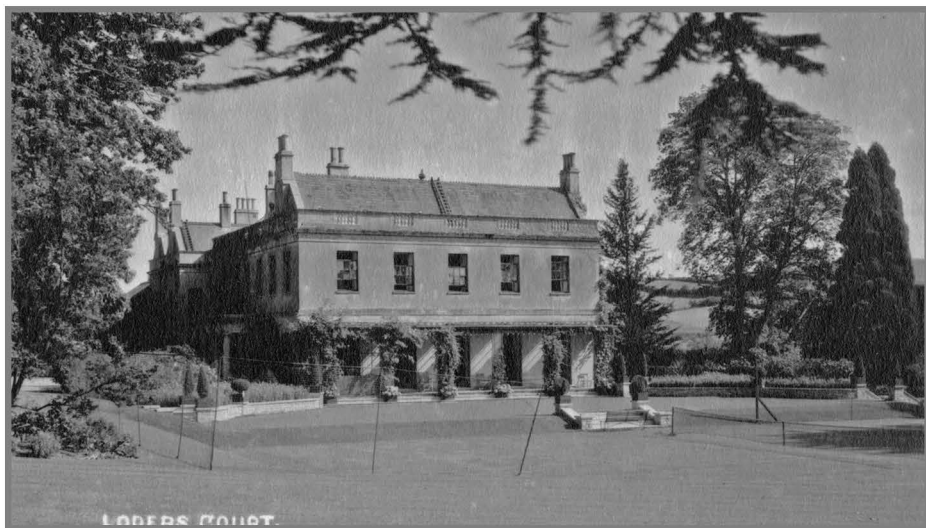


When we reached our early teens the boys of Loders and Bradpole were allowed to use the billiard table, the tennis court and, when we were about 15, the squash court.

The door to the Billiard Room was off the veranda (see below). It was a large room that smelt of cigar smoke with the billiard table at one end. The other end was fairly clear of furniture, just a few armchairs and a settee. A few pairs of boxing gloves were scattered on a side table for anyone who fancied a fight. Most of us tried it once or twice but decided we preferred snooker and billiards rather than a punch on the nose!

We spent many summer evenings playing tennis, sometimes until it was almost dark. Some evenings the tennis court was reserved for other groups, the staff from the Bridport Railway Station was one, but if they didn't turn up we were free to move in.



The squash court was one of very few in the area. Several school friends cycled out to Loders on Saturday afternoons for a game. Peter Gregory and Richard (Rick) Wills (later my best man) joined the village boys Brian Bolton and me. We were not particularly sophisticated to begin with and Peter ended up with smashed glasses from an over enthusiastic back-swing; something you should not do in squash. When we had improved we had games against Sir Edward. He was in his mid-seventies and not particularly mobile. We were about 16 and fairly fit but we had no answer to his skill. He dominated the centre of the court so that we were forced to run round him to every corner of the court. Red faced and dripping sweat we were hammered but we learnt a few tricks to add to our skills. It was not many years later in 1961 that Sir Edward sadly passed away.

## 1953 - The Coronation and Television

One of the most memorable events in the 1950s was the Queen's Coronation on Tuesday 2 June 1953.

Very few people had television sets but those who did kindly invited those who didn't to their houses to watch this historic event. About 40 of us joined the Rice-Oxley's at Knowle Farm to watch the black and white pictures on a 12 or 14 inch screen in its sturdy wooden cabinet.

There was local interest in the ceremony. Colonel Sir Edward Le Breton from Loders Court was a Gentleman-at-Arms to the Queen at the Coronation, they lined the route in the Chancel of Westminster Abbey. He brought back the blue screens which were placed behind the alter in Loders Church.

Houses in the village were decorated with red, white and blue flags, bunting and pictures of the Queen. At 3.30pm on the afternoon of Coronation Day a colourful fancy dress parade set off from Matravers bound for Loders Court.



(Above) The parade led by Frank Good marches past the Chapel and Knowle Farm in Uploders. Over his left shoulder is Dora Legg, behind and in-line with the telegraph pole is Phyllis Bunnell (née Thomas). The man in the suit and trilby hat on the left is Alby (Tubby) Wells with Edna Driver (née Baker) alongside him.

At Loders Court tea, cakes and soft drinks were provided. Sports and games included a tug-of-war across the river.

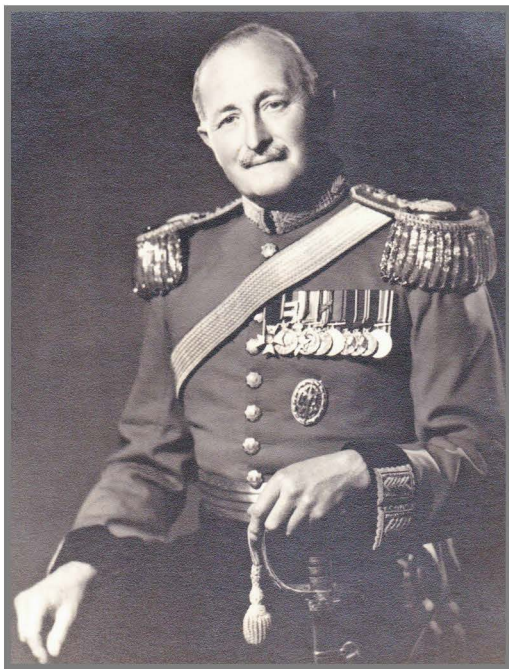


Every child in the village was presented with a Coronation mug, a gift from Sir Edward and Lady Le Breton.

The mugs were inscribed on the back 'From Col. Sir Edward and Lady Le Breton'. In the absence of Sir Edward, pictured below in his Gentleman Arms uniform, the mugs were handed over by his grandson, Edward Laskey.

In the evening entertainment and much merriment took place in the Hut which was decorated with red, white and blue flags and bunting. Fireworks and a bonfire on Mr Wilfred Crabb's field across the road ended the celebrations.

Luckily most of the few who purchased or rented televisions did so at least a few weeks before the Coronation which meant that on 2 May 1953 many of the men of the village and their sons (there was very little political correctness in those days) were invited to watch the Cup Final. Blackpool beat Bolton Wanderers 4-3 to



great national acclaim. Stanley Mathews had at last won a cup-winner's medal having been on the losing side twice before in the 1948 and 1951 finals. He was the toast of the nation except, of course, to the Bolton fans. But even they acknowledged that he deserved it.

## The Loders Arms Skittles Team



The 1953 Lock-Hansford Cup winners. (Back row from left) Fred Kick, Vernon Kick, Clem Poole, Bill Paull, (my father) Harold Darby, Sam Legg, Frank Osborne (Landlord). (Sitting, from left) Cecil Rogers and Dick Darby. As there was no skittle alley at the Loders Arms in 1953 all matches were played on away alleys.

## The Loders Football Club



Loders played on the field on the south side of the road to Bradpole and adjoining the track to Boarsbarrow Farm. Halfway to the Mangerton river a hedge divided what is now one large field. Steps from road gave access to people from Bradpole. There were no changing rooms. The team in the early 1960s, (back from the left) Sid Bullied, Olwyn Canterbury, Ken Solace, ? Hunt, Gordon Northover, Boly Burt. (Front ) Tony Wellman, Dave Winters, Peter Culver, Don Townsend, David Gill.



## The Women's Institute



In 1960 the Loders WI celebrated its 13th anniversary of its re-establishment in 1947. The picture above was taken at Loders Mill in 1947. Those present are (from the left: back row) Miss Holmes, -?, Lady Le Breton, Mrs Ebbs, May Osborne, Netta Taylor, Amy Darby, Joan Scott, Mrs Bond, Sis Gale, Ann Crabb, Lizzie Crabb, Mrs Pitcher, Mrs Wells, Mrs Swaffield, Mrs Townsend, Mrs Crabb and Miss Butterworth.

(Front) Miss Hinks, -?, Olive Legg, Mrs Holmes, Mrs Whittle, Mrs Tiltman, Mrs Moon, Nellie Crabb, Mrs Willmott, Granny Hyde, Grace Hyde, Dora Hyde, Mrs Dick Hyde, Mrs Thomas, Mrs Payvey, -?, Mrs Pitcher, Elsie Poole, Edith Hinks. (Standing), Mrs Diment and Grannie Crabb. The children are Rosamund and Mary Willmott, Bryan Hyde and Jannette Bond.



The Christmas meeting of the Loders WI c1952 in The Ex-Servicemen's Hut. Centre. at the table is Mrs Wells. Standing from the left -?, Mrs Crabb, Olive Legg, -?, Phyllis Bunnell, Mrs Willmott, Ena Crabb, -?, Pearl Symes. Sitting from the left 4<sup>th</sup> Netta Taylor, 8<sup>th</sup> Marjorie Gale, 11<sup>th</sup> Mabel Skeats, 14<sup>th</sup> May Osborne, 16<sup>th</sup> Lizzie Crabb.

## Askerswell & District Young Farmers Club (AYFC)

Contributed by Elizabeth Gale, née Buckler

The Askerswell and District Young Farmers' Club was founded on 4<sup>th</sup> December 1936 by George Jesse a farmer from Askerswell, already familiar with the movement in Sussex, Colonel Wordsworth, the Reverend Pope, a dozen other local prominent farmers and Ralph Wightman, the Dorset broadcaster, author and commentator, friend of the Lenthalls of Upton Manor Farm. The Club was run at first by an adult advisory committee with a junior chairman, the first being Bill Dawe, who farmed at North Eggardon. The Askerswell schoolroom was hired at four shillings per evening for meetings where some 20 members were welcomed.

The original aims were to educate the young farmers, most from typical West Dorset family farms, in cattle husbandry and calf rearing. Lloyds Bank advanced the money to purchase twenty-six Shorthorn calves at Sturminster Market averaging £3 to £5 each and members drew lots to secure one to rear and show. At the first calf show, held at Dorchester Market, the best heifer prize was awarded to Walter Bishop of Yondover, Loders.

During the Second World War some meetings were postponed as members were busy on the land. Outings were curtailed but money for the Red Cross Society was raised by holding a dance, at Askers Road House, tickets 3/6d. During the war, members collected waste paper and farm safety talks featured. To reduce the number of windows to black-out, the venue was moved to Loders Parish Room adjacent to the Crown Inn in Uploders. West of England sacks made ideal black-out material! Land Girls were invited to meetings and a number stayed on after the war.

The Club membership had grown by 1945 and the calf showing was allowed to fade out as other competitions were taking prominence. A larger hall was needed and the move to the more central Loders Hut was made. Quite chilly with a knotted floor, precarious stage, simple kitchen cum dressing room facilities, an Elsan lavatory and a single tap; it was of its day, perfectly suitable, an asset to the village and many happy times were spent there. Well-known speakers and demonstrators came along and there were visits to go-ahead farms. Modern agricultural methods were advised.

An inter-club Rally took place in the Marshwood Vale with competitions for boys in field contests and in a tent where the girls competed in home crafts. The day ended with County President Rolf Gardiner, a flax growing expert and his wife vigorously leading Morris Dancing.

Rolf Gardiner had a great affection for the Askerswell Club and initiated a Harvest Supper in Loders Hut for guests, members and parents. The room was decorated with hedgerow foliage and in spite of being a wooden building it was brilliantly lit by candles. The parents provided the food which consisted of cold roast chicken, game birds, venison, home-killed pork, trifles, home-made bread, cheese and butter, cider and home-made wine. Muriel Randall led the proceedings and produced an entertainment. At the end of the evening members undertook the washing-up in tin bowls in the very basic kitchen.

The Harvest Supper then became a highly contested Inter-Club County Federation competition for the coveted Rolf Gardiner Loving Cup with other challenges springing up to fill the programme such as public speaking, entertainment, hedging, milking, stock-judging, the annual inter-club rally and overall the huge Upton Oil Cup for the most proficient club. Over the years Askerswell took these various trophies time and time again. At one stage the Upton Cup came home to Lodors three times in close succession. Edgar Bishop was one of several popular Club Leaders.

In 1951, local Boarsbarrow farmer's son, Clifford Pitcher was elected Chairman and remained in office for three years during the Club's heyday. He owned a car and it could often be seen loaded with the young folk; bicycles being the usual means of transport. Supporting him was a superb team of members who participated in everything.

Through the 1950s the Club dominated the County movement. The girls made and embroidered Hessian sack skirts to wear at a harvest supper. Several members journeyed on exchange visits to other countries. Visits were made by Dutch girls and the Exeter Young Farmers' Club when Albert (Tubby) Wells, was president of the Askerswell club.

Farmers lent land on which potatoes were grown, harvested and sold to raise funds; it was a time of high activity. Over the years there were several marriages within the Club.



(Above) The 1953 Harvest Supper in Lodors Hut with (left to right): - Chairman Clifford Pitcher, President Martin Lenthall, Club Leader Alan Musgrove and Secretary Elizabeth Buckler (Gale).





(Above) The Follies entertainment at the Harvest Supper in 1953 which went on to win the County competition. Left to right the cast are, Jessie Crabb (Barrett), Doreen Barnes (Doble), Bill Hounsell (standing), Elizabeth Buckler (Gale), Bill Ives, Clifford Pitcher and Beryl Curran (Samways).



Visit of the Exeter Young Farmers Club in 1957. (Front, from the left) Tubby Wells, Monica Page and Daphne Cooper. Immediately behind are Chairman Elizabeth Buckler (Gale), Exeter YFC Chairman, Guy Gale, AYFC Vice-Chairman, Ann Groves, Jennifer Aldridge. Standing at the back are, Mavis Woodward, Audrey Marsh, Margaret Barnes, David Curran and Miriam Bugler.



In 1957 the Club's 21st birthday was celebrated at Askers Road House, on a wet, cold and foggy December evening. The celebrations took the form of a dinner, "This is Your Life" entertainment featuring the Club, dancing and cutting a decorated cake, resembling a farmyard. Marjorie Randall then working in Africa sent a surprise congratulatory cable.

When the membership reached eighty in the late 1950s, Loders Hut was almost outgrown. For the larger events the club moved to Burton Bradstock W.I. Hall and meetings were held at the Conservative Rooms in Bridport.

However, Loders Hut was often put to good use, such as in 1962 there was a great evening when the visiting Dutch Agricultural students were given a party there. The Hut, hung with lines of newspaper, was ideal for a tramp-theme fish and chips supper, too. (Above) The Dutch Students washing outside the Hut before the party.



Still the success and education continued into the 1960s but the older troupe had moved on having reached twenty-six, the upper age limit for membership. By 1965/66 the numbers had dwindled and it was decided that there were far more youngsters in the Bride Valley and a new organisation was started there.

Askerswell and District Young Farmers' Club's notable existence was brought to a close after thirty years, with a Thanksgiving Service in Loders Church, conducted by the Reverend Oliver Willmott. That final evening concluded with a bittersweet party in Loders Hut, a display of old photographs and a toast to the future.

## My Boyhood memories of David Skeats.

*In August 2018 one of my childhood friends, David Skeats, sadly passed away in Norfolk where he had lived for many years. As his family in Norfolk knew very little about his childhood I was asked by Alan Symes to write a few words about his life when he was a boy. This I did and it was read out at his funeral and I received a letter of thanks from one of his daughters. I have decided to include this tribute to David in his memory and as a reminder of what life was like for small boys in the 1950s.*



(Left) David's mother Mabel Symes (Skeats) and my mother (right) Annie Hawker (Paul) in about 1925. They were friends who grew up together in Uploders and went to the village school in Loders. They both married during the war and David and I came along close together so it was no surprise that we too became good friends.

(Right) Twenty-two years later in 1947, from the left, my mother with me and Mabel Skeats with David by the basin (harbour) in West Bay.

