

# Changing face of Winsover Road



**BUSTLING, busy Winsover Road has always been almost a community unto itself within Spalding, with an extraordinary mix of business taking place along its length.**

Cars are a constant feature today, adding to the general noise and sense of activity in the road where a wide range of take-away restaurants feed the enormous demand for convenience foods that has grown over the last 30 or so years.

Looking at a list of 'trades and professions in Winsover Road in 1937' contained in Michael Elsdon's Aspects of Spalding series, it would seem that the road's nature has altered completely since then – Gibbons Cycles is the only business from the list still in existence.

For instance, at the time the list was compiled there were six 'confectioners' and the use of coal was still common so there were four coal merchants. The fact that there was one boot dealer and two boot repairers suggests there were more men involved in labouring jobs and

the existence of a draper, dressmaker and a tailor point to more home-made clothing being worn.

Then there was Miss Lucy Aitken's 'typewriting office' at 190 – numbers mean very little now as they have been changed over the years. There was piano dealer Boyd Ltd, dentist Percy Elliott, three pubs – the Railway Tavern, Pied Bull Inn and the Northern Hotel – and plenty of butchers, grocers as well as Spalding Industrial Co-operative Society Ltd.



There was a fried fish dealer at 133 (Booth's) and at 14 (Campbell's), the popular take-away meal of the day.

John Honnor (72) attended the former Willesby School in Winsover Road as a lad and walked to school and back twice a day and can recall virtually every shop along his route.

"If I think about it, I can pretty well name all the shops," says John, whose wife Lesley once lived at what is now Domino's Pizzas, in a flat above Basker's butcher's shop which was owned by Law's.

He then proceeds to rattle off the names familiar from his childhood walk, such as Hilda Nelson's "posh dress shop", the Northern Hotel kept by Lesley's step-mother and Mrs Renison's sweet shop.

He recalls many of the shops, such as Willerton's cobblers shop, were "little shops in front rooms", and that The Railway Tavern was known as 'Kate Grounds', presumably after the person who ran it. He refers to 'Mrs Davidoff', who sold soap powders from her front room, and 'Slasher' Moore, the barber. Popular legend had it that if the railway gates shut, you could have your hair done with a cut throat razor and be out again before the gates re-opened. John can also remember that money handed over in the Co-op would be sent by chute to the cashier, any change returning the same way.

John, a member of Spalding and District Civic Society, said: "Winsover Road always had a different character, as it has now. It was a whole community in that street."

Today, the street caters for the more diverse nature of the town's population, with a Latvian bakery and 'global' hairdressing salon standing cheek by jowl with take-away businesses, Paul Taylor Ltd and Trio's, the award-winning cafe.

The businesses are just as varied as they were in 1937, with home improvement shop Aron Moses, Gordon's Motor Care shop, Television Aerials, the Pennygate Patient Link charity

shop,insurance agent K Burton & Son, B T Blinds, the Post Office and Spalding Music Services all offering their various goods and services.

The history is still there if you dig beneath the surface: proprietor of Gibbons Cycles Derek Chamberlain has an image on display of the shop as it was when it began in 1918 showing John Gibbons and his wife proudly standing outside. David Carroll knows the history of the building where he runs Paul Taylor Ltd and can recall previous commercial neighbours, such as Miss Elsie Store and her brother who sold fruit and vegetables. Gordon at Motor Care believes his shop was once the Railway Tavern, and at bridal shop Masquerade there are clues to its use in the past as Parkinson's butcher's shop, such as the tiles inside and a plaque outside stating 'A.P 1925'.

Funeral directors J Willson didn't quite make the 1937 list but it has been in the town for 70 years, now run by John Willson and his two sons, Gavin and Darren.

The businesses may have changed, but Winsover Road is as busy and varied as it ever was 75 years ago.