

LOCAL VILLAGE LIFE FROM 1900

To many of the young and strong people now doing good and responsible jobs of work, the first half of the century may be little more than history. The object of these notes is to record some of the prevailing conditions at that time.

There was no radio or television, motor cars were only in the early stages of development and only for the very few; electricity, the same as for the motor car. Communication and movement was very restricted. No welfare state and an Old Age Pension was ten shillings (50p) per week.

The doctor's practice spread over a considerable area and the tradesmen, the baker, butcher, hardware, boots and shoes all had their place.

Means of employment were builders, masons, carpenters, painters, railway staff, policemen, postmen, blacksmith and saddler. A position as groom, gardener or maintenance staff at the Manor House Estate was much sought after.

By far the highest in any one occupation was the number required to work on the farms; this work by its very nature was quiet, humdrum and really poorly paid. There were the dairy herdsmen (cowmen), stockmen, shepherd, daymen, carter (head of the stable) with other staff according to the size of the farm and number of horses required. These were big fine heavy draft horses, ten to thirty in number. The care of these took long hours morning and evening, plus seven to eight hours out in the fields, ploughing, cultivating, drilling, (sowing the seed), all slogging foot work. In season there was the haymaking, and the harvesting of corn and other root crops. For these long and arduous hours of work the pay was £1.10s.0d. to £2.0s.0d. per week, plus harvest and haymaking money. In season these men had to prepare and plant their own gardens, allotments and harvest the potatoes, a vital part of the family's food throughout the year with other crops. Therefore, it is plain to see these people saw little social life, only the occasional special event.

Between 1900 and 1950 two world wars caused much disturbance and distress. The young men went on military service, and as the village memorials show, many died in battle.

Housing was really very poor for these people, and much credit is due to the wives and mothers for the way they raised their families. There were giants in those days, in character, if not in physique.

A description of the various branches of the farm's work are more than enough for another article.

These notes are based on the actual experience of the writer, who would willingly give a detailed reply to any enquiry regarding the article.

My name and address is obtainable from the Editor.

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### 1st LEAFIELD GIRL GUIDES

The 1st Leafield Guides, who come from Milton, Shipton, Ascott, Fordwells and Chilson, have recently enjoyed a course of talks on local history by Mr. N. Frost. We heard about the early people at Lyneham Camp, the settlement of Saxon villages, and more recent developments, including the Ascott martyrs, and the importance of Groves as employers in the 19th century, amongst many other things. Pictures, photographs, artefact we could handle, buildings we could see, news of current research and family stories of the Ascott martyrs, helped to make the subject fascinating. We were enthusiastic enough to go on to take the Local History Badge, for which we had to cook a local dish or act out a local legend, as well as pass a short written test, and the following girls were successful:- Samantha Allen, Tracey Appleton, Gayle Baker, Mandy Baker, Rachel Barefield, Veronica Cox, Joanne Dore, Emily Fletcher Lisa Howell, Rebecca Millard, Stephenie Pearson, Rebecca Scully, Claire Stephens, Debbie Stringer, Lisa Taylor and Claire Turner.