

Number 17 and 19 Newby Road – Formerly a shop and dwelling.

The building at the junction of Mary Street and Newby Road which is numbered 17 and 19 Newby Road, dates back to the 17 century.



Anecdotal evidence suggest that it was built around 1640 although the first written deed and conveyance is dated 1888. It is registered on the local authority listed building register as a late 17th early 18th century property and the doorway (to number 15 see below), building style and window styles would certainly support this view.

The property originally combined what are now numbers 15, 17 and 19 Newby Road and which are structurally one building. Number 15 was sold off in 1921 to become a separate property The original entrance is now the entrance to number 15. This bears an inscription and at one time had a carved datestone. There is an interesting story (entirely hearsay) about the date inscription above the door way of Number 15. The lady who lived in the house during the Second World War had apparently heard that all old houses would be destroyed if the war was lost. She therefore had the numerals of the date chiselled out.

An entrance to number 17 was added at a later time. Originally the entry to number 17 would have been via the main doorway into number 15 and subsequently through one of several interconnecting doorways which have since been filled in. (The original outlines both upstairs and downstairs are still visible under the plaster)

There is a very large inglenook fireplace in number 17 which may have been used for cooking as well as keeping the house warm. Above the fireplace is a huge chimney.

It is thought that number 19 would have originally housed animals or have been a farm store. This section of the building was later used for many years as a shop. Under a fireplace in number 19 an old "cartwheel" penny dating back to the 17th century was discovered. Apparently when fireplaces were built the builder would place a coin in the foundation to keep out the "evil" spirits and give the property good luck. The shop window facing Newby Road is still in place. The construction evidence suggests that at least part of number 19 may have been added to the original building at a later date.

It is thought that the remainder of the building was originally a farmhouse and that it pre-dates the canal although the first written deeds (dated 1888) identify it simply as three cottages.

Interestingly there is an old iron riding stirrup in the fireplace which was passed with the house by the previous owners. It was understood to have been a remnant from the Civil War.(Circa 1650) The story is that the occupants of the building were "Royalist" supporters although there is absolutely no historical evidence yet available for this.

There is a later extension building at the back of the original house which now forms the kitchen, bathroom, toilet and 3rd bedroom of 17 and 19 Newby Road. Anecdotal evidence suggests that this was originally used on the ground floor as a store room and on the upper floor to sell "proven" (Cattle and animal food".) The entrance to the upstairs is now visible from Mary Street. There would have been external steps to reach the door which is 3 or 4 feet above the ground level.

There is a covered well at the back of number 15 which would have been the farm water supply.

There are also the remains of two Victorian "Privvies" which would have served the dwellings.

There is both written and anecdotal evidence that the building had been used as a shop for many years. The deeds record that the building was sold in 1888 by a Thomas Green (joiner and builder) to a Mr Overend Davy (grocer). It appears from successive deed and title documents to have been used continuously as a shop at least until the most recent conveyance in 1981. At that point it was sold as a "Village Stores" and dwelling. The shop continued to operate until June 1982 when it was closed. It was at that time one of only two remaining shops in the village.

The current owners of the property ran the shop for a period of 15 months from its purchase in 1981 to its closure in 1982.

- At this time the shop was open from 8.00am until 6.00pm between Monday and Saturday and from 9.00am to 1.00pm on Sunday. Sunday morning was often the busiest time.
- Although very small the shop stocked a wide range of goods. Customers could buy anything from fresh vegetables to spring flowers (at the right time of year), to cooked meats, to a box of pins, to canned meats, to cereals, sugar, tea, coffee, eggs, bacon, sewing materials, even stationery. Some elderly customers did most of their weekly shop but the majority of customers bought single items, This was most apparent on a Sunday morning when some customers would buy an egg, a couple of rashers of bacon and a small tin of beans – obviously breakfast. A few elderly customers left an order which was delivered on an evening.
- Children in the village used the shop on their journey to and from school to buy sweets. The shop had a "Sweet Tray" from which children could choose a mixed bag of individual sweets.
- The shop made up an order of cooked bacon (and egg) sandwiches each morning for the men and women who worked at the local mill (Cossentines). People working in the village and sometimes holiday makers on the canal also bought sandwiches.
- From time to time, particularly during busy periods the shop supplied the local pub (The White Lion) with bread, sandwich fillings and other products.
- Until his death, one elderly customer used to walk down Mary Street each day to buy a packet of very strong "Capstan Full Strength" cigarettes. He would then sit in

the shop for a while to regain his breath before the challenge of walking back up the street. There was a special chair for him. He could not be persuaded that his cigarettes were the cause of his being out of breath.

In June 1982 it proved necessary to close the shop. The reasons for its demise were both social and economic.

- The last two remaining shops in the village were both on Newby Road. The other shop occupied the premises which now comprise number 25 Newby Road. This was a much larger and more comprehensive and inclusive business. This shop contained the Post Office. It was the newsagents from which morning papers were delivered throughout the village. It was also an off-license able to sell beers, wines and spirits. It was considerably larger in volume and could therefore stock a greater range and quantity of goods. This shop provided strong competition. Any customer wanting only a few items would often use the excuse of having to go to the post office or newsagents to make their purchases. Why visit two shops when you could get all you needed in one. That said there was a fierce loyalty from some customers particularly the older residents.
- The 1980's saw the rise of the large supermarket chains and the development of shopping malls and out of town shopping experiences. The smaller shops were unable to compete with the prices offered by these large chains whose bulk purchasing power afforded a clear advantage. This was exacerbated by the Retail Price listings which small shopkeepers were supposed to follow. The price of goods from the wholesale suppliers who supplied small village shops were often greater than the retail prices charged by the large supermarkets. Indeed the last owners of the "village stores" often used to buy stock from the supermarkets (at a cheaper price than from the wholesale suppliers) , remove the price labels, add on a profit margin and advertise the goods for sale in the shop. The majority of customers only used the village shop for items which they had forgotten or of which they had suddenly run out.
- The advent of "best before" and "sell by" dates also had an impact on the purchasing potential of the smaller shopkeeper. Wholesalers tended to sell in large units but if the small shopkeeper bought his /her goods in large units, they had reached the sell by date before the shopkeeper was able to sell them. At that point they were unsaleable and the shopkeeper was out of pocket.
- Also at that time the demographics of the village and social conditions generally were changing. Historically many of the local residents who had used the shop were older residents who lived and worked locally and did not have access to their own transport. During the 80s this began to change. More younger people moved into the village. People tended to work further afield and shopped in the larger centres on their way to or from work or made special excursions to the "exciting" new shopping centres and supermarkets. All the large chains and supermarkets had moved to Sunday opening. Customers increasingly used the shop only if they had forgotten something.
- The takings were insufficient to merit the hours required to keep the shop open.