

## Book Reviews

**Silver Street** [Chacombe, Northants.]: **Rural Life in the 1900s to 1930s.** Betty D. Cameron (card covers, 188pp, illus.). ISBN 0-9546948-0-5. Published by the author (Poplars Farm, 19 Silver Street, Chacombe, Banbury, Oxon. OX17 2JR). 2004. £11.75 (incl. p&p); £9.99 at Banbury Tourist Information Centre, Ottaker's and W.H. Smith.

In *C&CH.2.9* (Sept. 1964), Geoffrey Dodwell described Flora Thompson's *Lark Rise to Candleford* as 'a rich seam for the social historian to mine'. Much the same can be said of Betty D. Cameron's *Silver Street*, which is a superb collection of insights into the Northamptonshire village of Chacombe in the 1920s and 1930s interspersed with her mother's memories of the years from the turn of the twentieth century.

This book was written in memory of Betty's parents, Alice Chinner (née Bennett) and Charles Francis Chinner and, also, 'of generations of the Bennett and Chinner families who have lived in Chacombe and tilled the land through many centuries'. In Betty's mother's day Chacombe was a small village in a largely agricultural setting. Its inhabitants lived in an assortment of mostly thatched cottages with nearby farmhouses but always there was an awareness of the doings of the big houses such as the 'Priory' and 'Chacombe House' where many in the village were employed.

Originally *Silver Street* appeared in sections in the village's own magazine called the *Chacombe Chimes*. However, Betty's childhood recollections and memoirs left by her mother will have an appeal for readers in general and not just residents of Chacombe and nearby villages. In part this is because the study is very much about how urban influences impinged on rural life.

Banbury was the nearest market town and its goods and services were accessed in a number of ways. Dr. Herbert de Burgh Dwyer, who lived in Grimsbury, provided medical assistance when this was needed. Mr. Tuzzio perceived a chance to increase his sales of ice cream by coming to Chacombe. His broad smile was accompanied by expressions such as 'you lika cone or sandwich, yes?'

Village folk made periodic visits to Banbury courtesy of carriers like Frederick Boddington who lived at 17 Silver Street or by train from Chacombe Road Halt on the Woodford Halse link line. Betty had close family living in Banbury including Uncle John (Bennett) and Aunt Nellie at the Wine Vaults in Parsons Street.

There are many other aspects of *Silver Street* that place the book high on any list of village accounts. These include recollections of the village shop kept by her great-aunt, which in addition to catering for everyday needs stocked such