

The following account, written by Pam Linford, (Percy's daughter) is of life in Middleton in the 1950s and 60s at a time before the expansion of the village when a lot of the old style atmosphere was still present.

“CHILDHOOD MEMORIES OF MIDDLETON IN THE 1950s

I was born 4th August, 1946, and have spent most of my life in the village. Clearly there have been changes over the years, but, for me, the greatest change has been the enormous amount of building work that has gone on. Some areas of the village now bear no resemblance to the Middleton I grew up in, and the area most affected is Station Road (from the Chalk Quarry to the Village Green taking in the Lane and the area behind Anvil House). I have enclosed a map of that area – the scale may be somewhat awry! Obviously the road layout remains the same, but Station Road was called North End, South Street was called Back Street, but Front Street was always Front Street.

Although there was no longer a “lord of the manor”, even as a child, I was aware of a hierarchy in the village. That hierarchy consisted of a few people at the top, and then the rest of us. The few people were:

THE HARLAND FAMILY: (Parklands). Mr Harland had a printing firm in Hull and Mrs Harland was from the Owbridge (cough mixture family).

DR & MRS CLEMENTS: Lived opposite the church.

MR & MRS DONALD SPECK: (Farmer – Manor Farm and Clayfields Farm.) Lived in the Red House on Beverley Road.

REV & MRS EVANS: Lived in the Vicarage on Warter Road.

MR & MRS TOM SPECK: (Nephew of Donald, and worked with him). Lived at Clayfields Farm.

MR & MRS HOGARTH: Headmaster (Lived in the school house).

MR & MRS TOM SOANES: Farmer on Church Hill.

I remember going to watch my father play cricket in the grounds of the Hall. The Hall itself faced west, and was a large white building. However, I have no recollection of the people who lived at the Hall. Jasper Hardy was the gamekeeper, and lived at the top of Back Street in the house near the Hall laundry. Jasper Hardy was, I am sure, a kind and gentle man, but he wore plus fours, and for some reason that frightened me, and I would avoid him at all costs.

THE CHURCH - Looks exactly the same as it did when I was little. The vicar only had the parish of Middleton and so was a more familiar figure than the vicar is today. Congregations were larger and more services took place e.g. on Sunday - morning and evening service. The vicar lived in the vicarage which was on Warter Road. The vicars I remember are:

Rev. David Evans (Welshman), Rev. Eric Winter and Rev. Harrison (I think that was his name).

There was a Sunday School which ran from 2pm – 4pm, and was led by Miss Ella Parker (lived on Front Street – last house before the school) who was assisted by Muriel Smith and Beatrice Wilson.

I attended the Sunday School, often reluctantly.

THE CHAPEL - Looks exactly the same as it did when I was a child. Had large congregations and ran a Sunday School, the highlight of which was “Chapel Anniversary”. At this celebration children had to learn “pieces” to perform, and the Church Sunday School children were invited to attend. We, Sunday School children, quite enjoyed going along as it made a lovely change from praying for the Mission, singing hymns, and doing class work in a building that was cold and dark even on the hottest summer’s day.

FARMS - Many farms in Middleton and surrounding parish.

In the village:

Soanes:	Church Hill (still going)
Speck:	Manor Farm (gone) and Clayfields Farm
Newlove:	Front Street (opposite school) – gone
Berryman)	opposite each other on Back Street (both gone)
Hutchinson)	
Swallow:	Beverley Road (still going)
Walker:	Station Road (gone)
Shipley:	Station Road (still going but the original farmhouse etc is gone).

Farming was mixed with cows, sheep, pigs, poultry and winter and summer crops. There were no farm shops but, most people got their eggs directly from the farm. One of my jobs was to go for our eggs to Walker’s farm. Farmers led their animals from the farms to the fields through the streets. The worst street for cow dirt was Back Street with 2 farms taking cows backwards and forwards to the fields. My grandfather used to say “The girls are going to and from work”. However, the street was often a real smelly mess, and children played in the street. I don’t know what Health and Safety would have said!

Farming wasn’t totally mechanised because I can remember waiting for Mr Walker to come home for lunch with his huge Shire horse. He would lift me up on to the horse’s back, and I had a ride to his farm. This was before I started school – I’d be about 4 years old, and the horse’s back was so wide that my legs stuck out horizontally at each side. The horse wore a collar with 2 brass pieces protruding upwards each with a knob on the top, and these were what I held onto. I remember that in the spring a team of sheep shearers would arrive and Mr Walker would put up a little fence, and he allowed us to watch the shearing which I enjoyed, but couldn’t get over how skinny the sheep were minus their fleece. When I was older farmers let the children ride on the trailers and on the mudguards of the tractors up to the harvest fields to watch the harvesting (Health and safety would be having fits!!) There were no combine harvesters so the farmer used a machine that had a low board with a big cutting wheel attached to it. When the corn was cut it fell onto the board, and men would gather it, create sheaves and prop some sheaves together to make a stook. These stooks were left in the fields until they were dry enough to bring to the farmyard. The threshing machine was like a fairground caravan – I have no idea what went on inside that machine, but stalks came out of one end, and dust and grain out of the other. The stalks were tied into bundles and straw stacks were created. The bunches were put onto an escalator type of machine so that higher stacks could be made. I’m assuming that stacks would be lower in the days when men had to hoist sheaves up on pitchforks. The grain was bagged and it must have been a misery for hayfever sufferers as

there was so much dust. The worst time of the year for villagers was silage making which was a necessity for the farmers as they had to feed their cattle in the winter. However, all farms seemed to do this at the same time, and believe me the smell from the turkey factory is nothing compared to the stench that we had to put with during silage making.

THE SCHOOL - I started school in September 1951 when the school had 3 classes – senior up to leaving school, junior and infant. Before I reached the junior class a Secondary Modern School had been built in Market Weighton, and children transferred there at the age of 11. Before I left Middleton a Secondary Modern school had been built in Drifffield so children who had not passed the 11 plus exam transferred to Drifffield, and not Market Weighton. Children who were already at Market Weighton continued to attend that school.

In 1951:	Mr Hogarth:	Headmaster, taught senior class
	Mr Buckley:	Junior class (lived in Millfield Garth)
	Miss Gray:	Infant class (lived with her parents at the Post Office in Bainton.) Travelled to and fro in her car – very modern.

When children started attending Market Weighton Mr Buckley left, and Mr Hogarth took over the junior class. When I started school there was water in the school building but, the toilets were across the playground, and they were earth closets! – not very pleasant. However, by the time I left Middleton school water closets had been installed. My time at the school coincided with milk for school pupils – my memory of that is luke warm milk in the summer, and thawing the milk in the winter. I can't remember a happy medium! I remember spontaneous nature walks if the weather was good (no thought of risk assessment then!), endless sewing afternoons for the girls, and gardening (in Mr Hogarth's garden!!) for the boys, and country dancing (for the girls) football (for the boys) on Friday afternoons in the playing field. In the playground rounders was a popular all year playtime activity as were seasonal games e.g. skipping, conkers, jacks, marbles, football. I remember when I was in the junior class Mr Hogarth would write 12 words on the board in 4 rows of 3, and the first thing we did after lunch was memorise them (we were given a couple of minutes to do that). They were covered, and we had to write them down. If you remembered them all you got a star for your team. I'm convinced that 4 years of doing that exercise has stood me in good stead. With only 2 classes in the school there was a wide age range in each class. In the infant class we sat around tables, and the atmosphere was much more informal. However in the junior class (which I entered 1 month after my 7th birthday) we sat in rows, each row consisted of a number of double desks with hinged seats – both people had to stand at the same time otherwise one person got trapped. The youngest children sat on the front row, and the older you got the further back you sat. Mr Hogarth always read to us at some time in the afternoon, and the first book I remember was George Eliot's "The Mill on the Floss" (probably only the childhood years). It wasn't, and never will be, easy to pitch fiction at the right level in a mixed age class, and I remember, at just 7, finding the language difficult to follow.

When I started school there were no school meals so everyone went home at lunch time (including teachers). However, when I was in the junior class (just in the juniors I think) school meals were introduced, and the school canteen was on the site of the O.A.P. bungalows on the bend of Station Road. On that site were 2 huge Nissan type huts and outbuildings that had been used during the war for P.O.W. accommodation, I think. The first cook at the new school canteen was Mrs Hogarth (Mr Hogarth's wife). After registration each day a child would be sent to the junior classroom to tell Mr Hogarth how many infant children wanted a school meal. He added that number to the junior number, and selected an older junior boy (never a girl) to take that number to the school canteen. The chosen person was supposed to run down Front Street, over Gray Garth, across Station Road and deliver the number to Mrs

Hogarth, and then get back to school as quickly as possible – Health and Safety would be having a nervous breakdown today.

SHOPS, SERVICES AND BUSINESSES - Middleton, like all villages, had been completely self-contained with all trades and services catered for. When I was small some of the shops and trades had closed down, but some were left:

STATION ROAD

Coalman	Mr Wilf Soanes (house next to Anvil House)
Seamstresses	Misses Agatha and Clarice Towse (The White House)
Saddler	Mr Soanes (where Haystacks & Pickering Park are)
Joiner	Mr Lewis (where Betty and Roger Lowe live)
Blacksmith	Mr Dove, (behind Anvil House)
Fish and chip shop	Sybil and Cecil Milner – where the Chinese take away is. For a short time in the old saddlers shop – run by Mrs Burnett.

FRONT STREET

Haulage firm	Mr Massey (where the Industrial Estate is)
Building firm	Mr Eastwood (next to Fliss Primmer's house)
Cobbler	Mr Towse (2 nd cottage after the chapel)

CHURCH HILL

Piano teacher	Miss Moate (next house after Roger Soanes')
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FRONT STREET

Newsagents, tobacco, sweets, soft drinks etc	Mr Cliff (The Brailsford' house & Hairdressers was the shop. Mr Cliff also delivered all the papers
Draper's shop	Part of the Co-op. Only opened 1 day a week when a lady from Driffeld came to look after it. (Where the Post Office is)
Co-op shop	General stores (where the now closed shop is) Mr Moate ran the shop with an assistant. Mr Moate delivered orders. I remember my mother making a list each week, and, I think Mr Moate delivered on Mondays.
General store	(The house next to the industrial estate going up Front Street.) Run by the Dixon family, and later by the Firth family. There were 2 houses, the one nearest to the industrial estate was the shop, and the family lived in the other one.
Small general store	In Station Road. After the Saddler's shop and house were sold Mr & Mrs Kirby and Ann (Dennis) moved in, and the front right hand room was a shop but only for a short time.
The Post Office	Just above Steel Walk. It was run by Mr & Mrs Noble until their retirement when it was moved to its present site. It consisted of 2 rooms – one behind the other – counter in the front room, all forms etc in the back room Hazel Hutchings delivered the mail to the village. The mail was brought to the Post Office, sorted, and Hazel delivered it on her bicycle.

There were certain mobile shops that called regularly in the village.

Butcher	Eric Bradley from Lund (We had Mr Bradley, and he came on Saturday).
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Butchers continued
Fishmonger
Ice Cream

Fred Foxton from Kirkburn
I can't remember where he came from
Burgessess' Ice Cream came on Sunday and Tuesday evenings.

LAUNDRY - A laundry service operated from Drifffield. Most people did not have washing machines and so this firm collected and returned laundry (in brown paper parcels, as I remember).

GARAGE - Owned by Jack Soanes who was still running a taxi service when I was small. The garage provided car maintenance, petrol, and dealt with car sales. During the years the building was extended and improved.

The small one up, one down building next to the Post Office was where Jack Soanes started his business as a cycle maintenance shop. When he opened the garage he continued to use that building as a store house.

When Jack Soanes retired the closing of the garage with the loss of petrol sales was a great loss to the village. Richard Briggs only continued petrol sales for a short time.

THE DOCTOR - Middleton was very fortunate to have a doctor's practice in the village which lasted until Dr Patrick Clements' retirement. The closure of the Doctor's practice was another great loss for the village.

Dr. Clements had a morning and an evening surgery. No appointments were necessary – people queued, and Dr Clements continued until he had seen everybody. After morning surgery he did his rounds. His practice was quite large, including Etton Pasture School (a residential school for children with learning difficulties).

The doctor's surgery was at the drive side of the house, and consisted of 3 rooms – pharmacy, waiting room and surgery. If patients needed medication Dr Clements was able to provide it immediately.

Many cottages did not have water laid on, so there were a number of stand pipes (obviously permanent). There was one on the corner of Greenfield Lane and Pickering Park, one up Church Hill where the lay-by is, one in Front Street between Pantiles Cottage and the next house up, and one in Back Street above the entrance to Steel Walk. Some cottages still had earth closets, but gradually all premises had water laid on (Middleton finally reached the C20).

POLICE - The village had a policeman who lived in the police house which was next to John Eastwood's house. There were a number of policemen through the years - I remember particularly P.C. Foxton, P.C. Farr. The policeman patrolled on a bicycle, and was responsible for Middleton, Bainton and North Dalton. I cannot remember any major crime in Middleton as I was growing up – in fact I can't remember any minor crimes either.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

THE RAILWAY STATION - This branch line was closed by Beeching's axe – A GREAT SHAME.

The line ran from Bridlington to Market Weighton and you could go anywhere from Middleton. The station comprised Station Master's Office, Booking Office, Waiting Room and storage area (all one building). There was a signal box further along and a very large station yard. There was a short platform, and a neatly kept garden. The staff were (as I remember):

Station Master: Mr Jack Allen Porter: Mr Kennedy Signalman: Mr Ted Dooks.

I remember many happy trips to the seaside by train – very easy – no parking problems! The trains had no corridors, just a series of compartments with overhead net luggage racks, and strange windows with leather straps that had to be fixed to a button on the door to hold the window open. If the window was open there was a danger of the engine smoke getting in – sometimes when we got off the train there was quite a lot of soot on our clothes.

I remember coal being delivered by train, and being deposited in the Station Yard. Mr Wilf Soanes (coalman) bagged up the coal, loaded it onto his lorry and delivered it round the village – very few people had central heating at that time. Mr Soanes also allowed children to ride in the back of his lorry, and I, like many others, enjoyed this until my mother saw me, and then those joyrides came to an abrupt end.

BUS SERVICES

Very good bus service that ran from Driffield to Beverley – no way you could get to Market Weighton or Pocklington by bus.

The first buses (each way) started through Middleton at around 7.00 am, and ran regularly until 11.30 pm.

Buses came specifically to take children to Driffield School, but I went to Beverley High School and so had to use the service buses. The bus went to Beverley at 8.10 am via Middleton, Lund (not Lockington), Holme on the Wolds, South Dalton, Etton, Cherry Burton. Returning home I caught the 3.55 pm bus from Beverley, getting home at about 4.40 pm. No way a child could do that now! I had a bus pass which was quite useful as I could use it at the weekend too. All these buses had rounded roofs so that they could pass under the North Bar in Beverley. Sadly we now have a much diminished service which is fine for car drivers, but for non-drivers is restricting.

ENTERTAINMENT

There were 2 pubs as today:

The Robin Hood run by Mrs Hotham, and the Rose and Crown run by Percy Dove. However only drinks were sold. The age of pub meals had not entered anybody's head at this time.

FOOTBALL - a thriving football team, or even teams, that played in the local league, using the playing field.

CRICKET - a thriving team that played in the local league, using the playing field.

TENNIS - The Tennis Club was situated on the left hand side of the road to Market Weighton, and on the corner of the turn to Enthorpe.

BOWLS - Bowling greens were introduced to the bottom of the playing field near the embankment, but I think that was a bit later than the 50s.

THE READING ROOM - When I was small a lending library operated from the Reading Room. It was open on one evening a week, and run by Mr Hogarth – I am sure this was a County Lending Library. I remember accompanying my parents when they changed their books. There was no children's section!

THE VILLAGE HALL - This building was in continual use as most people's entertainment took place within the village. Cinema trips took place to Driffild and Beverley on the service buses.

USES OF THE VILLAGE HALL - Wedding receptions, village parties, dances (usually to the accompaniment of Billy Thompson and his Rhythm Aces), whist drives, beetle drives, W.I. meetings, endless jumble sales for village fund raising or charities, the Produce Show (huge interest in that), weekly cinema show (very well attended!), pantomimes, plays (amateur dramatic societies) and there were also occasional talks.

CHILDREN'S ENTERTAINMENT - Christmas was a very happy time for children because there were quite a lot of parties:

CHRISTMAS PARTIES

School - tea and games

Sunday School - tea and games. Miss Parker gave a series of parties in her caravan at the bottom of her garden. As space was restricted Miss Parker gave a party for each class.

W.I. - tea and games

Mrs Harland's - tea, a few games and a film show (usually a short Laurel and Hardy, followed by a full length film which seemed to be "Stagecoach" every time, but I don't think it can have been). After the film show Mrs Harland made her appearance in front of all the peasant children, and wandered amongst us smiling regally, but saying very little. Finally Mrs Harland's cook, Olive, arrived with a large barrel of individually wrapped fudge bars which, I presume, the poor woman had been forced to make. Olive wore a black dress, white apron and some sort of white cloth tiara and duly handed out the fudge bars. We also received a small gift e.g. a jigsaw which had an Owbridge cough mixture bottle on the table in the sitting room where a party was taking place. I think most of the gifts probably came from her family's firm. The party was enjoyable, and it was kind of Mrs Harland to provide it, but I never felt any warmth coming from her. Before I left for this party my mother always told me that I must thank Mrs Harland personally. This instruction took the edge off the party somewhat as I was frightened of Mrs Harland because she was the first person I had met who had blue hair. Therefore I had to "screw my courage to the sticking point" in order to fulfil this task – it never occurred to me to lie to my mother!

FANCY DRESS PARTIES I can't remember who organised them, but we always enjoyed them.

ANNUAL VILLAGE TRIP TO SCARBOROUGH - There was a Children's Trip committee who held fund raising events throughout the year in order for this to take place. We all looked forward to this very much, and it was always a great day out for mothers and children (fathers were all at work). The day before the trip we all went to my Grandma's house to collect our 3 shillings spending money (a veritable fortune to a 50s child). Beforehand I always asked my Grandma if I could have the money in sixpences as it looked more. We travelled to Scarborough (with packed lunches) in a fleet of 3 or 4 coaches. A great day out.

ANNUAL SUNDAY SCHOOL TRIP TO BRIDLINGTON - We travelled by train, and Miss Parker provided the packed lunch which was very generous of her. I think, perhaps, the

mothers brought food as well otherwise it would have been rather hard on Miss Parker. Again another happy day out.

Travelling fairs sometimes came, and set up where the turkey factory is.

There were garden parties at Parklands in the summer.

ROADMEN - The village had 2 roadmen – Mr Gee and Mr Towse. Their job was to keep the footpaths and roads clean, and to repair them where possible. If the job was a big one a steam roller was used to resurface roads. In the winter these men gritted paths and roads, but we were often blocked in. As children we didn't care if we were blocked in as we could take our sledges onto Gray Garth, and sledge to our hearts content. Nowhere for children to sledge nowadays.

THE VILLAGE PIT - This pit was where the Bowls Club is now, and men had to take the household rubbish to deposit in the pit. Dustbin collections started much later. My father took our rubbish on Saturday afternoon, and I went with him carrying a small bag containing eggshells and very light articles.

THE FLOOD - This happened when I was 15 years old so I think that would be early 1962. We had had a very hard winter, but then a quick thaw. It was Sunday evening and we were watching T.V. when we heard a lot of noise outside. When we looked out we saw that the road was full of water and it stretched from around Walker's farm to the sharp bend beyond the Chinese take-away. The water continued to rise until it completely surrounded our house. My father waded out and brought logs in so that we could raise the settee, armchairs, table - heavy things that we couldn't carry upstairs. The water continued to rise and went through our air bricks but it stopped eventually, and it was about ½ inch from coming in, through front and back doors. Others were not as lucky – the six cottages that were on the land now occupied by Marie Fox's bungalow were all flooded as were the joiners house and 2 further houses down the lane. The saddlers shop was converted into a bungalow by that time and it was flooded, and I helped to clear things out for Mrs Burnett. I'm not sure about the Village Hall, but think that the Fish and Chip shop, which was where the Chinese takeaway is, was flooded. The following day the Fire Brigade arrived and helped to pump out the water from flooded properties. The drainage was inadequate then, but as a result of the flood some work was done to improve the situation. However, over the years the enormous building work put added strain on an ancient drainage system with the result that the residents of lower Station Road had, for some years, to put up with frightening and totally unacceptable flooding of the road every time there was steady rain. Although the work done in 2007 improved the situation it has not solved it, and, unless there is regular gulley and off trap cleaning and the dyke is maintained regularly (and not just if and when the landowner thinks it is necessary) and Yorkshire Water fulfil their responsibilities then lower Station Road will always be vulnerable.

THE CORONATION – When the King died Middleton school sent a letter of condolence to Buckingham Palace. A short while after Mr Hogarth brought a black edged envelope into assembly, opened it, and read the contents. It was a letter of thanks from the Palace and seemed quite amazing to all of us. We were allowed to look at the letter, but I don't remember touching it.

We, like many families, didn't have a television, and so we went to watch the Coronation along with a number of other families at Mrs Walker's house. I only remember the mothers and children – all the men at work, I suppose. My father had told me to watch the coronation very carefully because there would not be another one for a long time. I expected it to be

totally absorbing, but I found it very tedious, and all the children went out to play after a while. We were called in for the crowning which I did enjoy as there was far more going on.

I remember receiving lots of Coronation souvenirs – beakers, dolls etc., but I can’t find any of them now. There was a Coronation party in the village hall, and I wore a white dress with very tiny red and blue dots!

GOODMANHAM ROAD – There were/are 2 houses on that road. The first house had quite a lot of land, and was owned by Billy Abbott who had a market garden. His daughter Jessie ran the florist section of the business. Further along lived Mr & Mrs Thompson, and Mrs Thompson ran a café (situated at the bottom of the garden) for passing cyclists.

There was a public footpath (used regularly) which ran from the bend at the top of Back Street to Goodmanham Road beyond Billy Abbott’s land.

I was fortunate to grow up in a warm, loving and secure home with plenty of contact with the extended family. My paternal grandparents, an aunt, uncle and cousin also lived in the village, as had my great grandparents who had died before I was born. However, I was also lucky to grow up in a tight knit rural community where everyone knew everybody else, and were quick to help each other.

I think that I grew up with a great sense of belonging to the Middleton community, and I have very happy memories of my childhood. I am not pretending that Middleton was as idyllic as Cranford or Lark Rise but the slow pace of life, the people around me, the routine and special events in the village helped to give me a good start in life. Being in a rural area allowed me to see, at first hand, the changing seasons and to learn the names of trees, wild flowers, grasses, birds and wild animals that I saw around me. Freedom to roam was possible for rural children in the 50s, and I can’t remember any serious accident occurring. All in all my childhood in the 50s was happy and carefree, and I have enjoyed recalling my memories of that time.

JUST REMEMBERED

The Village Green – I don’t remember the pond reaching the pavement, but I do remember what is now the Green was being covered in cindery material. I also remember going to a bonfire whilst the cindery material was there. It was not until Coronation Year that the Green was grassed over, a central circular garden was planted as were trees and shrubs around the perimeter. Three seats were put in place each with a brass ENR in the middle of the backrests. A fourth seat was positioned opposite the Green where there is still a seat. People sat on the seats more than they do today – in the summer the seats were always full of elderly men chatting and putting the world to rights.

ALLOTMENTS

Most families grew their own vegetables in their own gardens or in allotments. My father had an allotment in the area behind the Everest-Todd bungalow. There were about six allotments in this area with ample space for vegetable and fruit growing. I also remember allotments in the area near the village rubbish pit.

THE CHALK QUARRY

Throughout my childhood the chalk quarry and whiting mill gave employment to a large number of village men. When my grandfather was serving in France during World War I my grandmother worked in the chalk quarry.”

