



Bertie Owen Hasler (1881 - 1963)
Gestingthorpe resident who served in the Boer War (1899 - 1902)
at the same time as Captain Oates.



Bertie Owen Hasler (1881 - 1963)
Outside his cottage next to the Lion Pub
(now the Pheasant car park)



Bertie and Edith Hasler
In their garden next to the Lion

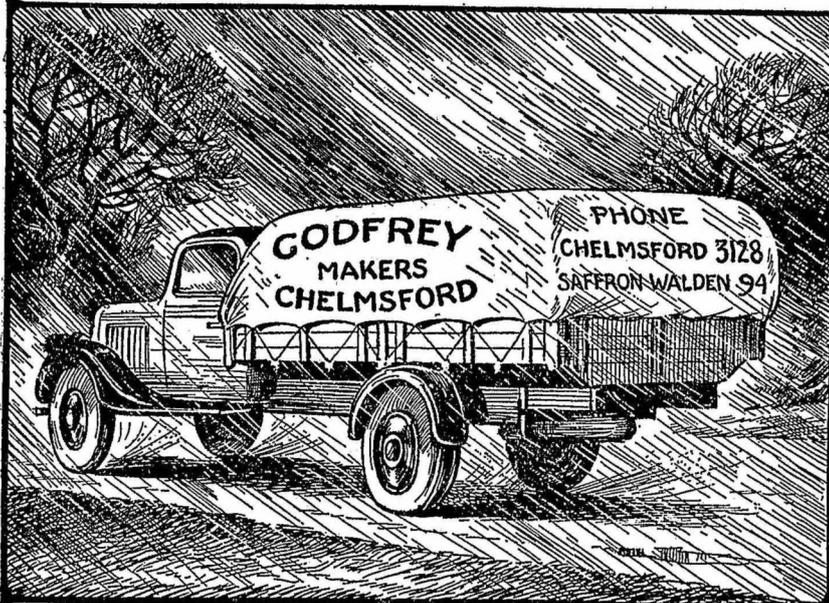


Bertie Owen Hasler (1881 - 1963)
Gestingthorpe resident and Master Thatcher



Bertie and Edith Hasler
Married in Gestingthorpe Church in 1909

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**Information from Beryl Spillings, her daughter, Christine and husband, Brian
(now living in Ryecroft, Gestingthorpe)
+ an excerpt from Basil Radley's 'Some Memories of Gestingthorpe'**

Bertie Owen Hasler (Master Thatcher)

Born 1881, died in his 80's

Lived (and grew up) in Wickham St Paul, opposite pub in the house next to pond
Very adventurous man and well-travelled. Very interesting – full of his travel stories.

Wife: Edith Hasler

Born about 1883

Edith was the daughter of James Murray and Sofia Murray (nee Page).

Edith and her mother lived in Chelsea workhouse, where Edith was 'deserted' by her mother. No trace of her father.

Mrs Oates organised a scheme for workhouse children to be brought to Gestingthorpe, and Edith was placed with Susan Ridgewell at the Moat when she was 11 years old. Susan, a religious woman whose father was a parson, grew fond of Edith and decided to keep her, so from the age of 11, Edith lived in the Moat until she married.

The house (facing the road) was burned down at a later date.

When Bertie was about 18, he went to South Africa where he served in the Royal Mounted Police during the Boer War (1899–1902)

After the war he returned to Wickham St Paul, working as a master thatcher in the area. Whilst working on the Moat, he met his future wife, Edith. They married in Gestingthorpe Church in 1909, and moved to the Rising Sun in Castle Hedingham, where they had 3 daughters, Violet, Doreen and Beryl.

When Beryl was 3 months old, Bertie and a friend went to Australia to look for gold. Edith and the three girls moved back to Gestingthorpe to live with Susan at the Moat.

Bertie wasn't in Australia long, when the 1914-18 war broke out. He had no wish to enlist in the Australian forces, so he came back to England and joined the Royal Artillery. He was posted to Jerusalem, Palestine, and Egypt during the war. As far as Beryl knows, he didn't find any gold in Oz, although he did come back with a gold ring and presents for the family.

During the war, Bertie and Edith had a fourth child, Dougy (John Hasler's father).

After the war, Bertie continued to work as a master thatcher, and they moved to the end terrace cottage next to the pub. Bertie continued his thatching for the farms in the area (often didn't get paid as times were hard). He travelled to his work on his bike, with his ladder. The farmers would have supplied the straw for the thatch. He continued thatching for the rest of his working life.

At some time, Bertie and Edith moved to 1 Sudbury Road.

Their two older daughters, Violet and Doreen moved away from Gestingthorpe when they married.

Although Beryl, their younger daughter, worked away from the village, she returned when she married Robert (Joe) Spilling of Maplestead. They had three girls, Josie, Christine and Pauline.

Dougy stayed in the village most of his life, and his son, John, still lives in Sudbury Road.



Joe, Josie and Beryl on a tandem outside The Lion cottages
(Bert's cut hazel saplings can be seen in his garden)

Excerpt from Basil Radley's 'Some Memories of Gestingthorpe'

"Thatcher"

After the First World War, Mr Bert Hasler went into business as a master Thatcher, splendid examples of his work being evident for many years in Gestingthorpe and the surrounding villages, be it on houses, barns or other farm buildings. He would also be called upon to thatch corn stacks after harvest (before combine harvesters). Being a school pal of his son Douglas, I well remember Bert cutting nut hazel saplings in the wintertime to make sprindles for use the following year. Sprindles are lengths of riven hazel approximately thirty inches long with a notch cut in one end to be driven into the stack in order to secure the twine that in turn holds down the thatch.

Having seen Bert's account book, times must have been hard for him when one reads how difficult it was, in some cases to get his money after doing this heavy work.

With the advent of the combine and most thatched farm buildings giving way to asbestos roofing, the need for Thatcher's diminished, just a few confining their skills to period cottages."