

Interview with Mr H Wilson, 18 Market Square, Toddington, approximately 85 years of age - 04/09/1962

During Mr Wilson's youth beer was brewed at what is now the Social Club across the road from 'The Angel' and sold at one shilling a gallon. Mr Tom Green believed to be the last know brewer.

Threshing tackle operated by Mr 'Sweep' Clark and May Smart's grandfather. The type of machine not known.

Firstly corn cutting machines used, sheaves hand tied to be used and later a binder in year 1898 at Chalton Cross Farm owned by farmer Thomas Fall. Sheaves tied by hand and machine cut at approximately four shillings per acre.

Sundon Church bells believed brought to Toddington and installed in their peal. Giving small poem or ode as follows, quote Mr Wilson:

Sundon people, funny people
Sold the bell to build a steeple,

During Mr Wilson's schooldays a thatched cottage stood in what is now Reg Marlow's garden. White Hart Farm, bottom of Horse Hill. This cottage inhabited by a man Mr Dean, who employed three working men, making bricks dug near by. Also land drain pipes were made. Bricks were made three at a time in kind of a box and hand cut with a wire attachment.

Present day cement works at Sundon not in existence, only workings on eastern side of roadway down to railway. All work done by hand. Cement was bagged and loaded into railway wagon at fourpence ha'penny per ton. Average wage for top class farm hands, cattle men, horsekeepers working a 4.30 a.m to 5 p.m. day with one hour for meals and three hours on a Sunday was 17 shillings per week.

Stocks in Toddington believed to stand in front of brick wall between Wentworth House side entrance gate and the Village Pond.

Interview with Mr W Clark (Sweep Clark), Station Road, Toddington, approximately 86 years - 13/09/1962

Began work at 11 years of age at Lodge Farm, Toddington. Later moved to (Herne Green?). Mr Scrivener (George's father) left when George finished school as there was not enough work for both of them. During World War I and just previous to this, began working with Mr Clark senior, market gardening. Through so doing did not have to join the forces. Vegetables were taken and sold in Luton, customers being found by Mr Clark's own initiative. Built up a thriving business on good quality produce. Soldiers were camped at Luton and by luck, in time quite a large bulk of produce was sent to the camps. Thus much excess produce was sold at a profit – swedes, cabbage etc. Usually sold through camp middle man for cash. Sometimes a large load would go direct into camp.

Mr Clark used to do lots of chimney sweeping with canes and brushes. Where chimneys were large and had ledges inside as at Upper East End Farm, Harlington (Mr John Giles, my great uncle), this meant climbing up the inside to clear the soot. Procedure usually twelve monthly.

Primitive Methodist Chapel next to Secondary Modern School, Leighton Road, Toddington, now used as schoolroom, was managed, superintended etc by Mr Clark for years but finally closed down about the year 1950 due to the lack of support, the congregation having dwindled to very few members.

Land owned and tilled, small acreages at Leighton Road, Toddington next to Mr Perry and Harry Russell, finally sold to a building firm about 1960-61.

Observation by John Kent

House and building at Station Road, Toddington occupied by Mrs Fleckney knocked down during 1962 to build larger and more modern garage. New petrol pumps and tanks installed back from the road. Whilst digging out for a new tank, an old well was discovered a yard or two NE of the most easterly tank. This was already half-filled with bricks when I, J Kent, first noticed it, in my view it had been partially filled in when mains water had previously been installed in the house. The brick lining appeared to be in a good state of repair but no water could be seen.

Referring back to Mr Clark. He first went to Sunday School at what is now the C of E Hall, Gas Street, Toddington. This having been a Chapel many long years before use as a cinema 'The Cosy'. Conversion to Church Hall from disused cinema about 1959.