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23-February-2000

Dear Sir,

May I begin by congratulating your society on such a wonderful publication. I have thoroughly enjoyed reading "Cowbridge Buildings & People". The book is special to me as my Great Uncle Jim Lewis got a mention on page 43; Which brings me to the point of my letter. I would be very grateful if you or somebody from your Society could advise me of any other publications that might help me in my research. I have been researching my family tree for many years, the Lewis branch of my family are such a mystery. We know a few things about Jim, my orphaned grandfather was cared for by Jim and his brother William Lewis. My Grandfather spoke so highly of Jim Lewis. He was such a kind, God fearing man. Unfortunately, my grandfather died in the 1960's so we have nobody to refer to for information about Jim.

Is there anyone in your Society that might know anything about Jim Lewis? Any information or stories would be very welcome. Perhaps you would let me know whether one can become a member of your Society and whether you have any other publications on old Cowbridge.

I have enclosed an S.A.E. I do hope you do not mind me writing to you.

Thanking you in anticipation

Jane McILQUHAM.

Jane McIlquham

Ans 28/2
23/3

On the other side of Cooper's Lane was where Jim Lewis the cooper lived, with all his beer barrels, cider barrels, and cheese vats - those with the central drainage holes - standing outside. I remember him clearly, a nice old gentleman, quiet, busy with his work. His work was his life. He lived and slept in his workroom, as did many craftspeople in those days. It was very dark, lit only by candlelight or paraffin lamps. You had to go down steps into his workroom, and he'd be there surrounded by his tools and his wood. He used the building behind (later to be Eddie John's grain store) to keep most of his wood. Annie Overton from across the way used to run errands for him. Further down Cooper's Lane was David Tilley's carpentry shop. He was a beautiful furniture maker and a carriage maker too. There would usually be cart wheels ranged on the wall on the left-hand side of Cooper's Lane waiting to have new spokes or hubs inserted. His saw pit was in the open space opposite, near the little cottage opening on to Bear Lane where Henry Trott, a plate-layer on the railway, lived. In those days Cowbridge people were either post or railway or business people.

From 'Cowbridge - District
Remembered'

Mervyn Harkett “used to take him the Echo and Football Echo, especially the Football Echo. He was a tallish man, not very stout, an old-fashioned sort of person. He lived on his own in what is now 75 High Street, the Yorkshire Building Society. His living room was his workshop as well. He used to sit in a chair in the corner near the fire. It was a very cluttered room, filled with his tools all over the place”.

George Bond’s father bought his planes, gimlets and other tools when he finished. He used to have very long planes, 6 feet long, and would stand these outside at an angle, and run the wooden staves along the plane to shave them into shape. On fine days he’d bring his wood outside to work there, and would band the barrels outside too.
