

CONTRIBUTORS

Each contributor is listed with the year of their interviews. Where I have been able to get one, there is a photo unless they are pictured elsewhere in the book.



KATE BELLMAN, *July 1999* with Neville Whittell: Kate has rung the bells in St Mary's Church, Kersey for twenty years and describes her bell ringing as an addiction! She lives in, "Elm Farm" at Wickerstreet Green,

manages a large garden of her own and also gardens for several other people, happily combining her favourite pastime and her work.

VICTOR BIEBUYCK, *March 1999*: Now 60, Victor spent a year as an evacuee in Kersey towards the end of the second world war. He mentioned this to me in a chance conversation as he and a friend passed my front garden during a visit to the village from Barking, Essex. Then he was kind enough to spare the time to commit some of his memories to my taper recorder!



LAVINIA BIGG, nee Williams, *April 1998*: Viney, as she is most often called, left Wickerstreet Green, on the outskirts of Kersey in 1996, after her husband Frank died. He was one of the early bell ringers, and the couple shared a great love of gardening. Viney now has a small house in Lavenham where there are shops and some of her family live nearby.

TERANCE JAMES BOND, *June 1999* with Margaret Needham and Ann Walls: Terry, a prolific wildlife artist, is perhaps best known for



the superb paintings of birds which he produces annually for the calendars of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. He and his wife Jill own "Little Paddock" in Wickerstreet Green and over the past twenty two years they have gradually acquired ten acres of surrounding land and landscaped them into beautiful grounds – a haven for wildlife of every description.

FRED BRAMHAM, *March 1999*: Fred, with Dorothy Gorst, has worked at Kersey Pottery for the past seventeen years. The Pottery is a place where visitors and residents can be sure of finding that elusive present and some have collected whole dinner services in their favourite design. Dot has always kept an eye on the village ducks, supplementing their food and ministering to any invalids.



CHERRY CHALMERS, *November 1997*: Cherry's father, Arthur Towns, was born in Kersey, though her mother, Christina Partridge, originated from Lindsey. Cherry was born in Lindsey in 1927 but the family moved to Kersey when she was three weeks old. Having lived with

her husband, Dave, for many years in 6, Church Hill Cottages and now widowed, Cherry moved to Hadleigh in 1997.

GRACE (nee Spraggon) & REG FARTHING, *November 1998* with Norah

Orriss: This couple, comma, both of old Kersey stock, have spent all their lives in the village. Reg, now retired, worked for the Artheys at The Priory for fifty years. They live in number 1, The Row, at the Northern end of Kersey. (*Update - As their house in The Row was "tied" to Reg's job at The Priory, he and Grace moved in 1999 into one of the Bungalows for the Elderly in Vale Lane. They are very happy there.*)

OWEN JAMES GILLINGWATER,

July 1998: Owen was born in Kersey in 1929 but, due to unusual domestic circumstances, lived here for only the first twenty-two years of his life. However, he has retained a great affection for the village and has an enviable collection of memorabilia concerned with it. He still visits the remaining people of whom he was most fond.

EILEEN GLEED, *December 1998* with Gladys Rice: Eileen was born in Hadleigh in 1926 but moved to Kersey when she married Lewis Gleed in 1949. Quite recently widowed, she lives on the corner of Vale Lane in a large modern bungalow. She and Gladys Rice were the last members of St Mary's Church choir now, alas, disbanded. However, from their front seat in



Jim Gleed and his sister Joyce (now Williams) in 1936

church, they still lead the congregation in hymn singing every Sunday.

JIM GLEED, *November 1995:* Jim was born in 1921. Like his sister Joyce Williams, he was born in Kersey. Called up in 1941, he served to the end of the war, including time in North Africa. He takes delight in imbuing his many memories with a quirky humour, often taking on the voices of characters described so that even a stranger feels close knowledge of them!

RUTH GLEED, *April 1999:* Ruth Gleed, nee Towns, who is now 81, lived in Kersey for the first 66 years of her life, after which she and her husband moved to Hadleigh. With her rare gift for capturing memories and thoughts in verse, Ruth is often asked to read her poems at church festivals and other events. Her poem, "Sunday

School in 1920", is reproduced in full in this book. She has been widowed since 1994.

RAYMOND GOYMOUR, *April 1999:*

Ray was born in Kersey in 1920 and lived here until 1952 when he and his mother moved to Hadleigh after the death of his father Arnold, who ran a pork butchery business from "Leys House" in years past. Ray, an only child, was in the Air Force during the Second World War and still uses the occasional RAF phrase. A keen member of the Royal British Legion, he lays the poppy wreath in church each Remembrance Sunday after calling out the names of the villagers who lost their lives in the two world wars.

SUE & DAVID GRIFFITHS, *April*

1999: This couple have lived in Kersey for over thirty years. Both are artists and teachers, though Sue has retired from teaching, due to back trouble. David's paintings – often of Kersey scenes – are particularly popular locally and many a



house in the village boasts a David Griffiths original or print. Their house, "Ailsa Cottage", is next door to "Ayres End", former home of the late Ralph Hammond Innes, who was their landlord.

JILL & MICHAEL HARBINSON,

November 1995: Although she was born in Somerset, Jill has lived in Kersey for nearly 30 years. She was organist and choir mistress in Kersey church for a number of years and chairman of Kersey Parish Council for ten out of the twelve years she served on it. Her second husband, Frederick Finch, died in January 1991. In 1965 Michael came to Kersey with his first wife Mary and they lived in “Wickerstreet House”, Wickerstreet Green.

From 1981 he has been the church Elder and for twenty-five years was treasurer of the PCC, of which he is still a member. Mary, meanwhile, was secretary of the PCC for fourteen years. The Finches and Harbinsons had always been close friends, and after Mary’s death in January 1993, Michael married Jill and joined her in “Bridge House” down by the Splash.

IRENE HASLER, *November 1997:*

Irene was one of the first “newcomers” to Kersey, moving here in 1960 upon her return from Hong Kong where she had been a hospital Matron for many years. She lives at the Northern top of the street just beyond the old water pump and is a keen and seemingly tireless gardener despite her 90-odd years.

JOAN & IAN HATTRICK, *December*

1999: Joan and Ian came to the village in 1988, prior to Ian taking early retirement in 1990. They came across Kersey whilst house hunting – drove

down Lindsey Road, turned into the village out of curiosity and saw the Street with the church on the hill. They bought and extended Water Lane Cottage, and soon got involved in village affairs. Joan has been churchwarden since 1991 and Ian is one of the church organists and a member of the PCC. Ian is also a parish councillor and was chairman of the council from 1995 to 1999.

MARY HOLDEN *nee Seggar, June and*

July 1998: Mary, a widely known and loved village character, to whose memory this book is dedicated, died, aged 78, on 29th March 1999. Her unexpected death was tragic: Having struggled for years with the stairs, damp and cold of Number 1, Church Hill where she was a tenant, she had at last become eligible for one of the bungalows for the elderly in Vale Lane. Indeed, while she was in hospital for a supposed short stay, her only child Robert had moved her belongings into the bungalow and even set out the plants on the windowsills.

But, whilst in hospital, Mary had a heart attack and died. She had lived in Kersey all her life and she and Ruth Gleed had been friends from the age of seven. Their husbands, one having died in October and the other in December 1994, were buried side by side in Kersey churchyard and now Mary is there too. Ruth had made many efforts to persuade her friend to move to Hadleigh to be near her, but Mary remained firm. Kersey always had been and always would be home to her.

MARIANNE LASH, *June 1999:*

Marianne is Norwegian and keeps in close touch with her family in Norway. She met Tom Lash, an English Colonel, in 1965 when he was stationed at the NATO Headquarters in Norway. Having lived for some years abroad and in Essex, they moved to Kersey in 1982. Their home, “Chapel House”, is a converted non-conformist chapel. Their love for Kersey is illustrated by the beautiful photographs they have taken of the village, many of which are reproduced in this book.

RUBY LING: Please refer to Ruby’s “An Introduction to Kersey”.

VERENA MANNING, *nee Fletcher,*

November 1998/March 1999: Verena was born in Kersey in 1925 and has stayed here all her life. Widowed for the second time, she now lives in one of the Vale Lane bungalows. From 1953 she was housekeeper to Mr and Mrs Hammond Innes in their home, “Ayres End”, and her brother Reg Fletcher was their gardener. After the death of Dorothy Innes in 1989, the pair continued to look after the famous author and his beloved Alsatian dog, Yseult, until first Yseult, then Reg and then Hammond Innes died in 1998. Verena has one son, Brian, who is married to Ann.

TED & MAISIE MARTIN, *February*

1996: Ted and Maisie are now in their seventies. Ted was born in Kersey Tye and Maisie, nee Partridge, in Lindsey. They met in Kersey village

school. After their marriage in 1941 they lived in the first cottage in the row beside The Bell pub until 1947 when they moved into one of the new council houses in Vale Lane, which they have since bought. They have two daughters, five sons, nine grandchildren and six great grandchildren.

CHRISTINA MELLOR &

RODNEY KERR, *April 1999*: Christina and her first husband moved to the Mill House in 1978. They parted in 1996 and have four children, two of whom are still at boarding



school. Her fiance, Rod, and his ex-wife have three children but even when all the youngsters are assembled, there is plenty of room in the large Queen Anne house with its acres of ground, meadow land and garden. Christina and Rod continue with their commercial development of the mill, maltings and various outbuildings.

CLAUDE MUNSON, *February 1999*: Claude Munson, affectionately known as Claudie, was born in Kersey Uplands in 1923 and has

lived in or within a few miles of the Parish of Kersey all his life. He separated from his wife, who has since died, but has a daughter, a son, five grandchildren and one step-granddaughter. His present home is in one of the Vale Lane bungalows which he shares with his beloved dog, Scooby-do, and his budgie, Georgie.

MARGARET NEEDHAM, *June 1999*

with Terance James Bond and Ann Walls: Margaret moved into 1, Hollies Cottage, Wickerstreet Green, in the Autumn of 1996. Her youngest grandchild, Brooklyn Rose, was born in front of the fire in her grandmother's new home! For the previous thirty four years it had been the home of Sir Laurence and Lady Kirwan who are mentioned in chapter 10.

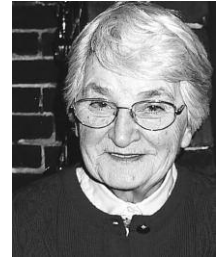


NORAH ORRIS, *November 1998* with Grace and Reg Farthing: Norah, like her brother Reg Farthing, has lived in Kersey all her life. From the time she was a girl she has taken part in almost every village organisation and is well known for her versatility and enthusiasm. Norah was on the Parish Council for twelve years, and has been treasurer of the Village Hall Committee since 1969. She has run the village Post Office from the front room of her house in Vale Lane since 1982. This is one of the remaining hubs of

village life where people often meet and exchange items of news.

NAOMI PARTRIDGE,

July 1998: Naomi, widow of the farmer, John Partridge and mother of seven children, lives in "Rose Cottage" on the



Kersey to Boxford Road. Several successive generations of Partridges have farmed in Kersey, and members of Naomi's family are clustered closely around her. Her sons Robert and Chris farm from "West Sampsons Hall" and Bridges Farm respectively, Peter who is in the building trade, lives at Trickers Farm close by and his sister Barbara has Harts Farm a little further on. Naomi has twenty grandchildren.

GLADYS RICE, *December 1998* with Eileen Glead: Gladys was born in Boxford in 1914 but, soon after their marriage, she and her husband Evan moved to Wickerstreet Green and remained in Kersey afterwards. Now widowed, Gladys lives at the end of Vale Lane in a corner house next to meadows and with a very large cottage garden. She has always been an enthusiastic gardener and has carried off the Challenge Cup for Vegetables and Fruit ten times at the Village Produce Association shows!

PAUL RYDE from the tape of a talk he gave to the Kersey schoolchildren in *June 1994*: Paul, born in Ipswich, came of a big agricultural family and cannot remember a time when he did not want to become a vet. His first job, with the Hadleigh practice, lasted until his retirement. He and his wife, Nora (nee Stiff), whose house is “Wormwood Green” just west of Kersey Village Hall have been directly associated with the hall since the 1960s. Both have always been closely involved with many village organisations, and Paul was chairman of the Parish Council for a number of years. He was chairman of the school governors until recently, and is still chairman of the Village Hall Committee.

HAROLD SEGGAR from the tape of a talk he gave to the schoolchildren in *May 1994*: Harold, brother of Mary Holden, has lived in Kersey all his life. He lives with his wife Barbara in Vale Lane. Barbara helped at the village school and, from 1950 until 1972, prepared school dinners, which used to be served in the Village Hall. The couple have one son, John.

JACK & JILL STIFF, *November 1998*: Jack’s Grandfather Robert, married to Kate, ran the village shop when it faced the Splash, in the building now known as “Market House”. In 1900 they moved premises to opposite the Bell pub, living in “Stone House” and creating a large multi-purpose store out of three cottages next door. The business remained in the family until

the last part of “Stiff’s shop” finally closed in 1992. Jack was born in Kersey and has lived here all his life, and Jill – who came from a dairy-farming family near London – moved here when she married Jack. Their son Chris farms from Rushes Farm and has taken over the domestic oil deliveries which were, until recently, the province of Jack’s brother, Bill.

IVY TRICKER, nee Jarvis, *November 1995*: When Ivy was born in 1915 the doctor came to the house on his horse. Her father stood outside holding the horse and heard the new baby crying. The sound was not a novelty, but he welcomed the baby just the same, and eventually his wife was to bear him ten children. They named all the girls after trees and shrubs. Ivy, whose husband died in 1988, lives alone in “Row View” and, as well as planting and tending her very large cottage garden, cares for two cats of her own and the large colony of feral cats who roam among the outbuildings and fields behind her property. (*Update: Unfortunately, Ivy is now in hospital in Ipswich. Her cottage has been bought by the young couple with two small daughters who appear in the final chapter of this book*)

PETER VANSITTART, *April 1999*: This well known author has written numerous novels and some books for children as well as a variety of other academic, amusing and anecdotal works. Now in his late seventies, he has lived partly in Hampstead and partly in Kersey since the 1950’s



when his mother moved into the village. His home, “Little Manor”, is one of the least spoiled of Kersey’s timber-framed medieval houses, and the hidden garden behind it is truly magical. Now Peter has sold his London property and is settling down as a full-time Kersey resident.

ANN WALLS, *June 1999* with Terance James Bond and Margaret Needham: Ann and her husband Albert moved to 2, Hollies Cottage, Wickerstreet Green, in the Autumn of 1994 and a little over a year later she took on the position of Clerk to Kersey Parish Council. For the past five



years Albert, who works in the Midlands, has been away during the week and, initially, Ann spent many months living in chaos while their small cottage was being extended. (*Update - Albert has now retired and the couple look forward to spending more time together in the place they love.*)

RACHEL WELLS, *August 1999*: Rachel Wells (nee Mowles) was born in Kersey in 1947. She lives with her husband Tony and children Louise and Duncan in the North end of “Vale Corner”. Until 1947 this was the only house in Vale Lane. Now twenty one and nineteen, Louise

and Duncan are the fourth generation of one family to live consecutively in the cottage. Like her mother and grandmother before her, Rachel is a Churchwarden of St Mary's Church as well as being active in many village associations.

NEVILLE WHITTELL, *July 1999* with Kate Bellman: Neville, who comes from a long line of bell ringers, has rung the bells in Kersey church for the past twenty-seven years. He also teaches the "methods", drawing on the experience he has gained since he began ringing at the age of fourteen. Living in Hadleigh, Neville is married to Christine and they have a grown up son and daughter, both of whom are bell ringers. Daughter Katharine is married to a bell ringer and has two children below school age who already visit towers when their parents ring!

FRANCES WHYMARK, *November 1998*: A Care Assistant at Friars Hall Nursing Home in Hadleigh, Frances was born in Kersey in 1946 and has remained here all her life. For the last twenty years she has lived in "The Haven", behind the old vicarage. The Smallholding is shared with her husband Gerald, schoolboy son Tom and a variety of animals, large and small. The Whymarks also have two daughters but the life of their third daughter, Cathy, was lost in 1989 when she was only eighteen. Frances' favourite sibling, bachelor brother Leslie Cockayne, died in 1994 at the age of sixty-two. He was a quiet academic, historian

and church warden. He and Cathy are missed to this day by all who knew them.

JOYCE AND LESLIE WILLIAMS, *November 1995*: This couple, now in their seventies, moved to Hadleigh in 1998. However, Joyce was born in Kersey and Leslie, who is Viney Bigg's brother, came here in 1946. Joyce is sister to Jim Gleed and cousin to Ray Goymour. Leslie's father, who used to live at Rushes Farm, organised many gatherings in Kersey Village Hall in the days when people made their own entertainment.

REVEREND IAN WILSON, *September 1999*: Ian Wilson, the present Priest in Charge of the benefice of Aldham, Elmsett and Kersey, took up the incumbency in 1993. Now 42, he has lived in Suffolk almost all his life and served on the Suffolk Police Force for ten years before he began training for the Ministry. He, his wife Patricia, and their teenage children Rebecca and Michael live in the rectory at Elmsett. Ian divides his time between the three parishes and ensures that there is a service in each church on four Sundays every month, with a benefice service in one of the churches on fifth Sundays.

ADA WYATT, *February 1996*: Ada, born in 1911, has stayed in Kersey all her life and lives in the eastern half of the semi-detached cottage opposite the road out of Kersey to Lindsey. She and her husband Lance have been married for

sixty-one years and Ada misses him very much since he has had to move to a Nursing Home in Eye. The Wyatts had two daughters and a son, George. Sadly, however, both their daughters have died – Ella, in 1987 and Doreen in 1998. Lance and Ada have four grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. (*Update - Very sadly, Ada died in January 2000. Her last remaining son in law had died on Boxing Day 1999.*)

SHEILA ZURBRUGG, *August 1999*: Sheila, who is now eighty-one, and her husband Robert Zurbrugg were among the early "newcomers" to Kersey. They moved here in 1967 when Robert retired from his job with Suchard in Switzerland. There followed eleven happy years together in "Church Steps", the cottage immediately below the church, before Robert's untimely death in March 1978. Sheila has three sons – Nicholas, Michael – married to Jenny – and Anthony. She also keeps in close touch with "adopted in love", Paulin, whose father died when she was thirteen.



In addition to the above mentioned people whose oral contributions form such a large part of this work, several recent newcomers to Kersey handed me their written impressions of the village. These feature in the last chapter.