

Audrey Wright 1919-2011

Audrey Wright was a very special lady, and a Sawtry person all her life, marrying Charlie Wright in 1942 at Sawtry Methodist Chapel. Sadly my uncle passed away in 1974, leaving Audrey a widow.

Sharing some wonderful memories of the “old” Sawtry, we would sit and reminisce of when she owned the “general stores” in Church Street, which they bought in 1948. Her customers would come in for a chat in her “Arkwright” type shop, a bell above the door announcing their arrival. Before the days of Food Laws and European intervention, she would scurry out the back for refills of 5 gallons of paraffin or a block of cheese. Also for sale were fresh flowers and vegetables from the garden. Kindling was sold in home made bundles because everyone had open fires in those days and the Christmas cake orders, which reached 57 one year! Looking back quite an entrepreneur. Audrey ran the shop until she was in her 70s...probably around 1989-1990.

Older Sawtry residents will remember with fondness, when the Fair came to Sawtry and was held on the Green. When Fred Fowler had the Butchers on the corner of Gidding Road (the site of Greenways now) and Wally Sisman always had a smile for their customers. Remember Dora Garrets’ little sweet shop on the corner of High Street and Church Street, selling every variety of sweet, from glass jars, on shelves lining the walls? Dr Patterson ran the little surgery from the building which used to be Paul Cox’s video and TV shop. Bill Hall was headmaster at the old Junior School on top of the hill, Mr Garner his Deputy. The Infant school was at the far end of the village, down Green End Road known as the ‘Hostel’. Sawtry Working Men’s Club was a wooden construction known as ‘the Hut’. Ray Wayland had a Builder’s yard in Church Street, guarded by a flock of geese. Scary! Park Road was a cul-de-sac of prefabricated bungalows and Annesley Close was known as the ‘rubble’ (the

site of huge bonfires on 5th November and a firework display with little or no regard to Health & Safety). The “Greystones” was a residential dwelling and the Chequers Cottage was a public house. The Royal Oak pub was situated on the far side of the A1, and not with such fondness, the lethal intersection on the A1 when travelling south to Huntingdon. Pre fly-over years!

Living in Sawtry most of my life, I can remember many people who are sadly no longer with us, but as a child, growing up with a wonderful Aunt living nearby, who was a very influential part of my life, I shall miss our long talks together of those people, about a time when Sawtry was a very different village than it is now.

Gilbert)

Jayne Clapham (nee