



Niton shopping almost a century ago



This fine image comes from Jill Wearing's private collection. The date is unknown, but probably early 1930s, and it appears that this family butcher was by then thriving sufficiently to support two delivery lads. The signage in the bottom of the window proclaims that only the best brands are stocked, prime 'Canterbury Lamb' among them, all the way from New Zealand's South Island. It seems that this was not a long established business, for villagers had for a long time obtained their meat from a butcher in Niton Undercliff, near the Buddle Inn, where there was once a slaughterhouse. The man in the centre of the photo is Frederick Green (1882-1936) but the identities of the others in the photo are unknown. Fred Green was Jill Wearing's grandfather. He came from Cowes, originally.

The smaller photo is of Ken Wright as butcher's boy about 1925-6, an uncle of Mary Stotesbury. His cycle seems to be the one on the right in the main photo.



It is remarkable just how well small villages like Niton were provided with shops over the inter-war years. Members of the WI once recalled how there was an antiques and furniture shop, a hardware shop, two grocers, a post office, a haberdashery, a cobbler, two bakers and, eventually, a butcher and a chemist.. A milkman did a daily round of the village and on Saturdays there was often a 'tally man' who came round selling clothes. There were already a few holiday homes in the village between the wars, and one WI member recalled staying in one as a child and the family collecting vegetables from Field's Farm, getting

tea and sugar from Baverstock's grocers where it was packed in stiff blue paper cones, buying butter pats from Norris's grocers, and even borrowing books from the chemist which clearly operated a small lending library along with their potions and pills. The milk came round on a horse-drawn float, the enterprise of George and Gwen Jackson, George always announcing his arrival by musical yodelling.

Ventnor & District Local History Society: Michael Freeman, (main photo courtesy of Jill Wearing, other material taken from *Isle of Wight within Living Memory*, (Newbury, 1994) – Isle of Wight Federation of Women's Institutes, smaller photo courtesy Mary Stotesbury who also helped correct some of my original material).

