

Round And About In The Parish

Following on from the Gardiners who were at the Corner Shop, came Fred Stevens and his wife Simone who came from Belgium. She was one of the ladies who were described as War Brides.

Simone was 16 when she first met Fred (who was 26) at a football match at Haysel Stadium. Fred was playing football in a match between two army teams. Fred kicked the football off and it hit somebody straight in the face and it was this young girl (Simone). He ran over to make sure she was alright and said he was sorry and asked to see her after the match. She waited outside the ground for him and eventually after a courtship they got married in Brussels and settled in Danehill. There was some opposition from Fred's family, simply because she came from 'the other side of the water'.



The Corner Shop sold confectionery, newspapers and periodicals. Fred also sold paint and he had a paint machine at the back of the shop in a shed. A customer would choose their colour and Fred would add a shot or two of the pigment to make an exact match for the colour required. They sold films for cameras and ladies' toiletries, as well as Wellington boots, ice-creams, drinks, lemonade, crisps etc. At the front they sold tomatoes (some raised by Mr H Awcock) and plants also grown locally. The Corner Shop was also a dry cleaning agent. Fred supplied papers to Birch Grove House and had special orders when President Kennedy visited Harold Macmillan.

Many customers placed special orders, one being the Headmaster of Cumnor House who would order 100 Castello cigars in boxes.



The photo shows the Corner Shop whilst Fred and Simone were in business.

They had three sons and a daughter and in this photo one of the sons [John] is shown on his sister's bike, whilst his own bike is propped up against the wall. It's interesting to note that this was at a time when

smoking and cigarettes were all heavily promoted. The giant sized ice-cream cornet advertising Lyons ice-cream would probably these days fetch a lot of money in an antique shop.

Fred had been a member of the Danehill Parish Council since 1968 and had been its Chairman for a number of years. He was also a .

governor of Danehill Primary School and Simone was chairman of the Danehill Memorial Hall committee.

For many years Fred and Simone were unable to have a holiday, but when John and his wife, Jenny, served in the shop for a couple of weeks, Fred and Simone were able to take a break and have a holiday. In November 1982 Fred and Simone gave up the Corner Shop to retire after 23 years in business. My thanks to John Stevens.