

## THE SMITH, A MIGHTY MAN

Frederick Thomas Phillipson is 76 years of age, and like many people who have been active all their life, he finds it a little difficult to put down the tools of his job and go into retirement. When I met Mr Phillipson at his home 'Anville', in the village of Alvingham, near Louth, there was little difficulty in locating him, because I 'homed in' on the sound of hammer beats on iron. He still has his favourite anvil in the workshop which he has built on to his bungalow since retiring, just down the lane from the village forge where he spent all his working life from the age of 14.

Horse power meant what it says in those days; a man's success in the farming community was measured very often by the number of horses employed on the farm. "A 12-horse farm or a three-horse farm is how they used to class the places in those days; I don't know how many acres some of my customers used to farm", recalled Mr Phillipson. "Most of the work was shoeing horses, although I got a good bit of repair work for the agricultural machinery—ploughs, grass reapers and binders. Mind you, we had to go out to the farms to shoe the working horses, as much as twice a week to the same farm sometimes. Horses working on the land were only shod in the front, whilst those working on the roads were shod all round. The regulations called for a full set of shoes only for those working on the hard roads, so there was a fair bit of economy around, but no problems about M.O.T. certificates! Nevertheless, they really looked after their horses."

"But they weren't all angels, them horses, by any means. The ones that had to work hard looked forward to a quiet rest waiting for the blacksmith . . . it was the ponies and the 'riders' that used to play up a bit. Some of them could be pretty nasty. You see, there was



no picking and choosing about shoeing horses; you had to do them all, good-uns and bad-uns. I had to give it up for a bit at 65, because one or two of them got the better of me; no bones broken, but not very pleasant for a few days after you had been wrestling with a few riding ponies that were only used once or twice a week; fed on hard food, and ready to have a go if they got half a chance".

How did you manage? I asked. "You had to be firm but quiet. A horse knew when you were scared of him; so firmness, don't lose your temper, kindness when it was deserved; that seemed to do the trick".

How did you get about in those days; did you ride a lot? "Never been on a saddle in my life" he said. "First I had a bike, then I sort of graduated to a motor-bike, a belt driven job. But I never rode the horses".

If you spend a good part of your life heaving horses' hooves into position for a major repair job, and bent double at the same time, surely this must be the one job of work designed to bring on premature back-ache? "Never had a spot of trouble with the old back . . . I could shoe all day, we often did, and I never knew I had a back. The only people who used to have what they call these days 'dipped discs' were those who retired from work!"

Mr Phillipson does not appear to be in the running as far as retiring from work is concerned. He could capture the market with boot scrapers, pokers and ornamental fire-side sets. One of his specialities is the wrought-iron, shepherd crook, twin horse-shoe, wellington boot pull-off combined unit. It's made with the hard sweat of labour, and dedication to the job.

Ray Drury



# District mourns a real character

THE death of Mr Frederick Thomas Phillipson of Alvingham occurred at Louth County Hospital on Saturday, where he had been admitted after a short illness.

Mr Phillipson was born in Alvingham in 1901 and had spent his long working life at Alvingham Forge where he eventually took over as village blacksmith. Even after his retirement from the forge he remained busy at the workshop at his home nearby, repairing tools and equipment and producing original metal craftwork.

He was a keen and meticulous gardener and a mine of information about the old days in the village. He was always ready to lend a helping hand to his neighbours and contributed regularly to local good causes and to North Cockerington School where he had been a pupil. He proudly displayed his work at

the Lincolnshire Show and demonstrated his skills at the Skegness Farm Museum.

Mr Phillipson will be greatly missed by his many friends and neighbours, but will leave a fitting memorial in examples of his blacksmiths craft in many homes in the village and county, some of his tools already in the Museum of Lincolnshire Life and not least in his weather vanes, prominent on buildings in the locality.

Mr Phillipson who had been a widower since the death of his wife Betsy 22 years ago, leaves two daughters Marjorie and Mary, a son Brian, and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren, also a sister Mrs M. Hauton.

The funeral service took place at St Adelwold's Church, Alvingham on Friday, and was conducted by the Revd Peter Faulkner, it was followed by cremation at Grimsby. Mourners were as follows: Miss M. Phillipson, daughter; Mr B. Phillipson, son; Mr and Mrs B. Stainton, daughter and son-in-law; Mr Michael Stainton, grandson; Mr and Mrs C. Gill, grand-daughter and husband; Mr and Mrs Mark Stainton, grandson and wife; Mr A. Grant, great grandson; Miss K. Gill, great grand-daughter; Mrs M. Hauton, sister; Mr and Mrs E. Chapman, brother-in-law and wife; Mr J. Chapman, brother-in-law; Mrs M. Leverton, sister-in-law; Mr H. Chapman, brother-in-law; Mr and Mrs R. Chapman, nephew and wife; Mr and Mrs R. Waller, niece and husband; Mr and Mrs W. Todd, niece and husband;



Mr Frederick Phillipson.

Mr and Mrs L. Atkin, niece and husband; Mr and Mrs S. Sargent, niece and husband; Mr and Mrs M. Waller, great nephew and wife; Mr M. Waller, Mr C. Waller, Mr M. Atkin, great nephews; Mr and Mrs Atkin, Mrs S. Banks, Mr and Mrs A. Barker, Mr A. Bowers, Mr J. Bowers, Mr S. M. Brender, Mr W. O. Brender, Mr J. Bett, Mrs Broomfield, Mrs E. Bett, Mrs M. Bett, Mr R. Callum, Mrs H. Coulham, Mr and Mrs R. Chapman, Mr and Mrs Coombe, Mrs Cook, Mr Dale, Mr and Mrs G. Darcy, Mr K. Drinkall, Mr and Mrs J. P. Davies, Mr A. Davies, rep. the Museum of Lincolnshire Life; Mr and Mrs R. Graves, Mr E. J. Hand, Mr G. Hawson, Mrs B. Johnson, Mrs Jeffries, Mrs A. Jacklin, Mr K. Larder, Mr B. Laughton, Mr G. Maddison, Mr J. W. Needham, Mr A. Norton, Mr and Mrs R. Oliver, Mrs M. Oliver, Mrs P. Parkinson, rep. Barclays Bank; Mrs A. Pratt, Mr and Mrs H. G. Pridgeon, Mr F. Pridgeon, Mr and Mrs J. Pridgeon, Mr and Mrs N. Pridgeon, Mr R. Pearson, Mr and Mrs P. Shucksmith, Mr and Mrs B. Shucksmith, Mrs A. Stratford, Mr and Mrs J. Smith, Mr J. Shaw, Mr and Mrs Taylor, Mr R. Trafford, Mr and Mrs H. Williams, Mr Ted West, Mr and Mrs K. Walker, rep. Skegness Farm Museum; Mrs L. Ward, Mrs West, Mr and Mrs West, Mrs M. Smith also played the organ.