

Reg and Honor Rouse and their three children Terry, Donald and Valerie came up from Langford in Somerset in 1943 along with George Collins for whom Reg had done some part-time work in Somerset; George had bought Weald Farm. Reg was appointed as his farm manager.

In February 1948 Reg took on the tenancy of Home Farm which was in the High Street and was pulled down in 1960 to allow Lavender Place Flats to be built for the elderly. The previous tenant, Bernard Dafter emigrated to Canada so Reg bought all the cows and calves and a tractor complete with all the implements. In the deal was a pedigree herd of Wessex Saddleback pigs that supplied many of the local residents of Bampton who kept pigs at the bottom of their gardens. During this time Reg maintained his role as Farm Manager for George and squeezed his own Farming each side of these hours which meant milking his own cows at 4.00am and finishing in time to be at Weald Farm for the 6.00am milking of the cows there. At 4.00pm he would then start his own work milking and tending to his own animals with assistance from Terry and Donald who would go straight from school to the farm. This continued until the Autumn when Reg finally went on his own.

As various fields around Bampton came up for sale, Reg bought them and with the help of a modern portable milking parlour took his dairy cows to these fields which often involved walking the whole herd through the middle of Bampton. The land to the north of New Road had nothing built on it and Reg rented that land from the council, right through to Station Road. This land now has Pembroke Place, Bowling Green Close, Colville Close, Chandler Close and the school built on it.

In 1954 Backhouse Farm with its house, barns and 38 acres of land came on the market and Reg bought it to make a viable farm along with the fields he'd already bought over the previous 6 years. With Terry, Donald and several other young Bampton boys working for him the business grew. They grew oats, wheat and barley, potatoes, sugar beet along with mangolds and kale for the animals. They ran two herds, one was a mixed herd that provided animals for beef production as well as a Guernsey herd that produced quality milk for a milk round. All of these enterprises involved the employment of a lot of casual workers especially Bampton ladies with whole families spending many hours working in the fields. Up until 1952 Harry Pocock was the only contractor doing the thrashing of the corn on the farms around Bampton and had resisted the temptation to move forward into the combine era. So, Reg bought a combine of his own, one that not only did the combining directly in the fields, but was also capable of doing the same as Harry Pocock, the stationary thrashing of the corn ricks during the winter. So, during the summer of 1952 Reg sent Terry aged 18 and Donald aged 15 out on contract work to do combining on farms as far apart as Witney and Faringdon. Whilst the 2 boys were doing this, Reg and the rest of the team along with casual workers would do their own harvest with a binder, hauling the sheaves of corn to build ricks at Home Farm where they would be threshed in the winter. This whole

operation was so successful that the cost of the combine was met in that first year. At this time there were only 2 Combines in Bampton, they were owned by the Wilkins Brothers and the Barlow-Vaughan family.

After the family came to Bampton, Colin, Teresa and Lynne were born. All three sons worked on the farm with the girls doing their bit as they grew up. When Lynne left school she worked in the office dealing with the administration as well as running the mobile homes site. With talk of going into the Common Market and not knowing its possible effect on farming in the UK, Reg and the 'boys' felt another form of income must be sought and in 1956 the first 6 mobile homes were in place next to the Backhouse farmhouse; eventually the site was moved to where Saint Mary's Trailer Court is now and was enlarged to accommodate 29 mobile homes. All of the building work was done by the family and staff with Reg in charge, including the building of a modern grain dryer.

When Don and Mary married in 1959, University Farm at Lew was bought bringing in more land to support a fast expanding enterprise. Mary worked as a secretary and bookkeeper before training to become a Handicraft Teacher at Bampton C of E School.

When the family came here from Somerset in 1943 Reg was already a very accomplished bellringer and two years later Terry learnt to ring; all 6 children eventually mastered the art as did Terry's wife Janet; she was the last person Reg taught before a series of strokes left him in a wheelchair for 18 years. Janet has been a member of the choir since it was reformed in 2002. Terry joined the choir at St Mary's as soon as he came to Bampton in 1943 with Don joining in 1945; it was boys and men only at that time. Honor went to the Methodist church and eventually became their organist; Colin, a staunch Methodist is a leading member of the Bampton Methodist Church. Both Teresa and Lynne helped with the Sunday School at St Mary's and Lynne played a leading role with the Bampton Guides. Over the years from 1943 to 2017, Terry has been a choir boy, bellringer, acolyte, treasurer, churchwarden and server at St Mary's, a full 74 unbroken years of service. He was also a Morris dancer for 36, first as a dancer and then as the fool and he often drove the minibus for the side when they danced away.

Don lives at Lew and he has been their correspondent for the Contact magazine for decades and being ably assisted by several people at Lew he has made sure their delightful little church is kept in good repair and the grounds kept tidy. He started the Bampton Weight lifting club in 1956 in a barn at Backhouse Farm using a bucket of water on each end of a broom handle before Reg bought him his first set of Weights for Christmas. He still maintains an interest in the club and enjoys the role of being their President. He was the South Midland champion for 14 years and competed at 3 different weight classes, holding area records in the Light, Middle and Light heavy weight Classes. During the 1960s the Bampton Club was one of the most famous clubs in the country with 7 British Champions, 4 Schoolboys, 2 Junior, 1 English Native, and one British Champion who represented Great Britain in the Montreal and Moscow Olympic games.

Don has been involved with the Oxford Leiden twinning since 1963 and is now their Deputy President. He has been a driving force with the SPAJERS since 1967 and has been the voice of the Donkey Derby and the Shirt race for decades. He also writes an article for each issue of The Bampton Beam and works very hard for The Lions. In 2002 he was awarded the MBE by the Queen for 'Services to Bampton'

Val went to America in 1960 as a nanny, met and married Richard while out there and is still living in America. Lynne and husband Henry live on the edge of Cirencester and Lynne is very involved with breeding and judging Cavalier King Charles Spaniels and with dog training. Teresa and Frank moved to the edge of Glastonbury to be closer to their daughter Faye and Jamie and their twins. Today both Terry, 84 and Don, 81 are retired from farming. Colin along with his wife Pauline, still runs a Beef herd with the calves happily growing up along with their mothers; they grow corn and forage for the animals as well as running St Mary's highly commended mobile home site; like his father Colin has an aptitude for diverse forms of farming, with livery stables for renting as well as an exercise area for the horses. With their grandchildren showing a keen interest in farming the Family hopes that the Rouse family will continue the tradition that Reg established all those years ago. With sisters Teresa and Lynne marrying into large families with strong Bampton connections, Don and Terry, who were not Bampton born, like to think that they are related to half of Bampton and often take time out to explain!

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