

Musbury Heritage – Musbury Memories – 22 years on...

I might as well come straight out with it... Reading Musbury Memories makes me sad. Not because of times gone by or how life has changed since those days recalled in the many fascinating stories from villagers, many of whom are no longer with us. No, what makes me particularly sad is the many pictures lost or mislaid and the stories told, but not completed. So many questions unanswered. I appreciate that Musbury Memories was never intended to be a history of the village. It was a fascinating book of pictures and recollections put together to celebrate the Millennium and great job was done by all concerned.

What is highlighted by re-reading the book is just how much knowledge there was in the village and how many pictures were found to support the memories. Unfortunately for me, as I am trying to document Musbury's history and preserve as much of its heritage as I can, many of the memories raise more questions than answers. History is based on facts supported by sources, in other words proof. Musbury Memories provides me with lots of clues, pointers and background stories, but in most cases not the facts. That is in no way to denigrate an excellent publication that succeeds brilliantly in what it set out to do.

Take as an example the piece written by Don Welch, a popular and much-missed resident, who took us on a lovely stroll through the village. My eye is initially taken to the photograph looking down Blacksmith's Hill, with May Cottage & Yew Tree House in the foreground. Where is the original of this picture?



Blacksmith's Hill

What era was Don's stroll based on? We know he was born in 1930 and he refers to Mrs McKinnel's ownership of Mountfield (she lived there as a widow from 1933 to 1941), but also mentions Harry Dutfield's ownership of the house (1941 to early 1950s). Trying to date the other mentions of people, buildings, trades, etc. becomes quite problematic. For instance, he refers to the publican of the New Inn (The Hind) being a Mr Good. This is interesting because we don't know who the landlords were from 1939 to 1956. So, we have a name, but no date. There are so many similar queries that arise. Who has the pictures of the Cox brothers and which one is which? I could go on....

The whole of Musbury Memories is littered with photographs that seem to have disappeared. There is the lovely picture of the gathering of villagers for the Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee of 1897. Particularly relevant as we prepare to celebrate the current Queen's Platinum Jubilee. What a shame it would be if this was lost forever.



Jubilee 1897

You will see from the poor quality of the pictures accompanying this article that trying to copy pictures from the book results in low quality images with poor resolution and very noticeable banding. As always, the more original the image the better quality the copy and the more we can learn from the details.

I would love to make as many stories, historical information, photographs, drawings, etc. freely available for anyone with an interest in Musbury's heritage to see. Please can anyone who has or knows of the whereabouts of any of these photographs let me know. All I want is to take a high-quality scan, know the whereabouts of the original and that it is being kept safe. Of course, if you would like me to take care of any items and ensure they are kept ready for inclusion in the Musbury Archives, when, hopefully, somewhere is found, then I will be happy to do so.

By the time this article is published I hope to have created a page on the Musbury Heritage website (<https://www.musburyheritage.co.uk>) called 'The Lost Pictures of Musbury' and I will put a link on the Home Page to make it easy to find. There are also images on the Musbury Village website for which the location of the original is unknown. It would be fantastic to find as many as possible.

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