

## Old Village Characters.

William Walker was born in Westlington, the son of David and Louisa Walker (nee Welford) in 1881. There were ten children in the family, five boys and five girls. William attended Dinton School as did all of the other Walker children. This was the only school that they attended and on leaving school at the age of 12 William worked on a local farm as a general farmhand with a great interest in the animals especially the horses.

Emma Southam was born in Fleet Marston near Waddesdon, the daughter of Joseph and Rebecca Southam (nee Allen) in 1875 and in this family were a total of five children, three girls and two boys. After leaving school Emma trained as a cook and later became head cook for a family in London.

Emma's grandparents Thomas and Eliza Allen were the publicans of the White Horse public house in Westlington and Emma would often come to Dinton to visit them. This is how Emma and William met and they were married in 1903 in Dinton Parish Church. They rented a thatched cottage together opposite the White Horse pub just across the Green which is where Emma opened a grocery and general goods shop. They had three girls, Lilian, Mildred and Florence.



The three Walker girls Mildred, Lilian and Florence posing outside the old cottage. This photo was taken circa 1915.



William and Emma Walker

The shop was a success but the First World War came and eventually William was called up to serve like the other men of the village. William joined the Veterinary corps so that he could be with horses but part of his duties was to supply the frontline at Ypres and the Somme with ammunition taken by horse pulled wagons! With the war over William returned to Dinton and in the 1920s they purchased Woodbine cottages just along the road in Westlington to re-open their shop in new premises. William continued to work on the local farm whilst Emma ran her shop. In 1929 they were granted a tobacco licence which added more goods to the shop and this licence is still in the family's possession. As time passed Mildred married Alfred Hopgood in 1931 but stayed in one of the cottages to set up her home where they had a daughter, Pamela.



The move to Woodbine cottages increased the number of shops in Dinton to four which served the village well.

Woodbine cottages (left) with Emma Walker.

The Second World War had now begun and although William was above the calling up age he did his bit by doing fire watching at St. John's hospital in Stone. He then became employed by the Bucks County Council as the local roadman and what a good job he made of it. William Walker was good value for money for the council and Dinton. Potholes were filled and repaired usually before anyone knew that they were there. The grass verges were kept trimmed and tidy and any litter was picked up. He never missed a thing! Lunch for William which usually consisted of a hunk of bread together with a thick slice of cheese and a flask of tea was taken sitting on his upturned wheelbarrow. He was a much loved and respected villager. He became a village celebrity when he won £845-11-6 on the football pools in 1948! Not a lot by today's values but quite a fortune then. Some of the older residents of Dinton still remember the excitement it caused. He purchased a Television set (the first in the village) and many of the neighbours would come to watch it especially for the football Cup final. William, like many of the other men in the village, would spend time in the summer collecting old dead branches (with help from his granddaughter) from the local spinneys and them bringing home on a truck to be sawn up ready for the coming winter.



Cheque presented to W. WALKER, Dinton Green, Aylesbury, on the occasion of his winning a free dividend  
 £845 11s. 6d. on Vernons Pools Results Pool for matches played Saturday, 28th February, 1948.

*Good luck &  
 Best wishes  
 Vera Clayton*

After retirement in 1946 he would do gardening for people around the village with the company of his black and white dog 'Bobby'. Keeping the local churchyard tidy really kept him busy. William also helped on the farm in thatching the straw and hay ricks.

The winning cheque returned to him by Vernons Football Pools. (Left).

In 1963 William and Emma celebrated their Diamond Wedding anniversary with all of their family.

William died in 1966 and Emma died in 1971 and both are buried in Dinton Churchyard.

After their deaths their granddaughter Pamela and her family returned to live in Woodbine cottages but she didn't like the name as Woodbine reminded everyone of the cigarette with the same name so she changed the name to Inglenook. I would like to thank Pamela Jeffrey (nee Hopgood) granddaughter of William and Emma Walker for supplying the photos and other information.

G.S.Weedon.