

C is for Cobblers..

... the current name of a house on the corner of Row Lane and High Street. Another name another memory. What's the story?

On the opposite side of the High Street is where *Edwin Brown* started his shoemaker and repair shop, from 1890s now, Jasmine Cottage. Edwin Brown was also an outworker for **Clarks of Street**, so, once a week he walked into Street to fetch the uppers and soles which he then, on returning home, stitched together to be exchanged for further work next week.

His son, *Samuel James Brown* attended Keinton School and continued the business till joining the army in WWI. On his return he also set up a saddlery business in Castle Street, just a short distance from the cross-roads. He married *Ida Culling* in 1919 and traded as *S.J. Brown* in High Street, now, Cobblers.

Ida ran the retail outlet selling new shoes, haberdashery, toiletries, household requirements, first aid items, and small toys e.g. Matchbox toy cars and other commodities if requested. Anything to oblige! The shoe range included fashion shoes for ladies as well as working shoes for both men and women.

Sam's son *Marwood*, who watched and learned something of both trades as a young boy, remembers the work clearly:-

"Sometimes I would help mend the harness. We had to stuff the collars with felt flocking to pad it out to be comfortable for the horses who had such loads to pull. The flock got every where and caused lots of sneezing. You'd have to wear masks these days!"

As regards the shoe repairs:-

"We mended the whole range of footwear. The quarrymen had only one of boots and worked a 5½ day week. Often they would bring in the boots, still wet with mud, mid-day on Saturday and we would have to finish them all that evening for them to be collected and used on Monday morning. There was no working on Sundays! I used to help out by putting in the hob nails. As for prices ,in the 1930s ladies shoes cost 1/6d for heels and 5/- for soles!"



Clark's outworkers typically used workshops alongside their homes

Any memories of boots, shoes or saddles ??

Strong boots like these were also used in the Mendip mines.



The census for 1841 lists three separate households with shoemaker identified :

*James Whitcombe aged 60,
Thomas Coate, 56, and
Isaac White aged 40.*

*Forty years later, there was
William Lambert aged 73
living in Castle Street*

*And young Will Higdon
listed as bootmaker, 19 from
(E Pennard.) working in
Queen Street*

*In 1891 John Webb 35
from Piney, and Thomas
Selwood 50, Kingweston
worked as a shoemakers.*



Above, in keeping with many homes of this period, the long gardens for veg and fruit often contained a pig sty at the bottom and the family privy. This one still stands in Row Lane, behind the house now called *Cobblers*.

Or of privies??