

Loders Back-Along

Schoolboy Memories from the 1950s
and Pictures from Even Earlier



Written and Compiled by Bernard Paull

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(Schoolboy Memories from the 1950s
and Pictures from Even Earlier)

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by

Bernard Paull

With help and information from friends and family



Uploders (West) c1930 by Claud Hider

Second Edition - November 2020

With Minor Amendments, Additions,
Addendum and Index of Names Added

Dedicated to family and friends and all who have
ever lived in this delightful West Dorset village.



Lower Lodgers c1905 by Bridport Photographer Potts

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Contents

Page	Details
4	Introduction
6	Thanks and Appreciation
7	Part I - Village Life in the 1950s
51	Part II - Life in Loders; Late 1800s to the 1950s
160	Addendum - Memories of a Wartime Evacuee
167	Bibliography
168	Index of Names
172	The Author

Introduction

For almost 40 years I have been collecting postcards and photographs of Loders. Our old family photographs were a good starting point. I have added to these by spending many hours trawling through the stocks of dealers at postcard fairs and browsing the internet.

In 2001 I gave my first public display, 'Loders - A Trip Down Memory Lane' at the new Loders Village Hall. The pictures were photographed on to 35mm slides and displayed using a slide projector. As always happens, and to some amusement, one or two were upside-down or back-to-front but overall the evening went well with much audience participation. After the show several people kindly allowed me to borrow and copy their pictures and add them to the collection for future use. Some are included in this book.

Since then I have given a few more presentations, the last in 2018 for the Loders' History Society. After each I have had similar offers which I have been pleased to accept and for which I am extremely grateful.

At my first display in 2001 I was asked "Why don't you write a book?". Over the years I have written up the collection getting much help mainly from those older than I am who grew up in the village. Sadly, not many are left now. My mother was particularly good. She named almost all of the folks in the old family pictures and dated them.

With the help of these old postcards and photographs we can look back at life and events from the late 1800s to the end of the 1950s.

Whenever possible (with the help of others) people in the photographs and locations are named. No doubt, some will be wrong. If they are, please let me know. It will be corrected in the reprint; if there is one!

The girls and ladies in the pictures have been named as they were when the photographs were taken. If they married later and their married name is known it is added in brackets. If they were married when the picture was taken their married name will be given. In a few cases if, for example, they grew up in the village or had connections with it, their maiden names will also be given.

The Title. For anyone unfamiliar with the local dialect “Back-along” simply means ‘in the past’ or ‘some time ago’. For example, if the old folks were asked when an event had taken place they would reply “Ah, that were back-along”.

Part I covers the years just after the Second World War. It is based on my own personal recollections and those of a few others who were around then. It recalls how life in the village was in the late 1940s and 1950s. Although things had changed since the late 1800s, many aspects of life were not dissimilar to how they were 50 years earlier.

Part II looks at the period from the late 1800s to just after the end of the Second World War. We take a journey through the village from east to west passing through Uploders, Yondover and Lower Loders to look back to those times and events of yester-year. Most people would have worked in the village or very nearby. Life otherwise centred around the family, the church, the school, the ‘Big Houses’, social groups and activities and, of course, the pubs which were just drinking places; very different from the pubs of today.

November 2020 - Amendments, Additions and Addendum

I am very grateful for the comments and the extra information provided by the readers of the first printing and the errors they pointed out and corrected. All of this has been incorporated in this new edition and, hopefully, improving its accuracy and adding a few more interesting facts. But please let me know if you spot any inaccuracies or can add anything more to the stories.

The first edition was listed on eBay. The first purchaser was Will Roberts whose father, Lionel, was a war-time evacuee in Loders during the Second World War. Will put me in touch with his father, then aged 92. He had vivid and detailed memories of his time spent in the village. In our numerous telephone conversations he recounted a number of fascinating and, at times, amusing, stories of his time here as an evacuee. Some of these are described in the addendum to this book. I hope you enjoy them, too.

Thanks and Appreciation

I would like to give my thanks and appreciation to all of those who helped me in any way. In particular the following who knowingly, and sometimes unknowingly, have helped me put the two editions of this book together.

Keith Alner, Pat Bown (née Ascott), Annelie Burrell (Talbot), Jessie Barrett (née Crabb), David Crabb, Paul Fuszard, Christine Harris, Arthur Hobbs, Clive Jeanes, Don Knight, Lionel Roberts, Brian Stidwell, Alan Symes, Philip Symes, Chuck Willmott and the Late Mrs Bishop, Bill Budden, Bill Darby, Marjorie Randall, Andrew Skeats, Derrick Skeats and Tony Yarde for the use of their pictures and postcards, their knowledge, information and general help and advice.

Helen Doble (née Crabb) for helpfully and willingly passing on her knowledge, photographs and good advice. And, for this second edition, answering some of the questions posed in the first edition, providing more information and pictures to complete some of the stories.

Elizabeth Gale for her encouragement and advice from the beginning, her comments on the numerous drafts and spotting the mistakes in them. Her contribution on the Askerswell and District Young Farmers and, latterly, the provision of an index of names for this Second Edition.

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Colin Ballard and Steven Lincoln for their help and advice in getting this book to print and Colin Bowditch for his input on the North Devon Reds.

Margot Blackah for undertaking the final proof reading and her good and helpful advice.

The postcard dealers who have helped me in the search for 'anything from Lodgers' and anyone else who I may have overlooked.

My mother, Annie Paull, who gave me such a good start with the old family pictures and postcards and who diligently recorded details of the pictures on their backs and who was able to give me information on any cards I had obtained.

Finally, my wife Christine for her considerable patience while I was compiling the book. (It took far longer than I thought it would!) For her ongoing checking, comments and advice on the wording and content and keeping me at it when I would have preferred to be doing other things!

PART I

Village Life in the 1950s

Page	Details
8	Domestic Life
11	Electricity
12	The Wireless
13	Water Supply
15	Monday was Washing Day
17	Toilet Facilities
18	Transport
20	Shopping and Tradesmen
24	School
31	Leisure Time
34	Sunday School
36	Bonfire Night
37	Earning a Few Coppers
38	Loders Court
40	1953 - The Coronation and Television
42	Loders Arms Skittle Team and The Loders Football Club.
43	Women's Institute
44	The Askerswell & District Young Farmer's Club
48	My Boyhood Memories of David Skeats

Village Life in the 1950s

Domestic Life

As a child anywhere within our reach was our playground; the fields, the roads and river. The only consideration was to arrive home in time for dinner! We wore our clothes until they were worn out. Our socks and jumpers were darned and patches sewn on our trousers and jackets. The older generation were addressed as Mr, Mrs or Miss unless they were relations. Many were, in which case they were uncle, aunty, granny or grandad. Our mothers wore frocks, we listened to the wireless, couples went courting and we caught the train at the *RAILWAY* Station! (Where did *Train Station* come from?)

Most of the families in the village could be traced back generations. Although the numbers working on the farms had dwindled with the introduction of mechanisation a lot were still employed as farmworkers. There were many small farms run by the husband and wife with occasional help from casual labour. A few men specialised in this type of work and did a bit of hedging and ditching or helped at harvest and other busy times. Others worked in Bridport or in other nearby villages. The houses were permanently occupied by these local working families, their elderly relatives and a few who had moved in for retirement. There were no holiday lettings or second homes.

The domestic arrangements were very simple and straightforward. When first married most women carried on working. Once the children came along they took on a different role. They stayed at home to look after the family, to cook, wash, iron, clean, tend to any livestock they might have and to keep the flower garden (or the flower knot as it was called then) colourful, neat and tidy.

They also took responsibility for elderly relatives who either lived with them or somewhere close by. The elderly couples stayed in their houses as long as they were able but once one of them passed away it was not unusual that the surviving one moved in with the family. There was very little social care as we know it and although there were Homes for the elderly and infirm they were firmly resisted by anyone approaching that time of life. "I will never go into a Home" were words we had all heard and understood. Who would want to?

The men went to work for five and a half or even six days a week for long hours and with overtime when demanded. They tended the garden, not as a hobby but as a necessity, to supply fruit and vegetables for the family. They did repairs and decorating around the house and occasionally went to the pub for a couple of pints.



To fill in any spare time they might have and to earn a bit of extra money a lot of the women in and around Bridport, including Loders, took in work from the Bridport net firms. Annie Paull, my mother (left) was one of them. Here she is in the garden, braiding on a warm and sunny summer evening.

We ate vegetables in season and we looked forward to the first pickings of peas, broad beans,

runner beans, potatoes, carrots, strawberries and raspberries but maybe not so much the Brussels sprouts!

People grew a lot of their own produce but there were still a couple of market gardeners. I remember my mother buying new potatoes from Sid Marsh at 37, Loders. He had wonderful crops in a well stocked garden that stretched from the back of his cottage down to the river.

Domestic freezers had not yet arrived in Loders so fruit and vegetables were preserved in other ways. Fruit was bottled or used to make jam. Apples were carefully wrapped in paper and stored in cool houses alongside potatoes in wooden boxes and onions on strings. Runner beans were sliced and placed in jars in layers with salt in between for use over the winter. Removed from the jars, thoroughly rinsed then cooked, they tended to taste salty but were fine. A taste of summer in the winter.

Even though much of the war-time rationing had ended supplies in the shops were limited compared with today so very little was wasted. We ate (or were expected to eat) all of the food on our plates. We had fruit and vegetables from the garden and many kept chickens but if not, eggs were readily available from farms or from people who kept poultry.

Frank and Ena Crabb, our next door neighbours and my uncle and aunt, kept chickens and occasionally geese for the oven at Christmas.

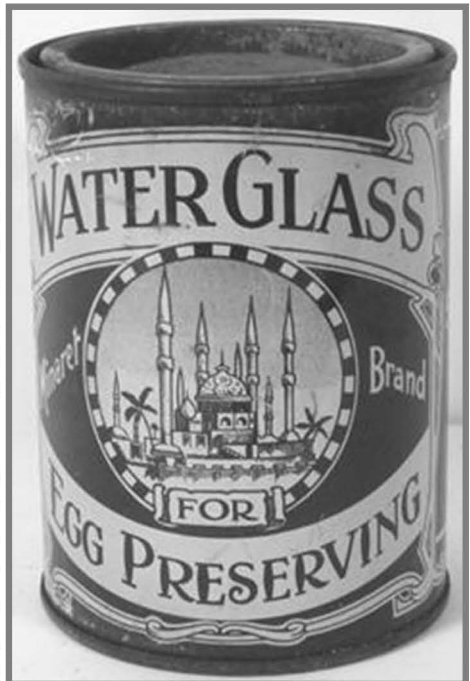
They had a spacious chicken run set on the slope from their garden down to the River Asker. There were a couple of hutches and fresh spring water that trickled from a pipe into a large cast-iron bowl. The bowl was from an old copper; more details of that later. Foxes were always a threat to chickens but with Uncle Frank's secure fence and sturdy hutches there were never any problems.

The chickens were well fed with corn and maize. They were also given a mix of bran with potato peelings, stale bread and any other vegetable waste but no meat, all mixed together and cooked. I rather liked the aroma that came from the stodgy mix as it bubbled on the stove. It was rather similar to the smell from brewery when they are brewing; something I also enjoy! The chickens enjoyed it too and tucked in to the sticky mix in their trough with enthusiasm.

At the back of Frank and Ena's house was a semi-glazed lean-to which, up to about the early 1950s, contained a large glazed earthenware jar of preserved eggs in a mysterious solution. Having now researched the subject, I can say with some certainty that the preservative was either Isinglass or, more probably, Water-Glass.

The powder came in a tin. It was poured into a bucket and mixed with water until the cloudy grey mixture reached the consistency of very liquid wallpaper paste. Any surplus (raw) eggs were lowered gently into the jar so as not to crack and were then covered with the Water-Glass solution.

How long the eggs remained edible I do not know but I imagine they were marked with the date they were laid to ensure that the older ones were used first. To my knowledge I never had the pleasure of eating one. Or maybe I was just not told!



Electricity

Electricity arrived in 1936. By 1950 most houses had been connected. Electricians Edward Marsh from Trossachs (now Butterwell) and Maurice Tucker, the son of Henry Tucker the head gardener at Uploders House, wired many village properties.



People enjoyed the pleasure and convenience of light at the flick of a switch and the ease and cleanliness of cooking on an electric cooker, (above left) compared with the kitchen range (right). Most agreed, though, that food cooked in the range tasted much better and the meat was more tender than that cooked in the electric oven. I would not disagree but electricity did make life a great deal easier!

My Great-grandfather's brother, Alf Marsh, and his wife Emily moved from Maycroft Road, Weymouth to Maycroft in Uploders when he retired from the Police. This probably explains why the house is named 'Maycroft', or perhaps it was just a coincidence. The rented house had no electricity and it remained that way until Emily passed away in 1971. She was widowed in 1947 and although the landlord offered to install electricity she preferred to carry on as she always had with coal fires, oil lamps and her range. Maycroft was probably the last house in the village not to have mains electricity. Riverdale continued in the same way until Granny Hyde passed away in 1960.



The Wireless



The wireless (left) gave us the BBC Light Programme and Home Service and programmes we would not miss; The Archers, Dick Barton Special Agent, Journey in to Space, Life with the Lyons, Have-a-Go with Wilfred Pickles, Family Favourites on Sundays and many others.

In the evenings we tried to tune in to Radio Luxembourg (on 208 metres medium wave band) to listen to the latest pop music. Being a commercial station there were the adverts. We all remember the Infra-Draw method devised by Horace

Batchelor from Keynsham (spelt K-E-Y-N-S-H-A-M,) Bristol which guaranteed wins on the football pools. If the method was that good, I wondered, why didn't he just keep it to himself?

Even though there was mains electricity after 1936 a few of the more elderly folk still kept their old wireless set that ran on an accumulator (right). This was similar to a car battery with lead plates and sulphuric acid in a thick glass container. The accumulators, like any battery, went flat with use but could be recharged.

After the installation of mains electricity, Mr Brown at Brook Barton offered a re-charging service which he operated until the 1950s. Ackerman's from Bridport offered a similar service which was available before 1936. They visited the village weekly and replaced discharged accumulators with fully charged ones. To make sure they always had a charged accumulator people kept several on standby.

