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This edition celebrates the beginning of our sixth year of the Pavey Group, and in the case of Pat Stapleton, Roy Aldworth and myself the beginning of the eighth year of involvement come November. Their efforts, talents, good humour and tolerance of me are the foundation for the success we have had to date. Well done Pat & Roy – please keep it up…

A chance meeting one lunch hour in the George with Jim Crook and his wife Olive highlights this edition of the Echo. Jim is the great, great grandson of one of Charmouth’s great entrepreneurs of the nineteenth century - George Holly, the proprietor of the Coach and Horses, the ancient posthouse on the Exeter to London coach run and of the Charmouth House Hotel. Jim’s recall of the village eighty years ago is rich, warm and remarkably vivid considering the weight of years. Jim, Olive & daughter Cathie were delightful company. Please come back soon Jim!

Elise Miles’ dedication to her parents recall a day and age that most of the older generation of the village will well remember. Ellis Long was a journalist, musician and artist with a host of other talents that were used unsparingly in every aspect of village activity. It was a different day.

I am particularly pleased that Peter Crowter submitted an article for this issue – I’ve been asking him to do so for a long time. He lives in the village, writes for the Dorset Echo, winters in Florida, does little other than play golf and sends news of alligators and exotic bird sightings from the Everglades. Crested Caracaras!

My article on the Marshwood Vale was done in a rush as a ‘filler’. I always need articles. This effort is a rewrite of a publication that appeared in the Friends of the Charmouth Heritage Coast Newsletter some years ago. I always need articles!

The Ed.

Subscriptions
Subscriptions are due as of 30th September for 2004 / ‘05

I very much regret that if you have not renewed your membership following the next issue of the Village Echo by 1st February ’05, it will be assumed that you do not wish to stay with us. We will be most sorry.
Recollections of Charmouth.

My recollections are of holidays staying with grandparents in Charmouth where my mother Fanny took my sister and me at Whitsun and then again in the summer. My memories stretch from about 1925 when I was four, to about 1934 when mother and grandparents were dead.

My grandfather, William Holly the Post Master and my grandmother lived in Wisteria House, the family home in which mother, aunts and uncles had been brought up and that in our day housed the Post Office and a bank.

Grandfather was the son of George Holly who had been the host of The Coach and Horses Inn. George had arrived in Charmouth from Wilton via Dorchester in the eighteen forties to become the proprietor of The Mail Coach Inn, the former name of the inn that had existed from early in the C18. Charmouth had become busy with some eight coaches per day of which the Exeter Flier completed its journey to Exeter from London in just over a day. Many ‘commercial gentlemen’ favoured the inn as it had two “pair-horse flies” for their conveyance and convenience.

The Coach and Horses was a thatched, two-story building. Its roof caught fire in 1863 but was extinguished. In 1882 the inn was pulled down against the protests of George and was replaced by the red brick building that still stands. Previously George Holly had added to his interests the proprietorship of Charmouth House, described as a ‘Family Boarding and Lodging House’. He did not return to the new Coach and Horses.
Grandfather proudly told us that he and his sister were self-taught – a tale of learning to read by candlelight in the little leisure time allowed by their duties in the Inn. (The census of 1861 shows he was still at school) He was fond of telling that the time to prepare breakfast was sounded by the horn of the morning coach as it came over Morcombelake. George Holly had three children. We knew grandfather and his sister, our Great Aunt Bessie, Mrs Salisbury, the widow of a ‘commercial gentleman’. She lived alone in Gresham House on the Higher Sea Lane. But her son George, who never married, and who is listed as a gardener in the census of 1891, died before our time.

I still have relics of the old Coach and Horses; a silver and silver plate embossed with a florid GH, a long, elegant goose spoon, a bronze corkscrew of screw jack variety that declares itself to be patented and a hand held balance of brilliant simplicity for determining the postage of letters. But the outstanding survivor of this time is a silver coffee pot with the engraving:

“Presented to Mr George Holly of the Coach and Horses Inn Charmouth by suscription of 357 Commercial Gentlemen as a Testament of their high estimation of his kind and Generous Conduct in Burying at his own expense the remains of Mr William French (one of their number) who was accidentally drowned whilst Bathing on June 10th 1849”.

The number 357 suggests a surprisingly large clientele moving through the village, but I suppose that this number faded with the coming of the railway to Lyme Regis.

Later grandfather took people and goods to and from Axminster station, and I imagine he carried out other work of the kind. In the census of 1891 he is shown as the agent in the village for the railway. His stables were behind Wisteria House and the passage to the yard for horses and vehicles was where the lean-to cottage, Wisteria Cottage, now stands. Later he sold this business to Mr Morgan of the village shop.

Uncle Will, having worked away, moved back to Charmouth and became the de facto village postmaster. He and grandfather built Wisteria Cottage. From my earliest recollection to the death of Grandpa, Uncle Will and his wife Auntie Edith lived in the Cottage. On the death of Grandfather they moved in to the house.

Despite all the years since I was last there I have the fancy that I could today find my way blindfolded about Wisteria House. Now I invite you to join me in what for want of space, has to be the shorter tour. Although I suppose the structure of the house to be as it was, I will put my patter in the past tense.

The house had a passage between an inner and an outer front door. On the left of the passage was the entrance to a bank that was manned once or
twice a week. On the right was the entrance to the post office, the bucket and spade shop, Uncle Will’s Aladdin’s cave of postcards, highly desired pencils, pads, crayons, rubbers, rulers and model sailing boats. Behind the post office came the telephone exchange with its dangling cords. Then the sorting office with its grid of small cubicles marked with destinations such as Atherton. The kitchen, behind the bank, was dominated by a large folding screen covered with postcards from afar and pictures from magazines. There must have been a range, but I remember an elaborate wick-heated oil cooker with oven and plates that was used for the cooking.

The sitting room was a large room on the first floor overlooking the garden. Here was Grandmother’s piano that she would play sometimes of an evening. It was a piano with a story. Grandmother had a sister who had married a Latter Day Saint and contentiously the piano had been carried off to Salt Lake City. But somehow Grandmother had won and the piano was returned. Above the bank was the room where visitors were received and where children were seen and not heard — a penance compounded by the black horsehair chairs that rasped flesh left bare by short pants.

From the stairs leading to the attics one could see through a south-facing skylight that gave a wide angled view of the sea and its horizon. The beauty of it was that the horizon was so clearly curved — a curvature as viewed that one could measure by reference to a ruler. But how to deduce from that curvature the diameter of the earth?

Wedding Day 1916
Alfred Crook & Marion Holly
At the time I did not yet ask myself why are things as I see them to be? I saw a garden raised and supported by stone walls on its eastern and southern boundaries and with a high stone wall on its western edge against which Grandfather trained an espalier plum. Of course, walls and gardens came from the necessity to make level landings for the houses by terracing the hill. At the eastern and southern edges we could look over the wall to see a beautifully kept garden with extensive soft fruit cages. We never knew who lived in that posh establishment. The butler was our only contact when, hesitantly, we knocked and asked permission to recover our ball.

I will end these memories of Wisteria House by mentioning the narrow strip between house and road. Village lads with their bicycles would gather on the landing to the right in front of the Post Office waiting the call at sixpence a time to deliver a telegram. On the left in front of the Bank was parked Uncle Will’s motorcycle and sidecar.

Most days we went to the beach by the Lower Sea Lane past the school then by the path to the bridge over the Char and to the sands. One summer, amongst the visitors making their way to the beach, was a delicate wisp of a silken Chinese lady delicately picking her way over the rough path in minute steps dictated by her bound feet. She must have been the governess of a family on holiday from the East.

Sometimes we went by the Higher Sea Lane that was so rutted that my sister and I would sing ‘I’ll take the high etc.’ and squabble about who should be on top. The Higher Sea Lane also took us past Gresham House where sometimes our Great Aunt Bessie was at the gate. She was a lady of some mystery. We never saw her at Wisteria House whilst Grandmother lived, but she moved to Wisteria House with her brother - our Grandfather - after Grandmother had died. Then we came to know her as a kind old lady.

On the other side of the lane was a black cottage that I now suppose had been tarred against the weather. It was the cottage of Ted Hunter who, so far as I am aware, was the only person who made his living by fishing – for lobsters and crabs. His boat and pots were to be seen on the beach close by the old lime mill. Indeed Mr Hunter was the only classmate ever mentioned by mother, aunts and uncles. It would appear that like the Holly children, the children of Charmouth left the village for work and marriage elsewhere.

At that time the Higher Sea Lane wound without interruption to the back of the lime mill that was empty, and then past the Coast Guard look-out to the platform in front of the mill. At one time one could see a bungalow on the west cliff that had fallen with the cliff. One could walk to Lyme by the west cliff starting on the remains of the old Lyme Road and then following an up and down path between shrubs that had rooted in the slipped soil and bearing tempting sloe berries.
In the summer, to the east, Scouts and Guides camped in the first field over the bridge. The path up the east cliff then went up to a ridge that extended seaward by some hundreds of metres beyond the present apex. The ridge had a ‘forest fleece’ of pines that in springtime was canopied with a solid carpet of bluebells. From the ridge the village was laid out below, a view spoilt by the ungainly rectangular cylinder of Gresham House, a crude gratte-ciel. The inside of the house had many attractions – reputedly an Adams fireplace and certainly an enormous dresser that held an abundance of Wedgwood Willow Pattern. There was a cider press in its lean-to coach house. But its most fascinating feature was a shower bath – a cupboard of a place in which water in a pivoted bucket above the bather could be tipped by pulling a cord.

Some memory is retained from every walk we took. One could walk to Wootton Fitzpaine starting from the cul de sac opposite the entrance to the Lower Sea Lane and between the white house on the left, then occupied by a Miss Whittington (inevitably a descendant of Dick) and the baker’s shop on the right. In the early morning the first fields on that walk provided mushrooms plentifully for breakfast. And one could walk up the hill through a farm of scattered implements to the lane from Catherston to Wootton Fitzpaine and then past the workshop of Mr Rapsey, the joiner and carpenter. Sometimes on such a walk one met Colonel Bullen of Catherston riding a horse at a pace respectful of both their ages. In such an encounter Grandfather was all deference.

Grandfather William Holly & Grandmother 1920
When I was about nine or ten Uncle Will took me one evening along the path to Wootton to see a hot bulb engine and a generator two young men had installed to provide electricity to the village – to those who had signed up. This engine could be heard over the village, bump, bump, bump starting as the light failed and running until about midnight. Slow speed and heavy engines of the kind had to be installed on a substantial concrete foundation. Mr Press has found the foundation still in place where I remember the generator to have been installed.

Other walks were up Stone Barrow Lane that had a small stream flowing on the right in which grew wild watercress that we were forbidden to pick. Stonebarrow led to a small stone structure, I think on the near slope of Golden Cap, which was said to have been a church. (St Gabriels Church). Then Golden Cap could look itself confidently in the face – all gold – before creeping flora stole its purity.

Charmouth was then much as it is now, although spaces that were empty have since become filled. The Street is unchanged but for the parked cars and for the absence of cars groaning up the hill. Few cars, vans and buses existed at that time. Sometimes one could hear desperate gear changes. The village groceries were supplied by Dampier’s, (the shop still exists under a different name nearly opposite the Coach and Horses) where ladies had the bliss of a chair and “what would Madam like today?” The milk came from Joliffe’s Dairy that was more or less opposite the church and where we were sent for treats of clotted cream. Bread came from the bakery opposite the entrance to the Lower Sea Lane. Marsh’s shop, the butcher, was below street level and just below the Coach and Horses. Marsh’s supplied the meat for the hotel and the transport, other than buses.

Because of the Post Office our grandparents must have had a wide range of friends in the village, but few people came socially to Wisteria House. The people I can remember coming are Mr Jones the retired schoolmaster, who had taught my mother, aunts and uncles, with his wife – who lived below Joliffes, and Mrs Marsh the widow of the butcher. Our grandparents were also friendly and in touch with a family whom they had come to know as holiday visitors. I have the impression that influential visitors sometimes arranged apprenticeships and other openings for village children. But the lack of society is a puzzle, and now I wish I had had the courage to ask and to risk the rebuke.

The majority of the houses on the Street are C19 villas built at a time when the mechanisation of agriculture was displacing people. So it seems probable that the houses were not built for local working families but for people of means who found Charmouth attractive. This is speculation, but in its spirit one might see the Jurassic Coast in its time, as much a building site as the Costa del Sol.
Since childhood I have visited Charmouth seldom but generally those visits have been celebrations. During the war a young lady, a fellow student, who was to become my wife and I stayed in Bridport and we came to Charmouth to show off my local knowledge. I led her over the cliff to Lyme. To our dismay, as we turned a corner we found ourselves beneath the barrel of a coastal defence gun, but after some minutes of anxious questioning the officer sent us on our way to Lyme. And years later after the children had lost their mother and I my wife, a wonderful lady came to renew our life. I took her to Charmouth. We ran on the sand, where Olive found a large pebble that the sea had crafted into an evocation of the Mother and Child.

I would like to dedicate this article to the memory of my sister Mollie, whose enjoyment of Charmouth we shared.

Jim Crook
The Char or not the Char...

The need for this article arose as a result of an argument relating to the naming of the parts of our noble stream - the mighty River Char. It was some time ago now, but I clearly recall the warmth of the words and the certainty of each claim; most of which, as things transpired, were quite wrong. The gist of the argument was, which of the streams was the actual Char and therefore, where was the source of the river? Having roamed around the Marshwood Vale over many years, the question had often come to mind as to the names of the many streams and had often recalled that ‘discussion’ that had arisen in *The Drum & Monkey* years before. The question was, was it the one that flowed from the flanks of Lewesdon in the north east, or was it the stream that flowed south from the northern limit of the Marshwood Vale, draining the western flanks of the Lambert’s and Coney’s Castle, before finally joining the other disputed stream just below Charmouth Bridge? It was a great issue – momentarily.

Ignorance of the facts might have prevailed had not Edna Smith given me an article that she had found relating to the Vale. In a search for the source of Edna’s information, it was eventually found in *The Proceedings of the Geologists Association*, dated December 4th 1925, in a scholarly dissertation entitled *The Submerged Forest at the Mouth of the River Char and the History of that River*. The first surprise was that the article was by a most distinguished scientist, Dr R.D.Lang, the Keeper of the Geological Department of the British Museum. Of far greater interest was that Dr Lang was a very prominent resident of Charmouth. (A short biography can be found on Page 14).

So the problem was solved. Dr Lang’s definitive study on the geology of the Marshwood Vale shows that there are six ‘major’ tributaries that form the Char, each one draining its own beautiful little valley within the greater Vale. The sources of the system were on the south western slopes of Lewesdon and the south eastern flanks of Pilsdon. Of the streams, only one has a name that suggests a Celtic origin and that is the *Gwyle*. In reality the *Gwyle* is little more than a healthy ditch draining the Hogchester Valley that joins the *Wootton Stream* at the first kissing gate on the footpath some 400m north of the bypass. At the head of this valley there is a site of great antiquity. In an area around Hogchester Farm, several Neolithic artifacts were found in the 1950s, suggesting that there had been a settlement there some four to 6,000 years ago. Two polished stone axe heads were found and a far cruder axe that suggests an even greater age, perhaps even of Palaeolithic origin. (Old Stone Age). Two of these ancient tools/weapons are on display in the Pavey Room. In the 1950s another Neolithic axe head was found in the Vale just north of Prime Coppice, two or so miles north east of Hogchester on the banks of *Card’s Mill*.
Brook. The names of the tributaries can be seen on the crude illustration on page 12. The others are; Charbrook, Middle Brook, Marshwood Brook and Monkton Wylde Brook. This information then had solved the old argument and the initial purpose of the search for the facts.

Interesting though it is that we now know the truth regarding the proper names of the elements of the mighty Char, this aspect of Dr Lang’s research was almost incidental to the primary title to his presentation of *The Submerged Forest at the Mouth of the River Char*. He gave a reading describing the discovery of bones of red deer and possibly mammoth as well as of ash, birch and hazel among the remains of an ancient forest that was known to exist at the mouth of the Char. (The fossilized roots of small trees can still be seen at low tide, some 100m+ to the SW of the Heritage Centre). With one exception, all of these forms still exist and the mammoth’s extinction is ‘almost’ within memory. These remains indicate a period of the ‘nearly modern’ conditions, those of the Pleistocene epoch, the time of the four great glaciations, the last of which terminated 11,000 years ago.

The main purpose of Doctor Lang’s presentation was to put these remarkable, virtually ‘modern’ discoveries into a geological context. In other words, to find out how these ‘recent’ deposits on the beach fit within much older rocks surrounding the Char estuary. This aspect of his paper was an even greater surprise. This is really exciting stuff!

The landform, or topography of the Marshwood Vale - again in simplest terms - is fashioned largely by Cretaceous deposits. This is shown by the chalk hills as near as Askerwewll and flint-topped Hardown above Morcombelake, where all the chalk has worn away. In the Vale most of the hills are capped with Greensand, a misnomer if you like, as they include all those lovely golden gravels on the top of Stonebarrow and Golden Cap. Underneath all this lies the grim, grey fossil-rich Lias strata of the Jurassic of 190 million years ago, which, like the Cretaceous stuff on top of it, were laid down as submarine deposits. The Cretaceous – the dinosaur days – ended about 64 million years ago, and since that time the land surface - our hills and vales - have been subjected to the slow, inexorable forces of erosion. In that enormous span of time it impossible to imagine the impact of such forces, although it could be said that we in Charmouth have a better indication than most places in Britain with the regular collapse of our cliffs.

Dr Lang delved somewhat deeper into geological time in explaining the origin of the hills in the Vale, describing the even earlier forces that fashioned them. He described the impact of ‘post-Eocene uplift’ of over 38 million years ago that caused the land to rise, raising the sea beds and how they were again elevated by the ‘Miocene uplift’ a mere seven or so million years ago. Each of
Key
Solid blue lines represent the streams that form the present drainage system.
Red dots on the map indicate former courses of the drainage of the Char. These Red dots appearing to be off the modern coastline are the presumed river courses draining into the Channel River in remote times.
these events caused massive movements of the land itself, a process that continues in many parts of the world even to today.

All of these movements of the earth’s crust had a direct bearing on all river systems all over the world. This brings us back to the mighty Char. Other significant local factors would have been the effects of fauluting – the term to describe the great cracks at the margins of slabs where the surface of the land rose or fell. There is even an example in downtown Charmouth – Lower Sea Lane is a fault line and it illustrates perfectly how drainage conforms to landform by finding the course of least resistance as it flows towards the lowest point. Our river has experienced many such changes. In the last million years or so the headwaters of the Char were captured by the Simene and drained through what is now West Bay. At another time the Char headwaters found a course through what was to be Chideock to the Winniford River (or Chid) to drain away.

By far the greatest surprise is one of the good doctor’s most extraordinary contentions that really tests one’s credulity. It is that Card’s Mill Brook is the ‘ancestral source’ of the River Char. If followed on the map it can be seen to join the Char near modern Whitchurch. However, it is at this point that the mind boggles, but yet provides a dramatic very local illustration of the forces that fashioned the Marshwood Vale. Dr Lang’s studies imply that from the point at which the Card’s Mill Brook joins the Char, the river found another course entirely. Over seven million years ago, give or take a few weeks, the Char changed course and flowed to the SE past what is now Morcombelake, (a rise of 400ft+ but not seven million years ago). It then probably incorporated Peace Brook to flow on to modern St.Gabriel’s Water to debouche ultimately into the Channel River. (This was the name of a river to the south in a great valley that flooded to become the English Channel when Britain became an island some 8 – 10,000 years ago). These unimaginable events give an excellent local example of the magnitude of earth movement over immense periods of time.

The drainage of the Marshwood Vale was subject to many other natural forces. Uplift and faulting were the more dramatic forms, but the impact of climatic change, of rain, flood, wind, chemical action, ice and sunshine causing the breakdown of surfaces over million of years has been inestimable. It is not surprising that the process of degradation is referred to as ‘weathering’.

The outcome of all this incomprehensible activity leaves us with a gentle stream in an idyllic landscape that gives an impression of timelessness, a place of peace and a time for reflection. Thank you Dr Lang: it’s a very good place for an old man; one can only wander and wonder.

Peter M Press
Keeper of the Geological Department of the British Museum

It is quite obvious that the article on the Marshwood Vale on page 10 relies totally on the work of Dr. Lang. He lived in our village for 38 years following his retirement. Prior to his retirement the greater part of his geological research was centered in the Charmouth area. A very short biography might give an idea at least, of the man’s contribution to science and especially to geology of West Dorset.

His academic qualifications were exceptional and his Fellowships indicate the breadth of interests and distinctions. Fellowships are an especial distinction in that they are awarded on the basis of exceptional scholarship that is recognised and awarded by ‘fellow’ scientists. There is no greater distinction than to be elected to such bodies.
Dr Lang presented an impressive number of scientific papers to academic societies on ‘local’ research during his lifetime, especially to the *Journal of the Geological Society* and to the *Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society*. There are more than thirteen papers on the geology of the Charmouth area alone. He was to become the foremost authority on the geology and palaeontology (fossils) of the West Dorset cliffs. Having worked in our area for most of his life he retired here in 1938. He continued to submit articles to learned societies to the time of his death in 1966.

As already stated, his distinction rested upon the definitive field work on our local cliffs. By exceptional good fortune, examples of Dr Lang’s early field work came to light two or so years ago, when four brilliantly presented, hand painted and printed, linen-backed maps of the local cliffs with each stratum elegantly defined, became available. The work is dated 1913 when Dr Lang and a colleague, Mr L.F. Spath undertook the research on the Charmouth cliffs. The maps are quite simply outstanding examples of scholarship and art.

A warden of the Charmouth Heritage Centre learned of these maps quite by chance, they having emerged as a result of an estate break up. A price was sought and agreed upon and the purchase was made – rapidly. These sheets have been professionally mounted and are on permanent display in the theatre of the Heritage Centre.

*Peter M. Press*

*The Marshwood Vale looking East from the battlements of Lambert`s Castle*
Go West Old Man

We always fancied moving west across the county to Charmouth when I retired but it took us some time and three visits before we found a suitable place to buy within our price range.

For the previous thirty years we lived on a fairly remote farm on Dorset's rolling downland north of Winterborne Abbas, a totally different landscape from the cosier countryside around Charmouth.

I first visited Charmouth as a schoolboy in the forties just after the war. With my parents and my older sister we spent two or three caravan holidays on the site that is now Seadown. I have to say that my memories of those holidays are pretty sketchy but I do have a few small black and white photographs taken with my own camera to jog a few recollections.

There is one of me riding a donkey and the nose of a second donkey can be seen following close behind. So far, no one I have spoken to remembers anyone owning donkeys in Charmouth but my sister has recently heard of someone in Somerset who claims the owner was his father. She thought the man's surname was Henley but I believe only the name Henry has been found in the parish records. According to the caption written by me beneath the photograph at the time the donkey's name was Mokey but I doubt whether that will jog anyone's memory.

There are also a couple of snaps taken on the beach, one of the caravan site and one of my parents and sister walking down Lower Sea Lane with Sea View cottage in the background looking much as it does today. I also have a photograph of a pair of swans and six cygnets taken on the river. I was quite sure at the time that it was good enough to enter a competition but unfortunately, on closer examination I realised there was a strand of barbed wire out of focus in the foreground.

I have some other old photographs of Charmouth in a book published to commemorate the 150th anniversary of my old seat of learning - Yeovil School. In the 1950s Charmouth was a favourite venue for the school camp but I have always preferred to sleep under something a little more substantial than canvas so I was not in attendance.

I retired in 1995 and armed with the proceeds from the sale of the house we owned in Mosterton, we started house hunting and Charmouth was our first port of call. Our search for a home was not straightforward as there were a number of options open to us. I was five years away from my state pension and we needed some extra income to supplement my farm pension. Plan A was to buy two properties, one for letting. Plan B was to buy a fairly large property and try our hand at Bed & Breakfast. Plan C was to buy a place with a self-contained flat for letting.
On our first visit to Charmouth we found a couple of properties that would have suited our own needs admirably but they were too expensive for Plan A and too small for Plans B & C.

After that we spent weeks searching most of Dorset west of Weymouth and then on our third visit to Charmouth we found the flat at Portland House that suited our needs perfectly. We had enough cash left over to buy another flat on Portland (coincidence) for letting, a venture that unfortunately turned out to be a disaster but that is another story.

After we moved into the flat almost our first visitor was one that we could have well done without. A young man turned up on our doorstep one day with a nice smile and a clipboard and said he was from the council. I let him in and conducted him on a tour of the house while he scribbled various notes.

A few days later a letter arrived from the council informing us that our flat had been reassessed and they had decided to bump the council tax up a band. I grabbed the phone to protest but all I got out of that was a convoluted explanation involving change of ownership and change of use. It sounded like a whole lot of waffle to me but I decided I would only be wasting my time if I were to take the matter any further so I left it at that. That and the herring gulls are the only two hostile elements we have encountered in Charmouth and a nicer place to live would be difficult to find.

Peter Crowter
Since being asked to write about my father, Ellis Long, I realise how easy he has made this for me. All around me is evidence of his life, his paintings on my walls, the scrap books of his writings, recordings of his talks and his organ and piano playing. His 91 years were packed with curiosity and creativity which, luckily, seems to have been passed down to all of us four children in one form or another.

Originally from Yorkshire, Ellis and his brother Harold were brought down to Weymouth to live by their parents when they were very small children. Educated at Holy Trinity School, Weymouth, Ellis showed very early signs of being a gifted pianist. By the time he was 16, he was playing the organ at St. Leonards Road Methodist Church. He met my mother, Nora, through the church and for several years struggled to make himself acceptable to her parents. As staunch Methodists, they were very much against the demon drink and, as Ellis also played in a dance hand - sometimes in public houses - this caused a sharp intake of breath. But they needn't have worried because he hated alcohol and loved Nora, so love won through in the end.

When he left school, Ellis did his training as a journalist with the Dorset Evening Echo, thus his lifelong love of words and stories. But Nora's parents owned a grocery business in Weymouth and he was soon working for the family firm. In 1937, he and Nora moved to Charmouth to start their own grocery business at the top of the village at Melville House where they stayed for 30 years, acquiring the post office after another 10 years. Between 1939 and 1945, Ellis was an Incident Officer with the Civil Defence Corps and over the years we have heard so many 'Dad's Army' type stories as they defended our shores.

It must have been difficult for them bringing up four children, but we all had a wonderful childhood in the heart of a busy, thriving business. Over the road was another little grocery business run by the Cabells. Ernie Hutchings cobbled a few doors away. Mr. Gollop sold coal from his yard opposite Nutcombe Terrace. The Singing Kettle was a hive of activity, as was the New Inn. One of us kids used to run up to the cafe on a Sunday after lunch to buy a block of ice cream as a treat and smell the heady aroma of old beer and cider fumes as the door of the pub stood open. The Ransfords were delightful friends who owned The Charmouth House and my sister and I spent many hours picking strawberries and raspberries in their garden, naturally eating as we went along. Then there was the much respected Reginald Pavey who lived opposite in The Well Head. He used to come down to the
School and give talks on village life in the old days - not that we were as interested then as we would be now. I remember he presented every child in the school with a silver spoon on Coronation day - I still have mine. He went up in our estimation enormously when one day we saw Mr Pastry arrive as a visitor in his old Rolls Royce. We were so impressed that such a serious man should have as a friend a fall-about, slapstick comic!
In the grocery business so many years ago, part of the service was the free delivery of food orders. Long before we had a car, my father used to carry orders in the huge basket on the old shop bike miles out into the neighboring villages. If there was room, he would put me in the basket as well and after a long, labouring outward slog, we would come bumping and crashing back down the lanes with me holding on for dear life.

At the very top of Melville House was 'Ellis's Poster Room', so called because that's where he painted posters. Huge colourful ones for the Regent Cinema in Lyme Regis. These were pasted onto doorways and noticeboards as well as outside the cinema each week. At school, his much loved art teacher, Bobbie Brewer, had encouraged Ellis in his love of painting. Over the years, he must have painted thousands of posters and signs for everything from WI meetings to Town Proclamations. There are still a few to be seen in the village even now.

But his great love was picture painting, mostly landscapes, in watercolours and oils, and during his lifetime he held several exhibitions in the village. He would sell a lot, but he would also give them as gifts to friends, and many’s the time Nora would come home to find a space on the wall where a particular favourite had been. In the end, she banned him from moving a chosen few.

In 1962, Ellis was asked to paint some murals for the new Youth Club and he produced three four-foot square pictures of village scenes on the walls. They were certainly unusual and I can remember being entrusted with helping him fill in large areas of sky. I can also remember that over the years, quite a few youngsters expressed an interest in drawing or painting and he patiently gave them free weekly lessons.

His love of words burst through every now and again in the form of ghost stores and local history stories for the Dorset Evening Echo and the Bridport News. These would all be illustrated with line drawings which he had reprinted as postcards and calendars. Several of his light-hearted stories about the countryside were broadcast by the BBC and his connection with them also resulted in a commission in the 1960s to play piano accompaniment to a Buster Keaton silent film shot in 1924. Ellis always wanted to share his passion for classical music and would hold regular 'musical evenings' at the WI Hall. He would load the car with the radiogramme and piles of records to while away a happy evening with people of a like mind.

He played the organ at the congregational chapel - as it was then - for about 30 years, finally retiring in 1986. He also shared the organ playing at the Methodist Church in Bridport (now the Arts Centre) with a friend and neighbour of mine, Don Harris. After this, he bought a Hammond so that he
could play at home in Barrs Lane. When we visited, we would push the gate open and be greeted instantly by thunderous music pouring out of every window. He was unique in that he needed no music score.

We used to go for 'tootles' in the countryside when we first had a car, Mum and Dad and my younger sister and I. We were actually doing the rounds of all the village churches where Dad would seat himself at the organ, my sister and I on the bellows behind a curtain, and he would be away. The silent church and countryside would shudder under the peals of sound and before long people would come out of the houses, the barns and the fields to stand and listen. I was often allowed to sit on the long, wooden bench with him when he played a large pipe organ and for a small, quiet man, it was awe-inspiring to hear and feel the shuddering wall of sound produced as his feet flew over the wooden slatted pedals and his hands flicked out the dozens of stops to make the notes sing with vibration.

Ellis and Nora were both very much part of the fabric of the village; Nora as an Elder of the church, sewing beautiful clothes, endless soft toys, cooking numerous cakes, arranging millions of flowers, Ellis serving many years as Treasurer of the Charmouth Charities who made sure no-one in need was forgotten.

Ellis` Studio, The `Poster Room`
One yearly event they both enjoyed and did so much for was the Village Supper which featured in this Echo recently. The 'supper' part of it was Nora's domain - all the best crockery and cutlery out for the mashed potato and cold meat feast. The entertainment I can remember being a bit more complicated and time consuming because Ellis and his partner in crime, Mark Jones who owned the Coach and Horses, wrote the village song. This was a
sort of round-up of all the worst gossip so woe betide anyone who gained
notoriety for themselves over the year. The rehearsals for this were as funny as
the performance as Ellis and Mark giggled and exploded through each verse,
trying to top each other's punch lines. The Church Hall was always packed to
the rafters and no-one seemed to mind making a complete idiot of themselves
up on the stage. My most vivid memories are of the Frampton sisters singing
'Seven little girls, sitting in the back seat, every one in love with Fred....' but I
can't remember who played Fred. Also the wonderful skiffle group with Bill
Duke on tea chest.

After 30 years of work and then 30 happy years retirement, they died
within four weeks of each other, together as always in the village they loved.

Elise Miles

The Winter Programme

The following arrangements have been finalized until Christmas. The New Year programme will be published in Quicknews 18 in early January.

Members Night Thursday October 21st 7.30 The Elms
‘Country Bygones Quiz’
A very informal meeting

Wine & Cheese Evening Thursday 18th November 7.30
The Elms

Christmas Coffee Morning Tuesday 7th December
The Elms
The Sixth Annual General Meeting of The Pavey Group
September 30th 2004

In spite of determined efforts the publication of Echo 15 was not realized by the date of the AGM. We are getting better though, we are only a few days short of our target date. So, with this delay and with a space to fill in the Echo, I am able to report upon last night’s meeting.

It went well. The chairman’s report was read with his usual homilies and a profusion of thanks. He then stood/sat down. Pat Stapleton reported very favourably on the state of the coffers and then retired from the treasurership. Malcolm Bowditch then assumed what has become his traditional role as chairman for the great transition. Having then said some very nice things, the voting was called. To everyone’s ‘unsurprise’ the executive of the Pavey Group was re-elected en bloc, the exception being the retirement of Ron Dampier (who will still do jobs), the elevation of Rita Whatmore to treasurer’s role and then to the chairman’s delight Richard Stirk ‘volunteered’ to become the new secretary of the Pavey Group. All this was achieved in less than an hour – another distinction – without a hint of challenge or discord. It was said to be a very good meeting.

The chairman was complimented on it, several members commenting on the performance. This he took to be a compliment.

The highlight of the evening came with another of our ‘traditional’ activities, our ‘post meeting diversion’. Richard Burleigh is the editor of the William Barnes Society’s newsletter and a very active member of the society that celebrates an outstanding Dorset personality. Richard read the meeting three poems that reflected three moods of the poet’s genius. Richard assumed what was a 160 year old Dorset rustic dialect that accentuated the simple sincerity and humour of the peasant’s lot within that historical context. His readings were excellent. He will certainly be asked to read some more.

Peter M. Press
Charmouth in August

The Fields are full of Vans and Tents
Holiday Homes producing Rents
Car Parks are full, the Beach is too
With Fossil Hunters passing through
As all along the Beach they search
And high upon the Cliffs they perch.

Surf Boarders splashing in the Sea
The Beach Café making lots of Tea
The Charmouth Market’s chock a block
The Roads are jammed as in they flock
The Fish & Chip Shop’s doing well
And Morgans still has lots to sell.

The Charmouth Fayre lights up the Night
And Village Pubs are doing alright
There’s lots to do and lots to choose
From Flower Shows to Barbecues
But all too soon September’s here
And we all calm down until next year.

The Shops and Pubs and Farmers too
Count up the cash to see them through
Until once more August arrives
To make a difference to our lives.

Rita Whatmore
The Rector's Day-Dream...fact or fiction?
The Bridport News  July 17th 1964

Writing in the current edition of the parish magazine the Rev Harold Hacking the Rector of Charmouth tells of a “day dream” in which he saw the Church Hall transformed from a place of coldness, drabness and dullness, into one of warmth and brightness.

“I dreamt the Parochial Church Council, realising it’s obligation and responsibility for the care and maintenance of the hall, received the full backing of the congregation, thus making possible certain improvements” he writes. The kitchen had been modernised, extra cloakroom facilities provided, the clubroom was properly heated and the present hall heating had been adjusted in such a way that people no longer suffered from cold feet. There had been decoration internally and externally.

That was the hall I saw in my dream and in due course, if only your imagination can be stirred, who is to say that one day my dream will not come true?”

Now 40 years on … I think the Rev Hacking’s dream has at last come true. If he could visit the hall today he could see the splendid improvements carried out by volunteers who formed the running committee when the church gave the hall back to the village in May 2003. Now called St Andrews Community Hall the clubroom has been totally revamped, the kitchen has been gutted and fully refurbished, also the cloakrooms gutted and modernised. The main hall is also due soon to be improved with new lighting and decoration. Also the main hall roof is soon to be replaced. So if you have not been in the hall for a while then go and have a look and see what’s happening.

Richard Stirk

Sponsorship and Advertising

We have no intention of raising the membership subscriptions. Yet this total barely covers the cost of our operation. By far the greatest amount of our ‘surplus’ for other very important needs comes from Sponsors and Advertisers. As we have a heavy shopping list this year, I am asking once again for the most generous support of our current sponsors and advertisers and indeed, of anyone who would care to assist our ‘cause’ in either of these forms.

We ask £15 p.a. for advertisers and £25 for sponsors. For this support you will become full members of the Pavey Group and be the recipients of our highest regard and profuse thanks.
Dear Peter,

Many thanks for sending me the Village Echo. I always enjoy reading them.

There are a few things I would like to add. My dad and his dad before him, used to hand make shoes for Mr Pavey. They had to be of very soft leather as he had problems with his leg.

I also enjoyed reading “Charmouth at War”, so I would like to add a bit to it. I lived in “Bayville” and we had six soldiers from the 230 AA Battery with us, my grandmother next door also had some. We also had to feed them in those early days. That winter (of 39/40) was very cold, even the river froze over, mother warned her boys not to skate too far as the river was very deep. There are a couple of other stories I’d like to relate – Miss Meade our teacher used to take us down to the beach for swimming lessons. One day we heard a terrific bang. Apparently one of Loosemore’s cows had got on the bit of the cliff that had been mined. My brother kicked something when he was in the sea and pulled out a cow’s head, I wonder what had happened to the rest of the cow.

Another little incident was after the Radar Station went over the cliff they built another further back which I believe is used by the National Trust. One day, I was up in a field just below where there were some blackberry bushes. While I was picking blackberries I met Mr Hoeke, a German living in the village, he was there with his dogs, I didn’t notice if he was blackberrying. After he had gone I noticed some strips on some of the bushes and picked them up. They were black on one side and silver on the other.

Kathi Morgan
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