

BUSINESS and OCCUPATION

During the twentieth century, East Bridgford has changed from a largely self-sufficient agricultural village to a commuter village. Whereas villagers once worked and bought virtually all of their goods within the village, the opposite is now true.

This chapter looks at how business and occupations have changed during the course of the century in East Bridgford.

East Bridgford in 1901

At the beginning of the century, East Bridgford was in decline. Its four brickyards and malt-ings businesses had closed. Consequently, the population had steadily decreased from a peak of 1155 in 1851 to 756 by 1901.

Arthur Du Boulay-Hill¹ quotes an account from two elderly parishioners, Samuel Curtis and John Dent at the turn of the century, referring to more prosperous times in 1837...

"Well Bridgford has gone down since them days! Why I remember back in the year the Queen was crowned what a lot of work there was which has all gone now. First the malting; though at that time men were mostly employed by the week from outside. There were four at the old malt-house by the river, one at Poole's, one at Matt. Millingtons, that's six maltsters. 'Then the four Brickyards, Potteries, Herod's yard, Doncaster's in Brickyard Lane, and the Foss Yard, employed nine men and perhaps twelve lads. 'Then the Boats; there were four boats, belonging to W Haskinson, Mr. Millington, F. Poole, and J. Holloway, three men to each boat; and later on three large gravel boats with five men to each, owned by R. Chapman, J. Hill, and W. Richardson. That's 40 men or more. Then there were the stockingers with 2, 3 or sometimes 6 or 7 frames in a house worked by the family. I can remember five stockingers on Cuttle Hill, with their song as they threw shuttle across;*

Ray Rah, Rat-tat-tat tat,

Water porridge and hardly that.

There were seven more along Kneeton Road, three in Straw's Lane, and Brown's Lane, five in the New Buildings, six in Main St. and Millgate – that makes 26 stockingers with three frames in each house on an average, perhaps 80 frames at work. Ah! There was a very deal more going on in Bridgford then!"

Some things don't change!

¹ East Bridgford Notts. The Story of an English Village A Du Boulay Hill

* Haskinson is the name appearing in quotation, however, a village family name was Huskinson

The 1901 census, although not an exact representation as it only records the residents and visitors residing in the village at the time of recording, provides evidence of the early dominance of agriculture within the village.

Of the 226 male inhabitants listed, 18 were farmers of which 3 additionally list themselves as butchers, 1 a blacksmith (Straw), 1 a builder (Turner) and 1 a publican (Green). There were 83 men employed in agriculture, predominantly as 'ordinary agricultural workers', waggoners and stockmen. There were also 8 'general workers'. In addition, there were 18 market gardeners, 11 gardeners (either jobbing gardeners or employed in domestic service) as well as 3 coachmen and 2 grooms.

Of the professional/white collar occupations there were 2 clerks in Holy Orders, 4 male teachers (of which 2 were pupil teachers) and one police constable, surgeon, bankers clerk, Prudential Insurance Agent, auctioneer and valuer, estate agents clerk, solicitors clerk, lace-curtain designer and cricketer.

Two males were listed as 'living on own means' and 13 had retired.

The village had numerous tradesmen. There were 4 publicans, 6 butchers and an apprentice butcher (including the 3 jointly listing farming as their occupation), 3 grocers, 2 bakers come grocers aided by 3 apprentices and 1 'breadmaker'. Also a fish hawker, 5 shoemakers and an apprentice, 1 newsagent, 2 tailors and a draper's assistant.

Additionally there was a plumber and decorator served by an apprentice, a stonemason's labourer, joiner, carpenter, corn miller, miller (millwheel grinder), corn merchant, threshing machine contractor and a saddler. There were 2 market carriers, 4 boatmen, 5 bricklayers and 5 blacksmiths.

Of the 118 females giving occupations, 18 were 'living on own means' and 2 had retired. Domestic service dominated with 56 females falling into this category with occupations ranging from kitchen maid to housekeeper. Additionally, there were 3 sick nurses, 2 domestic nurses, 4 charwomen, 2 laundresses and 1 governess. There were 8 female school teachers including 2 pupil teachers and 2 music teachers.

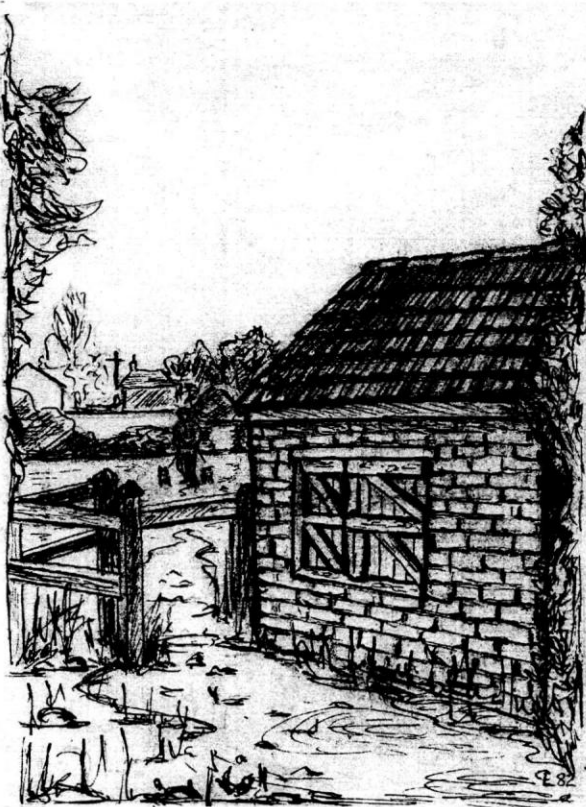
Another 11 ladies were occupied as dressmakers, besides one each as a seamstress, a plain sewer, fancy draper and one lady specialising in 'plain and fancy sewing'.

Finally there were 5 assistant grocers/bakers, 1 subpostmistress and 1 farmer's daughter.

East Bridgford in the first half of the Twentieth Century

During the early part of the century, along with agriculture, craftsmen and tradesmen formed the backbone of village life. Businesses were small, often a craftsman aided by an apprentice. Craftsmen worked from outbuildings adjacent to their homes or plied their trade from a converted front room. This was the era of 'living over the shop'.

Businesses supported the agricultural base of the village and provided essential goods and services for the village folk. Although there were far fewer houses than today (approximately a quarter), there were many more businesses.



The workshop of Reuben Morris, the cobbler, by the entrance to Butts Close off Brown's Lane

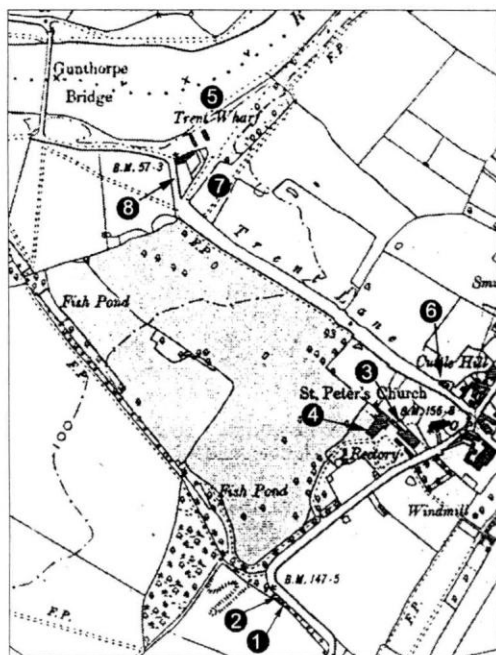
The village was alive with activity. Born in 1908, Sylvia Fisher (nee Mason)², recalled her childhood memories of East Bridgford

"When I was a child, there were at least three cobblers in East Bridgford and many were the happy hours I spent in their shops. One would give me bits of leather and old tools and there I punched and crimped patterns to my heart's content. One white-bearded old man was a shoemaker, and, in his little shop, we would examine his huge collection of lasts. Some were peculiarly shaped to fit his lame customers. He would fit everyone up with well-fitting hand sewn shoes. On a frosty day we would edge our way into the smithy's heat and noise, to watch the sparks flying, and smell the singeing hooves. Sometimes we might peep in at one of the four bakers at work, drawing the sweet smelling crusty loaves out of the huge oven on their long 'peels' or kneading dough until it squeaked for mercy. Sent with messages to the carpenter or wheelwright we would linger to watch the

shaping of the wood under their skilled hands or play with the aromatic shavings. The village also boasted a plumber, glazier and whittaw. The latter was always impecunious and would ask the farmers for an advance payment to buy leather for the repairs to their harness, but, alas, this money would often be spent at the nearest public house. Several dressmakers and a tailor also plied their trade.... One of the dressmakers also acted as midwife, nurse and was also much in demand to help with the pig killing. "*

With no bus service and a carrier service restricted to Saturday and Wednesday, daily access to Nottingham and Newark was by train from Bingham or Lowdham. This necessitated a walk or cycle ride to the respective railway stations unless one was wealthy enough to own one's own horse and trap or hire a carriage. Consequently, most of the working population found employment within the parish boundary.

A Tour of the village during the first half of the century



Kirkhill

At the beginning of the century it was customary for the first house on the periphery of the village to be occupied by the police constable. Thus, in 1901, Samuel Beardsley, the police constable lived in the first semi-detached house on Chapman's Corner (1). Next door was the home of Mr Thomas Watson, the chimney sweep (2).

Adjacent to the church, The Old Rectory (3) was the home of the Reverend Arthur Du Boulay-Hill. Behind, Bridgford Hill (4) was the home and business base of George Beaumont and Son F.S.C., land agent, surveyor and valuers. Successive generations of the Beaumont family were Secretary to the Gunthorpe Bridge Co in its early years. The company was responsible for the 1875 Toll Bridge until the opening of the new bridge and A6097 by-

pass in 1927. The bridge also provided occasional work for village labourers, replacing the wooden planks of which it was constructed.

Trent Lane

By 1900, the wharf, situated at the bottom of Trent Lane (5), was in decline. At this time, gravel and coal were the only commodities handled in any quantity. Joseph Chapman, and John Huskinson both had coal merchant businesses delivering coal from the wharf. Coal was hauled up Trent Lane by horse and cart to Joseph Chapman's yard, now No.4 'The Cottage' (6), where it was weighed on the weighbridge and bagged up into sacks. A 'gear horse' was hitched up at the start of the steep incline to aid the two horses pull the laden carts. Once at the top, he was given a drink from one of the two water troughs set in the churchyard wall and ridden down the hill to await the next load. One of these troughs can still be seen.



Joseph Chapman's Yard, with the 'Gell's Coal Wharf' sign prominent

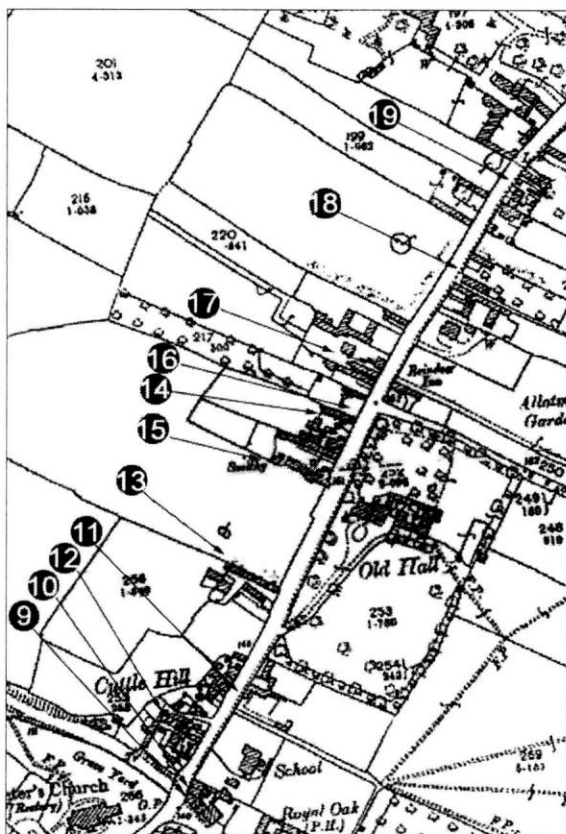
By the 1930s, increased public and private transport had created a hitherto unknown tourist trade by the River Trent. At one time it was nicknamed 'Skegness-on-Trent'. With the advent of motorised transport, a Charabanc used to bring day-trippers to Gunthorpe at week-

ends. During the late 1920s, overlooking the Trent on the site of 'Bridgford Court' (7), a series of wooden chalets were built as holiday accommodation for town people wishing to get away for the weekend. Mr and Mrs Townsend opened a tea-shop in their home, a red brick building covered with advertising hoardings, on the site of 'Kasserine' (8). Many were tempted by the sign 'Teas with Hovis'.



Kneeton Road

In 1900, at the top of Trent Lane, known as 'Church Corner' the drapery shop (9) belonging to Frederick Sharp stood along side the bakery and grocery shop (10) of Charles Millington. Both remained as retail outlets until recent times. The latter remained as a grocery shop until 1965. The former has had a more varied history. It was soon taken over by Mrs Elizabeth Wilks. During the 1920s, Mary Dexter and Gertrude Moore added a haberdashery business. Under their management it became the Post Office (1921-1941). Meanwhile Fredrick Sharp remained as the assistant overseer, tax collector and clerk to the parish council until the 1930s.



Walking along Kneeton Road, just past the school stands 'Ivy Bank' (11). At one time this was a hat shop, displaying its wares from a large window facing the road. Opposite, amidst the labyrinth of Cuttle Hill Cottages (12) lived the market carrier, Mrs Mary Ann Smith, Mr Selby the cobbler, the Ingram family who were painters and decorators during the 1930s and 1940s and Nurse Pike, fondly remembered by many villagers.

Hackers Close (13) was the location of Delia Hayday, the first ladies hairdresser to be listed in Kelly's Directory (1936 edition). At first, the business was located in a wooden hut in what is now the builders yard belonging to Oglesby's. Later, it relocated to the front room of No. 47 Kneeton Road.

Opposite Browns Lane, on Kneeton Road, stands The Reindeer Pub (17). Just below, 'The White House' (14), was once 'The Plough and Harrow', a beer house run by the

beer retailer, shop keeper and farmer, William Green, at the turn of the century. This later became a tearoom, used by school children from outside the village, who, before the introduction of school dinners, supplemented their packed lunches with soup, boiled eggs and cocoa. Audrey Metcalfe recalled her schooldays in the 1920s... *"Tommy Lewis used to collect us from Kneeton every morning on his bus. We would stop at the White House and leave an uncooked egg with our name on. It would always be cooked for us at lunchtime"*

In 1901, sandwiched between the two pubs, set back from Kneeton Road on Dovecote Close, was Euerby's Smithy (15). Soon to close, its last patron was Mrs William Euerby. During the Second World War, David Simpson (Sub Postmaster 1941-1948) ran the Post Office from a wooden hut (16) at the end of Dovecote Close.

By 1928, adjacent to 'The Plough and Harrow' lived the shoe repairer, Charles Hobbs. Beyond Brown's Lane, 22 Kneeton Road (18) became the site of E Hunt and Son, coal merchant and hauliers from 1922-1993.

Finally we come to 'Bead Cottage' (19), built during the late eighteenth century as a frame-work knitters workplace. It took its name from its later trade, making ornaments and beads from the satin-spar gypsum mined in the village. Arthur Du Boulay-Hill¹ recounts the tale of a previous rector discovering souvenirs made in East Bridgford for sale at Niagara Falls... When invited to buy ornaments of 'petrified spray', he asked where it was produced, and was informed that it came from a place in England called Bridgford. *"And so do I"*, he said, quite proud of his little parish.

Main Street

Stretching along the length of Main Street were a plethora of small businesses. Just beyond 'Church Corner', on the left stood 'The Mason's Arms' (20). Bill Widdison recalls....

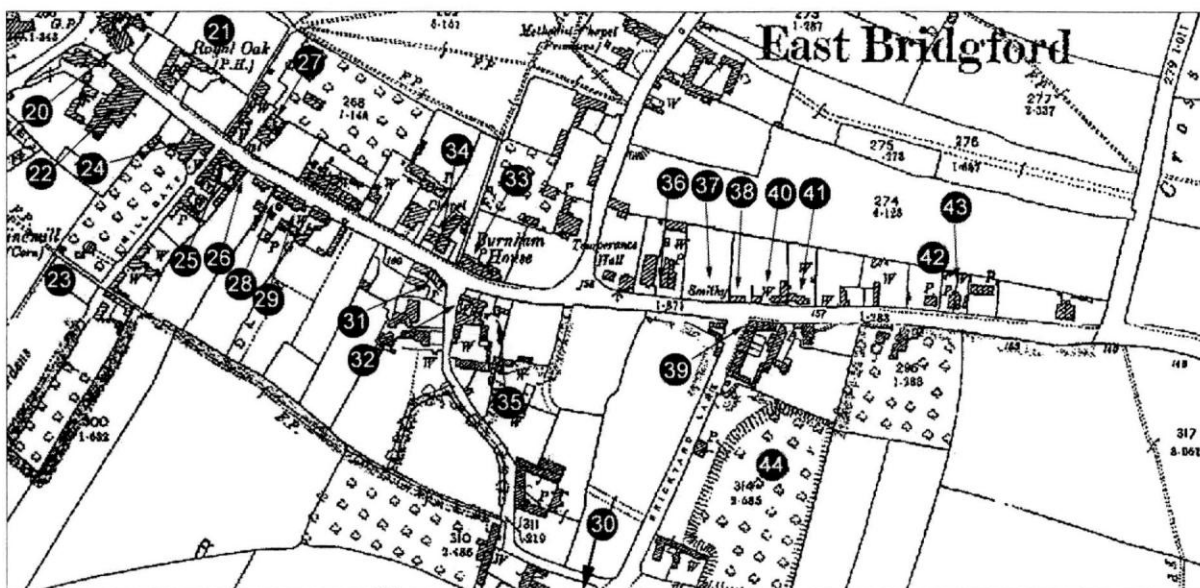


Opposite the Royal Oak stood the Mason's Pea Factory which operated in the 'Old Maltings' (22) between 1922—1957. At its height the business employed over 50 people

"On a Saturday night, there was nothing for us teenagers to do. So, the landlord let us play darts. Mind you, we were not allowed any sort of drink!" The Mason's Arms was converted to a dwelling in 1952. Next to it, as today, stood 'The Royal Oak' (21). James Lodder had become the publican by 1912, combining this with his builders business which later relocated to Kneeton Road.

Taking a detour along Millgate, the Mill (23) continued as a working corn mill until 1910. Its two millers this century were Stokes Gregg followed by Robert Barlow. In 1907, a sail fell off, demolishing the gallery and narrowly missing the miller.

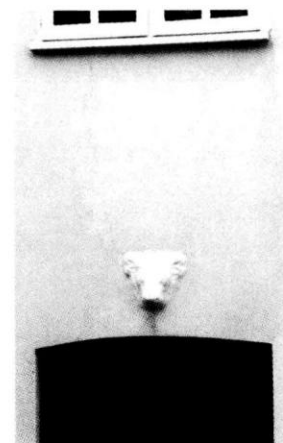
¹ East Bridgford Notts. The Story of an English Village A Du Boulay Hill



In 1911 Mr Hassall purchased the Mill and Mill House (24). The mill soon fell into disrepair. Mr Hassall continued as a corn merchant and market carrier and, within living memory can still be remembered using the winch mounted on the Main Street end of Mill House to haul goods into the loft. Millgate was also the home of Edwin Fox, the village threshing machine contractor.

Returning to Main Street, on the right hand side were the businesses of John Mason, butcher (25) and John Pickford, butcher and carriage proprietor (26). In those days, animals were herded directly from the village farms and slaughtered in the slaughterhouse behind the shop. The latter business remained in the family until 1967. A bull's head can still be seen on the wall denoting the butchery.

Opposite, in what became known as The Masons Yard (27), behind Leigh Bank house, the 1901 census records the home of Richard Green, the village plumber and painter. He appears in Kelly's directory as a plumber and painter until 1925.



Haycroft Cottages, which stood at the entrance to 'Haycroft Way', housed a number of businesses during the first half of the century. In 1901, the Post Office, run by Caroline Mee (28), was situated here. Incidentally, her husband was a professional cricketer. Mr Thomas Simpkin, a retired police constable, took over as Sub Postmaster 1902-1904. The position was taken over by Alfred Simpkin (1908-1909), a role he combined with a stationery and tobacconist business. Incidentally, he also published a series of postcards of East Bridgford between 1904-1906. Later, his daughter Emma Simpkin added a drapers business that was taken over by Mrs Mabel Green. Haycroft Cottages were also a good place to get an ice cream, Mrs Thornton used to make and sell ices from her cottage door. This was also an early site for the greengrocery business of Robert and William Jones before they relocated to Church Corner.

During the 1930s, from a cottage adjacent to the Haycroft (29), Mr Frank Oliver Green and his wife sold fish and chips. However, they were equally well remembered for their Autumn trade of fireworks which proved popular with the village youths. Later, Mr Green's sister, Mrs Sellers, took over his shop and enlarged it, opening a haberdashery business. Following her retirement the shop reverted to a fish and chip shop. Mr W Lodder installed a new range, selling both wet and dry fish. The business was subsequently taken over by Mr G Ellis, who continued the fish business, adding a fruit and greengrocery round. Subsequently, the shop became a ladies hairdresser's.



Haycroft Cottages— site of several businesses over the years. Demolished in the 1960s to make room for Haycroft Way and 2 new shops, one of which was the Post Office in 2000.

Across the road, No 31 Main Street is believed to have been the home of John Walker and Son, the village saddler during the 1920s.

In 1901 grouped around the junction of Walnut Tree Lane and Main Street were the bakery, grocery and carriage proprietor business of Robert Jones (31), the butchery and slaughter house (32) belonging to John Wilkinson (later owned by Fosters) and grocery business of



The Universal Stores in the 1920s

John Clegg (33). This latter business was taken over by Harold Pick in 1913 and renamed the Universal Stores. Next door, The Old Post Office (34) became the village Post Office between 1948-1993 (Sub Postmasters were Thomas Caldicote, Albert Lodder and his son, Ian). The building behind was at one time the base of Bob Mills, the coal merchant. At various times it also housed a cycle business, photography business and tearoom (known as 'The Blue Room') and ladies hairdresser.

Living in Holly Cottage (35), next to the Village Hall car park was the wheelwright, Jonathon Barnes. By 1908, William Sharman had taken over the business. He was also a carpenter and the village undertaker. Ruth Curtis (nee Pick), living opposite as a child, remembers him well 'When people died, Mr Sharman would visit the home of the deceased to measure up for the correct size of coffin. He would then work all through the night, banging, hammering and sawing until the coffin was made in time for the funeral. His wife used to help him with the glue pot, finishing off the inside. On the day of the funeral, Mr Sharman would load the coffin onto his bier, don his top hat and frock-coat and set off with a huge

screwdriver (used for sealing the coffin lid) protruding from his coat pocket. On passing his house on the way to church, he would unceremoniously toss the screw-driver over the garden fence. He was a fearsome sight to us young ones'.

Albert Boyce, by 1922, had set up his grocery shop (36) in the front room of his house next door to the Village Hall. Helped by his wife and family, he would bake bread early in the morning in the bakehouse behind the shop as well as currant buns and jam tarts. Orders placed by customers in the morning were delivered by Les Hand later in the day with his pony and trap. His round extended to many of the surrounding villages.

In 1901, Ernest Coville, the tailor was working from his home in Prospect Terrace (43). A few years later, he moved to the newly built Melton House (37), adjacent to the forge on Main Street where he worked until his early death in 1931. Clustered around the junction of Main Street and Brickyard Lane were the smithy operated by Chris Bateman (38), the cordwain* business of John Leek (39), and Bullers' carrier business (40). The Bullers family continued to operate as carriers in the village until the 1950s.

Incidentally, it would have cost you 7 shillings and 6d to have four hooves shod at Bateman's during the first few years of the Second World War.

By 1908, Walter Lander had taken over the cobblers shop in 'The New Buildings'. It is remembered nostalgically by villagers as 'an Aladdin's cave', stacked with every description of boots and shoes, spare parts for cycles, drums of carbide for carriage and cycle lamps, horse harnesses, rolls of leather. Walter often worked late into the evening at his last with a mouth full of sprigs (nails) deftly driven home with the edge of a rasp. No one went without for the want of a shilling.⁴ "*Aach! Yu begga! I've swalla'ed a tack!*" was often heard. Walter Lander could be seen striding purposefully down Main Street every Sunday night going to Evensong, dressed in his best hat, bow tie and spats, swinging his cane.

On one occasion, Walter Lander consulted Henry Hall, a poultry farmer, on the problem affecting his ducks who were falling over. It soon became apparent that the ducks were drunk, having consumed the liquor spilt in the yard after straining some home made wine.

Adjacent to Bullers', on the site now occupied by Nos. 83 and 85 Main Street (41) was the joinery and undertaker business belonging to the Cooper family during the 1940s.

In 1920, Thomas Lewis set up his garage and workshop in the village (42). From here, he ran an omnibus service between 1925/7-1945, allowing greater access to Nottingham, Newark



Thomas Lewis's garage from the air in 1964

* Cobbler

⁴ Albert Lodder, East Bridgford and Kneeton Village Magazine April 1984

and the surrounding villages for work, school and pleasure. In 1945 a single fare to Nottingham cost eight pence, alternatively you could buy a weekly return ticket to Nottingham for five shillings. On returning from the war, his son took over the business (along with his uncle) which never failed to keep cars, lawn mowers and farm machinery running until it closed in 1976. The garage also served as the village petrol station. Acting as a taxi service, private contracts for Social Services and transporting children from Kneeton to school were continued by Tom's wife, Diana until 1982.

Brickyard Lane

The brickyard of Brickyard Lane had been worked out and planted as an orchard by 1880 (44). As well as clay, it was also a source of satin-spar gypsum. There is some ambiguity regarding the date that gypsum was last extracted from the site.

Satin-spar gypsum had been an important raw material in the village during the nineteenth century. The satin-spar gypsum of East Bridgford was much prized as the crystals were exceptionally long, up to 15 cms. Besides being fashioned into beads, it was also ground down and used to make plaster floors. The beds of satin-spar lie about 8–10 metres below the ground surface in seams up to 10 metres wide. They were formed in horizontal crevices within the marl layer. The long fibrous crystals grow from the calcium sulphate dissolved in the ground water.



Reg Wilkinson and Jack Higgs, the last village gypsum miners, were photographed in the 1920s in the yard above the site of the brickyard.

In addition to the Brickyard area, Bill Widdison can remember gypsum pits on the sites of Walnut Tree Grove, the old Medical Centre, College Street and Browns Lane. The East Bridgford crystals were exceptionally long. According to A Du Boulay Hill, a sample is kept at the Natural History Museum. Today, bands of satin-spar gypsum are visible in the cliff adjacent to The Trent Weir.

Reg Wilkinson continued to extract gypsum until the early 1930s. Sheila Johnson, his daughter can just remember taking tea to her father working his last bell pit in Bullers field, at the southern end of College Street. Reg Wilkinson was also the village roadman, responsible for maintaining the roads and verges of the parish.

Brunts Lane (30) was the short lived base of Robert Moss, whose entry in Kelly's Directory³ of 1928 reads 'general and motor engineer, coal merchant, haulage contractor and furniture remover, contracts for any distance undertaken'. By 1932, Robert Slater had taken over the coal merchant business but is also remembered as a man to give a gent a neat haircut.

³ Kelly's Directory

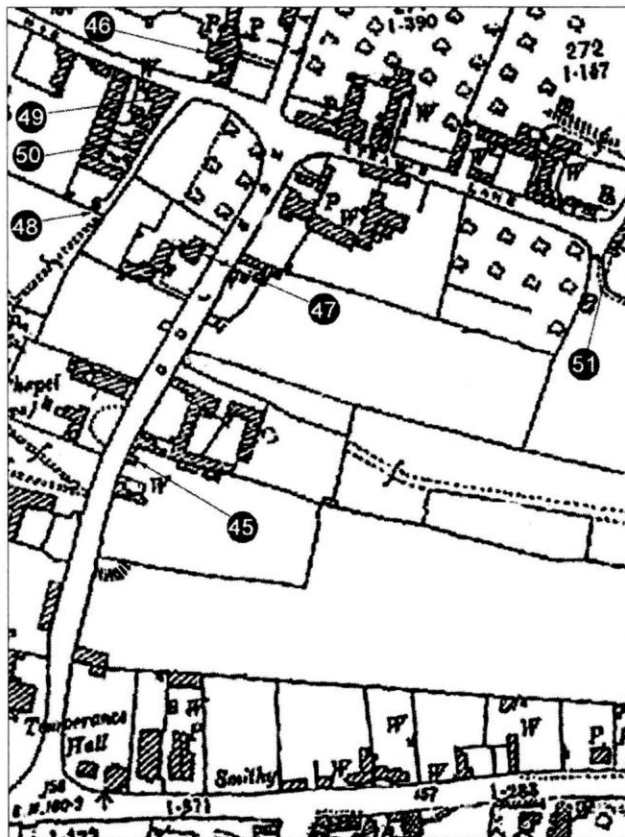
College Street

Some businesses linger fondly in the memories of many villagers. One such was Savage's shop (45). A little building on the east side of College Street, opposite the entrance to Butt Field was the home of Savage's sweet shop, renowned for its ice cream. In 1926 Mr Walter Savage decided to turn a garden store, from which he sold seasonal fruit and vegetables, into a sweet shop. As a market gardener, he had little spare time and only opened from 6 pm to 8.30 pm daily and noon to 6 pm on Saturdays, holidays and during Feast Week.

The ice cream was hand churned by Walter Savage and his mother at their house on Straws Lane, using milk from Charlie Allwood's farm. It was then loaded onto a motor cycle and sidecar and driven to the shop. The same vehicle was used to deliver the ice cream to Kneeton, Screveton and Car Colston. In a letter to the village magazine editors in 1984,



Savage's sweet shop sketched in 1974 shortly after it closed



Peter Richardson recalled how, as a child, on hot Saturday afternoons he and his siblings would be sent from their Mulberry Close farm to Savage's Shop for a bowl of ice cream for all the family and Bess the dog ... *"there has never been any ice cream like it since."*

At the turn of the century, Oxford House Farm was the home of the combined farm and building business belonging to Joseph Turner (46). Later, Bank House (47) became the business base for the builder, George Jackson, whose labourer was noted for saying 'put more mortar in, it's Saturday tomorrow'.

Browns Lane

Browns Lane formed another nucleus for tradesmen. In 1901, the cordwain, Abraham Morris had his cobblers shop adjacent to today's tennis courts, at the end of the

twitchel (48). In 1890, he built the workshop at the bottom of his garden for £26. All the shoes were hand-stitched. With no electricity, he worked by the light of a paraffin lamp when the daylight faded. Later, his son, Reuben, took over the business. He had a customer who regularly came all the way from Manchester for his shoes. Reuben was also known to give weekly shaves on a Friday with his brother Tom acting as lather boy. He is remembered variously for helping the elderly and bedridden and invented a secret ointment to cure ringworm! A man of many talents.

At the opposite end of the twitchel, facing Browns Lane, was the grocery and bakery business of Robert Swanwick (49). He was succeeded first by his daughter, Henrietta and later by John Olivant. A whole manner of goods could be purchased here from children's clothing, flowers, foods and sweets to haberdashery. A small single storey building, adjacent to the grocery shop was the home of a fish and chip shop (50) run by George Ellis c1930 before he relocated to Haycroft Cottages. The building at one time or another also housed a barber's shop and a butchery.



The 'Gawp Shop' with its resident group of 'senior citizens' ensuring that nothing important in the life of the village was overlooked.

Straws Lane

Housed in a building on the bend in Straws Lane (51), was a smithy run by Thomas Straw, for which he paid Magdalen College an annual rent of £3. By 1917, Lodder is recorded as the tenant, the rent having risen to £4 per annum for the blacksmith shop, a shed and an acreage of one rood and six perch. It served as the base for Bob Marshall, the village sweep. He lost a leg in the First World War. Bob was a familiar sight, hobbling along with his pony and barrow. In 1920 he charged two shillings to sweep a chimney but was always quick to add that he got two shillings and six pence if he was lucky!

The smithy later gained notoriety as the 'Gawp Shop', a place where a few elderly residents would gather daily to smoke and while away the hours. So reliable was it as a means of communication that villagers were known to send their postcards there! A variety hung on the door for many a year.

Writing in the Village Magazine⁵, Jack Kemp had this to say ... 'On Sunday morning a few of Bob Marshall's pals used to meet in the shed with the doors wide open (so as not to miss any young ladies passing by) and discuss the weather, birds, death and politics. Mr Denty Crossland carried the Liberal banner, Fred Marshall and Walter Guy the Labour, Albert Dickinson called them all out if he did not agree. Bob tried to keep order. It was said that none of them voted at the General Election in 1950 because neither of the candidates would promise a drink if they voted for him.'

⁵ East Bridgford and Kneeton Village Magazine January 1984

Miscellaneous

East Bridgford has been host to one or two more unusual businesses. At one time or another, the village also boasted a florist (1908-1912), a mole catcher and a rabbit breeder (1928).

Gypsies passed through the village every year. They would camp along Brunts and Green Lanes. Besides peddling their wears of clothes pegs and lace, they put fear into the hearts of the village children.

There is much controversy regarding the presence or otherwise of a fifth pub called 'The Beehive' in the early years of the century. Located near the brick yard on Straws Lane, it is believed to have been a *shabine*, catering for the navies who were working on the Fosse Road.

Two significant businesses

Two businesses, starting from humble origins in the early 1900s, have had a significant effect on the village throughout much of the century. They were Mason's Pea Factory and E. Hunt and Son, Coal Merchant and Haulier.



Mr Olivant's Shop on Browns Lane in the 1950s

The Pea factory.



The pea picking ladies at the factory in the 1950s after the presentation of a 'long service' clock to one of their number

Having taken over the family corn merchant business in 1901, Arthur Mason explored ways of extending the business. One early entry in Kelly's Directory reads 'corn factor and blue pea merchant, oil cake merchant and cycle agent'. However, by 1922, Arthur Mason had established a Pea Packer and Picker business in the village.

Mason's peas were packaged in distinctive hexagonal cardboard cartons. They featured a picture of Belvoir Castle on the front along with the words 'Mason's Peas are English'.

The Pea Factory was situated in the 'Old Maltings', on Main Street. Its offices were located behind the Mason's family home in what is now No.23 Main Street. At its peak, besides

Mason's barn, now belonging to Daffodil Cottage, there were eight deep litter poultry sheds used for pea storage at the bottom of Lammas Lane.

With the development of transport, the business grew. Peas could now be purchased and collected throughout Lincolnshire and later Cambridgeshire. At its height, the factory employed about fifty people sorting peas, a number of drivers and eight office workers. Additionally, during busy seasons, the Pea Factory employed a large number of out workers who sorted peas for an extra income. Sacks of peas

weighing twenty stone would be delivered to many of the houses in the village. There, the grub eaten and discoloured peas would be sorted. Phyllis Pinkerton can remember being paid by her mother for each bowl of bad peas. Marion Willis recalls the family gathering around the table sorting peas before the children were allowed out to play in the evening.

Sylvia Fisher, Arthur Mason's daughter recollected how, for extra money, women and large families would gather 'gleanings' from the fields that her father would buy. On one occasion, having been paid with an old ten shilling note and silver, an old couple returned for their half sovereign, not recognising the note in spite of it having been in circulation for years!

The business was sold to Batchelors in 1935. It continued as a sorting factory. The sorted peas were then transported to Wadsley Bridge in Sheffield for canning and packaging. In 1941, Unilever took over the business. The mechanical electronic eye eventually replaced manual sorting. The offices were closed around 1950 and the factory in 1957.

Many people still respectfully remember Jack Kemp, the Pea Factory Manager. In his spare time he was a keen gardener, growing his own tobacco which he dried in the pea storage sheds.

Although 1957 saw the end of the pea business in East Bridgford, The Old Maltings became the home of a prestigious invention. Between 1959 and 1961 the building was used by the Nottingham Electric Valve Company. Whilst there, Rutherford and Turner invented the 'Telcan' which recorded television pictures onto magnetic tape, allowing instant action replay. It was the forerunner to the video recorder. A full history of their achievements is documented at Wollaton Hall.

Subsequently, Jennings used the building as a laboratory supply company from 1963 to 1984. It was then converted into residential properties.

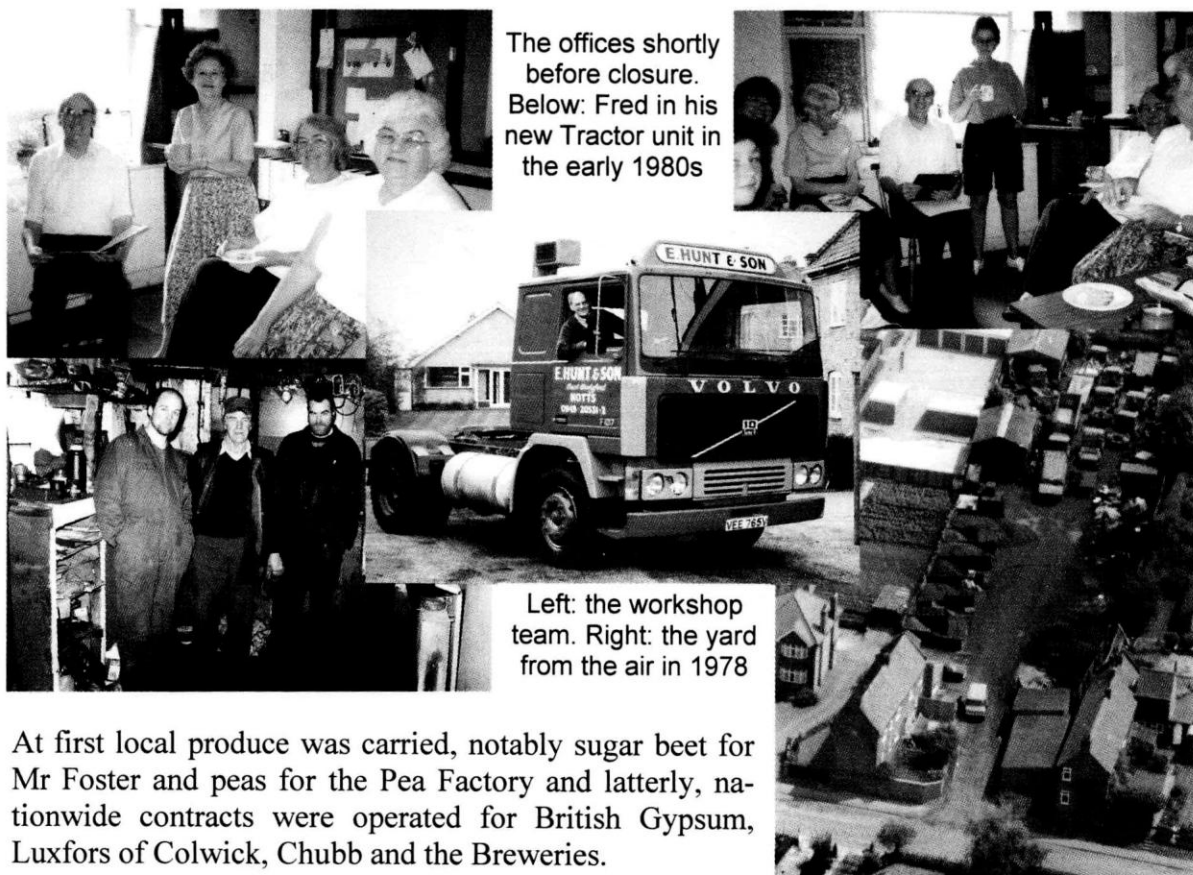


Sorting peas in the Pea Factory in the 1950s

E. Hunt and Son, Coal Merchant and Hauliers

In 1922, Edwin Hunt started a coal merchant business collecting coal from Bingham Station. Based at 22 Kneeton Road, the business grew into a substantial coal and haulage business. Following demobilisation in 1946, Fred Hunt joined his father as a partner in the business.

The business grew throughout the 1920s. However, the catalyst to expand came when Edwin Hunt sold four horses at Newark market to put a down payment of £50 on a model 'T' lorry costing £126 in 1928. With it came the opportunity to transport goods of all sorts.



The offices shortly before closure. Below: Fred in his new Tractor unit in the early 1980s

Left: the workshop team. Right: the yard from the air in 1978

At first local produce was carried, notably sugar beet for Mr Foster and peas for the Pea Factory and latterly, nationwide contracts were operated for British Gypsum, Luxfords of Colwick, Chubb and the Breweries.

At its height, the coal business had a thousand domestic customers. Fred still recalls the early morning starts to get to Gedling pit for 5a.m, queuing sometimes all day for his five/six ton load. In 1993, the coal business was sold to British Coal. Combined with the haulage side of the business it employed twenty to twenty five people throughout the 1960s and 1970s.

By the mid 1990s, the business's ten articulated lorries had outgrown the village site. Access for the large vehicles had become a major problem. With no alternative site permitted on the village periphery, Fred Hunt closed the yard in 1993. Sugar beet transportation continued using hired vehicles until his retirement in 1995.

Gradual Change, East Bridgford in the Middle of the Twentieth Century

Although businesses changed hands, the pattern of business and occupation in the village remained largely unchanged until after the Second World War. Public transport was prohibitively expensive. Phyllis Pinkerton remembers... *"when I left school, just before the war, I worked for 'Griffin and Spalding' in Nottingham. My weekly wage packet was 5 shillings and my weekly bus fare 4 shillings"*. However, with the coming of the motor vehicle in all its guises, the village gradually became more outward looking.

As vehicles replaced horses as a means of transport and power, many of the traditional crafts became redundant in the village. Christopher Bateman had closed the last village smithy by 1950. John Walker and Sons were the last saddlers to operate in the village closing between 1928-1932. The number of wheelwrights and carpenters dwindled until only Ernest Cooper was still working in the 1950s. Mechanisation had led to the purchase and servicing of farming equipment beyond the parish boundary.

As access to Nottingham and Newark increased through public and private transport, people shopped outside the village, no longer dependent on the village traders and craftsmen. Reuben Morris was the last village shoe maker, closing his doors in 1952. By 1950, the number of tailors and dressmakers had dwindled, although the draper and haberdashery shop of Dexter and Moore remained at Church Corner until 1978, latterly under the management of Mrs Brown and then Miss Ingram.

Change brought new businesses too. By 1936, 'Pylon Service Station' had opened on the Fosse Road, selling petrol and servicing cars and with the arrival of electricity came the first village electrician, Wilf Metcalfe in 1955.

By 1950, East Bridgford was noticeably less self-sufficient. However, with most villagers dependent upon public transport to and from the village, perishable goods were still predominantly purchased locally.

Life in East Bridgford around 1950

Diana Lewis recalls some of her early memories of East Bridgford when she arrived from London in 1947...

"The first gallon of petrol I served at the garage in 1947 cost 1 shilling 11½d.

I remember the first time Ray Kirkland knocking on the door and asking me how much milk I would like that day. I asked for a pint. But when he asked me for my jug I didn't have one to give him any larger than a cream jug as in London we always had our milk delivered in bottles!"

Judy Spendilow (nee Foster) takes up the story.....

"As we lived on the farm, we grew our own fruit and vegetables and so only used the village shops for the basics. I well remember going into Olivant's around the corner. It was a tiny

little shop. It was crammed with all sorts of tins and everyday items. Everything was stuffed onto the shelves in no particular order. A penny would go a long way at the sweet counter. We used to get invited into the kitchen where we were treated as part of the family. I remember the Olivant sisters as being very old and their father was positively ancient to my childhood eyes.

Now and again we went to 'Pick's' which was officially called 'The Universal Stores.' It was much larger than Olivant's. Its shelves were piled high with all the basics for everyday living. In those days, sugar had to be weighed up in the shop. You bought it in blue paper bags. Bacon was sliced at a high counter at the far end.

Sometimes I was sent to 'Pickford's' with an order for meat which was delivered later in the week. Every Saturday, a joint of meat arrived ready for Sunday lunch.

Rose Ingram's was the place to go for a reel of cotton.

Hanging out watching the two village cobblers at work was a regular past-time. Yes, and I remember being treated for ringworm by Reuben Morris along with many of the village children. He had his own secret potion. It was purple. It never failed to work!"

Sheila Johnson continues the story...

"In those days, the shops didn't sell pre-packaged goods. Pick's looked very different from the village stores of today. Flour and sugar were weighed up in the shop. Butter was cut off a large slab. Cheese was cut to order from a large block. Bacon hung behind the counter. There was no chilled cabinet, everything was kept at room temperature. Outside there were two vending machines. One sold chewing gum and the other, chocolate.

Besides buying from the village shops, people bought groceries from one of the two grocery vans which came to the village weekly, namely Potter's of Aslockton or White's of Bingham.

We used to buy our meat from Fosters. Cuts of meat were displayed in the window. Sides of meat hung from hooks along the back wall. In the middle stood a large butcher's block. We used to place a weekly order which was delivered by Eddie a few days later. It seemed expensive at the time but it never cost more than 12 shillings and that included a joint for Sunday.

As a child I remember the Post Office at one time or another selling bicycles. Mr Caldicote used to take children's portraits too. The back section was used as a sorting office.

You could still buy material and wool from Mrs Brown at Church Corner.

Olivant's sold the best sweets and there was always a jigsaw on the table in the kitchen which we were invited to 'go and have a look at.'"

The Demise of the Village Shops

Browns Lane

The last shop to trade on Browns Lane was Olivant's Grocery Shop. It finally closed its doors in 1960 and was converted into a domestic dwelling called The Pantiles, now The Corner Cottage. Reuben Morris had retired by 1952, his cobbler's shop was later demolished. A similar fate befell the fish and chip shop.

The 'New Buildings', Main Street

After 1944, Lander's shoe shop was briefly taken over by Charles Hobbs before becoming an electrical shop. Many a villager purchased their first television from Mr Hewitt. After a short life as a ladies hairdresser's, it was converted into a grocery shop run by Roly Ellis between 1955-1982, apart from a time, 1962-1966, when the business was run from a wooden hut opposite while the 'New Buildings' were demolished and replaced by the present shops. After 1982, the shop then reverted to a ladies hairdresser's, as today.



The newsagent and hairdresser housed in the shops that replaced the "New Buildings"

Next door briefly housed a D.I.Y business before becoming the newsagent's in 1969. Its four proprietors have been 'Appy' Outram, Dennis Fox, David Quine and Craig and Debbie Hayes.

Melton House, home of Earnest Coville, the tailor, has been a domestic residence since his early death in 1931. The bakery business of Albert Boyce next to the Village Hall became a residence in the 1940s.

The Chapel Schoolroom, adjacent to the Village Hall enjoyed a brief spell as an antique shop during the 1980s.

Walnut Tree Corner

Foster's, the butchery, closed in the 1940s and is now called Lilac Cottage. Across Walnut Tree Lane, Miss Jones closed the family grocery shop in 1946. Following Harold Pick's retirement in 1959, four proprietors ran 'Universal' Stores under different business names before it was converted into a house in 1984. Many villagers remember Fred Henson, who ran the business from 1959-1974.

Ian Lodder was the last sub postmaster in 'The Old Post Office', which closed in 1993. The shop has since been converted into a domestic residence, although the shop front remains.

Haycroft cottages

Haycroft Cottages were demolished in the 1960s to enable development of the Haycroft Way houses. The two replacement shops have housed a variety of businesses. The property on the left, currently the site of the Post Office and General Store, started life as a ladies hairdresser's. It was subsequently the site of the last village butcher's (Stanley and Lancaster) before becoming a dress-hire and gown shop. Its sister building, on the right-hand side, has been the home of a gift shop, 'Victoria's' dress shop, a supermarket and The Garden Workshop before being taken over by FSW Design in 1998, who specialise in Multi Media Product Design.

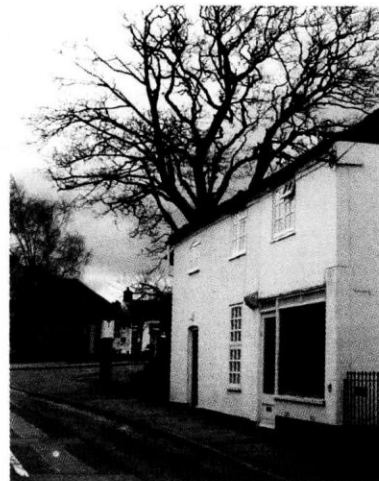
Pickford's, taken over by David Atkin in 1967 continued as a butchery until 1973. The two shops, collectively known as 'Pickford's', have variously housed a sign making business, The Garden Workshop, craft gallery and upholstery business. Latterly, the right-hand unit became the site of the Post Office and General Store, 1993-1999, run by Jennifer and Charles Holt. At the turn of the century, it was vacant and the left-hand unit had been converted into a dwelling.

Church Corner

Following the closure of the drapery business by Rose Ingram in 1978, the corner premises has had a chequered history. For a short while, it was run as a nearly-new shop.

During the 1980s it was briefly home to a book shop before becoming a green grocery shop, latterly 'The Good Life', owned first by the Laurents and then Jill and Ken Blagg. In 1997 it became 'PhysioNeeds', a private Physiotherapy Clinic.

Next door, 'Millingtons' remained as a grocery shop run by a number of proprietors. During the 1970s it became an antique business before being converted into a dwelling in the 1980s.



'Pickfords' in 2000

Rapid Change, 1970 Onwards

Shopping habits have seen revolutionary change during the latter half of the century, changing the face of East Bridgford like all small communities.

Car ownership, first refrigerators and later freezer ownership, chilled food supply chain, and other technical innovations have all enabled people to shop just once a week for food at a large, edge of town supermarket. The net result has been the gradual decline in food shops in the village.

Mass production of clothes and goods coupled with the rise in shopping centres, notably The Victoria and Broadmarsh centres in Nottingham, has led to the chain store being the preferred shopping option. People started to shop for fashion rather than function.

Life in East Bridgford during the 1970s

With so many businesses closing, one could be forgiven for thinking the village had become a derelict backwater by the 1970s. Yet, childhood recollections of Liz Meylan (nee Atkins) and Sue Pankowski (nee Hobbs) paint a different picture....



Rose Ingram outside her shop door at the bottom of Main Street on a Flower Show day in the 1970s

"The short way home from school was across the field. The long way meant leaving the school through the main gate and heading for Rose Ingrams shop. It was a magical place. The 'ting' of the door bell announced your arrival. For 1p, you could buy eight Black Jacks or Fruit Salads, displayed with lots of other goodies in a glass fronted cabinet. Mrs Ingram was a lovely old lady. She was tiny, with neat grey hair and glasses. Her shop window was a child's delight, straight out of a Dickens novel. Dolls competed with knitting sets, bobbin dolls, jig-saws, crayons, paper, drawing implements and books for space in the shop display. It was the place to go for a

present when invited to a (rare) birthday party. Inside the shelves were packed with all manner of haberdashery which competed with brushes and dusters, children's clothes and toiletries for space on the crammed shelves. It was a gold mine.

And then there was the butcher's on Main Street. There was always a queue. I remember standing on the red tiled floor, surrounded by cool air with its distinctive smell of meat. On the right stood a glass fronted cabinet full of cooked meat products. Hanging from the rails behind were the cuts of raw meat.

Now 'Victoria's' was very posh and expensive. They used to sell ball gowns and all sorts. We only went in occasionally when we wanted something for a special occasion."

In the 1970s, the Post Office was located opposite Walnut Tree Lane.

"To get to the Post Office, you had to go up a narrow, damp-smelling alley-way. The letterbox was set into the wall on the right hand side of the passage. Just beyond, you went up two old, worn steps on your right to get into the shop. Inside, the counter ran along the left wall. The shop was packed with all the essentials. Coffee, tea, sugar, pencils and pens, stationery, and, of course, a wide selection of electrical goods, fuses, plugs, light bulbs to name but a few, as the Post Office also served as the electricians.

At the time, Mary Hall ran the ladies hairdresser's from behind the Post Office. You had to go up a steep wooden staircase to enter the



shop. The steps were always were always slippery. All the children had their hair cut by Mary. It was too difficult to get a pram inside. When I (Liz) was a toddler, my mother would leave me outside and Mary would come down and cut my hair while I sat in the pram on the pavement."

Mary Hall recalls how one little boy was terrified of her. *"He used to ride around the village in a seat on the back of his mother's bike. If he saw me he would shout, "I'm not having my hair cut today" and start crying!*

Roly Ellis's was an amazing place. It was called 'The Spar Shop'. Piled outside were all the fresh fruit and vegetables. It was a small shop, bursting at the seams with goods for sale. If more than two people entered, it was full. There was nothing they didn't stock, but finding it was a different matter. Ladies tights sat next to the sugar and flour. If you hunted for long enough, you'd find what you were looking for.

Everybody had their favourite market gardener they frequented for their seasonal fruit and vegetables. Each had a dedicated shed in their garden with a large set of scales. We used to go to Mrs Ellis on College Street. You had to go down a stone path past the house to the top of the garden. There, in a shed, helped by Benji the dog, Mrs Ellis would weigh out whatever you wanted. My favourite were her cherries, although not many made it home!

Another job was to go with an empty can to Tommy Lewis's garage for a gallon of paraffin for the paraffin stove.

I can remember going to 'The Oak' after Guides one night and sharing half a pint of shandy between seven of us."

By 1960, Universal Stores had been taken over by Mr and Mrs Henson and reopened as 'The Village Stores'. It was the 'Harrod's of the Vale', attracting customers from as far away as Newark and Nottingham. The aroma of coffee filled the air. Henson's (as it became known) offered a range of around six different coffees, all ground on the premises. Its fresh cheese counter sold thirty-seven different cheeses, many locally produced including Stilton from

Colston Bassett and cream cheeses from Tithby. A range of bacon was boned and sliced to order. Elizabeth Windsor pies sat next to sliced salami's and delicacies purchased from Leicester. Breads and confectionery were delivered from three local bakeries. Sherry was sold from a cask along with a range of wines and spirits. Premium biscuits, Lindt Chocolates and the up-market Epicure range of goods all tempted customers from miles around. Up to eight people worked in the shop, including Sandy Hall who also delivered goods in the village and beyond. One customer for whom Sandy regularly carried in



The interior of 'The Village Stores' with Mrs Henson by the off licence section.

buckets of coal as he delivered the groceries, happened to be suffering from anaemia. Sandy recommended a draught of Guinness and promptly went and got her a few bottles. When Dr Brookes next called, he asked the lady if his medicine was working. She swiftly replied, "No, yours isn't but Sandy's is!"

Home Delivery

A familiar sight at the beginning of the century were the delivery boys on their bikes delivering goods ordered earlier in the day from the village shops. This service has been continuous in the village throughout the century. Henson's and Ellis's offered a delivery service along with many of the village shops. This service was still offered by the Post Office at the time of writing, who would deliver goods ordered from their extensive catalogue of locally produced organic fare.

The Newsagents also continued to provide households with their daily paper as well lining the paper boys' and girls' pockets with sweet papers – at the end of the century, rates of pay were running at £1 per round with a weekly bonus for turning up every day!

Although not a village business, a very recent introduction, but an increasingly familiar site in the village was a 'Tesco' van, delivering goods ordered via the internet from their local store in Carlton.

The Village Milkmen

At the beginning of the century, each dairy farmer had a delivery round for milk produced on his farm. Using a large jug, fresh, un-pasteurised milk would be measured from the churn according to the needs of each household. During the early 1950s, Joan Allwood can remember their milk from Prize Farm being delivered by pony and cart. This was a time consuming business. In the mid 1950s, they sold the delivery round to Roly Ellis. Later, Roly also purchased the milk round belonging to Joe Allwood of Clyde Farm. Roly and his son, John continued to deliver milk in the village until November 1992, when John sold the round to Joe Ellis (who subsequently sold the business to Northern Dairies in March 1993). John recalled the early years... *'with no vehicle, we delivered the milk on a builders handcart with iron wheels. You had to get a fair speed going at Church Corner to get the cart up the sharp rise at the start of Main Street, especially when the road was covered with snow and ice.'*

Ray Kirkland sold his milk round to Peter Thornton. Peter used the comparatively luxurious mode of delivery, a tractor and trailer. After a year, he sold the milk round to the Co-operative Dairy. Rapid decline in doorstep milk delivery towards the end of the century led to rationalisation within the dairy industry. Northern Dairies took over milk deliveries in the area. De-merged and renamed Express Dairies, they continued to deliver milk daily into the 21st century from outside the village.

Evolution of Small Businesses in the Village

Skilled Tradesmen

Craft trades have evolved to meet the changing needs of the village. Installation of electricity, gas, piped water and sanitation led to a need for electricians and plumbers.

During the last fifty years long-standing electricians include Albert, Ian and Peter Lodder, Wilf Metcalfe and Brian Thornton.

The most notable of the village plumbers are Higgs', Snowdon and Oglesby's. The latter was originally a plumbing concern belonging to Ken Hawthorne and Guy Oglesby, Guy and later his son Martin built up a large property maintenance business based on Hackers Close. The business expanded during the 1980s with service contracts for Rushcliffe Borough Council, maintaining their stock of council houses. Similarly, John Higgs and his son, Peter developed a plumbing and central heating business specialising in industrial and commercial contracts for plumbing, heating and air conditioning. During the 1980's, the business gradually moved from Lowdham to the site of the last village Pinfold at Chapman's Corner, building new offices in 1993/4. In common with most of the village businesses, their customers extended far beyond the parish boundary.

The demand for building work, be that new build, house alteration or maintenance has led to a growth in the number of builders in the village. Familiar names are Lodder, successive generations of whom have been builders in the village since 1912, the aforementioned Oglesby's, the Smith brothers, Chris Brownson (established 1973), Chris Comerie (established 1982) and Sure Construction.

The village has had a succession of joiners. Following the Cooper family, Don Bly was the village joiner for many a year. John Lawson has been in business since 1973. He acquired the old GPO exchange building during the 1980s, converting it into a workshop.

The housing explosion has also led to an increase in painters and decorators. Charles Dunsmore, ran his business from College Street for over twenty five years, finishing in the 1970s. At the end of the century, the village had three decorating businesses, namely Tony Beresford (established in 1979), Peter Mills (whose father had set up a painting and decorating business in 1962) became a full-time painter and decorator in 1982. Ian Hayward started his business, 'Haywood's', in 1986.

The demise of coal fires led to the decline in both coal merchants and the need for a chimney sweep. Mr Lodge was the last village chimney sweep, living on College Street during the 1950s. Fred Hunt and Alec Bates were the last village coal merchants, both finishing during the 1990s.

Agriculture

The greatest change in the village with regard to employment was undoubtedly seen within agriculture. Consolidation and mechanisation in farming practices has reduced both the number of farms and farm workers drastically.

By the end of the century, the number of farms had halved and the eighteen market gardens had all but disappeared. Whereas eighty-three men were farm workers at the beginning of the century, by the end there were only a handful. Contractors from outside the parish did most of the farm work.

Domestic Service

At the beginning of the century, the labour intensive nature of housework meant that even a moderate-sized home or farm had a live-in domestic servant. The six most prominent homes and two private schools had a much larger domestic staff. According to the 1901 census, The Manor had the most resident domestic staff, listing a governess, schoolroom maid, cook, parlour maid, housemaid and kitchen maid.

Jessie Shepherd recalled her days working at the Old Hall for Mr and Mrs Farmer, as a cook /housekeeper...

"I worked for Mr Farmer for thirty years until he died in 1959. He owned a lace factory in Nottingham. When I started, there was a charlady who came twice a week to do some scrubbing, a chauffeur, a gardener and a gardener's boy. A laundress came every Monday to do all the washing and ironing.

Before mains water came, every morning and afternoon the gardener's boy used to pump the water by hand from a well. Later we had a petrol engine to do this. We had a hard water pump and a soft water pump. The water was stored in four tanks in an attic room. I had to check there was always enough water.

I cooked on one of the first Aga's, called a 'Cooks Joy'. It was like an Aga with two ovens and an enclosed fire, which was kept burning night and day. I kept the fire going during the day and Mr Farmer would stoke the fire up at night. I used to cook everything except bread. There were a lot of people to cook for, especially at Christmas. The Farmer's had a lot of dinner parties. We grew all our own vegetables and kept our own fowl. Every morning the gardener would come to the kitchen door and ask what I wanted for the day.

Mr and Mrs Farmer enjoyed their food. I served a breakfast of bacon and egg followed by toast at 6 a.m. The gardeners would come to the kitchen door for a cup of coffee at 11 o'clock. (During the war they would bring their own sugar because we were rationed to 2 oz per week). Lunch was always meat served with two vegetables followed by a pudding. Rice pudding, steamed puddings and caramel pudding were all favourites. Afternoon tea was usually a snack of tea and cake (Mrs Farmer was always trying to slim!) unless they had visitors and then I would serve sandwiches as well. Dinner was served at 7.30 p.m. It was

roast meat served with vegetables followed by a pudding. The Farmers always had a glass of wine with their meal and a small coffee afterwards. If they had guests, I would serve a three course meal with home-made vegetable soup being the starter. Overnight I would make stock using bones bought from Mr Pickford.

I bought meat from Mr Pickford and most of my groceries from Picks. As well as the village shops, travellers used to come from Bingham and Nottingham for my food orders. I bought coffee and wine from Skinner and Rouke of Nottingham. Every Monday I placed an order which was delivered two days later. On Friday I used to go shopping to Nottingham. I had a lift with Mr Farmer in his chauffeur driven car. I bought fish and other items which I couldn't buy in the village.

You couldn't buy jam, marmalade, chutneys and pickles in those days. I used to make my own using fruit and vegetables grown in the garden. Picked beetroot, cauliflower or onions served with ham was always a favourite.

During the afternoons I would spend my time polishing the brass, silver and furniture and also sewing.

I was responsible for paying all the bills including the laundress and I would go through my account book with Mr Farmer every weekend.

Christmas was a big occasion. All the Farmers family would come for a party on Christmas Day. I always served vegetable soup, turkey and Christmas pudding with brandy sauce. The cleaning lady used to come and help me serve as there were a lot of people to look after.

I had alternate Sundays and half a day a week off. I would bike to Screveton to visit my family."

The coming of piped water, electricity and gas combined with the high cost of running such a large staff led to the demise of domestic service on this scale by the end of the Second World War.

Mechanisation of tasks within the home and a political will for mothers to stay at home during the 1950s/60s further eroded the need for domestic help.

However, at the end of the century, with more women working either full or part-time, there was a great demand for assistance in the home once again. This gave rise to a large number of self-employed cleaners and gardeners in the village.

At the beginning of the century, the infirm relied upon their family or live-in sick nurses for care and assistance. By the end of the century, this had changed. With families migrating away from home for work this was no longer possible. During the 1990s 'Helping Hands' was created by Kate Thornton offering twenty-four hour a-day assistance to the elderly and disabled in their own homes, allowing them to live at home rather than in a nursing home.

The Village Gardeners

Of the eleven gardeners in the village in 1901, most were employed by one of the major East Bridgford houses. Two of the last gardeners dedicated to one employer were Ned Crossland, gardener at Fosse Court and Frank Chapman, gardener at The Hill. Ned received fame for winning the Challenge Cup for twenty-three consecutive years at the village show. Frank was a noted judge at local flower shows. In his spare time he was a special constable and was awarded a Long Service Medal. He also served on the Parish Council for forty years. For half of that time, he was Chairman, using his influence to beautify East Bridgford through tree planting and related schemes¹.

As in all aspects of life, mechanisation of garden tasks led to a reduction in the need for full-time gardeners. However, at the end of the century, 'jobbing' gardeners were in great demand. The village supported five full and part-time gardeners as well as 'jobbing' gardeners living outside the village. The village also had a landscape garden business.

New Businesses

Unlike the beginning of the century, whereby all business related to the function of the village, East Bridgford became the home for several business who provide neither goods nor services for the village.

An example is 'Impact Building Services', No. 87 Main Street, site of the old Medical Centre. Started in 1995 in a house on Cross Lane, the business specialised in the design and implementation of high quality electrical refurbishment for offices and up-market shops. East Bridgford served as the head office. Over eighty percent of the company's refurbishment projects lie within the M25. None of its employees live within the village.

Similar businesses include FSW at the entrance to Haycroft Way (specialising in multimedia design) and various businesses which have been based in the Hackers Close development including Morecroft Yarns, D&G Workwear, Coldshield Ltd and Arch Joinery Services.

During the latter half of the century the village saw the conversion of shops, workshops and farms into homes. The Manor is the one property which reversed this process. In 1984 it was converted from a dwelling into a Residential Home for the elderly. By the end of the century it had become a Nursing Home catering for twenty eight residents.

¹ East Bridgford and Kneeton Village Magazine October 1984

Development of Business on the Fosse

By 1936, 'Pylon Service Station' had commenced trading. Its proprietors were Alec Reynolds and Wilfred Joseph. It continued to operate as a family concern, repairing and servicing vehicles and selling petrol, until 1993 when it was sold to Brobot. Brobot converted the business into the 'Jet' petrol station. Adjacent to the garage stood a transport café for many years. In 1971, the land was leased to Little Chef who continued to run a café on the Fosse for the rest of the century.



The newly built 'Little Chef' café and (left) the Pylon garage with new petrol pumps for decimalisation.

In 1970/71, David Frost started a plant nursery and landscape business adjacent to the Bingham roundabout. By 1974, the business, now jointly owned by David and his brother Hugh, had grown substantially and relocated to the site adjacent to the Little Chef. Hugh specialised in landscaping and David in the nursery business, utilising the site across the road. In 1986, Hugh bought out his brother's share in the retail business. Following a series of take-overs, Tarbots bought the garden centre in 1995, rapidly expanding the business. At the end of the century, besides plants, it sold a large range of gifts and pets.

The Boat Yard

As rail and then road replaced water as a means of transporting heavy materials at the beginning of the century, the wharf became largely redundant. During the 1920s, a Mr Middleton lived on a houseboat at the wharf. He owned two tugs and was employed by Gunthorpe Gravel Pits to aid navigation of their barges. Mabel Ellis remembers living in the Wharf House 1925-1932. As well as shipping fresh fruit and vegetables (typically bananas and tomatoes) from Humberside to Sneinton market, her father was responsible for the maintenance of the weir.

In 1953, Richard Smart and Dennis Hunt bought the wharf. Their first purchase was a dredging barge which they used to dredge the wharf that had silted up over the years. Next, a concrete slip-way was built followed by wooden moorings. After two years Richard and Dennis parted company and Dennis, a boat builder by trade, continued alone until 1978 when he sold the business to Russell Hunt and the France Brothers (cabinet makers based in Bingham). In 1990, Russell became the sole owner.

The business evolved and expanded over the years. Its focus shifted from boat building and repair to mooring an increasing number of boats. At one time there were nine house boats moored at the yard. At the end of the century, the yard had moorings for thirty boats in the water and twenty in the yard. Besides this, Russell also ran a boatyard shop, a small salvaging operation and boat delivery service.

Working From Home

Typical 'working from home' employment opportunities at the beginning of the century were dressmaking, laundering, cleaning and general labouring.

By way of contrast, below are listed some of the many 'home based' businesses advertised during the last twenty five years of the century in The Village Magazine²: car sales, chartered engineer services, chartered surveyors, architectural consultants, insurance sales, several accountancy and book-keeping services, 'Up to Six' kids', 'Interior Creations', 'Express Nails', 'Appearance Matters', 'Mayfair Landscapes', 'Pet Care Services', nanny, 'Golden Acorn Studio' (soft furnishings), 'Appletwist Studios' (furniture decoration), furniture restoration, Jon Nicholls (artist), Jennie Bambury (artist), 'Bobbins Sewing Services', 'Country Kitchen' (cooked food), 'Print Resource' and 'McTimoney Chiropractic'.

The advent of computers, fax machines and electronic mail had enabled several professional people to work from home. At the end of the century, the village had at least three consultants operating from home in fields as diverse as banking, management, and geological surveying. Their clients were global rather than local, a concept unimaginable at the beginning of the century. Additionally, the village had two fledgling home-based software companies.

As at the beginning of the century, the village had a resident number of music teachers as well as a speech and drama teacher working from home at the end of the millennium.

Throughout the century, villagers have sold surplus green grocery from their door. In the last half of the century, the Crossland family, Mrs Ellis, Albert Spring and Ray Kirkland will be remembered by many for selling home-grown green grocery. John and Sue Ellis retained the tradition, selling plants and seasonal wreaths from their front garden on College Street. For the last ten years of the century, Di Shoul ran an organic food business from her home on Kneeton Road and eggs could still be brought direct from a few villagers.

Inside the shops at the end of the century

At a time when most local villages no longer had a village store, East Bridgford was lucky to have two thriving shops stocking a wide range of goods.

The Post Office and General Store stocked a wide variety of goods. Besides stationery, it stocked grocery items, a range of chilled and frozen necessities, fresh milk and cream from a local farm, green grocery, confectionery and freshly baked bread and cakes.

The Newsagents was a busy little shop too, rarely without at least one customer. The central racking was covered with magazines. Elsewhere, the shop sold an assortment of goods ranging from confectionery and tobacco to pet food, household essentials, food, fresh bread, cards, children's toys and seasonal paraphernalia. Adjacent, the ladies hairdresser's was the place to catch up on the village gossip. Its windows were always steamed over and a strong aroma of perfumed hair products wafted over you as you opened the door.

2 Selection of East Bridgford and Kneeton Village Magazines 1975-2000

At the bottom of Main Street PhysioNeeds offered a range of services as can be seen from their advertisement in the East Bridgford and Kneeton Village Magazines of the time.

Finally, tucked away at the bottom of Trent Lane, only known to a dedicated few was the boat-yard shop. Besides boat paraphernalia the shop was packed to the gunnels with all manner of DIY materials.

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East Bridgford at the end of the Twentieth Century

Some employment statistics

At the time of printing, the most recently published statistics pertaining to East Bridgford could be found in the 1991 Census Area Profile³. I have included a copy for the readers' perusal.

Population 1991: 1727

Population 16 yrs - pensionable age: 1020

1. Employment Status 1991

Employment Status	%
Employed	58.8
Self employed	13.4
On government scheme	0.2
Unemployed	3.0
Retired	4.3
Permanently sick	2.1
Student	7.3
Other	10.9

2. Economic Activity 1991

Gender	% in employment
Male	85.0
Female	64.6

³ 1991 Census Area Profile, Parish East Bridgford – Government Statistics Office

3. Car ownership 1981 and 1991

Number of Cars per Household	% 1983³	% 1991
None	16.8	14
1	47.2	41.1
2 or more	36	45

At the closing stages of the twentieth century, a geographer would term East Bridgford a 'commuter village'. Whereas this is true, it would be wrong not to point out the extent and variety of employment generated within the village.

The Manor (40 employees), St. Peter's Primary School (25), Pre-School (5), The Medical Centre (20), East Bridgford Garden Centre (22), Little Chef (14), Brobot Filling Station (12), Sure Construction (variable 20-30), Oglesby's (16), J Higgs (10 plus additional contractors), Impact Building Services (5 in East Bridgford), FSW (3), Arch Joinery (2), Post Office (4), Newsagents (3), Ladies Hairdressers (3), PhysioNeeds (3), The Royal Oak (6), The Reindeer (2 full-time, 23 part-time), Boatyard (1) Chestnuts Riding Stables (2) and agriculture (circ 5 full time employees).

Add to this the aforementioned self-employed skilled craftsmen and people working from home and one can see that at the end of the twentieth century, unlike at the beginning, East Bridgford was a prosperous place in which to live and work.

³Small Area Statistics Parish East Bridgford – Government Statistics office