

MAURICE CRICK ('Rugger')

Maurice Crick was born on 17th December 1924, in Boarstall. He was the son of Reuben Leonard (Rugger) Crick (born 18th May 1900) and Dorothy Evelyn, nee Wheeler.

The family moved to Wheatley in April 1929 and lived in the stone cottage on the left-hand side of the footpath leading from Station Road, alongside Hathaways Yard.

His father was a blacksmith who had served his apprenticeship with Wilfred Sheldon. He worked for Cullums, and he had to shoe the heavy horses which were used to pull the carts for the sawmill. Other work included welding machinery, and fitting metal rims on cartwheels etc. The family moved into 54 High Street in 1939.

Maurice went to the infants school in Bell Lane, and then to the Church Road School. His friends included Bill Boxall, Victor Munt, and Alan and Tony Hollifield. He enjoyed all sports and played football and cricket for the Wheatley village teams. However, after the Littleworth Road School was built, they no longer had access to good playing fields, so Maurice started to play for the Horspath teams instead.

Maurice's mother, Dorothy was a 'good church-person', so Maurice and his brother Geoffrey both sang in the church choir, with their friends Alan and Tony Hollifield, and Mr Ralph East and Mr Whiting. Arthur Sheldon was the organist and choir master at that time, and Rev. Groves was the vicar, followed by Rev. Bowles. Rev. Bloomfield, who lived in Ladder Hill House, used to take some of the services in St Mary's Church. He was also a keen cricketer.

When he left school, in 1938, Maurice started to work for Jack White's butchers, in Wheatley. At that time this was on the corner of Church Road (now 2 Church Road). Butcher White also owned the house opposite, Jessamine Cottage, where his daughters Frances and Edie lived.

Maurice worked for Vic White's butchers, in the Market 1939 – 1943, and again from 1946-1973, a total of 34 years.

Between 1940-1943, Maurice served in the National Fire Service (NFS) with Les Tombs, Dolph Shorter, Mr Arkle, who ran the paper shop, Roy Crook, who had the garage, Arthur Wake, Jim Butler, from Holton, and Bill Smith, who was the 'Messenger'. After the war Maurice continued to serve in the Auxiliary Fire Service (AFS) with Vic Munt.

In 1943 Maurice was called up to serve in the Royal Navy. He trained as a signalman and went on a troopship to Gibraltar, and later down the Med. on HMS Fleetwood. He returned in January 1945 and did escort duty on a minesweeper in the English Channel. He was de-mobbed in June 1946, and went back to Vic White's in the market.

Maurice married Butcher White's daughter, Valerie, at All Saint's Church, Highfield, on 7th April 1958, and in 1973 he set up his own butcher's shop in Wheatley. They bought a house in Sandhills, 2 Bursill Close, and had two children: Malcolm b 1959 and Julie b.1964. Sadly, Valerie died of cancer in 1998.