



BBC
BOOKS

KERI DAVIES

WHO'S WHO IN
^{The}
Archers

BBC

2004

NEW EDITION

KERI DAVIES

WHO'S WHO IN
The
Archers
2004

To Steve and Catherine, who led me astray

This book is published to accompany the BBC Radio 4 serial *The Archers*.
The editor of *The Archers* is Vanessa Whitburn

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Events in Ambridge are constantly changing, but we have done our best to make *Who's Who in The Archers 2004* accurate at the time of publication.

Official Archers Website: www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/archers

for *Archers* episodes in Real Audio, including an audio archive of the last seven days.

The site also features daily plot synopses, news, information, a map of Ambridge, quizzes and chat.

Official Fan Club: Archers Addicts 0121 683 1951

Web site: www.archers-addicts.com

THE AUTHOR

A character in search of a cliché, after 11 years in Ambridge Keri Davies gave up the role of senior producer of *The Archers* to spend more time with his family. He now runs the BBC's Archers website and writes scripts for the programme. He lives in Birmingham with his wife and three sons, who think that having a father who is a part-time DJ is pretty cool. They don't mind about *The Archers*, either...



WELCOME TO AMBRIDGE



I am delighted that our handy guide to the characters and locations in *The Archers* is now in its fifth year.

While originally designed to help newcomers take their first steps down the byways of Ambridge, we have found that the book is used by more established listeners too; as a quick reference guide, or even an entertaining means of passing time in the smaller rooms of the house.

So when you are wondering who is the older, Eddie Grundy or Mike Tucker, this book is for you. What it can't tell you is why Eddie sometimes behaves like an overgrown schoolboy. That would require several large volumes.

Vanessa Whitburn

Editor, The Archers



REAL TIME, REAL DRAMA



In December 2002, even people who didn't listen to *The Archers* knew that something big was happening. They'd read it in the papers. An affair between wealthy Brian Aldridge and some Irish woman? And wasn't there a baby involved? In the last three months of the year our listening figures had increased by a quarter of a million. There was a fantastic climax as first Brian's daughter, then his wife, discovered the truth. The acting and writing was praised from all sides.

Of course, by then, regular listeners had been enjoying the story for a year. And it was by no means the end of the tale. Through 2003, with listening figures still increasing, we followed Brian and Jennifer's attempts to mend their marriage, sympathised with Debbie's inability to forgive her step-father, and held our breath as Siobhan returned in a last-ditch attempt to win back the father of her child.

So far, the story has run for nearly two years. And, although we never divulge the future in Ambridge, we can be sure that the affair and its

aftermath will influence events for many years to come. Compare this with our younger cousins, the television soaps, who seem to measure storylines in weeks at best, and whose characters are often blessed with remarkable amnesia about what's gone on in their lives. This real-time story telling is one of the great strengths of *The Archers* – and one of the reasons for its longevity.

The creator of *The Archers*, Godfrey Baseley, devised the programme as a means of educating farmers in modern production methods when Britain was still subject to food rationing. Five pilot episodes were broadcast on the BBC's Midlands Home Service in Whit Week 1950, but *The Archers'* official birthday was on 1 January 1951, when for the first time the lively 'dum-di-dum' of Arthur Wood's maypole dance 'Barwick Green' introduced episode one to a national audience. Episode 14108, broadcast on 1 January 2004 makes this comfortably the world's longest running radio drama.

The Archers lost its original, educational, remit in the early 1970s, but it still prides itself on the quality of its research and its reflection of real rural life. The Editor, Vanessa Whitburn, leads a

nine-strong production team and ten writers as they plot the complicated lives of the families in Ambridge, looking ahead months or sometimes years in biannual long-term meetings. The detailed planning is done at monthly script meetings about two months ahead of transmission. Each writer produces a week's worth of scripts in a remarkable fourteen days. To retain listeners' attention in the early years, *Archers* writers drew on the tradition of the 'cliffhanger' which was so much part of its predecessor, the thriller serial *Dick Barton, Special Agent*. The modern equivalent is a blend of stories carefully planned and structured to captivate today's sophisticated audience.

Actors receive their scripts a few days before recording, which takes place every four weeks in Studio 3 at BBC Pebble Mill in Birmingham, although in 2004 a move is planned to the Mailbox complex in Birmingham's city centre. Twenty-four episodes are recorded in six intensive days, using only two hours of studio time per thirteen minute episode. This schedule means that being an *Archers* actor is by no means a full time job, even for major characters, so many also have

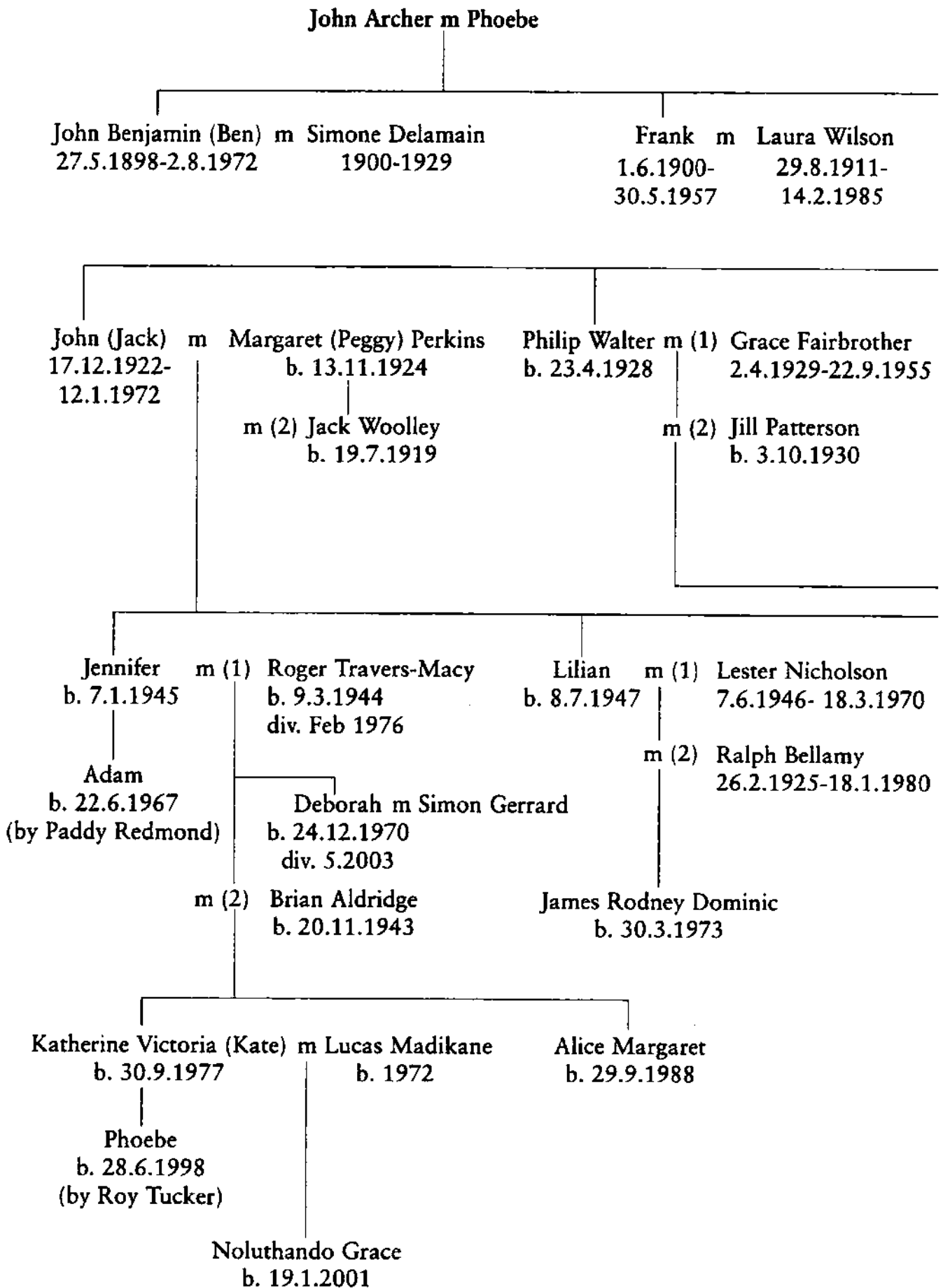
careers in film, theatre, television or other radio drama. The episodes are transmitted three to six weeks after recording. But listeners are occasionally intrigued to hear topical events reflected in that evening's broadcast, a feat achieved through a flurry of rewriting, re-recording and editing on the day of transmission. With nearly five million listeners every week in the UK alone, *The Archers* is the most popular non-news programme on BBC Radio 4 (92-95 FM, 198 LW). It can also be heard world-wide via the *Archers* website: www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/archers.

The website has been a particular baby of mine, and in 2003 I went part-time to run it, being lucky enough to combine this role with writing *Archers* scripts. Given my usually low boredom threshold, I'm slightly surprised to be working for the same programme after eleven years. But if *The Archers* suits you, it suits you very well. And, thank goodness, that goes for the listeners too.

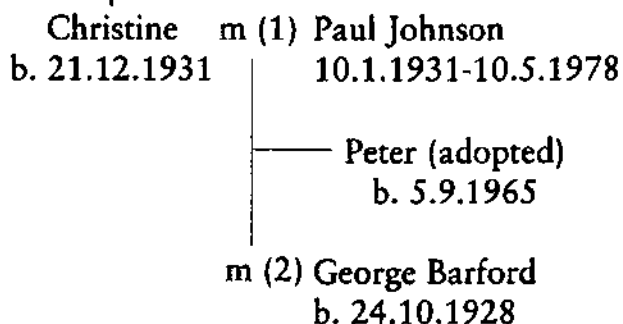
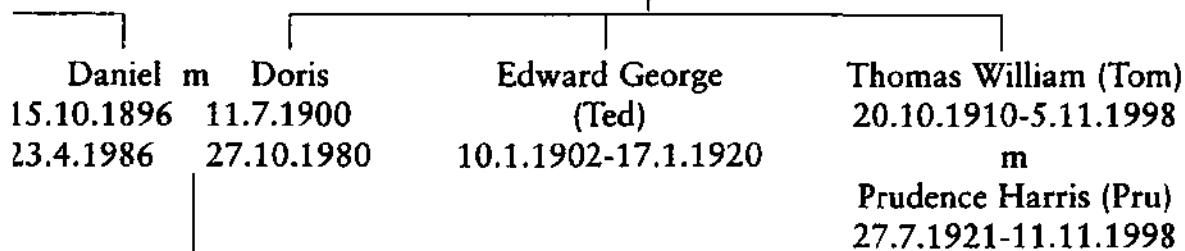
Keri Davies

Web Producer, *The Archers*

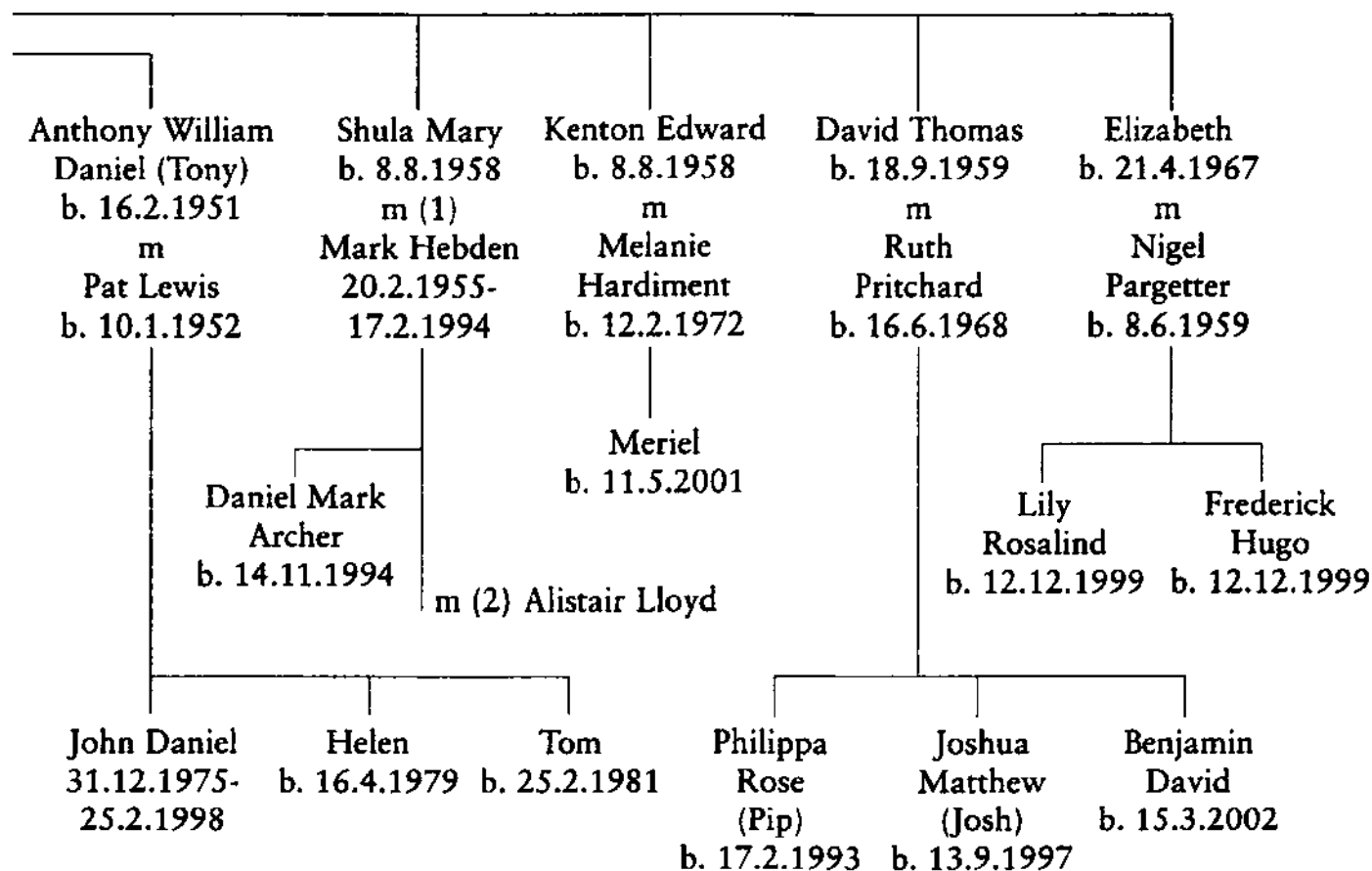
Transmission times: 7pm Sunday to Friday, repeated at 2pm the next day (excluding Saturdays). Omnibus edition of the whole week's episodes every Sunday at 10am. The website also holds an archive of episodes from the previous seven days.



William Forrest m Lisa



THE ARCHERS FAMILY TREE





ALICE ALDRIDGE



Home Farm • Born 29.9.88
(Hollie Chapman)

Alice was delighted when her father **Brian** bought Spearmint, a full size horse to replace her old pony, Chandler. She didn't realise it was a product of his guilty conscience following the affair with **Siobhan Hathaway**, because mercifully she remained unaware of the cause of the arctic relations between Brian and her sister **Debbie Travers-Macy**. None of the family wanted to scupper Alice's promising prospects as she started working towards her GCSEs as a day girl at a local private school, but Debbie must be seriously tempted to explain the real reason for her departure to France. Alice's second cousin **Shula** took over Debbie's role as riding mentor, but Alice missed her sister badly as she dealt with the angst and anguish – real and imagined – of her mid-teen years.



BRIAN ALDRIDGE



Home Farm • Born 20.11.43
(Charles Collingwood)

Wealthy and charming, Brian has had affairs in the past, most notably with **Caroline Pemberton**. But he entered new territory when a fling with **Siobhan Hathaway** turned into something much more serious. And serious was far too small a word when she had his son – Ruairi. It was an impossible secret to keep, and Brian's daughter **Debbie Travers-Macy** was the first to collapse the house of cards. Agonised Brian attempted to mend his marriage with **Jennifer**, losing contact with Ruairi as a consequence. Losing Debbie too because, unable to forgive him, she took a job in France. Then in September 2003, Siobhan returned from Ireland with fresh temptation. Although torn, Brian stuck to his decision, and as they fought in his car he lost control. The slow recovery from his injuries made for difficult times at **Home Farm**.



JENNIFER ALDRIDGE



(Formerly Travers-Macy, née Archer)

Home Farm • Born 7.1.45

(Angela Piper)

Although outwardly a respectable farmer's wife, observing a comfortable orbit from food hall to clothes shop to elegant farmhouse kitchen, Jennifer's history reads like, well... a soap opera. Unmarried and pregnant by a local farm hand, she gave birth to Adam (now **Macy**) in 1967. She later married Roger Travers-Macy, who adopted Adam. They had a daughter **Debbie**, but the marriage didn't last, and Jennifer wed **Brian** in 1976. They had more daughters: **Alice** and **Kate** (now **Madikane**) who by the age of 20 was taking after her mother, with two children by two different fathers (Jennifer regularly looks after **Phoebe**). Once a teacher and writer, Jennifer's interest in local history led her to set up the **Ambridge** website in 2002. Although devastated by Brian's affair with **Siobhan Hathaway**, she fought determinedly to save her marriage.



PHOEBE ALDRIDGE



Willow Farm
Born 28.6.98

Product of a short-lived relationship between **Roy Tucker** and **Kate Madikane** (née Aldridge), this little mite was born in a tepee at the Glastonbury Festival, prevented from leaving the country by a court order, subjected to DNA testing and named in a New Age ceremony on Lakey Hill. Roy bravely cared for Phoebe following Kate's departure to Africa. But when Kate had eventually 'found herself' – and a husband, **Lucas** – she swanned back expecting to collect the child like a piece of left luggage. Largely thanks to wise Lucas, Kate eventually accepted that Phoebe's home was with her father now. But she still plays the mother card on her occasional visits to **Ambridge**, which can only confuse Phoebe, who sees Roy's wife **Hayley** as her mother, and Kate as a rather exotic Aunty figure.



*'...Stand on the village green, trying to ignore the ghastly seventies cul de sac and the hideous faux-Georgian estate (c2003), and you can still get a echo of an England painted in watercolour by ladies called Clarissa. If you're the sort who thinks the Met Bar is getting a bit parochial, then Ambridge be may not be for you, even though **The Bull** Upstairs can get quite lively when local heroes pull in the crowds on a Friday night. But from Saxon church to duck pond, country house hotel to half-timbered pub, this place holds an addictive charm. Some have passed through, lingering for fifteen minutes on the way to somewhere else, and to their surprise ended up regulars for life...'*

The Rough Lonely Guide to the UK, £12.99, paperback



AMBRIDGE HALL



Early in 2002, **Lynda** and **Robert Snell** had cause to regret the river frontage which gave their home such an attractive prospect. Swollen by heavy rain, the Am broke its banks and inundated the building. Fortunately the flash flood receded after only a few hours, but it took weeks of work to restore the six-bedroomed Victorian house, and months before the landscaped gardens recovered. The gardens in particular had been the work of years for Lynda, a keen and opinionated gardener, who had established a low allergen area to which she can retreat when struck by her annual affliction – hay fever. In 2003, with the assistance of contractors, she developed a Shakespearean garden, using only plants mentioned by the Bard. Adjoining the Hall is a small paddock strikingly occupied by Constanza and Wolfgang – two llamas.



AMBRIDGE ORGANICS



Harcourt Road, Borchester

During the boom time for organics it seemed like a good idea for **Pat** and **Tony Archer** to open a shop selling the farm's vegetables, yoghurt and ice cream, pork and sausages, plus a whole range of bought-in organic produce. But what with business rates and other overheads, **Helen**, who manages this family enterprise, has found it hard to make a decent profit out of the place. She does her best to minimise costs by paying fairly modest wages to her staff – **silent** Anja and **Kirsty Miller**, the girlfriend of Helen's brother **Tom**.



MARJORIE ANTROBUS



The Laurels • Born 1922
(Margot Boyd)

In 2003, Marjorie – known to many **Ambridge** villagers as ‘Mrs A’ – finally faced the realisation that her independent life was at an end, and reluctantly she moved into a nursing home. She’d fought the inevitable for a long time, not just because of her self-reliant instincts but also because it meant evicting her good friends and lodgers **Roy** and **Hayley Tucker**. Marjorie is unbowed by the loss over the years of her old colonial husband ‘Teddy’, her beloved Afghan hounds and her role as the bastion of the parish council and PCC. Although physically frail, mentally she is as sharp as ever, even if she has replaced the boundless horizons of her African youth with the comforting care and routine of The Laurels.



BEN ARCHER



Brookfield Farm

Born 15.3.02

Ben's conception – on a Brookfield hay cart on a warm June night – was blissfully bucolic. But so soon after breast cancer, the pregnancy posed additional health risks for **Ruth**. Fortunately all was well, and the labour was so quick that **David** had to draw on a lifetime's lambing and calving experience as he became an emergency midwife. **Pip** loved having a new baby to bathe and dress, although for a while **Josh** worried that he was going to be replaced. **Ruth** has found that as a mother of three she can't be as active on the farm as she was used to, which has put more pressure on **David**.



DAVID ARCHER



Brookfield Farm • Born 18.9.59

(Timothy Bentinck)

Following **Phil's** much delayed retirement and after a bitter family squabble, David and his wife **Ruth** finally took over the running of **Brookfield Farm** in 2001. They've struggled through some difficult years, facing falling farm incomes, TB, BSE, foot and mouth and worst of all Ruth's breast cancer, but David has plugged away doggedly at every challenge that has come his way. With Phil's help now limited, **Bert Fry** getting on and Ruth busy with their young family, David struggled to keep on top of the relentless round of work, which includes raising Hereford beef for local customers and quality lamb marketed through The Hasset Hills Meat Company – in every way a 'joint' venture. No-one's quite sure where he'll find the time but in May 2003 David was elected to **Ambridge's** parish council.



HELEN ARCHER



A Tied Cottage at Home Farm • Born 16.4.79
(Louiza Patikas)

Helen seemed set for early middle age when she moved in with **Greg Turner**. It's been a tricky relationship. Helen is still maturing (not unlike her Borsetshire Blue cheese, which drew on her HND in Food Technology). And Greg took an awfully long time to reveal trivial details of his past life. You know, wife, children, vasectomy... Helen has done her best to help Greg cope with the impossibilities of being an absent parent of teenage girls. But she finds his bleak moods harder to deal with. Unkind observers (like her brother **Tom**) reckon they deserve each other, because Helen can, herself, be difficult. In Helen's case, it's because she needs to be more tactful when dealing with people, as her staff at **Ambridge Organics** can confirm.



JILL ARCHER



(née Patterson)

Glebe Cottage • Born 3.10.30

(Patricia Greene)

Jill was once an unashamed townie, but through 40-plus years of marriage to **Phil** she grew to be the consummate countrywoman. Never far from the Aga at **Brookfield**, Jill brought up four children – **Kenton, Shula** (now **Hebden Lloyd**), **David** and **Elizabeth** (now **Pargetter**) – and took a full part in village affairs through the church, WI and parish council. When she and Phil moved to their retirement cottage in 2001, Jill feared that her role at the heart of Brookfield would somehow end. No chance. She continued to run holiday lets at the farm's Rickyard Cottage, and retained her bees and hens in the orchard there. Jill's caring, practical nature is always valued by her family and by other villagers, and her sense of justice means she's always ready to take a stand on a point of principle.



JOSH ARCHER



Brookfield Farm • Born 13.9.97

When **Ruth** went into labour, keen cricketer **David** was in the middle of the innings of a lifetime, but he was persuaded to leave the field to see his son born. Josh attends the local primary school at Loxley Barratt. He was worried when he was replaced as Ruth and David's youngest son by the arrival of **Ben**. But they managed to persuade the lad that they had no plans to send him back to the shop.



KENTON ARCHER



The flat above Jaxx Caff • Born 8.8.58

(Richard Attlee)

Kenton was saved when **Jack Woolley** threw this one-time merchant-navy officer a lifeline, agreeing that he could manage Jack's new café in **Borchester**. Kenton had been thrown out by his Australian wife Mel and, on his return to **Ambridge**, had done the rounds of all the Archer family homes. In Australia, he'd left behind a sailing business and a daughter, Meriel; in Ambridge it was a trail of exasperated relatives. Kenton has an on-off relationship with **Kathy Perks**, who has no illusions about him. He's great fun, but flakier than a *mille feuille* with a Flake on top.



MEL ARCHER



(née Hardiment)

Somewhere in Oz • Born 12.2.72

Mel isn't the first woman to fall for **Kenton Archer's** plausible charms. But she was the first actually to marry him and the first to have his baby – at least the first he's acknowledged. Baby Meriel arrived two weeks late in May 2001 – already taking after her father – **David** quipped. But before the child's first birthday, Mel had seen through Kenton, who had borrowed money from her with little sign of it ever being repaid. She chucked him out, and he returned to **Ambridge** sadder but (this is Kenton, after all) no wiser.



PAT ARCHER



(née Lewis)

Bridge Farm • Born 10.01.52

(Patricia Gallimore)

Meeting Pat was probably the best thing that ever happened to **Tony**. Not only was she good with cows, having managed a herd of Welsh Blacks in, er, Wales, but she had the entrepreneurial spirit that he lacked. Together, they have built **Bridge Farm** into a thriving organic enterprise that produces its own yoghurt, ice cream, cheese (thanks to daughter **Helen**), pork and sausages (son **Tom**). They even have their own shop, **Ambridge Organics** in **Borchester**. Through all this, Pat has retained most of the radical principles that saw her famously replace Tony's *Daily Express* with *The Guardian* in 1984. **Clarrie Grundy** would certainly say Pat's a sympathetic employer, and she's been a good friend to **Kathy Perks**, even giving her a temporary home after her break-up with **Sid**.



PHIL ARCHER



Glebe Cottage • Born 23.4.28
(Norman Painting)

Phil is probably the only soap character to have been admired by a former Home Secretary as a fine example of British manhood. He's grown from a bright, if hot-headed, farmer's son, eventually taking over **Brookfield** during the boom years for British agriculture and passing it on to **David** and **Ruth** in much tougher times. His marriage to **Jill** has been one of the most stable relationships in the village and, all being well, they are on course for their golden anniversary in 2007. Despite retirement, Phil still lends David and Ruth a hand on the farm, but he does have more time now to indulge his passion for music; he is the organist at the parish church of **St Stephen's** and his piano playing often accompanies village productions.



PIP ARCHER



Brookfield Farm • Born 17.2.93

(Rosie Davies)

Christened Philippa after **David**'s father and **Rose** after **Ruth**'s aunt, the eldest **Brookfield** child is universally known as Pip. She took well to Loxley Barratt Primary School until brother **Josh** came along, when she started to play up. David eventually solved the jealousy by allowing Pip to show off her brother to her classmates. Fortunately, when **Ben** was born Pip was old enough to help out, and enjoyed having a living doll to bathe and dress. Pip loves to help with the young stock, and takes after grandfather **Phil** in another way too – she is learning to play the piano and has sung enchanting solos at carol concerts. Well . . . her family were enchanted, anyway.



RUTH ARCHER



(née Pritchard)

Brookfield Farm • Born 16.6.68

(Felicity Finch)

Ruth has always seen herself as a farmer, not a farmer's wife. She came from Prudoe in Northumberland to work at **Brookfield** as an agricultural student, and married **David** in 1988. The arrival of **Pip** and **Josh** didn't stop her working on the farm, particularly with her much-loved dairy herd, but she had to take much more of a back seat when struck by breast cancer in 2000. A mastectomy and punishing chemotherapy were successful, although the threat of a recurrence hangs constantly over her. Eager to pull her weight after her recovery, she was back in the milking parlour despite an unplanned pregnancy the following year. But when **Ben** arrived, she finally had to slow down a bit. Even Wonder Woman didn't have to save the world *and* cope with three children.



TOM ARCHER



Bridge Farm • Born 25.02.81

(Tom Graham)

Tom's cooled down a bit since his days as a notorious eco-warrior. In 1999 he was acquitted on a charge of criminal damage, despite admitting attacking a trial crop of genetically modified oil seed rape. This was on land owned by his uncle, **Brian Aldridge**, which didn't do a lot for family harmony. Tom works with his father **Tony** at **Bridge Farm**, mainly running the outdoor herd of organic Gloucester Old Spot pigs, which his brother John established before his tragic death in 1998. In 2003, despite his parents' caution, Tom drove through an ambitious expansion to supply a national supermarket with Tom Archer Sausages, although he soon found out how difficult it is to supply such a powerful customer. As with many young men, Tom's libido can lead him by the, er... lead him astray, but most of the time he remains true to his girlfriend **Kirsty Miller**.



TONY ARCHER



Bridge Farm • Born 16.2.51
(Colin Skipp)

Jennifer Aldridge's brother and the only son of **Peggy Woolley** and her late husband Jack Archer. For a long time, Tony felt responsible for the loss of his elder son John in a tractor accident, but each anniversary of the death is slightly easier to bear. Tony will never be dubbed Mr Sunshine, but he gets a quiet satisfaction from producing high quality organic milk and veg. Wife **Pat** and her dairy workers turn the milk into **Bridge Farm** yoghurt and ice cream, and daughter **Helen** converts small amounts into cheese. The veg is sold to a co-op and at the farm shop, **Ambridge Organics**. What does cheer Tony up is roaring round the country lanes in his venerable MG Midget ('mid-life crisis', scoffed son **Tom**), a game of cricket or the excellent products of Shires Brewery.



ARKWRIGHT HALL



This large Victorian house with a 17th century core has served as a community centre 'with soundproofed room for rock and roll' and later a field studies centre, but for a long time it remained unoccupied and unloved. The owner **Jack Woolley** eventually decided to lease it to the Landmark Trust. Architect **Lewis** supervised the building's restoration to its Victorian splendour and it is now available to holidaymakers looking for something a little different. As housekeeper, **Freda Fry** cleans the place between lets.



JEAN-PAUL AUBERT



Grey Gables • Born 1951
(Yves Aubert)

No sane person would put a highly strung, temperamental control freak in a hot room surrounded by blunt instruments and the sharpest of knives. But if they hadn't, then we would never have experienced the exquisite creations of **Grey Gables's** head chef. And he hasn't killed anyone. Yet.



BAGGY AND SNATCH



Baggy and Snatch. They go together like 'drunk and disorderly'. And, to **Clarrie's** alarm and despondency, they often go arm in arm with **Eddie Grundy**. Unlike Baggy, Snatch admits to a surname – Foster – and while admitting to that, he'd like several other offences to be taken into consideration. When Eddie comes home drunk, with hooky gear, or with pheasants protruding from his clothing, the chances are he'll have spent the evening in the company of either or both of these gentlemen.



CHRISTINE BARFORD



(Formerly Johnson, née Archer)

The Old Police House • Born 21.12.31

(Lesley Saweard)

Phil Archer's younger sister is always known in the family as Chris. She had a hard time accepting that worsening back trouble meant the end of her riding days, which had been her work and her life, and reluctantly she sold her business and house at The Stables to her niece **Shula Hebden Lloyd**. For many years Chris struggled with marriage to an airy dreamer, Paul Johnson. After his death she found happiness with the altogether more down-to-earth **George**, and they were eventually able to enjoy a companionable retirement. Christine hopes to see more of Peter, her adopted son from her first marriage. He lives away from the village, and travels a lot as an administrator with a symphony orchestra, but turned up as the star guest at her 70th birthday party.



GEORGE BARFORD



The Old Police House • Born 24.10.28
(Graham Roberts)

It's odd that George ended up in **Ambridge's** former police house, because he spent a few years as a copper before devoting the bulk of his working life to the gamekeeping trade. A sort of gamekeeper turned gamekeeper, you might say. George has been a great help to his fellow Ambridge keepers. He recruited and trained **William Grundy**, and William's boss **Greg Turner** has often benefited from George's wisdom, which George gained the hard way through an early life that was marred by his alcoholism and divorce. Because of this, George is on his second marriage, to **Christine**. His two children, Karen and Terry, are from the first relationship. A straight-talking Yorkshireman, George plays the cornet, works voluntarily both as a tree warden and a flood warden, and makes a popular chairman of the Parish Council.



LILIAN BELLAMY



(formerly Nicholson, née Archer)

Guernsey • Born 8.7.47

(Sunny Ormonde)

Jennifer Aldridge's younger sister and the widow of **Ambridge's** last real squire figure, Ralph Bellamy, who ended his days in Guernsey. After Lilian's son James (born in 1973) moved to London, his mother seems to have found comfort mainly in gin and the company of attractive young men. The collapse of her relationship with a two-timing gold-digging bit-part actor/model called Scott led to her temporary return to Ambridge in 2001 and a bid to regain her youth via cosmetic surgery. Rich, self-centred and impatient with Ambridge's sleepy ways, she has much in common with **Matt Crawford**. Jennifer was annoyed when Lilian got into bed with Matt over **Borchester Land's** housing development, **Grange Spinney**. It was a metaphorical bed, but we wouldn't put it past either of them to find a real one some day.



NEVILLE BOOTH



Born 1942 • Ambridge

A member of the bell ringing team at **St Stephen's**. Mr Booth's name was once linked by the **Ambridge** net-curtain twitchers with **Jolene Perks's** (then Rogers), when her car was seen parked outside his house *all night*. In reality it was because she was with **Sid** and she didn't feel it was safe for her car to be seen outside **The Bull**. Going on the speed with which the Mr Booth rumour spread, she was right to be cautious.



BORCHESTER



Welcome to the official Borchester website.

Borchester Chamber of Trade – bringing this historic market town into the 21st century

<continue running scripts on this page?>

SHOPPING: **Underwoods** (traditional department store), **Ambridge Organics** (speciality foods):

[Click Here](#) *<file not found>*

LEISURE: Theatre Royal, Multiplex Cinema (3 screens), Leisure Centre (gym, swimming pool)

[Click Here](#) *<fatal exception at E44CA965>*

AM VALE: visit the picturesque countryside that surround *<This program has performed an illegal operation and will be shut down>*



BORCHESTER LAND



Property company owning the 1020 acre **Berrow Estate**, including business units at Sawyers Farm and one tenanted holding, **Bridge Farm**. **Brian Aldridge** thought he was moving into the big boys' playground when he became a director, but he soon found that big boys play rough games. With world prices so low, the board has been unhappy with its return on capital, and is constantly looking for ways of screwing more money out of its investment. Brian saw his contract to farm the Estate's 'in hand' land go to a more ruthless outside firm, and was unable to prevent plans for the **Grange Spinney** housing development. As the Borchester Land chairman **Matt Crawford** makes Machiavelli look like Postman Pat, Brian would be advised to take a food taster to dinner parties.



BRIDGE FARM



STOCK

75 milkers (Friesians) • 35 followers (heifers/calves)
120 outdoor reared pigs

CROPS

115 acres grassland • 22 acres barley
15 acres wheat • 6 acres potatoes • 2 acres carrots
2 acres leeks • 3 acres swedes
2 acres Dutch cabbage • 1 acre Savoy cabbage
4 acres mixed vegetable and salad crops,
including 2 polytunnels

LABOUR

Tony Archer • Pat Archer • Tom Archer
Clarrie Grundy • Colin Kennedy (dairy)
Stan Derby • **Susan Carter** (sausages)

Tenant farmers **Tony** and **Pat Archer** rent 140 acres from the **Estate**, with an extra 32 acres from other landlords. Bridge Farm converted to organic in 1984. The farm's produce – including yoghurt and ice cream made in their own dairy – is sold through a wholesaler and to local outlets including **Ambridge Organics**. In 2003, ambitious **Tom** took on a brave commitment to sell his own brand sausages to a national supermarket, renting a business unit at Sawyers Farm for the processing.



BROOKFIELD FARM



STOCK

130 milkers (Friesians) • 70 followers (heifers/calves)
90 beef cattle (Herefords) • 300 ewes
Hens (small scale)

CROPS

258 acres grassland • 115 acres cereals
34 acres oil seed rape • 15 acres potatoes
12 acres beans • 10 acres fodder beet
17 acres forage maize • 8 acres set-aside

LABOUR

David Archer • **Ruth Archer** (relief)
Phil Archer (relief) • **Jill Archer** (hens, bees, holiday cottage)
Bert Fry (general) • Biff (sheepdog)

Brookfield is a 469-acre mixed farm, which incorporates the old holdings of Marney's and Hollowtree. With **Phil's** retirement in 2001, **David** contracted out the arable work to **Home Farm** so he and **Ruth** could concentrate on their livestock. Despite recurring problems with TB in the dairy herd, Brookfield is doing its best to move away from selling its products as commodities and to get closer to the customer. High quality beef from the Herefords is sold at the farm gate, and the lamb is marketed co-operatively under the Hasset Hills brand.



THE BULL



*'...Chips with your Shires Bitter? Not unusual, you might think. But The Bull on **Ambridge**'s village green now boasts two computers in their public bar, which opens at 10am for coffee and internet surfing. It's part of **Sid** and **Jolene Perks**'s drive to find new customers, supplementing the long standing attractions of the beer garden (with Eccles the peacock), the boules "piste", and the economical Family Restaurant. If, like me, you find the tapping of keyboards at odds with the olde worlde ambience of this half-timbered free house, you can escape to the quiet of the Ploughman's bar. No escape, sadly, from the caterwauling of the pop groups in the function room (the "Bull Upstairs") on Fridays and Saturdays...'*

Extract from *The **Borchester** Echo's* 'A Word in Your Beer' column.



CHRISTOPHER CARTER



No 1, The Green • Born 22.6.88

Neil and **Susan**'s son and younger brother to **Emma**, Christopher started at **Borchester** Green secondary school in September 1999. Christopher has had the odd episode of juvenile idiocy (haven't we all), but generally gives his parents little trouble. He's a dab hand with radio controlled cars, and came a terrific second to **Alice Aldridge** at the 2001 village fete. Neil has managed to persuade Christopher into the bell tower at **St Stephen's**, and he rang his first full peal – of Grandsire Triples – at the Jubilee celebrations in 2002. But of late he's become rather more interested in mixing on his record decks. Perhaps he intends to become **Ambridge's** answer to Paul Oakenfold (an eminent disk jockey in the field of house music, your honour).



EMMA CARTER



No 1, The Green • Born 7.8.84
(Felicity Jones)

In 2003, **Neil** and **Susan**'s bright and sassy daughter had a difficult time as the apex of a love triangle. She was torn for a while between **William Grundy** and his more erratic but more exciting younger brother **Ed**, who once saved Emma's life by pulling her out of a burning car. Unfortunately, the car was William's. Ed had taken it without permission, driven it without a licence and crashed it into a tree, which hardly endeared Ed to his brother – or to Neil. In the end, Emma chose the security and undoubted love that William could offer, soon sealing the decision by getting engaged to him. Emma is assistant manager (albeit in a very small team) at **Jaxx Caff**. The job basically involves running the place while giving the illusion that **Kenton Archer** is in charge, and Emma does it very well.



NEIL CARTER



No 1, The Green • Born 25.5.57
(Brian Hewlett)

Neil worked, reluctantly, for a few years as a feed rep, but in 1998 he returned to his first love – pigs. **Susan** wasn't impressed, and not just by the words 'first' and 'love'. Neil runs an outdoor herd of Gloucester Old Spots at **Willow Farm**, and does a lot of the pig husbandry for would-be sausage baron **Tom Archer**. In 2001, Neil replaced his and **Mike Tucker's** pick-your-own strawberry enterprise with **Betty's** free-range hens, to Mike's annoyance. **Eddie Grundy's** attempts to exploit Neil – or, as Eddie put it, make them both millionaires – were scuppered by **Emma's** accident. Neil's opinion of the Grundy family has been less than zero ever since. He could have knocked seven bells out of **Ed**, but he contented himself with ringing them – as tower captain at **St Stephen's**.



SUSAN CARTER



(née Horrobin)

No 1, The Green • Born 10.10.63

(Charlotte Martin)

Susan's not had a lot of luck in her attempts to shake off the bad start that comes with being a **Horrobin**. In 1993 she was forced to shelter brother **Clive** when he was on the run, getting three months in prison when he betrayed her to the police. She tried to get husband **Neil** into a white-collar job, only to see him return to the land. Susan supplemented her job at the **Village Shop** with a receptionist's post at the surgery, but it closed in 2002. In September 2003 she started as a part-time school secretary at **Borchester** Green, but it was only maternity-leave cover, so she continued to pack sausages for **Tom Archer**. She hoped her children would get further up the social ladder, but daughter **Emma** went to work in a café rather than on to university. So no pressure on **Christopher**, then...



Somewhere posh near Borchester
and a nice place in town
(Kim Durham)

Brian Aldridge's chairman in **Borchester** **Land** is a Del Trotter who really did make a million, but without that character's redeeming social features. Matt doesn't let a little thing like the planning laws get in the way of his business objectives, or the fact that he is married to Yvette get in the way of his sexual urges (as **Debbie Travers-Macy** once found out, to her horror). Brian has won some battles, but Matt still managed to get the **Grundys** evicted from **Grange Farm**, and the **Grange Spinney** housing development pushed through – albeit on a smaller scale than the mini-Milton Keynes he'd originally planned. It's clear from various clandestine house purchases that Matt has designs on **Ambridge** – and they are not the sort that the Arts and Crafts movement would appreciate.



THE ESTATE



More correctly, the Berrow Estate: see
Borchester Land.



FAT PAUL



Building contractor Paul Blocker is a man who beats not wisely, but too well. He managed to squeeze himself into the cab of his JCB to perform a comically awful 'Disco Diggers' routine with **Eddie Grundy** at the 2001 **Ambridge** fete.



FELPERSHAM



For **Ambridge** residents, Birmingham supplies the real bright lights, but this cathedral city 17 miles east of the village is a good half-way house. Lots of shops, nice places to eat and drink: a nirvana for the credit-card generation. In the evenings, Bannisters café bar is where the young and beautiful congregate until sensible people over the age of 30 have gone to bed. Then they move on to Angels club for several hours dancing, preening and ‘pulling’.



DEREK FLETCHER



Glebelands

In 1979, Pat and Derek Fletcher were among the first occupants of one of the 'executive homes' in Glebelands – the **Grange Spinney** of its day. The development was not welcomed by most villagers, and they soon felt the same way about the less-than-charming Mr Fletcher. Along with **Peggy Woolley**, Derek was one of the parishioners who left **St Stephen's** for All Saints, **Borchester** on the appointment of a woman vicar. **Roy Tucker** traced a poison-pen letter back to delightful Derek, when **Hayley** had the temerity to criticise people who want to protect their rural idyll by objecting to new housing. Ironical that, because in 1979, Pat and Derek Fletcher were among the first occupants...(this is where we came in).



WAYNE FOLEY



(Ian Brooker)

Radio Borsetshire

Broadcasting throughout the county on 87.3FM

'Tune in to the Wayne Foley Afternoon Show. With news and views from around the county and a tea-time guest just after four. And play spot the personality with Wayne's Usual Suspects competition!

Something to say? Call Brenda on the phones.*

Every weekday, 2 'til 5.

Life going slowly? Tune to Foley.'

(*That's **Brenda Tucker**. Mike's so proud)



ALAN FRANKS



The Vicarage, Ambridge
(John Telfer)

Once an accountant, Alan worked as a non-stipendiary minister before being appointed vicar of **Ambridge**, Penny Hasset, Darrington and Edgeley in June 2003. He's a man of passionate convictions, not all of which might be welcome to his more traditional parishioners. Alan's wife died of breast cancer in 1995, so his bonds with his daughter **Amy** are immensely strong.



AMY FRANKS



The Vicarage, Darrington

The Reverend **Alan** has brought his daughter up to think for herself, and now reaps the results in occasional blazing rows, although underneath they are extremely close. Coming to the countryside was a joy for Amy, primarily because she loves riding. She hit it off very quickly with **Alice Aldridge**, who is of the same age and similarly nutty about horses.



BERT FRY



Brookfield Bungalow • Born 1936

(Eric Allan)

To the casual observer, there's not much to set Bert apart from the general run of agricultural workers. But don't be fooled, because underneath those overalls beats the heart of a poet. Bert is the unofficial bard of Borsetshire who once had his own column in the **Borchester** *Echo*. Despite reaching retirement age in 2002, Bert kept plugging away at **Brookfield**, where **David** and **Ruth** have often been grateful for his understanding way with their children. Bert and **Freda** have one son, Trevor, and a granddaughter, Amy. Whether as cricket umpire or churchwarden, Bert approaches all tasks with the same steady, dutiful approach, which can infuriate the more impatient. But my goodness it pays dividends in his garden, as demonstrated by the numerous prizes he's amassed at the annual Flower and Produce Show.



FREDA FRY



Brookfield Bungalow

Freda cleans the house and holiday cottage at **Brookfield**, and is the housekeeper at **Arkwright Hall**. She knocks out cheap-and-cheerful meals aplenty for **The Bull's** family restaurant, and at home she keeps **Bert's** body and soul together with large helpings of hearty traditional nosh. At the annual Flower and Produce Show her cakes and preserves are so successful that despairing competitors wonder if she's made a pact with the devil. But it's not these domestic accomplishments that make Freda seem the perfect woman to a certain sort of unreconstructed male. It's that she is never heard to speak.



SIR SIDNEY



AND LADY MERCEDES GOODMAN

A garage mechanic announcing that he's going to give Sir Sidney's Mercedes a good seeing-to might soon expect a visit from a couple of burly men. Because Mercedes is Sir Sidney's Spanish wife, whose decades of sun-worshipping and couture shopping combine to form an appearance reminiscent of a distressed leather settee swathed in an elegant throw. Goodman's Spanish interests date back to the days when he fought with Franco, and he still takes a totalitarian approach to running his food-processing empire, which includes canning factories in **Borchester**, Spain and elsewhere.



GRANGE FARM



A working farm (just) until the bankrupt **Grundys** were evicted in April 2000. The bulk of the acreage was absorbed back into the **Estate** and the farmhouse sold with fifty acres to **Oliver Sterling**, who runs a few beef cattle ('hobby farming', scoffed **Joe Grundy**) with the occasional help of Joe's grandson **Ed**.



GRANGE SPINNEY



Or **Crawford's** Folly as it might have been known. **Borchester Land's** plans for a housing development on old **Grange Farm** land was the source of much **Ambridge** angst, but spirited opposition was only able to reduce the extent, to twelve luxury residences and six 'low cost' homes, which were built in 2003.



GREY GABLES



'Dear Dean,
*As you can see from the pictures on the front, I am staying in a really nice hotel. If you were here, you'd be out on the golf course all day – or in the health club, or showing off in the swimming pool. I've taken all the money out of your jet bike account and I've been having fantastic French meals and beauty treatments. **Caroline Pemberton** (the manager) and **Jack Woolley**, (he owns the place), they were really nice when I told them what you'd done. The receptionist is going to post this after I've gone, so you won't know where I am. I'm not coming back Dean, never. And if you turn up here I've asked the assistant manager **Roy Tucker** to set **Higgs** on you. You don't want to meet him, Dean...'*

Postcard entrusted to **Lynda Snell** for delayed despatch.



ALF GRUNDY



Gloucester • Born 13.11.44

When the Grundys were farmers, they didn't need to buy any black sheep, because they had one of their own, in **Eddie's** brother Alf. The Grundys adhere more to their own idiosyncratic moral code than the letter (or indeed word, sentence, paragraph or subsection) of the law. But after his release from prison for breaking and entering, Alf committed the ultimate offence; he stole from his family. When Joe was 80, Eddie and Clarrie arranged for him to visit Alf as a birthday treat. It was better than Alf coming back to **Ambridge**.



CLARRIE GRUNDY



Keeper's Cottage • Born 12.5.54
(Rosalind Adams)

While some people think **Eddie** should be shot, most agree that his wife Clarrie should be canonised. Only a saint could have put up with the four Grundy men (father-in-law **Joe** and feuding sons **Ed** and **William** complete the unlovely set) for so long and for such little reward. Clarrie labours night and day at **The Bull** and **Bridge Farm** dairy respectively, so you might expect the men to pull their weight around the house. You might, but stoical Clarrie gave up that expectation a long time ago... To escape her daily drudgery, she likes a nice romantic novel (not that she gets much time to read), and very occasionally she escapes to Skegness to see her sister Rosie Mabbott.



ED GRUNDY



Keeper's Cottage • Born 28.9.84
(Barry Farrimond)

Clarrie worries about Ed, and well she might. Although he's happiest playing his electric guitar, he can be a hard worker when he puts his mind to it. Father **Eddie** and **Oliver Sterling** both employ him, and he's trying to establish a small beef enterprise at **Grundys' Field**. But he all too frequently crosses the line of legality. A run of joyriding led to his crashing his brother **William's** car and injuring **Emma Carter**. Although Ed bravely pulled Emma from the burning vehicle, the relationship between the brothers is usually dire, especially as Ed once came close to stealing Emma away from William. **Jazzer's** ghastly experience has warned Ed off ketamine but not all drugs by any means. And he hasn't been able to resist a bit of petty thieving, either. Worry on, Clarrie...



EDDIE GRUNDY



Keeper's Cottage • Born 15.3.51
(Trevor Harrison)

Once a farmer, always... in debt, as Eddie might have said. Having lost the tenancy of **Grange Farm**, Eddie turned his back on agriculture to concentrate on his other enterprises – or ‘scams’, as the rest of **Ambridge** call them. He’s your man for garden ornaments, compost, landscaping or (keep your voice down) a couple of trout or a brace of pheasants. This motley collection of money-earners pays the rent to landlord **Jack Woolley**, although **Clarrie**’s wages are just as vital. Eddie found he couldn’t leave farming behind completely; he’s often employed in his tractor or digger around the fields of Borsetshire. And in 2003 this former tenant farmer was at last able to say “git orf moi laarnd”, when a windfall from his old milk quota allowed him to buy **Grundys’ Field**.



JOE GRUNDY



Keeper's Cottage • Born 18.9.21
(Edward Kelsey)

The Grundys had been tenant farmers 'since time immemorial', and Joe still feels the burden of being the Grundy who lost **Grange Farm** for future generations. He finds there is little that will console him, except possibly hitching up Bartleby his pony and trotting off in his trap for a pint at **The Bull** (Joe is a devout Methodist, except for the bit about not drinking alcohol. Or going to chapel.) Joe used to suffer from a complaint known as 'farmer's lung', but it's been a lot less troublesome since son **Eddie** hasn't expected him to do any work. So Joe potters around his garden and, thanks to neighbour **Robert Snell** and the computers at The Bull, has become an unlikely 'silver surfer'. He's the man who put 'bored' into message board.



WILLIAM GRUNDY



The Dower House Flat • Born 9.2.83

(Philip Molloy)

It looks like brother **Ed** inherited the Grundys' wilder traits, while **Clarrie's** respectable Larkin genes were passed to William. The elder son takes life seriously, to the point of being slightly stolid. But **Emma Carter** found Will sufficiently attractive not only to go out with him but to choose him over Ed when she was tempted to stray. William is lucky enough to have **Caroline Pemberton** for a godmother. Even when Caroline moved to **Grange Farm**, she allowed him to stay on in his flat at her house. To his father **Eddie's** dismay, Will works as an under-keeper with **Greg Turner** at the combined **Grey Gables**, **Berrow Estate** and **Home Farm** shoot. Sadly, William has a low opinion of both Eddie and Ed. Ever sadder, it's probably justified.



GRUNDYS' FIELD



This 3.4 acres may not look like much, but when the **Grundys** bought it in 2003 it represented their first step into land ownership after generations of being tenants. **Ed** grazes his few beef cattle there, but it's as much a storage area as a piece of productive grassland. A rough shed and a pole barn – controversially erected without planning permission – house Eddie's venerable tractor, his early Jurassic digger, and his stock in trade; of garden ornaments, materials for his landscaping business, and mounds of 'organic' compost. Don't complain about the piles of manure – that's Eddie's bread and butter, that is.



SHIV GUPTA



Coventry
(Shiv Grewal)

Accountant Shiv is **Usha Gupta's** elder brother, and can usually be relied upon to appear at Blossom Hill Cottage when Usha needs cheering up. He didn't really approve of her partner Richard Locke, and when Richard left after that unpleasant business with **Shula Hebden Lloyd**, Shiv did his best not to say 'I told you so'. More recently, perhaps in despair of Usha finding a suitable man by her own devices, he tried to pair her up with an ex-partner of his: Ashok, who was conveniently moving to **Felpersham**. But Usha seemed to prefer the barrister Adrian Manderson, and by the time she'd realised that Adrian was not the committing type, Ashok had moved away.



USHA GUPTA



Blossom Hill Cottage • Born 1962
(Souad Faress)

Solicitor Usha is an equity partner with the **Felpersham** firm of Jefferson Crabtree. Usha's parents were unhappy when she moved to the countryside from Wolverhampton in 1991. She's been welcomed by many villagers, but integrating into the rural community brought plenty of challenges, including a very distressing series of attacks by a gang of racist thugs. Although she gets on well with **Ruth Archer**, relations with Ruth's sister-in-law **Shula Hebden Lloyd** never recovered from Shula's affair with Usha's boyfriend Richard Locke. After Richard's messy departure, Usha couldn't find a satisfactory relationship, and for a while submitted herself to the matchmaking wiles of her Auntie **Satya Khanna**. It didn't work. Seduced by the Western romantic ideal, Usha still hankered after a love match.



SIOBHAN HATHAWAY



Ireland/Germany
(Caroline Lennon)

Siobhan and former husband Tim came to **Ambridge** in 1999; he to be the local GP and she to work as a freelance translator. But the marriage foundered. Tim became close to the then-vicar Janet Fisher (to whom he is now married) and Siobhan started an affair with **Brian Aldridge**. Once she gave birth to Brian's son, Ruairi, matters accelerated rapidly and she was hurt and furious when Brian chose to stay with his wife **Jennifer**. After an unhappy sojourn in her native Ireland, Siobhan returned to Ambridge in September 2003 in a last ditch attempt to persuade Brian to start a new life with her in Germany. Rebuffed again, she fought with him and urged by him, had to walk away in shock from the car crash in which he was injured. One wonders if she's got the message now...



BUNTY AND REG HEBDEN



Bunty born 20.2.22
(Bunty - Sheila Allen)

Retired solicitor Reg and wife Bunty are the parents of **Shula Hebden Lloyd's** first husband Mark. Since her marriage to **Alistair**, Shula has been uncomfortably caught between husband and in-laws on a number of issues affecting **Daniel**, whom Mark fathered by IVF, although he died before Daniel was born (pay attention at the back). Against Reg and Bunty's wishes, Alistair was determined that Daniel would not suffer the torments of private education that he had endured. Alistair won that argument, which didn't exactly smooth the way when he wanted to adopt Daniel, thus severing Reg and Bunty's legal rights. It took the scone-assisted intervention of the other grandparents **Jill** and **Phil Archer** before they consented. And of course Shula has made sure that their relationship with Daniel is just as close, despite the adoption.



JOHN HIGGS



Grey Gables

Is Higgs – as he is invariably known – the strong, silent type? Silent, certainly and as for strong... well, all right, perhaps he could wash a little more frequently, but he has a dirty job, as general handyman and gardener at **Grey Gables**. He does spruce up when required to drive **Jack Woolley's** vintage Bentley.



HOLLERTON JUNCTION



Although the bus service around **Ambridge** is pretty dire, just six miles west of the village is a railway station, which means it's easier to get to Birmingham or London (via Paddington) than it is to get to some of the surrounding villages. Ah, the wonderful logic of 21st century public transport...



HOME FARM



STOCK

600 ewes • 110 hinds, stags, calves

CROPS

954 acres cereals • 136 acres grassland
75 acres oil seed rape • 100 acres sugar beet
80 acres linseed • 75 acres peas • 2 acres strawberries
80 acres woodland • 58 acres set-aside, including:
40 acres industrial rape • 10 acres willow (game cover)

OTHER

25 acre riding course • Fishing Lake

LABOUR

Brian Aldridge (managing and relief)
Adam Macy (deputy) • **Greg Turner** (gamekeeper)
William Grundy (under keeper)
Andy, Jeff (general workers) • Fly (sheepdog)

With 1585 mainly arable acres, Home Farm is the largest in **Ambridge**. It has made the most of its huge machinery by carrying out contract farming for **Brookfield** and other local farms. And as a partner with Brookfield and others in the Hassett Hills Meat Company, it raises and supplies high quality lamb to butchers and caterers. Since **Adam's** arrival, it started selling its venison at local farmers' markets and entered the soft-fruit business.



RT REVEREND CYRIL HOOD



Felpersham

Peter Howell

Bishop Cyril? Decent bloke, most people think. The Bishop of **Felpersham** is a firm supporter of women priests. He was a great help to **Ambridge**'s previous vicar Janet Fisher over the untidy emotional mess caused by her attraction to the local doctor Tim Hathaway, who was at the time married to the adulterous **Siobhan**. Although Tim and Janet had to move away – to Southampton – they were still able to follow their respective vocations and were married in May 2003. **Shula Hebden Lloyd** and husband **Alistair** were among the parishioners who attended the wedding, which, despite rumours, was not sponsored by the Clerical Medical insurance company.



CLIVE HORROBIN



Coming soon to a prison near you

Born 9.11.72

(Alex Jones)

Honour among thieves? (Pause for hollow laughter.) Clive demonstrated quite the opposite when he was on the run following an armed raid on the **Village Shop**. He forced his big sister **Susan** to harbour him, and then when eventually caught, he shopped her to the police. Nice... When he returned to **Ambridge** after his prison sentence, it wasn't long before ex-copper **George Barford** correctly suspected that Clive was linked to a series of burglaries in the area. Although George took a beating for his good citizenship, that wasn't enough revenge for our Clive. After his release from another prison term, he started a terror campaign by slashing horses at The Stables, tragically not realising that the Barfords had meanwhile sold the place to **Shula Hebden Lloyd**. Even his family's stomachs were turned at how twisted Clive had become.



THE HORROBINS



6, The Green, and elsewhere

Three ex-cons out of six children is going some, particularly in a relatively law-abiding manor like **Ambridge**. **Clive**, Keith and **Susan** (now **Carter**) have all known the jangle of keys and the slamming of doors, although to be fair Clive was really to blame for Susan's incarceration. Their brothers Stewart and Gary aren't exactly feckful, and Tracy has exhausted the patience of numerous local employers, including the **Bridge Farm** dairy and the café at **Lower Loxley**. Bert is a lengthman by trade (it's something to do with road building) and Ivy cleans for **Usha Gupta** at Blossom Hill Cottage. The phrase 'where did we go wrong?' is a rather over-used one chez Horrobin.



JASON



Borchester
(Brian Miller)

Jason, an ebullient Brummie builder, had three children with his ex-wife, but has lived for many years with his girlfriend in **Borchester**. He's a good craftsman, although prone to taking on too many jobs and so spreading himself thinner than the skim on a partition wall.



JAXX CAFF



Borchester

One-time greasy spoon bought in 2003 by **Jack Woolley** and reopened with a retro 1950s feel. **Kenton Archer** practically begged Jack to give him the job of managing it, partly because it came with a flat upstairs, but the real assets are the chef Frank – a prince in the bacon-butt department – and assistant manager **Emma Carter**.



JAZZER



Borchester • Born 1984

(Ryan Kelly)

Jack 'Jazzer' McCreary was in **Ed Grundy's** class at school, and left with a similar lack of qualifications. He originally played drums and later sang in the band *Dross*, with his elder brother Stuart on bass and Ed and **Fallon Rogers** on guitar, but in 2002 his hopes of rock stardom were shattered. Always equipped with a dangerously wild streak, he took enthusiastically to a drug called ketamine. After one session with this living death he woke up a week later in hospital. Permanent brain damage left him clumsy and with memory problems, and his shocked friends tried their best to rehabilitate him. He worked as their roadie for a while, until the group broke up in 2003. Ed's dad **Eddie** finds work for Jazzer occasionally, but it's probably best not to ask where most of his money comes from.



JESSICA



Lower Loxley

What's that stunning bird often seen on the hunt at **Lower Loxley**? No cheap jokes here, please. That's probably a Harris Hawk, in the care of the resident falconer Jessica. She is self-employed, with a *quid pro quo* arrangement whereby she uses premises at Lower Loxley and they are able to offer falconry displays and 'experience days'. She is a good looking woman, though, so it's as well that **Elizabeth Pargetter** is confident that **Nigel's** interest is purely ornithological.



SATYA KHANNA



Wolverhampton
(Jamilla Massey)

When **Usha Gupta**'s family fled from Uganda in the 1970s, they ended up in Wolverhampton, and they really wished that Usha had stayed closer to them rather than moving to **Ambridge**. It falls to Auntie Satya to act as go-between. She has a knack of sensing when Usha needs a bit of support – or something to eat that doesn't involve piercing a plastic lid and four minutes on 'high'. When Usha asked for help in finding a mate, enterprising Satya went into matchmaking overdrive, but to her frustration even her best efforts couldn't find Usha a 'suitable boy'. Satya always gets on well with **Marjorie Antrobus**, who has seen something of the world and has similar attitudes on many subjects – like the importance of a hot meal on the table.



LEWIS



(Robert Lister)

Life was tricky for **Nigel** and **Elizabeth Pargetter** until Lewis came along. At last, someone who could get the better of the otherwise indomitable **Julia**, who is remarkably meek in his company. When not on pleasant outings, Lewis and Julia often take charge at **Lower Loxley's** art gallery, and occasionally look after **Lily and Freddie**. Lewis is an architect, officially retired, but he still does the occasional job that interests him, like the conversion of **Lower Loxley's** shop and café, the refurbishment of **Arkwright Hall**, or the extension of buildings at The Stables to form **Alistair Lloyd's** new veterinary surgery.



The Stables (Michael Lumsden)

In 2002, Alistair was aghast to find that his partner Theo was stealing drugs from their veterinary practice to fund a cocaine habit. Bruised Alistair dissolved the partnership to set up in converted buildings at his home, where wife **Shula** runs a riding school. Alistair's first marriage ended when his wife had an affair, and Shula's fling with Richard Locke meant that she and Alistair might not have made it to the altar themselves. But his love for her and her son **Daniel** won out, and he's been a wonderful father to the boy, whom he adopted in 2000. In his spare time, Alistair keeps wicket for – and captains – the **Ambridge** team, and enjoys a game of poker.



DANIEL HEBDEN LLOYD



The Stables • Born 14.11.94

(Dominic Davies)

Daniel is fascinated by animals, and you might think that he takes after his father **Alistair**, a vet. But Alistair is actually Daniel's adoptive father. The boy's blood father Mark died never knowing that his and **Shula**'s second IVF attempt had been successful, and the pregnancy gave despairing Shula something to live for. In 1998, a mysterious illness was eventually diagnosed as juvenile arthritis, and Daniel is subject to occasional 'flares' of this debilitating condition. No surprise then that Shula can sometimes be too indulgent of her miracle child, who certainly takes after his mother in his enjoyment of horse riding.



SHULA HEBDEN LLOYD



(formally Hebden, née Archer)

The Stables • Born 8.8.58

(Judy Bennett)

Phil and **Jill Archer**'s elder daughter and **Kenton**'s twin. Shula married **Alistair** in 1998, after an unwise dalliance with the then local GP Richard Locke, which lost Shula the friendship of Richard's partner **Usha Gupta**. It was an uncharacteristic aberration for Shula, a regular churchgoer, bellringer and church-warden. Shula's first husband Mark was killed in a car crash in 1994, never knowing that after years of disappointment and treatment for infertility Shula was finally pregnant with **Daniel**. Shula has always loved horses and after twenty years as a qualified chartered surveyor she took over The Stables – as a home and a business – on the retirement of her aunt **Christine Barford**. It soaked up all her capital and is hard work for limited financial reward, but she doesn't regret the move.



LAWRENCE LOVELL



A rather sad little bed-sit in Felpersham
(Stephen Hancock)

'...my greatest moment was when I was understudying the Red Shadow in a West End production of The Desert Song. I still remember the thrill when the director told me that Maurice's irritable bowel syndrome had flared up and I was to go on...'

'...I know from my experience as a model for knitting patterns the importance of the pose. I have often been dubbed a great poseur...'

*'...In **Ambridge** they still talk of the courageous casting of my 1998 Aladdin, which I might say found gold among dross...'*

'...one's leading ladies do have a tendency to fall for one. It's an occupational hazard. Are you doing anything later, by the way...'

Reporter's notes from a press interview to publicise a production of *Grand Hotel* by the Felpersham Light Opera Society, directed by Laurence Lovell.



To the casual observer, Lower Loxley oozes the luxury of a grander age. But, as **Elizabeth Pargetter** would testily explain, a 300-year-old building takes more than Handy Andy and a bit of MDF to maintain. So to earn its keep, the Hall hosts conferences and takes sightseers; Elizabeth's husband **Nigel** runs falconry courses and displays with **Jessica**; and the grounds boast a vertiginous tree-top walk, rare breeds, cycle trails and an art gallery. Ancient retainers **Titcombe** and **Mrs Pugsley** have been joined over the years by numerous additional employees. Among others, **Kathy Perks** runs the shop and the Orangery café, employing the culinary talents of Owen the chef. **Hayley Tucker** nannies for the Pargetter twins **Lily and Freddie**, and for Kathy's little boy **Jamie**, and runs occasional activity visits for local schoolchildren.



ADAM MACY



Home Farm
Born 22.6.67

Adam's arrival in **Ambridge** in 1967 caused quite a stir. **Jennifer** (now **Aldridge**) was unmarried and refused to name the father, although Adam's shock of red hair implicated Paddy Redmond, **Phil Archer's** cowman. Adam was later adopted by Jennifer's first husband Roger Travers-Macy. For many years, Jennifer saw only the occasional card or email from her son who, after graduating in agricultural economics, settled in Africa, working on farming development projects. Eventually the hard life of the development worker – and an unhappy love affair – took its toll on Adam, who returned to **Home Farm** in 2003. He rapidly made himself indispensable, especially after the departure of half-sister **Debbie Gerrard**. Thanks to Adam's energy and new ideas, **Brian** thought his stepson was the wasp's whiskers – until he discovered that Adam was gay, that is.



KATE MADIKANE



(née Aldridge)

Johannesburg • Born 30.9.77

(Kellie Bright)

Kate's packed a lot into her first quarter-century. In her teenage years she graduated from straightforward mischief to out-and-out rebellion against her wealthy parents, **Brian** and **Jennifer Aldridge**. She took up with travellers and for a while was something of an eco-warrior. She had a daughter, **Phoebe Aldridge**, initially fighting **Roy Tucker**'s attempts to prove himself the father. But eventually she had to leave Phoebe with Roy when she travelled to Africa to 'find herself'. In 2001, she returned to **Ambridge** to give birth to her second daughter **Noluthando**, later marrying the child's father **Lucas** in his native South Africa. Kate's occasional visits to her home village are always fraught with tension, because she still feels herself to be Phoebe's mother, even if in reality the role has passed to Roy's wife **Hayley**.



LUCAS MADIKANE



Johannesburg • Born 1972

(Connie M'Gadzah)

The father of **Kate's** baby **Noluthando** proved his commitment to mother and child when he spent a large sum of money flying to be with them in **Ambridge** after the birth. Caught in the middle of the parental struggle over Kate's other daughter **Phoebe Aldridge**, Lucas eventually managed to achieve the impossible; making Kate see sense. She reluctantly accepted that Phoebe was settled with her father **Roy Tucker** and returned to South Africa, marrying Lucas in June 2001. They are making a success of married life in Johannesburg, where Lucas is a radio journalist with the South African Broadcasting Corporation. They make the occasional (and often slightly fraught) visit to Ambridge, usually funded by Lucas's mother-in-law **Jennifer**.

🌳 NOLUTHANDO (NOLLY) MADIKANE 🌳

Johannesburg • Born 19.1.01

Lucas and **Kate**'s daughter was born in **L**Borchester General Hospital, ironically with Kate's arch rival **Hayley Tucker** in attendance. **Noluthando** means 'one who is loved' in Xhosa, the language of Lucas's tribe. In June 2001 Nolly's grandparents **Jennifer** and **Brian Aldridge** flew to South Africa for the christening, where Kate's half-brother **Adam Macy** became Nolly's godfather.



KIRSTY MILLER



Borchester
(Anabelle Dowler)

Kirsty's relationship with **Tom Archer** is like an ageing fluorescent tube: on again, off again... Initially drawn together by environmental concerns – they both attacked fields of GM crops in 1999 – she and Tom were prevented from seeing each other for months while Kirsty's trial was pending. Once the charges were dropped she reappeared on the scene to win Tom back from the girlfriend he'd found in the interim. Tom's obsession with his sausage business led Kirsty briefly into the arms of Chaba, a Hungarian student who'd been working at **Brookfield**, but she and Tom were again reunited at the 2003 Glastonbury Festival. Kirsty enjoys hearing embarrassing stories about Tom's youth from his sister and her boss **Helen**, who manages **Ambridge Organics**, where Kirsty now finds a more legal outlet for her environmental enthusiasms.



NIGHTINGALE FARM



A farm in name only, this farmhouse with outbuildings and half an acre of gardens was home to **Marjorie Antrobus** before she reluctantly had to sell it to finance her move to The Laurels nursing home. The self-contained flat had been occupied by a variety of **Ambridge's** young people before their first steps into home ownership, notably **Neil** and **Susan Carter** and **Ruth Archer**. The most recent tenants were **Roy** and **Hayley Tucker** and Roy's daughter **Phoebe**, who had to move in with Roy's parents following the sale of the farm to **Matt Crawford**.



ELIZABETH PARGETTER



(née Archer)

Lower Loxley Hall • Born 21.4.67

(Alison Dowling)

Never afraid to make waves, Elizabeth unleashed a tsunami when she objected to father **Phil**'s plans to pass **Brookfield Farm** on to **David**. (Elizabeth was to receive a mere token; half a £200,000 house.) She protested that running **Lower Loxley** was like knitting submarines out of fifty pound notes, and anyway she was thinking only of **Lily and Freddie**. To be fair, Elizabeth hasn't had it easy in the past. Before her marriage to Nigel, she had an abortion after being dumped by swindler Cameron Fraser, and her congenital heart problem required a valve-replacement operation after the birth of the twins. Recruiting **Hayley Tucker** as a nanny, Elizabeth threw herself into keeping the Hall afloat. Despite her spikiness, Nigel owes a lot to his 'Lizzie'.



JULIA PARGETTER



Lower Loxley Hall • Born 17.8.24
(Mary Wimbush)

Grande dame Julia resents letting hoi polloi into her home, even though **Lower Loxley Hall** wouldn't survive without them. Julia would have preferred **Nigel** to marry better than a 'farmer's daughter' (**Elizabeth**), which is ironic as Julia's true past was as a greengrocer's daughter and dancer in wartime variety. Julia has fallen prey to addiction, to alcohol and later to gambling. But in recent years, having **Lewis** on hand has helped to curb her excesses, and she's mainly restricted herself to being annoying. Julia was pleased by the arrival of a son and heir in the shape of **Freddie**, seeing **Lily** as rather incidental. But when, in 2002, Nigel's sister Camilla and her husband James produced a son – Piers – Julia's delight knew no bounds. At last, a grandchild with breeding on both sides of the family...

LILY AND FREDDIE PARGETTER

Lower Loxley Hall • Born 12.12.99

Elizabeth Pargetter's heart condition would have made even a simple pregnancy daunting, but with twins the pressure was really on. Happily, both were born safely (if early) by caesarean section and soon became troublesome toddlers (what other sort is there?). Freddie (the second and smaller child) used to be the particular favourite of grandmother **Julia**, until **Nigel's** sister Camilla gave birth to her son, Piers, in 2002.



NIGEL PARGETTER



Lower Loxley Hall • Born 8.6.59
(Graham Seed)

Nigel shares the eccentric streak which can make the English upper classes so entertaining to watch. In his youth it manifested itself in high jinks in a gorilla suit, and in recent years in a fascination with the sport of falconry, which, thanks to the expertise of **Jessica**, he has made a particular attraction at **Lower Loxley**. In 2003 an over-enthusiasm for good wine led to a conviction for drink driving, to wife **Elizabeth's** fury. But having to cycle everywhere soon made Nigel a convert for the two-wheeled life (note Lower Loxley's new cycle trails and bike hire), and he developed a growing enthusiasm for the natural world.



CAROLINE PEMBERTON



(née Bone)

Grange Farm • Born 3.4.55

(Sara Coward)

A relation of Lord Netherbourne and best friend to **Shula Hebden Lloyd**, Caroline has been bringing a touch of class to Ambridge since 1977. It's a measure of **Jack Woolley's** respect that he trusts her completely to manage his biggest asset, **Grey Gables** hotel. In fact Caroline's career progression has been one steady upward slope, in contrast to the boulder-strewn byway of her romantic life. After twenty years of serial disasters (including an affair with **Brian Aldridge**), she married landowner Guy Pemberton. But his heart attack only six months later left her a grieving widow, albeit a wealthy one, with the **Dower House** and a majority share in **The Bull**. Caroline was lucky enough to get a second chance though, meeting **Oliver Sterling** through her love of hunting, and moving in with him in 2003.



JAMIE PERKS



April Cottage • Born 20.7.95

(Ben Ratley)

Don't traumatise the child by telling him, but if Jamie hadn't been born, it's possible **Sid** and **Kathy** might still be together. Trying to keep up with a lively toddler, Sid – by then in his early fifties – decided to get fit. But what he also got was the amorous attention of Jolene Rogers – now **Jolene Perks**, so you'll get the gist of what it led to. Jamie still sees his father regularly, often staying over at **The Bull**. As for the other men in his life, he's quite fond of eccentric **Joe Grundy** and his tearaway grandson **Ed** next door. And Jamie gets on brilliantly with Kathy's occasional boyfriend **Kenton** (call me irresponsible) **Archer**. Oh dear...



JOLENE PERKS



(néé Rogers)

The Bull

(Buffy Davis)

Jolene's lively personality and generous assets shout 'lock up your husbands' to many Ambridge women, particularly **Clarrie Grundy**, who once saw this singer and keyboard player make beautiful music – well, all right, Country and Western Music – with **Eddie**. But it's **Kathy Perks** who should have been riding shotgun, because she lost her husband **Sid** to the one time 'Lily of Layton Cross'. Jolene (real name Doreen) is a natural behind the bar. Much of **The Bull's** success in recent years has been down to her, with innovations including a cyber-area with internet access. Jolene runs line-dancing sessions and still does occasional gigs with her band *The Midnight Walkers*. She's proud that her daughter has followed in her musical footsteps, although **Fallon's** preferred genre is a long way from Nashville.



KATHY PERKS



(formerly Holland)

April Cottage • Born 30.1.53

(Hedli Niklaus)

There's no doubt that Kathy came off the worse from her divorce. **Sid** kept his home and business at **The Bull**, and married warm, voluptuous **Jolene**. Kathy faced the isolation of being a single mum and the attentions – although attention deficit would be a better description – of **Kenton Archer**. With experience as a Home Economics teacher and at The Bull, at least Kathy is happy managing the café and shop at **Lower Loxley**. Having **Hayley Tucker** as a workplace nanny helps considerably with son **Jamie**, too. And Kathy is not completely without support at home. Her friend **Pat Archer** has been a rock in times of trouble. And the **Grundys** next door are... well, next door.



SID PERKS



The Bull • Born 9.6.44
(Alan Devereux)

Despite approaching the age of 60, Sid takes pride in keeping fit and is manager of the **Ambridge** cricket team. Many men envy him, but whether more for his 49 percent share of **The Bull** (with **Caroline Pemberton**), or the fact that he is married to the lovely **Jolene** is open to question. Sid's first wife Polly died in 1982. Their daughter Lucy lives in New Zealand and in 2003 made Sid a grandfather, while the much younger **Jamie** – his son from his second marriage – lives with his ex-wife, **Kathy**. Sid is usually the classic genial host but on certain topics – like homosexuality – he can be pretty reactionary. He clashed with the more liberal Jolene when his step-daughter **Fallon Rogers** started dabbling in drugs, and felt that **Jizzer's** downfall proved him right.



HEATHER PRITCHARD



Prudoe, Northumberland
(Joyce Gibbs)

After Heather's husband Solly died in 2002, she spent several months with daughter **Ruth Archer** at **Brookfield**. Heather found that being resident granny to the children (and to Ruth and **David** too, if we're honest) was occupational therapy to help her through her loss, although it did lead to some friction with **Jill**. Ruth urged Heather to make the move permanent, but she vigorously resisted, eventually returning to her life and friends in Northumberland.



MRS PUGSLEY



Lower Loxley

Like her colleague, the admirable **Titcombe**, **Lower Loxley's** housekeeper has seen the staff at the Hall grow considerably to service its various business activities, from conferences to falconry. She has accepted all these changes with a stoic resignation, and we have heard not one word of complaint from her. In fact, we have never heard *any* words from her.



MR PULLEN



Manorfield Close • Born 13.7.15

When people say Manorfield Close is next to Paradise, they aren't praising the facilities but reflecting on the imminent destination of most of the residents. When the last trumpet sounds for the **silent** and weak-bladdered Mr Pullen, he'll probably have to pay one last call before entering those pearly gates.



ELLEN ROGERS



Denia, Costa Blanca.

Born 1926

(Rosemary Leach)

Not a typing error for **Fallon Rogers** (no relation), but **Julia Pargetter**'s younger sister. A very merry widow, Ellen owns a bar in Spain and is only rarely seen in **Ambridge**. She was at one time a source of great embarrassment for Julia, who had tried to hide her humble past, having jumped several social strata on her marriage to Gerald, **Nigel**'s father. Julia had even dropped her original *déclassé* name, but she'll always be 'Joan' to her sister.



FALLON ROGERS



The Bull • Born 19.6.85
(Joanna van Kampen)

Fallon has an uninhibited streak that males find dangerously attractive, but she tempers it with a degree of common sense. She has more or less come to terms with her mother **Jolene** marrying **Sid Perks**, even though she used to think the relationship 'gross'. Fallon's father is the guitarist Wayne Tucson, and she has inherited her parents' musical talents, although her tastes are more for metal and indy than their country and western. She plays guitar and sings, and is studying for a HND in popular music performance at **Borchester** College. **Ed Grundy** and **Jizzer** thought they'd never forgive Fallon for winning a song competition, which led to the break-up of their band *Dross*, but she was not suddenly catapulted to stardom, and they eventually realised that she was much better to have as a mate than an enemy.



GRAHAM RYDER



Borchester
(Malcolm McKee)

As a land agent working for the **Borchester** firm of Rodway and Watson, which manages the **Estate** for **Borchester Land**, Graham is often to be found in the estate office at Sawyer's Farm. He is conscientious and courteous, and takes his professional duties very seriously, even when he's required to do the unpopular. Most villagers see him as **Matt Crawford's** puppet, and when Graham stood for the **Ambridge** parish council in 2003 everyone suspected that Matt was pulling the strings. Or depending on what sort of puppet Graham was, Matt could have had his hand up... well, anyway, Graham didn't get in.



ST STEPHEN'S CHURCH



Established 1281

This fine old church dates back to Saxon times. **Shula Hebden Lloyd** and **Bert Fry** (churchwardens), **Neil Carter** (captain of the bell ringers) and **Phil Archer** (organist) have seen some controversy over the years: the installation of a lavatory; clandestine attempts to kill off the bats in the roof; and the politics of the flower rota, which make the Florentine court look like, well, a church flower rota. But perhaps the greatest alarms were caused in 1995 when the parish was merged with three others – Darrington, Penny Hasset and Edgeley – under the charge of a *woman* vicar. Janet Fisher left in January 2003. We wonder if her successor **Alan Franks** knew what he was letting himself in for.



SILENT CHARACTERS



One of the delights of **Ambridge** is that coterie of characters whom the listener knows well and can picture clearly, but who are never actually heard to speak. A large but obviously rather quiet band, they include the ageing **Mrs Potter** and **Mr Pullen** at Manorfield Close, **Lower Loxley's** talented chef Owen and resident falconer **Jessica**, the quite delectable **Mandy Beesborough**, the rather less delectable **Baggy and Snatch**, not to mention **Fat Paul**, exotic East European Anja at **Ambridge Organics**, Frank, who flips the burgers at **Jaxx Caff**, **Freda Fry** who performs a similar function at **The Bull**, bellringer **Neville Booth**, **Tom Archer's** butcher Stan Derby, many of the Horrobins, and the king of them all, the wonderful **John Higgs**.



LYNDA SNELL



Ambridge Hall • Born 29.5.47
(Carole Boyd)

Ambridge would be a poorer, if less irritated, place without Lynda. Despite living in the village since 1986, she's still viewed as an incomer by many, especially near-neighbours and thorns-in-flesh the **Grundys**. Lynda doesn't help by regularly lecturing the locals on her latest environmental bonnet-bee. She's a keen gardener, when her hayfever allows, and producer of amateur theatricals, when her cast allows. She's known for bizarre enthusiasms but she excelled herself in 2003 with her 60th birthday present to long-suffering husband **Robert**: two llamas; Constanza and Wolfgang. When January 2002 brought floods to **Ambridge Hall**, the Snells were touched at the practical support that villagers gave. However, soon the bramble bushes on her way to work (as a receptionist at **Grey Gables**) were once more full of desperate people, diving in to avoid being recruited to her latest project.



ROBERT SNELL



Ambridge Hall • Born 5.4.43
(Graham Blockey)

What accolade is sufficient to reward Robert Snell? A knighthood? No, a sainthood, surely, because this is a man who can live with **Lynda** and like it. Robert is a computer expert, although he wasn't expert enough to keep his previous software business afloat, which forced Lynda to take a job at **Grey Gables**. Robert puts up with a lot, but when he's reached his threshold he's implacable, as Lynda found out when she objected to his helping Leonie – his daughter from his first marriage – buy a flat. Leonie has always been difficult, while relations with the younger Coriander ('Cas') are fortunately more amicable. Robert and Lynda have no children of their own. Wolfgang and Constanza are llamas, so don't really count.



OLIVER STERLING



Grange Farm (Michael Cochrane)

A single man in possession of a good fortune? It is a truth universally acknowledged that Oliver's arrival in **Ambridge** created quite a stir. He sold a large farm in the north of the county to fund his divorce settlement with wife Jane, and bought **Grange Farm** with 50 acres to do a bit of hobby farming. That work – with occasional help from former Grange Farm resident **Ed Grundy** – left him plenty of time to pursue his passion for hunting, as joint master of the South Borsetshire. Through the hunt, it was inevitable that he would meet staunch horsewoman **Caroline Pemberton**, which soon led to passion of a different sort. Although at first Oliver wasn't used to a woman of such independent spirit, they grew to love each other, and Caroline moved into Grange Farm in April 2003.



TITCOMBE



Lower Loxley Hall

Who is that enigmatic figure atop **Lower Loxley's** mighty ride-on mower? None other than head gardener Titcombe. He's seen a lot of goings-on at the Hall in his time, particularly in the wilder, party-throwing heyday of **Julia Pargetter**. But he never talks about it.



DEBBIE TRAVERS-MACY



(formerly Gerrard, formerly Aldridge)

Rheims, France • Born 24.12.70

(Tamsin Greig)

The daughter of **Jennifer Aldridge** and her first husband Roger Travers-Macy, Debbie used to work as deputy to her stepfather **Brian** at **Home Farm**, but in 2002 her happy life fell apart. Still emotionally raw, having unmasked her (now former) husband Simon as a serial adulterer, she discovered that Brian was cut from the same philandering cloth. As Brian and Jennifer tried to mend their marriage, unforgiving Debbie descended into a vortex of loathing and depression, turning on all who tried to help her – even her brother **Adam Macy**. Then one day she stunned her family by announcing that she had taken a job with a French agribusiness firm, and was gone the following week. Her sister, **Alice**, visits her occasionally, but Debbie can't play happy families, and so has chosen to play solitaire.



BETTY TUCKER



Willow Farm • Born 4.8.50
(Pamela Craig)

As manager of the **Village Shop** and a staunch WI member, Betty gets to hear most of what goes on in **Ambridge**. And she's got a few tales of her own she could tell, if she'd a mind to. Once a cleaner at **Home Farm**, she's still not quite adjusted to being linked to the **Aldridge** family (she and **Mike** are grandparents to **Phoebe** through their son **Roy**). Mike has had some pretty erratic times in the past, not to mention the results of **Brenda's** pitiful taste in men and Roy's brief involvement with fascists. In 2001 Betty started an organic egg enterprise in partnership with **Neil Carter**, who owns some land adjoining the Tucker residence. Mike wasn't impressed. But then very little impresses our Michael.



BRENDA TUCKER



Willow Farm • Born 21.1.81

(Amy Schindler)

When torn between two brothers – **Ed** and **William Grundy** – **Emma Carter** took a lot of advice from Brenda. Which is ironic, as Brenda's romantic career has been not so much chequered as houndstoothed. The older men she has fallen for are fascinatingly varied in their unsuitability: duplicitous gigolo (**Lilian Bellamy's** former-toy boy Scott); adulterous slimeball (**Debbie Gerrard's** ex-husband Simon); or admirable but gay (**Adam Macy**). Brenda works with **Wayne Foley** as a journalist at Radio Dorsetshire, where her enthusiasm for a story about **Matt Crawford** and a corrupt local councillor once nearly got her sacked. Her parents **Mike** and **Betty** would like Brenda to learn a bit of wisdom as she gets older, but we hope she doesn't; it's much more entertaining this way.



HAYLEY TUCKER



(née Jordan)

Willow Farm • Born 1977

(Lucy Davis)

Bubbly Hayley is a qualified nursery nurse, working as a nanny at **Lower Loxley**. She originally descended on **Ambridge** in 1995 in a hormone-driven search for **Pat** and **Tony Archer**'s son John. After John's death in 1998 (she wasn't responsible . . . well, only indirectly by refusing to marry him), Hayley grew close to John's friend **Roy**. They were married in May 2001 and Hayley took on the role of mum to Roy's daughter **Phoebe Aldridge**. This is not something that warms the heart of the child's real mother **Kate Madikane**. Very much a Brummie, Hayley still can't tell a cattle crush from a creep feeder. Nonetheless the little family has been very happy in Ambridge, although in 2003 they lost their flat at **Nightingale Farm** and had to move in with Roy's parents.



MIKE TUCKER



Willow Farm • Born 1.12.49
(Terry Molloy)

What's your impression of a typical milkman? A whistling early-morning visitor cheerily dispensing the fruits of the dairy? Well, you can forget that baloney. Meet Mike 'Miserable' Tucker. A once-bankrupt would-be farmer who lost an eye in a forestry accident, Mike had years of chasing casual farm and forestry work, until eventually supplementing the milk round with a more regular job at a turfing company. Mike's also had occasional business ventures with **Neil** 'Cautious' **Carter** and **Eddie** 'Godawful' **Grundy**. You'll gather that Mike isn't the first person you'd invite to a party. But in 2002 he surprised everyone – especially himself – by learning ballroom dancing so that he could treat **Betty** to a night out in true Fred and Ginger style.



ROY TUCKER



Willow Farm • Born 2.2.78

(Ian Pepperell)

To look at him now, you'd never guess that Roy was once part of a gang of racist thugs who terrorised **Usha Gupta**. Penitent Roy eventually realised the horror of what he was involved in. He ended the persecution, suffering a severe beating for his confession (from the gang, not from Usha, although she was sorely tempted). After a business studies degree from **Felpersham** University, casual work at **Grey Gables** led to formal training and an assistant manager's position there. He enjoys the work, but the money's not brilliant. Roy, wife **Hayley** and daughter **Phoebe Aldridge** (from ex-girlfriend **Kate Madikane**) used to be happy tenants of **Marjorie Antrobus**. But when she sold **Nightingale Farm** in 2003, they found they couldn't afford a place of their own and had to move back in with **Mike** and **Betty**.



GREG TURNER



A Tied Cottage at Home Farm (Marc Finn)

A former design technology teacher and outdoor activities leader, Greg arrived to look after the expanded **Home Farm/Berrow Estate** shoot in 1998. Widely read, he is a useful member of the pub quiz team, but for a long time his private life was a closed book. Eventually, people discovered that he'd become involved with **Helen Archer**. And even Helen took months before uncovering some big truths about Greg's past life: he'd had a vasectomy, for example, and he was divorced, his family having moved to France. In recent years his ex-wife Michelle has become more demanding, particularly as their elder daughter Sonja started to go off the rails (the younger, Annette, has been less trouble, but give it time...). The frustration of being an absent father of a difficult teenager did nothing to improve Greg's already surly demeanour.



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THE VILLAGE SHOP



Ambridge is fortunate in still having a village shop and post office, due in great part to the philanthropy of the owner **Jack Woolley**. **Betty Tucker** manages it, with the part-time help of **Susan Carter**. So for a pint of milk, book of stamps or a video – and especially for the low-down on the latest in Ambridge – you know where to go.



WILLOW FARM



Fortunately the farmhouse is quite big, as it's home not only to **Mike** and **Betty Tucker** and their daughter **Brenda**, but also son **Roy**, Roy's wife **Hayley** and their daughter **Phoebe Aldridge**. Like **Nightingale Farm**, Willow Farm's land was bought up by others long ago. **Neil Carter** owns eight acres, on which he keeps his outdoor breeding herd of pigs, and an organic free-range egg enterprise, run jointly with Betty.



HAZEL WOOLLEY



Last seen in Soho

(Jan Cox)

Adopted daughter of **Jack Woolley** and his first wife Valerie, the wayward Hazel seldom visits **Ambridge**, to the great relief of all who work at **Grey Gables** and not a few Ambridge residents. Hazel works in the film business, making (according to doting Jack) 'proper films, for the cinema'. No-one is on record as actually seeing any of them, though. Hazel claimed she was too busy to attend her father's 80th birthday, but stepmother **Peggy** suspects that when Jack is finally called to that nineteenth hole in the sky, Hazel will be there faster than you can say 'last will and testament'.



JACK WOOLLEY



The Lodge, Grey Gables • Born 19.7.19
(Arnold Peters)

Jack still harks back to his humble beginnings in the Birmingham suburb of Stirchley, a sharp contrast to the business empire he built up in and around **Ambridge**, including **Grey Gables** hotel, the **Village Shop** and *The **Borchester** Echo* newspaper. Even at 83, he was still ready to expand, buying **Jaxx Caff**, to wife **Peggy**'s exasperation and **Kenton Archer**'s relief. Jack has one adopted daughter, **Hazel**, from his first marriage. Although into his eighties, he still enjoys shooting, a brisk eighteen holes on Grey Gables' golf course or a slow foxtrot with Peggy, whom he recruited as his assistant at Grey Gables in 1972. Slow courtship, too: they were married in 1991.



PEGGY WOOLLEY



(formerly Archer, née Perkins)

The Lodge, Grey Gables • Born 13.11.24

(June Spencer)

Peggy is one of the wealthiest women in **Ambridge**, but it wasn't always so. Originally from London's East End, she came to the village having married **Phil Archer's** elder brother Jack. But with the country air and the glorious views came years of struggle, coping with Jack's get-rich-quick schemes and the alcoholism, which eventually caused his death. In **Jack Woolley**, Peggy found a rich man for her second husband, as did her daughters **Jennifer Aldridge** and **Lilian Bellamy**. This couldn't be said for her son **Tony Archer**. His wife **Pat** is neither rich, nor a man. Peggy is conservative with all the usual 'C's. She was delighted at the appointment of **Alan Franks** as vicar of **St Stephen's**. Not by him as a person, you understand; by the fact that he was

