

## MEMORIES OF OVERTON

**Willow Street** also locally known as Plough Lane

**Overton Hall** stood on the corner of Willow Street and the High Street. It was a collection of rambling brick buildings which had been added to over the years, at one end a small 16<sup>th</sup> century timber framed house to which had been added various brick 18<sup>th</sup> century additions.



The ground floor rooms had low open beam ceilings, the beams being stopped chamfered. Through the house were various exposed timber features, the partitions being wattle and daub. Some of the ground floor rooms were clad with splendid Tudor oak panelling, other rooms had oak dado-panelling, the handsome oak carved staircase had moulded handrail with turned moulded balusters. The upper part of the hall had open timber roof trusses and purlins in fine condition.

In 1841 Mrs Ann Randles was living there, she was of "independent means", had 4 children and a servant.

In 1848 it was part of the sale of the Bryn y Pys estate. Mrs Randles was the tenant at an "old rent" of £20 per annum. It was described as an "excellent residence, an old but respectable house, nearly opposite the church in the village with very large garden – wants some repair."

On the 1851 census only the housekeeper, Harriet Maddocks was at home.

In 1861 & 1871 it was lived in by Emma E Warburton ("a lady") plus her housekeeper, housemaid, cook, butler, page, ladies maid, & gardener.

In 1891 It was lived in by Caroline Scott with her 6 daughters & 2 sons & servants



By 1895 it was lived in by Mrs Frances Ann Wybergh and her daughter Evelyn plus a cook and a ladies maid. Frances Wybergh was the widow of a Yorkshire vicar.

The picture above was taken outside Overton Hall in the early 1900s after a confirmation at St Mary's Church.



"Age" asked the records officer when Private Evelyn Wybergh joined the ATS. "Fifty six," she said and bowed him the say "Age, and more." She may claim to be the oldest ATS, but she keeps her secret.

During the first world war Evelyn Wybergh rode on horse back every day to work in a munitions factory in Ruabon.

Mrs Wybergh died in 1924 and her daughter Evelyn, a very talented sculptress carved the Choir stalls in St Mary's Church in her memory. She also carved the war memorial plaque and the statue of the Virgin and Child in the Lady Chapel in St Mary's Church. She left the Hall in the 1930s and went to live at Gwernheylod Cottage in Argoed Lane. In the 1930s Miss Wybergh ran the Overton Cub pack. She was a great sportswoman and in 1939 joined the ATS (at the age of 69 - but saying she was 55!), and was the oldest serving member in the country. She was awarded the B.E.M. (See photo left) She died in 1961 aged 91.

Memory from Gerry Owen "As a young boy I was riding along Argoed Lane on the handle bars on Bill Roberts's bike. He put

*his hand in his pocket to get out some sweets, the handle bars twisted and we crashed. Miss Wyberg picked me up, put me in a wicker bathchair that had once belonged to her mother, and pushed me to Dr Casper's at Overton Hall. He patched him up, but I remember how he pulled off the plaster afterwards! I still have the scars."*

From 1939 Overton Hall was lived in by Dr Walter Mattocks Casper MRCS, LRCP, and his wife Isabel and 2 daughters. He was village doctor from 1924 to 1960 buying the practice from Dr Morton. The family first lived at Quinta House and then moved to Overton Hall which was also the surgery, providing a separate entrance, consulting room, waiting room and office.



There are memories of green oilcloth on the floor and pictures of sheep on the wall of the waiting room, also memories of Dr Casper handing out sweets if he had to put in stitches. The entrance to the surgery was from Willow Street.

In September 1951 a Canadian Visitor to Overton in North Wales introduced Dr. Walter Casper and David Haynes to a Swedish Bow and after shooting with it, so smitten were they that by May 1952 they had established the first Archery Club in North Wales - Overton Archers. It became very much a self-help club, they studied the sport in all available books and ingeniously made a straw target boss and painted a face in strong canvass to the required dimensions.

During the summer of 1952, twelve members of Overton Village were very keen to improve their archery skills and to this end persuaded six very experienced archers from the Shrewsbury club to come to Overton to teach the finer arts of target shooting. There were Regions of archery in all parts of the country and as there was one already established in South Wales, Dr. Casper was keen to form a similar region for the 6 North Wales Counties of which he was the 1<sup>st</sup> Chairman. The Earl of Powis resigned from the office of President in 1960 and Dr. Walter Casper was unanimously voted to take the office of the 2nd President of N.W.A.S in recognition of his hard work and dedication in the formation of the Society

Dr Casper retired from his medical practice in 1960 and died in 1986.

Overton Hall was part of the Bryn y Pys estate, the Wyberghs and Caspers were tenants. It was demolished in 1965 and was replaced by the housing development of Sundorne.

**Overton Hall Farm** (now demolished)

It is thought that Overton Farmhouse was behind Overton Hall and the farmyard on the other side of Willow Street, which later became the council yard. In 1841 Thomas Jones was the farmer. At the sale of the Bryn Y Pys estate in 1848 it was let to Mr James Heath at £245 per annum, house, building, and yard, barn yard and stack yard, garden, most of the land in the Bottoms, 84 acres in total. In 1851 Samuel Jones was farmer.

**Willow Cottage** (now demolished)

In 1851 it was lived in by the servant of Dr Eyton, the surgeon and his wife a laundress, in 1861 by a laundress, in 1871 to 1891 by gardeners/grooms. There are still memories of the Gardeners Cottage for Overton Hall was just past the big double doors to the Hall (similar to those across the road to the estate yard). George Gough was the gardener/ handyman lived there, a good cricketer.

**Willow House / Pen-y-glyn**

1841 was owned and occupied by Dr John ap Ellis Eyton, (born 1795) who for 40 years was surgeon and "Apothecary" in the parish of Overton. He died in 1865 and in 1871 Letitia Eyton, his widow lived there but then went to live in Chester Street, Wrexham.

By 1891 the name of the house had been changed to Penyglyn, and a cook and housemaid were employed.

In 1901 Mrs Ann Flory a widow of "independent means" her 2 spinster daughters, Henrietta and Maude and servant lived there.

In the 1930s Mr Atkinson, bursar of Ellesmere College lived there.

It was later lived in by Mrs Roper and her daughter and husband, Mr & Mrs Woodhouse.

In the 1980s the gardens were used to build 3 houses (Courtland House, Erbin Crest and Eastwood House) by William Pryce Griffiths who was Chairman of Wrexham Football Club 1982-2002.

**The Hermitage** is on the opposite side of the road. In 1838 it was two residences. It then became one and in 1851 it was lived in by Laura Owen a widow and her servant. In 1895 Mrs Louis M Mackenzie lived there.

In 1901 it was lived in by Jane Richards and Mary Egerton both spinsters of independent means.

It is now two houses again.

In the 1980s No 7 Willow Street was built in part of the garden of the Hermitage.

**The Plough** (now called Ivanhoe) was a public house. In 1841 the publican was Edward Cartwright, in 1851 Thomas Griffiths was publican and tailor. At some time before 1871 the pub closed.

In 1891 and 1901 it was lived in by Charles Jones with his wife Sarah who was a fruiterer & fishmonger.

**Ivan hoe Cottage**

In 1841 Thomas Griffiths, Tailor lived there - 10 years later to have moved next door to be publican. In 1851 Samuel Dulson, blacksmith lived in the cottage. In 1901 it was uninhabited. In the 1930s it was lived in by Mrs Busey.

The area between Ivanhoe Cottage and the High Street had been a farmyard and was then used as the Flintshire council yard. In the 1940s and 50s the surveyor whose office was upstairs in the building at the rear, was Mr Higgins. He knew everything there was to know about the roads in the area.

Memory *"The Council yard made Willow St (Plough Lane it was always referred to when I was a young lad) quite a busy area especially early morning and late afternoon."*