

Int. What about other festivals, for instance, Coronation, Jubilee and things like that.

B.B. Yes, those things took place, small carnivals. Don't remember taking part in them very much. We had a village fete and I don't remember too much about that, except that I must have gone to it. We had skittles up at the ex-servicemen's hut, as it was, whist drives, of course, in the winter evenings, no doubt bingo. That was about the limit. We had a cinema in Bridport and used to cycle in. I'm not sure when the cinema first opened, but I can remember seeing silent films there with my father, and we would cycle in of an evening, to see them. We really were too mean to go by car to the cinema.

Int. What was the influence, in those days, of the church on the village?

B.B. Oh, I think it was a greater influence than today, because the parson only had, of course, the one parish and he and his wife, almost all the ones that I can remember, took part in everything in the parish, including the school and the Sunday School. There were bigger congregations, of course, and services both Sunday morning and Sunday evening. Sometimes I had to go to both, because I had to go in the morning because of Sunday School, then in the evening, my parents might decide to go, so we had to go again, which we didn't very much relish.

Int. Traditionally, I suppose, most people in the village went to church, did they, at that time?

B.B. As far as I can remember, yes, the congregations were quite large, especially in the evenings, very large at Christmas and Easter and other festivals. For Armistice, the ex-servicemen used to parade through the village, go to the church for Armistice evening.

4 Int. What about people, were there any personalities, that you particularly remember, in the village?

B.B. Oh yes, I think both carpenters were, for some reason, they were both practical jokers, and they would set people up. I can remember Bill Symes, opposite, playing all kinds of practical jokes on my aunts, who were then growing up and courting and getting married, from Pound cottage. I can remember him chasing one of my aunts down the street, to measure her bottom, because her father had asked him to make a new toilet seat, and I think they had a three seater at Pound Cottage, because it was quite a large family. Freddy Fooks, the other carpenter was quite a practical joker, as well. There were entertainers in the village and for the moment I can't recall them, but they were quite ready to sing at concerts at the village hall. Outsiders would come in and sing, also.

Int. And they had carol singing, as well, at Christmas.



B.B. I don't remember carol singing, though I'm sure there was. I didn't take part in it, for some reason.

Int. Tell me about the harvest time in Loders, when you were young.

B.B. I can remember watching the corn being cut, with a team of horses and there was a self-binder then. The sheaves were bound, then stooked afterwards. It was always fun to go to corn cutting, because you got yourself a large stick, with a big knob on the end and you knocked down rabbits, who ran out of the corn as it was being cut, and we used to knock down quite a lot of rabbits in that way. They were sitting in the corn and, I suppose, couldn't hear the machine, or probably ran towards the centre and once you got near the centre, they had to run out. And, er, our hay was cut under contract always, we never cut our own, because we didn't own a grass mowing machine, but someone would come with a couple of horses, one of the other farmers, I suspect, and cut it for us. They all had teams of horses. My grandmother lived in Yondover, then, where Arthur Crabb is now living, that was my mother's mother, and they had two carthorses and used to do some work for us. Also there was a mechanised traction engine, with a thrashing machine towed behind it, with big belts and drives, that was owned by the Bishop family, down at Yondover, where Pat Hughes is now living, and they hired their services out with a gang of men, to go around all the farms, thrashing. That was quite a big investment, I imagine, and it was quite a noisy business. Many people in the village turned up for haymaking, to help farmers, because it was essential to get the hay in, and the corn in before the weather broke. They considered it some fun and recreation to go and have some jars of cider and make hay for the farmers. I don't think they got very much for it, but there was a great sense of camaraderie. If there was a disaster or a storm, the whole village shared in the concern of the farmer, and helped him out. We could get up at any time of the night and we knew that we could find several men who'd come and help us rope the roof on, which we had to do at one time, because we were thatched.

Int. What sort of games did you play in your early childhood?

B.B. Well, I think we had our bicycles. That took up a certain amount of our time; we used to race each other up and down School Lane. We had spinning tops from a very early age. I can remember having coloured spinning tops and a whip, whipping these up on a level piece of ground. We had tennis rackets and balls at a very early age and we used to bash them up at the front of the house, in the middle of the road and move off when the traffic or a cart came by. We didn't have very much else to play with, other than our toys, which, I remember, became mechanised



quite early. I had a steam engine, and what was called a cinematograph, then, which you turned by hand, and also a train set etc, in the very early days. They were quite cheap to buy. We didn't have very much else in the way of toys, which they have today. I don't remember playing many games. We were a busy family, we always seemed to have some work to do. I would have to peel potatoes or pick potatoes up, or pick apples up for cider apples, or something. We always had to work as kids, very much, but we did play some soccer and cricket, especially after we got to the grammar school, and as I say, we used to play tennis, but I don't remember very much of sport.

Int. How do you see the village now, in 1988? Do you feel it's changed radically from when you were a child?

B.B. Oh yes, certainly, I think the coming of the motor car has brought the greatest change and then, of course, the population has changed. The youngsters haven't been able to afford to grow up and marry and stay in the village, as they seemed to do when I was young. There isn't enough work to provide for them within the village and neither is there at Bridport, if they're ambitious at all, they have to go away. So that's led to houses being vacated, cottages being vacated by families and they have been bought by people from the cities, as holiday homes and retirement homes. So now we have a changing population. We have many retirees here, who didn't grow up here. Neither do they have kids here, going to the school. Many kids who went to the school have gone away, as I did, into the war, and my brother did, immediately he finished school. He went to Bristol, I went into the RAF, at age 19, in 1940; and I never came back to the village - simple reason- there wasn't a job here which I could do and which would give me the standard of living I felt I wanted. Same with my brother, he went on to much more further education than I did, he went to Bristol, to a Merchant Ventures College, then to Lee High University in the States, then to Harvard. So, youngsters aren't staying here, they aren't growing up and being teenagers here and families aren't marrying and staying and reproducing, so the village is quite different. I used to know everybody, when I was a kid, in the village, and I used to talk to them. They used to talk to kids, they had time to talk, of course. They didn't speed by in motor cars and, yes, it is changed very much.

Int. The atmosphere of the village is very different, is it?

B.B. Yes, for the same reasons, I suppose. The villagers or the householders are from different walks of life. That makes it interesting, mostly they are taking part in village affairs, and this is one of the better villages that I know of here in West Dorset, and that's why I came back here to live. Some villages,

of course, have been spoilt completely, but Loders hasn't. But it is busy and noisy and er, much more so than when I was a kid.

I think we're more of a village than some of the long, straggling ones, such as West Milton and Powerstock. They haven't had quite so much building, but we have retained our Post Office and village shop and, er, two pubs and this is the centre of life I'm sure, and we have a very active Youth Club. All these things help to make people get to know each other; and we have a very good church fete every year and a very good Uploders fair, that's all fun and the whole village mixes in and makes something of it, which doesn't happen in some of the other villages that I know of.

Int. So you feel that the village people still take part in these activities. They haven't been left out or cut out, in any sense by the newcomers.

B.B. No, I don't think so, they take part. Some of the villagers have less means than the newcomers, to travel, and therefore it is probably more important to them for a function in the village hall.