

**With grateful thanks to Edna Purnell for the following information and reminiscences:**

Edna moved to North Nibley on her marriage to Wilf Purnell in 1939 just before the outbreak of World War II. Edna and Wilf brought up 5 children who were all born in North Nibley, Tony, Joan, David, Anita and Diana.

*My husband came from North Nibley and lived in the mill at Stancombe as a child. They were a sad family as before Wilf was born two children had died from whooping cough, a girl, Lillian aged 5 years old and a baby boy of 6 weeks, Frankie. They are both buried in the village cemetery.*

*Wilf worked with my brother, Tom, in the drawing office at Mawsdleys in Dursley. Tom told me that Wilf wanted to ask me for a date but to start with I wouldn't go as he already had a girlfriend, I relented when he split up with her and we eventually got married just before the war in 1939.*

*Wilf was very musical and played the piano in a dance band – 'Wilf Purnell and the Rhythm Aces', and I sometimes went with the band to sing. He was the church organist at St Martin's for 21 years and also used to play the piano at the Black Horse on a Monday night when the regulars would have a sing-song.*

*When we first got married our home was a room at Forthay Farm with Wilf's sister and husband. We moved down to a cottage in Swinhay Lane for a time but my poor health meant we had to move back to Forthay. Our daughter Joan was born at Forthay. My brother-in-law had called Nurse Warner to tell her I was in labour but she didn't arrive as she had been up all night at another village birth – delivering Pete Timbrell, so I had to manage without her but with the help of my mum. Eventually we made our home at Brookside, Stancombe which is where Anita was born.*

*During the Second World War Wilf was in a reserved occupation at Mawsdleys where he was working on a way to repel shells shot at ships and submarines. There were soldiers and German and Italian Prisoners of War at Nibley House. The POWs lived in a Nissan hut in the grounds of the house and one Christmas Wilf was asked to play the piano for their party. I was a mum with two young children at this time.*

*I can remember the winter of 1947 very well. We had very heavy snow and I had to walk from Dursley to Nibley in the snow with Tony and Joan. On one occasion we had a young girl with a child walk with us, the child was very small so I took turns with the girl to carry him. He was actually, Auberon, the son of Evelyn Waugh, the author of 'Brideshead Revisited' who lived at Stinchcombe at that time.*

*As my children got older I took a job as a dinner lady at the village school and later as the lollipop lady so I have seen lots of village children grow up and have children of their own.*

*I can remember my parents-in-law moving from Stancombe to Stoneleigh Cottage opposite the garage where Liz Miller now lives. They made half of the cottage into a shop. Father-in-law use to take his horse and cart to Berkeley station to collect boxes of herrings which he used to then smoke and sell in the shop. Later on they took over the shop which stood where the village shop now stands, in those days it was a tin hut.*