

## MEMORIES OF OVERTON

### The High Street

For hundreds of years Overton High Street was the commercial centre of the village. In a time when few local people travelled far, everything that they required could be purchased in the village, from boots, to clothes, food, or hardware.

The Market Hall stood between Quinta House and the present butchers shop. It was set up in 1830 by voluntary subscription at the instigation of a committee of residents who also elected a "Mayor" of Overton on condition he entertained them to dinner. The first Mayor was Mr W. Edge but the arrangement only lasted a few years.



The market hall was 61½ feet long by 12 ¼ feet deep. It was supported on the far side by a wall and on the street side by iron pillars, two of the pillars bearing the inscription "W Edge 1830". The photograph shows a butchers stall in the Market Hall, but it was long enough for about 6 stalls.

The Market Hall came to an end with the coming of the railway to Overton, when local produce could move easily to Ellesmere to Wrexham to be sold. An enquiry held in 1890 led to the Market Hall being sold. A portion of the site was dedicated to public use i.e. the present pavement, and the rest sold (presumably to Quinta House) and the income invested to help the poor inhabitants of Overton by adding to the 'Flannel Charity'.



At the end of the nineteenth century the large shop to the right of the Market Hall was run by Lewis Evans as a General Drapery Establishment and Milliners. As well as his family and two servants, there was also a resident dressmaker and draper's assistant living above the shop.



In the 1920s the shop became Metcalfes, a grocers and general store. The household and china department was adjoining and connected, and is now the Butchers shop.

After being run by three generations of the Metcalfe family the shop was sold in the late 1980s and in the 1990s was changed into 2 houses.

In the 1880s the Publican of the White Horse was John Roberts and on his early death his widow Elizabeth Roberts took over with her servant, Annie Coffin. They employed an ostler and the yard and stables were the focus of a carting business. Accounts show the transport of goods, parcels and luggage for village residents to and from the station.



In 1904 the White Horse was reopened after being rebuilt as we see it today after a disastrous fire.

Many remember the landlord in the 1930s and 40s, Mr Andrews and his parrot that talked and hung in a cage outside the back door.

See picture left White Horse before the fire



The White Cottage next door was built in 1739. In 1891 the head of the household there was Sarah Rodenhurst, described as a 'Huxter', a type of hawker.

It was lived in for many years in the 20<sup>th</sup> century by the Woolley family.

In 1947 James F Woolley paid £15.12.0d a year rent to the Bryn-y-Pys estate.

Henry Milner Hughes was the chemist at the chemist shop in High Street, Overton from 1880 to 1883 when he died of TB aged only 27 years. He was buried in the new Wrexham Road cemetery.



This photo was taken during those 3 years, and shows him in the long white apron at the door of the shop, and his wife at the front door of the house. The sign says "Hughes, Chemist, Druggist and Family Grocer"

From the 1884 the Chemist shop was run by Mr Francis Fitzjohn who had a wife Mary, and three children. He was followed as chemist by George Knox Mawr, who later moved his business to High Street, Wrexham. He was the father of Ronnie Knox Mawr, author and Judge. In 1947 the shop was rented by L Rowlands & Co, who paid £30 rent for it to the Bryn-y-Pys estate. In 1931 Fred & Sarah James and family moved to Pharmacy House.

Next door lived Miss Ann Goodhall who had "apartments to let". This is now called Bank House and up to about 1980 the Midland Bank operated from the front room.



In the 1930s an old lady lived in Church Cottage. She is remembered by those who were children at that time as she sold lemonade to them for a 1d from the small window that can still be seen. The cottage was thatched up till the 1930s when a fire destroyed the thatch.

In 1949 J Blair lived there and paid £13 rent per year to the Bryn-y-Pys estate.

On the far side of the church the Flintshire Council Building was built in 1956, and demolished and replaced by the Doctors surgery in 2004.



On the opposite side of the street in 1901 the Corner Shop was run by Henry Williams, Grocer and Draper. By 1915 he had moved the business to the left hand side of what is the present Post Office.

The business was then run by Auguste Onckelinx, a Belgian WWI refugee who set up a motor and bicycle repair shop, with petrol pumps. He also ran a taxi service known locally as Onkys. The business was later moved to what is now Wason's in Salop Road.



Further along from the Corner Shop in 1901 was Allan Taylor who was a watchmaker which then became Mrs Jones's ladies clothing shop. And next to that was a greengrocers run by Mary Ann Jones, which then became Hamlington's sweet shop, next door to Ern and Blanche Haynes shoe shop. These houses were built in 1904.



In 1901 Henry Scragg grocer and bootmaker, occupied the premises of the present Post Office. His wife Mary Ellen Scragg was stationer and newsagent, their daughter Ethel was draper's assistant, and their daughter Magdalene was Post Office Clerk. Henry Williams and family had moved to these premises before this photograph (*right*) was taken in 1915.

The right hand side of what is the present Post Office was the Haberdashery and Wool Shop run by Mrs Mabel Stewart.



The house to the right of the present Post Office were built in 1741. The first in 1910 was the home of Reuben Holt, painter, glazier & plumber. He was also Church Warden and secretary of the Flower Show. This house was then lived in by the Lindsey's, Mrs Lindsey ran a small school at the Cocoa Rooms and their son made an early wireless for Major Peel.

Next door was the Bakers and Grocers, in 1901 run by William Wright and his family. The sign outside the shop advertised refreshments and accommodation for cyclists. The Rev. Lt Col Rod Price remembers that his mother Vera (Margaret Grace Vera Price nee Wright) took over the running of the shop after her father's retirement. She paid £13 a year rent to the Bryn-y-Pys estate.

Next door was the home of Job Evans, a Merchant Tailor; later in the 1950s to become Knaptons, the butchers. In 1947 Dennis Knapton paid £26 per year to the Bryn-y-Pys estate for the rent of the shop and house.

