. I well remember the day they went to open it up. Asking Mr. Lea to unlock the gate he was there with the policeman, P.C. Holmes and when he refused John Nurden going to put a chain on from the back of the cart and how he soon unlocked it, and P.C. Holmes following up on to the road and giving Mr. Nurden a summons for no name on the cart. I call to mind they all gave 2d each to pay the fine. It has always stayed open since, that is 48 years ago. Now the farmer that is

there now is trying to do the same. The keepers on the Sedbury Estate used to live at the White Walls, the first I remember was Mr. Trow who left and became landlord of the George Hotel, St. Briavels. After came the Walkers, Mr. Bone and Mr. Fox.

Then came the Forestry Commission who took over and Mr. C. Blunt went there. His widow and son are still there. Harthill Court was owned by Mr. E. Lamb in the early days and farmed by Mr. E. Thomas he left just before First World War succeeded by the Morris family, Father, Mother and two Sons and two Daughters. The old couple retired at the end of the First World War, the daughters married and one son David, went to farm at Shirenewton leaving Tommy at Harthill. He was a good sportsman and farmer and helped with all going on in the Parish, a District Councillor and was well known for his root growing. In fact a good all round man. He has now passed away. Harthill was then farmed by John one of the Simmons boys who carried on the Simmons tradition, always willing to help and take an interest in the Parish, now he has left to go in the Forest, so another of the old brigade is gone and no one to take his place.

At Aylesmore Court lived the Palins, I can remember them coming, Mr. Palin was a country gentleman, a J.P. a staunch Churchman at both St. Briavels and Hewelsfield and took a great interest in both Parishes and Schools, always ready to help. They always had a staff on the Estate. Mr. Curtis was the coachman, when they had the carriage horses, after he became chauffeur with the Sunbeam with large brass lamps, it was a sight in those days only a few Ford Ts about then. The Gardner Mr. Bowen lived in the Lodge at the top of the drive. Some of the family still round Sedbury. Now the lovely gardens are gone and the place looks neglected.

The Ghyl House was built by the late Edward Lamb just before 1914, he was going to live there but his wife was thrown out of the trap and killed by Clearwell Castle driving some girls to Clearwell Church to be confirmed. So during the 1914 War it was used as a Military Hospital for wounded soldiers.

In the house by where the Pool was, lived Mr. Townshend that is Frank's Grandfather. Down below the Pub is the small farm lived the Pritchards all the buildings the little cottage and pub used to belong to them. There were four sons and two daughters. George the oldest left and went to Bristol, Fred was the local pig butcher, he went to War I and never heard of again, believed killed. Albert was the farmer and Bill used to travel round.

In Hewelsfield in the early part of the 1900 there were two pubs. The Parrot down by the Church and the present pub called in my early days Tumpkins Hales, now the Carpenters Arms. The Parrot was kept by a landlord by the name of Mia Moulton, he was the last to keep it before it closed. This was the meeting place in those days for the men that used to come from

Woolaston and Brockweir. Those from Brockweir used to go down in the Free Wood and get bundles of straight sticks to send down to Bristol on the boat for basket making. Outside the Parrot on the Tump by the Churchyard Wall was the Saw Pit where they used to saw the timber into boards. The men I remember there were the Scrivens, Voyce and Worgan families who used to follow woodcutting in the winter and help on farms in the summer.

In the yard at the Parrot was the Blacksmith Shop this one was run by the Jones family who had a shop on the Chase and one at St. Arvans where some of the family still carry on. In the little house lived the local rabbit catcher (Luke Williams) he was always accusing us lads of stealing his wires and rabbits. I remember once after he had been on to us, three of us Fred Voyce, Bill Nurden and myself going up to the field by the road and pulling up his wire and hanging on the wire fence and tied a note on the gate "No bunnies tonight, Luke".

It was surpising the men that used to be seen at the Old Parrot in those days, those that came from Woolaston had horses and carts would go down to Brockweir with goods to go to Bristol on the boat. "The La Belle Marie" she sailed to Bristol and used to bring supplies for all the stores back, the boat belonged to the Dibden family who also ran the ferry across the River before the Bridge was built. She was left to rot away by the slipway. The Dibdens kept the Quay Stores at Brockweir and after built the Triangle Stores higher up.

Up at the pub, now the Carpenters Arms, there used to be a pool on the side of the road now filled in. It was a stopping place for the famrers on the way to Chepstow Market to water the horses and cattle – no lorries or cars. All the farmers drove horses and float. It was a big day out for them, all used to have fast horses and try to pass on the way home, but Mr. G. Bond could always pass them with his gig and trotters. He was always pulling someones leg on the way home. All pulled up at the Carps, no closing hours in those days. Before the closing of the Old Parrot they held a Dance and Social evening, it was the first dance I ever went to. The band there that night was Mr. Jack Clements (Fiddle) Mr. Harry Burley (Drum) St. Briavels, and Mr. Tom Voyce (Tin Whistle).

It seems hard today to believe that there were two Blacksmith shops in Hewelsfield but there was, the other up by the Carpenters. This one was run by the Tylers, son and father. The son married one of the Merrick girls and left for Wales, so after the fathers health failed was closed, it is now Mr Whittington's garage.

Below the pub lived the Scriven family, Mr. Scriven followed his trade as a woodcutter in winter and helped on farms in summer, always walked to work, was quite a character. He would think nothing of walking to Pillowell

and round that part to work. On down the road lived Mr. Selby and family. He was a son of Mr. Enoch Selby the Choir Master, I have mentioned. He was a staunch Churchman and helper in the Parish. He followed the family trade as a builder, was a wonderful stone mason. Lots of the Selby work can be seen in the stone buildings in the District. He built the first council houses in the twenties. Also the Mackenzie Hall at Brockweir and the Chepstow Cinema, so some of his work will remain as a monument to him.

On the other side of the road lived the Page family. Mr. Page always was called John Page "King of the Hudnalls" because he used to go over in the wood to get the birch to make his bisoms. The tale about him, was when he had a bad back the Vicar's wife took him down a box of Doans Kidney Pills. In the local they asked him if they were doing him any good, he had not found it had, so they said you have to take box and all together, so he swallowed box and pills and no more trouble with back (too busy) that's how it was years after, he had died when his name came up.

On down the lane towards Brockweir lived a Miss Bennett she was a foster mother. I can recall a lot of children she brought up. One was a lad Bert Plank who joined the Army long before 1914 and when he came home in his red and gold uniform how we boys used to run round with him. Another lad was Charlie Edilys who became a driver on the line. Right by lived Mr. Hill who I mentioned, across lived Mr. Jenkins, on down at Wells Farm lived the Jones family and up in Nool lane lived one of the sons Tom Jones. The lane now is always called Jones Lane, some of the family are still there. The Jones always supporters of Church and ready to help in the Parish. At Wye View lived Mr. Philip Jones, he had retired there from Aylesmore Court.

There were a lot of changes over the years at Wye View, I call to mind the Browns, two boys were in the Choir, 'The Williams', Captain Shotton and Mr. Wyatt living there. On along the lane, now known as Hunters Lodge, lived the Palmers and down at Wilmot Ede Townshend and Fraser Forbes used to live at Neilpahar just below Hartleys all took interest in Parish affairs.

Now all these people are mostly all passed on and their children moved. A new generation of people have arrived and with the coming of the car have no time for the quiet life of the village.

The farmers around in those days were all descended from farming stock. Not much money in farming then and plenty of hard work and long hours, not much machinery to help. Today with the tractor and machinery a new type have come in, very few like Bonds, Roberts, Morris, Martyns and Nicholas Blunts, Townshends, Prichards and Simmons left. Those men although it was long hours and hard work could always find time to take an interest in the Church, the Parish and fellow men and make a bit of fun out of the hard life and no trouble over paths going over their land, they always

made everybody welcome. Gone also are the Marlings, Palins, Lambs, Shottons, Frobes, Palmers and the lovely estates and houses.

The Carpenters Arms and Landlords of the early days

First Landlord I remember was Mr. Tom Heedwell, some of the family still in St. Briavels. Then came Sammy Goodman, followed by Mr. T. Stump who was also the village Carpenter and Undertaker. He moved over to Pond House across the road and this is where the first Post Office was at Hewelsfield. Mrs. Stump ran a small shop.

In those days the ladies wore large hats with ostrich feathers and it was joke of us lads to sit up in the Choir stalls and look down for them to come down the steps into Church and bet one another who would have the largest feather, not often Clara, as we called Mrs Stump got beat. After Mr Stump came Mr. Charlie Edwards, that was 1914, he stayed till 1922 then went to Painland farming, did not stay there went to keep the Black Dog Hotel, Gloucester. He returned to keep the Carps years later. In the meantime there was the Croomes, another Edwards Hall, Mr. C. Vincent and Joe Vincent. Then Mr. Edwards came back but it was not the same, all the old boys had gone and so had the fun jokes that were played on one another, and no conversation.

When I went back there I saw the difference, no Mr. Pritchard who we lads used to get to sing and who when he got up to sing would always say "if I yet in tune I be in the spirit". Mr. Scrivens was another one we loved to get going and Mr. Albert Tyler who used to collect the rates and always had some fish in his pocket on his way home from Lydney. He used to love to play quoits with Mr. Thorne the butcher and how they would pull one another's leg. Mr. Tyler used to say "Keep you toe back Mister". How we got his fish out of his pocket and laid them on the paper on the floor, one of the boys had gone over and bought a reel of cotton and run four lengths across the passage to the door outside and looped it around their necks. No electric lights in those days, the passage was dark, one said "Mr. Tyler your fish is on the floor, they must be alive". As the old boy went to go across to pick them up they went off along the passage, he said they are making for the pond but it was all took as a joke.

Mr. William Pritchard was another character. He used to travel around first with tea, then going round with pack used to go backwards and forwards down Wales when he came up would always have a sack of stuff. I can remember all the lads all buying hard hats and all going to Church in bowlers. A saying of Mr. W. Pritchards was after a good singer had sang a song "Not bad but if the bist was far out of town as thee bist out of tune these be a hell of a way from home". Mr. Jenkins was another old boy who

was always up to playing a joke on someone. If he could get someone stood in front of the fire from where he used to sit he could pick up the end of the fender and let drop on the stone floor. I have saw a few strangers jump around wondering what happened and was a real story teller, he made it all sound true and never a smile. He would get up to go and always said "I must get on down to Pontypool". I can recall one Sunday night Jenks getting up to go and saying it; in the pub were two men with a car and said "we will take you as far as Newport". "No thanks" said Jenks "I go across the fields, short cut". John Nurden was another case, he used to drop off to sleep and would find his legs tied when he woke.

Another old chap was Mr. C. Young of St. Briavels Common who when he went out to go would find some of the boys had turned the horse round in the shafts. Gone are Mr. C. Blunt who with his Ford T Lizzie used to be up to some jokes and Mr. Edwards who we used to laugh at when he was farming and the weather bad, his words were " I am going to sell up and all the farming " l'll do will be in a flower pot". Gone is Mr. Simmons another fine old gentleman who always caused a laugh and used to say "I shall maintain and guarantee" but who always had a smile and did all for the good of the Parish and sport and keeping the right of ways, paths and free woods open. Fred Voyce and Willie Townshend are two more missing who used to always be up to some antics.

So I suppose with the coming of the car, electricity and water and TV a new village life will come and the people who reside there will take no interest in the free woods, right of ways and paths, and never know how people before them used to make the most of their rights, all the families who used to bake went to get the wood from there and it was all looked on as fun although it was hard work to get it out of the woods, all went down and cut and carried it out. Those that did not own horses and carts could always have one from one or other of the farmers around, all joined in to help to make life happy.

In those days there was only the pub to go to and before the little club was opened, no restrictions, if you were about 14 and liked to go in no Police did not seem to interfere but the old boys that used to go saw that you behaved, no lads had beer, it was always pop with just a spot of beer. Beer then the first time I remember, was 2 ½ d a pint and if they gave a shilling when they went in they got five pints for a bob. How I remember some of those woodcutters marking it up on the table, four strokes and put the last one across, I can remember Mr Scrivens remark "That's the one over the bar". The old table was still in the Carpenters Arms 50 years after and still shows the marking where he used to put them down.

It cost the lads one penny for their glass of shandy, so you can see that times are altered, you wont get much today for one penny. It was all Cinderella and Tabs cigarettes in those days, Woodbines were about. The

price then was one penny for five, three half pennies for ten. Ansties Gold Flake in a paper packet was threepence for 10. One of Mr. George Bonds tricks was to get some of the boys down in the fields at Wye View, they all used to go down to watch his horses being exercised and offer them first round the field two packets of Woodbines, that was three half pennies, some prize after running round a 40 acre field. Another trick I remember him doing, was Fred Voyce and Arther Scrivens coming down on a bike to Wye View one night that Fred had bought, not many of us had bikes in those days. On the way up Mr. Bonds said "If I sit on and peddle and you two get one each side and hole me up I may be able to learn to ride". He sat on and these two started to push him telling him "Peddle" he was so say trying not doing much, after they had got him to the top of those steep hills on the Brockweir road he shot off, he could ride a bike, these lads said "What fools we are".

We always went about in the summer time on Sunday through the woods or for walks along the many paths in the Parish not only the younger ones, the older ones would be about as well, all knew how to get about the shortest way and walk to see neighbours although it was what today they would call a long way. I wonder how many of the people that have come into the district and say they are going abroad for their holidays to see the scenery and woods have ever taken the trouble to walk through the East Wood Oakhill, The Dingle, Roads Grove and over on the banks on each side of the Parish. Across the fields by Cowsale you can get across to Madgett and Sheepescot one way, you come to the Devils Pulpit with a lovely view of the Tintern Abbey going down the old Roman road towards Brockweir from Madgett you go up about 200 yards down you will find where Offa's Dyke goes on down and up by the Mackenzie Hall to Brockweir Common. In the field under Madgett if you walk along under the wood you get one of the finest views that you will find. You are looking down at the village and the bend in the River Wye and Llandogo in the distance and a patchwork of fields and cottages on the Common opposite. If you go up to the Common House on the other side you have a view of the River in the valley and Tintern. Over the other side of Madgett you can see all round Avonmouth and Bristol, as well as all the woods over on the Monmouth side round Chepstow Park. In the early days before the First War the farmers in the place would not use the horses or do only just what was bound to be done on a Sunday no haymaking or corn harvest all work stopped, all used to attend Church if not regularly would turn up sometimes as also did those men that used to come round. The Wars have seemed to have altered it all they seem to work today the same as another day.

Well in conclusion I should say to the people who have come to the Parish to reside, get to know your own district first, you are missing the lovely views on your own doorstep, no need to go abroad till you have seen them. Also to those farmers who have come in to the place, carry on the good work of

those men who it was an honour to have known who worked hard, helped all and enjoyed life and what was more could get the best out of land. If those farming in the district today could only see how well kept the farms buildings and houses were they would stop to wonder how those men with so little machinery ever had time to think of helping others and finding time to meet their neighbours and fellowmen.

Grammar and spelling as originally written

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