

Edna and Joe Thompson

When Dorothy and I moved to Pewsey in 1985 we met neighbours and other people who became friends. Some proved to be long-time locals who knew much of the history of the area – as well as the local geography. As long as I can remember we had been interested in the surroundings of wherever we were living – or indeed even if we were only visiting. So this was our new abode – and our present place to be explored.

Dorothy, because of her reputation as a naturalist and botanist, was soon taken under the wing of the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust and its Pewsey branch, including Mr and Mrs Thompson (Edna and Joe). They lived in Raffin Lane where they had an extensive garden which stretched down to the river. Edna and Joe were, like us, keen on the history of the village and the neighbourhood. We and they became good friends. Ultimately Dorothy became Secretary and Edna Treasurer of the Pewsey Local History Society. We organised lectures, exhibitions and various activities with fair success – and never once in the several years we were so friendly did Edna ever mention her childhood.

When Alzheimer's overtook Dorothy and she and I had the chance to move into Stanton Lodge we grasped the opportunity to move into this care home with its excellent flats and the chance to be able to summon care at any time, day or night. One of the activities which appealed to me was writing short essays and I wrote just such an essay about my childhood – I had lived as a boy in Wembley until the Second World War claimed me. My family were much intrigued by the essays and put my essay on the Internet. Edna thus found that she had attended my old grammar school (Wembley County School) albeit a couple of decades after I did.

Edna and Joe have since visited Stanton Lodge and we have spent much time looking at my old school photos and recounting stories of staff, pupils and old friends. Happy days – and we did not know until it was nearly too late.