

Cross Area & Baker Arms

The pictures in this section have as far as possible been arranged in chronological order - not always perfectly ! The number in front of the title refers to the archive number.

The area known as the Cross is the epicentre of the village, it is the most photographed part and is home to the war memorial and Baker Arm's. For this reason this section includes pictures of both.

Most people probably think the area known as the 'Cross' is because of the war memorial but the name is much older than that.

Many villages have stone crosses. When Alfred Pope wrote his book on 'The Old Stone Crosses of Dorset' in 1906 he was able to find traces of some 61 crosses in the county with the oldest dating back to Anglo-Saxon times being found at Todber. Pope was able to categorise them into several types. There were Memorial Crosses, Churchyard or Preaching Crosses, Market or Village Crosses, Boundary Crosses, Weeping Crosses and Pilgrim Crosses. All of these crosses were used as a symbol of Christianity but only the most ancient had Latin crosses on them ; most had heads that were similar to the current war memorial. Preaching crosses were usually placed either in the churchyard or near the main entrance and were often used by itinerant friars. Village crosses were usually found on the village green but were also used by the occasional preacher and banns of marriage might be announced from them.

Hutchins in his 'History and Antiquities of the County of Dorset' makes no mention of any cross in Child Okeford which is surprising as if there had been any remnant of one he would have mentioned it.

The first reference to the Cross area in Child Okeford, comes from a newspaper article in 1815, when the road "between a certain place called the Cross in the parish of Child Okeford aforesaid and Shoulder of Mutton Orchard the property of Mr Kaines adjoining Knott Lane within the said parish" was diverted.

The wording is interesting as if there had been an actual cross present in 1815 then surely the wording would have been "between the Cross, in the parish of Child Okeford". The reference to a "place called the Cross" suggests that no actual Cross existed at that date. The censuses before 1871 make no mention of the area but it appears in that year as just 'Cross' with no 'The' attached to it although later ones do.

When Pope visited the village in 1906 he noted,

“the open space at the cross roads in the centre of the village, formerly the village green, now known as “The Cross,” is a huge block of green sandstone, which measures in its upper bed thirty-four inches square, and is sixteen inches deep. This stone does not appear to have been worked as a socket, there being no sign of a mortise or cavity of any kind for fixing a shaft, and the usual broaching is absent. There is therefore no ground for supposing that it ever formed the socket or other part of the ancient village cross which might formerly have stood upon this site. The basin-like depression in the top of the stone might have been a dole-hole. There is a tradition, for which I am indebted to the Rector, the Rev. Canon Brymer, that the stone was used some ninety years since as a stand on which one Mary Saint was whipped for continually stealing hurdles”.

The dedication of the war memorial has the following to say, “Into the block immediately under the cross portions of the sandstone in the old cross have been included”. The Millennium Book for Child Okeford has the following: “The column of Doultling stone, resting on the base of stones belonging to the old cross which had been re-cut, was erected by Harry James and his son who lived in Damsel Pit, and was dedicated on 6th November, 1919, by the Bishop of Salisbury. The site chosen for the War Memorial was where a large block of green sandstone had stood, which may once have been a ‘Preaching Stone’.

The suggestion implicit in the Millennium book account is that a substantial amount of stone from the old cross was used in the erection of the war memorial. If so it was not kept or stored near the Cross area itself and there is no record in, for example, the vestry or parish council records of any of this stone being kept elsewhere.

Precisely when the current Baker Arms was built is not known but Historic England gives the date as late 18th century. What is known is that a house of some sort has existed on the site since 1641 and that in 1754 the owner, Robert Belben, was granted a licence to sell beer from there. In 1790 it was called the Bear Inn, in 1813 The White Bear Inn and in 1821 it became the Baker Arms, named for the Baker family of Ranston House, Shroton.

Many roads lead, quite literally to the Cross and it has been difficult to decide how to organise the pictures. In the end I decided to put them in as much of a chronological order as is possible.

0609 - 0612 The Baker Arms -dating by signs.



In the absence of definite dates on many of the pictures we resort to other clues - in this case the pub sign. In the earliest pictures of the Baker Arms we find a rather plain sign which is essentially dark writing [we cannot be sure of the colour] on a light background. This sign appears on the earliest photograph of the area we have which is from c 1890. Curiously in that picture at low magnification it appears to be white lettering on a black background but at high magnification it's true nature is revealed. This sign is present on photos of the pub that we have up to 1925. Note the ornate bracket; this is found on the earliest picture and survives to the present day, continuing to do it's duty over a 130 years after the first picture.



This sign first appears in COA_0607 but that picture is undated but thought to be early 1930's. The

writing is now light writing on a dark background. It must have entered service after 1925 but precisely when is not known. Underneath THE BAKER ARMS is writing that cannot be made out but is probably 'Badgers Ales' as the pub was for many years a tied house belonging to Hall and Woodhouse.



The Baker Arms was not named for the trade of being a Baker but for a very specific family, the Baker family of Ranston House in the neighbouring village of Shroton. The name was so popular that one of their number, Sir Edward Baker Baker [Baronet], used it twice. Prior to 1821 the pub was known as the White Bear Inn and in that year the first Alehouse Licence in the name of the Baker Arms was issued .

All great families had their own coat of arms and from 1949 onwards we find that the pub sports a sign with their coat of arms on it. The motto is 'Finis Coronat Opus' and is attributed to the Roman poet Ovid. It means 'The end crowns the work'. This particular picture was taken in 2005. The sign is present in the St George's day play in 2009 and in 2012 when the Morris men danced outside the pub. At some time it was replaced with this one which was taken by Tony Ward in 2017.



0600 The Oldest Photo of the village centre c 1890



It is a shame that the first photo of this important area, said to be from 1890 is of rather poor picture. A man appears to be going into the Baker Arms, and two men wearing stripy aprons stand outside the butcher's shop. Two horse carts, one with a horse the other without stand outside. A man with bicycle watches them all.

Owner: Not recorded

0605 Cross Area pre-1900



This appears to be a copy of a copy and is of low quality. It is clearly a very ancient scene and has been labelled as pre-1900. The entrance to Cross House is visible on the right. There is no war memorial and a man is sitting on the preacher stone. Outside the Baker Arms a large four wheel cart laden with coal is being pulled by two horses. Either a delivery is being made to the Inn or the driver is partaking of some refreshment. On the left hand side of the road another pony cart stands opposite where the bus shelter is today and we can see the massive gates at the entrance to Church farm, designed, no doubt, to keep livestock in, and strangers out.

The photographer attached his name to the picture. He was Tom Nesbitt of 7 Market Place Blandford. Kelly's directory of 1903 describes him as 'photographer and collector of poor rate'. He appears in several of the pictures and was to die in 1915.

Owner : Not recorded.

0635 The Cross area pre -1900



We now move our gaze to looking north east.

Oh for a wide angle lens and a better quality picture. Cross Cottage [left] and Cross House [right] are partly visible but the cameraman could not get them both in in their entirety. Centre stage goes to Bartley House which with it's awning outside is the home of the earliest form of the Co-op.

In front of Damsel Pit a pony chaise rounds the corner heading towards Gold Hill. The house 'Damsel Pit' appears to be thatched whilst the outbuilding is tiled. Being set well below Bartley House it is barely visible. At one time it used to be called Cook's Cottage.

On the preacher stone sits a woman with her young child who, judging from the way [s]he is being supported, has probably only just learned how to stand. Behind her a man is heading towards the church. To her left a man/boy in a pith helmet stands in the middle of the road and further left still can be seen three children with sun hats, larger than the children themselves. There is a man with the children one of whom seems to be perched on the edge of a wheelbarrow.

Owner : not recorded

0648 Looking toward the Cross c 1900



School must be out as there some thirteen children playing in the street, most of them 'infants'; none can be more than five or six years. The solitary adult in the scene is walking towards the photographer. His occupation is unknown but it may be his large four wheeled wagon that stands outside the Baker Arms. If so it is not carrying coal for he is wearing a splendidly clean white apron and straw hat. To the left of the picture an older boy in Knickerbocker trousers stands outside 'Fry' Saddler.

Ernest Cottle was in fact the saddler between 1901 and at least 1939 [when the National Register was compiled before the war]. He came to the village in 1901 'as manager of a branch and in 1909 his employers sold this branch business to him'. It is assumed therefore that 'Fry' was the original owner but where from is not known. Cottle did not live 'over the shop' being found in the 1911 census living in Pear Tree Cottage.

A sepia toned version of this picture is sold by Frith's and is not shown here. Our copy has the endorsement M. J. R.- B No 1471, together with The Cross, Child Okeford on it which the Frith's version does not have.

Owner : not recorded

0606 Cross Area c 1904



Another picture by Thomas Nesbitt. The picture is slightly blurry but three girls and two boys stand in the cross area. The boys symmetrically arranged around the girls. A young boy stands in front of the Baker Arms. He may be a delivery boy as he has a basket slung from his shoulder. The Preacher stone can be clearly seen. In the middle distance a man stands outside the butchers shop with to his right a woman complete with white apron stands in the house next door. A cart, horseless, is parked outside the Saddlers. Nothing much else is happening.

A copy of this picture has been published in the Blackmore Vale Magazine in it's 'Then and Now' column and has a version that was sent in 1904

Owner : Millennium Book Committee

0650 Looking towards the Cross 1904 hand coloured



Almost from the beginning of photography people were dissatisfied with black and white pictures and hand colouring of individual prints was common. We have two versions of this picture in the archive. The date, for reasons given in the next picture, is 1904. The tinting was done using a variety of dyes or paints and the quality varies. Here it has been carefully applied as befits a low output producer. The image [COA_1912] of Bournemouth pier would have been produced in their thousands and less care was taken in the application of the paint. It is not known who coloured this picture but as it was produced in the village it may have been a villager. They at least would have been familiar with the different colours of the buildings etc.

As with the previous picture the road is full of children. In the centre foreground are four young girls but only one is looking at the photographer. She at least is following the injunction to 'smile at the camera'. On the right partially obscured by blemish on the print is a small boy and a young girl with a large hat behind him. To the left a two wheeled horse chaise stands with one occupant waiting to head down Hayward lane. In front of Fry's Saddlery stand a young boy and there are two men, one boy and a woman in white waistcoats. A small boy dressed in a sailors outfit stands in the road to their right and behind him another boy perches on the railings outside of what today is 'Joint House'. In front of Cross House two older girls and a man are visible. The girls appear to be heading towards the Co-op at Bartley House, which has its awnings pulled out. The man appears bow legged and stooped so may have been an older gentleman.

Owner : Jane MacBeth

0651 Looking towards the Cross 1904 original



This version was probably the original of the one above. The same picture [though not this card] was featured in a 'Then and Now' article published in November 2023 by the electronic Blackmore Vale Magazine. It also included 0606. This picture was signed at the bottom - Hanford Sept 4th 1904 A.A.M. Our version was owned by a villager.

Owner: Merv Wareham

0604 Cross Area pre-1919



The dating of old pictures without direct evidence, such as a postage mark, is difficult although other clues may guide us. In this picture, for example, there is no war memorial so the date must be pre-1919. Moreover as we will see the sign outside the Baker Arms allows to give a chronological sequence to the pictures even if the exact date cannot be known. As with many of these early pictures it was very carefully staged. Nothing about such pictures could be spontaneous for the long exposure times needed all too often resulted in blurred images. All the participants are thus careful to keep still and watch the cameraman.

The Baker Arms is doing good trade as two bicycles rest against its walls. The ridge of its thatched roof has recently been renewed and it has a non heraldic sign of black letters on a white background. It must be hot inside as all the windows are open.

In the right foreground is almost certainly the stone described by Alfred Pope in 1906 [see introduction to this section]. Known as the 'Preacher' stone it was a large block of sandstone on which it was said that one Mary Saint had been publicly whipped some 90 years before for stealing hurdles. The origin of the name is not known but Pope noted that many village crosses were used by itinerant preachers and as the stone was thought to be the remnant of an old cross this might be the explanation.

Four children stand in the road, which is made of little more than compacted chalk. It would have been an uncomfortable ride for the cyclists in the pub even though Dunlop's pneumatic tyres, introduced in 1888, would have made it more comfortable than in a horse cart. As with all the other pictures of the village there are more girls in the street than boys. The absence of motor traffic no doubt made this area a safe place to play.

The trunk of a very tall solitary pine tree stands in the grounds of Church Farm. Outside the butchers

shop are a bicycle, two horse carts [minus horses] a splendidly rotund man in butchers apron and a boy sitting on the fence at by the entrance to what today is 'Joint House' but was then the entrance to the butcher's yard. Animals spent their last days grazing in the field known as Jacob's ladder before being brought to the yard for slaughter. Food miles were considerably shorter in those days.

A horse and cart are heading down Hayward Lane heavily laden with a cargo of coppiced wood to what appears, judging by the bundles of wood outside it, to be a wood yard behind what is today Midsummer cottage.

Owner : Jane MacBeth

0628 The Wayside Cross and War Memorial

v1 c 1919



One of the casualties of the first world war, Rupert Brook, posed the question, "*Stands the Church clock at ten to three?*" Well no actually it doesn't – it reads 4 pm- so although we know the time of day and that a

NE wind is blowing [according to the weather vane on one of the Church Farm buildings] we do not have a precise date. The masonry is 'rougher' in this picture than in later ones and although there is a single inscription around the top course of stone there are as yet none to the dead that are on the course below it. The inscription, though much eroded today, reads,

"TO THE GLORY OF GOD IN MEMORY OF MEN OF CHILD OKEFORD & HANFORD WHO SERVED THEIR KING & COUNTRY IN THE GREAT WAR 1914 -1919 REMEMBERING ESPECIALLY BEFORE GOD THOSE WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES WHOSE NAMES ARE INSCRIBED BELOW"

When it was dedicated on Thursday November 6th 1919, it was referred to as the 'Wayside Cross', and the lack of inscribed names may reflect that at that stage the full casualty list was not yet fully known. Behind the war memorial we have a clear view of Manor Farm, the church and in the far distance Hambledon Hill. This is the first picture of the entrance to the church to show a lamp over the gates. The entrance to Church Farm can be seen on the right and there is clear evidence of traffic into and out of the farm yard.

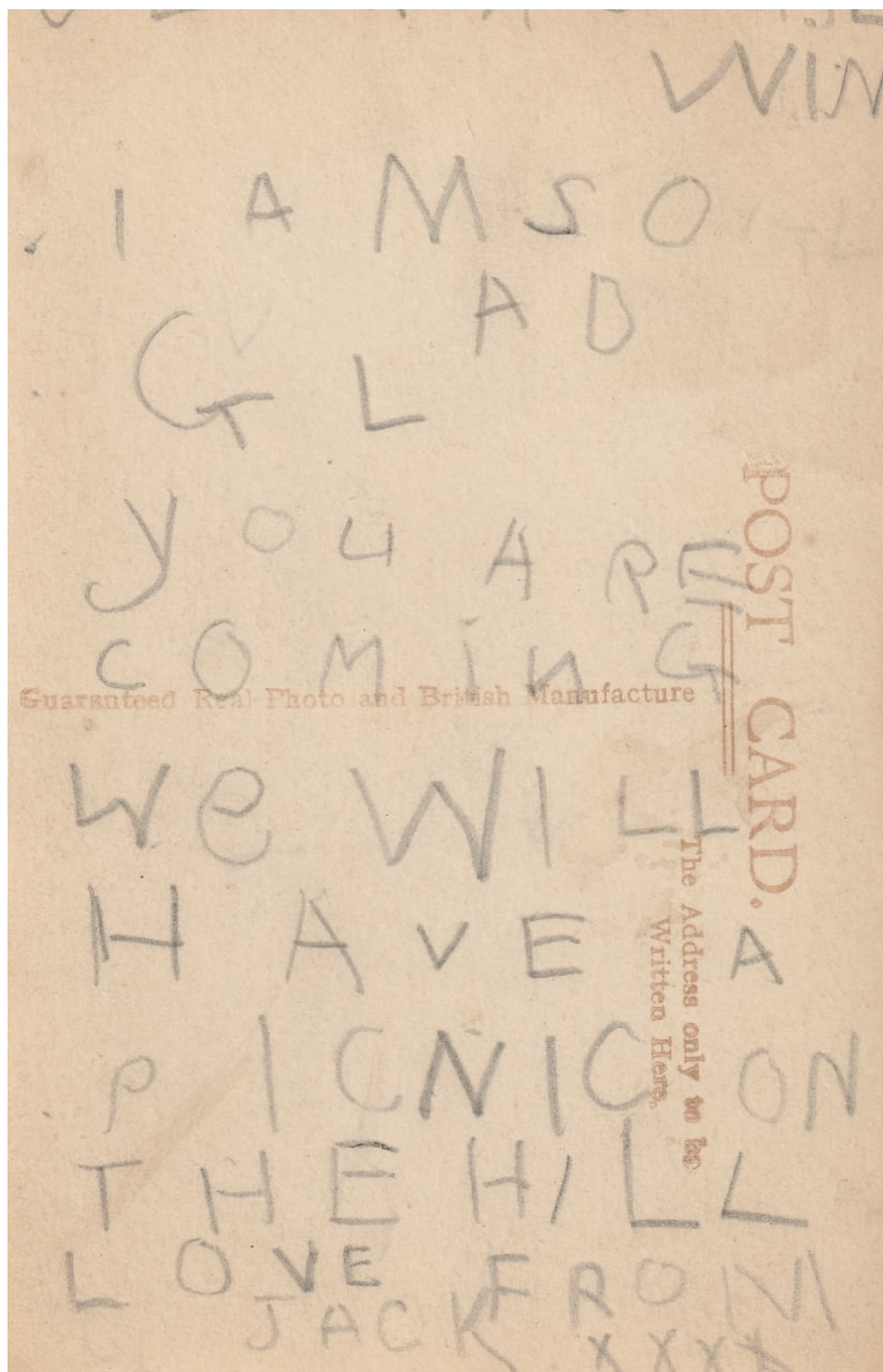
Wreaths may be seen on the memorial itself which at this stage is surrounded by crushed stone of some sort, probably chalk. Immediately in the foreground there is clear evidence of passing bovine traffic.

Owner: Dave Wingrove, John Davies

0629 The Wayside Cross and War Memorial c 1919



This version of the picture was published by Diffey's and is slightly less clear although better exposed in the shadows. The interest however comes from the obverse side of the card.



Unfortunately we have no more details of who Win and Jack were.

Owner: Jane MacBeth

0601 Butcher's shop c 1920



In 1861 Thomas Turner of Manston was living in this shop and in the census of that year he lists his occupation as a confectioner. Five years later his son Robert was born and in 1891 he joined his father as butcher's assistant and ran the business until in 1948, when he was nearly 80 yrs old he sold the business to Mr H L Dyer whose son, in turn, took over the business in 1981 until his retirement in 1999 when the business closed.

Animals were kept in Jacob's Ladder [then a field now a small housing complex] and were slaughtered at the back of the butcher's shop. The Millennium Book notes that *"After a cow had been killed Mr. Turner loaded all the waste on to a cart - the smell was terrible - and took it down to Southfield, a field off Southfield Lane where it was left to rot. Sheep and pigs were killed by slitting their throats and letting them bleed to death, and the screams of the pigs could be heard all over the village"*.

Dated 1920 it is probably a hot day. The surrounding houses have their windows open and the curtains drawn. Turner's door is open but the shop has the shutters up probably to keep the interior cool. In the days before refrigeration the only way of keeping the meat cold was to lay it out on marble slabs. Heat was the butcher's enemy. The butcher's shop and cottage next to it has been demolished since and a modern cottage 'Joint House' now occupies the site. In this picture an ancient motor cycle is parked outside whilst an indistinct figure [small boy or dog] can be made out at the entrance to the old slaughter yard. The shop itself seems to have been an infill between the Baker Arms and the cottage next door.

Owner: Not recorded

0613 The Baker Arms c 1924



This is the oldest dated picture of the Baker Arms alone that we have. An older lady stands in the entrance of the Baker Arms. This is Mrs Beatrice Maud Pride the landlady who was 51 in 1924. Her husband had been a police sergeant in Sherborne who had died in 1918. She may have taken over the licence in Child Okeford in 1920. To the left of her there are two boys wearing 'knickerbockers'. These are her son's Reg [the smaller of the two] aged 16 and Bill aged 20. Since they do not look this age it is possible the date on the picture is wrong.

Both boys are very smartly turned out; it is perhaps a special occasion. Reg is wearing a waistcoat and Bill has a chain with what one guesses will be a fob watch on it's end. Both wear bouquets in the button holes of their coats. To the right of Maud stand Ivy and Bert Cooper. In the 1921 census Ivy is shown as Ivy Kidd as she was Maud's daughter from her first marriage. Ivy was 22 yr's old in that year. Bertie Cooper was considerably older [33] and was a plumber based in Wilton. They married in 1922.

The front of the Baker Arms has a shallow wooden porch with some impressive lead flashing and at some time in the past thirty years the thatched roof has been renewed as it looks in perfect condition. There are only three downstairs windows but in order to protect the privacy of the customers net curtains obscure the view into the pub. The pub sign simply states 'The Baker Arms' there is no heraldic work or motto on the yet. A part of the yard behind the pub can be seen. The two storey barn visible on the right is now a holiday cottage known as Daisy cottage. As yet motor traffic in the village is rare the main motive power being horses and in the yard can be seen the solid wooden wheels of a horse cart. It will not be long however before the motor car invades the village; good news for Reg Pride who would eventually go on to own the

only garage in the village, situated opposite Millbrook House.

Owner : John Davies

0614 The Baker Arms c 1924



Another young woman, this time dressed in white stands in the entrance. We do not know who she is. To the right we get a good view of Cross Cottage. Note how both properties front straight onto the road. To the left we see a part of the butcher's shop together with a wall strengthening support. The pub still has it's thatched roof and only three windows on the ground floor.

Owner : John Davies

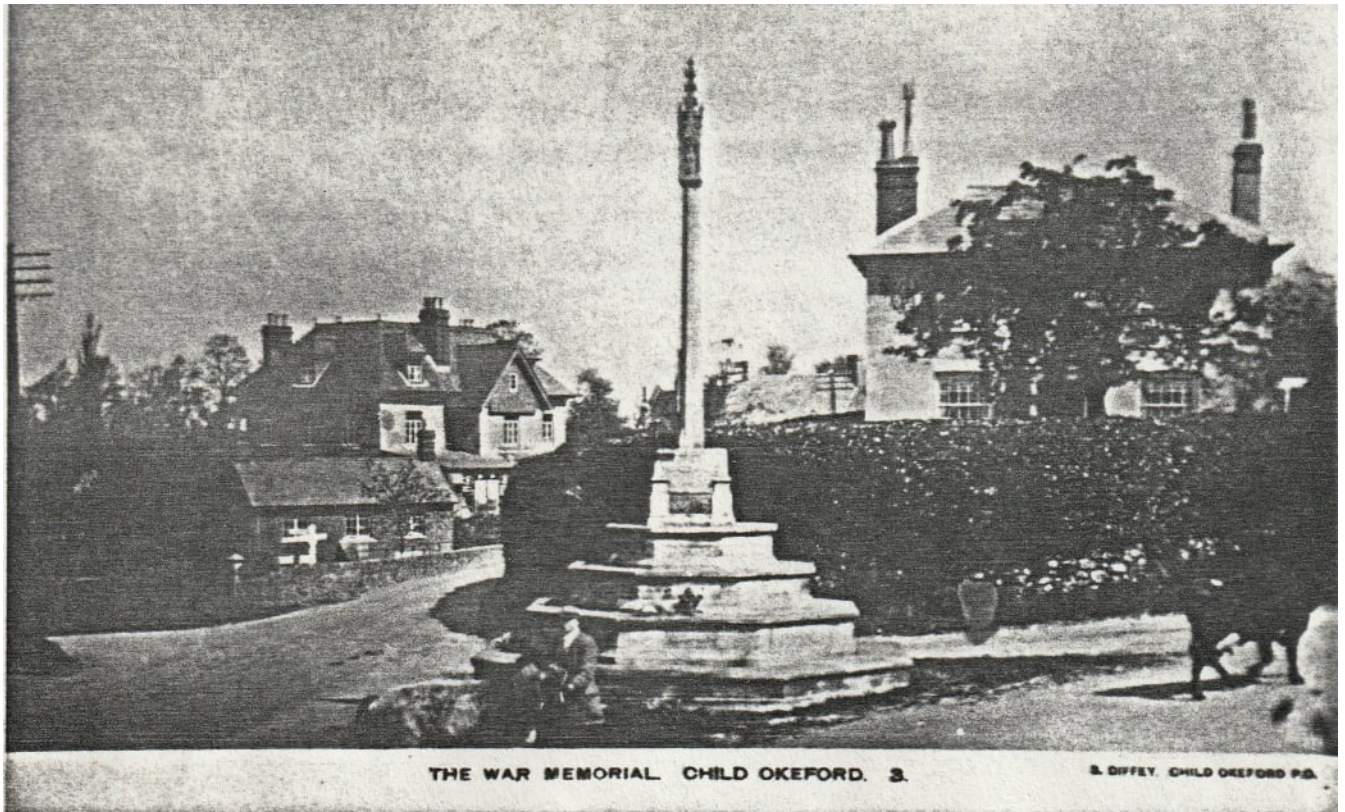
0615 The Baker Arms undated c 1924



The summer sun shines and it is clearly a hot day for although the door is closed five of the six windows are open. One of the customers has left his bicycle propped against the front wall. Perhaps he intends to have it repaired for on the far wall of the pub is a notice 'Cycles Repaired' below which is a free standing noticeboard. It appears to be selling something as there objects pinned to it and a notice declares they are 'VALUE FOR MONEY'. The pub sign is the one in use since 1900 but additionally the pub has now acquired a large circular sign indicating that it is selling Badger Ales from Hall and Woodhouse brewery at Blandford. For many years it was a 'tied' house.

Owner: John Davies

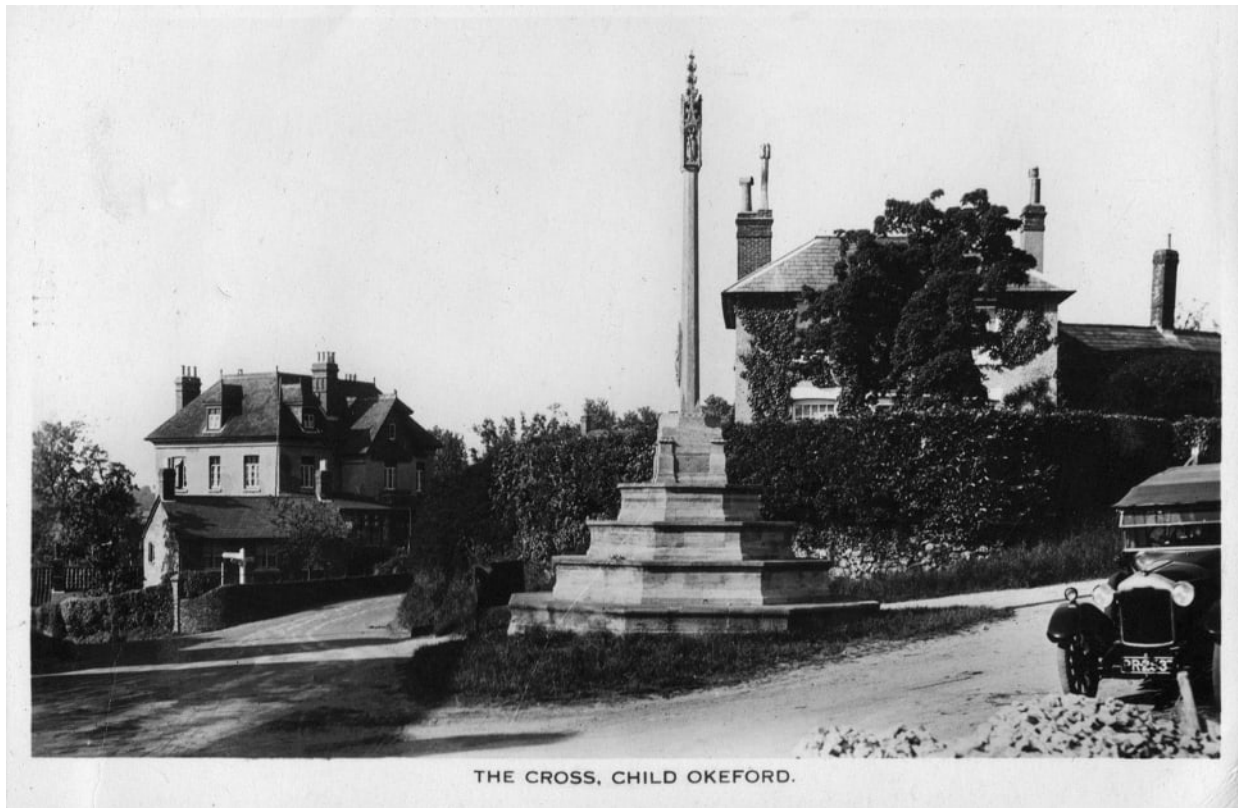
0636 War Memorial and Cow date unknown



This picture is a photocopy of the original so it's quality is understandably poor. It is clearly post 1919 as the war memorial has been built. We get a fine view of Damsel pit [now tiled] and Bartley House and on the right Cross House with a splendid set of chimney pots. Whilst a man sits on the memorial itself a cow makes it's way up to Church farm for milking.

Owner : Sylvia Holdeman

0638 The Cross, Cross House and Bartley House mid 1920's



The original was dated c 1920 and this would certainly fit with the registration number on the car on the right. Two letter PR numbers were issued in Dorset between January 1923 and December 1927.

The Cross area was the natural site for the war memorial and at it's dedication it was named the Wayside Cross. With it's based shaped to accept the preacher stone coins of the time and current newspapers, etc. were placed underneath. The base of the War Memorial was erected by Harry Janes and his son who lived in Damsel Pit which can be seen in front of the towering presence of Bartley House. By the time this shot was taken grass has begun to grow around it and the masonry seems below the top tier seems to have been in much better condition. By this time the names of the fallen have probably been inscribed but cannot be made out.

The signs posts around the cross area have changed. In this view one of Dorset's famous finger sign posts can be seen in the grounds of Damsel Pit. Cross house has an interesting range of chimney pots on it's roof and I wonder if the photographer composed the picture to include them as they make a pleasing arrangement alongside the war memorial. There are as yet no telephone/power poles or wires visible. If the date of this picture is correct all the above pictures having telephone/power wires must be in a later period.

Owner: not recorded

0652 The Pride of the Village 1925



Two copies of this picture exist; one is dated 1925 whilst the other was sent to Miss G Adams on 1st July 1925 by her sister [Win?].

Bartley House [as the Co-op] is visible in the background complete with awnings and the advert's seen previously visible on the windows. We also get a partial view of Cross House. Outside Damsel pit is a three finger sign post. The sender of the card was expecting her mother to arrive at Shillingstone station the next day. It was in the middle of a heat wave apparently and a dog is tied up outside the butchers which as before has it's shutters closed against the heat.

The writer added a note "Dad Please note "The Pride of the Village". This probably relates to the fact that in the middle of the road there is a motor vehicle of some sort. The wheel alignments , front and back are unusual and I wonder if it was a van towing a trailer. A man is probably resting on the latter although it gives the appearance of him pushing it. The Pride family opened the garage in Child Okeford and the car was presumably owned by them. The owner of the card, John Davies was a member of the family.

Owner : John Davies

0607 The Cross from Cross House c 1930



The next two pictures are taken from a unique perspective in that they can only have been taken from Cross House.

A lone woman, dressed in black silhouetted against a chalky white road, strides away from the war memorial. I think this adds an eerie quality to the scene. The Baker Arms has a white on black sign the significance of which will be explored later. This is the last photograph showing just three windows on the ground floor and the unenclosed entrance. New signs advertising Hall & Woodhouse and Badger's Ales adorn the walls.

The picture is said to come from the 1930's; if so it is the early part of the decade. Modernity has come to Child Okeford, not only do power / telegraph lines cross the scene but telephone poles can be seen in the background. For the benefit of motorists and strangers a finger post has now been installed on the bend of the road, not in it's current position at the junction of Upper Street and the Hollow, but opposite Turners the butcher. The awning at Turner's has not been opened out and the windows are shuttered but this is a common feature of photographs of the butcher's. It was presumably to keep inside temperatures down.

As a solitary man leaves Woolfrey's shop [now Midsummer Cottage] we can be certain that this was not a Sunday. Opening on a Sunday was strictly forbidden. Large signs outside of Woolfrey's advertise Colman's Mustard and Brooke Bond tea. Next door there is a large thatched cottage set back from the road. It's attractive appearance is not sufficient to save it from the future as it will eventually be knocked down and replaced by the Cross Stores. The garage next door however survives until the present day [2024].

Owner : Not recorded.

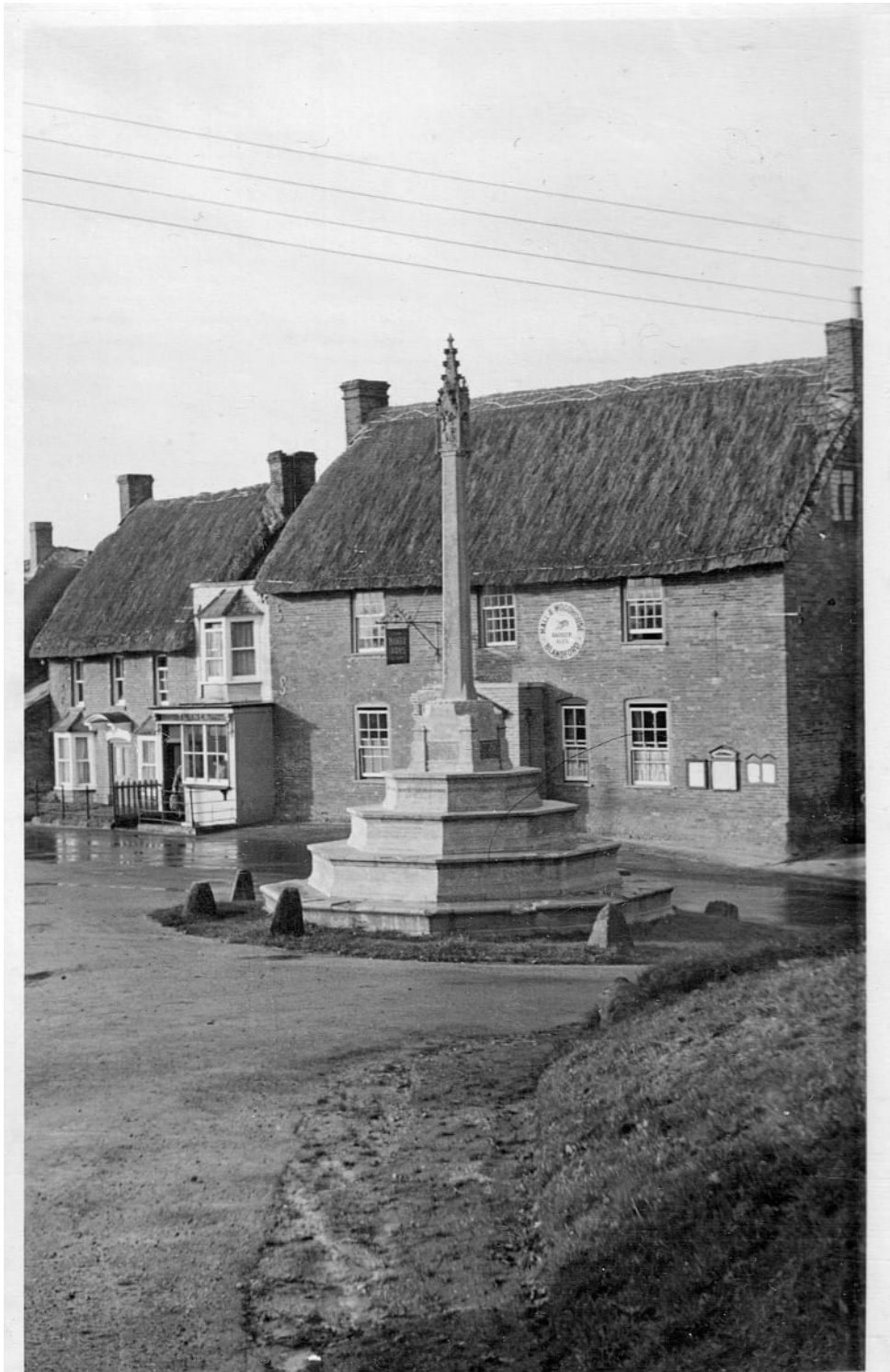
0631 Cross and Church undated



There is no date on this card but it is earlier than the following two cards. There are as yet no noticeboards, cars or bus shelter. It was taken just before 1 pm.

Owner : Dave Wingrove

0621 Cross and Baker Arms - undated



It has been raining judging by the state of the road in front of the pub. A Hall and Woodhouse sign is now in place and the pre- 1925 sign has been replaced with the white on black sign. The 'Inn' sign, seen in later pictures, has not been added to the front wall but two new noticeboards have, making a total of four. Next door to the pub Turners the butcher is open and a customer is leaving the shop. Through the window it

is to possible to make out another customer or assistant inside the shop.

Owner : John Davies

0653 The Cross c 1940's



A hand tinted photograph the date of which is unknown but probably the 1940's as the Baker Arm's sign is not yet heraldic and that appeared c 1949. No vehicles or horses are seen which is as well as two women stand in the middle of the road. One appears to be about to enter the butchers shop. The sign over what was 'Fry Saddlers' now reads 'Cottles' as although he suffered bankruptcy in the 1920's he was able to soldier on in trade. The Millennium book records *"He worked by himself in a shop smelling strongly of wax and leather next to the butchers, and made and repaired everything for which a horse or its owner could wish. He made belts for farm workers, bellows for the smithy and sets of harnesses, from heavy shaft and trace harnesses for cart-horses to light equipment for pony and trap. He made ridge pads, girths, collars and blinkers as well as riding saddles and bridles."*

Brasso, a necessity for cleaning horse's tack is prominently advertised. Possibly his best seller.

The Baker Arms now sports two signs on the same support. The inner one appears to be an early form of the Baker family coat of arms and the outer is the , second type seen before. On the far right of the picture the finger post described above can just be made out.

Owner Merv Wareham

0641 Upper Street 1942



Two copies of this picture exist in the archive. At first sight this seems to be a colour photograph. Closer examination reveals it to be colour print of an original black and white picture which has at some time been hand coloured. This is the best picture of Damsel pit in the collection and for once it obscures Bartley House rather than the other way round. Two cyclists head towards Shaftesbury. In front of them is a pretty thatched cottage which is part of a small collection of houses which then as now is known as The Barracks, though why is not known; in due course it will become a pottery. On the corner of this cottage is a large wooden pole. This is delivering electricity to the Co-op which in 1931, when it was installed, was the first house in the village to have it. Rather curiously the printer of the picture has attempted to 'paint' out the wires running to the pole. Unfortunately he has not made a particularly good job as some wires remain; their ends seem to be terminating in space. Further up the street the cellar doors of what at one time had been 'The Old Cow Inn' can be seen.

The post card was sent on the 19th June 1942 although the dress of the cyclists suggest the original picture was taken much earlier. It was sent to a Mrs Adams in Poole and bears a 2d stamp of George VI which has been franked at Child Okeford. During the war , 'Careless talk' may have cost lives but careless post cards seem to have escaped the censor. Not only does the card say where the picture was taken, it also shows a finger post on the wall of Damsel pit giving directions and distance to Manston and Gillingham. Worse still we learn that Fred is expected at the weekend and that Jack is now at Cambridge having been transferred to an "armoured division."

Owner : Merv Wareham

0620 Peace and quiet 1947



All is still; if just a little out of focus! There are two versions of this card one attributes it to the 1930's but the other is clearly marked 'Taken April 1947'.

The Baker Arms has four windows on it's ground floor. The new pointing can be seen around it and there is now a new enclosed entrance to the pub. Perhaps it is a sign of increasing traffic in the village but around the base of the war memorial for the first time we see a protective ring of what appear to be the bases of staddle stones.

Today though peace reigns. It is a bright, sunny day, fluffy white clouds fill the sky there are no humans, animals or motor cars to enliven the scene.

Owner: not recorded

0642 Further up Upper Street 1948



Sent by her sister [unknown] to Mrs Adams in Parkstone on 18th July 1948 . The picture sent from Wayside cottage shows the junction of Upper street and Shaftesbury Road. Out of sight on the left is Yew Hedge House and in the background is Hambledon Hill. Today a small garage is to be found on the right and the hedges have grown up considerably but otherwise the area is not much different today. The narrowness of the road prevents the view being ruined by parked cars.

Owner: not recorded.

0645 Junction of Hayward Lane 1948



The date the picture was taken is unknown but this card was sent to Mr Adams in Parkstone on 6th February 1948. It has been raining as the ground is wet. On the right we see a high brick wall behind which is the playground of the school is a 'field' belonging to Church Farm. Picture 0104 in the aerial photos section shows that the area behind the high wall at the back was still in cultivation into the 1960's.

On the left a horse waits patiently for something to happen as does a dog at the horse's feet. The cart to which it is attached has an illegible name painted on the front. Seemingly unaware of the photographers presence a man on the cart, talks to a man on the ground, neither looking at the camera. A youth stands next to him and the socks, knees and shorts of a young boy can be seen near the horse's head but the rest of him is not visible.

Owner: John Davies

0602 The old saddlers shop 1949



Taken in 1949 we see what had once been the saddler's shop, owned by Ernest Cottle. By this date however the various signs that used to advertise his wares have gone and the business appears to have closed.

Owner: Nancy Manning

0622 The Cross, Baker Arms and Coach 1949



Dated to 1949 and not surprisingly there is now road traffic present. A coach is partially obscured by the war memorial whilst a van, probably the butchers van stands outside the shop. Lurking in the corner between the Baker and the Butcher is a man with a bicycle.

This is the first picture that shows the heraldic sign at the Baker Arms.

Owner : Nancy Manning

0639 The Cross 1949



The year is 1949 and film was in short supply. Cross House is clearly visible, Bartley House and Damsel pit are clearly seen and now there is a sign, albeit not a finger post, in the position of the sign today. The staddle stones are in place. Unfortunately it is slightly out of focus.

Owner: Nancy Manning

0655 The Butcher's shop 1949



Taken in 1949 this is one of a small series. Outside the butchers, with it's rather wonky awning is the butchers van. Overtaking it on it's way to Sturminster the rear of a bus can just be made out. Another car opposite the saddler's is another car [registration unknown]. Fry's / Cottle's Saddlery appears to be closed. The windows appear to be boarded up and the space where the sign was is seen to be empty. There is not a soul to be seen.

Owner: Nancy Manning

0623 The Cross c 1950



The modern age has arrived in Child Okeford. Rising from the roof of Midsummer cottage can be seen a large H shaped television aerial, designed to receive the signals of the BBC. This suggests that the picture was taken in the early 1950's. The possession of a television was a rare event though for none of the other houses have an aerial.

The thatched roof of the Baker Arms has just had it's ridge renewed. The pointing around the new window still stands out and the pub now bears three signs. The simple sign of 1925+ has been replaced with a heraldic coat of arms, a circular sign belonging to 'Hall and Woodhouse' and a sign that simply says 'Inn'. Two noticeboards are attached to the front wall.

A young boy in shorts walks up the middle of the high street followed by a group of young girls. Luckily there is not a car in sight. A young woman pushes her bicycle with the intention of going into the butchers shop. As she does so another woman enters the shop. What was Woolfrey's shop [Midsummer Cottage] now has a large awning over it's main display window.

Owner : John Davies

0624 The Cross, Child Okeford c 1950



The Cross, Child Okeford

FRITH
COOK II

This version of the previous picture is owned by Linda Curtis [of whom more anon]. It is identical to the previous picture.

Owner: Linda Curtis.

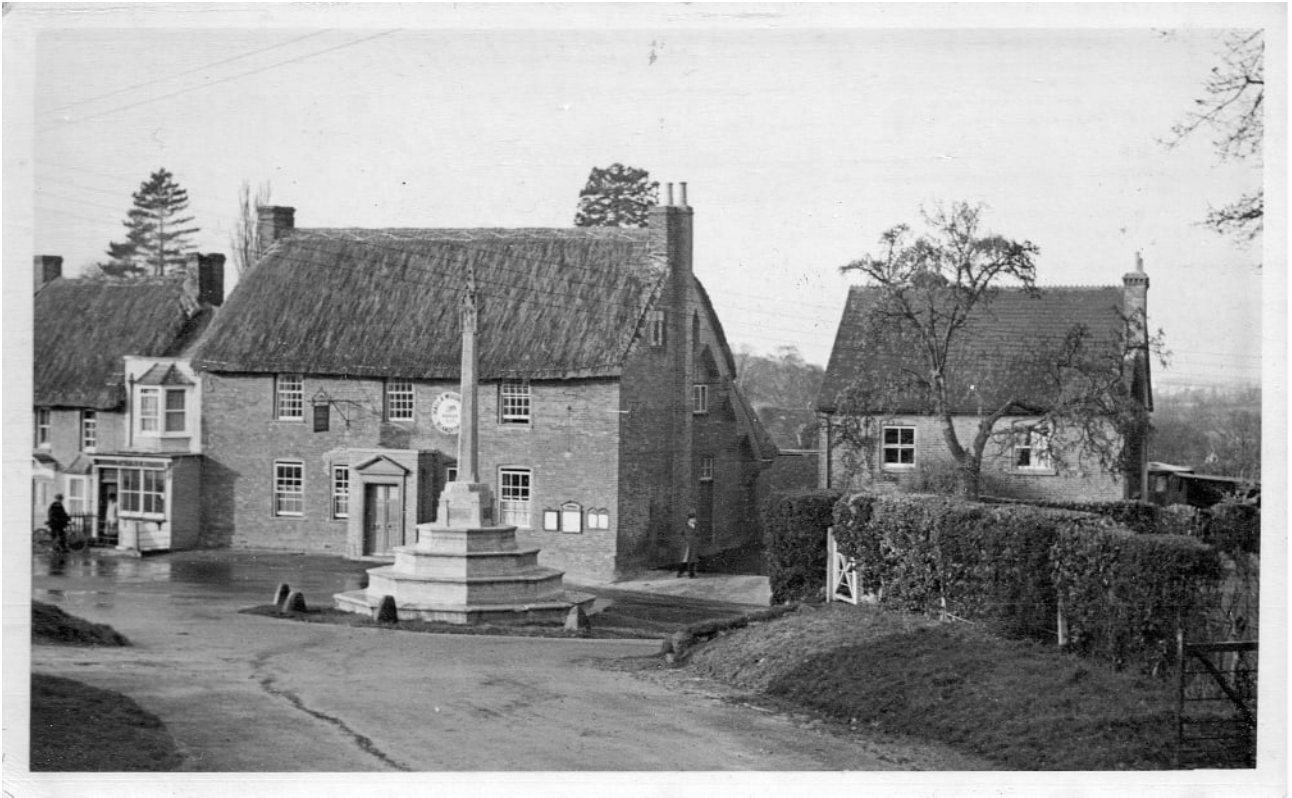
0666 Butcher's and Bakers c 1950



The pub is still thatched, has a brick porch four downstairs windows and the Heraldic sign together with the Hall and Woodhouse sign and another one that says simply 'Inn'. Bartley house appears to be still in use as the Coop in the distance and, to the right, Cross House can be clearly seen behind a well trimmed hedge. The awning of the pub still looks wonky but presumably functions satisfactorily. There is a non-finger post sign behind the War Memorial .

Owner: John Davies

0619 The Baker Arms and Cross Cottage c 1950



The next few pictures are taken from the road leading to the church which oddly enough is not named church road. The road in front of the pub is wet and a rivulet is running down from the church to the road. The entrance to Church farm can just be seen on the left and there is a fine view of the upper storey of Cross Cottage. The chimney arrangement of the Baker Arms is particularly complicated as noted in the listing by English Heritage - *"The projecting stepped chimney-breast is of an unusual design"*. On the left hand end of the building a solitary chimney, with no pots, can be seen but on the right, behind a man standing in the drive, no less than four external 'breastworks' can be seen feeding into one chimney with two pots. More pictures of this feature were taken in the series COA_0618a.

Three men are visible in the picture. One with a bicycle near the butchers and another man leaves the butcher whilst the third man stands in the pub's driveway.

This card was sent to Mrs Adams in Parkstone but the franking date is obscured. The stamps however are George VI and so probably this is the late 1940's – early 1950's.

A Hall and Woodhouse sign is now in place and the pre- 1925 sign has been replaced with the first 'coat of arms' sign. Two new noticeboards have been added to the front wall. Likewise the new window can be seen clearly with it's fresh pointing. Next door to the pub Turner's the butcher is open and a customer is leaving the shop. Through the window it is to possible to make out another customer or assistant inside the shop.

Owner : John Davies

0658 The Baker Arms c 1952



The Baker Arms which now bears the heraldic sign. A card dated 29th May 1952 was sent to Misses Adams in New Milton.

Owner: Dave Wingrove

0657 The Wayside Cross an unusual perspective.



At last a photographer with a different sense of perspective. This photograph has no date on it and is unique in that it has been taken from inside the railings of the Butchers shop. This does not help us as the railings can be seen in photos from 1900 to the 1950's. Nothing is going on and the long shadows suggest it is an evening shot which is confirmed by the clock on the church which is around 5 past 7 pm.

Owner: Dave Wingrove

0647 The Square, Child Okeford c 1959



The car in the foreground has the number plate NPR 688. It was a Dorset issue plate with the NPR indicating that it was issued from January 1959. Times have changed the children have been cleared from the streets along with the horses and carts. Mr Cottle's shop appears to be in good condition although it's bow window has been removed and replaced by garage doors.

Smart new doors also protect the entrance to the back of the butcher's, where so many animals met their fate. It is still a butcher's shop however. The photograph is labelled 'CDOK.34F The Square, Child Okeford' but the area has never been called the square.

Owner: John Davies

0633 The Cross date unknown.



There is no date on this card. Sometimes one wonders what the photographer was thinking. He has labelled this picture 'The Cross' but then only partly included it in the picture. It is also out of focus although at least we can see that the Church clock reads twenty to two. Another point of interest- the car- has also been cut in half, it appears to be a model from the early 1960's. Perhaps he took the picture after a drink or two in the Baker Arms.

Owner: not recorded

0632 The Church and Cross c 1960



The clock indicates that it is about 1 pm and appears to have been taken from the side entrance to the Baker Arms. The car on the left looks to be a Hillman Imp which would put the date of the picture after 1963. There are still no stones around the war memorial but at high magnification the inscriptions have been added to it. On the right is the Parish Council Noticeboard and in the background one belonging to the church. In time the Parish Council will move it's noticeboard to the wall of the village stores.

Owner: Dave Wingrove

0608 The Cross from Cross House 1964



This picture appears to be taken from Cross House. The photo is said to be taken before 1964 and was certainly being used when this card was sent on the 7th September 1965. In the distance can be seen one of the two village shops with, over it's doors the sign 'Curtis stores' which was then owned by Keith Curtis and his wife. In the previous pictures this was known as Woolfrey's. Although the tree obscures the view it can be seen that the rather handsome 'cobb' cottage next to it appears to have disappeared - as indeed it was to do.

Owner : not recorded.

0637 The Cross 1968



Another splendid picture of the area with clear views of Bartley House, no longer the Co-op, and someone seems to have erected a complex array of aerials. There are good views too of Cross Cottage and House and Damsel pit.

This picture was sent to Miss G Adams in New Milton on 1st July 1968 but light smoke coming from Cross Cottage reveals it was taken in the colder months.

Owner : Dave Wingrove

0603 Top of Hayward Lane 1973



The back of the card states it is one of the “scenes of interest and beauty in Child Okeford Dorset” and that it is a ‘real’ photograph. It may be a real photograph but I am not sure the photographer has fulfilled his remit in other respects as apart from the unidentified man walking towards Monk’s Yard there is little of interest in the picture itself. The card was sent on 16th November 1973.

Owner: Not recorded

0626 The Memorial Cross 1999



The Memorial Cross, 1999

Taken in 1999 nothing much has happened to the the Baker Arms although it is now tiled rather than thatched. The old butchers shop has gone, replaced by a brick building, set back from the road known today as Joint House. For the moment it is still a butcher's shop although slaughtering animals had long since ceased. It is owned by Mr Dyer but he is about to retire and the shop will then close. In the background what was Woolfrey's stores is now a private house and the splendid cobb cottage seen in 0607 has been replaced by The Curtis Stores. As yet it is brick built but will eventually be rendered.

Owner: Millennium Book Committee

0654 Mr Dyer's Butchers shop 1999



Mr. Dyer's butcher's shop, 1999

What is now Joint House has replaced the earlier cottage but at this time was still in use as a butchers owned at the end by Mr Dyer. The whole area has had a make over. The railings that so many generations of youngsters perched upon have gone. So too has the galvanised roof over the entrance to the old slaughter yard. Even the bikes have been replaced by an old Renault Clio [probably Mr Dyer's] parked outside the shop.

We now get a better picture of the new village stores.

Owner: Millennium Book Committee

0634 Cross, Church and Bus shelter c 1990



The classic view of the war memorial and St Nicholas Church. It is in splendid condition and I wonder if it has been cleaned recently. The back of the card has no message on it but it was produced for G S Diffey by New Perspectives London. The telephone number given is 081 for outer London which was introduced in 1990 and was replaced in 1995 by 0181 which dates the picture to between these times. Unusually the photographer is named; H Prendergast and he took it at 17.30 pm. Whatever the date was the village was clearly confident that omnibus travel still had a future as a substantial brick built bus shelter had been erected.

Owner: Dave Wingrove

0616 The Baker Arms 2005



The landlord , Norman Mills stands outside the pub. He and his wife ran it from 1998 to 2005. Since the 1920's much has changed. The thatch roof has gone, a new window has been added on the ground floor and the old porch has been replaced. It is no longer tied to Hall & Woodhouse and has become a Freehouse. This picture is one of a series taken at the time and includes interior views.

Owner : not recorded

0617 The Baker Arms in Lockdown 2020



A sad sight taken in the period of lockdown, 2020, when all travel was banned except for personal exercise. The landlord and landlady of the time, James and Desi Hutchings have painted a 'Thank you NHS' message on a pallet outside the pub.

Owner : Kevin Pearce

0618 The Baker Arms in Lockdown 2020



Owner: Kevin Pearce

0618a The Baker Arms Bicentenary 2021



The Bicentenary of the Baker Arms was celebrated in 2021 when thankfully lockdown had ended. A series of pictures was taken including interior pictures including this one of the bar with it's one way system to enforce social distancing which was still in force in public spaces.



Owner: Kevin Pearce

o618b The Baker Arms Up for Sale. 2024



In 2024 the pub was put up for sale with an asking price of £500,000. At this time opening hours were greatly reduced and no food was being served.

Owner: Kevin Pearce

0640 The Cross undated



THE CROSS, CHILD OKEFORD

A sunny day , telephone/power poles are visible. This post card is entitled 'The Cross Child Okeford'. Unfortunately for the photographer he has a standard lens and it has not been able to capture the war memorial in it's full length. It was taken from the bank in front of what was then Church farm , now St Nicholas close. On the left we see a part of Cross Cottage. To the right of the war memorial we can see Damsel Pit at one time a house given over to accommodating the village poor.

Owner : Jane MacBeth

0643 The Pottery Upper street undated.



Taken from a four scene postcard this is the pretty cottage referred to above in 0641. We do not know when the picture was taken but it was in use as a potters shop. Outside can be seen a collection of pots on what appears to be the triangular chassis of an invalid carriage. The electricity pole mentioned above is still in position but is vulnerable to damage as it has two reflective warning signs attached to it. Today this cottage is much overgrown with greenery of some sort and is virtually unrecognisable. The electricity pole remains although it is anybody's guess as to how many times it has been replaced.

Owner: Nancy Manning

0644 A present from Child Okeford



The appearance of this picture in February 2021 caused quite a stir as such a plate had never been heard of before. Was it made in the pottery above ? Well we cannot know but if not there where else ?

Owner: John Davies