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Memories of 1920s Barkway From an Old Resident

The High Street in the 1920s was more busy with farm carts than motorised traffic and my memories of pre-school days was of sitting in our window (then a genuine Georgian bay) watching the horses and carts. (*This is in the days before house numbering. This house is now number 15*). You could hear the horse's hooves a long way off and we would turn to see which driver it was. Mostly the man would be sitting on one of the shafts to save his legs when he could and I remember when it was raining or snowing the driver would be wearing two sacks, one around his waist protecting his hip region and the other around the shoulders. Sometimes this one was doubled up to form a hood keeping the snow from head and neck, but these men always wore caps. In fact, there were very few men I remember not wearing caps.

There were earth paths with grass verges on either side of the road but of course less grass verge where the road narrowed. There were scrapers outside most front doors as I suppose in bad weather there would be a lot of mud and going back to the days of coaches running from London to Cambridge there would have been great muddy ruts in the unmade up road and this was the reason that houses built at this period were built higher with steps up to the front doors. Our house was older than this as seen by the invitation windows to do with window tax. The house we now live in was maybe older but possibly only a couple of cottages to begin with. It was some years before my Grandad bought it from the brewers, known as The Plough, an alehouse but with stables in the yard and I dare say in the coaching days busy enough as a changing point for the horses. (*now number 42*). I think when he bought it, it was a saddlery shop.