

Dial Post 1939 onwards

I was born at Hobshorts farm in Nov 1939. It was very wet and I am told that as the brooks flooded Mr Beck's sheep swam across the river and ended up at Hobshorts, so he called to see mother [and me] when he came to collect them.

In those days farm tenancies were yearly, and at that time my father had Thistleworth as well - some 400 acres - an enormous undertaking at that time with only horses and hand labour to do the work. The Harvey family at Lock Estate wanted to add Hobshorts to their farm, and father was under some pressure to give it up. We had problems with Brucellosis and Johnes disease at the time and he was quite glad to reduce his commitments, so he gave up Hobshorts and we moved to Thistleworth, which is where I grew up from the age of about two.

I went to school at Dial Post from about 1944 until I was fortunate to be accepted at Collyers in Horsham in 1950. Dial Post school was a typical Village school, most pupils stayed there until they left at 14 and went into the wide world. I had a friend, Bill Pelling, who lived at Wincaves - he seemed awfully big to me but I suppose he was only 10 or so, he used to give me a cross bar down the A24 to Ashurst lane most nights. One evening a POLICE car went past, the driver shouted at me 'Get Off and I did - straight into the ditch by the roadside. Bill carried on as if nothing had happened! He came back and picked me up 'after the coast was clear' and we carried on home as usual!! But I remember, and I can show you the exact spot in the ditch where I hid.

I was quite good at making 'Go Carts' and we used to run these down Swallows Hill on the Shipley road after school. One evening, I was at full speed by Swallows Farm when round the corner at the bottom came the post van. I went straight into the mud and brambles at the road-side! I can still remember it vividly, no doubt why I am very cautious today. I think my Pusher was more worried than I at the time!

I don't really remember the 'Winter of 1947', only skating on the pond and walking on the snow which was level with the hedge tops. I certainly do not remember the cold, unlike 1963 which I DO! But it was certainly as severe as 63 if not more so.

I also remember that as a small boy, with my special friend Basil Grady, who lived in the Black House Dial Post, we used to go by bus to Horsham to watch the football team at Queens Road every Saturday that they played at home. Horsham Silver Band often used to play there; the two Warnet boys, Mickey & Tony, from Dial Post were bandsmen, and we were very impressed by them! Can you imagine, two boys about 7 going to a football match on the bus alone today? The only danger we were in was of being squashed in the mass exodus when the match ended; something is sadly amiss today! How odd that we should be safe, when every household had a gun and was prepared to use it if we were invaded!!

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