

## Saddlery and the Pridmores

The first idea of placing something between the rider's bottom and the horse appears to have been put into practice around 4000 years ago but was little more than a piece of cloth or animal skin. It took many centuries before the practice caught on but when it did, Middle Eastern tribes and warriors began to use much more elaborate saddle coverings in the seven or eight centuries before Christ.

In the area that is now Siberia, the nomadic Scythians created saddlery that was functional and beautiful. A frozen Scythian tomb from the 5th Century B.C. revealed a saddle cover intricately decorated with animal motifs made from leather, felt, hair and gold. As expert horsemen, the Scythians used cushioned saddles and girths and may have had leather stirrups

Concerned with their mounts' comfort, Asian horsemen created a felt saddle with a wooden frame about 200 B.C. This primitive saddle tree kept a rider's weight off the horse's tender, sensitive vertebrae, preserving the animal's well-being and prolonging his usefulness.

In more recent times there was a need for both riding and pack saddles during the many centuries when horses were the only form of transport available and the main means to ploughing and preparing the land.

It seems the Pridmores became adept in the business as generation after generation continued to produce saddles, collars and harnesses as well as being involved in related occupations such as flax dressing and rope making.

1. John Pridmore and Ann Durham
  2. John (Flaxdresser)
  2. James
    3. James (Saddler)
    4. Thomas (Master Saddler and Harness Maker)
  3. Henry (Rope maker)
  3. Thomas (Saddler)
    4. Robert James (Saddler and Harness Maker)
    - 5 William (Saddle Collar and Harness Maker)
    5. Thomas (Saddler)

In early 2011 I was searching Ebay on the internet for any related items to the Pridmore name. I came across an auction for an invoice issued by a William Pridmore, Saddle, Collar and Harness Maker, dated 1946.

His profession immediately aroused my interest and I managed to win the auction, paying the princely sum of £2.02p for the invoice.

DR. TO  
**W. PRIDMORE**

COLLINGHAM, SWINDERBY AND NORTH SCARLE  
 NEWARK

SADDLE, COLLAR &

REPAIRS NEATLY AND PROMPTLY  
 EXECUTED



HARNESS MAKER

ALL KINDS OF STABLE REQUISITES  
 ACCOUNTS RENDERED HALF-YEARLY

*Mr J Bowen Garton*

*July*

1946

<i>Mar 28</i>	<i>rephleupads 2 flaps</i>		<i>257</i>	
	<i>new flap</i>		<i>6</i>	
	<i>newly collar</i>		<i>2</i>	
	<i>rep ditto</i>		<i>156</i>	
			<i>2</i>	
			<i>136</i>	
<i>Paid Aug 30 1946</i>				
<i>W. Pridmore</i>				

My lines of investigation uncovered the following information

William (5) was born in Corby Glen on February 13<sup>th</sup> 1882. He was one of 15 children born to Robert James Pridmore and Selina Pick. He met and married Annie Elizabeth Taylor of Collingham in April 1906 and they set up home and business there.

Collingham had been divided into North Collingham and South Collingham and we have a fine description of both in Kelly's Directory of 1941.

North Collingham was 2 miles from the River Trent, had a railway station on the London, Midland and Scottish line, streets lit with gas and an available supply of electricity and water.

The 13<sup>th</sup> century church of All Saints was the place of worship with St John the Baptist church, having its origins even earlier in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, available for those in South Collingham

The area was and is today prone to flooding and the old churchyard of All Saints has the base of a churchyard cross, on which is the mark of the highest flood level on record, taking place in 1795. Other memorable flood years can also be seen inscribed on the wall by the entrance gate.

The public hall was erected in 1889, the library established in 1853 and before that a most disturbing event took place around 1840. Between 60 and 70 skeletons were discovered near to Potter Hill, nearly of them having had their thigh bones broken. They were found 3 or 4 to a grave, some lying some in a sitting position.

In March of 2011, my wife and myself went off to Collingham to see what remained of 160 High Street. We found an idyllic Nottinghamshire village, bathed in early Spring sunshine, that captured both of us to an extent that we both said we could easily live there.

William and his family had just gone through the second world war at the time of the issued invoice and I cannot help thinking that even in times of austerity, they at least had such a lovely place to live in.

It seems that William also combined his family profession with a number of other services ranging from show repairs to supplying a number of hardware items and roofing felt but one of the photographs still shows horse collars hanging on the wall at the side of the shop doorway.

The house and business were at 160 High Street, Collingham according to the 1911 census. In 2011, this is now the Chinese Takeaway for Collingham. However, shortly afterwards the family appear to have moved to new premises at the corner of Swinderby Road and High Street. This data was kindly supplied by the Collingham and District Historical Society, courtesy of Liz Addington.





160 High Street, Collingham in 2011



Around 1909 William and Annie had their first child, Robert William Pridmore who did not follow on in the family profession but instead became a minister of the cloth. Robert married Doreen Exill. They raised a daughter, Jane who married into the Lee family and their descendants are still in the village to this day (2011).

In 1914, Sue Taylor Pridmore was born but never married

William died on July 31<sup>st</sup> 1969 and it might just be that the Pridmore family profession died with him.