

BILL BUDDEN

Born in 1921

Bill was born in Loders, at what was then the Post Office, since demolished, opposite the Farmers Arms. The first record of his family in the village is in the Church Baptismal Records of 1637. His father, Arthur William Budden, started in his own father's trade of butchering, but as they bought more land, they became smallholders, dealing in animals rather than butchering them. Later he also ran a market garden, where High acres is now. This meant that his day started with the milking at 5.30 or 6.00 am and finished when darkness fell, a particularly long day in the summer.

Bill's mother, Gladys Louisa Jane Walbridge, was born in Litton Cheney. She kept the Post Office and sold groceries and other goods, including vegetables and fruit, grown in their own market garden. One of the few village telephones was located in the Post Office, so she had to be available when people needed to make urgent 'phone calls.

There were two other children in the family, a sister, Mary Elizabeth Jean, who was two years younger than Bill and a brother, Anthony James, six years younger. Bill and Anthony both got scholarships to the Grammar School and had highly successful careers, Bill ending up as a director of Bridport Gundry. He started work at the Pymore Mill Co., owned by Joseph Gundry & Co., in 1937 and, after a wartime spell in the RAF, serving as a navigator with distinction, he returned to work for the same firm, gradually making his way to the top. Anthony travelled extensively, going first to a Merchant Ventures College in Bristol, then to Lee High University in the States, then to Harvard, finally becoming an engineer and starting his working life at Lockheeds.

Bill met Vera at a WAAF party, during the Second World War, and they were married at Kingsbury in Devon on 9th December 1944. Vera was born at Neasdon and worked as a secretary at Wembley Stadium before she was called up. Their only daughter, Caroline, who is a barrister, was born in 1954.

When Bill and Vera first came back to West Dorset, they lived in Bridport. They returned to Loders in 1975, having built their present house, Smishops, on the site of part of the old market garden. Highacres was built on the remainder of the site. Bill has now retired and is very active in the village. Apart from looking after the maintenance of the Village Hall, to which he gives a good deal of time, his latest interest is in vintage cars.

Bill Budden-My Life

To travel hopefully is a better thing than to arrive and the true success is to labour.

(R.L. Stevenson)

The Budden name has appeared in Dorset for hundreds of years. My neighbour (a Historian) tells me that he has seen a record of Mr Budden of Bridport a Ropemaker and is recorded in the town records as supplying the Kings Navy in 1371. A copy of invoice proves this. My own family appear in Loders Church Christening Books in an unbroken line since 1637.

Early Days at Loders

I was born on 16 March 1921 to the best parents in the world at 27 Loders, then the Post Office. My mother was Gladys Louisa Jane (nee Walbridge) she was born in 1900 and my father in 1897. My father Arthur William had returned from the Army in 1919 having served in the Dorset Yeomanry and the Imperial Camel Corps for 5 years mostly in the Deserts of Egypt and then to Palestine and Syria, He had taken part in the battle of Agagia which is the subject of a painting in the Keep Military Museum in Dorchester. This battle was the turning point of the War against the Turks and enabled the Dorsets to press on up to Damascus under General Allenby. He told me very little of his war but described some of his escapades in the Imperial Camel Corps into which he was drafted, this was an elite collection of Yeomanrymen from many mounted regiments. His greatest memorable event was when his troop captured Lawrence of Arabia and brought him back to camp thinking he and his troop were enemy (Turkish) spies. He had been paid one shilling (5P) per day all those years and was given £40 gratuity with which he started a small holding.

My mother had attended the Bridport Grammar School and had become a school teacher. They were married on 10th April 1920 at Loders. They were devoted, I can remember no harsh or unkind words between them. My mothers parents Frederick and Elisabeth Walbridge lived at New House Farm, Yondover, Loders, unfortunately he died suddenly in 1925 and my grandmother had to quit the farm.. My father's parents Arthur William Causeway and Mary Ann Budden lived next door at no 26 Loders. They owned their house and the one in which I was born (it had two fields attached and my father paid £1 per week rent for about 26 years). Our house was of stone with a thatched roof, my mother's kitchen was a lean-to extension, stone walls and I think with tiled roof and a window on the west end. We had a fireplace in the living room and in the back kitchen my mother cooked marvellous meals with a steel oil stove with a tin or steel oven. We had no refrigerator, no family that I knew had one, but we had a meat-safe which was a large window-like aperture in the north outside kitchen wall with a metal fly-proof panel to the open air to enable air to filter inwards.

We had no bathroom, our bath was a large tin portable one. There was no piped water in Loders until 1974, we obtained water from a well at the back garden, by lowering a galvanised iron bucket on a chain and winding the chain around a drum by a handle on one side. About 1930 we installed a hand-pump in the milk house at the back and my job was to pump about 180 strokes to fill a tank in the roof to pass through a milk cooler which cooled the milk and this became a source of water to the kitchen adjacent.

All the houses in Loders used the unfiltered water from the well for cooking, drinking etc. In 1974 the local authority condemned the water as unsafe to drink and forced every house to have the state owned water at great expense it was one of the great many "Cons of the century!". My Water Rate is about £400 per year including sewage disposal which in my young days was the bottom of the garden or the field next door and my wife thinks it is so unsafe to drink the water that she buys Bottled Water , (another con of the century a billion pound market! And it takes the equivalent of 8 bottles of water to make the bottle, how stupid can women be to fall for such a marketing gimmick? I read that some bottled water comes in from France and Germany!)

Loders looked pretty then, no parked cars except a very occasional delivery van, hardly any traffic, the hedgerows were also quite natural with primroses, blue and white violets growing in the banks in Smishops (then called School) Lane. Cows were driven through the village night and morning to Mr Tolley's Waddon farmhouse (now called Barn House), all the land for this farm was on the North side of the main street. The young Tolley boys rode a pony named Hursey (probably a corruption of horsey). Horses pulled wooden wagons with wooden wheels along the roads laden with hay, cattle food, vegetables, and manure for

spreading on the fields. One or two farmers and gentry used a horse and small two wheeled buggy called a trap to take themselves around and to the market. Hearses for funerals were horse-drawn or for the poor were hand-pushed on a kind of 4 wheeled trolley! The wealthy were beginning to hire motor vehicles for weddings. School buses were unknown, all children walked or cycled to school...there were none of the risks then which make us escort our children everywhere by car there was of course no child abuse or any of the risks which forces parents to bus their children to school.!

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My father always had a car, his first was a model T Ford, left hand drive, made in the USA and was a 2.5 litre petrol engine model costing £20. It had no gear-shift as we know it now, one started the engine by pulling a choke wire and turning a starting handle at the base of the front radiator. I can remember coming up Abbotsbury Hill and halfway my dad returned to the bottom and we came up in reverse, he told me that reverse was a lower gear than the lowest forward and also the petrol in the almost empty tank drained towards the engine. (Ford's first Model T was made in 1908, Ford had made 15 millions of this model by 1928) Our car had a folding hood and some kind of side-curtains which clipped into the top of the four small doors. The petrol was in a tank in front of the driver's cabin and fed into the engine by gravity. The rear tyres only were inflatable, the front two were of solid moulded rubber about 3 inches deep but with 1 inch holes right through the rubber tyre throughout its circumference they gave the tyre a shock absorbing capability but the ride was still uncomfortable as roads were not as good as today! After some years maybe in 1930 father changed to an open top Chevrolet and then an Essex Super 6, (absolute luxury and all left hand drive shipped second hand from the USA). A great friend was Frank Osborne who lived at Bell cottage and worked for the Ford Dealer a Mr Kitcher in Bridport. Frank was a genius and he and my father sawed off the passenger body behind the driver's cabin of one of the cars and with four very large bolts attached a wooden truck body in its place. They then alternated between passenger rear half to truck rear half! I knew no other car owner to do this, they should have patented the modification. There were, about 10 cars in total in Loders in 1930 and several motorcycles some with sidecars for the family! We needed petrol for the cars and it was delivered to our door by Shell, BP and R.O.P (Russian Oil Products) in 2 gallon cans once each week, and cost 1 shilling(5p) per gallon and 2 shillings deposit returnable on the can. We had no electricity until 1936, we lit with a paraffin oil lamp graduating to an 'Aladdin' lamp with mantle in about 1931 still paraffin but this diffused a very bright white light and made home-work and reading much easier. When electricity became available in 1936 we were one of the first to install it and my father then replaced the hand-pump with an electric one and we thought we had moved into the twentieth century. We burned wood and coal in the fireplace in the winter. Our pet dog, a small brown Irish Terrier named Peter, would sit up and beg for titbits, he would take a toffee out of the paper and took the prime place at the fire in wintertime. In summer he had a kennel which was a cider barrel with one end knocked out. Our second dog was Fly a greyhound-Lurcher cross and could outrun rabbits when we went ferreting for rabbits. Coal was delivered in 1 hundred weight sacks and dumped in the shed as was the wood, mostly apple wood from our own orchard which my father sawed by hand, one of us children usually had to chop some wood and fill the coal scuttle, daily for the living room fire in winter..

We were connected to the telephone in about 1934 and our number was Bridport 178. To make a telephone call one unhooked the earpiece this released a bracket opening the line, and then spoke the number required to the operator. My mother was Postmistress following a tradition of 3 generations of Buddens in this post, I remember the postmen who used to call and empty the letter-box in our wall on the pavement. He told us that his salary had been raised to 35 shillings (£1.75) per week. My father was a smallholder with one or two cows, several pigs and chickens. In 1935 he bought 16 acres of land from a Mr Marsh who lived next door to the Farmers Arms (now Orchard Cottage) and took over his business as a Market Gardener, 5 acres of the land was a market garden then called the Allotments now High Acres, more WORK!

But to revert a few years, the first thing I can remember in detail was going to Loders School in 1926 (The year of the General Strike and the year in which Adolf Hitler started to form what became the Nazi Party, but we knew nothing of that then). An uncle named Rob Wilson, married to my father's sister Emily, was here on holiday and my mother asked him to take me to school because she felt that if she took me I would cry when she left! My sister Jean was born on 7 April 1923 (unfortunately brain damaged at birth by the sheer carelessness of the midwife), and my brother Anthony was born 29th January 1928. We had a very

happy childhood, my Grandmother kept the Village Shop and my Grandfather who was not the most energetic man used our slaughterhouse to kill a pig and sell the meat occasionally. On Wednesdays in school holidays sister Jean, brother Tony (mother hoped everyone would call him Anthony, but they did not!) and myself would walk to Bridport with Mother to the Market and on Sundays we sometimes visited my mother's widowed mother in Burton Bradstock, but in summer we went to West Bay, took sandwiches and lay on West Beach, 11 to 3pm, we must return to Loders then to milk cows. We frequently went to Sunday School and either morning or evening Church where an elderly Vicar named Hutton preached to us (his wife taught the Sunday School). The Church would be more than half full on most Sundays and there were held morning and evening services. He rode a bicycle through the village visiting the sick etc. He came to visit my father during a crisis when my father had pneumonia, it was a very stressful time for my mother and distressing for me because many died from this illness in those days. We also had visits from the family Doctor, Dr Coleman, and we visited his surgery at times. I do not remember if we had to pay him, I suppose we did. We were paying 1 penny per person per week into a Hospital Saturday Fund which provided free hospital. When a villager died the house drew their blinds or curtains for the day and the church bell was tolled, a dismal occurrence and fairly common since medical healing was fairly crude.

On Bank Holidays and some Sundays we went to Weymouth, that was a special treat, we could walk a long distance out into the sea on a sandy beach which did not hurt our feet! and we could watch Punch and Judy and ride on Donkeys, and on August Bank Holiday my father would pick the apples from the 'Beauty of Bath' tree at the front door garden and sell them on the beach for 5 for a penny, I guessed that paid for our petrol! My mother knitted swimsuits for us all (where did she find the time?)(no TV thank God! I always thought it would destroy family life and waste time, which it does now!). I can remember my father buying our first radio, a Mc Michael Portable in a large leather case with handles for carrying, for £12 (8 weeks pay for a farm labourer then, equivalent to nearly £2000 now!). (A farm labourer today (if there is such a man) could buy a portable radio today on half an hour's pay!)It was powered by 2 large batteries. We did not have electricity in Loders until 1936. We listened to the BBC radio News of course and music programmes sponsored by advertisements from Radio Hilversum (Holland) and Luxemburg. I do not believe that British Broadcasters were allowed to relay advertisements the BBC had a monopoly?

I was not interested in sports at home or at school, my time was taken helping my father, evenings and on Saturday mornings, my father held a vegetable and produce stall in East Street Bridport and I had to join him with my bicycle and deliver purchases to the customers who ordered so one could say that I started my working life as a barrow-boy. I frequently felt tired and I think that this affected my ability to study my homework.

Our parents worked all the daylight hours during the summer. Father started work at 6.30 in the morning and finished at 10pm or dark during the summer. Mother started at 7AM and worked until 7PM summer and winter. They never took a holiday. The first time that they slept away from home was in 1944, they went to London to Buckingham Palace to see me collect the DFC. I look back with considerable guilt that I did not do more for them when I was able, they needed so much help then, but I was busy and career-bound. We always had good food, clothing, warmth and shelter, but only because of their unceasing labour. I was always very attached to Mother (I think because I always felt her anguish that she had two sons but a retarded daughter) and her death in 1968 saddened me greatly (I had visited her in hospital at South Petherton a few days before she died) and I realised that I was seeing her for the last time. I had a serious nervous breakdown 3 months later brought on by several unrelated worries and I was off work for 10 weeks and it took another 3 months to revert to normal, fortunately Vera performed a miracle for me, must have been a very stressful time for her with Caroline just 14. Visiting me in hospital must have been a very great strain. Reg Besley MD of the firm was very supportive of me too. I was told many years later that, but for this, I was a candidate for MD of the Group some time in the future

As I write this we are told that there are now two million people in UK taking welfare payments and most of them are driving around in cars and trying to find excuses for claiming more. (We have at last reached the Welfare state where the Leader of the House of Commons has avoided paying his Council Tax on 3 homes incurred no penalty, has incarcerated old people in prison for not paying theirs. His salary £170,000 per year plus expenses plus pension is about £500,000 per year in total and he is a leftwing socialist ex trade union leader!! And he is now selling his memoirs for £500,000. Why on earth do people buy Ex MPs Memoirs little of what they write is true??))

We did not have to shop, there were no Supermarkets. My Grandmother owned the shop next door and