

Stickney's Fish & Chip Shops

The first mention of a fried fish and chip shop in Stickney is in the Lincolnshire Directories of 1930 and also 1933 when Mrs Mary Taylor is referred to as the proprietor of one in the village. Her husband James Henry died in 1929 and is vaguely remembered by some of the older residents as he walked around the area selling wet fish from a wicker basket. The chip shop was situated in the north end terrace house next to the Primitive Methodist Chapels on the main road opposite The Forge, but all the buildings have since been demolished and replaced with two new bungalows. The south end house of the old terrace is still standing and at the time would have served as the Police House. Mary Taylor, who died in 1954, was reputed to have been stone deaf, and therefore her regular customers took to placing their order by using sign language. As a portion of chips was 1d and a piece fish was 2d, fish & chips together would require the showing of three fingers to make the necessary purchase. Most of the sales were for take away suppers but there was a provision for a few customers to eat in Mrs Taylor's front room if need be. When the train arrived from Grimsby, Wally Long being a young boy at the time would be waiting at Stickney railway station to take the fresh fish to Mrs Taylors shop and be rewarded with a few pence. He also took supplies to Cartwright's Shop at Holland House for extra pocket money.

Walter & Eliza Crow used to fry fish & chips in a black wooden shed built in their garden of what was their home and once a Public House called the White Horse, They are mentioned in the Lincolnshire Directories of 1930 and of 1937 but probably started the venture about the same time or just after Mrs Taylor did, as both shops traded in the village for a small numbers of years in the early 1930s. The Crows also had an egg round and regularly visited the many small poultry farmers in the area collecting their eggs for packing and resale. Fish and chips were never rationed during the Second World War although fish was often scarce and when this happened, eggs were often deep fried and sold instead. The shed was of a reasonable size as there were a few wooden benches for customers to sit and eat their supper inside if they wanted to. The actual frying vessel was an old cast iron copper with a wood and coal fire burning beneath it, and this and the chimney were built into the only brick wall of the building. This was filled with dripping that was bought from the village butcher and the chips and battered fish were all cooked in the

same fryer. Walter died in 1942 but Mrs Crow and her daughter Ivy continued with the Fish & Chip shop until about 1950. Violet Brown and Hilda Crow also worked in the shop as they were often opened until midnight on a Saturday. When Mr Lucas and Samuel Woodthorpe eventually opened their enterprise Mrs Crow offered her experience to them initially but her assistance was rejected and deemed unnecessary. Mrs Eliza Crow died in 1963 at the age of 83 and is buried in Stickney cemetery with her late husband Walter.

Sam Woodthorpe was the Stickney news agent before the war and on release from a P.O.W camp he returned to the village and initially took to keeping chickens and growing Millett on a piece of land near to the Railway Station. When Mrs Crow and Mrs Simpson eventually closed their chip shop, Samuel realised what a loss it would be to Stickney and the surrounding area for such an essential amenity to disappear and decided to build his own Fish Shop in the Village. According to an invoice from Frank Kemp of Hall Lane, for materials and labour for the woodwork and decorating of the building, the original Fish & Chip shop in Horbling Lane was built in 1951. In a photograph of the time the man working on the gable end is Sam. The other man in the photo who is stood observing is his brother in law Stuart Lucas who was a builder and also a partner in the venture. The shop was open on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays for takeaways but there was also a small area with tables and chairs for customers to eat inside, The two wives were involved in the preparation of the fish and the peeling of the potatoes and making of the chips and Stuart Lucas was in charge of lighting the coal fired pans and the actual frying of the food and warming of the peas. Having politely turned down Mrs Crows offer to show him how to fry properly, his first night of opening was said to have been a real disaster. Four times a week the fresh fish would arrive at Stickney Railway Station on the passenger train from Grimsby, and was collected by Sam's daughter Nancy on a hand cart and taken to the shop.

The potatoes for the chips and scallops where bought locally and the fat or lard for frying was supplied by Shaw's Butchers. Any wet fish that was left over was sold to villagers as no refrigeration was originally available to store it. As Sams regular work kept him away from Stickney during the week he was only able to help in the shop on Friday evenings and on Saturdays, then returning to Birmingham for Monday morning.

The business was later sold to Chris and Jean Scarborough in early 1961 and they extended the building and added a second storey for the living quarters. The variety of the

food available was gradually increased and eventually included fried chicken, sausages, hot meat pies with peas and baked beans as well as fizzy drinks. Chris and Jean retired after thirty five years of frying and the business was acquired by John and Christine Parker on October 7th 1996.

Another fried fish and chip shop that was opened in Stickney probably in late 1936 was housed in a timber building with a solid brick front and was erected in the garden, towards the south of Edward Winn's property and stood almost opposite to where Mrs Taylors Chip Shop was. This shop was only open for a short time and on one wall displayed the slogan "Be Wise Eat Wrights Fish" and was operated by Fred Wise and his brother-in-law, Charlie Wright who also played the drums in a local band called "The Marine Dance Band". During the Second World War the empty building was used for a short while as an emergence billet for the soldiers rescued from Dunkirk in the summer of 1940 and the business venture may have ceased just prior to this . The building is no longer standing and no photograph is available as to how it looked, although it may have been removed and reassembled as a residence elsewhere. In a dry season the outline of the property can still be clearly seen in the lawn of the garden where it once stood.

