

PERSONAL RAMBLINGS

YOUR EDITOR asked me if I had any history of the former "London Inn". I am unable to help but I feel there surely have to be people still resident or moved away, who can give some leads. Many such old establishments must have histories worth uncovering.

Why, even the old police station/house in South Street had a suspected murderer in one of its two cells. The story of the murder of 33-year-old Miss Ida Mary Breton, staying with her uncle Mr Isbell at Claremont Villa is recorded in a book I have by the late Chief Superintendent Walter Hutchings, written in 1956 and called 'Out of the Blue'. A certain John Ware, 25, who had returned to Hatherleigh after several years' absence, became suspect number one and was held in detention there ...

I won't spoil it by telling you the end of the tale now! I have passed it to the Editor who may possibly use it. But it's more than a little dramatic. I have just looked at the date of this cell-occupation and would you believe, it was on Wednesday 17th May 1905, 110 years ago exactly as I type this.

In my day a Sergeant Gordon Willis grew mushrooms in one of the two cells after its many years of neglect.

SO, WHO ARE WE?

My wife Sheila, our 22-month old daughter Angela, and I as PC 234 with just over 4 years' service in the then Devon Constabulary arrived on the day of the ManU fatal air crash disaster in Munich, 6.Feb 1958.



Our family was added to at 2, Claremont Place on 28th January 1959 and the 10th August 1960 with the arrival of Angela's baby sister Janice and brother Richard respectively.

Our family soon became firm friends with the **Aubrey Edwards** family, staunch Methodists who owned a greengrocery-and-

chip shop opposite the opticians which was alongside the "London".

Next to the Edwardses was the chemist who was next to the "George". The Edwardses lived at Hurtle House, on the first left hand bend on the A.386 going towards Okehampton. The Edwards's shop also had a tearoom at the rear and toddler Angela busied herself (she was later assisted by Janice once she too could toddle) by "helping" serve the customers in the tearoom and shop (not the chipshop, of course). The pretty little maids, already very out-going in attitude but not much more than babies, were very popular with the customers and it served as a foundation for their lifelong self-confidence. Angela still recalls fresh veg in boxes at floor level. She now has a B.Sc degree!

The Hatherleigh constable's mode of transport to cover not only Hatherleigh but Monkokehampton, Iddesleigh, Ingleigh Green and Broadwoodkelly was a pedal cycle (bike allowance was paid to eventually cover its purchase.) After the legally required small saddle and footrests were firmly attached it became a two-seater for Dad and one child. Angela clearly remembers the thrill of riding many times down Market Street from Claremont Place with utmost confidence in her dad and sitting safely between his arms on the Raleigh bicycle.

By virtue of residence I was a Pot-boiler (one who "boiled his own household pot and not being a landlord of a property in which he doesn't live." I thereby qualified for grazing rights on Hatherleigh Moor in respect of the herds and flocks I never had! Hatherleigh Carnival was run, as I recall, by the **Pillivant** family in the 1950s - a torchlight procession with all manner of fancy clothes. For this purpose I loaned my obsolete old-fashioned button-to-the-neck police tunic to somebody. *Can I have it back now, please?*

On 5 July 1962 after 4½ happy years we "struck camp" and moved down south to Plymstock, now ceded to, or stolen by, greedy-for-territory Plymouth City.

I retired after my full 30 years engagement on 5th November 1983 at the dizzy height of Police Sergeant and am back in my native city of Exeter at 5 Knights Crescent, EX2 7TG. E-mail limbuv@tiscali.co.uk. (I still decline to add the required "Plymouth" when writing to "Plymstock, Devon")

A question for any researchers to ponder. If you enquire about Hatherleigh Buddle's origins it might lead to historians of the London Inn!