



BBC
BOOKS

KERI DAVIES

WHO'S WHO IN
The
Archers

BBC

2005

NEW EDITION

KERI DAVIES

WHO'S WHO IN
The
Archers
2005

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To Archers listeners, for keeping the otherwise unemployable (me) in work.

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 2005* 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, archive moments, quizzes and chat.

Official Fan Club: Archers Addicts 01789 207480
www.archers-addicts.com

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



WELCOME TO AMBRIDGE



To my great pleasure, our handy guide to the characters and locations in *The Archers* is now in its sixth edition.

It was originally conceived as something we all wanted when we first started to listen to the programme: a bit of background to the people we heard on-air and a helping hand to explain their intricate relationships. But we have found that even established listeners find it an entertaining volume to keep by the radio or (as we suspect is more frequent) by the loo.

So if you ever wonder ‘Who’s this Ronnie and why is Christopher Carter following him around?’, or can’t remember the name of Matt Crawford’s housing development*, this book is for you.

Vanessa Whitburn

Editor, *The Archers*

*see page 59



HAPPY BIRTHDAYS



The past year has seen some notable birthdays in the extended family of *The Archers*. Margot Boyd, who plays the wonderful old colonial Marjorie Antrobus, reached her 90th birthday. Fellow *grande dame* Mary Wimbush (Julia Pargetter) celebrated her 80th, as did Norman Painting, who has played Phil Archer from the very beginning. And because she is so spry we tend to forget that June Spencer (Peggy Woolley), who was also in the first episode in 1951, is well into her eighties.

One of the great pleasures of being part of *The Archers* has been working with people well past 'normal' retiring age – yet who are still capable of producing outstanding work. (Only a cynic would credit poor pension provision in the acting profession as a reason for these golden oldies continuing in harness.)

The continuity of character that these actors give us is one of the many reasons for the

continued success of *The Archers*. Listeners join not a transient piece of ephemera but a lifelong story, whose roots are deep.

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 14,422, broadcast on 2 January 2005, 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 ten-strong production team and eleven 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 13 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 a state-of-the-art studio at the BBC's premises in the Mailbox complex in central Birmingham. Twenty-four episodes are recorded digitally in six intensive days, using only two hours of studio time per 13 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

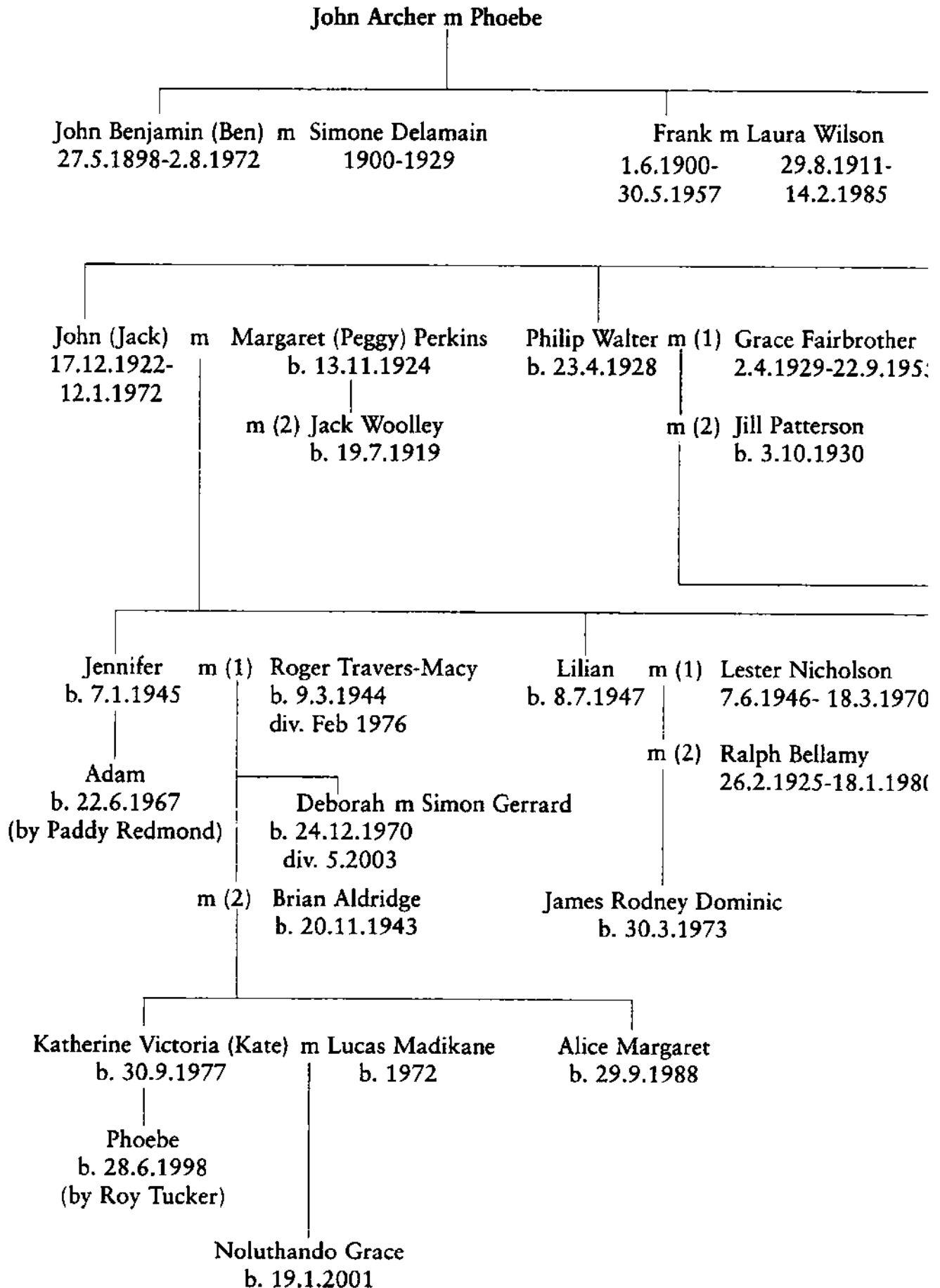
occasionally intrigued to hear topical events reflected in that evening's broadcast, a feat achieved through a flurry of rewriting, re-recording and editing on the day of transmission.

With nearly five million listeners every week in the UK alone, *The Archers* is the most popular non-news programme on BBC Radio 4 (92–25 FM, 198 LW). It can also be heard worldwide via the *Archers* website:

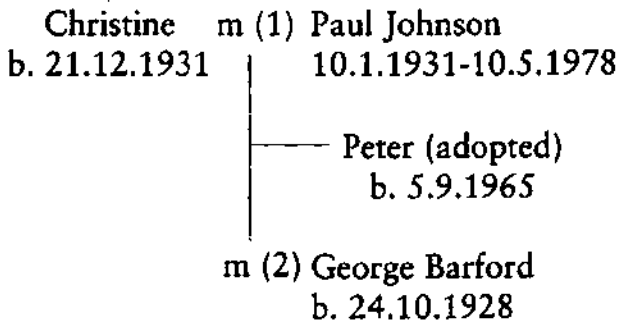
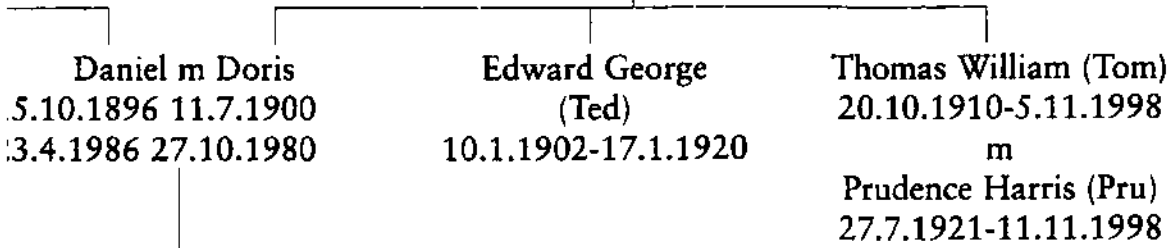
bbc.co.uk/radio4/archers

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 12 years. But if *The Archers* suits you, it suits you very well. And, thank goodness, that goes for the listeners too.

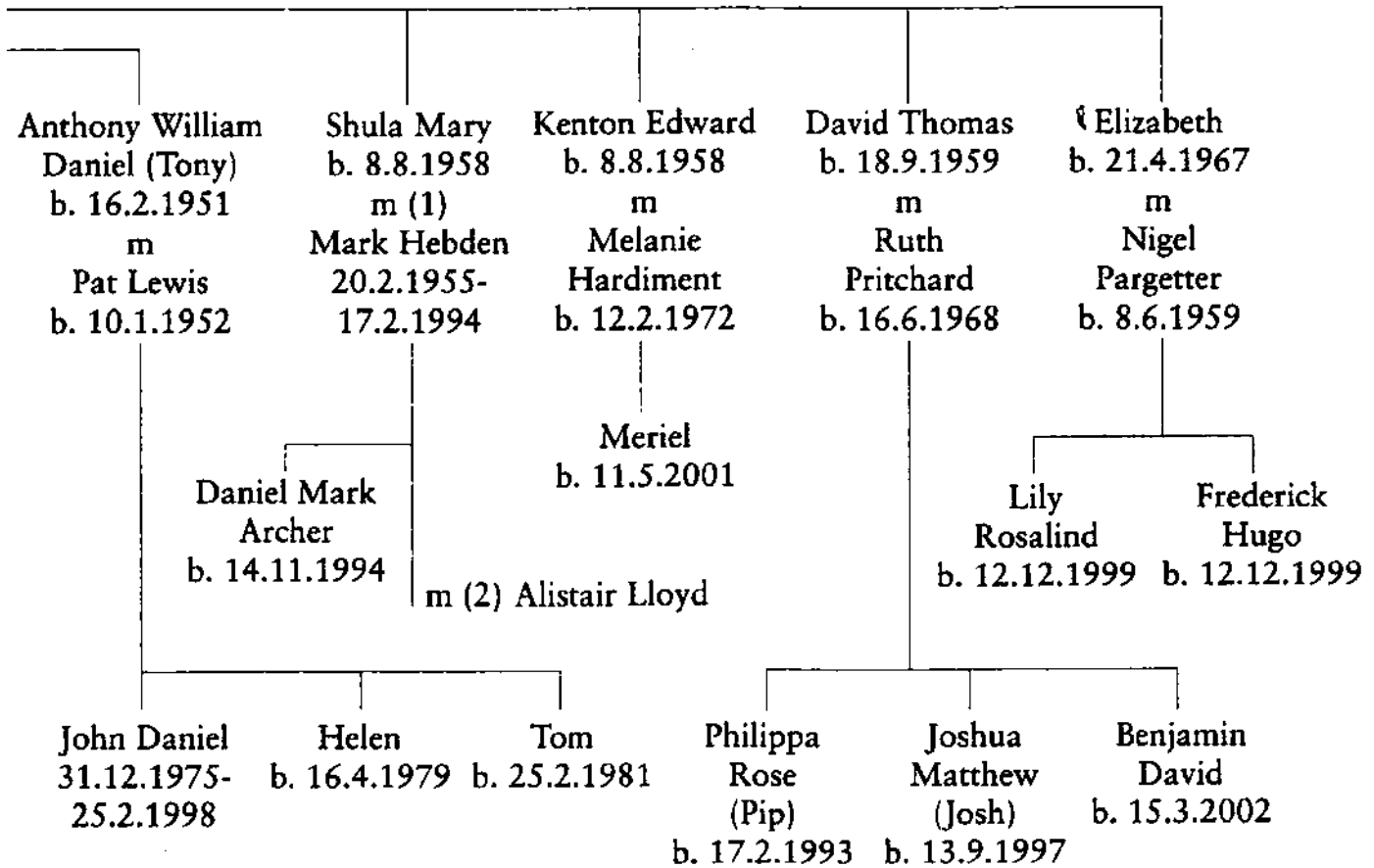
Keri Davies



William Forrest m Lisa



THE ARCHERS FAMILY TREE





ALICE ALDRIDGE



Home Farm • Born 29.9.88

(Hollie Chapman)

None of the family wanted to scupper Alice's promising GCSE prospects as a day girl at a local private school, so mercifully she remained unaware of father **Brian**'s affair. In fact, Alice actually benefited from it, in the shape of guilt-gift Spearmint, a full-size horse, which replaced her old pony, Chandler. While **Debbie** was in voluntary exile in France, Alice formed a good relationship with her other half-sibling, **Adam Macy**. Alice's second cousin **Shula** took over Debbie's role as riding mentor, and Alice was lucky to find a new friend in fellow horse-lover **Amy Franks**.



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 local doctor's wife Siobhan Hathaway turned into something much more serious. And serious was 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**, while spurned Siobhan eventually settled in Germany, allowing Brian only an occasional photo of his growing child. No wonder that Brian, normally so driven, wondered if he had the energy to continue in the unpredictable world of agri-business.



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 25 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. Although devastated by Brian's affair and the discovery of his son, she fought determinedly to save her marriage.



PHOEBE ALDRIDGE



Willow Farm • Born 28.6.98

Although she seems to be part of a stable nuclear family in the loving care of **Roy** and **Hayley Tucker**, Phoebe's surname indicates a situation in the style of many 21st-century familial tangles. Roy is Phoebe's father, but her mother is **Kate Madikane** (née Aldridge), whose early New Age leanings meant that the child was born in a tepee at the Glastonbury Festival and named in a ceremony on Lakey Hill. Young Roy bravely cared for Phoebe following Kate's departure to Africa to 'find herself', and it fell to Kate's now husband **Lucas** to persuade Kate that Phoebe had a home with Roy and Hayley and couldn't be collected like a lost umbrella.



AMBRIDGE



*'...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 an 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 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 15 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



It's a wonder there aren't more accidents on the way to Penny Hassett, as drivers' minds are boggled by the incongruous sight of two llamas contentedly grazing in a roadside paddock. Wolfgang and Constanza were notionally a present for **Robert Snell**, but they are really **Lynda's** babies. So too are the landscaped gardens of this six-bedroomed Victorian house, featuring a Shakespearean section – using only plants named by the Bard – and a low allergen area, to which Lynda can retreat when her annual hay fever descends.



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 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 – ‘Mrs A’, as she’s known to many villagers – 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 **Ambridge**’s 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

Dark-haired Ben caused quite a panic when he arrived at **Brookfield** before the midwife. It was lucky that father **David** had helped with plenty of births before – even if they were of lambs and calves. The new arrival caused some anxiety for **Josh**, who worried that Ben was some sort of replacement, but his parents were eventually able to persuade Josh that he wasn't to be sent to market. Even David's sister **Elizabeth Pargetter** managed to bury her sibling rivalry, agreeing (with **Alistair Lloyd** and the departed Dr Tim Hathaway) to become a godparent.



DAVID ARCHER



Brookfield Farm • Born 18.9.59
(Timothy Bentinck)

David and his wife **Ruth** have been running **Brookfield Farm** in their own right since 2001. **Phil's** 'favouring' of David as inheritor was distinctly unpopular with **Kenton** and **Elizabeth**, although neither of them ever showed much inclination to get up at 5 a.m. to milk the cows. Actually, that's become more of a novelty for David since he expanded the herd and employed **Sam Batton**, one of his many responses to the dizzying changes in agriculture over the last few years. David hasn't always made the wisest choices – shooting a badger was never going to be a career move for a parish councillor, even though the farm was at the time paralysed by TB. But he is a devoted husband and father, determined to pass Brookfield on in the best possible shape to **Pip, Josh** or **Ben** – if they want it, that is.



HELEN ARCHER



Bridge Farm • Born 16.4.79

(Louiza Patikas)

Helen looked set to carry on her mother **Pat's** pioneering work, taking an HND in Food Technology, developing **Borsetshire** Blue cheese and managing the farm's shop **Ambridge Organics**. But Helen struggled in a difficult relationship with local gamekeeper Greg Turner, who, faced by one setback after another (including despairing Helen walking out), eventually took his own life in May 2004. The grief and guilt were almost impossible to bear. Helen needed all the support that Pat and **Tony** could give her, although **Tom**, unable to comfort his broken sister, found it easier to submerge himself in work. Helen made a faltering return to her job, but everyone knew she was at the bottom of a very steep slope.



JILL ARCHER



(née Patterson)

Glebe Cottage • Born 3.10.30

(Patricia Greene)

Through 40 years of marriage, Jill has never stopped mothering. She takes a keen interest in the lives of her adult children – **Kenton**, **Shula** (now **Hebden Lloyd**), **David** and **Elizabeth** (now **Pargetter**) – especially when they aren't behaving like adults. Many villagers, too, have been grateful for her caring and practical nature. Although she and **Phil** moved to their retirement cottage in 2001, Jill still tends the bees and hens in **Brookfield's** orchard and takes a full part in village life. Outwardly a traditional 'farmer's wife', Jill has a radical streak. She's opposed to private education and hunting, for example. Her strong sense of justice has led her to support several causes over the years, the most recent being an attempt to rid the local school of junk food.



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. Keen on pigs, and a good painter, Josh attends the local primary school at Loxley Barratt and has made lots of friends, including girls Megan and Lydia. He was worried when he was replaced as Ruth and David's youngest son by the arrival of **Ben**. But when they realised what the problem was they managed to persuade the lad that there was room in the family for two sons. As he grows up, Josh is obviously taking a fairly traditional route for a little boy. Among his favourite toys has been something called a Killer Borg. Mm, delightful...



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 café in **Borchester**. Kenton had been thrown out by his Australian wife, Mel, and on his return to **Ambridge** did 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 millefeuille with a Flake on top.



PAT ARCHER



(née Lewis)

Bridge Farm • Born 10.1.52

(Patricia Gallimore)

As daughter **Helen** struggled to deal with the suicide of her partner Greg Turner, Pat had plenty of help to offer. She knew only too well the effects of bereavement, having suffered clinical depression after the death of her eldest son, John, in 1998. It surprised many, as Pat had always been the positive antidote to her more moody husband **Tony**. Thanks to her drive they built **Bridge Farm** into a thriving organic enterprise producing its own yoghurt, ice cream, cheese (thanks to **Helen**), pork and sausages (son **Tom**), and opening their own shop **Ambridge Organics** in **Borchester**. Once a radical feminist, Pat's now more of a caring capitalist. Like Anita Roddick, but with a bit less money and a lot more yoghurt.



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 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 Davis)

Christened Philippa after **David**'s father and **Rose** after **Ruth**'s aunt, the eldest **Brookfield** child is universally known as Pip. She inherited some of grandfather **Phil**'s musical talent, learning to play the piano and singing enchanting solos at carol concerts. Well... her family were enchanted, anyway; Phil so much so that he pushed David and Ruth into grooming Pip for **Felpersham** Cathedral School. Eventually the pressure of cramming and Phil's over-eager musical coaching proved too much for the poor girl, and to general relief (except for Phil, obviously) Pip was directed towards the more local and down-to-earth **Borchester** Green.



RUTH ARCHER



(née Pritchard)

Brookfield Farm • Born 16.6.68

(Felicity Finch)

In 1987, agricultural student Ruth Pritchard arrived in **Ambridge** from Prudhoe in Northumberland looking for farming experience and a good reference. She found a husband (**David**), a home (**Brookfield**), and a workplace for life (hopefully). 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. The arrival of baby **Ben** in 2002 was a surprise but welcome blessing, and as a mother of three she's done less of the practical work on the farm since then. But never make the mistake of calling this dedicated farmer a 'farmer's wife'. Oh, nooooo....



TOM ARCHER



Bridge Farm • Born 25.2.81

(Tom Graham)

Like his mother, **Pat**, Tom's a one-time radical who's become a successful businessperson (or 'sold out' as some of his erstwhile eco-warrior friends might claim). In 1999 he was acquitted on a charge of criminal damage, despite admitting attacking a trial crop of genetically modified oil seed rape on land owned by his uncle **Brian Aldridge**. 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. Like 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)

Tony is one of life's plodders but, like Aesop's tortoise, he's not done too badly overall. His sisters **Jennifer Aldridge** and **Lilian Bellamy** may have married money but he married brains, in the shape of **Pat**, and it's been an effective partnership. As the back-room boy, Tony produces **Bridge Farm's** raw material - high quality organic milk and veg. Pat and her dairy workers turn the milk into 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**. While Pat didn't handle things well, Tony's steady nature proved invaluable in dealing with Helen's difficult - and ultimately tragic - relationship with Greg Turner.



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 a location with a difference. As housekeeper, **Freda Fry** cleans the place between lets.



BAGGY AND SNATCH



Baggy and Snatch. They used to go together like 'drunk and disorderly'. And, to **Clarrie's** alarm and despondency, they often went arm in arm with **Eddie Grundy**. When Eddie came home drunk, with hooky gear, or with pheasants protruding from his clothing, the chances were he'd have spent the evening in the company of either or both of these gentlemen. But Snatch (surname Foster) proved himself to be no friend when he supplied Eddie with contaminated meat to sell, claiming it was good. Eddie was fined heavily and was lucky to escape jail. Snatch went down, and most people thought good riddance.



CHRISTINE BARFORD



(Formerly Johnson, née Archer)

Woodbine Cottage • Born 21.12.31

(Lesley Saweard)

Phil Archer's younger sister – always known in the family as Chris – was forced to move to Woodbine Cottage in April 2004 after the horrific arson attack on her real home, The Old Police House. Not the sort of retirement she had in mind two years previously, when back trouble made Chris sell her riding stables business to her niece **Shula Hebden Lloyd**. **Clive Horrobin's** target was really Chris's husband **George**. In all other respects George has brought Chris far more happiness than her first husband, Paul Johnson, who dragged Chris down with his crack-brained money-making schemes and dalliances with other women. Christine and Paul adopted a son, Peter, although Chris doesn't see him very often because he travels as an administrator with a symphony orchestra.



GEORGE BARFORD



Woodbine Cottage • Born 24.10.28

(Graham Roberts)

After a few years in the police force in Yorkshire, George spent a long working life as a gamekeeper, until his retirement in 1999. **Christine** would probably ask: ‘Retirement? What retirement?’ – George’s expertise continued to be in demand at the **Ambridge** shoots, on top of his voluntary work as a tree warden and flood warden, and as chairman of the parish council. It’s a far cry from an early life marred by George’s alcoholism and unpleasant divorce. George’s lifelong gamekeeping instincts made him the personal nemesis of **Clive Horrobin**, who on release from prison started to target George, ultimately firebombing his home, The Old Police House. Unbowed, George and Chris rented Woodbine Cottage from nephew **David Archer** while a bungalow was built on the site.



SAM BATTON



Rickyard Cottage, Brookfield
(Robin Pirongs)

Devon-born Sam arrived at **Brookfield Farm** in May 2004, as part of their plans to expand the dairy herd. As herdsman, he does the milking six days a week and is responsible for the herd's health, welfare and nutrition. He's not employed directly by Brookfield, but by a contract company: Paxley Milking Services. **Ruth** and **David Archer** were keen that they should be able to get rid of someone easily if they made a wrong choice. They needn't have worried, because Sam – who's obsessively professional without being an 'anorak' – very quickly brought the latest dairy thinking to Brookfield. He has a girlfriend, Fliss, in Cheshire but, given his long working hours and her shifts as a nurse, they don't see much of each other.



LILIAN BELLAMY



(formerly Nicholson, née Archer)

Nightingale Farm • Born 8.7.47

(Sunny Ormonde)

Oh, the embarrassment that Lilian causes her siblings **Jennifer Aldridge** and **Tony Archer**. Lilian spent many years as a tax exile in Guernsey after the death of her second husband, Ralph, the last real squire figure in **Ambridge**. At least her excesses there (usually involving alcohol and pretty young men) were unlikely to be broadcast on the **Village Shop**/Women's Institute sub-ether band. But when in 2003 Lilian returned to Ambridge – unfeasibly nipped, tucked and lifted – her exploits with the married **Matt Crawford** were enough to keep the Ambridge gossips on double time. It's perhaps no wonder that Lilian's son, James, (born in 1973 and now working in the City of London) seldom visits.



NEVILLE BOOTH



Born 1942 • Ambridge

A member of the bellringing team at **St Stephen's**. Mr Booth's name was once linked by the **Ambridge** net-curtain twitchers with **Jolene Perks** (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>*



*One to watch: this aggressive property company has made a particular target of the Ambridge area. Despite intensive-input farming from a national contract company, the board seemed dissatisfied with the returns from its 1,020 acre Berrow Estate, which includes business units at Sawyer's Farm and the tenanted **Bridge Farm**. In 2003 BL converted a few acres of agricultural land for a luxury housing development **Grange Spinney**. Directors include **Brian Aldridge**, who farms in Ambridge, although my source, a regular at the estate's extensive pheasant shoot, tells me there's no love lost between old-money Aldridge and his rough diamond chairman **Matt Crawford**...*

From the 'Your Business = Our Business' page of the *Felpersham Advertiser*.



BORSETSHIRE



This charming, predominantly rural county lies south-west of Birmingham and shares many of the characteristics of Worcestershire, Warwickshire and Gloucestershire. The cathedral city and administrative centre of **Felpersham** dominates the east of the county and the second largest settlement is the market town **Borchester**. **Ambridge** lies south-east of the Hasset Hills and falls under South Borsetshire District Council. The main local newspapers are the *Felpersham Advertiser* and the *Borchester Echo* and the area is served by Radio Borsetshire.



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
Neil Carter (pigs – part-time)
Clarrie Grundy (dairy) • Colin Kennedy (dairy)
Stan Derby (sausages) • **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**. Tom rents a business unit at Sawyer's Farm to process his own-brand sausages.



BROOKFIELD FARM



STOCK

180 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 (managing) • **Ruth Archer** (managing)
Sam Batton (herdsperson) • **Phil Archer** (relief)
Bert Fry (general) • **Jill Archer** (hens, bees)
Biff (sheepdog)

Brookfield is a 469-acre mixed farm incorporating the old holdings of Marney's and Hollowtree. After **Phil's** retirement in 2001, **David** contracted out the arable work to **Home Farm**, expanded the dairy herd and recruited herdsman **Sam Batton**. 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 Hassett 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 10 a.m. 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



A caravan at Willow Farm • Born 22.6.88
(William Sanderson-Thwaite)

It wasn't good timing when **Neil** and **Susan** moved the family into a caravan while building their dream home. Not only was Christopher studying for his GCSEs at **Borchester** Green secondary school, but he'd hit that time in adolescence when everything is 'rubbish' – especially parents. He'd certainly no desire to muck in with them and sister **Emma**, who arguably liked the experience even less. Chris should be used to sharing a confined space with Neil, however, as they are both bell-ringers. In 2004, Chris announced that he was set on a career as a farrier. It was a death knell for Susan's hopes that at least one Carter would gain a degree, but Neil was delighted when Chris persuaded **Ronnie** to take him on.



NEIL CARTER



A caravan at Willow Farm • Born 25.5.57
(Brian Hewlett)

Neil can often be found at **Bridge Farm**, as he does a lot of the pig husbandry for would-be sausage baron **Tom Archer**. In 2004 Neil and Susan decided to sell their former council house and self-build their dream home on Neil's eight acres at **Willow Farm**. If that sounds a lot of land, you have to remember that it's shared by Neil's outdoor herd of Gloucester Old Spot pigs and the free-range hens, which he runs with **Betty Tucker**. Neil's got a pretty low opinion of the **Grundy** family, but he's had to resign himself to daughter **Emma** marrying **Will**. Just as well he doesn't know what **Ed** got up to shortly before the wedding, or the lad might have found himself hanging from one of the bell ropes at **St Stephen's**, where Neil is the tower captain.



SUSAN CARTER



(née Horrobin)

A caravan at Willow Farm • 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. Susan tried to get husband **Neil** into a white-collar job, only to see him return to the land. Her jobs at the local surgery (now closed) and **Borchester** Green school both ended prematurely, leaving her part-time at the **Village Shop** and packing sausages for **Tom Archer**. The children aren't exactly going into the professions, either. Susan's seen café worker **Emma** marry a **Grundy**, and **Christopher** start an apprenticeship as a farrier. Susan contented herself with the prospect of her dream home – when Neil gets it finished, that is.



THE CAT AND FIDDLE



The Cat and Fiddle just outside **Ambridge** used to be the place to go for a lock-in and the roughest cider in **Borsetshire**, which is why it was the favourite haunt of **Eddie Grundy** and his mates – especially as they were often barred from everywhere else. For a while the pub came up in the world after new landlords Sean and Peter revamped it with youth appeal and indoor lavatories. But in 2000 their CD jukebox was silenced when the brewery sold the pub without a licence. The development company which bought it found their plans stymied by the building's listed status and in 2004 **Lynda Snell** formed a Building Preservation Trust with the aim of reopening the 'Cat' as a heritage centre.



IAN CRAIG



A staff flat at Grey Gables

Born 1970

(Stephen Kennedy)

Ian had no idea how his life would change when he took a short-term contract as head chef at **Grey Gables** in December 2003. Everyone warmed to this affable Northern Irishman, who soon proved worthy of a permanent position at the hotel. He found what looked like another permanent position too, at the side of **Adam Macy** – although some villagers (especially **Sid Perks**) were deeply discomfited by the happy couple. While Adam is prone to meet the prejudice head-on, Ian prefers a more diplomatic approach, and the differing philosophies led to the first real disagreement between the two lovers.



MATT CRAWFORD



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

‘All over the village like a rash’ as **Joe Grundy** was once heard to say. Matt is chairman of **Borchester Land**, and the driving force behind its dominance of the **Ambridge** property scene. Matt’s fought his way up from the bottom by not taking ‘no’ for an answer, even from district council planning committees, which is how the **Grange Spinney** housing development was eventually built. When she’s not riding, Matt’s wife, Yvette, prefers London life, which is just as well because Matt and **Lilian Bellamy** carry on like a pair of hormone-crazed teenagers most of the time.



THE ESTATE



More correctly, the Berrow Estate: see
Borchester Land.



FELPERSHAM



*To the east of **Ambridge** village famous
Felpersham is ranged.*

*The cathedral used to be the city's heart, but that's
all changed.*

*There's shops and bars and restaurants and
no-one thinks it's odd*

*That they have tills instead of altars, and the
credit card is God.*

*The girls at Bannisters café bar have blonde
streaks in their hair.*

*Then they move on to Angels nightclub – best not
ask what happens there.*

*Seventeen miles away there's much my Freda
thinks is rum*

*But she'd rather go to Felpersham than scary
Birmingham.*

One of **Bert Fry**'s odes.



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. Ironic 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 87.3 FM

'Tune into the Wayne Foley Afternoon Show. With news and views from around the county and a tea time guest just after four.

Win a Radio Borsetshire mug in our What's That Sound? competition – you won't believe your ears!

Something to say? Call Brenda on the phones.*

Every weekday, 2 'til 5.

If you think life's a pain – you haven't met Wayne.'

(*That's **Brenda Tucker**, who'd really rather be out chasing hot news stories.)



ALAN FRANKS



The Vicarage, Ambridge
(John Telfer)

A former accountant who worked as a non-stipendiary minister in Nottingham, Alan was appointed vicar of **Ambridge**, Penny Hasset, Darrington and Edgeley in June 2003. Alan's wife Catherine died of breast cancer in 1995, so his bonds with his daughter **Amy** are immensely strong. Alan believes in living out his Christianity through his everyday actions, and sometimes his passionate convictions make him less than diplomatic when driving new ideas into the minds of his more conservative parishioners. Many thought him unwise when he took a heroin addict into his home, and there was little support for his bid to set up a homeless hostel in the area. But, while Alan's heart can rule his head, he is widely admired for his principles.



AMY FRANKS



The Vicarage, Ambridge
(Natalia Keery-Fisher)

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. Amy has inherited her father's firebrand spirit and can get into scrapes when driven by her highly developed sense of justice. When Alan feels overwhelmed, he sometimes calls on the restraining influence of Amy's grandmother Mabel, originally from Jamaica but a long-term resident of Bradford. 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)

Bert is due to retire in 2004, but will stay in his tied cottage at **Brookfield**, where he will help out on a casual basis. It's given him more time for his poetry – oh yes, despite his stolid exterior Bert is an inheritor of the tradition of John Clare (as can be seen by his ode to **Felpersham**) and he once had his own column in the ***Borchester** Echo*. Bert also serves as a churchwarden and cricket umpire and is a devoted husband to **Freda**, with whom he has one son, Trevor, and a granddaughter, Amy. Bert's other great love is gardening. Competitors at the annual Flower and Produce Show quailed at the thought of Bert devoting yet more energy to his luscious leeks and brilliant brassicas.



FREDA FRY



Brookfield Bungalow

Freda and husband **Bert** are the panzer division of the annual Flower and Produce Show, attacking irresistibly on two fronts. While Bert pins down the vegetable categories, Freda dominates the cakes and preserves with maximum prejudice. She gets plenty of practice, putting three meals a day in front of Bert and turning out cheap and cheerful meals aplenty for **The Bull's** family restaurant. She also cleans the **Brookfield** farmhouse, and is the housekeeper at **Arkwright Hall**. A busy woman, then, so is it any wonder that she is never heard to speak?



SIR SIDNEY



AND LADY MERCEDES GOODMAN

Many **Borsetshire** residents are aware of Sir Sidney, thanks to his food-processing empire, which includes a canning factory in **Borchester**. But this local big cheese is also a *queso grande*, with extensive Spanish interests dating back to the time he fought with the fascists in the civil war. He also imported a Mercedes from Spain – not one with leather seats, but rather one with a leathery complexion, albeit elegantly clothed in the finest couture. Lady Mercedes is a big chum of **Julia Pargetter**.



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 50 acres to **Oliver Sterling**, who runs a few beef cattle.



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 12 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 was 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 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 done. The reseptionist 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 trainee 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

While **Eddie** sails close to the legal wind, and **Ed** occasionally capsizes, Alf is a positive submariner. Eddie's elder brother started young by stealing chocolate from Woolworths, progressed to receiving stolen goods and eventually served time for breaking and entering. But what really estranged Alf from the rest of the family was walking off with Eddie's car stereo and the contents of **William's** money box. When **Joe** was 80, Eddie and **Clarrie** arranged for him to visit Alf as a birthday treat, but neither are in any hurry to renew the contact.



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 escapes to Great Yarmouth to see her sister Rosie Mabbott.



ED GRUNDY



Keeper's Cottage • Born 28.9.84
(Barry Farrimond)

Clarrie worries that her younger son has inherited the bad genes of his uncle **Alf**. Ed's already had several brushes with the law. He's served community punishments for joyriding and burglary and in 2004 he tried to grow cannabis in a barn at **Bridge Farm** with his mate **Jizzer**. Ed really needs the love of a good woman to settle him down. Trouble is, the woman he loves – **Emma** – married his brother **William** while carrying a baby that might be Ed's. Tortured Ed had to get away from **Ambridge**, so his occasional employer **Oliver Sterling** found him some work on a farm in Hungary before returning to Keeper's Cottage.



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 pay 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 a windfall from his old milk quota allowed him to buy **Grundys’ Field**. But in 2004 he was lucky to retain his liberty when prosecuted for (unknowingly) selling condemned meat – a scam too far.



EMMA GRUNDY



A tied cottage at Home Farm • Born 7.8.84
(Felicity Jones)

Oh, Emma, Emma, Emma... It's not generally reckoned the best start to a marriage to sleep with the groom's brother, and even worse to marry pregnant and unsure which one is the father. Emma naturally assured loyal **William** that he was the daddy-to-be, while **Ed** packed up his broken heart and fled to Hungary. 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. If only she could handle her personal life with similar aplomb, but she's helplessly torn between the security and love that William can offer, and the risk and excitement that Ed inevitably brings.



JOE GRUNDY



Keeper's Cottage • Born 18.9.21
(Edward Kelsey)

Being the Grundy who lost **Grange Farm** for future generations sat heavy with Joe, but the purchase of **Grundys' Field**, making this former tenant into a landowner (albeit in a very small way), brightened his 80th year. Joe's often to be seen trotting around the village – in his trap, pulled by Bartleby the pony, that is. Bartleby knows the lanes well, which is a blessing given Joe's appetite for his own notorious farmhouse cider (Joe claims to be a Methodist, but he's seen rather more in **The Bull** than at chapel). Joe looks after the gardens at Keeper's Cottage and neighbouring April Cottage, and maintains a running feud with **Lynda Snell** across the road. Well, every man needs a hobby...



WILLIAM GRUNDY



A tied cottage at Home Farm • Born 9.2.83
(Philip Molloy)

Although never the most exciting boy in the playground, on the face of it **Clarrie** and **Eddie**'s elder son has not done badly so far. Will's godmother, **Caroline Pemberton**, rented him a nice flat in her posh house – even when she'd moved out – and after the death of Greg Turner, **Brian Aldridge** was persuaded to promote Will to head keeper at the combined **Grey Gables**, Berrow **Estate** and **Home Farm** shoot. To top it all, August 2004 saw him married to the lovely **Emma**, who told him that she was carrying his child. But the truth was that the real father might well have been Will's hated brother **Ed**. Trouble in Paradise...



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. They've kept a few cattle and over-wintering sheep there, but it's as much a storage area as a piece of productive grassland. Dominating the plot is a pole barn, which was erected without planning permission, demolished (to **Lynda Snell's** delight) and re-erected (to her disgust) when **David Archer** rented the Grundys a few acres of **Brookfield** land. The barn and a rough shed house Eddie's medieval tractor, his pre-Saxon digger, and his stock in trade: 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, 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 Kapoor. At the time Usha seemed to prefer the barrister Adrian Manderson, but after that relationship foundered for Adrian's lack of commitment, Ashok returned in a new guise as an artist. For a while, they seemed well suited, and were briefly engaged, but Ashok's wanderlust proved too unsettling for Usha. Back to square one for Shiv.



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 horrendous series of attacks by a gang of racist thugs. Although she gets on well with salsa dancing partner **Ruth Archer**, relations with Ruth's sister-in-law, **Shula Hebden Lloyd**, never recovered from Shula's affair with Usha's then boyfriend Richard Locke. Since he left, despite the matchmaking efforts of auntie **Satya Khanna** and brother **Shiv**, Usha has not had a satisfactory relationship. In 2004 she was engaged briefly to an accountant turned artist, Ashok Kapoor, but he was restless and wanted to live outside the UK, whereas Usha was ready to settle down.



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 had fathered by IVF, although dying before Daniel was born (pay attention at the back, there). 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 the boy, 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, although he's a little too fond of a drink to be an ideal chauffeur.



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
80 acres woodland • 58 acres set-aside, including:
40 acres industrial rape • 10 acres willow (game cover)
2 acres strawberries

OTHER

25-acre riding course • Fishing lake

LABOUR

Brian Aldridge (managing and relief)
Adam Macy (deputy) • **Debbie Travers-Macy** (deputy)
Andy, Jeff (general workers)

William Grundy (gamekeeper) • Fly (sheepdog)

With 1,585 mainly arable acres, Home Farm is the largest in **Ambridge** and has carried out contract farming for **Brookfield** and other local farms. As a partner with Brookfield and others in the Hasset Hills Meat Company, it supplies high quality lamb to butchers and caterers, and sells its venison and strawberries at local farmers' markets.



RT REVEREND CYRIL HOOD



Felpersham
(Peter Howell)

Bishop Cyril? Decent bloke, most people think, and **Alan Franks** has found him a compassionate and practical boss. 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



Inside again, naturally

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 Carter**, 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. When Clive was released following that sentence, he conducted a twisted vendetta against George that culminated in 2004 in a firebomb attack on George's house. Badly burned, Clive sought refuge with Susan once more, but this time she did the right thing. Clive got 12 years.



THE HORROBINS



6, The Green, and elsewhere

Most people think the Horrobins are a waste of space, but they do serve one useful purpose, as a family the **Grundys** can look down upon. At least only one of the Grundys has been to jail, whereas **Clive**, Keith and **Susan** (now **Carter**) have all been residents of Her Majesty's guest house. It can be argued that Gary and Stewart haven't joined their siblings inside only through a combination of good luck and low cunning. And although Tracy hasn't been in trouble with the law, her attitude to work is pretty criminal, as several ex-employers can testify. Bert Horrobin has already disowned Clive and as far as Ivy is concerned (she is **Usha Gupta**'s cleaner at Blossom Hill Cottage), mother's pride is what you make toast with.



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 butty department – and assistant manager, **Emma Grundy**.



JAZZER



Borchester • Born 1984

(Ryan Kelly)

Clarrie Grundy wouldn't mind if **Ed** never saw his old school friend ever again. Joyriding, housebreaking, cannabis growing... all activities that Jack 'Jizzer' McCreary has led Ed into (although to be honest Ed didn't need very much leading). Over-enthusiastic use of the drug ketamine left Jizzer a little clumsy and with memory problems, and put paid to his hopes – with Ed, **Fallon Rogers** and Jizzer's elder brother Stuart – to storm the rock world with their now-defunct band, *Dross*. Ed's dad, Eddie, finds work for Jizzer occasionally, but it's probably best not to ask where most of his money comes from.



JESSICA



Lower Loxley

Jessica proved impervious to **Kenton Archer's** charms, which led him to the natural conclusion that she was a lesbian. She can certainly handle the birds, as she is the resident falconer at **Lower Loxley**. Jessica 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'. Although **Nigel Pargetter** often spends time with Jessica, he assures Elizabeth that his interest – unlike Kenton's – is purely in the hawks and falcons.



SATYA KHANNA



Wolverhampton
(Jamila Massey)

Wolverhampton to **Ambridge** isn't particularly far, but when **Usha Gupta** settled in the village it was further away than Usha's parents would like. 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)

Although ‘indomitable’ is an adjective often applied to **Julia Pargetter**, Lewis is the exception that proves the rule, because he does seem to have more power over her than most people. Charming Lewis officially retired as an architect, but 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. He also agrees to serve on the committee trying to revitalise the old **Cat and Fiddle** building. But these occasional tasks leave him plenty of time to escort Julia on pleasant outings, supervise Lower Loxley’s art gallery or look after **Lily and Freddie**.



ALISTAIR LLOYD



The Stables • Born 1962
(Michael Lumsden)

Ambridge cricket captain Alistair runs his veterinary practice from converted buildings at his home, where wife **Shula** also 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. Alistair was also betrayed by his former partner Theo, who stole from the practice to fund a cocaine habit, but Alistair's proved not to be above the odd vice himself. He managed to lose over £8,000 when a friendly card school led to serious poker games with **Matt Crawford** and his cronies. It was time for Shula to do some forgiving.



DANIEL HEBDEN LLOYD



The Stables • Born 14.11.94

(Dominic Davies)

Given that his father, **Alistair**, is a vet, you might not be surprised at Daniel's fascination with animals. But it's not in the genes, as Alistair adopted Daniel in 2000. Daniel's blood father was a solicitor, Mark Hebden, who tragically died in a car crash without knowing that his wife **Shula** was pregnant. In 1998, a mysterious illness was eventually diagnosed as juvenile arthritis, and Daniel is subject to occasional 'flares' of this debilitating condition. But most of the time Daniel is a normal little boy, who enjoys playing with the family dog Scruff – and horse riding. Now that's certainly something he's inherited.



SHULA HEBDEN LLOYD



(formally Hebden, née Archer)

The Stables • Born 8.8.58

(Judy Bennett)

Outwardly, Shula – **Phil** and **Jill Archer**'s elder daughter and **Kenton**'s twin – is the pinnacle of respectability. A qualified chartered surveyor now running her own stables and riding school, a regular churchgoer, bellringer and churchwarden. But a moment of madness with a former **Ambridge** GP Richard Locke estranged her from Richard's partner **Usha Gupta** and very nearly lost Shula her now-husband **Alistair**. (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**.) But since the affair Shula has devoted herself to being a good wife, mother and member of the community – to the point where arguably she could do with a bit of excitement again.



LAWRENCE LOVELL



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

Larry Lovell would no doubt describe himself as the doyen of the **Felpersham** Light Opera Society, although that's not the word most people would use. A former professional actor/singer/model (knitting patterns, actually), he occasionally muscled in to direct village shows on what **Lynda Snell** fiercely regards as her turf. Decades ago, Larry's path crossed with ex-hooper **Julia Pargetter**, as they swirled around, if not the bowels of Variety, then certainly its lower intestine.



LOWER LOXLEY HALL



Lucky **Elizabeth Pargetter**, living in a stately home... Just don't let her hear you say that, because she's far more concerned with keeping the 300-year-old pile tolerably vertical. To fund the never-ending maintenance bills, she and **Nigel** try to wring every drop of income out of the place. The Hall hosts conferences and takes sightseers; Nigel runs falconry courses and displays with **Jessica**; the grounds boast rare breeds, cycle trails, an art gallery, a cruck barn and (not for the acrophobic) a tree-top walk. All this takes staff, of course. Ancient retainers **Titcombe** and **Mrs Pugsley** have been joined over the years by numerous additional employees, including retail manager **Kathy Perks** and **Owen**, the Orangery café's chef. **Hayley Tucker** nannies for **Jamie Perks** and the Pargetter twins **Lily and Freddie**, and runs activity visits for local school-children.



ADAM MACY



Home Farm Born • 22.6.67
(Andrew Wincott)

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. After graduating in agricultural economics, Adam worked for many years on farming development projects in Africa. 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, although **Brian** found it hard to adjust to the news that Adam was gay – and to his relationship with **Ian Craig**. So when the prodigal daughter – Adam's sister, **Debbie Travers-Macy** – returned the following year, the scene was set for an interesting family drama.



DEBBIE TRAVERS-MACY



(formerly Aldridge, formerly Gerrard)

Home Farm • 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 then husband Simon Gerrard 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 a vortex of loathing and depression, turning on all who tried to help her – even her brother **Adam Macy**. She left abruptly and spent the next year working for an agribusiness firm in France – and working through her feelings about Brian. Jennifer, Brian and younger sister, **Alice**, were delighted when Debbie returned, although Adam wondered what it meant for his position on the farm.



KATE MADIKANE



(née Aldridge)

Johannesburg • Born 30.9.77

(Kellie Bright)

It's ironic for **Brian** and **Jennifer Aldridge** that now their daughter Kate has grown up and settled down a bit, she's 5,000 miles away on another continent. When she was at home, Kate was a heap of trouble: i.e. expelled from school, taking up with travellers, having baby **Phoebe** at 20 and denying the father **Roy Tucker** his parental rights – until she needed to dump the child so she could 'find herself' in Africa. She met **Lucas** on her travels and had his baby Noluthando on 19 January 2001. He's been a calming influence on her ever since.



LUCAS MADIKANE



Johannesburg • Born 1972
(Connie M'Gadzah)

Lucas caused quite a stir when he arrived in **LAmbridge**. The father of **Kate**'s baby was black. But he managed to win many villagers round with his charm and directness. Kate wasn't happy when Lucas wanted to move from Cape Town to a journalist's job with the South African Broadcasting Corporation, but her love for him won through and they married in June 2001.



KIRSTY MILLER



Borchester.

(Annabelle 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 works for Tom's sister **Helen** at **Ambridge Organics** and was a staunch support – personally and professionally – following the suicide of Helen's partner, Greg Turner, in May 2004.



NIGHTINGALE FARM



No longer a farm, now just the farmhouse with outbuildings and half an acre, this property was one of the many in **Ambridge** acquired by **Matt Crawford**, who promptly did it up and let it to his paramour **Lilian Bellamy**. Nightingale Farm was owned by **Marjorie Antrobus** until 2003, when she reluctantly had to sell it to finance her move to The Laurels nursing home. Matt re-amalgamated the self-contained flat with the rest of the house. A shame, because it had provided a happy first home for a variety of **Ambridge**'s young people, notably **Neil** and **Susan Carter**, and **Ruth Archer**. The most recent tenants were **Roy** and **Hayley Tucker** and Roy's daughter **Phoebe Aldridge**, who were much less content when forced by the sale to move in with Roy's parents.



OWEN



Owen worked as the chef at **The Bull** for **Sid** and **Kathy Perks** before being poached (as it were) by their arch rivals the **Cat and Fiddle**. When that pub closed, **Lower Loxley** took him on at their Orangery café, where ironically he was once more to answer to Kathy in her new role as retail manager there. Owen's always been one for the ladies. While at **The Bull** he charmed **Freda Fry** (to Bert's discomfiture) and later took up with Tracy **Horrobin**, who 'worked' with him at both his later employers. Always willing to help out, Owen's expertise has been called on for **Ambridge** village events, including judging the food sections at the Flower and Produce Show and assisting with the revolting Bushtucker Challenge at the 2004 fete.



ELIZABETH PARGETTER



(née Archer)

Lower Loxley Hall • Born 21.4.67

(Alison Dowling)

Elizabeth has never quite stopped being the baby of the **Archer** family. Despite marrying **Nigel**, having twins **Lily and Freddie**, living in a Jacobean mansion and capably running the bulk of its commercial ventures, she's still inclined to throw her toys out of the pram – particularly at any hint that her parents **Phil** and **Jill** are favouring **David**, **Kenton** or **Shula** over her. Apart from sibling rivalry, Elizabeth has faced some genuine challenges in her life. 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. Although Nigel despairs sometimes of his 'Lizzie's' competitiveness, her fighting spirit has played a big part in **Lower Loxley's** continued survival.



JULIA PARGETTER



Lower Loxley Hall • Born 17.8.24
(Mary Wimbush)

Julia was delighted when **Nigel**'s sister Camilla gave birth to a son, Piers. At last Julia had a grandson with breeding on both sides of the family. **Freddie** was damaged goods because of **Elizabeth**'s yeoman ancestry and as for **Lily**, well she was a girl so didn't really count. All this concern for the purity of the Pargetter line is somewhat paradoxical given that Julia's dad was a greengrocer; she'd met Nigel's father as a dancer in wartime Variety (her, that is – Gerald wasn't that sort of chap). But self-delusion is part of Julia's complex make-up, contributing to her periods of addiction, to alcohol and later to gambling. As you may gather, she's quite a handful. Nigel and Elizabeth were grateful when **Lewis** came along, as he seems to have the knack of reining in Julia's excesses.

LILY AND FREDDIE PARGETTER

Lower Loxley Hall • Born 12.12.99

It doesn't seem so long ago that the family feared for **Elizabeth**'s life, pregnant as she was with twins and suffering the effects of a congenital heart condition. But Lily and Freddie were born – in that order – safely if a little early by caesarean section. As toddlers they were treated to the nannying skills of **Hayley Tucker** (supplemented by the idiosyncratic care of grandmother **Julia**) and they started at Loxley Barratt primary school in September 2004. But if Julia has anything to do with it, they won't be in the state system for long.



NIGEL PARGETTER



Lower Loxley Hall • Born 8.6.59
(Graham Seed)

Nigel shares the eccentric streak that 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 more recent years in 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 proselyte for the two-wheeled life (note Lower Loxley's cycle trails and bike hire), and he developed a growing enthusiasm for the natural world. In 2004 this led to his planting a wild flower meadow and an area of vines, which will eventually produce Lower Loxley's own wine.



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 career. After 20 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 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, with **Oliver Sterling**, and in 2004 the co-habiting couple submitted themselves to the long process towards becoming foster carers.



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 50s – 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 been quite fond of eccentric **Joe Grundy** next door and his tearaway grandson **Ed**. 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)

With a name that calls out to be sung, it's no surprise that Jolene's background is in country music. The singer and pianist (real name Doreen) still plays occasional gigs with her band, The Midnight Walkers, but her main efforts are devoted, with **Sid**, to **The Bull**. Jolene's warm personality and generous assets make her a natural behind the bar and much of The Bull's success in recent years has been down to her, with line-dancing sessions and music nights at The Bull Upstairs, and innovations including a cyber-area with internet access. Jolene's daughter **Fallon** has inherited her mother's musical ability, although she'd rather eat nails than play country and western.



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 ready with natural remedies to counter the effects of the menopause. And the **Grundys** next door are... well, next door.



SID PERKS



The Bull • Born 9.6.44

(Alan Devereux)

Despite passing 60, Sid takes pride in keeping fit. Many men envy him, but whether more for his 49 per cent 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 **Kathy**. Sid is usually the classic genial host but on certain topics he can be pretty reactionary. When his step-daughter **Fallon Rogers** started dabbling in drugs, his approach was notably different from the more liberal Jolene's, and he resigned as manager of the **Ambridge** cricket team after friction with the gay **Adam Macy**.



HEATHER PRITCHARD



Prudhoe, 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

Mr Pullen, a resident of **Ambridge**'s little plot of 'old people's homes', has probably led a rich and varied life, but sadly nowadays he's only known for one thing; the relative weakness of his bladder.



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 indie than their country and western. She plays guitar and sings, and studied for an 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.



RONNIE



This busy farrier, a regular visitor to **Shula Hebden Lloyd's** stables, was in 2004 persuaded to take **Christopher Carter** on the four-year-long farrier's apprenticeship scheme.



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. No-one was surprised when he was cast as the Devil in the 2003 **Ambridge** mystery plays. Most villagers see Graham as **Matt Crawford**'s puppet, and when he 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

In 2003, when **Alan Franks** arrived as the vicar of **Ambridge** (plus Darrington, Penny Hasset, and Edgeley) and proudly surveyed the fine village church – dating back to Saxon times – can he have known what he was letting himself in for? **Shula Hebden Lloyd** and **Bert Fry** (churchwardens), **Neil Carter** (captain of the bell-ringers) and **Phil Archer** (organist) have tales to tell of grand controversy over the years: the installation of a lavatory; clandestine attempts to kill off the bats in the roof; and of course the installation of his predecessor, Janet Fisher, who you (being very sharp) will guess was a *woman*. If the departed Janet had one word of advice for Alan, it would be to keep away from the politics of the flower rota, which make the Florentine court look like, well, a church flower rota.



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** gardener **Titcombe**, housekeeper **Mrs Pugsley**, resident falconer **Jessica** and green-woodworker Alec; **Matt Crawford's** elegant wife Yvette and the rather less elegant **Baggy and Snatch**; **Home Farm** workers Andy and Jeff, **Bridge Farm** dairy worker Colin Kennedy, exotic Anja at **Ambridge Organics**; Frank, who flips the burgers at **Jaxx Caff**; **Freda Fry** who performs a similar function at **The Bull**; bell-ringer **Neville Booth**; **Tom Archer's** sausage butcher Stan Derby; **Grey Gables** assistant manager Trudy Porter; many of the Horrobins; and the fragrant **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 the **Grundys**. Lynda doesn't help by regularly lecturing the locals on her latest environmental bonnet-bee. She's a keen gardener, 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 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. As a result Lynda was forced to give up her life of leisure – sorry, service to the community – and 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 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)

Oliver's marriage to his ex-wife was a traditional one. He ran a large farm (in the north of the county) and she was the homemaker, bringing up their son and two daughters. He was happy, but it wasn't enough for Jane. Following their divorce, Oliver bought **Grange Farm** with 50 acres, intending to do a bit of hobby farming. As joint master of the South **Borsetshire** Hunt, Oliver met **Caroline Pemberton** – and they fell in love. She moved in with him in 2003 and before long they realised they both had more love to give: Oliver having missed out on much of the pleasure of fatherhood, and Caroline reflecting on the satisfaction that her godson, **William Grundy**, had brought her. They took the brave decision to offer themselves as foster carers, and embarked on a long process of training and assessment.



TITCOMBE



Lower Loxley Hall

The **Pargetters'** head gardener doesn't say much. He probably thinks that **Lower Loxley's** three acres of formal gardens speak for themselves.



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 Shindler)

When torn between two brothers – **Ed** and **William** – **Emma Grundy** took a lot of advice from Brenda. Which is ironic, as Brenda's romantic career has been not so much chequered as hound's-toothed. 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 Travers-Macy's** ex-husband Simon); or admirable but gay (**Adam Macy**). Brenda works with **Wayne Foley** as a journalist at Radio **Borsetshire**, 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-fuelled 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 the frustration of moving 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 a trainee 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**.



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THE VILLAGE SHOP



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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 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. In 2004 he and **Susan** started to build their own house on the land, with **Mike** doing a lot of the work. It meant that the farmhouse had to stretch even further as members of the Carter family took refuge from the caravan that was theoretically their temporary home.



HAZEL WOOLLEY



Last seen in Soho
(Jan Cox)

Hazel, the adopted daughter of **Jack Woolley** and his first wife Valerie, claims to work in the film business, but no-one seems to know exactly what sort of films. Her visits to **Ambridge** are infrequent but chaotic and on her departure villagers are startled by the noise of a rushing mighty wind: the collective sigh of relief from the staff at **Grey Gables**.



JACK WOOLLEY



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

Jack has clear memories of his humble beginnings in the Birmingham suburb of Stirchley, although sadly he is increasingly unable to remember what he had for breakfast. In the 1960s and 70s, Jack built a business empire 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. But it was his last acquisition, and the first to be dropped when his condition was diagnosed. Jack has one adopted daughter, **Hazel**, from his first marriage. As he declined, Jack couldn't remember seeing her lately, but that's nothing to do with his failing memory.



PEGGY WOOLLEY



(formerly Archer, née Perkins)

The Lodge, Grey Gables • Born 13.11.24

(June Spencer)

Peggy doesn't really approve of much that modern life has thrown at her. She struggled to accept the presence of **Usha Gupta** in the village, let alone **Lucas Madikane** marrying her granddaughter **Kate**. When Ambridge had a woman vicar, Peggy felt forced to worship elsewhere. And it was bad enough grandson **Adam Macy** being gay, but when he hooked up with **Ian Craig**, who had been her lodger, well... Peggy was originally from London's East End. She came to the village having married **Phil Archer's** alcoholic elder brother, Jack, and for many years she owned and ran **The Bull**. In 1991 she married her current **Jack**, becoming one of the wealthiest women in the village. Despite their middle age, Peggy still keeps a maternal eye on her children, **Jennifer Aldridge**, **Lilian Bellamy** and **Tony Archer**.

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The Archers Annual

The Archers – Family Ties: 1951–1967

The Archers – Looking for Love: 1968–1986

The Archers – Back to the Land: 1987–2000

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Jennifer's Diary

THE AUTHOR

After 11 years in Ambridge, Keri Davies gave up the role of senior producer of *The Archers* to spend more time at the gym.

When not there, he runs the BBC's *Archers* website and writes scripts for the programme, and is occasionally let back into the studio to direct episodes for which no-one else will take the blame... er, credit.

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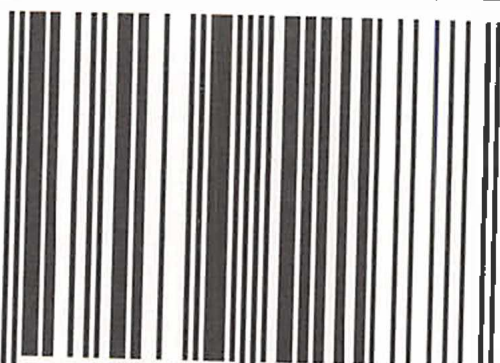
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