

BBC

BOOKS

KERI DAVIES

WHO'S WHO IN
The
Archers
2007

NEW EDITION

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The
Archers
2007

B B C
BOOKS

To Angela and Mark: longest, not oldest.

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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The moral right of the author has been asserted.

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Project Editor: Cath Harries

Designer: Sarah Ponder

Production Controller: Arlene Alexander

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Events in Ambridge are constantly changing but we have done our best to make *Who's Who in The Archers 2007* accurate at the time of publication.

Official *Archers* Website: 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, a detailed timeline, archive moments, quizzes and chat.

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

THE AUTHOR

A former senior producer of *The Archers*, Keri Davies became an *Archers* scriptwriter in 2003 and runs *The Archers* website. He lives in Birmingham with his wife and three sons and is a part-time drummer and DJ, so it's amazing that he's got any hearing left.

WELCOME TO AMBRIDGE

This is the eighth edition of our handy guide to the characters and locations in *The Archers*.

If you've bought any of the previous versions, you will notice we have expanded the format and, following suggestions from readers, introduced a new listing of characters by forename. This should make it easier to locate the characters' entries if you've only heard them called 'Shula' or 'Ian', for example.

But even if you know full well that Shula's surname is Hebden Lloyd, you will still find much that is useful, informative and (we hope) entertaining within these pages.

Vanessa Whitburn
Editor, The Archers

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

When and how can I hear the programme?

On BBC Radio 4 (92–95 FM, 198 LW and on digital radio and television). Transmission times: 7pm Sunday to Friday, repeated at 2pm the next day (excluding Saturdays). An omnibus edition of the whole week's episodes is broadcast every Sunday at 10am. Episodes can also be heard world-wide up to seven days after transmission via *The Archers* website: bbc.co.uk/radio4/archers

How many people listen?

Nearly five million every week in the UK alone. *The Archers* is the most popular non-news programme on BBC Radio 4, and the most-listened-to BBC programme online.

How long has it been going?

Five pilot episodes were broadcast on the BBC Midlands Home Service in Whit Week 1950, but *The Archers*' first national broadcast was on 1 January 1951. Episode 15,047, broadcast on

1 January 2007, makes this comfortably the world's longest-running radio drama.

How did it start?

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.

So it's an educational programme?

Not any more. *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.

How is it planned and written?

The editor, Vanessa Whitburn, leads a ten-strong production team and nine 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.

...and recorded?

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.

What's that 'dum-di-dum' tune?

The Archers' signature tune is a 'maypole dance': *Barwick Green* from the suite *My Native Heath* by Yorkshire composer Arthur Wood.

How did you get that news item in?

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.

CHARACTERS BY FORENAME

The characters in this book are listed alphabetically by surname or nickname. If you only know the forename, this should help you locate the relevant entry.

Adam Macy	Graham Ryder	Neville & Nathan
Alan Franks	Hayley Tucker	Booth
Alf Grundy	Hazel Woolley	Nigel Pargetter
Alice Aldridge	Heather Pritchard	Oliver Sterling
Alistair Lloyd	Helen Archer	Pat Archer
Amy Franks	Ian Craig	Peggy Woolley
Ben Archer	Jack Woolley	Phil Archer
Bert Fry	Jamie Perks	Phoebe Aldridge
Brenda Tucker	Jennifer Aldridge	Pip Archer
Brian Aldridge	Jill Archer	Robert Pullen
Bunty and Reg Hebden	Joe Grundy	Robert Snell
Caroline Sterling	Jolene Perks	Roy Tucker
Christine Barford	Josh Archer	Ruairi Donovan
Christopher Carter	Kate Madikane	Ruth Archer
Clarrie Grundy	Kathy Perks	Sam Batton
Clive Horrobin	Kenton Archer	Satya Khanna
Daniel Hebden	Kirsty Miller	Shula Hebden Lloyd
Lloyd	Lewis Carmichael	Sid Perks
David Archer	Lilian Bellamy	Siobhan Hathaway
Debbie Aldridge	Lily and Freddie Pargetter	Snatch Foster
Derek Fletcher	Lucas Madikane	Sophie Barlow
Ed Grundy	Lynda Snell	Stephen Chalkman
Eddie Grundy	Mandy	Susan Carter
Elizabeth Pargetter	Beesborough	Tom Archer
Ellen Rogers	Marjorie Antrobus	Tony Archer
Emma Grundy	Matt Crawford	Usha Gupta
Fallon Rogers	Maurice Horton	Wayne Foley
Freda Fry	Mike Tucker	William Grundy
George Grundy	Neil Carter	

Some can also be found under 'Silent Characters'.

John Archer m Phoebe

John Benjamin (Ben) m Simone Delamain
27.5.1898-2.8.1972 1900-1929

Frank m Laura Wilson
1.6.1900-30.5.1957 29.8.1911-14.2.1985

John (Jack) m Margaret (Peggy) Perkins
17.12.1922-12.1.1972 b. 13.11.1924

Philip Walter m (1) Grace Fairbrother
b. 23.4.1928 2.4.1929-22.9.1955

m (2) **Jack Woolley**
b. 19.7.1919

m (2) **Jill Patterson**
b. 3.10.1930

Jennifer m (1) Roger Travers-Macy
b. 7.1.1945 b. 9.3.1944
div. Feb 1976

Lilian m (1) Lester Nicholson
b. 8.7.1947 7.6.1946- 18.3.1970

Adam
b. 22.6.1967
(by Paddy Redmond)

Deborah m Simon Gerrard
b. 24.12.1970
div. 5.2003

m (2) **Ralph Bellamy**
26.2.1925-18.1.1980

m (2) **Brian Aldridge**
b. 20.11.1943

James Rodney Dominic
b. 30.3.1973

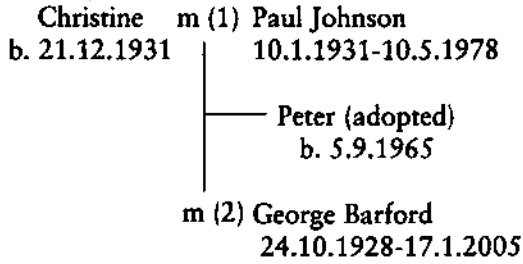
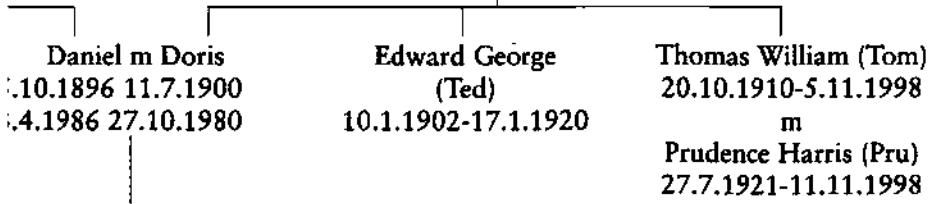
Katherine Victoria (Kate) m Lucas Madikane
b. 30.9.1977 b. 1972

Alice Margaret
b. 29.9.1988

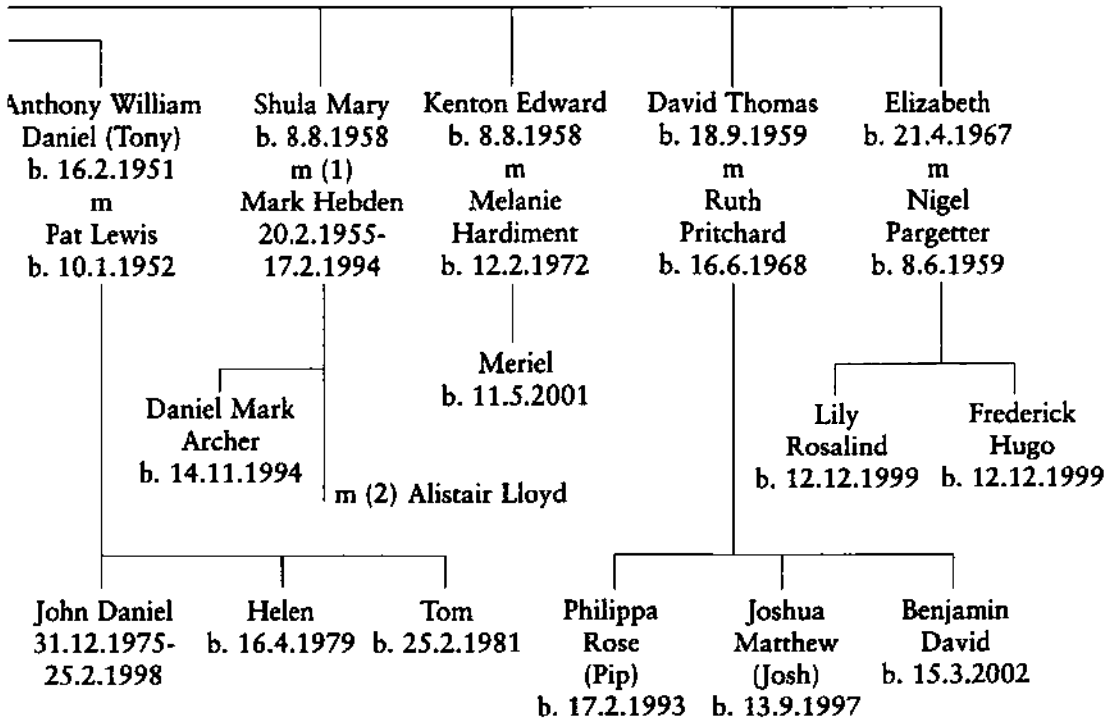
Phoebe
b. 28.6.1998
(by Roy Tucker)

Noluthando Grace
b. 19.1.2001

William Forrest m Lisa



THE ARCHER FAMILY TREE





ALICE ALDRIDGE



Home Farm • Born 29.9.88

(Hollie Chapman)

After excellent GCSE results in 2005, Alice left her posh private school to study A-level psychology, maths, design technology and physics at **Borchester** College – insisting that as they were saving on school fees her parents could buy her a car! Blaming the influence of Alice's friend **Amy Franks**, who sometimes rides Alice's horse Spearmint, **Brian** despaired at the prospect of his daughter communing with the college's hirsute Neanderthals – and that was just the lecturers. Alice plans to spend her gap year (another educational innovation that Brian could do without) in South Africa, assisting sister **Kate Madikane** at an AIDS project. Alice would like to see more of her (half) sister **Debbie**, and fortunately thinks that having a gay (half) brother – **Adam Macy** – is pretty cool.



BRIAN ALDRIDGE



Home Farm • Born 20.11.43

(Charles Collingwood)

Does restless Brian have a psychological need to stir things up? He's flirted with danger in the past, mainly by flirting with women – and it's often not stopped there (just ask **Caroline Sterling**). But Brian got a lot more than excitement when one conquest – **Siobhan Hathaway** – became pregnant with his son **Ruairi Donovan**. The bombshell almost destroyed Brian's marriage with **Jennifer** and his relationship with step-daughter **Debbie**. But as soon as Debbie was reconciled, Brian started pitting her against her half-brother **Adam Macy** for influence on the farm. After Debbie's departure to Hungary in 2005, Brian helped relaunch **Tom Archer's** failed sausage business, making Adam even more convinced that Brian had problems with Adam's sexuality.



DEBBIE ALDRIDGE



(formerly **Gerrard**, née **Travers-Macy**)

Home Farm • Born 24.12.70

(**Tamsin Greig**)

This human boomerang, the daughter of **Jennifer Aldridge** and her first husband Roger Travers-Macy, has left home four times. She cut short her French studies at Exeter University because of an affair with lecturer Simon Gerrard, who later pursued and married her. But he turned out as much lecher as lecturer and the marriage collapsed in 2002. Six months later, unable to accept **Brian's** own extra-marital affair, bruised Debbie fled **Home Farm** for a job in France. Her return in 2004 generated continued friction with half-brother **Adam Macy**, as Brian played power games with the siblings. In 2005, Debbie took a job running a farm in Hungary for a consortium including Brian, and the following year Adam was further irritated when **Matt Crawford** put her in charge of the **Estate** land.



JENNIFER ALDRIDGE



(formerly Travers-Macy, née Archer)

Home Farm • Born 7.1.45

(Angela Piper)

Four children by three fathers? What council-estate Chavette is this? Well, put your prejudices on hold and meet Jennifer Aldridge; elegantly dressed and spoken, former teacher and writer, keeper of the **Ambridge** website, splendid cook and loyal wife. Pregnant by a local farm hand, unmarried Jennifer 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. More daughters followed: **Alice** and **Kate** (now **Madikane**) who by the age of 20 was taking after her mother with two children by two different fathers (Jennifer regularly looks after **Phoebe**). Although devastated by Brian's affair and the discovery of his son, doughty Jennifer fought for – and kept – her husband.



Willow Farm • Born 28.6.98

(Scarlett Wakelin)

Who's the mummy? Well, it's not **Hayley Tucker**, despite appearances to the contrary. Phoebe is the product of a short-lived union between Hayley's husband **Roy** and **Kate Madikane**, who now lives in Johannesburg. With Kate in charge, Phoebe had the full hippy trappings: birth in a tepee at the Glastonbury Festival and a New Age naming ceremony on Lakey Hill. Her upbringing under Roy and Hayley's care has been rather more conventional.



AMBRIDGE



Ambridge, Ambridge

You must be blind

*If you don't have sweet Ambridge on your
mind*

*Though we don't much like **Grange Spinney***

Since it was built in 2003

*Stand by **The Bull** and you can see*

The duck pond and the Green

Ambridge, Ambridge

It's always been

*Just a pint of Shires keeps Ambridge on my
mind*

Lyric fragment by **Eddie Grundy**



AMBRIDGE HALL



It could be argued that, with six bedrooms, Ambridge Hall is much too large for **Robert** and **Lynda Snell**, even with Scruff (**Daniel Hebden Lloyd's** former dog) around the place. So when the IT industry no longer seemed to need Robert's services, Lynda suggested they might take in B&B guests. The place does have a lot to offer: attractive landscaped gardens, including a Shakespearean section – using only plants named by the Bard – and a low-allergen area, to which Lynda retreats when her annual hay fever descends. But the *pièce de résistance* is in the paddock. How many guest houses could boast a pair of llamas, after all?



AMBRIDGE ORGANICS



Harcourt Road, Borchester

With business rates and other overheads – and the ubiquitous supermarkets moving into organics – **Helen Archer** has felt the pressure at the shop she manages for her parents **Pat** and **Tony**. With the help of **silent** Anja and **Kirsty Miller**, former girlfriend of her brother **Tom**, Helen sells the farm's veg, yoghurt and ice cream plus a whole range of bought-in organic produce. But for how much longer?



Willow Farm

Neil and **Susan Carter** are obviously not Roxy Music fans or they might have heeded the warning of the art-pop outfit's *In Every Dream Home a Heartache*. But dream home it is, self-built by Neil (with the assistance of professional tradesmen and his friend and near-neighbour **Mike Tucker**) on Neil's few acres at **Willow Farm**. The house was completed in May 2005 and features luxuries that the Carters could only imagine in their former ex-council property at 1, The Green, including an en suite bathroom, downstairs loo, cloakroom and 'utility'. When naming the place, Susan ignored the nearest external landmark, choosing the romantic '**Ambridge** View' rather than the just-as-accurate 'Pig Ark Pong'.



MARJORIE ANTROBUS



The Laurels • Born 1922

(Margot Boyd)

After a lifetime of independence and service – initially to the Empire as a colonial wife in Kenya and elsewhere, and later to **Ambridge** through the church and parish council – Marjorie finally moved into a nursing home in 2003. Although physically frail, mentally she is as sharp as ever and organises her fellow residents much as she used to her pack of champion Afghan hounds.



BEN ARCHER



Brookfield Farm • Born 15.3.02

(Thomas Lester)

Although they are used to breeding replacement heifers for the dairy herd, **David** and **Ruth** had to assure **Josh** that the same principle didn't apply when they produced a younger sibling. Anyway, the new one turned out to be male, so would have been a rubbish milker. Dark-haired and lively, Ben started at Loxley Barrett Primary in September 2006.



Brookfield Farm • Born 18.9.59

(Timothy Bentinck)

David is husband to **Ruth**, devoted father to **Pip**, **Josh** and **Ben** and a stalwart of the **Ambridge** cricket team. Having taken on **Brookfield Farm** in 2001 (much to the disgruntlement of squabbly siblings **Elizabeth Pargetter** and **Kenton**) it seemed like a good idea to recruit specialist herdsman **Sam Batton** to maximise the revenue from their expanded dairy herd. But when David's former fiancée **Sophie Barlow** reappeared, obviously interested in David, it inflamed Ruth's affinity with Sam into something stronger. David hasn't always made the wisest choices; shooting a badger was never going to be a great career move for a parish councillor, even with the farm paralysed by TB. But coping with Sophie's advances was to be his toughest test yet.



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 on him), eventually took his own life in 2004. The grief and guilt were almost impossible to bear. Despite the support of Pat, **Tony** and brother **Tom**, Helen's need for control manifested itself in a life-threatening eating disorder. She was lucky to be admitted to a specialist clinic, which was slowly able to turn tortured Helen round and return her to her grateful family.



JILL ARCHER



(née Patterson) • Glebe Cottage

Born 3.10.30

(Patricia Greene)

Seeing her with husband **Phil**, the casual Observer might easily pop Jill into the pigeonhole marked ‘farmer’s wife (retired)’. Over 40 years she’s done much to merit that label, raising **Kenton, Shula** (now **Hebden Lloyd**), **David** and **Elizabeth** (now **Pargetter**) while helping with village life and on the farm – in fact she still tends **Brookfield**’s bees and hens. But there’s more to the woman than these traditional values. Jill’s radical streak is seen in her opposition to hunting and to private education, and in a more recent campaign to rid the local school of junk food.



Brookfield Farm • Born 13.9.97

(George Bingham)

Like many small boys, **David** and **Ruth's** middle child has occasional wild enthusiasms. Previously attached to a charming plaything called a Killer Borg, in 2006 Josh took pity on an abandoned muntjac deer. Against their better judgement, his parents succumbed to Josh's piteous pestering and for a while the lad did keep his promise to look after 'Monty', even sharing his bed with him, to **Bert Fry's** considerable disapproval. But eventually the novelty faded, so the beast was found a new home at **Lower Loxley Hall**. Monty, that is; not Josh.



KENTON ARCHER



The flat above Jaxx Caff • Born 8.8.58

(Richard Attlee)

If **Shula Hebden Lloyd** is a Cliff Richard single, then her twin **Kenton** is the novelty B-side featuring **The Young Ones**. After a spell in the merchant navy, with at least two failed businesses behind him, and having been bailed out on several occasions by parents **Phil** and **Jill**, **Kenton** returned from Australia when his wife **Mel** threw him out. He was lucky to be able to persuade **Jack Woolley** to give him a job managing **Jaxx Caff**, and doubly so when the new owners agreed to keep him on in 2005. **Kenton** means well, but he has the attention span of a mayfly. It's probably just as well that his daughter **Meriel** lives in New Zealand, and that the woman with whom he is most frequently involved is the level-headed **Kathy Perks**.



PAT ARCHER



(née Lewis) • **Bridge Farm**

Born 10.1.52

(Patricia Gallimore)

Pat and **Tony** were pioneers of the modern organic movement, eschewing chemicals at **Bridge Farm** as far back as 1984, but Pat's generally seen as the more go-ahead of the two – even by Tony. Her main responsibility is processing the farm's milk into yogurt and ice cream. But in 2006, fed up with Tony moaning about how many of his carrots were failing to meet the supermarkets' stringent size restrictions, she took the initiative and started to market them in the farm's own specially printed packaging. Even doubting Tony was eventually won over by the project, proof that Pat still had a drive to supply high quality food.



Glebe Cottage • Born 23.4.28

(Norman Painting)

Born on St George's Day, Phil is the type seen by many as the backbone of rural England. The son of yeoman farming stock, he built up **Brookfield Farm** in the sixties and seventies and still lends a hand under the management of son **David** and daughter-in-law **Ruth**. He's a staunch churchgoer – in fact, he's the church organist – and his marriage to **Jill** has been one of the most stable relationships in the village. In his retirement, Phil is very active, looking after Brookfield's previously neglected garden as well as his own; and his piano playing is always in demand for village productions. Altogether an admirable man, then. If he has a fault, his indulgence for granddaughter **Pip**'s musical activities means he occasionally overestimates the actual extent of her talents.



PIP ARCHER



Brookfield Farm • Born 17.2.93

(Helen Monks)

Pip has reached the age that parents wish could be fast-forwarded, when the simplest request can be met with stentorian huffing and vertebrae-threatening head tossing. **Ruth** and **David** are resigned to toughing it out. As can often be the case at this tricky time, Pip sometimes gets on better with grandfather **Phil**, especially as she has inherited some of his musical talent. As well as playing the piano and clarinet, Pip sings in the choir at **Borchester** Green school with her friend **Izzy**.



RUTH ARCHER



(née Pritchard) • Born 16.6.68

Brookfield Farm

(Felicity Finch)

Ruth has been a fixture at **Brookfield** since she arrived from Prudoe in Northumberland in 1987, first as an agricultural student and then as **David**'s wife. She was forced to take a progressively less hands-on role on the farm following the welcome arrival of **Pip, Josh** and **Ben** and the absolutely unwelcome arrival of breast cancer in 2000, which required punishing chemotherapy and a mastectomy. In 2006 she started to redress the balance, insisting that David become more acquainted with the dishwasher and the kids' homework timetables. But this brought her into ever-closer contact with Brookfield herdsman **Sam Batton**, setting the scene for a radical threat to the Archer marriage.



TOM ARCHER



Bridge Farm • Born 25.2.81

(Tom Graham)

Tom had something of an *annus horribilis* in 2005. His organic pork and sausage business (which he'd built up since his brother John's tragic death in 1998) collapsed when Tom's biggest customer summarily de-listed him. And to add insult to penury, Tamsin – the woman for whom Tom had chucked long-time girlfriend **Kirsty Miller** – de-listed him romantically as well. He was lucky on two counts. His hard-nosed uncle **Brian Aldridge** helped Tom rebuild the business, despite friction with Tom's more idealistic parents **Pat** and **Tony**. And Tom grew close to **Brenda Tucker**, the sister of his friend **Roy**. With a mobile catering business – Gourmet Grills – helping to publicise his products and an increasing ability to hold his ground with Brian, Tom proved that what doesn't kill you makes you stronger.



TONY ARCHER



Bridge Farm • Born 16.2.51

(Colin Skipp)

Tony's sisters **Jennifer Aldridge** and **Lilian Bellamy** may have married money but Tony 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, through their own box scheme and at the farm's shop **Ambridge Organics**. Tony is one of life's plodders but, like the fabled tortoise, he's not done too badly overall. And he would proudly point to his classic MG Midget as evidence that he's still 'got it' – whatever 'it' is.



ARKWRIGHT HALL



This large Victorian house with a seventeenth-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 Carmichael** 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.



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 in 2004 after the horrific firebomb attack on her former home, The Old Police House. Not the sort of retirement she had in mind two years previously when back trouble forced Chris to sell her riding-stables business to her niece **Shula Hebden Lloyd**. Arsonist **Clive Horrobin**'s target was really Chris's second husband George, who sadly died of a heart attack before they could move into their rebuilt house. Chris chose to stay in Woodbine Cottage, which she bought from nephew **David Archer**, and faced up to life as a widow again. Peter, her adopted son from her first marriage, travels a lot as an administrator with a symphony orchestra, so the family rallied round as Chris adjusted to her new circumstances.

Henley-on-Thames • Born 1962

(Moir Leslie)

This trainee fashion designer, at the time naïve and slightly fey, once went out with lusty son of the soil **David Archer**. The unlikely couple became engaged in 1986 but the fairytale wedding at **Felpersham** Cathedral never happened. When Sophie took a job with a London fashion house, her growing confidence made her realise that David wasn't the man for her. If he was honest, David was quite relieved when they went their separate ways. Imagine his surprise when Sophie returned unexpectedly to the area in 2006 after the death of her father. Just as feminine but far more worldly-wise, she seemed very keen to pick up acquaintance with her one-time fiancé as they worked together on a charity project. Flattered by Sophie's attentions, David didn't realise that **Ruth's** resultant insecurity was driving her towards their herdsman **Sam Batton**.



Rickyard Cottage, Brookfield

(Robin Pirongs)

Kirsty Miller had been attracted to sporty Sam for a while, and it didn't take long for them to get together after **Tom Archer** had given her the old heave-ho. A Devonian, herdsman Sam arrived at **Brookfield** in May 2004. He does the milking six days a week and is responsible for the dairy herd's health, welfare and nutrition. He's not employed directly by Brookfield, but by a contract company: Paxley Milking Services. Sam is obsessively professional, and very quickly brought the latest thinking to Brookfield. Unfortunately for **Alistair Lloyd**, this included Sam's insistence that the high-tech world of dairying needed a specialist veterinary service. Despite his reluctance, **David Archer** was forced to sack his brother-in-law. He might have done better to sack Sam, who in 2006 became dangerously close to David's wife **Ruth**.



MANDY BEESBOROUGH



The red-haired, vivacious doyenne of the Pony Club has produced a similarly luscious and horsey daughter, India. **Susan Carter** nurses the hope that her son **Christopher** might hook up with India. **Jennifer Aldridge** nurses the hope that her husband **Brian** doesn't hook up (again, it's rumoured) with Mandy.



LILIAN BELLAMY



(formerly Nicholson, née Archer)

The Dower House • Born 8.7.47

(Sunny Ormonde)

Lilian has certainly ignored the adage ‘never go back’. After many louche years as a tax exile in Guernsey following the death of her second husband Ralph, she returned to **Ambridge** apparently with the intention of teaching her siblings **Jennifer Aldridge** and **Tony Archer** the true meaning of the word ‘embarrassment’. In 2006 she moved, with her ‘Tiger’ **Matt Crawford**, to the home she’d once shared with Ralph and then she bought a majority share in **The Bull**, the pub in which she’d grown up! Lilian’s son James (born in 1973) paid her a rare visit in 2005, but sadly his only objective was getting a shedload of money to shore up an over-ambitious property deal.

NEVILLE AND NATHAN BOOTH

Neville born 1942

Ambridge

Neville is a bell-ringer at **St Stephen's** but of late his nephew Nathan has been making more of a noise in **Ambridge**. Once disqualified from a nettle-eating contest at **The Bull** (for numbing his mouth with ice cubes), slimy Nathan was beaten by **Lilian Bellamy** and (narrowly) **Lynda Snell** for election to Ambridge parish council in 2006. He contents himself with membership – in partnership with **Graham Ryder** – of the world's smallest pub quiz team. The Straighten Arrows are similar to Millwall Football Club, at least in their defiant attitude: 'everyone hates us, we don't care'.



BORCHESTER



This market town lies in the picturesque Am Vale, six miles north-east of **Ambridge**. At its heart is a historic clock tower and wool market. Pubs and hotels include the comfortable George, the Tin of Peaches (near the canning factory) and the Goat and Nightgown (very lively thanks to its proximity to Borchester General Hospital and Borchester College). There's a good range of shops, including **Underwoods** department store and **Ambridge Organics**. Leisure facilities include the Theatre Royal, a three-screen cinema and a municipal leisure centre with gym and swimming pool. Cafés and restaurants range from **Jaxx Caff** to the upmarket Botticelli's, plus the usual range of ethnic establishments and takeaways. Despite these delights, teenaged residents have only one word for the place: 'boring'.



No-one is quite sure what attracted the attention of this aggressive property company to the **Ambridge** area, but a lot of locals wish it had had grit in its eye at the time. BL owns the 1020 acre Berrow **Estate**, which includes business units at Sawyer's Farm and the tenanted **Bridge Farm**. In 2003 it converted a few acres of agricultural land for an ill-received luxury housing development: **Grange Spinney**. All this was under the lairy chairmanship of **Matt Crawford**. Matt enjoys the business opportunities afforded by the Estate's extensive pheasant shoot, in which fellow director **Brian Aldridge** plays a large part. As Brian is the *acceptable* face of Borchester Land, you'll understand that Matt is to the countryside what Wayne Rooney is to needlepoint.



BORSETSHIRE



Some people say they have trouble finding Borsetshire on the map. They obviously aren't looking hard enough. Stare in the right frame of mind at the borders of Worcestershire and Warwickshire to the south-west of Birmingham and you will discover a charming, predominantly rural county, dominated to the east by the cathedral city and administrative centre of **Felpersham**. The second-largest settlement is the market town of **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. Right, now let's look for Narnia...



BRIDGE FARM



STOCK

90 milkers (Friesians) • 45 followers (heifers/calves)

CROPS

115 acres grassland • 20 acres barley
15 acres wheat • 6 acres potatoes
4 acres carrots • 2 acres leeks
3 acres swedes • 2 acres Dutch cabbage
1 acre savoy cabbage
4 acres mixed vegetable and salad crops,
including two polytunnels

LABOUR

Tony Archer • Pat Archer • Tom Archer
Clarrie Grundy (dairy) • Colin Kennedy (dairy)

Tenant farmers **Tony** and **Pat Archer** rent 140 acres from the **Estate**, with an extra 32 acres from other landlords. Bridge Farm converted to organic in 1984. The farm's produce – including yoghurt and ice cream made in their own dairy – is sold through a wholesaler and to local outlets including **Ambridge Organics**. In 2005, ambitious **Tom's** sausage business collapsed, forcing him to start again under the control of his uncle **Brian Aldridge**.



BROOKFIELD FARM



STOCK

200 milkers (Friesians) • 80 followers (heifers/calves)
90 beef cattle (Herefords) • 300 ewes
Hens (small scale)

CROPS

312 acres grassland • 80 acres cereals
15 acres oilseed 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 (casual) • **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 contract 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.



*Location: **Ambridge**, near village green*
Appearance: Half-timbered, chocolate box
*Outside facilities: Car park, beer garden,
boules piste, resident peacock (Eccles?!)*
Bars: Public, lounge ('Ploughmans')
Food: Bar snacks and family restaurant
Beer: Shires, very well kept
*Other facilities: Skittles, darts, two computers –
internet access, upstairs function room*
Entertainment: music nights, quizzes
*Management: Free house. **Sid Perks** (a bit
old school), **Jolene Perks** – wow! Part
owner **Lilian Bellamy***

Inspector's notes from South Dorsetshire pub of the year competition.



Lower Loxley Hall

(Robert Lister)

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** veterinary surgery. He also agreed to serve on the committee trying to revitalise the old Cat and Fiddle pub, until it was instead redeveloped as flats. These occasional tasks left him plenty of time to woo **Nigel Pargetter's** mother Julia. They were married on 26 May 2005 but sadly their happiness was short-lived, as Julia died six months later.



CHRISTOPHER CARTER



Ambridge View • Born 22.6.88

(William Sanderson-Thwaite)

Like his father **Neil**, Chris is a keen cricketer and a bell-ringer. He sounded the death knell for **Susan**'s hopes that at least one Carter would gain a degree when in 2004 he announced that he wanted to pursue a career as a farrier. But Neil was delighted when **Ronnie** took his son on. Chris buckled down to the four-year training scheme and his developing musculature made him a popular visitor to the area's stables and riding schools. (There's a pun here to be made about the local fillies but we wouldn't sink that low. Honest.)



NEIL CARTER



Ambridge View • Born 25.5.57

(Brian Hewlett)

Don't mention former employer **Tom Archer** to Neil or his wife **Susan**, as they still feel he let them down badly when his business had to retrench in 2005. Neil and Susan live in a self-built house 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 **Hayley Tucker**. Actually, don't mention the **Grundy** family either, as daughter Emma married **Will Grundy**, had his child **George**, rejected Will for **Ed**, divorced Will and then became estranged from Ed too. Hell's bells, as Neil might have said (after all, he is the tower captain at **St Stephen's**).



SUSAN CARTER



(née Horrobin) • Born 10.10.63

Ambridge View

(Charlotte Martin)

Redundant after the collapse of **Tom Archer's** business, Susan eventually got a job with responsibility, as the manager of the **Village Shop**. She'd often had to take unskilled work in her struggle to shake off the **Horrobin** inheritance, and even went to prison in 1993 when forced to shelter her fugitive brother **Clive**. Finally accepting that husband **Neil** would always be a pigman, she had hoped that her children would do better. At least **Christopher** has good earning potential once he's qualified as a farrier. But bright **Emma** – not only working in a café but also embroiled in a love triangle worthy of the front page of *Chat* magazine. You'd think she was doing it out of spite...



The gamekeeper's tied cottage at **Home Farm** is in quite an isolated spot, on a lane bordering Lyttleton Covert. It's not been the happiest of homes in recent years. The previous occupant – **Will Grundy's** former head keeper Greg Turner – committed suicide while living there. At least he had the grace not to blight the place totally, committing the deed nearby rather than actually in the cottage. Will and **Emma Grundy** christened the place 'new house' in Spanish, in memory of their Mexican honeymoon, and spent the first few months of their ill-starred marriage there. When Emma left, Will remained in bitter defiance, and does his best to make it a cheerful home on the days son **George** spends with him.



Borchester

(David Kendall)

Long-term associate of **Matt Crawford**. When 'Chalky' was a member of South Borsetshire District Council's planning committee, he forgot to mention that his wife Mererid Calder was a director of **Borchester Land's** parent company. Embarrassing that, when the council was considering a Borchester Land application for what eventually became **Grange Spinney**. When Matt was trying to hide money during his divorce, he 'paid' Chalkman a large sum as Matt's 'financial consultant'. Matt also 'lost' £50,000 to his old mate in a very well-staged poker game, complete with upstanding landowner **Nigel Pargetter** as a witness. In 2005, the partners in, er... business invested in the conversion of the old Cat and Fiddle pub to luxury flats, to **Lynda Snell's** disgust.



Honeysuckle Cottage • Born 1970

(Stephen Kennedy)

Although easy-going socially, the head chef at **Grey Gables** is a stickler at work and is a big part of the hotel's continuing success. Much to the discomfiture of **Sid Perks** and certain other residents, this affable Northern Irishman and his partner **Adam Macy** occupy a cottage prominently located on the village green. Their generally stable relationship was rocked in 2006 when Ian's old friend Madeleine (Madds) asked him to father a child with her. Adam took a lot of persuading before he could support Ian – and then the mercurial Madds announced that she had met a man who she thought could be part of a more conventional family unit. All rather unfair on poor old Ian...



The Dower House

(Kim Durham)

After a messy and expensive divorce from Yvette, Matt shackled up with mistress **Lilian Bellamy** and in 2006 bought Lilian's former home **The Dower House**. As this is the poshest residence in **Ambridge**, you'll understand that Matt isn't short of 50p for the gas meter. A Londoner, ambitious Matt started in sales and climbed the greasy pole to become chairman of **Borchester Land** and the driving force behind its dominance of the **Ambridge** property scene. He despises the **Grundys** but ironically they have much in common, notably a flexible approach to any legislation that might hamper their business dealings.



RUAIRI DONOVAN



Germany • Born 14.11.02

Ruairi is the illegitimate (quaint word nowadays, we know) product of an extra-marital affair between **Brian Aldridge** and **Siobhan Hathaway**. Once Brian had made the choice to stay with **Jennifer**, he faced the agonising consequence of being little more than a stranger to his son. Siobhan certainly turned the knife by moving to Germany, which added geographical and language barriers too. And we know what you're wondering (unless you're Irish). It's pronounced 'Rory'.



THE DOWER HOUSE



*'...This fine res, historically the home of the squires of **Ambridge**, benefits from lg ent hl, din rm, sttg rm, stdy, 2 frthr recp rms, wl-appntd kit, lndry, 6 bdrms, 3 with en suite, separate offc suite. Lg gdn, lawns and stbls, superb views...'* (That's enough estate agent speak. Ed.) **Lilian** and Ralph **Bellamy** lived here in the seventies. More recently it was home to **Caroline Sterling** who, in 2006, sold it to fund the purchase of **Grey Gables**. To whom did she sell it? Why, **Matt Crawford**, now the partner of the same Lilian Bellamy.



THE ESTATE



More correctly, the Berrow Estate: see
Borchester Land



Google tells us that Fat Paul is a DJ who has played at the Thekla in Bristol, among other venues. This isn't that Fat Paul. A building contractor, Paul Blocker is a man who eats not wisely but too well. He managed to squeeze himself into the cab of his JCB to perform a comically awful 'Disco Diggers' routine with friend **Eddie Grundy** at the 2001 **Ambridge** fete. But even more memorable than that is his party piece, which involves the shedding of his size XXXL clothes to the strains of *Agadoo* – and a high incidence of post-traumatic stress disorder among any unfortunate witnesses.



FELPERSHAM



This cathedral city, the county town of **Borsetshire**, stands 17 miles east of **Ambridge**. With an extensive shopping centre, cafés, eating places and nightspots, it entertains many a credit-card-crazed consumer who can't be bothered to travel the extra distance to Birmingham.



Glebelands

Lover of gnomes and hater of cats, Derek Fletcher has made a lot of enemies in **Ambridge** (except among the gnome population, obviously). Since 1979, he and his wife Pat have lived in an 'executive home' in Glebelands – the **Grange Spinney** of its day. Along with **Peggy Woolley**, Derek was one of the parishioners unable to accept a woman vicar at **St Stephen's**. He seized power on the parish council following chairman George Barford's demise and has been known to send anonymous poison-pen letters, too. What he must think of **Usha Gupta** living in the village is too ghastly to contemplate.



Radio Borsetshire

(Ian Brooker)

A former colleague of **Brenda Tucker**, before she decided to improve her chances by going to university, Wayne presents the afternoon show on Radio **Borsetshire**. He's a big fish in a small pond, as **Brian Aldridge** once said. Well, it sounded like 'total carp', anyway...



Borchester

Once upon a time, the worst result for **Eddie Grundy** following an encounter with his mate Snatch would be a splitting hang-over and a tongue-lashing from **Clarrie**. But Snatch proved to be no friend when he started supplying Eddie with meat 'from a hill farmer doing a bit of slaughtering', which Eddie sold at car-boot sales. The meat was actually condemned and finding its way out of the back door of **Felpersham** abattoir. Eddie was fined heavily and was lucky to escape jail. Snatch went down for two years. By a strange turn of fate, Eddie's godson – Snatch's boy Bruno – turned up in the village under the foster care of **Oliver** and **Caroline Sterling**. Bruno tried to take revenge for Eddie grassing Snatch up, until he discovered the full story of his father's duplicity.



The Vicarage

(John Telfer)

Alan isn't afraid to flout convention, which in a traditional rural community has made him a sometimes controversial figure. A former accountant who worked as a non-stipendary minister in Nottingham, Alan was appointed vicar of **Ambridge**, Penny Hassett, Darrington and Edgeley in June 2003. Activities that have kept the local gossips busy have included tearing up the lanes on his motorbike (often in the company of Hindu girlfriend **Usha Gupta**), abseiling down the church tower and taking a young heroin addict into his home. This last was thought particularly unwise given the presence of his daughter **Amy**, who protested that she could look after herself, thanks. Alan's wife Catherine died of breast cancer in 1995. Despite their close bond, Amy was pleased when her father found new love with Usha.



The Vicarage • Born 1989

(Natalia Cappuccini)

Alan Franks' daughter is as much of a fire-brand as her dad, 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. In September 2005 both girls started A level studies at **Borchester** College, Amy with the eventual intention of becoming a midwife.



BERT FRY



Brookfield Bungalow • Born 1936

(Eric Allan)

We will sing of Bert Fry, gardener
Spouse of **Freda**, Trevor's father
Tills the soil at **Brookfield** stoutly
Choosing not a full retirement
Working on a casual basis.
Warden at the church of **Stephen**
Umpire for the village cricket
Well known he for repetition
Of his stories old and rural.
Why, you ask, this versifying?
Bert Fry is a bard of **Borset**
Versifies to all and sundry
With his many poems. Plural.



Brookfield Bungalow

Bert and Freda's has been a traditional marriage. Freda doesn't just cook and clean at home; she's the mainstay of **The Bull's** kitchen and is the cleaner at **Brookfield** farmhouse and **Arkwright Hall**. Bert and Freda celebrated their golden wedding anniversary in 2006 with an unusually adventurous trip to India. Only the most unreconstructed would attribute the longevity of the relationship to the fact that Freda is never heard to speak.



GRANGE FARM



A working farm – although some may dispute that description – until the bankrupt **Grundys** were evicted in 2000. The bulk of the acreage was absorbed back into the **Estate** and the farmhouse sold with 50 acres to **Oliver Sterling**. For several years, he raised a few beef cattle there, as little more than a hobby – although it did provide part-time employment for a previous occupant of the farm: **Ed Grundy**. In 2006 Oliver conceived a scheme to set up a small herd of Guernseys, supplying **Mike Tucker**'s milk round. Jeopardised by Ed's disappearance, the project eventually proved to be valuable occupational therapy to get the lad back on his feet.



If **Matt Crawford** had his way, **Ambridge** would rival Birmingham for urban sprawl. This **Borchester Land** development of 12 luxury houses and six 'low cost' homes, built in 2003, is a step on the way.



GREY GABLES



After a refurbishment in 2004, with excellent facilities including a health club and golf course, and with go-ahead chef **Ian Craig** aiming for his first Michelin star, Grey Gables became a hotel fit for the twenty-first century. So when it was put on the market as owner **Jack Woolley's** mental powers failed, it made an attractive business proposition. Manager **Caroline Sterling** sold all she had and with the support of husband **Oliver** – and the bank – made a successful bid in 2006. **Roy Tucker's** subsequent promotion to deputy manager upset **Lynda Snell** more than somewhat but her elevation to senior receptionist did a little to reduce her umbridge. No: '*umbridge*'.



ALF GRUNDY



Gloucester • Born 13.11.44

Although **Joe** still has some paternal feeling for Alf, **Eddie** has very little time for his elder brother. Alf progressed from petty theft to breaking and entering – for which he eventually served time – but what really estranged Alf from the rest of the family was his walking off with Eddie's car stereo and the contents of young **William**'s money box. At least **Ed** has not stolen from his family. Unless you count the time he 'borrowed' Will's car. And took his wife. Hm... Perhaps it's not surprising that Eddie hasn't much time for Ed, either.



CLARRIE GRUNDY



Keeper's Cottage • Born 12.5.54

(Rosalind Adams)

Clarrie must have done something very wicked in a previous life to be landed with such a trial in this one. While cooking and cleaning for husband **Eddie** and curmudgeonly father-in-law **Joe**, she has a United Nations-sized task trying to intercede between warring sons **William** and **Ed**. If that sounds like a full-time job in itself, you might be surprised to hear that Clarrie also works in the dairy at **Bridge Farm** and behind the bar at **The Bull**. She's kind-hearted and a good friend, but displays a fierce tongue when one of the Grundy men gets out of line, which is quite often. 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.



Keeper's Cottage • Born 28.9.84

(Barry Farrimond)

Ed's lived a pretty troubled life so far and there's no sign of it easing any time soon. 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 sensed a chance of salvation when **Emma Grundy** and Ed's beloved nephew **George** moved in with him, prior to Emma's divorce from his brother **William**. But in 2006 the strains of the difficult relationship were too much for Emma, who moved back with her parents. Ed went AWOL in a miasma of drink and drugs, to the despair of parents **Eddie** and **Clarrie**. When Ed was found, employer and patron **Oliver Sterling** battled to give him a reason to live.



EDDIE GRUNDY



Keeper's Cottage • Born 15.3.51

(Trevor Harrison)

This former tenant of **Grange Farm** can often be seen doing casual work on the farms of **Ambridge**, sometimes using his ancient tractor or digger. But Eddie's got a finger in more pies than Mr Kipling, dealing also in garden ornaments, compost, landscaping and anything else he thinks will turn a penny. He admits that selling illegal meat was a bit of a mistake and was fortunate to escape prison – although to be fair he didn't know the meat was condemned. Perhaps Eddie's best bit of luck in recent years was a windfall from his old milk quota. This allowed him to buy **Grundys' Field**, which has become a base for all the Grundy enterprises – including an illegal cider den. No wonder **Clarrie** despairs.



EMMA GRUNDY



Ambridge View • Born 7.8.84

(Felicity Jones)

This is the life of Emma Grundy...
Disappointing GCSE results. Disappointed her mother **Susan** by taking a job as assistant manager of **Jaxx Caff**. Disappointed her father **Neil** when pregnant by **Will Grundy**. Disappointed **Ed Grundy** by marrying Will. Disappointed Will by believing baby **George** was Ed's. Disappointed Will (and Neil and Susan) by leaving Will for Ed. Disappointed Ed when George wasn't his. Disappointed **Kenton Archer** for messing him around over her maternity leave. Disappointed herself over conflict with Will about George. Disappointed Ed by moving back in with Neil and Susan. Disappointed **Eddie** and **Clarrie Grundy** for devastating the lives of their two sons.

Disappointing, isn't it?



GEORGE GRUNDY



Ambridge View/Casa Nueva • Born 7.4.05

Little George was named after **William Grundy's** former gamekeeping mentor George Barford. So far, so straightforward. But there's a clue to this child's troubled background in his middle name. Was he Christened Edward after his grandfather **Eddie**? Or did **Emma's** guilty conscience want the man she mistakenly believed to be the real father – Will's brother **Ed** – to have some sort of stake in the child? Not long after George's first birthday Emma was divorced from Will and estranged from Ed. Perhaps not the best start for the poor little chap.



Keeper's Cottage • Born 18.9.21

(Edward Kelsey)

Joe's always been prepared to share everything he has with you, but unfortunately he's never had anything, or at least that's his story. Although he still feels the odium of being the Grundy who lost the tenancy of **Grange Farm** (through bankruptcy), the purchase of **Grundys' Field** brightened his 80th year. And he still clings to the hope of seeing grandson Ed in a responsible position at their old home under its new owner **Oliver Sterling**. Thanks to his trap, with pony Bartleby, Joe keeps as mobile as he wants, which is mainly between home and sources of decent cider, including his own potent farmhouse brew. He tends the gardens at Keeper's Cottage and neighbouring April Cottage and provides a constant source of outrage for **Lynda Snell** across the road. He thinks of it as a public service.



WILLIAM GRUNDY



Casa Nueva • Born 9.2.83

(Philip Molloy)

Clarrie and **Eddie**'s elder son has the well-connected **Caroline Sterling** as godmother but it's a fairy godmother he could really have done with. 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, with a tied cottage to boot. This was topped off in August 2004 by his marriage to the lovely **Emma Grundy** (née Carter) and the arrival a few months later of their son **George**. But oh, how things changed when Emma left Will for his hated brother **Ed**. A bitter divorce followed, in which George became the totem of their mutual resentment. Will isn't much of a Cher fan, but *If I Could Turn Back Time* must be his theme tune.



GRUNDYS' FIELD



Given their 'druthers' the **Grundys** would rather be farming their old tenanted holding **Grange Farm**, but since their bankruptcy in 2000 this 3.4 acres will have to do. At least they own this patch of land, and have been pretty creative in turning it to economic advantage. In the colder months they raise Christmas turkeys and over-winter sheep for hill farmers. Spring and summer see car-boot sales, with children entertained by the Berkshire sow **Barbarella**. A pole barn, rough shed and (shudder, **Lynda Snell**) an old shipping container house **Eddie**'s ancient tractor and digger, plus his stock-in-trade: garden ornaments, materials for his landscaping business and mounds of 'organic' compost. And don't tell the Excise, but you might find the odd pint of farmhouse cider consumed there too. 'Treasurer' **Eddie** will sort out your 'membership' of the 'club'.



USHA GUPTA



Blossom Hill Cottage • Born 17.6.62

(Souad Faress)

Usha is a solicitor and very comfortably off, as an equity partner with the **Felpersham** firm of Jefferson Crabtree. After several unsuccessful romances with apparently suitable men, this Hindu took the difficult route and found growing happiness with the local vicar. **Alan Franks** even helped Usha mend her fractured relationship with her patrician father and depressive mother, who disapproved of Usha's move from Wolverhampton in 1991. Although she's well-accepted now, integrating into **Ambridge** brought plenty of challenges, including a horrendous series of attacks by a gang of racist thugs. Relations with former friend **Shula Hebden Lloyd** never recovered from Shula's affair with Usha's then boyfriend Richard Locke, but Usha gets on very well with Shula's sister-in-law **Ruth Archer**. She relaxes through salsa dancing (with Ruth) and playing poker (with anyone foolish enough to under-rate her).



SIOBHAN HATHAWAY



(née **Donovan**) • **Germany**

(Caroline Lennon)

Siobhan and husband Tim came to **Ambridge** in 1999; he to be the local GP and she to work as a freelance translator. But the marriage foundered. Tim became close to the then vicar Janet Fisher (to whom he is now married) and Siobhan started an affair with **Brian Aldridge**. Once she gave birth to Brian's son, **Ruairi Donovan**, matters accelerated rapidly and she was hurt and furious when Brian chose to stay with his wife **Jennifer**. Siobhan (now divorced) settled in Germany, allowing Brian very limited contact with his growing son. She became more content for a while with new partner Dieter but when he left Brian started to make clandestine visits to make sure Siobhan and Ruairi were all right. This is probably not a good idea but you try telling Brian...



BUNTY AND REG HEBDEN



Bunty born 20.2.22

(Bunty – Sheila Allen)

Alistair Lloyd is in the unfortunate position of having an extra set of quasi in-laws – the grandparents of his adopted son **Daniel Hebden Lloyd**. Retired solicitor Reg and wife Bunty are the parents of **Shula**'s first husband Mark. Having had a bad experience in private education as a child, Alistair insisted that Daniel should go to the local state primary, against Reg and Bunty's wishes. But they won the second – and arguably more significant – round, siding with Shula and funding the boy through **Felpersham** Cathedral School, where he started in September 2006.



Higgs – as most people know him – used to be general handyman and gardener at **Grey Gables**. He retired from the job in 2006 but continues to provide **silent** services as the chauffeur of **Jack Woolley's** vintage Bentley.



HOLLERTON JUNCTION



*Yes. I remember Hollerton —
The name, because one afternoon
(No seat!) the London train drew up there
Abruptly. It was late June.*

*The iPods hissed. Someone cleared his email.
No-one left and no-one came
On the bare platform. What I saw
Was Hollerton – only the name*

*And ‘Ambridge – 6 miles’, and grass,
And Hassett Hills, and silage clamp,
And ‘Services to Birmingham – Platform 2.
Wheelchair access via ramp.’*

*And for that minute a moped growled
Close by, and round him, noisier,
Farther and farther, all the cars
Of Borchester and Borsetsshire.*

With apologies to Edward Thomas



HOME FARM



STOCK

600 ewes • 110 hinds, stags, calves
60 fattening pigs

CROPS

1034 acres cereals • 148 acres grassland
75 acres oilseed rape • 80 acres linseed
75 acres peas • 80 acres woodland
58 acres set-aside, including:
40 acres industrial rape • 10 acres willow (game cover)
4 acres strawberries • 6 acres maize

OTHER

25-acre riding course • Fishing lake • Maize maze

LABOUR

Brian Aldridge (managing and relief)
Adam Macy (deputy) • Andy, Jeff (general workers)
Tom Archer, Jazzer (pigs) • Students and seasonal labour
William Grundy (gamekeeper) • Fly (sheepdog)

With 1585 mainly arable acres, Home Farm is the largest in **Ambridge** and carries out contract farming for **Brookfield**, the **Estate** and other local farms. As a partner in the Hasset Hills Meat Company, it raises and supplies high-quality lamb to butchers and caterers, and sells its venison and strawberries at local farmers' markets.



CLIVE HORROBIN



A guest of Her Majesty • Born 9.11.72

(Alex Jones)

Many families have a black sheep. But when the family in question is the **Horrobins** then it gives a new dimension to the concept. Clive isn't prejudiced – he'll rob anyone, anywhere – but much of his illegal activities have been in the **Ambridge** area. These include an armed robbery on the **Village Shop**, after which he forced his big sister **Susan Carter** to harbour him (for which she served time), a string of burglaries on local homes and – worst of all – a vicious vendetta against former policeman George Barford 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

Bert Horrobin isn't a 'glass half full' sort of bloke and frankly it would take the powers of the most enthusiastic spin doctor to put a positive gloss on the fact that three of your six children *haven't* been to jail. **Clive**, Keith and **Susan** (now **Carter**) have all been on the wrong side of visiting time. Ivy (**Usha Gupta's** cleaner at Blossom Hill Cottage) keeps her head down, hoping the others don't follow their siblings' example. Gary, Stewart and Tracy have managed it so far, although Tracy's attitude to work is pretty criminal, as several ex-employers can testify.



MAURICE HORTON



Borchester

(Philip Fox)

Butcher Maurice works part-time at the business units at Sawyer's Farm making sausages for **Tom Archer**. He makes this up to a full-time income with work in a supermarket and butchers the occasional venison carcass for **Home Farm**. Maurice was relieved to be able to give up his failing butcher's shop in **Felpersham** to work for Tom. It was there that **Eddie Grundy** found Maurice, when seeking a witness to mitigate the illegal meat case against him. Maurice was a bitter man and it wasn't until **Ed** interceded for his father that he agreed to give evidence. **Alistair Lloyd** later discovered that Maurice has a lot to be bitter about, as he had lost his previous business, wife and son through a compulsive gambling habit. Where did he discover this? The **Borchester** branch of Gamblers Anonymous, which had helped Maurice remain bet-free since 1995.



Meadow Rise, Borchester

(Lizzie Wofford)

Ruth Archer had to put a few prejudices to one side when her daughter, the previously no-mates **Pip**, palled up with Izzy. While Pip's farm upbringing had kept her a child, Izzy seemed well into her teenage years by the time she was 12. But Ruth eventually saw beyond the crop tops and hooped earrings – and Izzy's home in the pretty rough Meadow Rise flats – to see a sparky, confident girl with a welcoming nature and talent for music. Stepfather Dom is not only very taciturn but not a great earner, so Izzy's mum Karen works on a supermarket check-out and has two cleaning jobs to provide for the family, which includes 'mental' (Izzy's description) elder half-brother Keifer, younger half-sister Minnie and Ghengis the Alsatian.



Borchester

Former greasy spoon, with a flat upstairs, 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, mainly because he'd become homeless after exhausting the patience of numerous family members. Frank the chef turned his hand to a slightly more ambitious menu (gasp: panini!) and for a while capable assistant manager **Emma Grundy** made sure that Kenton could concentrate on what he does best – chatting up the more attractive customers. When failing Jack started to divest his portfolio in 2004, the café was one of the first businesses to be sold, but to Kenton's relief the new owner kept him on. Emma returned part-time after her maternity leave in 2006, sharing the work with **Brenda Tucker**.



JAZZER



Borchester • Born 1984

(Ryan Kelly)

It's easy to blame Jack 'Jazzer' McCreary for some of **Ed Grundy's** wilder excesses. So let's do that. **Clarrie** certainly does. Joyriding, housebreaking and cannabis-growing are just a few of the offences to be taken into consideration. However, Jazzer does serve as an Awful Warning about the misuse of drugs – specifically ketamine, which left him a little clumsy and with memory problems. It also put paid to hopes of rock success in the now-defunct band *Dross*, with Ed, **Fallon Rogers** and Jazzer's elder brother Stuart. Jazzer works part-time looking after **Tom Archer's** pigs at **Home Farm** and delivering milk for Mike Tucker. You really don't want to know what he gets up to the rest of the time.



SATYA KHANNA



Wolverhampton

(Jamila Massey)

Usha Gupta's parents didn't want their daughter to move to the countryside, so for many years Auntie Satya was Usha's main link to the parental generation. Satya often descends when she senses that Usha needs support, even if Usha doesn't want it at the time – although the accompanying food parcels are always welcome, as Usha isn't a great cook. After numerous failed matchmaking attempts, you'd think Satya would have been pleased when Usha fell in love with a prominent, pious and professional man. Unfortunately that man was **Alan Franks**, the local vicar, which didn't go down at all well with this practising Hindu.



The Stables

(Michael Lumsden)

Not everyone who plays the occasional hand of cards ends up threatening their marriage and mortgaging their house to pay their debts. But not everyone is a compulsive gambler. Suffocated by the stifling Archer clan and wife **Shula Hebden Lloyd's** controlling nature – and under pressure following the loss of clients from his vet's practice – Alistair found an outlet in poker. About £100,000 of his money also found an outlet, much of it to **Matt Crawford**. Alistair and Shula both had to accept some home truths as they rebuilt their marriage. Alistair refocused on his practice (which is based at Shula's riding stables) and his relationship with adopted son **Daniel**.



DANIEL HEBDEN LLOYD



The Stables • Born 14.11.94

(Dominic Davies)

Daniel is the son of **Shula Hebden Lloyd** and (by adoption) **Alistair Lloyd**. His biological father was Shula's first husband Mark Hebden, who tragically died in a car crash without knowing that Shula was pregnant. Daniel used to suffer from juvenile arthritis but his 'flares' of this nasty condition are becoming rarer. Indeed they may have ended altogether, so he's been more able to have fun playing cricket and horse riding. Did we mention that Alistair is the **Ambridge** cricket captain and Shula runs a riding stables? Coincidence? Perhaps not.



SHULA HEBDEN LLOYD



(formerly Hebden, née Archer)

The Stables • Born 8.8.58

(Judy Bennett)

Shula's first husband Mark was killed in a car crash in 1994, unaware that after treatment for infertility Shula was pregnant with **Daniel**. Of **Jill Archer's** twins, **Kenton** seemed to have the irresponsible gene and Shula the respectable one. But this regular churchgoer, bell-ringer and church-warden, now running her own stables and riding school, once had a most unrespectable affair. Although Usha Gupta has still not forgiven her (it was with her then partner, Richard Locke) bizarrely her second husband **Alistair Lloyd** wishes Shula would remember it more often; then she'd perhaps be less judgemental of his own failings. Shula found that accepting her psychological contribution to Alistair's gambling problem was harder than making the financial contribution necessary to bail him out.



Few little girls now want to marry a prince and live in a castle. Perhaps they've been warned by the experience of **Elizabeth Pargetter**, who married a member of the landed gentry – **Nigel** – and was then landed with the exhausting joint responsibility for maintaining a 300-year-old mansion. To pay its way, the Hall hosts conferences and admits sightseers. Nigel runs falconry courses and displays with Jessica; the grounds boast rare breeds, cycle trails, an art gallery and a tree-top walk. Staff include ancient retainers **Titcombe and Mrs Titcombe** (formerly Pugsley), retail manager **Kathy Perks** and Hugh the Orangery Café's chef. **Hayley Tucker** nannies for **Jamie Perks** and the Pargetter twins **Lily and Freddie**, and runs activity visits for local schoolchildren. Elizabeth's advice to little girls seeking a fantasy? Stick to dreams of winning *Pop Idol*.



Honeysuckle Cottage • Born 22.6.67

(Andrew Wincott)

After graduating in agricultural economics, Adam worked on farming development projects in Africa, returning to **Ambridge** in 2003. Despite **Brian Aldridge**'s protestations, Adam's step-father found it hard to adjust to the news that Adam was gay. Although approving Adam's innovations at **Home Farm**, including a thriving strawberry business and an annual maize maze, Brian instinctively favours Adam's half-sister **Debbie**'s ideas for the future of the farm. Step-father? Half-sister? Get this: when **Jennifer** became pregnant with Adam, she was unmarried and refused to name the father, although Adam's shock of red hair implicated local cowman Paddy Redmond. Jennifer's first husband Roger Travers-Macy later adopted Adam. In 2005 (again to Brian's unease) Adam set up home with **Grey Gables** chef **Ian Craig**.



KATE MADIKANE



(née Aldridge)

Johannesburg • Born 30.9.77

(Kellie Bright)

In her younger and (much) wilder days, Kate caused little but trouble for parents **Brian** and **Jennifer Aldridge**: expelled from school, disappearing with travellers, having baby **Phoebe** at 19 and denying the father **Roy Tucker** his parental rights – until she needed to dump the child so she could ‘find herself’ in Africa, that is. She met husband **Lucas** on her travels and had his baby Noluthando (‘Nolly’) on 19 January 2001. He’s been a calming influence on her ever since. In 2005, when Kate returned from South Africa on one of her occasional visits, Roy found her much mellowed; so much so that his wife **Hayley** feared that there was a spark between him and Kate again. She needn’t have worried; that flame died a long time ago.



LUCAS MADIKANE



Johannesburg • Born 1972

(Connie M'Gadzah)

Lucas caused quite a stir when he arrived in **Ambridge**. 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 in Johannesburg, but her love for him won through and they married in June 2001.



Borchester

(Annabelle Dowler)

As she works at **Ambridge Organics**, you'd expect Kirsty to have environmental principles, but you might be surprised to learn that she was once charged (although not convicted) with destroying GM crops. It was to be the start of a six-year on-off relationship with fellow eco-warrior **Tom Archer**. But in 2005, foolish Tom fell for a business contact and ditched Kirsty, only to be ditched himself shortly afterwards. **Pat** and **Tony Archer** feared that the break-up would mean the end of Kirsty's involvement in their family business. But Kirsty was blowed if Tom was going to ruin that too. However, Kirsty did find Tom taking up with her best friend **Brenda Tucker** a bit hard to bear. For a while it jeopardised her new relationship with **Brookfield** herdsman **Sam Batton** but it was his growing attraction to **Ruth Archer** that she should have worried about.



ELIZABETH PARGETTER



(née Archer) • Lower Loxley Hall

Born 21.4.67

(Alison Dowling)

The youngest offspring of **Phil** and **Jill Archer** often feels she's got the raw end of the deal. Some (especially her elder siblings) feel this is ironic considering she has a charming if eccentric husband in **Nigel** and lives in a Jacobean mansion. She's quick to point out that a colander is easier to keep afloat than **Lower Loxley** and that her main concern is for **Lily** and **Freddie's** future. 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. There's no doubt she's a fighter, which is probably just as well for Lower Loxley, given Nigel's occasional quixotic episodes.

LILY AND FREDDIE PARGETTER

Lower Loxley Hall • Born 12.12.99

(Theodore and Madelaine Wakelin)

When **Elizabeth** was pregnant with twins the family feared for her life, as she was 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 Nigel's mother Julia (now deceased). They started at Loxley Barratt primary school in 2004. At least Julia no longer has to suffer the almost daily outrage of their resultant mixing with *hoi polloi*.



Lower Loxley Hall • Born 8.6.59

(Graham Seed)

Lower Loxley's continued survival has helped Nigel shrug off his former reputation as the Pargetters' idiot son, one largely earned through appearing at hunt balls in a gorilla suit and his party trick of undoing bras one-handed. But even those fond of him would admit that he still displays a loveable eccentricity. Like many visitor attractions, Lower Loxley reveals the enthusiasms of its owner, with a cruck barn, falconer Jessica, cycle trails and bike hire, a wild flower meadow and an area of vines that in 2006 started to produce small quantities of Lower Loxley wine; all of which are the result of Nigel's crazes. It has to be said, though, that recruiting **Elizabeth** as his wife and co-manager was probably the smartest move that Nigel ever made, or ever will.



JAMIE PERKS



April Cottage • Born 20.7.95

(Ben Ratley)

Despite his youth, Jamie's often to be found in the local pub: he has regular stayovers with his dad **Sid** at **The Bull**, although his mother **Kathy** is the main carer. Living next door to the **Grundys** might not be considered ideal – especially when you've had **Ed** as a babysitter. But with **Kenton Archer** as your favourite 'uncle' – well, we might as well write poor Jamie off now.



(néé Rogers) • **The Bull**

(Buffy Davis)

One definition of an intellectual is someone who can hear the *William Tell Overture* without thinking of the Lone Ranger. It could also be someone who can meet the landlady of **The Bull** without thinking of Dolly Parton, either because of her generous figure or her remarkably singable name. To be fair, that would be an entirely appropriate association, because Jolene (real name Doreen) still plays occasional gigs as a country music singer and pianist. Much of The Bull's success in recent years has been down to **Sid's** wife, with line-dancing sessions, music nights and innovations including a cyber-area with internet access. Jolene's daughter **Fallon Rogers** has inherited her mother's musical ability, although you'd get a pretty withering look if you asked her to play country and western.



KATHY PERKS



(formerly Holland) • April Cottage

Born 30.1.53

(Hedli Niklaus)

You wouldn't know it to look at her now, but at Christmas 2004 Kathy suffered one of the worst traumas a woman can face, when she was raped by former **Lower Loxley** chef Owen King. After chasing Owen from the area, Kathy's ex-husband **Sid** nearly jeopardised his current marriage by caring for Kathy, and it was many more tentative months before she was able to resume a normal relationship with boyfriend **Kenton Archer**. With experience as a home economics teacher and at **The Bull**, Kathy manages Lower Loxley's café and shop, and organises occasional film nights at the village hall. And with Kenton's erratic help, she does her best to provide a stable and loving home for her son **Jamie**.



The Bull • Born 9.6.44

(Alan Devereux)

Sid runs **The Bull**, in which he has a 49 per cent share (with **Lilian Bellamy**), and is married to voluptuous **Jolene**. This is Sid's third marriage. His 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's always been a sporty type and still keeps fit. Over the years he progressed from player to captain and finally manager of the **Ambridge** cricket team, eventually resigning after desperate discomfort about the talented – but gay – **Adam Macy**. But all that experience was not wasted. Sid started to encourage a new generation of cricketers, through coaching sessions at Loxley Barratt Primary.



HEATHER PRITCHARD



Prudoe, Northumberland

(Joyce Gibbs)

Ruth Archer's father Solly died in 2002. Her mum lives a long way from **Ambridge**, has a busy life and likes to take cruises, so she's only a rare guest at **Brookfield**. But when she does visit, her capable and motherly nature means that everyone gets looked after – and a lot of home cooking.



ROBERT PULLEN



Manorfield Close • Born 13.7.15

Robert Pullen, a resident of Ambridge's little plot of 'old people's homes', is the son of a Black Country draper. He has many tales about the acts that he saw at Dudley Hippodrome as a young man, but little is known about the intervening decades. He's still a game old bird, turning out for Over Sixties' events such as the Queen's 80th birthday celebrations in April 2006, despite his notoriously weak bladder.



ELLEN ROGERS



Denia, Costa Blanca • Born 1926

(Rosemary Leach)

Not to be confused with the unrelated **Fallon Rogers**, although in 60 years' time we wouldn't be surprised if Fallon is just as merry a widow. **Nigel Pargetter's** aunt lives in Spain among the ex-pat community in Denia, where she owns a bar and lives a jolly life. Her surprise arrival at Nigel and **Elizabeth's** wedding in 1994 blew her sister Julia's cover as a scion of the aristocracy, as Ellen regaled everyone with tales of their childhood as daughters of a Lewisham green-grocer. Ellen made two very contrasting visits to **Lower Loxley** in 2005; in May to see Julia married, and very sadly in November for her funeral.



FALLON ROGERS



The Bull • Born 19.6.85

(Joanna van Kampen)

In 2005, this singer and guitarist finished an HND in popular music performance; unsurprisingly, perhaps, given her parentage. Mother **Jolene Perks** and father Wayne Tucson (which might conceivably be a stage name...) were both active on the British country music circuit. Fallon takes what music-related work she can get, and works behind the bar of **The Bull** when she can't. She's been musical director for a couple of local shows and has shown some talent as a promoter, running successful music nights in the function room 'Upstairs@The Bull' but ideally she'd like big success in an indie band. She once had hopes for her group *Dross* but friends **Ed Grundy** and **Jizzer** were probably not the most promising of musical colleagues.



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.



Borchester

(Malcolm McKee)

As Cardinal Ratzinger was to the former Pope John Paul II, so Graham Ryder is to **Matt Crawford. Borchester Land's** enforcer – a land agent working for the **Borchester** firm of Rodway and Watson – is often called upon to do Matt's dirty work, although the conscientious and courteous Graham would not see it that way (and certainly harbours no expectations of succeeding Matt). Graham used to supervise the management of the Estate's in-hand farmland and was less than grunted when Matt passed that role to **Debbie Aldridge** in 2006. Graham is not popular in **Ambridge**, standing unsuccessfully for its parish council in 2003. And he was cast as the Devil in the 2004 Ambridge mystery plays, which rather blows the papal analogy out of the water.



ST STEPHEN'S CHURCH



Established 1281

Despite this increasingly secular age, **Ambridge's** fine church – whose history can be traced back to Saxon times – is still a focal point for the village. Indeed, it's a very significant one for some villagers, including **Alan Franks** (vicar), **Shula Hebden Lloyd** and **Bert Fry** (church-wardens), Neil Carter (captain of the bell-ringers) and **Phil Archer** (organist). If the sturdy walls could speak, they'd tell of considerable controversy in recent years; in particular the installation of a woman vicar, Alan's predecessor Janet Fisher. Of course, they can't speak. Just as well we've got **Susan Carter**, then.



SILENT CHARACTERS



One of the delights of **Ambridge** is that coterie of characters who 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 **Eileen Titcombe**, resident falconer Jessica, chef Hugh and greenwoodworker Alec; **Eddie Grundy's** friends **Baggy** and **Fat Paul**; **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**; bellringer **Neville Booth** and his nephew **Nathan**; parish council chair **Derek Fletcher**; many of the **Horrobins**; and the fragrant **John Higgs**.



LYNDA SNELL



Ambridge Hall • Born 29.5.47

(Carole Boyd)

They might not like it, but every village needs their Lynda. Since she and long-suffering husband **Robert** arrived from Sunningdale in 1986, there are few Ambridge activities that have not 'benefited' from Lynda's special touch. In particular, she is the prime mover in local amateur dramatics and in 2004 she launched an unsuccessful appeal to renovate the old Cat and Fiddle pub as a visitor centre – on top of her 'senior' receptionist's job at **Grey Gables**. Despite her annual hay fever, she's a keen gardener and her support for environmental causes often brings her into conflict with local farmers. She clashed with **Adam Macy** over his strawberry polytunnels and is constantly in despair at the activities in **Grundys' Field**. **Joe** and **Eddie** would expect nothing less from someone with two pet llamas; Wolfgang and Constanza wisely keep their Peruvian counsel.



Ambridge Hall • Born 5.4.43

(Graham Blockey)

While most people remember an urgent appointment upon sight of **Lynda**, her husband is more the sort of chap you'd pull up a chair for. Genial Robert manages to put up with Lynda's crazes and campaigns – mainly because he genuinely loves her. Although displaying an almost parental affection for the llamas that Lynda bought for his 60th birthday, Robert also has two daughters from his first marriage. Lynda gets on well with the younger, Coriander ('Cas'), while Leonie is the more demanding one – as in 'demanding money with menaces'. Retrenching after the collapse of his software business in 1995, Robert made a decent living with a few small clients and agency work. But when a contract was terminated in 2006 he started to despair of finding another job in the IT industry.



CAROLINE STERLING



(formerly Pemberton, née Bone)

Grange Farm • Born 3.4.55

(Sara Coward)

A relation of Lord Netherborne, **Ambridge's** posh totty has brought pleasure to innumerable men since her arrival in 1977. (Archers listeners, that is; what do you think we meant?) After 20 single years – including an affair with **Brian Aldridge** – she found Mr Right in the person of landowner Guy Pemberton, who unfortunately died after only six months of marriage. She later found love with another rich man: **Oliver Sterling**. And why not? Two Rights don't make a wrong. Caroline, who has managed **Grey Gables** since 1988, sold the **Dower House** and a majority share in **The Bull** to buy the hotel jointly with Oliver in 2006. Oliver proposed soon after the purchase – for romantic as well as sound financial reasons – and they were married on 29 June.



Grange Farm

(Michael Cochrane)

Oliver's previous marriage was a traditional one. He ran a large farm (in the north of the county) and Jane was the homemaker, nurturing their son, two daughters and a growing frustration. 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, he met **Caroline Pemberton** – and they fell in love. They married in 2006, having along the way become joint owners of **Grey Gables** hotel. In the same year, Oliver's industry-defying plan to set up a small dairy herd supplying **Mike Tucker's** milk round was severely hampered by the disappearance of key employee **Ed Grundy** – and by Ed's reappearance as a case more suitable for treatment by the Priory than by a gentleman farmer.

TITCOMBE AND MRS TITCOMBE

Lower Loxley Hall

Who knew that such a bond was developing between the **Pargetters'** head gardener and their housekeeper (formerly Eileen Pugsley), previously noted mainly for their **silent** devotion to their duties. Following the death of Mrs Pugsley's long-estranged husband, Titcombe was thrown into teen-like angst until, encouraged by **Nigel**, he plucked up the courage to propose to the woman he had worshiped wordlessly for so long. They were married in October 2006.



BRENDA TUCKER



Willow Farm • Born 21.1.81

(Amy Shindler)

Daughter of **Mike Tucker** and younger sister of **Roy**, in May 2005 frustrated Brenda chucked in her job at Radio **Borsetshire** to look for more demanding journalistic work. When Fleet Street didn't come a-calling, Brenda's plans to improve her employability by taking a degree were set back by the death of her mother Betty in 2005. Getting a taste for commercial life through her involvement with boyfriend **Tom Archer's** sausage business, she enrolled at **Felpersham** University in autumn 2006 to study marketing, supplementing her student loan by working for Tom and at **Jaxx Caff**. As well as being a source of income, Tom appeared to be a wiser choice of boyfriend than her previous men, because up until him she'd demonstrated an unerring eye for sleazeballs, con-men and wasters.



HAYLEY TUCKER



(née Jordan) • Willow Farm • Born 1977

(Lorraine Coady)

When she married **Roy**, Hayley didn't think it was too much to hope for a little place of their own, and a baby as a brother or sister to **Roy's** daughter **Phoebe Aldridge**. But the stratospheric price of local housing and the death of Roy's mother in 2005 – with the attendant dependence of Roy's father **Mike** – made these reasonable expectations quite a challenge to achieve. Hayley is a qualified nursery nurse, working as a nanny at **Lower Loxley**, but this unmitigated Brummie was rather surprised to find herself joint manager of the organic egg enterprise that Betty had established with neighbour **Neil Carter**. She still thinks that 'hayrick' is a greeting and 'spray boom' the noise that an aerosol makes, though.



Willow Farm • Born 1.12.49

(Terry Molloy)

Mike was once a dairy farmer – until his bankruptcy in 1985. He took on a milk round – when doorstep deliveries were under severe pressure from the supermarkets. He trained in forestry work – and then lost an eye in an accident. And his wife Betty died at Christmas 2005, a devastating blow for this already not-the-most-cheerful of men. In more recent years, Mike has supplemented the milk round and forestry with turfing and casual labour. In 2005 he got regular work assisting gamekeeper **William Grundy** and the following year enhanced his milk round by going into business with **Oliver Sterling**. Mike found that work alone was not enough to get over his bereavement but, as his children **Roy** and **Brenda** found him diverting projects, he slowly started to move forward.



ROY TUCKER



Willow Farm • Born 2.2.78

(Ian Pepperell)

Roy was once part of the group of racist thugs who terrorised **Usha Gupta**, but that youthful foolishness is long behind him now. He pulled up his socks, read business studies at **Felpersham** University and eventually became deputy manager at **Grey Gables**. After Roy, wife **Hayley** and daughter **Phoebe Aldridge** (by ex-girlfriend **Kate Madikane**) had to leave their flat at Nightingale Farm, they struggled to find somewhere affordable, and a 'temporary' move back in with parents **Mike** and Betty in 2003 became a drawn-out occupation. After Betty's death in 2005, Roy naturally became very protective of his father. Hayley had to work hard to persuade Roy to continue their house hunt and to try for a baby of their own.



UNDERWOODS



Well Street, Borchester

RADIO COMMERCIAL – UNDERWOODS – 0'30"

Female 1: Look at all these things! Gorgeous dress!

Female 2: Thanks. And what do you think of this vase, and this garden hose?

Female 1: You must have been to dozens of shops.

Female 2: No, Jean, I got it all at Underwoods.

Female 1: I'm amazed! All this in one store?

Female 2: Yes. Underwoods is big, friendly and it's got all you need.

Female 1: I wish I could say the same for my husband!

Both: (GIGGLE)

Male: Underwoods – **Borchester**'s most varied store.



THE VILLAGE SHOP



Ambridge is lucky to have an asset that many British villages have lost. More through philanthropy than anything else, failing **Jack Woolley** held on to the village shop and post office after he had sold all his other businesses. It's tried to move with the times, offering extended opening hours and DVD rental along with the more traditional groceries and emergency packets of tights. It's also the best place to get up-to-date on village life, thanks to the propensity to gossip of the manager **Susan 'Radio' Carter**.



Now, do you mean Willow Farmhouse, which accommodates **Mike Tucker**, his daughter **Brenda**, son **Roy**, Roy's wife **Hayley** and his daughter **Phoebe Aldridge**? Or do you mean the eight acres of land owned by **Neil Carter** – the rest of Willow Farm's holding having been sold long ago? The land houses Neil's outdoor breeding herd of pigs; an organic free-range egg enterprise, run jointly with Hayley; and **Ambridge View** – Susan's dream house that Neil self-built with Mike's help. Confused? We're sure the postman has trouble, too.



HAZEL WOOLLEY



California, Camden Town... who knows?

(Annette Badland)

Jack Woolley adopted the daughter of his former (second) wife Valerie. Hazel claims to work in the film business, but no-one seems to know exactly what sort of films. She made one of her mercifully rare visits to **Ambridge** in summer 2005, and only left having failed to persuade Jack to sign **Grey Gables** over to her. **Peggy** loves her dearly, of course...



JACK WOOLLEY



The Lodge, Grey Gables • Born 19.7.19

(Arnold Peters)

As St Peter wrote, all flesh is as grass. Self-made Brummie businessman Jack Woolley dominated the **Ambridge** scene for four decades. But the onset of dementia in recent years forced him to divest his enterprises, selling **Grey Gables** hotel, the ***Borchester Echo*** newspaper and **Jaxx Caff**. The erratic progression of the illness means that Jack's (third) wife **Peggy** never knows whether the day will bring lucidity or lacunae. And the very occasional visits of Jack's adopted daughter **Hazel** (from his second marriage) usually make things worse. To finish as biblically as we started, how hath the mighty fallen...



PEGGY WOOLLEY



(formerly Archer, née Perkins)

The Lodge, Grey Gables • Born 13.11.24

(June Spencer)

Despite their middle age, Peggy still keeps a maternal eye on her children, **Jennifer Aldridge**, **Lilian Bellamy** and **Tony Archer**. Originally from London's East End, she is the widow of **Phil Archer's** elder brother Jack, with whom she ran **The Bull** for many years. With a singular lack of imagination she married another **Jack – Woolley** – in 1991. Although perhaps it's not surprising, given that her mother married two men named Perkins. Of a conservative bent in many ways, Peggy is one of the wealthiest women in the village. Having lost her first husband to alcoholism, she is now a living example that money can't buy happiness, forced as she is to cope stoically with her second Jack's decline due to Alzheimer's disease.

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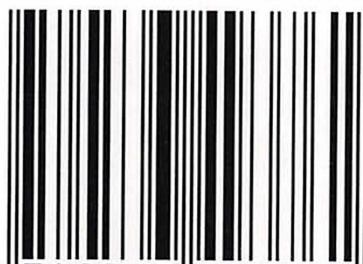
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