

An interview with Mr. Gerald Cobb, 25 Littleworth conducted by Trude Hickey on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2003-

Background Mr. Cobb was born on 11<sup>th</sup> December 1920 in the house in which he still lives. His house is the end of a terrace of 8 brick houses probably built in the 1890s and formerly known as Shotover View. These houses did not have indoor toilets or water or electricity until after the Second World War He is the oldest resident who was born and bred in Littleworth and the only person who remembers how it used to be many years ago. He was the seventh child in a large family of eight children, (one of whom died in infancy and another died of diphtheria aged 17) and is the sole survivor of the Cobb family.

He began his working life at Cooper's Brickworks in Littleworth when he was 14 years of age and earned 7/6d per week. The brickworks were extensive and covered the area which now houses the Caravan Site and the whole of Cooper's Close. The clay was dug out from the cliff but eventually there was too much lime in with the clay which caused the bricks to blow up in the kiln and so the brickworks ceased operation some time after it had been purchased by the London Brick Company. Hand made and machine made bricks were mad® at the Littleworth site and there were four kilns, and two large chimneys. There were also two large ponds on the site.

After working there for fifteen months Mr Cobb went to work at the Pressed Steel Company for the sum of 15/- per week. He worked on the production of Spitfire wings from 1939 until 1945. After the war he worked on reclamation of metal from crashed planes which was part of Morris's organisation. Then he was called up on 1<sup>st</sup> March 1945, soon after he had married, and served in the army in Egypt, Palestine and Jordan. He was demobbed in October 1947 and went back to work at Pressed Steel. He cycled to work for 48 years and retired in 1963. He and his wife had two

daughters, one of whom lives in Wheatley and one in Holton.

### Mr.Cobb's recollections of old Littleworth

Mr. Cobb reckoned there were approximately 25 cottages in Littleworth that could be described as old. Many of these have now been demolished and new houses built on the land they used to stand on. He remembers that several of the cottagers had large vegetable gardens, and many of them kept pigs in those gardens. He described how the children would all gather around when Mr. Harris (from Garsington) came to kill a pig, and that nothing of the animal was wasted. He told of one pig that was killed was then covered in straw, and the straw set alight to singe the skin - but the pig leapt up and ran around and had to be caught again and properly dispatched! He said that the pigs bladder would be made into a football for the boys. He described the market gardens that used to be behind Shotover View going up towards the Windmill which were run by Mr. Jim Munt and his son. There were several people by the name of Munt in Littleworth, and there is still a family there to this day. He said that the Cricketers' Arms public house used to have iron railings around what is now the car park, and that there was a lawn with flower beds around it. There was no bus service until the early seventies, but you could go to Oxford for 6d return on the train!