

QUENINGTON AND GODWINS

by Ray Trinder

Quenington is a small Cotswold village some eight miles from Cirencester, situated for the most part on land falling gradually down the west bank of the River Colne. The land was originally recorded in Domesday Book as eight hides and consisting of three manors held by Aluold and two men, both called Doda, passed to Walter de Lacy (d. 1085) whose son Roger held them in 1086. Owned by his brother Hugh (d. by 1115) his granddaughter Agnes de Lacy granted Quenington Manor to the Knights Hospitallers in the twelfth century. The Hospitallers established a preceptory c. 1193. Edward Thame of Fairford leased land from them before 1506 and held the manor until the short lived revival of their order in England ended in 1558. After the Dissolution the land passed through the hands of various land owners until the seventeenth century when the preceptory was demolished. A Manor house was then built on the site as a farmhouse.

Adjacent to the site was the church of St Mary, dedicated to St. Swithin in 1735, and is complete with two well preserved and magnificently carved doorways depicting, to the north, the Harrowing of Hell on the tympanum, and to the south, the Coronation of the Virgin. The Rectory house is adjacent to the church.

The nearby water-mill of 1338 became a fulling mill in the eighteenth century, which included a gigmill and dyehouse, owned by William Thomas and the clothier Richard Pinfold. The mill had, by 1735, become the property of Charles Morgan of Fairford. By 1738, the site had been leased to Joshua Carby who was an eminent papermaker who died in 1791 at the age of 84. The site included a new mill and a Rag House in 1830. The mill was then operated by Joshua Carby Radway until his death in 1840. In 1841 Joseph Bence Palser was operating the site and added four beating engines in

1851. William Alfred West was making paper from straw by 1860 and still worked there in 1876. The mill was out of use by 1879. In 1976 an eighteenth century mill called Knights Mill survived on the site, the chimney having been demolished in the early 1930s. The area is used as a small industrial site to this day.

The majority of the villagers worked on the farms on the estate. In 1775 the village had one beerhouse, by 1840 two beerhouses, and by 1870 three were recorded, The Keeper's Arms, The Earle Grey and The Pig and Whistle. The Pig and Whistle closed in the 1940s, The Earle Grey in 1997, which claimed to have the smallest bar in the country. It was 12 feet 3 inches by 9 feet 6 inches (3.7m. by 2.9m.). Electricity was not installed in the pub until the late 1940s, the bar being illuminated by a candle in a bottle. The landlord in the 1930s until 1946 was one Jimmy Strange, a rather eccentric character but a much travelled gentleman, having worked his way across America in the 1920s. This house held some interesting items including a large collection of matchboxes.

Apart from the normal tradesmen, such as carpenters, masons and builders, a plasterer was recorded and several lime-kilns were recorded in the 1920s. Bakers, tailors, dress-makers, a shoe-maker, a mealman and a hurdle-maker, shopkeepers, a draper, a tea-dealer and a blacksmith were amongst the trades mentioned. The Collett family of blacksmiths were recorded in the village for a period of over 250 years.

Growing up in the 1930s

My education began at five, in 1933, at the village school; this included visits by the school doctor and dentist with his foot-operated drill. The local nurse was also a visitor, examining us for head-lice. She lived in Hatherop and was responsible for looking after everyone in Colne, Hatherop or Quenington who might need emergency treatment for accidents or general medical care. She was a tower of strength to the community and was respected by everyone for her gentle manner and the conscientious way in which she carried out her work. The best teacher during my period was a Scots lady who stayed with us three years prior to her retirement. At this time there were about

twenty pupils attending the school until we reached the age of eight years when we attended either Hatherop or Fairford. At the age of eleven we sat an examination to attend Cirencester Grammar School. I attended Fairford School under Mr. Hedges. At the age of eleven I obtained a place at the Grammar School.

Five happy years were spent at this school under the strict eye of the headmaster, Mr. Pat Frazer, a gentleman who gave twenty years of his life to the pupils. The date at this time was 1939 and the Second World War was imminent. Our class sizes rose to 40

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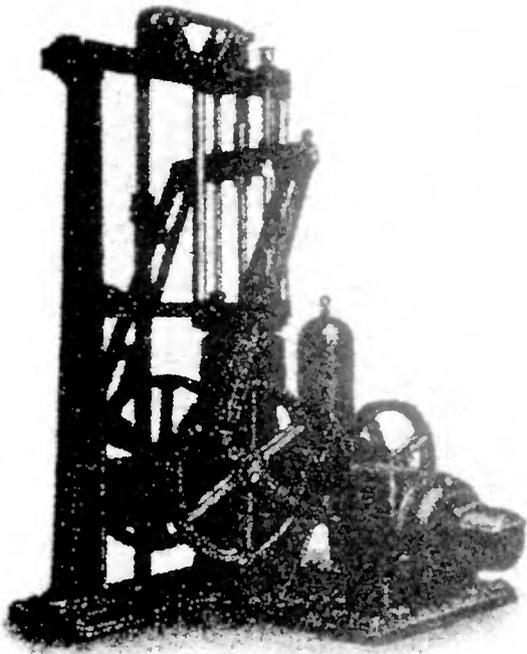
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pupils due to the influx of evacuees from the cities and also Jews and Poles from Europe. Many new friends were made. The Physics master was the best instructor at the school, always showing us how to use our classwork in our future lives. The History master also left his mark on many of us. He was a conscientious objector and as such his work was made difficult in some quarters, but many of us regarded him highly for his outspoken manner. The Army Cadet Force came into being, under the leadership of the Assistant Headmaster, an officer from the First World War who had been gassed and was decorated for bravery. Our unit was first attached to the Gloucestershire Regiment and later seconded to the Royal Gloucestershire Hussars, an Armoured Reconnaissance Regiment containing many old boys from the school.

Working at Godwins

After five years I left to begin an engineering apprenticeship at H J Godwin Ltd., starting in the

workshops and later transferring to the Drawing Office to become a draughtsman, something I had always wanted to become after meeting the chief draughtsman, Mr Gardner. My first job was to deburr machined items ready for transfer to the fitting shop. This lasted for two weeks when I was sent to the fitting shop to work under a senior fitter, Mr. Walter Cole, trained by the GWR in Swindon and an excellent fitter. I have always been pleased to say that he was my first mentor as much was learned in those early days, sometimes only realised many years later. My father by this time was in charge of the Test Section and was responsible for ensuring that the equipment met the design specification before despatch to the customer. The pumps I helped to manufacture were destined to Messrs. R A Lister's factory at nearby Dursley. The orders supplied by them were a vital part of the factory output and were always given priority each week. After several months I spent a week on the test bed and then moved to the machine shop to work on the gearshapers, capstan lathes, millers, slotter, keyseater and in the tool room. After about three years spent in the workshops I was introduced to the complexities of the Drawing Office under Mr Gardner and then under a new man, Mr Orpet, a friend of the owner H J Godwin, who became senior draughtsman. He was well over retiring age but still very active and had served an apprenticeship at the Bath company of Stothert and Pitts. This company was well known for the manufacture of cranes and steelwork. Changes took place in the company in 1950 and I became assistant to the General Manager. This involved many duties new to me, such as interviewing people for jobs, meeting customers, preparing estimates and dealing with the issuing of orders for spare parts and also processing some telephone orders. On May 31 1952 I married and in 1953 left the company to take up a position at Gloster Aircraft Company. At Godwin's I learned much good practice in engineering which stood me in good stead in my new job.

Godwin's Company Story

H J Godwin Ltd. had been operating for many years before I arrived in 1944 and was a manufacturer of water pumps, powered by electric motor, petrol or diesel engines, hand or wind power. About 120 employees were engaged in this work, and as the factory was remotely situated it was a very self sufficient unit. Patterns were produced for the castings which were purchased from foundries in Stroud, Gloucester and Witney. Nuts, bolts, bearings, jointing,

leathers, as well as raw materials - brass tube, steel bar and sheet, brass and phosphor-bronze cored stick were bought in. All the parts necessary for the production of the pumps were made in-house with the exception of the motors and engines. The company began as builders, recorded in 1879 as William Godwin who was dealing in drain pipes and cisterns in 1894 and was involved in fitting a new water wheel in the paper mill for Sir Thomas Bazley, the wheel being supplied by the Gloucester company of Summers and Scott. By 1906 the company was recorded as 'William Joynes Godwin, Builder and Contractor, supplying building materials and pipes, sinking and boring wells, supplying and fixing wind engines, hydraulic rams and waterwheels'. During the 1914 war the forges at his premises supplied horse shoes under contract to the army. By 1919 he was succeeded by his son Harold Joynes Godwin. The firm prospered during the early thirties when electricity was being installed around the country. Farmers began

to buy pumping equipment and to pipe water to cattle troughs in the fields. Boreholes were drilled and windmills with powerheads and storage tanks mounted above them were giving a cheap trouble-free supply of water to the farmstead. In 1939 the firm of H J Godwin Ltd. specialised in pumping machinery and employed 100 people. During the 1939-1945 war pumping sets, portable on skids and fixtures, were supplied to the Forces. The name Godwin was known throughout the world, supplying windmills to South Africa, America and India. Hand pumps, windmills, diesel operated pumping sets and deep well powerheads were supplied across the Empire through the Crown Agents for the Colonies. The company was owned by the Godwin family until 1974 when it was bought by a large combine. Although being bought twice since, it is still operating with about 100 employees in a small Cotswold village.