

Plumstead resident Nick Fulford wrote a piece for Remembrance Day 2018, of which the following is an edited extract.

Plumstead in 1914 was a very different place. There were no houses down Cherry Tree Road apart from The Cherry Tree Pub at the far end. Was its location, a bit outside the village, by design or accident I wonder? Anyway, a number of footpaths and bridleways converge here; in particular, the one from Plumstead Green.

With no new houses, Plumstead Green hasn't changed so much. In 1911, our village had 43 dwellings housing 167 people. Since then the population has fallen to about 100 and the number of houses increased to 58. Many houses then were a lot more densely occupied with perhaps 3 generations living under the same roof. Couple that with no electricity or running water and sanitation was an outside lavatory into a pit. Lighting was by oil lamp, water was drawn from a well. When it gets dark at 3.30, it's a long evening without Eastenders and Strictly Come Dancing!

Getting around was generally by foot or bicycle, on, of course, the unmade tracks. It would appear that Jericho Lane and Harp Lane which runs between Plumstead Hall Farm and the eco-house were actively used routes in those days.

A number of cinemas opened in Holt, Sheringham and Cromer in 1914. Prior to that there couldn't have been much to do other than wander down and have a drink at the Cherry Tree. The price of a pint of beer was 4 old pence, equivalent to about £1 in today's money. £1 for a pint doesn't sound bad... relatively affordable. Having a pint or three was a popular pastime in the country and led to the 'Defence Of The Realm Act' in 1914. This introduced licensing hours, the watering down of the beer and made it illegal to buy a round – no more buying your friends a drink!

As well as the pub, the other social outlet was the church, and in those days a United Methodist Chapel on the other side of the road –

beside the house where the Fulfords live – was quite a lot of church for our little village.

The Rector, Rev Herbert Wynell-Mayhow lived in Plumstead. Church Farm house was used as a rectory, but we don't know whether he actually lived there.

The house on Church St known as The Old Post Office was bought by John Durdin in 1971, and did serve as the village's Post Office until the late '60s (when it was known as 21 Church St). Miss Florence Coleby was the sub-postmistress. There was a smithy down near Walnut Farm but I don't know when it closed.

The school at the top of the road was shared with Matlaske. The school leaving age was 12, this was raised to 14 in 1918.

The lord of the manor and chief landowner was John Stanley Mott esq. hailing from 4, Curzon Street, Mayfair. Barningham Hall was, presumably, his weekend retreat.

Men in the village did not have the vote at that time – voting was in the hands of John Stanley Mott and other bigwigs in the area. John probably also got a vote in Mayfair. All men got the vote in 1918 and women, of course, in 1928.

Life for most men and women in our village was extremely basic by our standards. Looking through old newsletters, there didn't appear to be much going on. One little snippet was "Hints to Cottage Gardeners for January" which started – Now Christmas has passed and the pig has been killed, take the very first opportunity to clean every bit of manure out of the pigsty. Then followed familiar advice on what to grow on manured soil, advice that has been passed unchanged down the years. Christmas Turkeys were much too expensive then and presumably lots of families had their pig which was fed on scraps from the kitchen and their hens. It's a very different world we live in now.