



Cleeve Prior Chroniclers

Random Memories of Childhood in the early 20th Century- By Jack Stock

His earliest memory was pushing his younger brother and sister in a pram down the drive & tipping them out.

Making toffee in the orchard at Home Farm with Jim Holtom and Brodie Halford. They found some bricks & made a fire, Jim stole the butter from an aunt & Jack provided sugar, vinegar and a saucepan. The fire was going well, the toffee bubbling when they thought they heard someone coming, so they tipped the toffee away, put the fire out, and ran around a corner to see who it was. Imagine their surprise when they peeped out to see an old donkey putting its head round the corner.

Jack went to Field Barn with his father in a pony & trap. His father opened the gate into the field and Jack drove the pony through. The pony bolted, the wheel hit a large ant hill which tipped the trap upside down with Jack underneath. He sustained cuts and bruises.

A gang of friends went "bat fowling" with a long net. They went round hedgerows at night to try to catch sparrows. One person went on one side of the hedge with a pole, while two more carried the net to catch the sparrows as they flew out.

One night they went out to Salford meadows and a thick fog came down- it took them ages to find the plank to cross back over the river. On the way home they came across a pear tree laden with ripe pears. Someone suggested holding the net underneath whilst one of the others beat the tree with the pole. Just as this was happening, the pears rolling down the road, the owner let his dog out and they ran away. Undeterred, they carried on down the street to a cottage covered in ivy. Once again the stick came out to disturb the birds, but they also disturbed old Tom who poked his head out of the bedroom window and said "what be y'at"

[The Chronicler points the reader to the recollections of Eli Ankers who tells the same story, but not with such wonderful detail]

In 1904 Lynwood was built opposite Home Farm. The sand and bricks were drawn from Bidford by horse and cart. Jack aged 4, used to go across the road every day to watch the builders, and when they actually started to build, one of them gave Jack a trowel and some mortar and showed him how to lay the foundation bricks. The elderly lady who was having the house built, owned the Kings Arms. When she sold the pub for £300, her daughters thought what a high price it was, and the old lady went insane!

Lynwood eventually became the home of Hilda Orvis, Jacks younger sister.

1911 was the driest season on record. It was the coronation year of Edward 7th. Big tents were erected and everyone had to take their own knife, fork spoon & plate. A big lunch was laid on, beef, ham, lamb, tongue, and lots of sweets. There were sports afterwards, racing and jumping. An old couple called Punch and Judy, due to the fact that they were both short and hump-backed, put left over food in their baskets and went home with enough to feed them for a week!

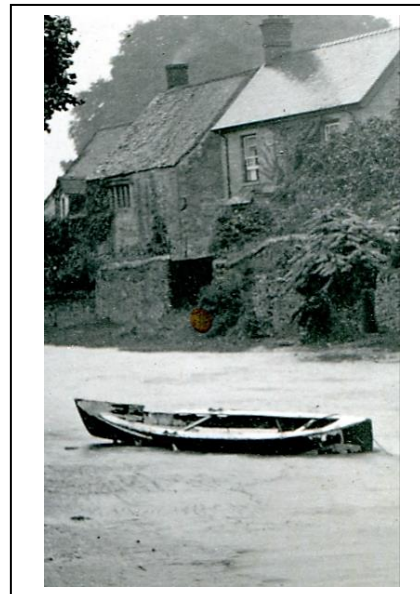


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Harvest was done by hand at this time. Punch used to cut the corn and stook it, while Judy used to lay the corn bond and Punch dropped the stook in to bind it. Punch was paid so much an acre.

Moving on to August Bank holiday 1912. It was a very wet season, water ran off the fields and along the village street by the Kings Arms. There was a very strong current and one man who was staying there on holiday got his canoe out and another man stood on the pub steps with a fishing line hanging in the water, allegedly with a fish on the end. Three pals got a round tub and pushed it out into the water. They got in and it floated about in the village street, but the current was so strong it took them downstream to Hoden Lane, where they whirled around in a deep pond. They were washed out in some bushes where they were able to get out, very wet and frightened.



The Great War

When war was declared Jack had to leave school to help on the farm. Jack's father Henry had 4 acres of Senator Peas which women picked, 6d for 40lbs. Jack's job was to weigh them and pay the workers. The peas went to Tonypany in Wales. They were taken from the farm to Littleton & Badsey station by horse and wagon. It was a very dry season, Henry also had 2 acres of potatoes which were all dug by hand. Owing to the drought a lot of the potatoes were funny shapes and when someone dug up a really bad one, they said it was Kaiser Bill.

There was a big hollow elm tree on the farm and one of the workers spotted bees going in and out of the tree. They could not get the bees out because they were so high up. As the tree was hollow it wasn't of much value so it was chopped down and cut in to pieces and the bees driven out; 1 hundredweight of honey was collected-beautiful golden honey.

During the war the government took all the best horses from the farm and sent some black light legged horses in their place. The farm horses were sent to France to help move the guns. The government also commandeered the hay ricks leaving just enough for the farm's own use. They stuck arrows in the ricks with WD [war dept.] on them, which could not be pulled out. They took the crops the following year, at hay making time a show engine with a baler was sent to help, with a parson's son to drive it. He knew nothing about it, one minute he had too much steam and the next not enough, much to the amusement of the onlookers. A gang of land girls fed the baler with hay, 200lbs



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-212lbs each with 5 bands of wire round them. They were loaded on to a steam brick wagon, which came from Honeybourne brick works, and taken to Littleton & Badsey station to be loaded on to trucks to be sent to France as fodder for the horses. It was also put in deep brooks & streams to help get the guns across.

All the young men in the village joined Kitchener's Army, mostly never to return home.



This picture came from the Jack Stock family and was from his collection. All we know is that they were his un-named friends from the village. If anyone can help to identify them we would be grateful. - The Chronicler

Zeppelins used to come over at night to bomb places, Scarborough was the chief place.

There were very bad times between the wars.

1921 was another dry summer and on the occasion of Jacks 21st birthday. He spent the day ploughing until 3 o'clock. His mother had made some claret for his party later in the day, it was in the dairy cooling, but Jack couldn't wait and had a good drink of it. Earlier in the day there had been a shoot round Cleeve Green and people who had week end cottages in the village joined in. Jacks party was held in the new village hall, the whisky came from the Kings Arms.

At this time Jack went to the pictures every Saturday night. He went ice skating in Ragley Park, where he had a collision with Bill holder. He fell and broke his nose but didn't dare tell his mother what had happened because he shouldn't have been there. He had a crooked nose for the rest of his life