

ASHRIDGE



BEN & IRENE BURTON

Map Reference D14



Our names are Ben and Irene Burton and we are both retired. Previously we farmed in Bedfordshire and moved into the village in November 1990, as we wished to live near our daughter, Vicky Burrough of Manor Farm. Ben's one and only interest is farming - I enjoy gardening, reading, cooking and visiting places of interest (to me!). Our livestock now consists of our Alsatian dog and five hens!

The bungalow was built in 1965 -66 for Mr & Mrs J Lush and was formerly known as JAKS. This is our fourth residence since we married and one which suits us (all the others were big, cold and draughty). We have made a few internal alterations but do not intend making any changes in the foreseeable future.

This is a beautiful area of the country. Damerham is a lovely, unspoiled village with friendly residents. Our end is very quiet and peaceful.

One problem is that people who can no longer drive or have no car do have transport difficulties. We are lucky to have a Post Office and Garage - will they still be in existence at the end of the next century? Maybe all central heating will be solar powered and there may be no need for cookers - everyone could be "pill popping"!!

CHAPEL COTTAGE



LOIS PATERSON

Map Reference D11

My name is Lois Paterson. I live here with Dinny, my Cavalier-Dachshund who is 15 years old but still very active.

My mother was brought up in a country village just outside Liverpool, but saw it swallowed up first by the airport, then factories and a huge Council Estate. Her ambition was to retire once more to rural life, but sadly when the opportunity came in 1968, she was already suffering from the cancer which, six months after she moved into Chapel Cottage, was to end her dreams. I kept the cottage on, working during the week on the Music Staff of a London Theatre School, and coming down here for blissfully peaceful weekends. When rheumatoid arthritis made me give up my job, I came here permanently and, two knee replacements later, am still able to walk the dog, though life otherwise is a bit of a struggle and the garden would go completely wild were it not for my sister, who lives in the High Street and is a tower of strength.

The house was originally a Congregational Chapel, built in 1807. The walls were 'cob' (a mixture of clay and chopped straw) and the roof was thatch. Inside there were wooden

pews, a high pulpit and a gallery. During the 1939-45 war the chapel was at times used by the A.R.P. and also as a depot for the distribution of 'Woolton pies' (named after the Minister for Food) to farm workers. Weekly meetings were still held here in the 1950s, but by 1963 the chapel had been converted into a cottage, with a tiled roof, the walls being lined and cement-rendered, making them very thick. The kitchen took up about a quarter of the floor space, and a first floor with two bedrooms and a bathroom were added. A painted scroll 'The Lord is my Shepherd', though interrupted by the new chimney-breast, still exists under the wallpaper in the main bedroom. The original shape of the Chapel windows can still be seen



in the front of the cottage.

From my upstairs windows, I look out over a 'set-aside' field (where the farmer is paid by the Government not to cultivate) and, beyond it,

copses surround a grassy hill on which ponies graze where cows used to be pastured. The weeds that have grown on the 'set-aside' field make a happy hunting ground for the kestrel and, last year, a barn owl. Roe deer sometimes venture out of the woods and a pair of soaring buzzards have often been seen. At night the eerie bark of a fox and a tawny owl's call can sometimes be heard. Each spring daffodils appear in a place where there was a cottage garden, now no more, and snowdrops grow unseen behind the hedge

THE FIRS



DUNCAN MACILDOWIE

Map Reference D13

Duncan MacIldowie, children Ross & Tom. Widower with two children. Head of the household works as a self-employed accountant. Older son is a civil servant, second son is studying at university.

4 bedroomed detached house. Originally a two bedroomed dwelling, extended by present owner in 1981, through addition of a first floor extension. In the early part of the 20th century, the village bus was kept at the property. Originally the house was in an orchard on land now occupied by adjacent properties on the southern and western sides.

A good mix of established village families and positive newcomers has resulted in a very progressive community. When I arrived in the village the 21 year danger of the village school closure was averted, by a far-seeing concept of amalgamation of the school with Rockbourne.

FLINDERS



SIMON CHALK & KAREN
RAYNBIRD-CHALK

Map Reference D14

Simon Chalk - Chief bosun with hobbies including guitar and yachting. Karen Raynbird-Chalk - medical technician with hobbies of photography and writing. Our children, Raven Emily aged 5, Tarn Ellis aged 3 and Henry Joseph aged 20 months.



We moved to Damerham from Poole in 1993 having looked long and hard for a rural retreat

and then very nearly emigrated to Australia. But fate was with us the day we drove the wrong way down South End and stumbled across our little bungalow (previously named Hilbert) with its tussocky field-of-a-garden. We fell in love with it immediately. We renamed it 'Flinders' after one of our favourite areas of Australia and in between having three children, have managed to do a bit of building/decorating/patio laying etc!

Life here has been wonderful - we have days during the grey winter when we wonder whether we made the right decision to stay in England, but many other glorious days which remind us why we relinquished life 'down under'.

Our little slice of England

From the grey dawn mists of winter and through trees - dark and old and lichen-covered, emerged a spring of balmy air filled with a cacophony of birdsong and an orchard confettied with blossom.

The evenings lengthened and shadows spread across the cornfield.

The air was warm and still.

Cows grazed upon the hill and church bells rang.

And then, the corn that once waved and hissed in the summer wind was cut by huge 'combines' that hummed and whirred their way through the afternoons in a mist of dust and debris that hovered like a gold cloud into the dusk.

Those gorgeous sunsets that summer left - the little black islands of cloud, dotted in a blazing sea of scarlet and the skies that autumn brought, when the little green tractor ploughed its way across the field on the horizon, flanked by huge walls of mauve and grey.....

And then the birds gathered and, in silent 'V's, they flew in dark paths across the crimson skies to warmer climes

And left our little slice of England

K. Chalk
