



Eldred Broad's Reminiscences

TRANSCRIBED BY ROGER PYKE

Eldred Broad's Reminiscences

Index

3. Great Grandfather came to Launceston.
4. Tower Street Chapel.
5. Father and World War One.
7. Mother and Father at Trescoll/The Grigg's.
9. The Bloye family leave Tetcott for Coombekeale, Egloskerry/ Father's first Wireless.
10. School days.
11. Father's first Car.
12. Launceston College.
13. Rabbit Trapping.
15. Start of the Day and Milking.
16. Mother's B&B and Threshing.
18. Barn Machinery.
19. Haymaking.
21. Netherbridge, the River and Flooding.
22. Dutson Brickworks.
23. Sheep Shearing.
24. Mangolds and Turnips /Bombing and the Second World War.
28. First Tractor.
30. Butter Well up the road.
30. The Mail and Telephones/ 1937 Father started selling milk & Launceston & Lewannick Famers.
31. Road Stone and Timber Transport and Hedge Paring.
33. Launceston Livestock Market during the 1950s.
34. Ice, Snow and Blizzards.
35. Water Supply and Sunnybank.
36. Cole family Higher Dutson/rabbits and flooding at Bridge Ham/Heard family at the Toll House.
37. Quarry field pit, Big Curly, Buntie, Albert & Farley.
38. Ridgemoor Mill & Willow Gardens at Homeleigh/Foot and Mouth/Tit-Bits.



Great Grandfather came to Launceston

It was around 1890 that my Great Grandfather (Thomas George Broad 1841-1923) brought the family to Dutson. I think previously too that he lived at Coryton where he was a coal merchant; as a boy, I remember being told or rather shown parts of his old coal scales. He was a Methodist local preacher for over 60 years and has walked from Portgate to the chapel which was at Middlewood, North Hill to preach and then walking home again. (Census details show Thomas as having originally started out working as a miner in the area, before becoming a tanner and coal merchant. He first went into farming at Liddaton, Brentor). He had a beard several inches long, on his retirement together with his wife and daughter Emma he went to St. Stephens Hill where he has a house and field which now forms the road and housing some 50 or 100 yards above St. Josephs School. They are buried at Portgate Chapel where Emma is also, she spent her final years at 17, Duke Street. She died in 1947 and the house was I think sold for about £420. In 1989 it sold for £42,000. Ernie Jenkin had worked for Uncle Frank (1895-1973) and lived at 19, Duke Street ever since leaving school in the 1920s. When Uncle decided to stop his farming activities around 1960, Ernie went on to work for the County Council until his retirement.

The farms at Dutson were originally part of the Werrington Estate, but they sold the farms to my Grandfather, John James Broad (1867-1960) in 1920; at that time there was no security of tenancy and money not too plentiful. I was told Grandfather and Gran (Alice Westlake 1869-1933) took their pony and trap touring around North Devon for several days looking for an alternative farm to rent before deciding to buy Dutson. At that time the estate employed about 40 workers which included 8 keepers, one of whom lived in the lower cottage opposite our bungalow at Tamar View. A large corn hutch was situated in the wagon house opposite the cottage where quantities of maize were kept for pheasant feed. The keepers would go around the farms and buy broody hens for hatching pheasant eggs and dozens of coops with hens and pheasant chicks would be placed in various fields on the estate including the big field over the hedge from our 'Doctors Ground.' The electricity for the mansion was generated by water wheel at Ham Mill, two of the employees who lived at St. Stephens had been working on the generator, and were walking home across the rearing field caught a poacher named Sam Bultress a carpenter from Langore for which he was sent to prison, but his accomplice managed to escape and his/her name was never divulged although it was rumoured to have been his wife. Sam was caught again by a farmer at Truscott but bribed him not to report him by making a cart for the farmer.

There were several rabbit warrens in the Park which had been made complete with doors, the keepers would flush the rabbits out with a ferret then shut the doors. The following day a lot of people would be gathered from Launceston as brushers and the shooting party guns would walk with the brushers to shoot the rabbits as they ran away in front. At that time the Parkland was rough with ferns, brambles, coarse grass etc, the rabbits were of various colours as well as the grey wild rabbit we know. The Park wall was kept intact and there were about 140 deer roaming the Park and if any were known to escape if a door was left open, then a gang would be organised to drive them back into the Park. For the cull, a Scottish deerstalker was employed.

During the summer, boy scouts from London usually held a camp in the Park, and one evening we all walked out across to their campfire and a sing-song was held by the thatched roundhouse used for shooting party dinners etc, which was situated near the lower end of the pond, it was burnt down by accident I believe when the squire lit a bonfire too close to it, in the late 1940s, or early 1950s. The Launceston Boy Scouts also occasionally held camp there, about 1938/39 one who was the local Police Sergeant's son drowned in the river.

The farm was managed by the late Harry Baker, their main enterprise being the pedigree herd of North Devon cattle for which they won many prizes for, as well as four or five Guernsey's being kept as house cows to provide milk for the big house and staff. During the Second World War, no pheasant rearing took place and they were almost non-existent, but there were always wild partridge around the fields which also we do not see or hear of since the early 1980s. Harry was promoted from the staff and after his retirement, he was replaced by Ian Tocher who married Wendy Maunder (the ropemaker family from Launceston) but after a few years, he emigrated to Canada. The farm was then managed by Ian Tocher but he was too ambitious to stay at Werrington for long, but whilst there, he expanded the dairy herd to 200 plus Friesian milkers. He went on to manage the Arundel Estate in Sussex (1991). The farm was then managed by David Baker, the youngest son of Harry Baker. However, at the beginning of 1991, it was a big shock to him and five other members of staff to receive notice that farming activities as they knew them were to cease at Werrington. The sheep flock of 375 ewes and 270 beef cattle were the first to be sold, and on March 16th, 1991 the 400 dairy cows were also sold followed by all the farm implements two weeks later. The grass was then let by tender each year.

Ham Mill Farm was farmed by Russell Stanbury who had a pedigree herd of Red Devons, and when he retired the farm was amalgamated with the Estate Farm. The Stanbury family had been there for at least forty years. Bert Sanders worked there all his life and lived in the lower cottage here in Dutson, first driving horses before a standard Fordson tractor was purchased. He also helped with cattle showing at the Smithfield, Bath and West, etc. shows. The cattleman was Jim Harris who lived in the cottage by the farm but was quite old and I remember father was a bier for his funeral at Werrington Church, they used the parish bier to carry the coffin from Ham Mill.

Going back to just after the Second World War, a chauffeur was employed mostly for errands often passing several times daily going to town, he also transported 3 or 4 women who worked cleaning and doing the laundry in the late 1940s early 1950s. In springtime, his Hillman estate would be loaded with boxes of daffodils which were despatched from the railway station to Covent Garden. Father remembered when there were 40 men employed on the Estate. All the timber was pressure treated with creosote before use in the Estate pressure tank. We still have various posts and rails here on the farm at Dutson, which have been here for at least 100 years including two gates. All field gates adjoining the road were upright pales on all the Estate farms.

Tower Street Chapel

With my family being strong Methodist, we were part of the Tower Street Chapel congregation. Father said the Tower Street Sunday School trip (around 1905-10) was usually by train to Camelford Station from where they all would walk down to the beach at Trebarwith. The food being carried by the Sunday School superintendents in a hamper by Mr Fry who had a grocer's shop at the top of Race Hill and Mr Harry (a tailor in Westgate Street now the Christian Bookshop).

I remember going into the shop and seeing Mr Harry sitting cross-legged making a suit for someone and his son dealing with the customers in the front part of the shop selling all gents' items.

The ladies always wore hats to chapel. Tower Street choir usually numbered around fifteen to twenty, and one Sunday, a lady observed another in the congregation was wearing an identical hat to hers, and the next day the choir lady rang another to ask what could be done about it.

Father and World War One



Above Private Harold Broad of the Devon Yeomanry.

Father (Harold Broad 1896-1976) together with some of his friends thought it their duty to volunteer for the army during the early part of World War One, and as he was used to horses, he enlisted in December 1915 at Exeter with the Devon Yeomanry (Regimental No. 3451). Here he was sent to Tidworth Barracks to commence their training. The training was often done on Salisbury Plain, but it was of little value as it was found the use of barbed wire made the horse cavalry almost obsolete. I think they sailed from Southampton, I know they went to Rouen, when they arrived, they were sent as replacements to various regiments, father being transferred to the Dorset's (Regimental No. 22156) August 30th, 1916. This was the last time he saw his army pal called Cook, also a farmer and from Plympton. I don't remember how long he was in France, but it was at least one winter in the front line (records show Harold serving in France until April 16th, 1917, when he was posted back to the depot).

He never liked saying much about his experiences, but I know various nights he worked with the wiring party erecting barbed wire and lying on the ground every time 'Jerry' opened fire or sent up a flare. The trenches were often flooded and the troops put their hands on the sides of the trench and swing along in the mud and water. Horses were only used behind the lines to bring up the supplies and as they did, they were subject to artillery fire. Their fate and conditions were very distressing for Father, tied up in lines no shelter or protection. Before he left home the best farm horses had been commandeered by the army, all the horses had to be presented for inspection at Launceston Market where the selection was made. I think it was Easter Monday and the Battle of the Somme (possibly the Battle of Arras as this offensive started then) when he was wounded going 'over the top.' A bullet shattered his right elbow from which he never fully recovered, always having a slightly crooked arm and could feel some pressure even to lift a cup of tea. His 21st birthday was spent in the army hospital at Bury St. Edmunds from where he was repatriated. (Harold was discharged from the army on August 29th, 1917, being physically unfit for further service).

Corps	Unit	Promotions, Reductions, Casualties, &c.	Rank	From	To	Signature of Officers certifying correctness of Entries.
-------	------	--	------	------	----	--

It was the same autumn when Grandfather bought a young Devon bull at the annual bull sale. Grandfather and Uncle Frank proceeded to lead it home, with father following with his arm in a sling. Going down Race Hill, the bull took off through the Southgate Arch and along Church Street at great speed. They managed to stop him by the church and secured him to the church rails. Father was sent back to Maunders the ropemakers for a longer rope which enabled a couple of men to help bring it home, but I understand it was always a bad-tempered animal. The church railings were taken as were most other metal gates and fences for scrap iron during the early years of the 1939 war.

Mother and Father at Trescoll

My Mother, May Grigg (1903-1969), came from 'Pitts Down,' Tregony. Her father farmed there. She attended dairy classes and learnt the art of butter making, she then came to Launceston to take charge of the Launceston and Lewannick District Farmers butter making in their factory, which was next door to the Railway Inn (now the Co-Operative Funeral Parlour). Father and Mother married in 1926 and rented a farm at Lockengate called 'Trescoll,' which was more or less in between their two homes. They spent three very happy years there and made lots of friends, especially at the little chapel which is in a very isolated spot well away from any roads. Called Innis Chapel, it was down across the fields from the farm. It was found the fields had many rocks hidden under the ground which made ploughing rather difficult, but poultry thrived well, they kept turkeys, fowls, ducks and geese. To test eggs for fertility a pan of warm water after they had been incubated for a week or two. The eggs would be placed in the water and if they moved or jerked the chick was alive inside, but the infertile eggs would sink and if shaken would rattle inside. If burst these infertile eggs would create a very vile smell. Father was testing some goose eggs once and shook one near his ear. "Bang," you can imagine the consequences.

When Father and Mother first went to Trescoll, father told me he took his dog 'Rose' with him, but she went missing. I am not sure how father was travelling, but coming to Launceston they called in at the policeman's house at Five Lanes to report the missing dog. The Policeman said a Mr Maunder at Trenilk Farm had a stray which was had come over the moor. This was 'Rose' who had been making her way back to Dutson. I just remember her as being a brown dog.

In 1929 the Dutson brickworks had gone into bankruptcy and closed down, and Grandfather owned the land at Sunnybank but the bungalow had been erected by the brick company on a ground rent basis for their foreman. As Grandfather's health was poor, he decided to purchase the bungalow and retire there. As father was the furthestmost son from home, he offered him the tenancy of the farm here at Dutson. Father accepted and returned at Michaelmas 1929. Grandfather had a farm sale of all his live and deadstock with father buying a few things, but he also brought a lot up from Trescoll. The sheep and cattle were driven to Bodmin Station and sent by rail to Launceston. Implements, poultry houses etc, were brought by horse and wagon, father together with the young lad who lived and worked on the farm (Eric Trethewey) would bring the carts and wagons loaded and meet Grandfather and his man with empty wagons near the clay works on Bodmin Moor (Hawkstor, near Temple), rest the horses, eat their pasties and exchange wagons, returning for another load the following day. A lorry was finally used to convey the furniture which had to be carried to the end of the lane, as the lorry could not negotiate the lane at Trescoll.

The lorry had been late in arriving and Father and Mother were at the end of the lane waiting with all the furniture, when finally loaded they set off for Dutson complete with 'Rose' the sheepdog, in the lorry cab she wagged her tail and disconnected the lights. Having reconnected the wire, they proceeded across Bodmin Moor in very dense fog which made it a very slow journey as there were no cats' eyes. This was made worse by the fact that in those days there were no fences along the moor, and animals could stray onto the road. I think it was past midnight when they arrived. Grandfather and Granny had been worried stiff as they did not have a telephone to inform them of the delay.

The Grigg's

This was a good move on father's part, but it was a long way from Dutson to Pitts Downs in those days, usually visiting by train before father had a car in 1936/37. I remember father going once but

usually, he would be at home to do the work and Mother would take me for the weekend perhaps twice a year. Arrangements would have to be made by letter, with father taking us to Launceston Station by pony and trap on a Friday morning. We would then get on the train for Wadebridge, uncle Jack Westlake lived there and he was a guard on the railway. I was always delighted if he was the guard on our train. When we arrived at Wadebridge there would be a long wait for the next train which would take us to Bodmin Road Station. Whilst we were waiting there was plenty of time to visit Aunty Clara who would be expecting us to dinner and if uncle Jack was doing a late shift, he would also be home for dinner.

After dinner we would take the Bodmin train from where we would then catch the bus to St. Austell, Grandfather Grigg and Aunties Evelyn and Olive would be there to do the weekly shopping. We would meet at Pugh's Garage then we would finish our long journey in Grandfather Grigg's car. Granny Grigg was very unwell, with then nurse calling often and she was confined to her chair for years before she finally passed away in 1943.

Grandfather Grigg would usually take us for a ride to visit Uncle Colin and family at Trenona. He was the local threshing contractor and kept three or four steam engines. Or sometimes we would visit Uncle Albert at Trethella. He had a paralysed hand having had blood poisoning from a thorn. Once when we visited them, some men were shearing his sheep and a little boy from the village had been watching, the men offered to cut his hair which the lad said okay. I shudder to think what his mother said or thought when he went home, as they had clipped it the same as the sheep with a pattern of rings!

The only time I ever see a woman's money bag was when Aunty Alice gave me sixpence. She pulled up her skirt to reveal the bag of money which was tied around her waist. When Uncle Albert and Aunty Alice retired, they lived at Myrtle House, Tregony, their niece Maud Verran lived with them. Occasionally I spent a week or two at Pitts Downs on holiday during the war, having ridden with Mr Chudleigh of Cross Lanes who attended Truro Market. I would then cycle to visit Uncle Charlie and Aunty Edith at Lanewa, Uncle Harold and Aunty Phyllis at Creed and Uncle Arthur and Aunty Mary at Trevillick. Once whilst riding with Grandfather Grigg and Aunty Evelyn en-route to Lanewa, the clutch of the old car was slipping going up Polmassick Hill. Grandfather said to Aunty Evelyn "pull out the choke, pull out the choke" with smoke rising and the car almost at a standstill he said "put in the choke you fool," he was in a real panic and with the car full of smoke, I was glad when we reached the top. I suppose he had never had to take a driving test and was not too competent in his old age. Some years before, father said he was going to ride with him and he pointed to the handbrake and said: "Harold if you see anything pull that one!"

Usually, a lot of corn was grown at Pitts Downs and the first corn to be harvested would then be threshed a few days later. Once a sow went missing for some days for which everyone searched but luckily was found between the early threshed ricks of corn still alive.

Mother said as children they were playing in the farmyard when Grandfather opened a door to feed a sow, but it bolted out between his legs and carried him around the yard looking down over his tail before falling off in the dung heap.

Aunty Evelyn and Aunty Olive would milk the cows out in the yard only one cow had to be tied indoors as it would not standstill. The milk churns were then pushed to the end of the lane on the 'Dilly' which was a kind of trolley with two motorcycle wheels. When any poultry was to be killed, I have seen aunt Olive hold them by the legs in one hand and a chopper in the other, go to the

chopping block and chop! And let go it would run a few feet headless before collapsing, but I suppose it was a very quick end really.

Uncle Alfred was very mechanical and always seemed to be covered in oil. Often neighbours would come to him with their mechanical problems. After he was married and under petticoat government, his lifestyle changed completely, I never saw him oily after.

Mother was the second of a family of seven. Granny had a girl to help with the housework, apparently, she was short and was being teased about it, someone suggested she put some manure in her shoes to make her grow. A few days later she complained of having bad feet.

The Bloye family leave Tetcott for Coombekeale, Egloskerry

The Bloye family lived at Tetcott Barton in the early 1900s. One of their horses died and as the river was running high, they thought it was an easy way of disposal. It eventually got washed up at Newmoor just below Polson Bridge, enquiries by the police as to the owner resulted in them having to come from Tetcott to bury the carcase. It is believed that it was the result of someone shooting a pheasant that the family was evicted from Tetcott. They then had the tenancy of Coombekeale at Egloskerry (part of the Penheale Estate) from where Hely Bloye went to Horwell Boys School which was at the bottom of Roydon Road. My father started school there on the same day as Hely having been at St. Stephens School before that. I assume Hely had left school when men were working the Penheale Estate woods when one had a limb of a tree crash down and pierced his head. Hely was the driver of the horse and cart with which they transported the victim to Launceston Hospital which was then on Western Road, but he died of his injury there. I think it was in the early 1910s that they moved to West Down End, which was part of the Tregear Estate.

Clifford Bloye tractor stuck at West Down End

When Clifford Bloye got stuck with his Allis B tractor his father said to have the horse and cart to help pull it out at West Down End. Clifford was hitching a chain from the cart axle to the tractor, his father who was going to drive the horse was looking out over the back of the cart, the horse unexpectedly started and he went out over into the mud head first. They still had to have Mr Pett's tractor to pull it out.

A Mr Johns who had a smallholding further over the drive came to help at West Down End whilst having dinner he said his sheep were in ?? field and his bullocks were in the Squires field so he said we are all out earning.

Father's first Wireless

Father bought his first wireless in the early 1930s. It had to have a dry battery which was nearly as big as an A5 page and 2" or 3" thick and lasted about six months. It also needed an accumulator which was rechargeable and filled with acid which burnt your clothing if it got in contact. These were charged by F. T. Martin who had a hut halfway up St. Thomas Road, where he would have scores on shelves connected to his charger. He employed a man to deliver the recharged battery and take the other away to recharge, I am not sure if it was weekly or once a fortnight, but it was necessary to restrict your listening hours or the charge would soon run out.



Schooldays

I started school at Ladycross and on my first day, Father sat me on a sack in front of the saddle on our black cob 'Doxey' and took me down to Ham Mill Cross, where he put me into a jingle with five bigger boys whom I did not know, but later I learnt that they were the Stanbury's from Netherbridge and the Baker's from Jays.



The pony pulling the jingle (similar to the one above) was named 'Dolly'. We set off to school with Father following on 'Doxey.' I cannot remember much about those earliest days, but our teacher was called Miss Webber. We kept our own pony in the stable at Ladycross Farm which was then in the occupation of Stan Soper, who had an affinity for his cider house on the farm. Miss Sloman who was the junior class teacher, came from Weston Farm, North Petherwin, riding her pony which was also stabled at the farm. During the dinner hour, we were allowed to play hide and seek around the farm buildings if old Stan was in a good mood, at other times we played in the copse which is now partly a field opposite the council houses. When I was six years old, I was in the school concert, Father with the rest of the family, left home in the dark to walk to the school and when we were approaching Church Hill the Stanbury family came along with their car and gave us a lift. My contribution to the concert being a recitation 'Needles and Pins, Needles and Pins, when a man marries, his troubles begin.'

At Ladycross School, the headmaster was Mr Grant who lived in the house adjoining. The local policeman lived in the house opposite by the chapel with the caretaker's house being the only other house except for the farmhouse. The school hours being 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. with an hour for dinner at 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. We used to go down to Yeolmbridge for a few minutes to Mrs Martin's sweet shop occasionally, having passed by Mr Mules the blacksmith in his forge and Mr Pearn the miller who

would be white with flour dust (having a hair lip, he had a speech impediment). Children would receive a 1/3 pint of milk each which was delivered each morning by one of the Heard brothers who lived at Home Farm, it being transported on an old pram chassis.

We had to take our own dinner with us as there was no school canteen, but if the old tortoise stove was lit in cold weather, there was an oven in which we warmed our pasties. The library books would be delivered in big wooden boxes, which were occasionally exchanged. A few hens were kept and the boys would, in turn, be in charge for a week (older boys who would leave at 14 years old). If a hen was broody, they would try to hatch a few chickens. The school photographer had a camera on a tripod and would go in under a black cloth, and I remember seeing him once. I can remember the older boys having a demonstration of milking a cow with an artificial udder to a wooden frame at one time. One afternoon we were leaving Ladycross when a boy named William Barriball, said he could run as fast as the pony could go, so he held the back door of the jingle. Digory Baker made the pony gallop and Bill was still holding on but was run off his legs and skinned his knees (boys didn't wear long trousers in those days). Another day we stopped to pick up beech nuts whilst coming down Church Hill, but 'Dolly' our pony, decided it was time to go home and set off with us running after her, shouting "whoa!" Luckily, she obeyed and we never all got out again. One thing we did not like meeting was the 'Lifton Miller.' What a big lorry it was, it could carry six tonnes! Dolly certainly did not like it.

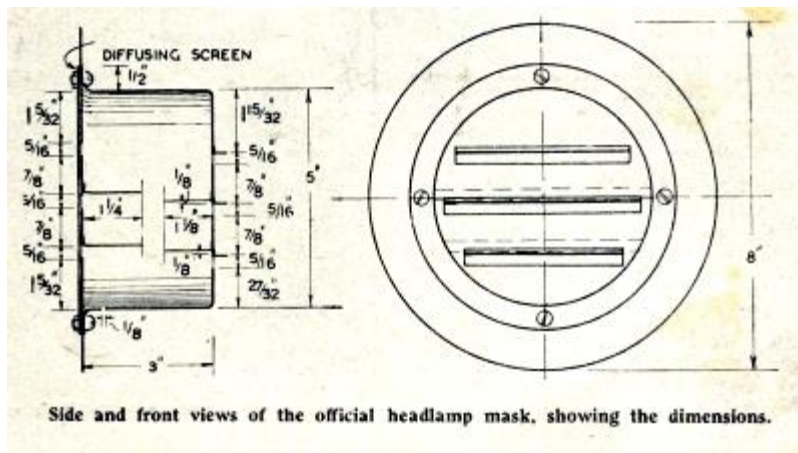
One morning when we arrived at Ladycross School, the boys from Yeolmbridge said the Circus elephants had left their 'trade-mark' down the road, so the older boys went down to inspect. At that time all the Circus ponies and elephants walked from town to town, and this was the Circus coming from Bude to Launceston. Travelling with the Circus would have been a menagerie of various animals in cages on lorries. Lions would come into the main ring and into a cage which would be erected before the show and the trainer would go in with them, with a whip and make them do various acts. They would roar and snap and for us, it was frightening to watch. The cage would then be dismantled to make way for various pony acts, monkey tricks, or sometimes a boxing kangaroo. After the performance, by paying a few pence extra, you were allowed to go around the back to visit the menagerie of animals. It was usually held in the field by the river at Newport.

The one thing I did dislike as a child, was being made to learn to play the piano. At the time I used to catch moles and when it was near the time for the piano lessons, I would go out to the field to tend to the traps, waiting with arms folded in defiance for the piano teacher to go. She always waited for me though!

Father's first Car

When I was seven, Father bought his first car, a green Hillman Minx 10 H.P. with the registration No. BAF 647. I think it cost him £160 second hand from Hoskin's Garage on St. Thomas Road. We kept it until after the war and sold it around 1948 for £200. Whilst I did not know it at the time, Father had held a driving licence for some years before, therefore he did not have to take a driving test when they were introduced. Mother also learnt to drive and passed her test at the second attempt.

Cars all had a starting handle as often the batteries would fail, with very few lasting more than two years. It was very unusual for cars to be parked in the streets overnight as they had to display their lights, it also was an offence if they were parked the other way. During the wartime blackout, the sidelights had to only show through a hole, I do not remember the size but it was usually done by making a cardboard disc with the permitted hole. Headlamps were metal with a grid, which only allowed the light to shine down on to the road for a few yards ahead.



I don't know how this could be achieved with the modern-day lights with so much variation. In the 1950s and 60s, if a car passed along the road, it would interfere with your T.V. reception, if the offending vehicle wasn't fitted with a suppressant. I think this was made law. Also, it wasn't unusual to hear a car backfiring as it went down a hill. I think it was something to do with the ignition. (Leaks in the exhaust system such as the manifold gasket or manifold to exhaust pipe packing. Leaks in those areas allow oxygen to be inhaled on deceleration causing gas build-up in the muffler to ignite).

When I was about eight or nine years old, I was promised a bicycle if I learnt to milk a cow, which I promptly succeeded in doing, my bicycle cost £3 5s. 0d. from Robbins cycle shop which was situated in Northgate Street. Looking back, I now realise this was two weeks' wages for the farm workers. The hours they worked were 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. leaving at 4 p.m. on Saturdays, but also having to help milk the cows on Sundays. Father usually employed two men who lived in the cottages down the road.

Launceston College

When I was ten years old, I went to Launceston College and here there were about 160 boys I believe and about 10 teachers. Mr Spencer Toy was the headmaster and always wore his boy scout uniform including shorts. I learnt absolutely nothing here, most of the teachers had gone to war and had been replaced by pensioners and students, etc. The main subject was Spanish, Latin etc, and I never liked it there and would stay at home to help on the farm as often as I could which would be quite often. I used to harve (harrow) in the corn for both Father and Uncle Frank with our cob 'Tiny' and Uncle's cob 'Tommy' with two halves of tine harrows this would take several days to do the 60 or 70 acres at least. Sid Cottle, our wagoner would have drilled the corn with our shires 'Prince' and 'Lion.' Ernie Jenkin would have worked most of the ground with the Standard Fordson and spade lug wheels, rubber tyres were not obtainable for farmers during the war. His implements being the old horse-drawn chisler and spring harrows before the new chisler was available, which had a rope to trip the lift (no hydraulics in those days).

Coming back to my time at Launceston College, it was either 1942 or 1943, petrol being rationed and only available for essential purposes and so the grass on the playing fields had overgrown. At that time most boys carried a sheath knife or pocket knife, which was useful for making a whistle from a fresh bit of sycamore or a peashooter from a piece of elderberry, or sharpen a pencil etc. Mr Toy decided it would be a good idea to cut this grass and organised about fifty or more boys to cut the grass with our knives over two afternoons. I remember having a blister or two and Mr Toy having to patch us up with a roll of tape.

Rabbit Trapping

Father had several different workers in pre-war days who only seemed to stay for two or three years most of whom left to farm on their own account, farms were easy to rent at that time. The landlords had great difficulty to find tenants for some of their farms especially the bigger ones.

The main income from lots of these being from the rabbits of which there were thousands, with dozens being found in every hedgerow everywhere. Lots of men made their living as trappers using hundreds of gin traps, these were usually set on Mondays here at Dutson by Ern Barriball who used to 'buy the rabbits' from Father for about £25 to £30 per year. Looking back now it was very barbaric, but at that time it was just an accepted way of life, most farms also had a three-legged cat or two and many hedgehogs, foxes, etc met their doom to these traps. When the trapper was not busy with his traps, he would do some casual work or go ferreting. Traps were not used in frost hard weather or during the summer as fridges were very few and far between, deep freezers almost unheard of. The rabbits were paunched and their legs spliced together in braces and hung across a bar which spanned a wooden crate which would hold several braces, if you went to the railway stations there would be lots of rabbit crates ready labelled for despatch in the guard's van of the passenger trains.

There were no covers on the crates, at that time everyone was trusted, this would also include the day-old chicks which would also be received by rail in their boxes. The railway station being a very busy place at that time with all the feed and fertilizers arriving for the various stores. I remember Bibby's, Crossfields, Silcocks, and Launceston and Lewannick District Farmers among others. There was also Bate's coal yard where 'Sailor' and 'Harry' worked weighing and delivering the sacks around the town by horse and cart. Glover and Uglow who had a fleet of cattle and tip lorries (5/6 tonners) would contract for a man and lorry to unload a railway truck of coal (loose and by hand) then transport it to the hospital or wherever large quantities were required in bulk. Harry had a speech impediment and if they were delivering on a hill, the cartwheel would be triggered to relieve the horse and Harry would say "chig up chailet."

I don't know which year but when rabbits were very plentiful, Father said he scrambled along the hedge of Bridge Ham and caught 40 rabbits which were crouching on the top when there was a big flood. A black cat which was also on the hedge took a plunge and swam on downstream.

When I was about nine or ten, Father made me a 'Gerry' with cast iron wheels (a go-kart), this was a really strong one which I could carry a good load of logs etc on, and a lot better than the old one which only had some old pram wheels.

Our farmhouse kitchen had a slate floor with a coconut mat or two extra mats near the back door being thick hessian sacks, which would have originally been used for fertilizer sacks. Sacks of phosphate were usually 1 ½ cwt's and all fertilizer and corn would have been in 1 or 2 cwt hessian sacks as there was no plastic in those days. This also applied to all buckets, pans etc, and Mother used an enamel pan on the kitchen table to wash the dishes, with the water being heated in the fountain over the open fire. The table was at least 12' long with a fixed bench to sit between the table and window. Father sat in a wooden armchair at the end and Mother had a kitchen chair. The light was from an oil lamp and a candle was carried if anything was needed from the dairy (pantry). Candles were also used to go up to bed.

Paraffin which was used in most homes for the oil lamps also came by rail tankers to the two storage depots which were at Launceston Station. Trood's and the Gasworks had their own siding which ran off into what is now the Launceston Steam Railway. It was a full-time job for one man shovelling the

coal from the trucks into a wheelbarrow and across into the Gasworks shed, for the final year or two a conveyor was installed on to which it could be shovelled direct from the trucks. Cattle pens were also provided as were special trucks to enable 'up country' buyers to transport their stock. On Tuesday's I have seen droves of 50 or 60 fat cattle being driven from the Cattle Market to the Station as well as sheep.

During the war, pigs were very scarce as no imported food was available and all fat stock had to be booked with the auctioneers 10 days in advance. The cattle were then weighed at the market and graded by the appointed graders being a local farmer and a local butcher, sometimes the Ministry of Food 'super grader' would be in attendance. The sheep graders were also a butcher and farmer and they would estimate the carcass weight which caused a lot of discontent before a weighbridge was finally installed. The lambs would mostly be marketed during the winter months after having eaten off the rape which most farmers grew. They were fatter than fat. The Launceston meat allocation was slaughtered at the abattoir at Newport then transported up to the Pannier Market (then down by the church in Market Street), where it was allocated to the local butchers. This restriction continued until 1947. It was illegal to slaughter any animals for own consumption except the occasional pig for which the family would have to forfeit their own meat ration coupons for a given number of months. It was in the family's interest to have as large a pig as possible.

On the day of the slaughter the licence having been obtained before, Mr Stanley Heard (son of Herber), who was a licensed slaughterman as well as a farmer, would arrive early in the morning. The copper or furnace in the back kitchen where Mother boiled her clothes would have been lit and the water boiling. The pig would be caught and taken to the garage (which stood in the yard outside the front door in the yard), and here it would be slaughtered. The water would be fetched usually in kettles which were poured onto the pig to scald it for scraping, then the carcass would be hung up and drawn before leaving it to cool down. In the evening, Stanley would come back again to cut it up for with Father helping, although his main job would be to hold the candle to see. I would carry the joints indoors where Mother and Aunty Annie would be rubbing in the salt. The salt would have been in a solid block of about 14lbs or 28 lbs, and it would have to be broken up and finally rolled with a rolling pin before it was suitable to use. The meat would then be placed in the granite trough ('trundle') which was situated in the dairy. The pork was not all salted usually it was distributed to the neighbours who would return the compliment when their own pig was slaughtered which enabled us to have fresh rather than salt pork. The pig would have only received barley meal and potatoes to eat and would be very fat, often the bacon slices were all fat and at least 2 inches thick, this tasted better than the inter lean after having been salted. I never enjoyed the brawn which was a mixture of trotters, ears, etc, the pots were washed and turned inside out a few times then cut up and fried (nattlings), but I did enjoy the liver and kidneys. Everything was saved except they never found the squeal!

Before 1930, the pigs when fat would also be killed at home, and then taken by pony and trap to Tavistock Pannier Market where Plymouth butchers would be the best customers.

Most pigs before the arrival of the Landrace around 1952/53 were bred from the Large Blacks or sometimes Saddlebacks and crossed with the Large White Boars which were then known as Yorkshires, the resulting greys being the most popular for fattening. Father only kept four or five sows as did Uncle Frank who also kept a Yorkshire board, several local people kept 1 or 2 sows and would bring them to the boar often walking then with a rope tied to one front leg to control them. Uncle also kept a Devon Bull before changing to a South Devon around 1944.

I later kept a few sows (Saddlebacks) and sold the pigs for bacon at about 8 score, mostly going to the bacon factory at Highbridge. Later Landrace pigs were imported to Britain and then I changed over to selling weaners from about 25 sows; when my son Francis left school, he had the pigs and sold them for pork at Launceston Abattoir at Newport, and when that closed, to Jaspers at Treburley.

Several farmers or 'dairymen' would bring their cows to the bull (no transport, only driven) these included the Wicket's from Northumberland House, the Werren's from Park Lanson, Chudleigh from Cross Lanes and George Hocking who was our carpenter, decorator and milked about 5 cows at the back of Higher Cleaverfield and took his churn of milk to the White Horse to be collected by milk lorry. Reuben Gabriel kept about 15 cows and retailed his milk around the town. His buildings were on the Ridgeway Estate site. Herber Heard up at the Toll House, kept 5 or 6 cows, by day he drove them down to the field now a plantation next to Tree Field and by night to the first 2 fields between St. Stephens Lane and the main road. During the war, one of his cows was killed while being driven up past the well by an army vehicle that was being driven in convoy. If Herber was also a cow and calf dealer had a good market, he would often come home tipsy on Tuesday afternoons. The two fields which Herber had in St. Stephens Lane, he rented from Gypsy Orchard, who had his caravan where he eventually built Moorview bungalow (as the other fields he let to John Langford who also rented fields opposite Dutson Terrace from some people named Dennis I believe. His cousin Dick Langford, who lived with him, would walk up from Newport to milk their few Devon cows and carry it down in his two buckets with his yoke across his shoulders. I always regret not buying the yoke in their sale. No-one bid for it.

Start of the Day and Milking

The first thing after waking up was to reach for the matches to light the candle. If nature called the 'PO' or 'Charlie Pot' was used. We'd then get dressed and go down and get the fire going, then fill the kettle and hang it over the fire, making sure the spout was in front of the fire, otherwise the water would taste smoky.



We'd then get the cows in for milking before our man came at 7:30. The buckets were kept on a rack outside the back door. We used a small bucket and stool for milking with bigger buckets by the door to tip the milk into between each cow. If for any reason the cow kicked the bucket over, there would be less for the churn. The churns were also stood outside the back door, a strainer put on top to filter the milk then we would write out a ticket to tie on the churn handles with our name and quantity on it. Once the milking was finished, we would then take the churns up to the stand. If hot

weather, the afternoon milk churns would be placed in a trough of water overnight. By this time Mother would have fried the breakfast over the open fire, using a big iron over the brandize.

Around 1947-48, Father was persuaded to buy a milking machine. I built the dairy and Stenlake and Sons supplied a Gascoigne milking machine worked by a Lister petrol engine. Hot water for cleaning being provided by a Calor gas boiler. The cows were Devon X, but from then on, we gradually went over to Friesians, but never more than twenty.

Mother's B & B and Threshing

Mother used to have her sign B & B, Teas and Camping site at Tamar View and I remember one night as many as three caravans were staying, around 1938/39 and war was looming and a family who was staying were anxiously listening to the wireless for his unit to be called as the father was a naval reserve. At the outbreak of war, Mother took in an elderly couple, Mr and Mrs Seccombe, I assume from London. I remember Mr Seccombe making a frame with lathes and felt to fit some windows as it was law the no lights were to be seen. Uncle Frank was appointed as a parish representative come inspector to check on the acreage of potatoes, wheat etc, which each farm was allocated to grow. Fields which had been permanent pasture had to be ploughed to get the quotas, but the corn grew so strong in these fields before falling flat, made the harvesting very difficult. All the work was done by horses if the corn was standing the binder would cut about an acre per hour providing the chain did not come off the knotter, and the 'canvases didn't slip.' If the corn was laid it would have to be cut 'one way' which meant the sheaves had to be moved to provide a wide path for the horses and binder to return for the next round. Before starting a swath six or seven feet wide was mown by hand all around the field and the corn then made into sheaves and bound by twisting some of the corn into a band. Also, any badly laid patches would be sometimes hand mown. One other problem experienced, especially in fields which were originally pasture, was the creeping thistle (dashels) many an hour has been spent with a needle taking out prickles (no weed killer sprays back then).

The sheaves would have to be 'set up' into shocks six each of oats or dredge corn (oats and Barley mixed) very little barley being grown on its own, or if wheat eight or ten sheaves per shock. This would be left in the field for about ten days then on the day we were 'saving corn' the shocks would be pulled over to allow the sun and wind dry the stubble ends. But if it was wet weather the corn would sprout and the sheaves would start growing together then we would sometimes take the middle sheaves refixing the wet ones after trying to turn them inside out which was a very tedious job. If sheaves were harvested too quickly or before they were dry a mould would appear in the corn ricks and on thresh day the sheaves would be like pancakes and the resulting dust was very harmful to our lungs. (Corn was grown on the farm before the war but on far fewer acres).

If weather conditions were favourable, Father and Uncle Frank would help each other, both employed two men, the team then would then consist of one man pitching the sheaves in the field, three with a horse and a wagon each who would make their load, that is place each sheaf in place by hand which if not done correctly, the load would sometimes slip off (very embarrassing), then pitch off their load when they arrive at the rick. If the loads were to be brought up the hill, a second horse was put in front. A little boy, Harry Stoneman, from across the road, loved leading the third horse down to Tree Field gate, ready to help the next load up. Father and one of the men usually made the ricks again picking each sheaf individually.

Two men would be on the rick, one to pass the sheaves to the rickmaker who would try to keep the sheaves tight and straight, if they were not packed tight the rick would slip and ash poles would be needed to prop it (again very embarrassing). If the rick was not built under the shed it would have to

be thatched usually with wheat straw (not reed), this would take several hours, firstly a lot of 'spears' would have to be cut, usually hazel, all from a hedge with about 2 years growth. These would be about 2'6" in length and sharpened at one end the thatch neatly placed at one end of the rick, then six or seven ropes would be attached to the first spears with a suitable length of rope then wound around another for each line, the thatcher would then place the straw unwind about 18" of rope and twist it around each spear in turn after placing the straw for the next, the process would be repeated across the rick, of course, this entailed many journeys up and down the ladder. A thatcher's ladder was made from a pole cut in half with the flat outside and the inside edges were then more comfortable to his knees. (A builder's ladder was flat inside).

The base of the rick was usually made from faggots of brushwood, a hundred of these were bound each winter, all would be used to boil the clothes in the furnace, warm the cloam oven or light the fires in the open chimney. The arrival of the Aga cooker spelt the end of the faggot and the combine harvester ended the ricks and thresh day.

Threshday was a kind of social occasion, but a very dusty job. When stocks of corn were needed, Mr Weeks from Lawhitton, our local threshing machine contractor, would be at the market on Tuesdays taking 'orders' he would then explain the route he would be taking as the outfit consisted of a steam engine towing a threshing machine which in turn often had a chaff cutter in tow.



Above Mr Weeks with his threshing machine, seen outside the entrance to Pennygillam Farm.

Father said when he was younger, the thresher would be taken from farm to farm by horses as would the portable steam engine. When the first self-propelled engines arrived, the farmers would have to provide a man to go in front to help oncoming people control their horses and ponies as the engine would often frighten them. I remember the polished steam showman's engines passing by towing two or three trailers each containing the dodgems, roundabouts etc, as they travelled to Launceston after the Holsworthy St. Peters Fair. Also, road rollers were steam-driven engines. I recall a character called Curly who worked on the council and when tar spraying, he worked the sprayer. The tar was in 40-gallon barrels and a chain block hoist was used to lift the barrels up on to the portable sprayer. The sprayer was coal-fired to heat the tar which would then run out through a pipe which Curly would be holding to spread it as required, the steam roller would be pulling the tar pot and Curly dressed in old sacks. A gang of men would shovel the chippings over the tar after which it was rolled. (Chippings were also spread on the road if there were snow and coarse sand on ice. There was no salt in those days). Coal had to be provided both for the steam roller and the tar boiler,

also a man with a horse and a specially built water cart (with hand pump) was required to supply the engine.

Coming back to the threshday, steam coal would have to be purchased to provide the engine fuel. I think it would use at least seven or eight bags a day, also one bag had to be provided for it to go to the next farm. The threshing gang would be at least ten or twelve men including the engine driver and his mate. Any extra staff were borrowed, we would go to the Davey family at Goodmansleigh, Mr Jordan at Oakleigh and Mr Werren at Park Lanson to among others and ask to borrow a man, we would then have to return the favour when needed. I would also stay home from school. On the day the milking etc would be done early with the driver's mate arriving on his bike at about 7 a.m. to get up steam in time to start around 8:30 to 9 a.m. At about 10 a.m., Mother would come out with kettles of tea and a tray of splits and cheese, saffron buns, saffron cake etc. At 1 p.m. work would again stop and we would all sit around the kitchen table. Father would carve the beef and we would have a good meal. The grain would all be carried up into the granary in sacks and the straw would be stacked in bundles (latterly bales).

Barn Machinery

Before my time a horse round provided the power to drive the barn machinery. The centre pivot was fixed to the big round granite that was situated about 30' from the barn towards our bungalow. It must have been a big day when the 'Tangye' engine replaced the horse round. The thresher which was situated in the barn was complete with a corn elevator which lifted the corn to a big bin in the 'mill house' (now demolished for the new entrance), with a series of shafts and belts, the engine worked the thresher mill and chaff cutter as required. I never saw the thresher used, what a horrid dusty job it must have been working with it indoors. The engine was very temperamental, it had to be warmed with a blowlamp before it would start, which was done by swinging the handle on the flywheel. It would often soon be too hot and would bump and bang as it if was going to explode. The remedy was to turn on a wheel valve to allow water from the 300-gallon cooling tank to circulate if opened a fraction, too much and it would slow down and the exhaust would 'choo, choo.' I have used the Tangye engine before I was able to convince Father to re-site the mill and work it with the Standard Fordson tractor. For the last few years before combines took over the harvesting, we changed to the Stenlake family from Tregaller who had tractors to power the thresher and not the old steam engines. Most of the old engines were cut up for scrap iron. It was probably about 1950 when we went to a farm sale at Trecrogo, South Petherwin, where Trebullett blacksmith, Sid Conibeare, bought a really big engine for about £10 for the iron.

The first combine harvester had a bagging arrangement and if the grain was running well, it often took two men to tie the sacks and release the sacks down a chute to be collected later. Often the bales of straw, as well as hay from the earliest pickup balers were dotted around the fields as the earliest bale sledges needed a man to ride on them who would stack the bales, then release them six or eight at a time. I think of the sport we had as the corn was being cut by the binder, the rabbits would have retreated to the middle and the last few rounds would encourage them to bolt. Most of the sheepdogs would then give chase and catch them. Boys from around would arrive for the occasion and we would all run after them shouting "hoo, loo, loo" often catching eight or ten, then realising that we were hoarse by shouting so much.

The threshday highlight was when we were near the bottom of the rick, catching the rats. A roll of wire netting would have been erected around to hold the rats, and the dogs would catch some, and boys with stick others. I remember as many as sixty being caught. Sometimes men would use their pikes (two or three toed forks) but this could be dangerous. One man accidentally stabbed Uncle

Frank's foot one time, which took a long time to heal. It was the law to erect the wire fence on threshing days, sometimes we would get a visit from the local 'bobby' to check that we were complying. For several years our 'bobby' was P.C. Pryne who cycled around and he was stationed at Egloskerry, and when he retired, he was replaced by P.C. Gobles who was far more lenient with the locals and would sometimes turn a blind eye if your rear bike light was not working. The local P.C. also had to be notified of the date of sheep dipping and would often attend.

During the war, a number of the Women's Land Army girls were detailed to be rat catchers, about twenty were trained here. They were then formed into teams of four and visited the farms, laying bait for two or three days, then used poison anywhere that the bait had been eaten. The days following, they would collect any rats which were lying around, but often cats would eat some of the rats and would, unfortunately, suffer the same fate.

We drove our sheep to be dipped to Heale Farm where the Lifton police would sometimes attend, at that time Lifton had its own police station, sergeant, constables and court. It was easy to see if the sheep had been dipped as ochre was added to the dip which in turn made all the fleeces red, this practice petered out in the early 1950s as the coloured wool was then downgraded. I have wandered away from threshday without mentioning of the chaff cutter which was a three-wheeled machine which would be manhandled to the end of the thresher from which an extension belt would be attached. One man would stand on the machine usually using a walking stick to guide the loose straw from the thresher onto the cutter's conveyor chain. At least two men would be needed to attach the large sacks and carry the chaff to the barn often a Saturday job when we boys would have to empty the sacks which were very hard work for us when the heap got higher. The chaff would be fed to the cattle and horses mixed with pulped mangolds, and another hard job was turning the pulp handle.

Haymaking

Cutting with the horses and 4'6" width mower was a very slow and tedious job, especially when cutting meadow grass, the fingers of the mower would often clog with any mouse nests or rotted grass. I never cut grass with horses as we had the Standard Fordson tractor the same year as I left school and we had fitted a hitch to the mower, then with one man driving and another man riding on the mower it was quicker than with horses. We could then cut about one acre per hour if the mouse nests were not too bad. The knife would need changing quite often in bad conditions another man would be needed to sharpen the spare knife.

It was thought a waste of time to turn the hay before the swath was wilted on the top, but once this had happened, the turning was done with a 'Nicholson' turner which reached two swaths and consisted of iron pegs about 6" long attached to wooden crossbars with the horse being led and not driven as there were no guards or seat. Occasionally if the crop was heavy the turner would not clear the bottom of the swath, then the rows were turned over by hand using either a two or three toed pike. Another way often performed, was to rake the hay into small rows then re-raking to ensure it moved all the hay, these rows were then scattered again with the turner if necessary. If the hay was nearly fit to save but rain was imminent, all hands would 'poke' it. This was to gather it into small piles four or five feet high and quickly rake down the sides to make each pile as weatherproof as possible. Once the weather had improved they would then again be spread out.

Another tedious job was picking the docks out of the newly cut hay often cartloads of red seeding docks (remember there were no sprays in those days). Docks were our worst enemy and they would be everywhere. When the arable fields were being cultivated we would take buckets and collect the

roots, sometimes with as much as a cart-load in a single field. Then when the corn grew so would a fresh lot of docks, so again we would take the cart, buckets and garden forks and fork up the new lot of docks, again sometimes filling a whole cart. At Launceston College, we had Thursday afternoons off but school on Saturday mornings. During the summer, Thursday and Saturday afternoons always seemed to be delegated to picking or forking docks. It was a relief when the first sprayer arrived in the 1950s, our first being an 'Allman' spray rig with an oil barrel for a tank attached to our Ferguson T20.

The hayrick would be made near the gate usually unless it was a big field then often in the middle. Hedge trimmings or sometimes straw would be spread under the rick to make the 'rickbed' which would be five or six paces wide, the length being 'a pace to the acre and a pace for the maker.' A pit about 1' deep would then be dug approximately 2/3 of the way from the end to hold the base of the haypole, this was unloaded from the wagon and the two parts slotted together, the four pegs needed for the guy ropes were driven into the ground, then the wagon was loaded with hay. One man would then stand on the load, the small end of the pole then heaved up to him where he would then attach the big pulley rope on the four guy ropes. The horse would then be 'back backed' with the wagon, the man on the load helping to lift the pole from the back lade with his shoulder. With two or three to hold then tie the ropes to the pegs, it was soon erected. The hoist arm was then raised by the big rope, the wire rope already having been threaded through the grab attached, then if the hay was fit, we were ready for action.

The hay would be raked into rows with the horse rake, usually two men with a horse and sweep to sweep the hay to the rickside and another cob attached to the wire rope to hoist the hay. Often this was my job as a schoolboy to lead the horse forward then backwards. The horse was driven along the row of hay until the sweep was full then proceed to the rick. The handles of the sweep were lifted, then the sweep points would catch the ground which enabled the sweep to roll over the top of the load empty and ready for the next load. The man working the grab would then guide onto the load as the lift horse was made to go backwards, the grab was then pushed into the hay, the tip lock set. The lift horse was led forward until it was high enough and the guy ropes would have been adjusted allowing the grab to swing over the rick until it reached the desired position, the rick maker would shout 'tip' and the grab man would tweak his guide rope to trip the grab and would then pull the grab back off the rick as the lift horse was being led backwards.

It was a boring job, leading the horse over and back for hours, with lots of flies irritating and biting both horse and handler. The big advance in mechanisation was when Uncle Frank bought a car sweep which was bigger than the horse sweeps and attached to his car by taking out the mounting bolts on the front of his car's springs and using longer bolts to span the channel iron which was the sweep attachment. Using his car, he was able to do the work of two horse sweeps. Later, when the tractors arrived, one was used to sweep the hay and another with the lift wire attached to the front axle made life more comfortable to operate with the absence of flies. As the field was cleared the horserake would again be used to collect any litter.

At the first chance after completion, the rick would be thatched. Most of the ricks were thatched with rushes which were cut with a scythe, these grew in the wood and in 'Six Acres' before they were killed with the advent of spray (weed killers). The rushes would be tied in bundles with the band, also made with rushes, for transport. If the rick was in a field where cattle grazed, it would need to be fenced with barbed wire. The sheep would eat around the rick as winter approached, often undermining the rick several inches if unfenced.

During the winter, hay would have to be fetched two or three times per week, usually, two men with a horse and wagon (later with tractor and trailer) would take off the thatch at one end of the rick then using a hay knife would “take in a tap.” This was to cut down until a load was completed with the exposed part of the rick then being covered with some of the old thatch until the next load was needed. No matter the weather, the hay had to be fetched, which was especially difficult to handle if windy. The hay was then offloaded, some into the stable loft for the horses, and the rest into the hay-house which was the double doors beside the shippen.

In the early 1950s, it became fashionable to bale the hay in the field, the first baler being a stationary baler with a platform on which a man stood to feed the hay into the baler, having been swept there and two men having pitched the hay onto the platform. When sufficient hay for a bale had been fed in, a wooden block with slots was dropped in to divide the hay and allow the wires to be threaded through to tie the bales. This was later converted to a string threading mechanism, but with all the knots being hand-tied. The bales were about 1 cwt each which made us think it was a luxury with the arrival of the pick-up baler.

Another job I hated was when Father would decide Saturday afternoon was a good time to cut some moats off the hedges with a cross-cut saw. My young arms have ached for many hours doing this, often having to stand at very awkward angles to reach the moats. The moats were then all piled up out in the backyard to eventually be used as ‘back sticks’ in the open fire.

Netherbridge, the River and Flooding



Netherbridge flooding.

The river holds many memories from me of cattle crossing and mixing which in a way was very exciting when sorting them whilst riding our cob ‘Tiny,’ but a lot of work went into fencing the bank it has certainly saved a lot of bother by stocking the hams with sheep in recent years. As a small boy, I was taken by Father, Uncle Frank and a workman one Sunday morning to save the sheep which were surrounded in the ‘Long Ham’ by a flood, (the gateway leading into the field was much lower then, three or four hundred tons of fill has now been dumped there since). The sheep were loaded onto the cart and taken a few at a time out to ‘Little Ham’, but the last load decided to follow which they succeeded in doing, leaving Uncle Frank and me for the last trip.

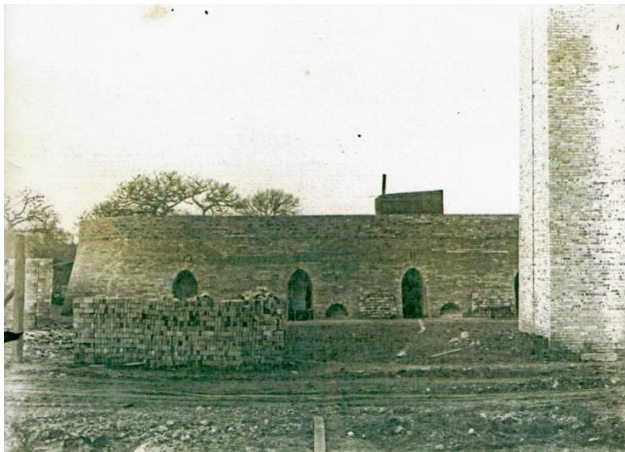
Several years before Father and one of his brothers bought a pony (much to grandfathers disgust) and put it down by the river until it was old enough to ride. It got in the flooded river and scrambled ashore at Newmoor (near Polson Bridge). There was a frost that night and the pony caught pneumonia and died.

Lots of articles have washed up on the bend in the river at Newmoor in the past, like the Bloye families grey horse previously mentioned. A funny escapade seen by my Father was a cyclist who was equipped with leggings and a cape, who was determined to show his cycling skill on the flooded road. He went back up the hill to get up some speed, but when he came flying down, the current of water clean knocked him flat.

Before the traffic lights were installed in the 1970s, vehicles would often meet on the bridge. Sometimes whilst working in the 'Bridge Field', I have seen the drivers get out and argue as to which should reverse.

Dutson Brickworks

The Brickworks was formed about 1921 on what was formerly part of the farm. The ground was ploughed etc in rotation except for a small area on the south side where a small pit existed and bits of brick would show it had been used for brickmaking years before (part of the Bude-Launceston canal was constructed with Dutson Bricks). Two round kilns about 25' across were built to make the first bricks, this was followed by a much bigger oval kiln and chimney stack 105' in height (this was demolished around 1954).



The kiln and chimney of the Dutson Brickworks

Power was provided by a portable steam engine and the clay was hauled up by winch and tram lines to the machinery. Their transport consisted of a steam lorry and a large traction engine which towed two trucks, sometimes taking a load of bricks to Tavistock and returning with coal. There were twenty-eight men working including one who would work by night stoking the kilns, he would push a wheelbarrow up a wooden ramp with no side rails, loaded with coal and tip it down through into the kiln. The foreman who was called 'Blackmore' lived in the bungalow at 'Sunnybank.'

Some of the bricks had been used to build the houses at Dutson Terrace, but if they were left unrendered they would flake off which I assume together with the depression was the cause of the companies downfall and ultimate bankruptcy in 1928. The traction engine was sold but the other equipment was all abandoned. I remember seeing the old steam lorry almost covered in brambles and a birds nest in the cab, the fences were down and our cows used to wander into the kilns for shade during the summer.

In 1939, Gerald Congdon (1913-1970), whose father farmed at Horrel Farm, Werrington rented it from the Whitstone Brick Co. (who had bought the premises) to use as a pig farm. During the war years he collected swill from the various army camps and hospitals etc. Also refuse bins were placed in towns for people to place potato peelings and any other edible food suitable for pig food. He fixed

a boiler at the bottom of its chimney stack and used long poles as fuels pushing them in as the ends burnt. An old car was jacked up with a belt attached to the back wheel and leading to a water pump, provided the water from the pit pool to fill the 300-gallon tank on top of the kiln, this, in turn, supplied the water bowls. It was not an ideal piggery being very damp and dark inside and bushes growing over the top. He also stocked the pool with rainbow trout.



Gerald W. Congdon boating on the former Dutson Brickworks pool.

After the war the swill became scarce and imports of grain started to come in, so Gerald changed over to poultry in pens, but after a few years through various reasons, his situation got the better of him. He had lived at St. Stephens with his wife, but after she had left him, he started to live in a hut near the kilns for a couple of years before finally leaving the district entirely.

Again the site was abandoned and had been taken over by the Launceston Abbatoir Company for use as a possible knackers yard. It was then put up for sale and as I was by this time farming on my own account, I bought it and now we have a small caravan site and fishery on it.

Sheep Shearing

Most of the flock of sheep we had were Devon Longwools and their fleeces would be from 7lbs to 10 or 12lbs. They were shorn with hand shears until I left school in 1944 when Father bought me a clipper, which was a two-man operation as the second man was needed to turn the handle which was a very tedious job. By 1945 we had our Standard Fordson tractor, so with a pulley, this was then used to power the clipper. Once mains electric came in 1960, we were able to use shears with electric motors. The wool was sold privately, the buyer arriving with scales and weights. Then the wool would be packed in sacks. When the wool board took over, we delivered it to the old Market House (now the Market Arcade) by St. Mary's Church. An electric hoist was used to lift the basket up from the road below, the basket had to be emptied before returning for a refill.

Father only kept Longwool sheep but when I took over the farm in 1960, I bought Scotch half breeds, but they seemed to lose their teeth quickly, so I then went to Kendal and also to Blackmoor Gate bought some Masham's. It later became fashionable to keep mules but the Masham's did us well, the only time that we reared 200% was with the Masham's.

Mangolds and Turnips

At least half to one acre of ground was drilled with mangolds and this was a very labour-intensive job as the ground would be worked to a fine tilth and then rolled before ridging. I think it was 22" width ridges, then the mangold drill was used to sow the seed along the ridges after which all the ridges would be rolled down again. When the rows of seedlings could be seen the horse hoe would be used at about 15"-18" width between the rows, then with the 'turnip hoe,' the rows would be side hoed and a second horse hoeing before a hand hoeing. A week or two later a third hoeing would be performed if the weather was wet.

The mangolds would then be pulled in November, the tops cut off and left in rows to be loaded in the cart. No forks were used as these would damage the crop. Several loads were put indoors for storage with the overflow being put in a 'cave' in the field which was known as 'Behind Barn' where Tamar View is now situated. The mangolds were piled along a cart width then covered with straw for frost protection then a layer of hedge pairings (brambles etc) to hold the straw in place and also to keep the poultry from scratching off the straw (all poultry were free-range).

We also grew turnips which were grown the same way as the mangolds but pulled and thrown onto the cart then scattered for the sheep in early winter, marrow stem kale being cut and carried to the cattle (no electric fences in those days). The main pest problem we had in growing turnips, kale etc, was the flea beetle for which the treatment was two men with a long pole to which sacks were attached then soaked in paraffin and dragged along the rows.

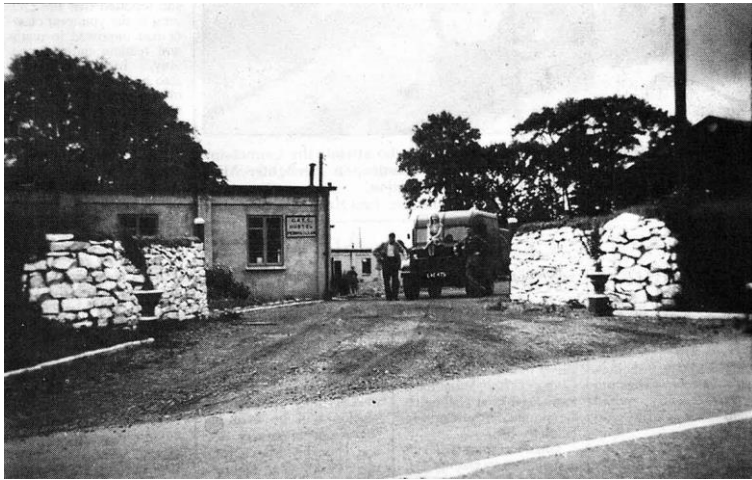
The flatpole cabbage grown for late winter feed would be bought by the thousand plants and we usually had about 4,000 which were dug in along the ridges which were already rolled at about 2'6" spacing (these also needed hoeing). These were cut as needed and carried to the unhoused Longwool sheep of about 40 ewes and 20 ewe lambs.

During the war, our allocation was 3 acres of potatoes which together with the other root crops, amounted to a total of 6 acres at least needing to be hoed etc. Schoolchildren were allowed special leave from school for potato picking before the Italian prisoners of war were available. These would arrive on a bus about thirty in number with one armed soldier as a guard and the bus driver. Two of the P.O.W.s were cooks and would fetch some potatoes and cook chips over a bonfire whilst boiling some flatpole cabbage. I do not remember what any ingredients were but I consider they were treated very leniently. Their working day was not very long as the buses would be back at the camp in Holsworthy by 5 p.m. I think (they would be passing as I came back from college, which finished at 4 p.m. Their uniforms had big holes cut both on the jackets and trousers, then patched with bright colour patches for easy recognition. Later German prisoners were based at Pennygillam in the old army camp from where we could obtain the labour for various jobs. I remember collecting three in 1947 for threshing but forget how much we had to pay the authority for their labour, but it was not free labour. Several farms also had a P.O.W. living on the farm to help with the work a few of which decided (especially Germans) to stay and married local girls after the war. When the prisoners were repatriated, a harvest camp was established at Pennygillam for a year or two, we had six or eight girls picking potatoes, most of whom were office girls from Yorkshire, spending their annual holiday at the camp.

Bombing and the Second World War

When I was nine there was talk of war and I remember seeing a long line of railway trucks with armed guards beside them on the railway line between Wheal Martyn at Carthew (now the China Clay Museum) and St. Austell. On the following Sunday morning, as I sat on a stool in front of the

open fire with the fountain and kettle, our only means of hot water (also the brandize for the saucepans), I heard Neville Chamberlain say we are now at war with Germany over the wireless.



The entrance to the Pennygillam Camp.

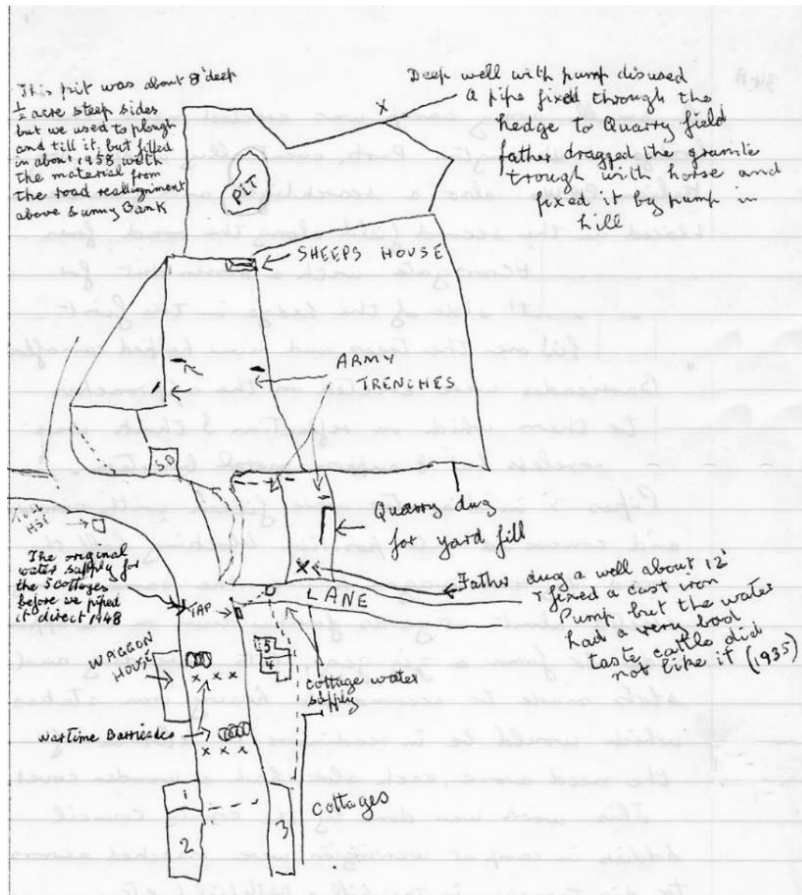
Launceston was soon a busy place. The first soldiers to arrive in Launceston during the war were billeted with local people, with the Tower Street Chapel Sunday School being used as the quartermaster stores and marquees being erected on the Castle Green for cooking and mess. Much to the disgust of local people, a camp was established on Pennygillam Farm ("shame such good ground" was the cry), where soldiers were then transported later, to be followed by American G.I.s, German P.O.W.s, harvest camp, then to the Secondary School before the new College was completed. (The area is now the Industrial Estate).

Another camp was constructed at Hurdon Way, on what was part of Scarne Farm. This was occupied by Black American G.I.'s, but after the war, the Nissen buildings were converted into temporary housing, before the new houses along Hurdon Way were built. The White Americans could not agree with the Black Americans and in fact, had a small battle in the Square. I remember bullet holes in the plate glass window of Hicks the drapers and marks on the wall of Mules the barber which was next to Barclays Bank. It was a tobacconist downstairs with a metal spiral staircase up to the barber's shop where two barbers worked. The barbers also often lathered and shaved with a cut-throat razor several of the older farmers on a market day.

A small army camp was erected near the bridge at Werrington Park which was eventually used by Italian P.O.W.s. There was also a searchlight and gun placed in the second field along the road from Ham Mill to Crossgate with a Nissen Hut for the crew, this side of the hedge (from Dutson) in the first field which I assume the trees and river helped camouflage.

Barricades were erected on the approaches to the town which on reflection I think were almost useless, but I suppose morale boosters. Pipes 3' in diameter were filled with concrete and concreted into position blocking half the road by the wagon house. The same being erected about 15 yards further down on the opposite side to form a zig-zag. Pits were dug and slots made to accommodate heavy iron stakes which would be in readiness to slot in if the need arose, each slot had a wooden cover. This work was done by the County Council and soldiers in camp at Werrington were marched across to dig trenches in the hill, Pathfield etc. Also, half-round huts were erected at the lower end of Tree Field by Black American G.I.s, this was for ammunition storage before D-Day. American army

lorries loaded with scores of Black soldiers from Hurdon camp, passed daily. Their task was to make an unloading and loading siding at Tower Hill Railway Station (In the March 1943, with the build-up for the invasion of France, two new sidings were laid and the headshunt lengthened considerably, the down loop was restored and a new signal box commissioned in the booking hall, extending out onto the up platform), and erecting hundreds of these ammunition dumps, firstly digging a gap through the hedge and fixing the hut inside, and then when filled with ammunition each end was sheeted with a tarpaulin. From memory, I would think the huts were about 10' wide and 12' to 15' long and about 10 to 15 yards apart, spread over many miles of roads around Tower Hill, wherever the road was wide enough for two vehicles to pass.



Very early in the war, a plane landed in the big field at Netherbridge (26 acres at Tipple Cross). Somebody came running and said the Germans had landed, so Father and Uncle Frank took their shotguns to investigate. It turned out to be only a twin wing trainer that had run out of fuel.

In the early days of the war, free trade had been stopped and two men were appointed to estimate the deadweight of the sheep, but this caused a lot of discontents, before a weighbridge was installed, as it appeared that their friend's sheep would always be heavier than other peoples.

As previously mentioned, a blackout was universally implemented with windows having big thick curtains to block any light from escaping and street lights were all switched off. Motor vehicle lights were severely restricted in what was allowed to be visible. As well as car headlamps having a mask and sidelights being permitted a ½ inch hole, bicycle lights had to be half-covered and no light was allowed to be shown from the windows of buildings. Bonfires were also not allowed after dark. Many people were fined for breaking the regulations.

Our first evacuees were from the Balham area of London, and a Catholic School to boot. As such, they went to St. Josephs school which at the time was run by nuns. Our two boys were Smith (I can't remember his first name), and Xavier de Valancie whose father was the French announcer for the broadcasts to the French people who were under German occupation. These two boys soon returned to London as did several others from the district as the bombing of London had not begun (1939-40 was known as the phoney war). We then later had Michael Marshall also from London, who was first billeted with Mr and Mrs Braunie Werren at Park Lanson but had to leave there because Mrs Werren was expecting.

With the evacuees arriving, there were seven or eight boys of my age in the village, with very few cars then we could really speed down the road with our 'Gerry's'. Not only were there few cars around, but petrol was also rationed and what was available, was only to be used for business reasons. I think the basic ration was 3 ½ gallons per month for a 10 h.p. car. Doctors, Vets, etc could obtain extra, but people who only used their vehicles for social trips had to lay up their cars for a few years.

About 1942/43, we boys took the pony and cart down into the wood (now cultivated) where there were about 180 big fir trees to obtain a top for a Christmas tree. Michael our evacuee climbed the tree and secured the top by a rope, both above and under the intended cut. He chopped it off but it was far too big and it came crashing down breaking the rope, it was a very lucky thing it fell opposite Michael, as it was at least 20' as it broke in two as it crashed, the part we came home with was still too tall to go indoors. (Michael later emigrated to New Zealand where he married and settled). Michael called in on us in the 1980s and after that we kept in touch each Christmas up until 2010 since when we haven't heard anything.

Uncle Frank and Auntie Annie also had two boys, Micky Sharnock and Brian Russell. Down in our cottage, our workman was Sid Cottle, his wife and two children Sidney and Joan and evacuee, Ginger Mullins. Across the road were Bert Sanders and wife with their two boys Roy and Kenneth, and they had an evacuee called Eddie Woods. At Sunnybank were Bill Bromell and his wife and son, Roy and they also had one boy evacuee. Bill being a mason had to go to Plymouth and later to London to work on bomb-damaged buildings.

Very early in the war, before the petrol was rationed, Grandfather Grigg came to stay with us for a few days and he wanted to visit friends at Crapstone then at Yelverton. I was riding in the back seat when we were overtaken near Yelverton Church, by five soldiers in an open-top jeep. They were going too fast and went down over a bank and the jeep bounced all except the driver out. Father did not stop, but I can still picture those soldiers going up in the air and coming down behind the jeep which never rolled or tipped over.

After Dunkirk, the L.D.V. (Land Defence Volunteers) was formed and most of the farmers and other men volunteered. Armed with their twelve bores and an L.DV. armband grouped together in each parish, soon after they were issued with uniforms and rifles etc and then renamed the Home Guard. Three or four members were stationed in a small hut at Tipple Cross (just above Netherbridge) each night to stop and check whoever was passing. As time went on anyone young enough who had not volunteered was conscripted. They trained on evenings and Sundays. At times convoys of army vehicles would pass here mostly by night with very little light on show.

One Sunday evening we felt and heard vibrations whilst sitting around the front room fire. The next morning, we were told some bombs had been dropped, luckily not on the town, but two or three had landed in Mr Werren's field at Park Lanson, which adjoined the Park near the Chinese Garden

and others in the big field this side. Father saw some craters whilst seeing the sheep in Doctors Ground and walked across to take a closer look, when he came home, he said that he had also seen some holes in the ground which we later heard contained unexploded bombs which the army later removed.

Around 1942/43 a barrage balloon which had broken free came down in the river where the new Netherbidge is now situated. It must have flown for several miles as there were none around Launceston. The only time I have seen any vehicle stuck on the old Netherbridge being an American Army tank transporter, which became stuck owing to its width. This was about 1943.

When Plymouth was being bombed, which was usually by night, several of the people here in the village would go up to Pathfield where we could see the searchlight beams as well as the anti-aircraft flak bursting amidst the glow of the city fires. One night I remember the drone of a plane overhead which we assumed was a German one as it turned back towards Plymouth again. The Launceston fire crews often went to Plymouth to help with the fire fighting.

First Tractor

I would think it was about 1955 when our last horse died, this was a bay cob called 'Tiny.' She was used for light work, also riding around the farm to see the 'things' (cattle and sheep). We had our first tractor, a 'Standard Fordson,' in 1944. During the war years, tractors were allocated to the biggest farms or to contractors first. Uncle Frank had included our acreage to obtain his tractor in



Standard Fordson Tractor on spade lugs. Harvesting a corn crop with a Standard Fordson at Dutson.

1942, the only tractors available on pneumatic wheels being for contractors, and his was on spade lugs and not allowed on the public road, therefore all the haulage still had to be done by horses.

The fertilizer was often spread by a man kneeling in a cart with a firepan and man or boy driving the horse, often fields would be 'straked' if it was not spread properly especially if sulphate of ammonia had been spread. Basic slag was a very dirty thing to spread which arrived in small hessian sacks. All fertilizers and feedstuff arrived in hessian sacks, always 1 cwt, 1 1/4 cwt and even 2 cwt sacks. I have often been down to the Station with 'Tiny' and the cart to collect a few cwt. Father and Uncle Frank both kept four or five horses each. Names of the ones I remember most being 'Lion,' 'Prince,' 'Violet (poor thing had been blistered whilst lime spreading and her skin would then rub raw if she sweated very much, so usually she only did light work),' and 'Damsel (she bolted with the cart after being frightened by Uncle's boar pig which had strayed out into the road and came into the yard and crashed into the granary steps and cut her head and died of blood poisoning).'

Uncle did not have many good horses, 'Joe' was steady but very reliable, always used as the first shaft horse and lived to be 33 years. 'Black Lion' was one he had bred but he had a deformed shoulder and needed a special collar and so was only used to work the fields. 'Pearl' was a mare which he bought on recommendation, but proved to be a nuisance as often she would jump over the hedges and difficult to find being down at Goodmansleigh or elsewhere. Then he had another 'Lion' which was very good for several days then would suddenly jib, simply refusing to move.

Ernie Jenkin took pride in his ploughing and often entered the Lifton and District ploughing match, with the harness well oiled (harness oil), brasses shining and chains aluminium painted, he would set off early in the morning with the plough loaded on the wagon. I suppose it was only about ¼ acre plots to plough, but then when finished, he would groom his team which would include tracing both manes and tails before presenting them for the class for the best-presented team. Also, at the ploughing match would be classes for roots etc, which included mangolds and flatpole cabbages. A few men would enter the stone hedging competition, whilst twenty or thirty farmworkers would compete in the turf hedging class.

The wagoner (the man who would work the first team) would always be proud of the horses and would clean them every day during the winter when they would 'lye in' (stabled). The dung would be loaded by hand onto the cart and often taken up the road to the arable fields, i.e. 'Doctors Ground,' Quarry Field,' 'Three Corners' or the 'Little Bungalow Field' (now all Pathfield). It needed two horse to pull the cart which would contain about eight 'heaps' which would be left about seven yards apart, these would be later spread with a fork.

Lime and/or sea sand would also be carted and spread in a similar fashion. The hill field known as 'Clover Hill (third field out above the lane) was also ploughed in rotation but very awkward to harvest often tipping over the loads. One wagon tipped over at the bottom of the field throwing over the horse too. When the horse, 'Lion,' was released he rolled out over the bank into the lane. Later when we had a tractor I have ploughed, worked, cut with the binder and harvested it all with our Standard Fordson.

It was 1944 when I left school and we went to a farm sale at Burcombe Farm, St. Dominick, where a Standard Fordson on 'rubber' tyres was to be sold. As mentioned, new tractors were only obtainable on permits and pneumatic tyred tractors were in great demand, but the law stated they were not to be sold for more than the new price. This also applied to ploughs, mowers etc. Therefore, the auctioneers on reaching the full price would then organise a draw at ten shillings (50p) each for a benevolent fund, with the winner being able to purchase the article at the equivalent new price plus commission (£233+). My name was drawn and immediately Fred Stanbury from Poole Farm offered to pay the bill if we would let him have the wheels, this we declined though. Within a few days, Father was allocated a new tractor which he accepted and made a deal with Spry's who took the second-hand tractor minus the wheels which enabled us to have a new tractor on tyres. It took another two or three years before Uncle was able to get his spade lugs replaced by rubber tyres, such was the scarcity of rubber.

Father told me about an interesting incident involving a Doctor who had been to see a patient at Werrington Park. He was driving his car which had a 'Dickie' seat and gave a lift to a man who lived in a cottage at Dutson. When he arrived at Dutson he stopped to let his passenger out, but when he looked across, he wasn't there. So, he looked back the road to see him coming carrying his hat. As the Doctor had swung around a corner, his passenger went out over the back!

Butter Well up the road

In the early 1930s, all our milk was separated and Mother used to sell some of the cream to one or two neighbours, but made most of it into butter. I don't know how much but it would have been from the yield of ten North Devon cows. During hot weather, I remember helping to carry the butter which was placed on a roofing slate and pans of cream up the road to the well to keep it cool. Before the road was widened and straightened it went in close to the well door and there would often be circus notices or descriptive notices of farm sales etc. displayed on the door. I was told the water was clear before they dug further back and struck the redum seam.

The Mail and Telephones

My earliest memory of the postman coming around with a motorbike and sidecar. Father remembered when the post was delivered by horse and carriage there was a small cupboard built into the wall but our (Tamar View) entrance where he would deliver the mail and would blow his horn to let everyone know he was around if there were any letters to collect. Grandfather offered to provide free access for a village post box which was then provided in the early 1920s. There were two collections with the first being around 11 a.m. This was by cycle round which started delivering at Ridgegrove then on to St. Leonards not forgetting Goodmansleigh, then on to Welltown, before going across the track to Narracott (a thatched cob cottage abandoned in the 1950s). From here the round went out to Heale and onto Tettridge and also a short walk up the railway line to Jays. The 5:15 collection was by motorcycle and sidecar, but in later years by van. Nowadays we only get a 10:30 collection and none at all on a Sunday.

Telephones were far and few between and urgent messages could only come by telegram, the charge being so much per word for which you had to take your message to the Post Office and they would phone your message to the Post Office nearest to the address of the recipient with the telegram boys delivering the message. If there was any reply needed, they would take it back to their depot. These boys had a uniform and bicycle, some of them followed on to be postmen.

The telephone came to Dutson in the 1950s with each line having two wires connected to the switchboard at the Telephone exchange at the top of Race Hill (now Race Hill Garage in 2017). The switchboard was manually operated. When you lifted your receiver the operator would say: "number please," you were then put through to your required number for three or four minutes, then you would hear three or four pips for extra time charges, there was also an extra charge if the call was over thirty or forty miles, which were classed as trunk calls.

1937 Father started selling milk & Launceston & Lewannick Farmers



Cleaverfield Milk Factory.

Around 1937, Father decided to sell the milk and reduce the butter making, the milk had to be delivered down to the back entrance to the building next up from the old 'Railway Inn' which was the butter factory where Mother once worked (now the Co-Operative Funeral Parlour). This soon closed which had been run by the previously mentioned Launceston and Lewannick District Farmers, who then used it as a corn store before they had a bigger store situated beside the railway line and were able to unload the sacks direct from the trucks into the store which was situated where Orchards Electrical Shop now stands. (The original Milk Factory was begun at Plusha in the Lewannick parish before it was moved to St. Thomas Road). This factory closed down when the new Dawes Creamery was built in Dutson Road (Cleaverfield Works below) next down from the Ridgemoor Estate, which itself was built upon allotments at that time. We then delivered our milk to Dawes. After this creamery closed the building was used as a farm machinery depot for Watkins and Rosevear who had the main depot at Ivybridge.

The railway station was a very busy place the various firms' corn stores were all on pillars so as to be level for unloading the trucks and loading the lorries, carts etc. On market days the Launceston, Lewannick farmers had an office up in the town and farmers would order their pig and poultry feed, cow cake, etc. and it kept 3 lorries delivering, all being in sacks in those days. Bran, barley meal sharps usually for pigs, flaked maize, maize meal, kibbled maize, wheat, oats, molasses meal etc, etc.

Before 1937, when Father purchased his first car, we used to go to town on Saturday afternoons by pony (our black cob 'Doxey') and trap to deliver our eggs and butter which Mother had made that week. We would deliver it to Dennis's shop at the junction of St. Thomas Road and Wooda Road, opposite the old National School. We would then travel up to the town and stabling the pony at the 'White Hart Hotel,' we would go to the Market House by the Church where we would see Mr Dennis who being the Market Inspector, collected the tolls from the market traders he would pay Father for the butter, eggs, apples, potatoes etc. (Mr Dennis's wife and daughter ran the shop). Mr Dennis also collected the tolls at the Cattle Market.

If we heard the whistle of the steam train engine as it was coming in from Egloskerry it was a sign of rain, but if at harvest time it could be heard coming from Tower Hill it would encourage Father to cut the hay. In earlier years Grandfather and Granny used to catch the train on Fridays and carry their baskets of butter and eggs to Tavistock where they would go to the Pannier Market and meet shopkeepers who would come up from Plymouth to buy their supplies.

Road Stone and Timber Transport and Hedge Paring

My Father has hauled stone by horse and cart from the quarry at Goodmansleigh (now filled in by contractors building the Ridgemoor Estate) up to the road junction by the Garden Centre where an elderly man would break them into roadstone using a hammer with a wire mesh mask to protect his face. Pre-war the Quarry was worked and concrete blocks were produced here for Tredydar Road developments. These jobs were done by contract where the letting to the lowest price would be arranged during an evening at St. Stephens School. I do not know the terms, but £1 10s. was the contract offer to pare the hedges from Netherbridge to Millways which included lopping back the overhanging branches of which there would be many. Hedges would only be cut down after at least seven years of growth. Father has also hauled the broken stone on to Boyton as well as stone from the Barracados Quarry over to St. Thomas Hill (this was before the days of tarmac). In dry weather, the council provided a horse and water cart to dampen the dust around the town. As a young man, Father told me he rode his bike to the Royal Cornwall Show at Callington and it must have been good weather as the few motor vehicles that passed, created terrific dust.



Chaplins delivering to the town centre.

Whilst the motor vehicle was slowly taking over, I remember Chaplin's the carriers delivering goods from the Railway Station with both a lorry and a horse-drawn wagon, also Mr Gyn would deliver the light parcels with his pony and trap, and his little terrier dog always following the pony's heels by running under the cart.

Claude Gilbert from Daws House kept a few cows and delivered his milk by pony and trap with a church fitted with a tap, drawing off his measure and going to the doors where the ladies would bring out their jugs. Others I remember include Allen's the grocers from Newport Square and Baskervilles the bakers from St. Thomas Hill. The White Hart Hotel also kept a pony and trap to convey their goods and I assume cases from the Railway Station. They kept a few cows in a field where the Police Station now stands. This field had a barn near the road with 'White Hart Hotel' painted on its roof.

Neddie Gloyn was a well-known character with his team of horses and timber wagons. He contracted to carry the timber for Bartlett's Saw Mills down at the Railway Station, where Southern Court now stands. When he was working at Bridgetown around 1936-38, he would stop down below the cottage and unhitch the rear wagon and put that team of horses in front of the first team to help haul the wagon up the hill. Once on the level, they would bring the four horses back down for the other wagon. It must have been heavy loads as the horses would stop, and the wheels would be triggered so that they could rest outside here. Downhill the drag shoe would be used to skid the back wheels (no brakes).



Horse Logging at Polbathic in 1924, similar to Neddie Gloyn's operation.

Mr Parsons was the 'young' vet and travelled around by car which he kept in a garage where the veterinary surgery was in Exeter Street. Also stabled there were the senior partner, Jan Vickery's pony and jingle, Jan, who was getting older and I think he was very much into his whiskey, if possible, would just sit in his jingle and offer his opinion. Their surgery/dispensing/waiting room was next door where you would see mysterious mixtures concocted from dozens of large jars which lined the shelves. The 'cures' must have been mostly faith as there were no antibiotics in those days. Jan Vickery arrived at West Down End, Pipers Pool, one day, only to realise that he'd made a mistake, "Oh it's not you that wanted me, it was your cousin at Dunterton!" He then had to make the trip back through Launceston and out the other side to Dunterton, all in a pony and jingle. On one visit he made to us, I can remember Mother inviting him in for a cup of tea. He went and sat down on the three-legged stool by the fire and fell right back over.

Launceston Livestock Market during the 1950s

During the 1950s, Launceston Market was a very busy place, with hundreds of sheep being sold, both fat and breeders and mostly Longwools. Pig numbers often reached 1,000 and there would be scores of cattle, both stores and fat, and lots of cows and calves which were always sold together, all the calves would be wearing a muzzle (often over 100, but only the odd Friesian, with the majority being Devon Short Horns and Guernsey's). After the cows had been through the auction there would be various men asking to be allowed to milk the cows, some being lorry drivers who would carry a can in their lorry. One or two dairymen would also top up their supply if needed, with the chief character milking being Herbie Sandercock from Tower Street. He was a quick milker and would fill a few churns which he transported with his pony and trap. Another busy activity being the poultry market where hundreds of poultry from day-old chicks and ducks, to layers, and depending on the season, dogs and ferrets would also be auctioned.

We always drove our cattle to or from the market including cows and calves and lots of stories could be told about the cattle droving when they escaped into someone's garden or even occasionally through an open door into the house. The last time I took two cattle to market with just a dog to help, the route being up Angel Hill, they went up Madford Lane, the dog managed to fetch them back, but they then slipped through the Southgate Arch and again the dog retrieved them, but with cars becoming more plentiful, we decided to hire a lorry from then onwards (but it was fun when you were young). After this most of our cattle went straight to an abattoir.

St. Leonards fair in November was an important day with a lot of store cattle being sold. An amusing incident was when I was driving our steers around the ring and the farmers around began to laugh. Unknown to me, as I raised my stick to move the cattle along, it was close to Mr Frank Tucker of Druxton, and it whipped his cigarette from his mouth up into the air, but it never touched him. The steers would have been Red Devons and sold for about £32 or £33 being near if not the top price.

When at College I often cycled down to the market during the dinner hour on Tuesdays to see Father who was usually around the store cattle ring. One day I said look at that cow, it looks just like ours but Father did not take much notice, however, after I went back to school, the auctioneer was asking for the owner to come forward. Mr Bert Heard from Hawkadon could not find a maiden heifer which he had sent to market, eventually it was discovered his workman, who was driving his cattle to market, had trouble passing here as the forestry workers who were cutting the tree in 'New Plantation,' had left the entrance gate open and his three or four heifers went into the meadow. Being a bit 'thick' he had sent his dog into the field and although he probably could count, was too thick to realise that he was taking a cow instead of a maiden heifer, needless to say, but he then had to drive his cattle back home to Hawkadon and exchange bullocks en route. If the cob needed

shoeing, I would ride her into the Blacksmith in Race Hill (where Francine's Fish and Chip Shop is now). One Tuesday, Father had bought a cow and calf in the market, which also happened to be a shoeing day. I was driving the cow and calf following behind at Newport. A small gate which led into a playground behind the Round House where toilets have since been erected was open. A small boy ran out of the gateway and the cow wishing to protect her calf, charged the young lad, knocking him over, but before the cow could turn around, I had jumped off the pony and was able to beat the cow off with a stick which I carried, the boy jumped up and crying, ran off through the playground towards Westbridge Road. We never knew who he was but I bet he never forgot the incident.

Ice, Snow and Blizzards

About 1943 we had to take some sheep to market which Father had booked previously as food rationing prevented us from delivering them without notice. This proved to be very difficult on this particular day as there was black ice and the sheep were afraid to move, but we got them to the market eventually.

I don't remember the year but it was before we had a milking machine so it would have been in the 1940s (it was 1947). Father said the sheep must be put in the sheep's house as it was blowing a blizzard and already there were inches of snow laying. I did not like hand milking and chose to house the sheep. Pulling the cow's teats would have been a better option I realised too late! That might have been the same year the train was stuck in the snowdrift for two or three weeks in the Lydford area. (An area of High Pressure transferred north, from France, on January 18th. Two days later, the anticyclone was centred over north-west Norway. It then drifted south-east to Southern Scandinavia and dominated the UK weather for the rest of the month. The first frost came on the 20th, and the first snowfall on the 23rd, where heavy snow was recorded in the South West of England, even the Scilly Isles. Many villages became cut off and isolated.) The Council would send out a lorry with chains on the wheels and loaded with grit, two men standing with shovels spreading it as they went along. Sometimes if the conditions were really bad, they would scatter gravel.

The big freeze of 1962/63 is the most memorable to me as I was suffering from sciatica and had been fitted with a plaster jacket (after being fitted with it, they sent for an ambulance from Launceston as I had to come home on a stretcher due to having to dry to harden it). The river was frozen over and I had two men working for me and they were able to stand on the ice to cut wood on the river bank it was that thick. When it thawed, I remember standing on the bridge and feeling vibrations as massive chunks of ice hit it.



Ice chunks are seen at Yeolmbridge in 1963. Photo by Tarry Barriball.

Water Supply and Sunnybank

When I was first married, we lived at Sunnybank. There was a well under the front garden together with a lead pump, but this wasn't very satisfactory. It was decided to have a new water system for the farm which in turn would supply Sunnybank before the advent of mains water. The trenches had to be dug by hand which I tackled with help from our farmworker (no diggers around then!). We found it very helpful to have borrowed a subsoiler for our Ferguson T20 to loosen the ground. It was a big undertaking as we not only from the pump at the bottom of the meadow to the reservoir, we also had to go across to 'three corners' then down to Sunnybank plus extra arms had to be dug to 'Clover Hill' and Higher and Lower Drs Ground? Trewartha, Gregory and Doidge were the plumbers from Callington who did the plumbing work, laying bitumen lined pipes which were recommended at the time. All the joints with a kind of grease, then wrapped with sticky tape, these corroded after a few years and all had to be replaced. With the hire of a J.C.B. and alkathene pipe, the replacement was much easier. Also having a mains electric supply saved much hassle as the original method of an engine and pump kept going wrong, and the borehole pump saved the hassle. Many a time when we lived at Sunnybank the water would run out and I would have to go and start the engine to fill the kettle for breakfast, dinner or tea.

At Sunnybank, we had two asbestos deep litter houses and used to light two Tilley Lanterns each evening which gave them light until the paraffin ran out. I eventually had a Petter diesel engine driving a small generator, so we then discarded the lanterns as well as having electric indoors. We were then to have our first television at that time, although there was only one channel available, which was from the B.B.C. and in black and white. I had to swing the handle to start the engine and fixed a wire from it to our bedroom, then pull the rope over our bed to stop the engine. I brought the engine to the farm when we changed homes with Mother and Father, as mother was very unwell having had a couple of strokes. They had a housekeeper (Winnie Reep) who looked after both Father and Mother to the end. Three or four months after our move to the farm mains electricity arrived.

All the hens were free-range around the farmyard and would often make a nest in the hedges or cattle houses and if not found quick enough they'd sometimes go 'broody' and hatch out some chicks. Farm hens were mostly mongrels and many colours. It was the fifties when it became fashionable to have hybrid hens and deep litter houses. Our first 150 we kept up in the sheep's house. One advantage of the hens being kept indoors was the fact you had the eggs, and not the dogs if they found the nests first. After I was married, we had two deep litter houses up above Sunnybank and often sold over 200 dozen eggs a week. An egg packing station was started in Launceston and their vans made weekly collections and cash payments, I shudder to think what would happen to all those envelopes of cash for the previous week's collection, and which were carried in an unlocked van left out by the road whilst the driver collected wooden egg boxes which contained 25 dozen eggs in these 'modern times!' The packing station was in Western Road but later moved to Scarne in ex-army premises before going bankrupt.

For a few years before the deep litter craze, a lot of hens were kept in fold units which held about 25 hens each and were moved on to fresh ground each day, we only had three up in Path Field. After corn harvest, it was usual practice to take a portable poultry house out into the cornfield usually with young cockerels to live off any waste grain for a few weeks as the arishes were not usually ploughed until after Christmas. Now it is always a rush to plant another crop and I haven't seen any partridges for several years, as they also used to live off the waste grain. We have had the occasional plover and curlew nest here, but I've not seen them either for years. A barn owl used to nest down over the old shippen, but they too are a very rare sight nowadays.

Also, when at Sunnybank, Clifford Bloye lent me a terrier to catch rats which were around the poultry houses. Soon after he said I could keep her. "I don't really want her back as she won't go to ground," he said. Not long after, she started to go ground and proved to be very good, especially finding fox cubs and was in much demand around and we caught as many as thirty, one season around the various farms. I don't think the hunt supporters approved of it, but this was when a lot of farmers started fox shoots as there were so many foxes around. A couple of reasons for this being that rabbits had caught myxomatosis and the use of gin traps had been banned, which enabled the foxes to multiply.

The best collie I ever had was called 'Bob.' He was very good and loved going through to wood etc if I went out with my gun. If we were passing the milk stand and put the churns on the trolley, he would scurry off and fetch the cows unless I said no, it's not milking time. Yet if I said quietly to get the cows, he would bring them slowly, but if said it quickly he would bring them quickly. Sadly, when I took him to West Down End looking for foxes, Clifford's dog attacked him and he lost his sight in one eye.

Cole family Higher Dutson, rabbits and flooding at Bridge Ham

Prior to the 1914-18 war, the Cole family who went to Chaddlehanger, near Tavistock, were tenants of Higher Dutson which also included the Hams and they ploughed the Bridge Ham for wheat after it was cut and the shocks were standing a big flood came along and washed most of the sheaves away. Sometime after when our family had the Hams, there was another big flood and Father said he scrambled along the hedge and caught 40 rabbits which were marooned on top of the hedge. There was also a black cat which jumped off and disappeared downstream.

There was a water wheel in a big pit at Higher Dutson and a collecting pond just below the bungalow 'Hill and Dale' next to the old Toll House. The wheel, Father said, would work for ½ an hour then the water would be gone.

Heard family at the Toll House

On January 21st, 2003, I went to the funeral of Ethel Moore, she was 92. She lived in the old Toll House most of her life with her father and mother, Herber and Mrs Heard and she then married Bill Moore, their wedding reception was held in the garage at Sunnybank. They had one son called Gordon. Her brother Stanley started work as a tea boy down at the Dutson Brickworks, but when it closed he went to work for Butcher Turner at Boyton where he was expected to work very hard, he told me after an evening courting he cycled home from town to Boyton and more than once Butcher Turner would say I need another bullock and he would slaughter and dress one before he was able to go to bed. Stanley had a lucky escape once when delivering meat. He tried to ford the swollen river between Hele and Bridgetown but the pony and cart were washed downstream but Stanley reached the bank but I believe the pony drowned. As years passed, Stanley was able to go farming at Broadwood where his son still farms today.

Across the road was Mr and Mrs Bill Bromell and their son Roy who married and two daughters, but he died quite young. Bill was a mason and was foreman when Trekeastle was built around 1938. During the war, he had to go to Plymouth and London doing running repairs to the war-damaged properties. He built the bungalow just past the Homeleigh Garden Centre in 1951. Uncle Frank and Auntie Annie lived at Higher Dutson.

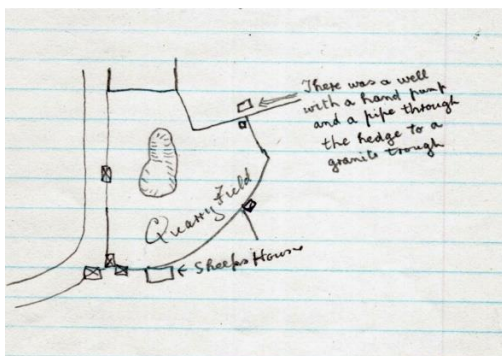
Post-war Bert and Mrs Stoneman lived in the Higher Cottage across the road with their children Ivy, Enid, Audrey, Harry, David and Michael. Tommy Sandercock in the lower one with his daughter

Evelyn and her boy Ivor, also for a while daughter Flossie, her husband Tom Watkins (a Welshman) and their three girls. Not forgetting (Tommy) his two sons, Clifford and Stanley there was a total of 10 living in a two-bedroom cottage where all the water had to be fetched from the tap 20 yards up the road and the loo was a bucket at the end of the garden. Bert and Mrs Sanders down the lower cottage had two sons, Roy and Ken, before the war she used to sell cigarettes, sweets etc. and nine toffees for 1d. Our cottage opposite was two cottages which were converted to one about 1956. Until about 1950 they also had to fetch all the water from the top of the road. Together with Werrington Estate workers, we laid a pipe down through the gardens and across the road to supply all five cottages from the well situated in the lane. About 1960 the mains water arrived after which there was no fear when the well would be running low. Since the mains water supply arrived, the Werrington Estate has sold all the cottages.

There were two cottages before they were renovated around 1955 and converted into one complete with a bathroom and Rayburn cooker. Previously the only heating had been from an old cast iron range which also doubled as cooker, electricity only arrived at Dutson in 1961, before that we had a candle to light us to bed.

Quarry field pit

Up in the Quarry field, there was a big pit which must have been at least ½ an acre in size with steep sides the middle being not less than six or seven feet lower than the surrounding field. Whilst it might sound ridiculous, we used to plough it but it certainly made the field difficult. Around 1954/55 the Council wanted to purchase the land to improve the bend by the Garden Centre which Father agreed to sell on the condition that the soil was used to fill the pit.



Big Curly, Buntie, Albert & Farley

One character I remember was 'Big Curly' who often lodged in Bill Smith's lodging house in Northgate Street, and he would help sometimes threshing days or other jobs spreading dung etc. He was very undependable as he would go elsewhere for a few weeks and spent all his earnings on booze.

'Buntie' also lodged at Bill Smith's Northgate Street lodgings, and Bill would send out the poor old chap to collect or buy rags, rabbit skins, etc. I remember him coming down inside the railings in Dutson Terrace as I was pushing my bike up the hill on my way home from College. He was shouting rago, rago and he came out over the step at the lower end he said rabbit skins. People in those days would often buy a rabbit from the butcher (or from a poacher) and skin it themselves.

Albert was another old man who used to go around the town before the 1939 blackout with his long-crooked pole to switch on the gas street lights. I assume they had a pilot light; I remember seeing him lighting one on the corner of the Santander Bank opposite the White Hart (often known

as Lennard's Corner after the shoe shop that once held that building). He would have had to go around later to put each light out. Even in the 1950s, the electric street lights went out by 11 p.m.

Farley was an old man who lived alone in a small wooden hut up in the old quarry on the way to St. Stephens (Herber Heard later had it for a poultry house, it possibly having wheels). He suffered a very sad life as he was always shaking and trembling, he went to the Tower Street Chapel very regularly and usually had a seat to himself.

Ridgegrove Mill & Willow Gardens at Homeleigh

At Ridgegrove Mill the miller lived next door with Miss Jones, his sister. The machinery being worked by the water wheel. The other building there was a bone mill but I think it was redundant. Where the ponds are at the Homeleigh Garden Centre, which are recent additions by my son Derek, was a willow garden years ago, but had not been a commercial thing since the 1914-18 war.

Foot and Mouth

In 1967, when there was a big outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease upcountry which caused nationwide alarm. The County Council provided tarmac and made baths about 30 or 40 feet in length where all vehicles coming into Cornwall had to drive through. The N.F.U. organised a rota of people to direct vehicles through the disinfectant, I kept the water cart filled daily for our A388 tyre bath. I think it was used for 3 or 4 weeks, personally, I consider it was to make the public aware of the crisis rather than the effect of containing the disease.

Tit-Bits

A man drove into the Ford at St. Leonards and he got stuck, he went up to Colhay Famer where Mr Cole was the farmer. Mr Cole went out into the field and fetched his horse, harnessed it and went down and retrieved the car from the river. A few days later when Mr Cole was in the market talking to a friend, he said do you know that mand over there? Yes, he said, he lives at Lewdown and he's got plenty of money, Mr Cole said: "I should think so, for all I did for him, he gave me sixpence!"

When Ben Vosper from Bamham went to Oakleigh threshing, at the dinner table when asked if he would like another helping, he said: "just a small bit please, you gave me too much by half las' time!"

Horace Vanstone, when asked if his dinner was okay, replied: "Yes thanks I have been in the army and can eat anything."

Bobbie Burt who lived at 2 or 3 Dutson Road, used to get drunk, and one night he was carried home. His wife looked out the window and said: "put the beast in the coal house, he will be better in the morning." He was met with his hands outstretched and said: "Mind out the way, I have the measurement of the window."

I remember once cycling back from visiting my friend Bernard Robbins down at Welltown near Polson when it was getting dark. I had no backlight, so fearing being caught by the local policeman, I gingerly went along using one foot on the ground to propel myself along. Sure enough, I hadn't got very far, when I was duly stopped on Polson Bridge by our 'Bobby.' Seeing how I was 'pedalling' the bike, he said 'go on then, carry on.'

The Tregear Estate sent three workmen across to West Down End to clean out a well there bringing a ladder with them. With the ladder safely placed down into the well, the gaffer instructed the first worker to go down and start cleaning, but he refused saying 'I'm not goin' down there!' to which the gaffer looked at the other worker and said 'well, in that case, you'll have to go down and do it.' He

too refused, saying 'I'll go up but most certainly not down there!' to which the gaffer replied 'well I am certainly not goin' down there' so they pulled up the ladder, replaced the cover and left without ever cleaning the well.

My friend Bernard Robbins of Welltown Farm when we were at College, decided to go with another boy one lunch time back to his home at South Petherwin to run an errand. The only problem was, Bernard's mother hadn't allowed Bernard nor his brothers to have a bicycle as she thought them to dangerous for her boys. So Bernard 'borrowed' another boy's bicycle and the two of them quickly cycled off to South Petherwin. With the errand run, the two made the the return journey back to the College, but on the way, Bernard came off his bike on the hill down by the Bangors Tip, scruffing himself. They eventually made their way back to the College, but Bernard's mother on seeing the state he was in, decided that perhaps if he'd have had his own bicycle he might not have got into such a scrape, and from that moment on, the Robbin's boy's all had their own bicycle.