

AMPNEY CRUCIS VILLAGE HALL

Prior to the latter part of 1920 Ampney Crucis did not have a village hall or as it was called in those days 'a Reading Room'. Major Frederick Cripps, the owner of Ampney Park, and indeed the whole village, decided that Ampney Crucis needed this facility and on November 8th 1920 gathered together a committee to discuss the best means of providing a village hall. This committee made a decision to purchase a wooden hut which had become available at an estimated cost of £300 made up as follows:-

Cost of hut	£ 60.00
Cost of removal and erection	£130.00
Cost of painting hut etc.	£ 30.00
Cost of furniture.chairs, tables lamps and curtains	£80.00
Total	£300.00

There are no actual records but people who have lived in Ampney for many years seem to think that the hut was actually erected in a plot next to the present village hall - where there is a bungalow now.

The committee borrowed £60 to actually purchase the hut - the remainder would have to be found when the hut was completed so it was thought that as everyone in the village would like to share in this project that subscribers should purchase shares at ten shillings each (50p in today's money). Interest was to be at 7½% or one shilling and sixpence per annum (7½p) for each £1.00 to be repaid as a first charge on the profits of the hall and the shares to be repaid as quickly as possible each year as the accounts justified.

At a meeting on Wednesday, Major Cripps reported that 125 subscribers had purchased 232 shares valued at £196.10.0d - £7.00 in donations including ten shillings from the schoolchildren at Ampney Crucis school.

This hut was duly erected, painted and some furniture was obtained. Six fire-buckets, 24 folding benches, 8 fixed benches, 6 tables, 2 cupboards, 1 easy chair and 20 chairs were bought at Brockworth aerodrome for the magnificent sum of £25.19.6d. In addition 12 card tables were bought from Ovens and Sons costing £5.2.0d.

The committee ran dances in the hall charging admittance at 9d - approximately 3½p! They also ran whist drives and concerts as well as organising a fete at Waterton House on August 6th 1921 which raised £130.6s.1d - after this fund raising, it was thought that some of the shareholders could be repaid with interest - a draw to determine those who should be repaid. Shares of £45.10.0d were then still outstanding and it was hoped these would be repaid by the end of 1922. The reading room was officially opened on October 10th 1921 at 6.30 pm when it was decided to purchase 1 Daily Mail newspaper daily. By the end of 1922 there was only one shareholders' money outstanding - £39.00 owing to Mrs W Cripps.

Mr Fred Kent undertook the duties of MC at dances run in the hall. On December 21st 1925 the following charges for use of the hall were introduced:-

	s.d
Hall from 7-10pm	7.6
Private outsiders	10.0
Everyone from 7-12 midnight	15.0
Small room meetings	1.0

There were no minutes recorded until a meeting held on May 2nd 1929 when owing to the run down condition of the village hall, Major and Mrs Cripps offered to build a new hall in memorium to their late son, Mr Richard Cripps. Again, there is no written record but village memories indicate that the present hall was built on the site of 2 cottages which were demolished to make room for the new building. This offer was gratefully accepted and the new hall was officially opened on 16th October 1930. The first village concert in the new hall was performed making a profit of £1.8s.7d. A Mr Willavoys was caretaker at that time - he later died and Mr Arthur Lafford was appointed temporary caretaker until May 1932.

In **February 1932**, the management committee of the hall instructed the hall keeper to sprinkle powdered chalk on the floor each time a dance was held. This continued for many years -I can actually remember this happening up to the early 1950's. Major Cripps became Sir Frederick Cripps in the New Years Honours List of 1933. Nurse Dinah Lafford was appointed caretaker in October 1933 at a wage of £1.00 per week! At a meeting in September 1935, it was reported that electric light had been installed in the hall at a cost of £12.10s.0d - Mr Steel (Audrey Greenaway's father) running a whist drive to help towards this expenditure.

In **September 1937**, the committee reduced the caretaker's wages to 15 shillings a week as it was felt that due to the changeover from oil lighting to electric light there was less work. In October 1938 it was decided to let the hall to outside organisations at a fee of £3.00 per letting. In October 1939 because of the Second World War, the large hall was closed and the curtains in that room were used as blackouts for the small room - subsequently, socials and whist drives provided the money to purchase material for blackouts for the large hall.

In early **December 1939**, it was decided to use the hall every other Sunday for church services as of course, it was well nigh impossible to blackout the church. The evacuees also had the use of the hall during the war years as the village school could not accommodate the extra numbers. The photograph shows them "Digging for Victory" which today is part of Mrs Kent's garden at the back of the hall. The fee charged for every service was two shillings and sixpence -12½ new pence! In 1943, there was a reported profit and it was decided to invest £50 in Wings for Victory bonds. In July 1945 Mr & Mrs Trueman were appointed as caretakers.

At a meeting on **October 6th 1945**, it was proposed that there should be a Welcome Home fund for the returning servicemen for a party to be held at Ampney Park at an agreed date with each man or woman to be presented with a cheque from that fund.



October 1948 - the committee agreed to a review of hall charges - all hirers to pay two shillings and sixpence per hour. In 1955, these charges were again increased to three shillings and sixpence per hour for the large room. Mr Paddy Thompson joined the committee to represent the Cricket Club

The gardens at the Village Hall

together with Mr Albert Clack. A new floor was fitted in the large hall in 1956. Mrs Cole was appointed as caretaker in September 1957.

After perusal of the deeds of the hall, it was reported at a meeting in early 1959 that the three trustees of the hall were 1: The Vicar, 2: The Chairman of the Parish Council and 3: The Occupier of Ampney Park. In July 1961, a letter was received from the Education Committee requesting the use of the hall until the new school could be built. Mr Dwyer, the new owner of Ampney Park was asked to fill the post of Trustee.

The hall charges were increased in 1964 to”

Locals	Outsiders
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Large Room	5/-	15/-
Small Room	3/-	3/-

In **August 1973** it was agreed that work was needed to upgrade the Ladies toilet and villagers were to be asked for donations towards this project and for a new heating system. Building work commenced about a year later and it was decided to connect to the mains Sewerage system.

At a meeting on **23rd January 1974** Mrs A Greenaway was elected as chairman of the Village Hall Committee and new hiring charges were set as follows:-

Locals	Min. Cost	Outsiders	Min Cost
£1 per hour	£1.50	£2.00	£3.00

On **7th May 1975** it was decided to ask the Charity Commissioners for permission to elect members of the trustees yearly from villagers who were interested in keeping the village hall open and finally it was agreed to have representatives from all village organisations using the hall plus a member of the Parish Council - the chairman, treasurer and secretary to be elected annually at the Annual General Meeting. On **September 3rd 1975**, it was decided to remove the old solid fuel stove which up to then had been the sole means of heating the hall. On **December 3rd 1975**, due to rising costs the hiring charges were reviewed as follows:-

Locals	Min. Cost	Outsiders	Min Cost
£1.50 per hour	£3.00	£3.00	£6.00

On January 7th 1976, the new Trust Deed was approved by a majority of the committee. A letter from Mr N. Cripps was read out at the committee meeting stating that he personally had taken over the administration of the Ampney Estate including the caretaker's cottage. The AGM on March 3rd discussed the sale of the screen on the stage, a chair and stand, and it was agreed by a majority that a reserve should be place on the sale of these items - £75.00 for the screen and £18.00 for the chair.

AMPNEY CRUCIS NURSING ASSOCIATION

Before the advent of the National Health Service sponsored by Aneurin Bevan, everyone had to pay for doctors visits, midwifery fees etc. At that time wages were very low indeed, and families were very much larger. So to help alleviate the problems in Ampney Crucis village a Nursing Association was formed with the first committee held on **November 4th 1926**. It was decided that the fees would be as follows:-

Minimum Family Subscription. 4 shillings and 4 pence (4s/4p) per annum or 1d (old penny) per week.

This payment did not include wage earners over 16 years of age or lodgers. Subscribers earning over 10/- (ten shillings) or more per week could avail themselves of the services of the nurse if required, in the same way as other subscribers.

Non-Subscribers 2/- for the first visit and 1/- for each subsequent visit. Ten consecutive visits would be regarded as a subscriber for the remainder of that year.

Midwifery Fees

For Regular Subscribers £1.5/-
For Non-Subscribers £1.15/-

Maternity Fees

For Regular Subscribers £1.0.0
For Non-Subscribers £1.10/-

Miscarriages Half Fees

Unless subscriptions were up-to-date, non-subscribers rates would be charged.

During this time, many of the older ladies of the village recall that the custom was that after confinements, ladies did not attend functions etc until they were "churched" by the vicar, a service, in effect, to thank God for a safe delivery of mother and child. This custom seems to have now died out.

The first meeting to form the Nursing Association was held at Ampney Park in early **October 1926**. (Lady Cripps was always well-known for trying to help the village, in fact, in those days the whole of Ampney Crucis was owned by the Cripps family and she helped on many committees to help upgrade the standard of life of the tenants). At this meeting the following officers were elected:-

President Mrs F Cripps ((who later became Lady Cripps)
Secretary Miss Smith
Treasurer Lady Ingram

Members attending Lady Ufford, Mrs W Cripps,
Mrs Maclean. Mrs Wykeham-Musgrave,
Miss Harding, Mrs H Cole, Mrs Harris

Miss Milford, the county superintendent attended to explain details of the nurse's salary and her duties.

The committee resolved to pay Nurse Phipps £85 per annum with a rise of £6 at the end of nine months and then an annual rise of £8 per annum. The £85 was divided up as follows - £26 sundries, £54 board and laundry and £4.8/- for coal and lighting. Major Cripps allowed the Association to use one of his houses in Ampney Crucis rent free. Certain draft rules were submitted to the committee and from these a list of suitable rules were compiled for the Ampney & District Nursing Association,

At a committee meeting in **November 1926** it was reported that the nurse's bicycle was unsafe so it was decided to buy her a new one from Farrells, Cirencester. The nurse's uniform was discussed - a new winter coat was necessary but the cost to be deducted from the allowance. However, Mrs Orrid donated a macintosh for the use of the nurse. The question of insurance under the Workmans Compensation Act was discussed at a later meeting and it was decided that a member of the committee should approach the Law Accident Society to find out more about this. It was also raised that the nurse should inform the secretary of dates she was taking her week-end off and that the secretary should write to the Down Ampney Nursing Committee to ask if their nurse could relieve on our nurse's time off. The response from Down Ampney was that this should be reciprocated but this offer was declined as it was thought that the Ampney Crucis nurse should not attend cases any further away than Ampney St Peter or Ampney St Mary. The feasibility of hiring a car was discussed for cases at the extreme ends of the area but this was thrown out due to lack of funds. It was proposed and seconded that a clinic would be held at Barnsley Rectory on the second Thursday of each month and was accepted by the committee. In **February 1927** the decision was made to ask Mrs (Nurse) Lafford to fill in for Nurse at week-ends, holidays and sickness and in addition Miss Payne could help with health visiting during nurse's holidays.

In **June 1928** it was reported that over the months of April and May the nurse's hours had increased from nine to ten hours a day so the committee agreed to ask Miss Melford, Head of the Glos County Nursing Association if Driffild and Harnhill could be transferred to Siddington and Preston or South Cerney if these villages decided to form a nursing association. Because of the increased workload 5/- a week was allocated to Nurse to hire transport, it was reported that an old lady living at Ranbury was causing difficulties in calling out the nurse for no apparent reason. She lived with her unmarried son who was earning good wages as a cowman but was not a subscriber. Because of this Rule 3 was amended to include - "Old Age Pensioners living with their wage earning children or relatives are entitled to the services of the nurse providing that these relatives are a subscriber of the Association."

At the Annual General Meeting in **September 1928** it was reported that some 3,863 visits had been carried out during the year (this included 199 new cases plus 13 Midwifery cases), altogether an increase of 500 over the previous year. At the same meeting the decision was made to purchase a secondhand car, subject to an expert's approval - advertisements to be studied and the AA consulted, it was also reported that a Mrs Williams who had previously lived at Sheepphouse but was now living at Ampney Downs had agreed to pay nurse's car fees in order that she could attend her during and prior to her confinement. Because of the bad weather and distance travelled

it had been necessary to take a hired car every day from **Dec 26th 1927** to **January 4th 1928**. Mrs Williams had only contributed £1 despite being asked on numerous occasions for the remainder so the committee decided that she be considered a defaulter and her name should be struck off the membership list. At the **March 31st 1929** meeting it was reported that a car had been purchased and a sum of 2/6p would be allowed for oil and cleaning. The secretary also stated that Nurse Phipps had been taken to hospital and that Nurse Edwards from Stratton would fulfill duties until her return -Nurse Edwards to be paid the sum of £1. 1s.0d a week but the Ampney Crucis to retain any maternity fees due. Nurse Edwards to have the use of the car and also driving lessons at the expense of the Association. The charges for attendance at miscarriages was revised to 12/6p but a motion was discussed that cotton wool and Lysol should be paid for by the patient but this was refused. Nurse Phipps resigned on **2nd August 1929** due to ill health.

Nurse Mary aged 39 was engaged at the **November 1929** meeting at a salary of £120 p.a. plus a uniform allowance of £5 and a furnished cottage. An emergency meeting was held on February 8th 1930 to discuss an estimate from Skurrays of £20 to repair the nurse's Baby Austin car or to accept an offer of £28 as it stood and purchase a 1928 model or £90 which included insurance up to **October 1930** (less the £28 for the old car). The committee said that they could not afford this £62 so a decision was made to ask Skurrays if a smaller less expensive car was available. Note: Skurrays offered a 1927 Baby Austin for £63 less the £28 for the old car - £35 all told on **February 15th 1930**.

March 31st 1930 - appointed to examine the car promised by Skurrays of Swindon found that the new car for the nurse was little better than the old one and that an estimate from Woodbridge of London Road, Cirencester for repairing the old car was much cheaper and that it would be able to be used for sometime to come. *Remember that in those days there was no MOT and that the rules were not so stringent. The estimate was accepted and the following resolutions were discussed and accepted:-

- 1) Baldwins of London Road, Cirencester to clean, oil and generally attend to the car at a fee of 2/6p weekly.
- 2) Barnes of Ampney to house the car when repaired in a closed shed at 30/- annually.
- 3) Nurse to record her daily journeys and duration for future reference.

Lady Lifford was leaving Ampney Crucis on **12th April** so Mrs F Cripps was appointed secretary in her stead.

January 26th 1931

It was decided to

- a) Insure nurses' furniture
 - b) to take out a license for the car from **31st March to 31st December 1931**
- and
- c) to insure nurse against Third Party Negligence at 6/- per annum.

An emergency meeting on **September 3rd 1931** at Eastington House was told that Nurse Duffy was resigning as from **30th September** so it was decided to carry on with a temporary nurse until the end of **March 1932**. Mrs Cripps was appointed as President, Mrs Macleay as Secretary and Miss Winwood as Treasurer. At the next committee meeting on 5th October at Ampney Park, Mrs Macleay was requested to write to Miss Melford stating that after **November 1931** owing to lack of funds the Ampney Crucis Nursing Association would be unable to belong to the County Association. Barnsley and Driffield had definitely decided to drop out. The decision was made to sell the branch car for £22 or more if possible and to advertise in a nursing paper for a private nurse. A general meeting was held in the village hall on **October 15th** to explain to the parishioners that the funds of the nursing association were insufficient to make it viable. After discussion, it was agreed to find a nurse who would be allowed the use of the cottage and furniture and to be guaranteed a suitable sum of money providing that she was engaged as a private nurse. A whist drive and rummage sale would be held for fund raising.

A committee meeting was held at Ampney Park on **February 27th 1932** to interview Nurse Selman for the position of nurse for the association. She was engaged at a salary of £100 per annum. The rules of subscriptions were raised and it was decided to insert "That subscriptions must be paid in April and October - if not, 1/- (one shilling a visit) to be charged and two guineas for midwifery cases".

At a meeting on **29th September** held at Ampney Park, Barnsley was to be asked to continue with the association, otherwise double fees would have to be paid for all visits. A Village Fete held on 21st July raised the magnificent sum of £45.1s.6d. NB Could this possibly have been the first Ampney Crucis Village fête?

At the Annual General meeting in **November 1932**, Dr. Morris Jones gave a talk to 50 members in which he explained that the nurse looked after a child from birth till leaving school through a government grant. However, when Mrs Cripps, the chairlady read out the 1932 Financial report she said that the next following year would be very difficult as Barnsley and Driffield had dropped out.

In November Nurse Selman asked permission to join the Nurse's Pension Scheme which the committee were obliged to accept. The fee was £2.10/- the local association to pay £2.00 and the county association 10/- payable half yearly. The scheme enabled a nurse to retire at 55 years of age on a small pension paid according to age when joining. Harnhill, Driffield and Barnsley applied to rejoin. Mrs Harris, the representative from the Infant Welfare suggested that a member from each area should form a committee to assist Mrs Barton and herself. This was accepted and each village appointed a representative.

In **December 1933**, the nurse's salary was increased to £105 per annum, and as income had increased to deposit £100 in the bank and to issue the first balance sheet for the association. In October 1935, a Mrs Bateman, whose late husband was the former rector of Eastington donated £150. Below is a copy of the balance sheet for the year from end of **March 1936 to March 1937:-**

Nurse's salary went up to £170 per annum rising by increments of £5 pa. - this included a uniform allowance and 4/- per week for rent. When nurse took her holiday it would cost the association £1.10/- per week to have a resident relief nurse. Tetbury County Hospital would cater for maternity cases where the home conditions were unfavourable or where mothers were experiencing difficult pregnancies for a standard fee of £3 or free depending on the financial circumstances.

At a meeting on **23rd October 1937** it was decided to issue membership cards and that old age pensioners of 70 years and over should only pay 50% subscriptions. In **October 1938** a First Aid course was held in Ampney Crucis, Ampney St Peter and Barnsley to train a detachment of first aiders to help out in Cirencester Hospital in an emergency.

In **June 1939**, nurse was asked to give medical help to children being evacuated in the event of war being declared - nurse to examine evacuees on arrival and the Rural District Council to arrange any hospital treatment required. Mrs Champion reported that 228 mothers and 761 children had attended the 12 monthly meetings of the Baby Welfare during the year **1938/39**. In **September 1939** it was stated that Poulton and Ready Token would be joining the Ampney & District Nursing Association so it would be necessary to provide Nurse with a car.

Lady Cripps reported that the County Council would grant £50 and the County Nursing Association a further grant of £16 thus leaving a further £50 to be raised. £15 was to be paid to the County Nursing Association for the hire of the car and the car would be changed every 3 years providing that it was kept in good order with the running expenses to be paid by the Ampney & District Nursing Association. The decision was also made to provide nurse with a telephone at her home. In **May 1940**, the telephone was taken away because the cost did not warrant the number of calls received by the nurse. Subscriptions had considerably reduced and it had become necessary to the reserve fund to meet current expenses.

On **June 9th** it was reported by Lady Cripps that the RAF band from South Cerney camp would be playing at Ampney Fete on **July 19th 1941**, and in December of that year.

Shire Hall at Gloucester was asked to pay a fixed rate per annum for nurse's attendances to evacuees.

In **September 1943** Lady Cripps reported that the "Rushcliffe Report" required the County should charge a minimum sum of 6/6d per annum for members belonging to the District Nursing Association but the committee made a decision as follows:-

All persons earning £3.00 or more per week to pay the full amount - those earning less than £3.00 weekly to pay 4/4d, old age pensioners to pay half this amount i.e. 2/2d per annum and that wives of men serving in the forces to pay 4/4d per annum.

More subscribers to pay Nurse 2/6d per visit
Midwifery raised to 35/- Non-subscribers 50/-
Maternity 20/- Non-subscribers 45/-

Nurses salary raised to £210 per annum with an additional £10 per annum if staying with the same association up to a maximum of £270. As it was becoming impossible to replace nurse's car every 3 years, the Gloucestershire County Association were to pay for an overhaul and the necessary repairs to cars used by Ampney District Nursing Association (ADNA).

Mrs Miller, the secretary died in **May 1944** - she was replaced by Mrs Sprat.

March 1945 Nurse now to pay 4/- weekly rent and 3/6d for furniture. Telephone installed in the cottage at a cost of £2.11/- Telephone No. 277. Nurse's car cost £53 for the year including repairs. Nurse Seiman left the ADNA on **May 14 1946** - Nurse Stocking to replace. *(I can remember this nurse - she visited after my eldest daughter was born at the old Querns maternity Home - she threw her dummy on the fire)!* Nurse's cottage was re-decorated and inside sanitation installed, garden dug and trenched - rent to go up to 10/- per week. Nurse's car completely overhauled and now at Ampney Park - in future to be serviced by Mr Clack, the chauffeur for Ampney Park (my own father!).

May 1947 Balance for year £111.0s.2d. Expenditure exceeded income by £123.7s.5d.

On **November 20th 1947** general arrangements for transferring the Nursing Association to the auspices of the County Council were approved but there was strong opposition to the proposal to transfer Barnsley into the Bibury area and the following resolution was unanimously passes to be sent to the County Couun Council:-

“The committee of the Ampney & District Nursing Association wish to protest against the proposal to transfer Barnsley from this association. Barnsley has always been closely associated with the ADNA rather than with Bibury and the present area could be enlarged by the addition of Meysey Hampton and Down Ampney without increasing the workload of the nurse”. In future, the parish councillor would be responsible for appointing the committee and no Nursing Association monies would be given to the County Council but would permanently belong to the ADNA.

On March 12th 1948, it was decided to put the reserve fund money into the bank for a new fund to be called the "The Ampney & District Welfare Fund" to be used as required for the benefit of the sick in villages belonging to the old ADNA. The secretary reported that a letter had been received from the Glos County Council stating that Barnsley would be retained in the ADNA . A detailed report was given to the effect that the ADNA would carry on under the Health Scheme.

Nurse had an accident with her car which left her badly shaken - the car had been damaged and repairs were in progress.

August 1st 1950 Nurse now taken on Down Ampney and Meysey Hampton which makes 9 villages in her area. The Nursing Welfare Fund now standing at £164.4s.3d - all nurses expenses now paid by the County Council. Nurse requested that patients requiring a visit should ring Poulton 277 before 9am - if this was not possible, to contact their local Post Office which she would call daily for messages. (Since Ampney St Mary and Ampney St Peter had no post office, Mrs Gibbs undertook to take messages.)

The committee to meet in future on the first Monday in April at Ampney Park at 4.30 pm to hold an unofficial meeting to discuss nursing affairs.

A list of people able to lay out the dead to be kept by each village and the names passed to the nurse, it was noted that the County Nursing Association appointed Miss Hadfield to hold a meeting on **March 10th 1950** to give notice to all nurses in the area - the reason given that they had not passed the second part of the Health Visitors examination for which they had not been given an opportunity to qualify. For this reason Nurse Stocking had been told that she would be moved. All orders for nurse now come from County and it was felt that the duties of the committee had come to an end but it was proposed that there should be a lady appointed by each village to whom the nurse could contact in case of difficulty.

No meeting of the village representatives called until **October 29th 1957**. Nurse Parnell had been housed at the Nurses House at Poulton when first appointed - £13 paid out of the Welfare Fund for someone to dig and plant her garden during **June 1957**. The invalid chair bought from the Welfare Fund now retained at Ampney Park. Nurse Parnell had now left. Nurse Brockway arrived at the end of the meeting and was introduced to all present. It was agreed that minutes of any further meetings held should be recorded. Lady Cripps wished to resign as chairman and secretary - her resignation was reluctantly accepted. Mrs Miles was elected as chairman and secretary. Nurse Hyland on Bibury 241 was appointed as relief nurse.

The following is a note added to the top of the Balance Sheet for 1933

December 1933

Nurses salary was increased to £105.00s.00d.

Income had increased as it was decided to put £100 on deposit at the bank and it was decided by the committee to print a report for the years and to issue a balance sheet.

8th October 1935

Each village was provided with a balance sheet and years report.

Mrs Baternan whose late husband was the Rector of Easington kindly invested £150 for the benefit of the association.

Infant welfare Reps reported they were hoping to have lectures for mothers on eyes, ears and throat and perhaps teeth. Three of the committee members provide the BW with the 17/6d required for lectures

21st September 1937

BALANCE SHEET

March 31st 1936 to March 31st 1937

Receipts	£	s	d	Expenses	£	s	d
Balance in hand (1 st April 1936)	40	10	3	Salary of Nurse	118	13	6
Donations	31	2	0	Uniform	5	0	0
Payments				Affiliation Fee	1	0	0
Midwifery	13	13	0	Ins & Pension.	5	19	10
Other Fees (Weekly Subs)	45	10	4	Drugs	1	12	11
Grants	39	0	0	Car	1	6	0
					<u>133</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>3</u>
				Bank Balance	<u>36</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
	<u>169</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>7</u>		<u>169</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>7</u>

This article is from the Wilts & Gloucestershire Standard dated Friday 1st February 1963

DISTRICT NURSE FOR OVER FIFTY YEARS

Every Friday, weather permitting, an elderly lady draws her pension at the Ampney Crucis Post Office, walks down to the crossroads, and steps on to a bus going to Cirencester where she does her weekly shopping.

She is Nurse Dinah Lafford who has lived at No 13 Ampney Crucis since 1905. She is now 87 years of age and still "as happy as a sand-boy."



Born at Lyneham. She still boasts that she is a "moonraker" and not a "cuckoo hedger" although she has lived in Gloucestershire for the greater part of her long life.

She went to school at Lyneham and commenced work in a farmhouse for an annual wage of £12 and her keep. After a short period as cook at a Beckhampton racing establishment she returned home again to assist in her father's market garden.

Later she obtained a situation in Bristol, where she saw the foundation stone of the Cabot Tower laid by the late Marquis of Dufferin and Ava. 66 years ago.

At the age 22 she answered an advertisement for student nurses at the Oldham Infirmary, Bath where she gained valuable experience in general and mental nursing; after this she went to the British Lying-in Hospital at Endel Street, London and came back to Gloucestershire as a fully qualified District Nurse in 1901. Her first appointment was at the adjoining village of Ampney St. Peter.

In 1905 she married Mr. Arthur Lafford and they set up housekeeping in the home where she still lives.

In 1914 to satisfy the local Nursing Authorities she went to London and obtained her certificate as a State Registered Nurse, and then was duly appointed as District Nurse and Midwife at Ampney Crucis. although her district included Poulton, Ampney St. Peter, Ashbrook, Harnhill and Drifffield, six parishes.

Nurse Lafford walked and cycled thousands of miles in the course of her duties and was midwife at the birth of hundreds of babies.

In 1933 she and her husband were appointed joint caretakers of the Village Hall at Ampney Crucis. Although her husband died the following year she still continued as caretaker as her house is near the village hall.

When she reached the age of 70, Nurse Lafford resigned her district much against the wish of her friends. Since then she has done nursing in a private capacity. She looks back over her long career and says "I can truthfully say I have never refused to help any man, woman or child whenever possible, even to providing meals for hungry people."

With great pride she draws the attention of visitors to two cacti plants nearly a century old, her sacred pictures and an oaken handkerchief box made by an ancestor in 1770.

She is now the oldest and most respected residents in Ampney Crucis living up to her motto: "Let me have tonight look back across the span twixt dawn and dark and to my conscience say; because of some good act to beast or man, the world is better that I have lived today."

NURSE LAFFORD

Nurse Dinah Lafford was born at Lyneham and her proud boast was that she was a 'Moonraker', and not a 'Cuckoo Hedger' (the local name for those born in Wiltshire & Gloucestershire!) She married Arthur Lafford in 1905 and set up house-keeping at No.13 Ampney Crucis. She became District



Nurse and Mid-wife to six Parishes i.e. Ampney Crucis, Ampney St Peter, Ampney St Mary, Harnhill, Driffield and Poulton in 1914. In the course of her duties she walked and cycled hundreds of miles and was mid-wife to countless babies. In 1933 she and her husband were appointed joint caretakers to Ampney Crucis Village Hall. Although her husband died the following year, Dinah still continued as caretaker as her house was next to the village hall. When she reached the age of 70, Nurse Lafford resigned her district much against the wishes of her friend. However, she continued to look after herself and tend her flowers - she was especially noted for her beautiful Cactii which she kept in the hallway of her home and on fine days, the front door was left open so that all could enjoy the sight of these magnificent flowers. She was also engaged in the making of home made wines and favoured visitors were always offered a glass of the current brew. She had another claim to fame, in that when village dances were held in the village hall, at some time in the proceedings, Dinah partnered by Mrs Vi Trueman (a relative of Tony, who lives at Hillcot End) she took to the floor and danced the Polka, cheered on by the villagers! She died at the age of 92 in 1968 and was sadly missed by all.

MORE ABOUT DINAH LAFFORD

This is a tale told to me by one of the older villagers as follows:-

Dinah lived in one of the cottages next to the village hall. One day she had a visit from a 'Kleeneezy' salesman who tried to sell her a paintbrush. "No! " said Dinah, "What do I want with a paintbrush? - My husband works for the Council and can get enough brushes to paint the whole of Ampney!" So the persevering salesman said "What about a toilet brush then?"

This was new to Dinah so she decided to try one. Six months passed and the Kleeneezy man visited Ampney again on his rounds. Dinah was out in her garden so he stopped and asked her how she got on with her toilet brush. "Well" said Dinah, "It wasn't any good, I only tried it the once then I went back to paper!" I cannot vouch for the truth of this story but it does make a good tale!

This article is from the Wilts & Gloucestershire Standard dated 1968

DEATH OF NURSE DINAH LAFFORD

“Nurse” Dinah Lafford of Ampney Crucis, who was immensely proud of her record of being the oldest former district nurse in Gloucestershire, died in Stratton St. Margaret Hospital, Swindon on Monday. She was aged 92.



Nurse Lafford was also Ampney Crucis' oldest resident. A widow for the past 35 years, she first became District Nurse for the Ampney Crucis area in 1901 and in the course of her career which continued until just before the Second World War was midwife at the birth of countless children. She always took the greatest pride in her work and it gave her immense joy in later years to be able to meet and converse with her many “babies” in their adult life. She had taken up her nursing work following training at Bath, having moved to Ampney Crucis from Lyneham.

Following her retirement from nursing, Mrs Lafford was, for a number of years, caretaker of the Ampney Crucis village hall. Amazingly active for her years, she continued to look after herself and to tend her flowers until very recently. It was not until just after Christmas that she became ill and had to be taken to hospital.