

# Introduction

Since my retirement some years ago friends have suggested that I write my autobiography - apart from not knowing what to write I think that perhaps they thought they were trying to find something for me to do. They need not have worried on my account as I can always occupy myself. Also, when I speak or write I'm often trying to make a joke of it, which is usually inappropriate, particularly when you have used the joke before, not everyone likes this sort of thing and probably they don't understand mine anyway.

Example - even when I started this first page I began writing that I was born at a very early age in the U.S.A., "Up Stairs in the Attic". Then I remembered that I had already used this joke in 'The Slate' so I will try to refrain from such frivolity for the remainder of this booklet.

To begin at the beginning as they say in the best of circles, I am Matthew Cyril Hicks aged 80+ and my wife is Hazel, who is my age for only ten days each year. Our daughter Helen is a teacher at Tywardreath, she has a nice flat that over-looks the sea at Fowey and we are delighted to have her with us each weekend.

Now for some background information - I was born in one of the cottages at Rockhead in 1918 and moved to 124, High Street (Lundy View) when I was one year old. Not that I remember much about this but Delabole has been my home ever since. They told me that I was proper poorly when I was born, I was laid on the bed as dead but my father saw my hand move and they called in a family friend, Samuel Radcliffe, who christened me in the bedroom with the added comment, "He will live now!" - and to prove it, I'm here.

Apparently it was a heart condition and in 1930 a doctor told my parents that I would not climb the stairs again - I over-heard and didn't do what he said. I was then confined to bed for some time and I shall always be grateful for the friendship of Jabez Williams. He lived with his family next to the school (now The Setters) and every day after school he would come in and spend an hour with me, bringing me up to date with the happenings - he seldom missed a day. For a ten-year-old boy to do that was something special.

One thing that I recall in particular from my stay in bed - hundreds of times I counted the slates on the roof of Mr.Paul's house opposite, I could tell how many slates there were in a row and how many rows there were. I grew in height whilst I was in bed - before I was ill I looked out of the window from below the centre bar - when I was allowed out I was looking over the top of it. I must have grown about 3 or 4 inches and it was strange getting accustomed to it. On my first day out I walked over to a shop I sometimes frequented, the dear lady who served me said, "Hello, we never expected to see you again!" It cheered me up no end !!!

Many years ago when Helen was little, she was on her way down to Smith's shop and met an elderly friend of ours, when she came home she said, "I met Mr.Keat and asked him how he was and he told me." I would not wish to be put in the same class as that but it is sometimes difficult when asked after your health, you say, "Fine, thank you," when they know very well that it's avoiding the truth. It is no secret as far as I am concerned and at 80+ when I say, "I'm fit's a fiddle, thank you." I take my pills regularly and sometimes do as I'm told.

I am treated well by the N.H.S, I am diabetic and the doctors tell me I have asthma, a prostate tumour, a couple of wonkey heart valves and a pace-maker that was fitted on the right hand side on the second attempt. They blamed my anatomy for that but it seems to be doing its job O.K.,and, by the way, they said I must lose weight! The authorities in my legs make me clumsy on my feet but apart from that I'm fine thank you. My cancer is in remission with three monthly implants - to those similarly affected I say have faith and a quiet prayer. When I was in hospital, on two occasions the nurses asked if they could take my teeth - I soon put them straight, I told them that if I wanted my teeth taken out I would go to a dentist!!!

I can do quite a number of odd jobs and sometimes cut the lawn - or at least follow the hover mower around. I find the computer a wonderful help and spend hours at the keyboard, it also has a piano keyboard. I don't profess to understand the thing but it's a marvellous piece of equipment - I can get it to talk to me - and that's a fact.

That's life folk, I would not have wished to have it any other way as I have been blessed and fortunate throughout life with always having a wonderful family - and friends. I won't embarrass anyone with mentioning names.

I think Delabole is a wonderful place to live, where else could you find such friends? I have heard many people moving into the village say how friendly they found their neighbours and how soon they really felt at home. The amount of money raised for good causes is terrific and support for the numerous functions is fantastic.

That's sufficient for the autobiography side of things as I expect some further details will come out in the following pages. One thing, which persuaded me to compile this little booklet, was the last Flower Festival at our Chapel. Our theme was Old Delabole, with floral displays and explanations about many of the topics covered in this book. Those write-ups gave me something on which to hang my hat. I was asked to incorporate them with more comments about our village in days gone by and this I agree to do,

with the valued help of some friends, including Les Cory, Wesley Mills, Chris Keat and Jack Richards. Many thanks for your assistance and I trust all of you will find "*Delabole in Days of Yore*" of interest.

Cyril Hicks

*Sadly, my dad, Cyril, passed away peacefully to be with our Lord on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> May 1999, without seeing his booklet in published form. He had not been in the best of health for some years and the day before he died he wanted to know how anyone could age ten years in two.*

*Despite his lack of physical energy Dad was still planning lots of projects. His whole life had been about getting involved and doing things – he could not understand why anyone would want to be a spectator when there was the opportunity to make a difference. His Christian faith was central to all he did and he believed that this should extend to all the practical activities that he undertook.*

*Everyone thinks that his or her dad is special and I thought mine was fantastic. He was always patient, loving, wise, great fun and had time for me. He seemed to know the right thing to do and how to do it. If he didn't he would find out. His interests were numerous and I don't think he was ever bored or lost his temper. One person wrote in her message of sympathy that she had never heard dad say, 'I can't' – I don't think I did either. I count myself very fortunate to have known him and to have had him as a father.*

*Getting this booklet completed involved many people and mum and I would like to thank all of them – especially Chris Keat and Angela Bluett.*

*Dad once quoted his former boss, Charles Parker, saying, 'Service to the community is the rent we pay for our room on Earth.' Dear dad, you didn't die in debt!*

Helen Hicks

## Home Life

I feel that as this is my autobiography it should include something about my early life but I do not wish to make it appear too 'lily-white' and simple - I know my parents had their difficult times and it has amazed me, particularly in more recent years, however they managed as they did. Mother was twenty-six when Arnold was born and she had seven children over fourteen years, five boys and two girls - at one time we were all living at home.

Father always worked hard and had to give up his trade as a butcher during the First World War due to bad health. He took on an insurance agency with the Prudential and never looked back. His 'round' took him all over North Cornwall and he had contacts everywhere, as time went by the Company appointed other agents at Tintagel, Boscastle, Port Isaac etc, leaving Dad with just Delabole as a centre. However, he was well known over the whole area and was always being contacted for advice on insurance matters, his services to the Company were acknowledged many times for which he received awards.

They say that a little knowledge is a dangerous thing so I must not get too involved with history - not my best subject. Lloyd George was responsible for a parliamentary act concerning health and unemployment insurance - I believe all employers had to have two insurance cards for each of their staff and had to purchase stamps each week from the Post Office, the employee paid a part of the cost. Father was fortunate in having the Quarry almost on his doorstep and knew most of the men who worked there; he then had their business and issued them with their cards each half-year.

That was where I came in - twice a year he had a stack of cards to enter a name and address with their National Insurance number and I was able to help. On the top of the card I had to stamp the agency number and that must be printed on my heart - N23 14-20-12. Father had a roll-top desk in the kitchen but as the family grew he had an office built at the back of the house and that was his den. Margery helped dad at times but she did not enjoy good health.

From his butchery days dad kept his interest in animals, dead or alive - he had the two fields at the rear of Lundy View where he had pigs and poultry and one or two cows providing us with milk, cream and butter. He killed one or two of the pigs a year and I can see mother there now 'salting-in' the hams and making hogs puddings (and all the work appertaining there-to!!!)- and I still don't like fat bacon. We always had the large pans of 'raw' milk in the dairy, one already scalded and ready to be skimmed, the other being set to go on the range for the next day.

Father had rather hard strong hands and I never saw him lose his temper, nor did he ever hit us children although I expect we often deserved it, he was always there when we needed him. I cycled to Camelford when I began work there - if the weather was bad Father would often be waiting outside in the evening to take me home, he would tie the bike to the side of the car. Mother would never hit us but would sometimes 'clip us around the ear' if we did not do as we were told - with the comment, 'and be

quick about it'. I remember well some of her routine, Monday morning she picked together our 'best clothes', brushed them and put them away for the next Sunday. She had a large cooking board, about 3ft.by 2ft, made by her brother Jack of course, this was placed on the kitchen table where she rolled out the pastry for the beef and potato pasties, made the tarts and pies, and about once a week the yeast and saffron cakes. How do you buy your flour? Eddie George the miller was mother's cousin and he would call in about once week with a bushel of flour, which he would tip into the galvanised bin in the pantry.

The cooking range was also a routine job for Saturday mornings, I think. This had to be cleaned out of ash and soot and the whole thing given a coat of 'black lead' and polished until it was shining like a mirror - to be lit again with the two kettles on the boil ready for the next pot of tea. I can visualise now the wording above the oven door - 'Hoskin Launceston'. It was not until 1935 that we had an electric cooker and washing machine - if only she could have had them earlier!!! The cooking range was then replaced with a tiled grate.

We usually had fried breakfast, except for Kitty if I remember rightly - she would fly down the stairs, pick up something in her hand and off to work in the Co-op office. In those days I would take half a pasty for the mid morning lunch break - I could not look at it now. First thing in the mornings Dad would do the milking and the outside jobs - Roy later took over this and I believe Reg also did his turn. I did it a few times in an emergency but it was not for me I'm afraid.

I don't remember a lot about Dad and his motor bikes but he used to like them - the time came when he changed to the Austin Seven but in the winter months he found it hard going and he had a small paraffin heater in the car with him. He would sometimes take a packed lunch and flask, I often heard him say that he would call in somewhere for a meal but I don't think he did, he may have had a cup of tea and went on working, that was probably partly to blame for his illness.

We children had a lot of fun together. I worked for the Delabole Electric Company and one evening mother had a phone call asking if the street light was on outside Lundy View, she thought it was something to do with my job, looked out and said it was O.K. She was then asked if the one outside the school was all right, she went out again and said it was lit, then the question came, 'Would you mind seeing if the light is on at the top of Pengelly?' Out she went again, came back and reported that it was lit - 'Then blow it out!' she was told. It was Roy at the other end.

Kitty sometimes had to pay the penalty for being small - the coat hangers in the passageway were fitted by our Uncle Jack who was 6 ft. something. Kitty was sometimes found hanging there by the belt of her coat - if she was there too long I would ring the door bell and depart so that mother would find her, I thought it was funny anyway.

Dad passed on to a better life in 1951 at the age of 71 and our mam died at the age of 74 in 1962. I seem to be doing quite well as I saw my 80<sup>th</sup> last July but Hazel has to wait until next July to catch up with me.

## **The Band** (Mainly from the pen of Wesley Mills)

Our Delabole Band could have been one of the earliest bands to have been formed in Cornwall as the history of Delabole Quarry, written in 1888 by Capt. John Jenkin mentions the Wesley Chapel at Pengelly being used for band practices. This was the first chapel in the village, built in 1810.

This suggests that a band was here from some time in the 1880s although possibly not previous to that date. The invention of brass instruments was by Adolphe Sax, who had perfected the chromatic valve system by 1851. From then on, brass bands became numerous throughout the county, especially where there were men employed in industry - like Delabole with the Slate Quarry. It could have been the Quarry that helped with the purchase of band instruments in the 1880s. In those days village bands consisted of about 10 to 14 members although possibly only a limited number of instruments would have been available - due to their cost.

Before the 1914-18 war it would have been normal for a band to consist of 25 bandsmen and from then on a similar number would have applied. After the Great War (1914-18), the band was called THE DELABOLE COMRADES BAND. After the 1939-45 war it became DELABOLE EX-SERVICEMANS SILVER BAND.

The band would play music at concerts, carnivals (with probably two other local bands), fetes, church parades, sports events etc. They also played Carols around the village on Christmas mornings - something which we always looked forward to.

Extra practices were called when competing in a contest, where the band would have played a set of test pieces of the early days. These were usually from operatic music as very little music was composed for brass bands until the 1930s.

Over the years, the band attended contests at Redruth, Penzance, Wadebridge, Bugle, Stenalees, Exeter and Barnstaple and was sometimes among the prize winners. As youngsters we would await the

return of their coach to hear the band play at the top of Medrose, the top of Pengelly and down by Pengelly pump.

The uniform was of a very smart appearance, navy blue with red and gold facings and brass buttons. The tunic had a high-buttoned collar and the uniform was completed with a peak cap - very smart.

The bandmaster was a most important person, responsible for teaching and conducting the band. We don't know who was the first band master but we can list the names of some of those who held this position - Mr. Smith, Mr. Males, Mr. Jim Amy, Mr. Rogers, Mr .B. Williams and of course Mr. Les Prout who was well known to many of you.

Mr. Prout was a very competent conductor and trainer, always encouraging the band to enter contests and music festivals for solo, quartet and octet playing. He spent a lot of his time teaching youngsters to play instruments, with the band and his choir duties he was kept busy. One of his annual events was going to the National Brass Bands Festival in London. He was with the band until 1956 when it could no longer function.

The final act was probably when the Quarry, the owners of the band room, found that the building was unsafe and too dangerous for future use. One of the band's means of raising funds was the weekly Saturday whist drive in the band room and this also could no longer continue. The Drill Hall was made available for three or four years but this was then taken over by the army cadets and the T.A.- and so ended Delabole Band. What a great pity that Delabole should lose such a facility.

## **Buses & Transport**

Delabole once had the main depot for buses in our area - they started and finished their journey here and there were several running each day to various places in the West Country. I can say without fear of contradiction (as one of our local preachers said many times) our bus service was second to none for a country area.

Although I must say that a retired gentleman living nearby told me only this week that since he could no longer use his car he found the buses running through Delabole most useful and he had no difficulty in getting to Plymouth or more local towns. However, I should greatly miss my own transport if I was no longer able to drive, it's not just the fact of being tied to a timetable and the long walks, it's also getting the wife's purchases back to a bus. (I shall probably wish that I never written that.)

Blake's Bus Service was one of the main ones in the area and well known throughout the district, they had a fast and regular run to Plymouth, calling at pick-up points on the way. Their fares were quite reasonable and the last time I used that service I remember the adult fare was five shillings but my aunt paid only half fare for me - and that was quite a while ago! I had reason to remember that trip as she took me into Woolworth's and bought me a train set - there were two or three parts but I think they were all sixpence each - how could I forget?

Alfred Cleave also had buses with a service to Plymouth. There was a time when he ran two buses with his son, Alfred, as driver. Their route was different to the Blake's run, going via Altarnun and that area. The journey was therefore longer and, depending on the route, it could take from two to four hours. Perhaps I should not tell you this but they were not noted for their speed.

There were three generations of Cleaves at 'Cleave's Corner' - all named Alfred - and this one was the youngest, just a little older than myself. One morning I was standing by our upstairs window and as the bus passed I shouted, "Alfred". He stopped, got out, looked around but could see no one. I never told him but he may well have guessed. After all, it was then normal procedure to stop the bus but not much used these days.

It was a sad day for Delabole when both of these old firms ceased to operate. They were subsequently taken over by the Western National Bus Company. I did use their services sometimes, particularly to get me to work at Camelford. They had a driver and conductor and I must relate an amusing incident that happened at Camelford Station one morning. The driver was up-front in his cab, shut off from the passengers, and when they made a stop the conductor would get off and run to the front of the bus to confer with the driver. This happened on one particular day and as soon as the conductor got off the driver pulled away - I can still hear him running after the bus shouting, "STOP - wait for me." He could not be heard above the noise of the engine and the laughing of the passengers.

When I worked for Delabole Electric Company, next door to Blake's Garage, I was in close contact with the chap who managed the business - Albert Moore, and we organised several trips, many for the various organisations with which I was connected. Several other people organised day excursions and mystery trips with Blake's buses and we visited lots of places of interest. There were also Prout's of Port Isaac and Fry's of Tintagel, both had several buses but we did miss the local buses.

I have included transport under this heading as there is a connection - the Quarry had two lorries at one time to deliver their products but Williams and Chapman were the main hauliers for the district with several lorries - they were housed in Station Road. Employed there was another friend, Stan Lawrence, as the mechanic. He was very helpful to me on several occasions when I had a problem with a car as I

had a lot of enjoyment playing with the engines - I would not dare to take an engine apart on the modern vehicle, to look inside the bonnet is enough. Going back a little further, we had Harry Hamblyn with Williams and Chapman, driving a big lorry with solid tyres, to me it seemed a monster as it came towards you.

Another person whom I should include here is Joe Hawkey, he had a horse and wagon and if you wanted anything moved or you were moving to another address in the village - he was your man. It was not the swiftest form of transport but I can imagine him now, with his horse going along the street at a very steady pace, the wagon loaded with furniture with Joe seated quietly in the driver's seat, not in the least concerned, as if the horse knew where he was going.

He kept his horse in a field which is now the entrance to Penmead and I often sat on the field gate while other boys would try to catch the horse and have a ride - but they seldom succeeded. I was not too bothered as I was half-afraid of the thing - as mentioned elsewhere in this booklet.

## **Butchers**

Many will remember the time when there were two butchers shops in the village in addition to those with the delivery vans that visited Delabole. This was long before the days of the super-markets and such stores. You went to the shop of your choice, often on a Saturday morning, to get your Sunday joint. It was usual for this to be made to last the family for several days and served up in different forms.

Opposite what is now the Playing Field was the butcher's shop of Mr. Allen Stephens and a few yards further along was his slaughterhouse, set several yards back from the road. On one occasion I remember men driving some bullocks up West Downs Road, making for what is known as the 'Fair Field', where the animals were to be kept pending their visit to the slaughter house opposite. One of the herd collapsed half way up the hill and the men took a nearby field gate, rolled the animal on to it and, with ropes attached, pulled it up the road and into the field where there were some old sheds just inside the gate. They were debating how they were to get the animal into the shed - when it stood up and quietly walked in - the men were not amused!!!

As a young man father bought his butchery business from Billy Nute and traded from the shop at the top of Pengelly, which is now the offices of an Insurance and Estate Agent, much different from the late teens when the entrance door was at the end of the building, facing the old Co-op. That was then the entrance to the shop and you could go through the partition to the next part. In those days however that was the killing house and I can well imagine the bullocks, pigs and sheep hanging there with the double doors wide open to the public - for fresh air. Such things, quite rightly, would not be allowed these days. This old killing house was later to become a garage for the butchery.

Wesley Nute worked for my father and subsequently bought the business, taking it back to the Nute family. From then it passed on to William Mules and to Boxer (Ernie) Rowe. It has since changed hands a few times but externally the property has changed very little over the years.

Father told the tale of how Wesley would tie his horse to the outside wall, still between the shafts, with its feed bag over its head. One day he went out and spoke to his horse but there was no response, he assumed that it was asleep as it often was. There was no reaction from his second call and he went over and gave it a slap. The horse fell over - dead. Wesley said, "Well, he never done that afore!"

## **Cemetery**

The oldest Cemetery in Delabole is of course the one at St.John's Church, which is now almost full. I have my "Prout" ancestors buried there and other relatives and many friends. I suppose that because they are associated closely with the actual church they are usually referred to as 'Church Yards' but anyway we know what we are talking about. That burial ground was consecrated on the 5<sup>th</sup> October 1881. The Quarry gave the stone for the church and local farmers arranged the haulage free. Capt. John Jenkins writes in 1888 that only five burials had taken place there up to that date. Sadly, the first two burials were the two young sons of William Martin, the headmaster of Delabole School. They died during a diphtheria epidemic.

Prior to this ground being available it was necessary to use the cemetery at St.Teath or Lanteglos, both of which were quite a distance from Delabole. They must have had some means of transport but as a child I well remember the cortege passing our home with six men carrying the coffin and the immediate mourners walking just behind, followed by many friends and neighbours. I might add that this also included several people from the village who attended every funeral. Instead of the funeral service or the remembrance service being held at the Church, in those days a service was sometimes held at the

house and conducted by one of the local preachers, followed by a short service of committal at the graveside.

What stands out in my mind is the procession singing hymns as they passed by, also the men in regimented fashion, carrying the coffin - after a short distance six more men would walk quietly pass the coffin and take their place ahead, they changed over without missing a step, then stood aside and took their place further back, ready to take over again if they were needed. I believe that the undertaker walked alongside the coffin and gave the instructions when the changeover was needed.

The Toc H was very helpful at this stage and presented the village with its first bier, which must have been greatly appreciated by the men attending the funerals. I imagine that the bier was made at the Quarry. It had wooden frame and cycle wheels but was very effective. This was housed at the Quarry but I have no idea what happened to it. The bier in use at present was purchased by the Parish Council for use throughout the Parish - it is kept in the vestry at the Delabole Chapel.

Our Cemetery in Vale Lane (note my spelling) was opened by Rev. R. Pike of Plymouth on the 27<sup>th</sup> March 1929, this was funded by the three Methodist Churches and the ground was donated by James Strout who died on the 3<sup>rd</sup> November of that year and was the first to be buried there. I was at the opening ceremony but I did not really appreciate what was going on except that they had taken away our play area. Where the gates are now was a very wide field hedge and I imagine it was once where there was a gate across the lane. The door to the work-shed at the bottom of the cemetery was from Bodmin Jail, complete with spy hole, now it has been replaced by one of these T & G things.

We had had a wonderful camp in the hedge, built with branches and lined with old hessian corn bags, we could not be seen from the lane and now all this was gone. However, we were a progressive and inventive lot and soon had another camp built in the field at the rear of Lundy View - what is now Acky's Yard.

The Cemetery gradually filled and by the time I was Clerk to the Council we were looking for additional ground. A suggestion was made that the Anglican burial ground might be enlarged but this was nearly full and the idea did not take on. It was eventually agreed that the Cemetery should be handed over to the Parish Council, which was obliged to accept it when the ground was soon to be closed for further burials.

The Council took over the burial ground in April 1973 and began negotiations with the Davey family to purchase some adjoining land, it was eventually agreed that a small plot of land adjoining the present ground should be purchased with the option to buy additional land when actually needed for burials. The new section was opened in January 1984. The life of the Cemetery was extended when the committee agreed to have double depth burials. At first there were some objections to this but it was passed and is now in operation and accepted.

The Parish Council agreed to the appointment of a Cemetery Committee on which should be three members of the former 'Methodist Burial Board' or three representatives of the Methodist Church. At present these representatives are Mick Greenway, Dennis Hayne and myself.

It would not be appropriate for me to include jokes under this solemn heading but I should relate two incidents that stand out in my mind concerning our cemetery. There is considerable paper work involved when dealing with a burial. I set up our system based on a similar one used by the Padstow Council, one of the few Parish burial grounds in the district. I had several discussions with their Clerk and visited him to exchange information. A local man died and I wrongly assumed that a double space would be required - for him and a reserved space for his wife. I marked out the space, the grave was dug and the night before the funeral I discovered that he was to be buried in another part of the cemetery, next to his brother. I had to get my skates on.

We always had an up-to-date plan of the burial plots and I have a copy of this up to the time I handed over to the new Clerk, Jayne Stark, I imagine that St.John's have a similar plan for their Church Yard but with the lay-out there this would be much more difficult.

There is also a small cemetery in front of the former Pengelly Chapel. The last burial recorded there was that of Thomas Penhallagon in 1929, possibly a grandfather of the late Stella Hooper (wife of the late Joe Hooper).

Another incident that stands out in my memory is when a chap rang from London. He said his family had previous connections with Delabole and wanted his mother buried here. We exchanged details and I posted him the necessary forms, which he completed and returned. He arrived the next day with the coffin, on his car roof rack, (I suppose they do this in London!!) The burial took place in the plot I had marked out. The next day my mind was in turmoil - what had I done? This was someone I didn't know and he could have buried a bag of sand - or the proceeds from the great train robbery, after all, Ronald Biggs knew Delabole well as a wartime evacuee from London. I reported in detail at the next Council Meeting and it was "left on the table" as they say.

Space for cremation plots is provided along by the hedge of the Delabole Cemetery but the nearest crematorium is at Bodmin - when it might well have been in our area. It is rather a long story but several years ago when cremations began to take over from burials, I contacted a firm that did all the necessary work to provide a crematorium if suitable grounds could be provided. They would deal with everything, from planning through to completion, then negotiate terms with the Council for the running of the

'business' which they would administer. From figures produced we considered that the revenue would more than cover our Parish Rate for years to come, our main problem was to find a suitable site within the Parish - no-one wants a burial ground or crematorium on their doorstep. However, the scheme was prepared and presented to the Parish Council, unfortunately there was one councillor who carried quite a bit of weight who was not in favour and carried the meeting.

Fortunately, all was not lost. Derek Westwell of Camelford R.D. Council was interested when he saw our proposals in our Council minutes which I always sent to him - it was not long before we heard that a scheme was going ahead for a crematorium to be built at Bodmin! We missed the boat.

You probably read about the slate they found at Tintagel Church and their efforts to connect it in some way with King Arthur, I appreciate that was nothing to do with the old history of Delabole but I found the story of the stone alleged to have been found in Delabole St. John's Churchyard rather fascinating. Apparently John Prout was grass cutting and caught his mower in something hard, which appeared to be a stone. He pulled it out and found that it was in fact a sawn stone with an imprint on it. He took it home and washed it off to find an inscription which appeared to be 'WM 19 29.' I must not take up too much space with this but after extensive enquiries were made and the stone examined by experts from Truro and even further afield they concluded that it was the marker for the water main laid in 1929. There is little I can add except to say sorry John.

## Churches in Delabole

If you're anything like me you don't find dates very interesting - unless they're in a tart and served with plenty of clotted cream! However, the following list seems the best way of presenting the information and, to the best of my knowledge, this list is correct and in chronological order. I have tried to include most of the important happenings over the years - my apologies for any errors or omissions.

- 1784** John Wesley sent Adam Clarke to Delabole Quarry to preach and the spot was named after him as "Clarke's Hole". It is still known as this, even today. It is questionable whether John Wesley actually preached there (I can find no record of Wesley ever visiting Delabole) but several times he visited nearby Trewalder.
- 1806** Robert Bake, Quarry Owner, gave John Wesley land, materials and £40 to build the first Methodist Chapel in the area. Conveyed on the 13<sup>th</sup> February 1806. This later became Wesley Sunday School. It was subsequently used as the Band Room and was known as "Cudlip's Tenement" but has been demolished in more recent years.
- 1816** The first Methodist Chapel was built in Treligga.
- 1820** A cottage at Rockhead was used by a congregation known as the "Bryanites". This was named after the well-known William O'Bryan, and this society later became known as the "Bible Christians," I have been unable to trace which cottage it was, possibly someone has a record or maybe they are no longer with us. (I wonder if it was where I was born? It could have been!!!)
- 1835** The first Bible Christian Chapel was built at Medrose (or Meadrose as it was then known). The present Sunday School now stands on this site.
- 1837** Matthew Male from Delabole was a Missionary in India for 18 years.
- 1839** Breakaway group from the Wesleyans built a Chapel in Grove Street and named themselves the "United Methodist Free Church". This site is now cottages - 131/ - Pengelly Terrace.
- 1847/**
- 48/55** Great religious revivals in Delabole.
- 1863** Mr. Hanson of Delabole Barton gave the land for a Chapel and Sunday School to be built at Medrose - and also to be used as a day school. This continued until 1880 and scholars paid 2d. a week. That year the Bible Christians built their Chapel on the site next to the Sunday School. The entrance door to the new Chapel was then on the south side, facing High Street. The entrance was moved to face the main road in 1879.
- 1865** The United Methodist Free Church built their new premises in Pengelly Road with the Sunday School under the Chapel and a small Cemetery at the front. This was opened on the 5<sup>th</sup> June 1867.
- 1867** The old U. M. Free Church premises in Grove Street were then sold and are still there and occupied.
- 1869** The new Wesley premises were built. (Deeds dated 28<sup>th</sup> May 1869.) The old premises in Grove Street (also old Band Room) were used as the Sunday School until 1904. This had a gallery at the back with the entrance from outside. Mr. Alfred Thomas salvaged the plaque from this building and placed it against the wall of a memorial garden that he made. I expect the plaque is still there.

- 1878** There was a night school at Wesley with Mr. James Allen as Headmaster.
- 1881** September - St. John's Church was built. The Vicarage/Parsonage was built in the same year.
- 1881** St. John's Church Burial Ground was completed and the first two buried there were the two sons of the first Head master of Delabole School - William Martin. The children died in a diphtheria epidemic. The burial ground was consecrated on the 5<sup>th</sup> October 1881.
- 1898** Medrose Sunday School was re-built on the same site.
- 1903** The seating in the Pengelly Chapel was re-designed.
- 1904** Wesley opened their new Sunday School.
- 1907** Wesley installed their pipe organ - the first in Delabole.- Pengelly in 1910 & Medrose in 1911.
- 1929** The Methodist opened their new Cemetery in Vale Lane and transferred it to the Parish Council in 1973.
- 1980** The three Methodist congregations merged to form one Society, using the former Medrose premises.
- 1981** The Pengelly Chapel and cottage were sold.
- 1981** The Wesley premises were taken over by "Delabole Church Youth Group", subject to them covering all cost, including insurance. They appointed a committee, with the usual officers and organised various events for the young people of the village. Funds were raised with grants, pantomimes etc., by the Youth Group, which was non-denominational, to extend the schoolroom with a toilet block, kitchen and store. The Chapel site is now a car park for the premises.
- 1981** The Burial Ground at the front of Pengelly Chapel taken over by the Parish Council.

I was introduced to the church at a very early age by my parents, attending Sunday School at Medrose twice on a Sunday and also part of the morning service. As soon as I became old enough I took over father's class at Sunday School and things grew from there. Horace Hatcher and I became joint Secretaries and then I became Treasurer. Irvin Keat was the Senior Steward and I joined him as Junior Steward - eventually taking over his duties - still keeping on the work with the young people as this was where my main interest was.

The Chapel Trust was renewed just before the War and I accepted the invitation to join it, along with a few others - including Ern Smith, Doug Tattam and John Tinney. There were deep discussions going on at the time as to whether we should accept the 'Model Deed'. We were trying to get a grant towards maintenance from Central Office in Manchester, as was Pengelly Chapel, but no money was forthcoming unless we signed the Deed - which we did. For some of us this was the wrong move as we handed over major controls to Manchester H.Q. With some of the developments since that time I can now imagine our forefathers saying, 'I told you so.' I was also the property steward and together with a property committee we worked well for a number of years.

I held a few Circuit offices and attended many Circuit meetings over the years, one I particularly enjoyed was being the assistant secretary for the Royal Cornwall Methodist Tent. I spent several hours in preparing the tent and putting on film shows and providing music - this went well but seemed to change its character when it became larger and the whole atmosphere of the thing altered. I felt that I had to come off the Circuit Committee at the time the Tintagel Manse was built. The Manse should have been on High Street, opposite the entrance to Water Lane, in fact the ground was purchased and a deposit paid (I don't know if it was refunded or not) The Circuit asked Delabole to raise a Committee to over-see the building - and I am ashamed to say that Delabole could not even provide that committee!!

On 7<sup>th</sup> November 1978 the three Methodist churches of the village agreed to form one Society and progress towards this end was made from that date. It was agreed to use the former Medrose premises and plans were made to restructure and refurbish the premises with the help of the Manpower Service Commission. I was already involved with them through the Parish Council and they were most helpful - they allowed us eight men plus a mason and carpenter to cover both the Council and the Church schemes. We were fortunate to have Eddie May as the carpenter and he spent all his time on the chapel project. The Commission appointed me as Clerk of the Works and I spent a lot of my spare time on the scheme.

Looking back, I shall always remember the Lectern and the Cross, which I made in my garage with wood from the three chapels. The Pengelly Chapel and cottage were sold and raised enough money to purchase the Allen Organ, the carpet and the chairs for the new chapel. The Delabole Church Youth Group was given permission to use the Wesley premises and the Trustees agreed that the Wesley Chapel should be demolished and the area used as a car park, with an extension being made from the Schoolroom for toilets, kitchen and store.

The pipe organ at Pengelly was sold to Twelveheads Methodist Church and the organ builder involved also bought the Medrose pipe organ, using some of the stops when rebuilding the organ at Twelveheads. We went down to hear it when their chapel was reopened. The Wesley pipe organ was sold locally and the pews of the three chapels were removed, advertised and quickly sold. Several can be seen in our neighbourhood today. We retained some of the panelling, which we used to enclose some of the heaters and for other work with the alterations. The pulpit from Pengelly was modified and

reused at Medrose where it fitted perfectly - in size and timber colour. Jean Boyd was responsible for the painting of the ceiling centrepiece and the pulpit fall - both of which are regularly admired by many. Several church groups have since visited our church when involved with similar alterations to their premises - they have taken photographs and made notes, making complimentary remarks about the scheme, with which I have always been pleased to have been associated.

I expect many will remember the umbrella stands at the end of the pews with small trays underneath to catch the water - I don't suppose many came in cars in those days. That was not really the point I was going to make - do you remember the 'seat rent' which was once paid? There were little brass cardholders with your name on the book-rest. I believe Mr. Jim Henwood collected the one-shilling per seat per quarter from the Medrose congregation. I know our family used to have the whole of the back seat on Rockhead side - in front of us sat Mr and Mrs. Hayball and Miss Heal. Some members did not like anyone else sitting in 'their' seat!!! Something we are well rid of.

That was not the only thing I was pleased to see abandoned. Following on from Irvin Keat I was the steward and read the notices at each morning and evening service. I kept the notice book and noted the collections at the bottom of each page - what I particularly remember was reading, "The collection this morning (or evening) are for Church Funds - Choir Fund or Sick and Needy." The money later came from our general fund. In those days we had a Trust Fund, Society Fund and Sunday School Fund (which, incidentally, I still prefer). Mrs. Ivy Medland used to look after the 'poor fund', gave the Minister a few pounds to quietly pass around to anyone in need - and at Christmas time she would give a list to the Co-op for them to deliver a cwt of coal to any villager she thought it might benefit. This went well for a number of years but then she began to have callers enquiring when their coal was being delivered. That put an end to the system.

As a life-long Methodist it is appropriate that I should end this section with a text - try this for size and please give it some thought. (Job: 42/2,) "No THOUGHT can be can be withholden from Thee." (I was looking for "Thou knowest my innermost thought" but could not find it.)

## Cinema

'Let's go to the pictures.' That was said in Delabole thousands of time just a few years ago - when Delabole was unique, but things have changes over the years. In fact in recent times, even I bought myself a new hat, a deerstalker, and my friends say, 'Are you coming or going?'

The last chap who greeted me with that comment met me in the Liberal Club and I asked him where he had parked his car - he said, 'Up around by the Cinema.' I reminded him that the Cinema was burnt down in 1969. Who is it that doesn't know if they are coming or going? He was probably one of those who helped form the queues that extended from the Cinema down on the main road when there was a 'special' on.

Pictures and Delabole have always been synonymous. My mother often mentioned the film she saw in the Co-op Hall - 'The Manger to the Cross' - and I imagine this was one of the shows put on by Bill Newth. The Hall was situated above the old Co-op premises, always known as Co-op Corner, and was approached from a door on High Street next to the dwelling. The Hall covered a large area with a stage and dressing room at the far end. In about 1937 the Co-op used it as a furniture showroom. In fact I helped to install the electrical lighting for their displays.

Bill Newth used the Hall when he went around the district with his mobile picture show after the First World War and there are those around who remember it well - Delabole every Tuesday. Jim May told me that Bill Newth regularly lodged with his family when he was in this district. Only last week a lady mentioned to me that Alf Hooper was Bill Newth's 'right hand man', as I understand it he may well have been his left hand man as well. Alf looked after him from 1920 to 1924. Alf was working for the Co-op and one of his jobs was to get the Hall ready - and then Bill Newth would ask him to stay on and help him at the picture show. Apparently Alf was the Jack of all trades, he saw the people in, got the 'gear' ready, it had a large carbide gas unit for light and the projector was hand wound - which Alf also did. There was no music but I was expecting Alf to tell me that he accompanied the film on the piano!

Bill Newth was 'ousted' by a firm from Bude who had their own portable generator on a lorry, which they parked in the Co-op yard. They didn't use our mains electricity supply as they would not have had this facility in many places. It was still the silent films of course and it was not until 'Cosy' Wills built the Cinema that we had the 'talkies'. Even at this stage it was at first expected that we should have some silent films. He had made some provision for this as he had arranged for a piano and had ask my brother Arnold if he would play, but talkies were coming into their own and it was sound films from then on. Arnold was probably the only one who was disappointed.

I had a 9.5mm camera and projector but this was rather expensive for films and was not used a lot. I was pleased when they asked me to look after the Methodist Circuit Film unit - we had a 16mm Bell & Howell sound projector, speakers, large screen, the lot - all on nominal hire terms from the Rank Organisation. We had a list of free films from many firms and we took them around the Circuit for some

years. One thing that has always been a mystery, organisations would sometimes borrow the equipment, which they collected and returned to the Medrose Schoolroom. One evening I went to set up for a show and the screen was not there - how anyone could lose a heavy eight foot screen I shall never know. If anyone has seen it, please tell me - I don't want it but it would put my mind at rest!!!

The old Cinema changed its name a few times over the years - I was left some memorabilia by Charlie Parker and he told how they had a lot of 'fun and games' in the early days. He recalled the first film 'The Last of Mrs. Cheyney' and of all the breaks they had with the films when 'Cosy', as he was affectionately known, would go to the front and apologise - accompanied by the clapping of the audience. It was not his fault of course - when the films arrived in Delabole they had been in circulation for some time and been through many strong ark lights - making them hard, brittle and easy to break.

From day one my brother Roy helped Len Wills in the 'operating box,' as it was then known, and I did an occasional turn if one of them was away. I was never left on my own to put on a show but I remember the sound system - the large (24 inch?) records which had to be synchronised with the film - when you spliced a repair the film had to be the same length or you would hear the door slam a few seconds after you saw it close - and there would be more clapping. Charlie P told me how he took Cosy to Bournemouth in his Climo car to buy new sound equipment from S.G.Brown's - this was the new fangled system where you have the sound track actually on the film - isn't this marvellous? I think they had more fun and games when it was converted from D.C. to A.C.supply in 1935. They had an AC/DC generator under the outside steps for quite a while until the whole system was changed over and rewired.

Mr and Mrs. Wills were friends of our family. Cosy bought the ground from my father and during the building of the Cinema the foreman, Mr. Glasson, regularly brought in a cardboard box of pasties at lunchtime to be warmed for the men. When the Wills' came up from Wadebridge for the evening show Mrs.Wills would often stay with mother or they would go to see the show at the Cinema. If she did not come, Cosy would sometimes stay the night in the annex at the back of the Cinema where he had his workshop and a bed-sit.

Hazel and I were on holiday when the great fire occurred and I well remember coming home that night, we stopped outside Jubilee House, looked up across Atlantic Road - but there was no Cinema.

## Cricket

I've racked my brains trying to think of something of interest to write regarding cricket in Delabole, witty or even otherwise. The last cricket club we had was wound up as they could not find sufficient players and this was a great disappointment, particularly as just a few years ago they seemed to be going from strength to strength.

So much energy was used in making the new square and it looked in grand condition, with the new pavilion and a lot of good equipment it seemed set for years to come. I am not despondent however and trust that 'out of the ashes' we may yet see our Delabole cricketers playing there. Perhaps, for starters, a few of the former team would coach an interested group of youngsters and arrange a match or two for them. Why not have a go?

I know it's no use living in the past but an old mate of mine, Arthur Hamblyn, was always keen on cricket and ready for a game. I worked with Charlie Parker and he carried a cricket ball in his tool-bag. I remember once when he was working on the generator under the steps of the old Cinema we stopped for a break and out came the ball - from about 20 yards he would throw the thing and expect me to catch it and throw it back, which would be about half the speed. The thing that amazed me was when he threw it into the air - straight up until it almost went into orbit - then he stood his ground and the ball came down and landed straight into his hands.

Over the years I have played only one cricket match in our Delabole Playing Field, that was on the 16<sup>th</sup> June 1941 and I have photographic proof of that event. This was a comic cricket match during the activities of War Weapons Week. We did change the rules slightly, they were quite simple, it was ladies versus gents. The ladies dressed as they wish and the gents were in 'drag', they had to bat and bowl under-arm, left handed - and it was a lady umpire. The ball was a tennis ball soaked in beetroot juice - but the first ball from Charlie P was a camphor ball - it was rather off-putting.

It's not like me to brag about my cricketing prowess but how can I miss this opportunity? No one asked me to bowl for some reason and I was put into bat at about 6<sup>th</sup>. I stood my ground, left-handed of course, took the first ball and hit it for six. There were complaints from left, right and centre saying that I was normally left handed so I had to continue playing right handed - I forget how many I made but everybody enjoyed themselves, which was the object of the exercise. They never asked me to play again, even in a comic match.

## Doctors & Dentist

I suppose it is a little ironical that I should now be attending the doctor's surgery where I began working for the electrical supply industry about sixty-five years ago. Since then it has been used by an estate agent, by a Bank and now as a very well equipped surgery. It is true that I always enjoyed my work and that was never a problem but at that time I never imagine that I should be still going there, especially for blood tests. However, they are a jolly crowd and even when you ask someone in the waiting room how they are they always say, 'I'm fine thank you.'

My doctors are part of the Camelford Group and we could wish for nothing better, they look after Hazel and I very well and nothing is too much trouble for them - the Receptionist and Nurse are not so bad either!!! (I will apologise before my next injection).

In the days of my youth the doctor's surgery was in the sitting room of private houses with no appointment system and you often had to wait quite a while for your turn when there were several in the queue - that is much better these days. It is also an excellent system to be able to collect your prescription the same day from the Post Office - and we are very grateful for the friends who pick this up for us.

The dentist surgery was also in a 'front room' of a private house. I did not have a great deal to do with these but I was taken to Launceston when I was very small to have teeth out - I would not let the dentist come near me. At that time I was under the care of Dr. Bailey of St. Tudy, father took me out to see him and he did 'the deed'.

That was better than the tales I have heard about teeth extraction - it was carried out by the local blacksmith or any other chap around who had a strong arm. Delabole had a policeman by the name of P.C. Benoy, and as a spare time job, or rather a hobby I think, he would extract teeth from all who suffered in that direction. There was no resident doctor in Delabole at that time and sufferers from toothache had to rely on local amateur talent for relief.

It is related that on one occasion a chap was suffering intense toothache and applied to P.C. Benoy to do the necessary. He took him into his back kitchen and seated him on a stool, produced a primitive and formidable looking instrument to relieve the pain. He said later that his feelings at the sight of the instrument can be better imagined than described. It was about six inches long and the handle was like a large door key - on the other end was a sort of hook, facing sideways. The point of the hook was put into his mouth, stuck well down into the gum; a piece of rag was wrapped around the handle to give a better grip, a rapid twist of the handle and out came the tooth and gum together. He made no charge.

I'm sorry if that put you off your meal but it was a true story and you wanted to know about Delabole in days of old.

## Electricity

This is a subject on which I could write pages. Perhaps Delabole was not the first village to have electric street lighting and electricity in the homes but very few towns or villages in the County could boast of it before 1914.

Don't ever be-little the Annual Parish Meeting as it was at one of these on the 15<sup>th</sup> February 1913 that the decision was made to draw up a scheme to electrify Delabole - to replace the oil street lamps as previously used. Apparently the old oil lamps had been funded by voluntary subscriptions, paying for the lamps, oil and the lamp lighter, but it became more difficult to collect sufficient cash and something had to be done. At the February meeting a committee was formed to investigate the possibility of having electricity and within one month they had come up with a scheme. They had obtained particulars from the village of Brandninch (near Exeter) where they had a population of about 1400, similar to Delabole, they had already installed electricity and their circumstances were very similar.

A lot of suggestions were based on their system but Delabole was fortunate in having the backing of The Old Delabole Slate Company, who made an offer of the use of their equipment up to 20HP, during working hours at no charge for a term of 14 years. The agreement was that it would not be supplied free on Sundays and public holidays and the Quarry would supply and maintain the dynamos, switchgear etc.

The population of Delabole at that time was 1250 and there were about 330 houses. The Quarry employed approximately 500 people. A prospectus was issued and a Company formed with an authorised capital of £1,500 by 6000 shares of 5s. each. Apparently these were not taken up very quickly as it is recorded that by June 1918 only 3954 shares were issued. W. G. Heath of Plymouth carried out the original installation but funds were short as they were not paid in full until 1922.

The switching on ceremony took place on the 14<sup>th</sup> January 1914 and there were 35 streetlights with a further 250 lights in the houses. There was a carnival that day, one major attraction was an electric car, most probably in the form of a tram.

There was yet another instance showing the shortage of money, the Delabole Electric Lighting and Supply Company, as it was known, had to borrow £200 in September 1915, this was not repaid until 1928 - for which I hold the receipt. Records show that by the 30<sup>th</sup> June 1914, 173 houses were connected to the supply.

One cannot write about electricity in Delabole without mentioning the name of an old colleague, Charles Parker. He came to Delabole on the 24<sup>th</sup> August 1926 for a six-month trial and stayed for 16 years. Little had been spent on electrical equipment and it was decided that an electrical engineer should be appointed - C.P. got the job. A new shed was built for the batteries and new storage batteries installed, the original dynamo was replaced by a 460 Volt motor generator set. A new switchboard was also installed at this time and some of the overhead mains were increased in size.

I began working for the Electric Company in May of 1935. We had a shop in High Street, which is now the doctor's surgery. Few appliances were sold as there was not sufficient power, but we did sell wireless sets, lamps, shades and a few irons, later kettles became popular and gradually all-mains wireless sets were being supplied. When the plot for the shop was purchased, consideration was given to building a powerhouse on the ground at the rear of the shop for a generator to supply Delabole but this did not materialise. I am the sole remaining member of staff of the D.E.S. Company, Horace May was the last Secretary, before him, Barbara Cowling, and the original secretary when the Company was formed was Rambler Mitchell.

One of our functions was to charge wireless batteries, these came in various sizes and a charge would last about two weeks, costing from 6d. to 1/6d, depending on the size of the battery. We sold a number of accumulators, H.T. batteries, mainly 120v, also grid bias batteries - but you are too young to remember them!!!

I could tell you stories of how we used to collect these old dry batteries to light our tents with car bulbs - may-be more of that later. We had cars and vans from the surrounding area bringing us batteries for charging. There was a report in the C & D Post of a man complaining to the Parish Meeting that Delabole people were paying for the electricity to be produced but it was being taken 'out of the place' in batteries. (I have the press cutting).

The older folk will recall Charles Parker riding his motor bike, towing a ladder on a handcart or riding his bike with a ladder on his shoulder - what would they say today?

I went out on some two-handed jobs with C.P. one of my first was wiring the Delabole Co-op at Camelford - in ¾" conduit, but I spent most of my time in the shop/battery station. There were men at the Quarry who would help when needed on outside jobs but a couple of times I went out during the evenings to repair flying fuses on the poles - which I should not have done, not on my own anyway. Originally there was only a single main fuse at the powerhouse and if the cables blew together during a storm the whole village was in darkness. C.P. fitted fuse boxes on poles for each section of the village and this helped matters. Later, aerial fuses were fitted to the service line to each house.

Due to the small size of the overhead cables (7/ .029 if interested), when someone called in the shop to buy a lamp, if you did not know them you asked where they lived. There was quite a voltage drop over the whole area and Rockhead and West Downs people had 200volt lamps but those nearer the Quarry had 240volt, the lamps then lasted longer.

Our charges were 11 pence per unit for lighting and 3 pence for power, if you had no meter you paid five shillings for one lamp, 9s. for two and 12s. for three. You were allowed up to 40 watt lamps under this un-metered supply and if you had an eliminator (in place of batteries for your wireless) you paid an extra 2s. a quarter. There was a 2s. rebate if you had an electric iron and I know of a case in Pengelly of the meter reader/collector going to the front doors of a row of houses whilst the iron was being passed along by the back door - and they also received a rebate. Dwellings were nearly all houses in those days and the meters and fuses were usually upstairs by a bedroom window, which was not always convenient.

In 1937 the Delabole Company was taken over by Cornwall Electric Power Company, we went from D.C. to A.C. (50 cycles). From our Delabole stores we supplied materials for the wiring of the Tintagel, Boscastle and Camelford areas. I am so old that I can remember Camelford being lit by gas and the lamp lighter (Sam Coombes) going around lighting the street lamps each evening. I can also recall the electric lighting at Wadebridge, which was a local company, they were on 25 cycles A.C. and there was a continuous flicker (if there is such a thing). As you can imagine, I did tell them how inferior it was to our Delabole lighting. Still under Cornwall Electric Power, I was 'given employment' at the Camelford Office, that was the phraseology used by the manager as this avoided paying me any travelling allowance. Hazel then took over my job in the Delabole Showrooms and later moved to the Camelford Office - I moved on to Bodmin.

C.E.P. Company was taken over by S.W.E.B. and more recently Norweb has moved in, in association with an American Company I understand, I do hope that I shall never be paid my pension in dollars!! Still dealing with money - the Delabole shares valued at 9d. in 1926 were worth 8s.6d. in 1937.

Charles Parker moved from Delabole to become manager of the Padstow branch and later moved to a similar position at Newquay, where he retired. He had been a great asset to our village and was involved in many efforts. He died in the mid 90s and only a few weeks earlier he had passed on to me some of his memorabilia and an audio tape that he had made. He was particularly interested in the Toc

H movement and one of his sayings was, "Any service to the community is the rent we pay for our room on earth." I don't think he died in arrears.

As this section is on electricity I thought we would end on a lighter note. SWEB always had a big 'do' at the Royal Cornwall Show. Four members of staff were being driven home by Gerald Hoskin and after being lined up for ages to get into line to drive out of the Show field we at last made it and were in sight of the gate. Cars from all angles were trying to join our queue Gerald put down his window and shouted to one of the unfortunate drivers, 'Pull in behind me.' He was delighted and shouted back, 'Thank-you sir, thank-you sir!' as we drove on homeward, with a wave.

Although I spent what was a life-time for some people in the electricity supply industry I never professed to be an electrician although I claim to have invented some remarkable gadgets - one being an electric mouse trap. I nailed a number of one inch pins at irregular intervals into a flat board laid it on the floor, ran a thin wire along the top of the pins and soldered the wire to the heads of them - leaving a small gap between the + & -, ending the wires in a piece of cheese in the centre and the other end of the cable into the wall plug - D.C. supply of course. (I was not very old and it was when I was still at Delabole School.) We were troubled with mice at the time but I never caught any, nor did I see them there any more. Mind you, I did write 'Electricity - keep clear' on the board and as our mice were probably well educated maybe they understood. Or possibly it may have been the vibrations from the electric - at that age I don't suppose I was too advance with my ultrasonic techniques.

On my last day with S.W.E.B. they organised a little tea party and presentation in the conference room at Bodmin to note my 49 years service with the industry. Several of the staff gathered and I appreciated their good wishes for the future but I told them that if I had known then that it was only a temporary job I might not have taken it.

## Entertainment

If I was to ask anyone with some knowledge of Delabole in the past, "What do you recall as the main form of entertainment in Delabole in the 30s?" I am sure the answer would be 'The Cinema' but I have already covered that under a special heading. However, I think entertainment is a two-way thing, who is providing it? Do we prefer to just sit back and watch or actually participate? I always preferred to take part.

Ask anyone of my age what was their form of entertainment in their youth and they would probably tell you, "We made our own!" and how right they would be. We had a wonderful time as children, playing here, there and everywhere without a care in the world. We played football on 'The Downs' (Treligga Downs of course) and even on the narrow strip of grass between the gorse we arranged football matches - with our coats as goal posts. When there was a break in proceedings, looking for the ball, we would also look for skylarks nests - and would often find them - the mother bird on the nest would usually sit quite still whilst we picked up the ball from near-by.

The modern generation may think that hoops were a girl's game but believe me, the way we played in was very rough and tumble. The local blacksmiths were our friends, Dick Cory and his colleagues at the Quarry and Will Nute at West Downs made us boys iron hoops which would last a life-time, if only we could find them. Our hoop racetrack was from the Co-op down around Pengelly Pump and up to the Co-op again. I forget the name of it but the 'Guide' or "Crook" was also made of  $\frac{3}{8}$ " iron, about 15" long with a loop at one end and a double crook at the other - both polished as smooth as glass with continuous use.

Scooters were also very popular and I was fortunate in having an 'Uncle Jack' who made toys for us, the only thing was that when he made something he really made it and the scooter I had was a Rolls Royce of scooters, it weighed about a ton. He also made a trolley for me and that was out of this world - most of them were orange boxes and the like with a protruding 'T' board nailed to the bottom and it was fitted with four pram wheels - controlled by a rope attached to the front. My trolley had a hand brake but most of the others had dual braking - the driver's boots.

At home, when I was small, we had another of Uncle Jack's toys, a rocking horse. I tell you this not as a part of the entertainment activities but as testimony to his workmanship and generosity. We were a large family of seven children (I was the third) and I can always remember us playing with it, it was as you expected, massive and built like a tank. It must have been older than me as we have a picture of brother Arnold with it at Rockhead, our former address. I wonder if any of the younger members of the family remember it! - Margery, Josh, Kitty or Reg? I know it lasted many years.

With the games we played we covered a wide area, Helland Woods was a favourite spot where we climbed trees and swung across the river on ropes. The owner, Johnny Mutton, never objected but one of his workmen did. A gang of us were coming up the lane from the farm when we heard someone on horse-back coming up behind us yelling his head off, we took to our heels but could not out-run the cart-horse so we went over the hedge to escape. We guessed that he was trying to catch the boys who were

'scrumping' the apples. It was not us but I think it must have been the Medrose gang, they would do things like that!

We had a halfway house to Helland Woods - in the wide hedge in Vale Lane, near where the Cemetery entrance now is. We inherited this camp in the hedge from the older boys who moved on to other more important things. Then came the building of the Cemetery, which began in 1928 and we lost our camp. Not to be out-done we built another camp in what is now Acky's Yard, which was then our field. I can picture it now, it was in the top corner of the field, straight across from the present entrance gate - we built it with branches of trees and lined it with old Hessian corn bags. I mentioned elsewhere that we collected old wireless batteries - this is where we made use of them with our own electric lighting. We collected old car bulbs and wired up the dry batteries for the 6 volt bulbs (nearly all cars then had 6V lighting) and we gradually raised the voltage tapplings in the 120volt batteries until it was used out. The Saturday dustbins were a very good source of supply.

I must not give the impression that everything we did was beyond question - I don't think we ever damaged anything but we did things which could have been called 'naughty' perhaps. What about tying the doorknobs of adjoining houses together with a little slack string, then tapping on both doors and hiding away? I once had a joke flower in my coat lapel with the bulb of water in my pocket - some men were standing under Moore's shop veranda and I asked Clifford Heard to smell my flower - he did, and I never ran faster in my life. I don't know why I did it as it was entirely out of character for me. I ran up Atlantic Road, dodged around a gate post by the Cinema, back to the main road and along past the Liberal Club to our front gate. I covered those three steps in record time, jumped inside the door and slammed it. I leaned against the door expecting him to come in but I heard his footsteps going away. I'm sorry I did that, particularly as in later life I had good reason to be grateful to him. As I write this I'm thinking how fortunate that it didn't happen in the present age. The door would have been locked but the front door of our home was never locked - you didn't know if you were the last in at night, there was only one key and no-one knew where that was.

When I began this page I had in mind entertainment but I got carried away with my childhood dreams - and why not, some say they are the best years of your life, but, with me, it seems that every year has been the best. I suppose that I'm now in my second childhood and I'm enjoying that too but I wish I had some of the energy I once had.

Entertainment! We certainly made our own. Some lads who lived on farms or outside the village probably worked more than we did, but living in the village we made full use of our freedom. We used the Liberal Club for billiards and Table Tennis, arranging matches with other Clubs and groups and no 'men' were involved in organising it. In addition to this the Club Hall was our H.Q. for most things, Alf Cleave was our leader for a keep fit group, we met whenever there was nothing else to do. I was the treasurer and we each paid 2d. a week. Alf drove his Bus to Plymouth regularly and met up with a Phil Strong who was into this Health & Strength business. Alf brought home odd items of light equipment, weights, chest expanders and that sort of thing for us to use. We did exercises, including tumbling, the usual P.T., experimented with various things and generally enjoyed ourselves. At one session we put some long tables together, ran along them to the end and did a somersault on to the floor - that was the theory anyway. I was the first to try - I ran down the tables, did the somersault but landed flat on my back. I can still hear the thud as I struck the hard wood block floor and it was a wonder that I did not break my neck.

We had the Boys Brigade with Rev.J.W.Walker from about the mid 30s, that took a lot of our time with one or two meetings a week. We had various activities with extra time arranging P.T. displays, camping and sports. When Rev. Walker left to 'join up', Alf Hooper took over as Captain of the Brigade- I was then considerably younger than him.

The two Alfs (Alf Hooper and Alf Thomas) and I organised social evenings and concerts in which we all took part. We sang, performed plays and sketches, Monologues, Cornish Readings and I did a conjuring act. We went around to various Churches and schools with our shows. Once a year we had our Circuit Youth Festival and we trained the youngsters to take part in this with their singing, elocution and handicrafts. For a time we had the handicraft class in one of the garages in Atlantic Road. We did photography, woodwork and at one time played with a car engine to discover how it worked. The girls met in the Medrose Schoolroom for their activities - they had the Life Boys and Girls Brigade. The B.B. usually met in the Pengelly Sunday School except when there was something special on, such as a display, when we needed more room, then we used the Wesley Schoolroom.

I have already mentioned our little concerts but we also put on special shows, more in line with our Pantomimes of recent years. All we had to do was to mention to Alf T. that we would need some floral decorations and in no time he would have the schoolroom decorated with half of Helland Woods. The Biblical Plays were our major events with quite a large cast - including the two Alfs, Sid Colwill, Ron Thomas, Dorie Keat, Hazel Hill, Jean Burnard, Winnie Thomas, Margery and Kitty Hicks and myself. Mrs. Popplestone and Mrs Barbara Prout joined with us as our soloists and we hoped the audience enjoyed it as much as we did. We had our photo taken outside the old St. Breward Sunday School after a performance of 'The Giver of Light', the building was later destroyed by one of Hitler's bombs. That's how long ago it was.

Some of the socials took place in the Pengelly and Medrose Schoolrooms. I sometimes look at the photographs of the youngsters who took part and wonder where they are today - I believe they enjoyed it as much as we did - they were a grand crowd.

This section would be incomplete without mention of 'The Delabole Optimists' and Boxer Rowe in particular, as he was known far and wide throughout the West Country. The group was made up of Lionel (Boxer) Rowe, Edwin Williams, W.J.Williams, Irving Thomas, Len Cowling, Wilfred Hawke, Bill Wheeler, with Jack Moore as pianist. One out-door concert I remember particularly well was outside the Chapel at Treligga, for their Church funds. The Optimists performed a variety programme of musical items and sketches on a farm wagon and the audience sat around on the grass and any chairs that could be scrounged. Restricting my comments to just one incident - Charlie Parker and Edwin Williams bought an old station bus from Launceston and for a couple of years transported the Optimists around to their concerts. One night they missed their way and landed up in a farmyard - the farmer opened his bedroom window and asked what was going on. Boxer shouted back, 'We've come to drash (thresh) mister!'

Included in the photographs that I have is Will Allen, I understand that he was something like a stage-manager, looking after the props etc.

An interesting incident concerning the Optimist party - I received an enquiry from a Mr.Manley, asking if I could trace the maker of his violin. An unusual request but I was able to help. I recalled that there was once a member of the Optimists party who played at their concerts and apparently he made his own instrument - upon further enquiries I discovered that it was in fact the same person - F. C. Bartlett. I was sent a photograph of the violin, marked "Violin No: 8, 'Harold' by F.C.Bartlett" this is printed inside the body or case of the violin. In 1928 he lodged with Mr & Mrs.Percy Brown in West Downs Road.

Delabole Carnival was one of the best in the area and it took place in the summer when fine detail was of importance. We often entered two tableaux, one from home and another from the Sunday School and it was usual for us to win a prize. One thing that has always been a mystery to me - it must have been one of the last major carnivals we had but when the prize list was read out neither of our entries were mentioned - until they came to present the cup for the best tableau in the carnival, which we apparently had won - I think someone made a little mistake!

That takes us up to the war years when things certainly changed. Most of our friends went into the Services but for those of us who were left at home I believe the training we had in organising must have helped with the various things we did for the war effort and the local community.

It's now 1999 and as I sit comfortably at the computer looking out over the beautiful countryside I wonder why I was so fortunate over the years, the youngsters today have no B. Brigade or Girls Brigade, no Band or somewhere to be taught music and they say, "I'm bored!" Why, I wonder? I think to myself, why couldn't we have someone like Rev.J.W.Walker in Delabole again? He certainly left his mark. Then I see the T.V. with the terrible pictures of poverty and brutality - how fortunate we all are to live in Delabole, but as my mind wanders I still feel that it could be better for the youngsters, perhaps if more of the older folk would take just a little interest. Delabole has all of the facilities but lacks the inclination.

## **Farming**

I would not presume to know much about farming although my father was very much inclined that way. As a young man he owned a horse or two for transport and enjoyed breaking them in I believe. As the result of an injury, his father died young and had been in a wheel chair for some years, it was therefore necessary for him to help out at home, also with their mobile shop, a pony and trap. This is nothing to do with farming but I cannot resist - the local bobby had told them not to take the pony on the highway after dark without lights. Dad and one of his brothers were warned one night that the policeman was waiting for them - they turned the pony into a field (they were also magicians) both of them got between the shafts and making a lot of noise with their heavy boots, trotted up the road with the trap. The policeman was not amused.

I suppose that years ago we could have been described as an industrial village set in agricultural surroundings but I don't think this would be applicable today. Farms around here were not very large, possibly 100 acres and mainly run by the family I imagine, probably called 'small-holdings' with the owner working at the quarry by day. A large farm in our area would possibly have been say 200 acres, 'up-country' there are much larger fields, lots of hedges being removed to allow the harvesting equipment to move around. I am told that we are in a stock rearing area rather than arable. Looking across the countryside it's good to see lots of cattle and sheep grazing - with Roughtor in the distance.

When I was a small boy my father bought two fields at the rear of 'Lundy View' and we had an entrance to them from our garden - what a wonderful place to play. We had one or two cows, a few pigs and poultry - I was not a great deal of help but I did like the cream off the large pan. Dad killed a couple of

pigs a year, which was not an experience I looked forward to; mother had us children indoors with the curtains drawn.

My parents didn't think a lot of my gardening capabilities. This may well have been due to the fact that when I was fairly young mother sent me over to our allotment plot, which was in the area to the rear of Jubilee House. Mother asked me to get some parsley and, obedient child that I was, I ran across the road to do so. Unfortunately, I couldn't tell the difference between parsley and carrot tops and, like our good Queen Victoria, Mother was not amused.

On moving to West Downs Road, Kingy Rush appointed himself as our gardening overseer and he was quite helpful. Tubby Spry was also of great help. I can still see him shuffling along the carrot row after I had put in the seed and muttering, "That'll get rid of your carrot fly!" He was a man of few words and in those days we were troubled with moles. He would set his traps in the garden and every now and then I would go out in the morning and find a mole on the doorstep. In return I would quietly slip an ounce of 'backy' into his pocket. Our gardening has considerably improved since those days, particularly with Hazel's interest in the floral side of things.

You have heard tell how some people put their foot in it. I once did right up to the elbow. When cutting the grass of the front lawn some visitors passed by one summer's evening and came over to admire the hydrangeas and we began talking. He came inside, said what a lovely lawn it was. I told him exactly what I did to the grass. He bent over and felt it and I asked him if this was his line of business. "Well yes." he said, "I'm head gardener on Lord \_'s estate." I then felt like crawling under the hydrangea bush! When we moved to West Downs Road we kept a few hens, this grew to 200 pullets for eighteen months and they then went to Robinson's Egg Packing Station at Camelford - this later moved to Delabole in the premises opposite my present address. Then followed 200 Christmas cockerels and these went to Robinson's after six months. If things remained as they were I may well have been still keeping poultry but now you need to have about 20 to 30 thousand hens to make it viable.

Perhaps I do know a little about poultry - enough to know that all poultry are NOT chicken. If you go into a restaurant and asked for a leg of chicken and that was precisely what they brought you I imagine you would not be too well pleased!!!

With BSE and the value of the £, few would go into farming these days - it was not for me anyway, I was half afraid of cows and horses.

## Fire Service

Delabole has been fortunate over the years in having the Fire Brigade right on it's doorstep - the Fire Station has moved a couple of times but our thanks go to those who served in the Brigade and also the Annual Parish Meeting of March 1928 when they agreed to send out circular letters asking for contributions towards the appliances and 600feet of hose.

Those serving in the Brigade since that time include the following: (Sorry for any omissions)

Gordon Spry	A.Burt	Walter Smith	Joe Callaway	Hector Cory
Bill Pauling	Sam Broad	Eddie Mutton	Sam Rush	F.N.Prout.
Irvin Amy	F.J.Prout	Harry Hatcher	John Dawe	Len Pomeroy
Len Dawe	Carl Hewett	Henry Sweet	G.Worthington	Cecil Thomas
Oswald Martyn	John Commins	L.Martin.	Frank Colvell	Francis Ede
Wm.Auger	Bill Smith	Horace Prust	Bob Keat	Jack Hatcher
Mike Leverton	Albert Jane	R.C.Hill	Harold Hoskin	Bill Caruthers
Bob Clements	F.J.Dawe	F.L.Bate	Percy Hicks	Ron.Richards
Alf.Ching	Tom Collins	Eric Colvell	George Teague	Stan Laurence
Henry Spragg	Cliff Best	David Stacey	Ray Spear	Dave Rowe
Henry Thomas	Les Wills	Jack Richards	Roy Burnard	Lawson Goodman
Ken Hore	Gordon Amy	Len Collins	Jim Cleave	Ack Callaway
Mike Brommel	John Lobb	Cyril Langdon	Ken Davey	Fernley Davey
Mike Callaway	Chris Keat	Chris Hore	Dave Leighton	Steve.Fitzpatrick
<b>Past Officers in Charge:</b>		Oswald Martin	Harold Hoskin	Alf Ching
Jack Richards	Sam Broad	Cyril Langdon	Chris Keat	
<b>Present Officer in Charge:</b>		Mark Saltern		

<b>Present Station Personnel:</b>	Ken Goodman	Leigh Oulton	David Broad
Tony Winnacot	Geof Cleave	Richard Bluett	Shane Trewin
Don Cuff	Bob Hegan	Michael Davey.	Dean Leach

Over the years they have dealt with many house and gorse fires, fires caused by the old steam trains in addition to cliff rescues, especially before the Coast Guards took over. I know of a special incident of an animal rescue for which Harold Hoskin was awarded the R.S.P.C.A. Bronze Medal on the 27<sup>th</sup> December 1956, and Jack Richards earned a similar award on the 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1963, for which rescue the Station received a Certificate of Merit.

One fire of special local interest was when the Delabole Cinema burnt down on the 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1969. An ex- fireman told me of a farm fire where they were struggling to put out burning hay in the yard - and the farmer and family went to bed! That's confidence for you.

On 6<sup>th</sup> July 1979 Delabole were called for a jet fighter plane which crashed on Tintagel, which ended up on its side between two buildings, the cockpit broke away and finished up in the middle of the road, spreading some 480 rounds of ammunition in the road. All were accounted for - a crew backed Delabole from Bodmin, Wadebridge and Launceston, miraculously only two people were slightly injured.

Delabole has attended emergency calls as far out as Falmouth for a ship fire, Zennor for a gorse fire, Callington for a tyre depot fire and even in to the next county to assist Devon. On average Delabole attend some 120 emergency calls a year

## Football

The original Delabole A.F.C. that played in the Cornwall Junior Cup and Bodmin and District League Competitions back before and after the war was wound up on the 10<sup>th</sup> October 1958, due to lack of players.

This was largely brought about by the emergence of a new side, Camelford British Railways, who, after considerable success at the Junior Cup levels, in the early sixties applied to us the Delabole Playing Field and changed their name to Delabole United A.F.C.

On moving to their new venue, they began playing in the Plymouth and District League and after doing well at that level, joined the East Cornwall Premier league and continued in that league until the 1979/80 season when lack of players caused the Club to withdraw from the league.

After a break of one season the Club reapplied to join the Junior Cup and Bodmin and District League, and following the collapse of the B & D League, began competing in the Duchy League in the mid eighties.

The Club gained promotion to the Duchy League Premier Division at the end of the 1997/98 season, and for the first time in many years a second team side was formed for the current season 1998/99.

The Club has always received a loyal following both amongst its officers and committee and from many of the current players who have successfully formed the backbone of the side for several seasons and is locally based. Support on the touchline is equally good, and their loyalty is often put to the test by weather in an exposed field,

Les Cory and Co were responsible for the above information but prior to those dates my interest in football was from the age of about six when I was given a "12 panel leather case football" (I think that is what they called it) for a Christmas present. Our age group played in various fields from Barton Farm to Treligga Downs. We were not too fussy about how many were on each side but it was usual for Medrose boys to play Pengelly, which included High Street, known as Pengelly High Lane in those far off days.

I was not very good at football but I was usually in the team for some reason - it could have been that it was my ball but I never heard it mentioned. One thing I do remember about that ball was playing with it when it was wet, it weighed about a ton - and if you took a header with it you avoided the next one. Anyway, this was an improvement on the 'ball' we used earlier, that was a pig's bladder which the boys collected from one of the local slaughter houses - blown up hard and it lasted for some time!!! I was not over-keen.

My Uncle, Jack Prout, was one of our supporters and he made silver cups for us. I knew they were cut out of three ply and painted silver but it was a trophy much sought after.

Our goal post were piles of coats and other clothing which we would discard and as the game progressed the pile became higher. Football on the 'Downs' was not too bad but cricket, played under a similar team set-up was more difficult and many balls were lost in the gorse - not the genuine cricket balls of course, I was afraid of them anyway and old tennis balls were most popular.

Thomas Henry Holmes, our schoolteacher, provided us with a better football pitch in his garden at "The Holmstead" in Vale Lane, now the home of Mrs. Rowe. He also became our coach and trainer and I shall always remember a match he organised for us against Port Isaac School. Our team arrived at the

appointed time in shorts and a variety of coloured shirts. (I will mention at this stage that it was usual for boys to wear short trousers until we left the C.P. School). But imagine our surprise when our opponents arrived - great big fellows they were, all dressed alike in jerseys and white shorts, and they actually wore football boots - whoever heard of children wearing football boots? I believe we had goal posts but no nets.

The game ended with the score something like 18 to 1. I think that was what Mr. Holmes said and he should have been good at 'sums'. I didn't say who won but it was not us and I don't think I had anything to do with the one goal. Mr. Holmes didn't arrange any more games for us! I often wonder why?

After Delabole School I went to Lansdowne School at Wadebridge, and it was usual for us to have a kick-around in the school field at lunch time - during a ten day period I put the ball through the headmaster's study window - twice, it was closed at the time. The first time he sent me to Brown's the builder to get it repaired, the second time he did the same but I shall always remember Mr. Rich, the Head, saying, "Hicks, you have chosen a very expensive hobby!" I offered to pay for the damage but he wouldn't take it, after all, he was Rich.

## Garages & Cars

I believe I must have been about five years old when father had his first Austin Seven but prior to that I can remember his motor bikes. He sometimes brought them up to the back door but his garage was at the rear of Jubilee House - there were a few old sheds there and one night there was a lot of noise - the sheds were on fire.

Looking out of our bedroom window we could see the flames rising high and men running 'to and fro' with water. We were told that a Mr. Cose, (a neighbour from across the way) a big heavy man, was throwing buckets of water on to the fire when he caught another neighbour, Mr. Osman, in the face with his elbow. The next day I seem to remember there was more talk about Mr. Osman's black eye than about father's poor motor bike. I believe that was his last two wheeler and he progressed to the Austin Seven. There was a relic of his motor cycling days however, he then wore a nice thin leather airman's helmet which I inherited, a nipper 'though I was, and I wore it everywhere, even in bed so I'm told. We had school photographs and individual pictures were taken for anyone who wanted them. I did and you've guessed - I wore this helmet.

Next door to Mr. Cose (Luther Rowe's) there was a large shed, which was once a blacksmith's shop I am told, it was there that father garaged his nice new motor car. Our next door neighbour at that time was P.C. Mallet and he also bought a nice new Austin Seven and they shared that garage across the way.

I must digress at this stage - P.C. Mallet often came in to spend the evening with us around the fire for a chat. Mother and father were there, also brothers Arnold and Roy, and probably Margery but I know I was curled up in a chair trying to sleep. One of the party was trying to irritate me with a feather as soon as I settled down. I know I put up with it for some time and then my temper got the better of me. Still half asleep and with arms and legs flying I shouted, "Stop it, you silly old fool!" when I realised that it was the policeman-man with the feather - that was not my usual phraseology but I think I was sent to bed.

Father often took 'the family' out for a drive on a summer's evening, usually the four younger ones but the story was told many times of how dad would take his 12 bore shot gun with him in the hope of getting a couple of rabbits. Up around Tresmeer was his usual hunting ground and he would pull in quietly at the side of the road, put his hat and glasses straight, creep up to the hedge and peer over - take careful aim - and Kitty would blow the car horn. I don't think there were any harsh words except, 'I'll leave you home next time.'

Father knew very little about cars but the Austin Seven served him well - he went on working for the Prudential long after he should have stopped and then I took over CAF 37. I ran this into the ground, there were no shock absorbers left and the exhaust was in need of attention - I fitted four feet of 1" galvanised water pipe and it sounded like a jet - before they were invented. I sold this to a Yank at Davidstow and then had several 'bangers' with which I enjoyed myself for several years.

Father had built the garages next to the Cinema and I had one of these with an inspection pit. There I played with cars, taking the engines down and making adjustments when they were probably not necessary. My cars included two sports cars, an M.G. and a Singer Le Mans, which were a pleasure to drive. I probably had about 20 cars over the years but I would never make a car dealer - I can honestly say that I only made a profit on one of them.

The first petrol selling station in Delabole was Lugg's, prior to this it was owned by Bill Smith but in 1927 W.E. Lugg introduced 'Shell' and the petrol has been flowing ever since. I reckon that this firm with a shop would probably come next to Delabole Quarry in being the oldest established firm in the village. I know there are farms and the like going back generations even before my time, but I am thinking of shops with a name over the door.

If I may mention a few of the staff who have been and left over the years (I apologise in advance for the names I'm going to miss): Mansel Allan, Colin Prust, Cyril Warren, Norman Jane, George Stone, Richard Bluett, Paul Burden, David Meekin, and of course, the big white chief, 'John'.

Past and present staff has always been ready for a laugh, particularly as far as my cars were concerned. One day I took over the rusted cutter disc from my mower to have it welded and the whole gang went into a huddle to decide which part of my car it came from. I usually got my own back - (by courtesy of Delabole Slate) this time by suggesting that a member of staff should not leave his car outside on a Thursday morning - that's the day the refuse lorry comes around.

We once had three garages in the village selling petrol, W.E.Lugg's which is still with us, J.E.Webber's (now owned by Stuart Biddick) and Cleave's Garage on Cleave's Corner. Luggs was the only one that carried out repairs but they dealt mainly with motor cycles and pedal cycles in the early days. I had my first bicycle from Lugg's, an Elswick if I remember correctly, but I always wanted one with an engine and I moved on to a second-hand Auto-bike, unfortunately I had to peddle the thing more than being propelled by the engine. After getting married we settled down to a more reliable system - but I still like cars.

## Hospitals

My first stay in Hospital was in 'Freedom Fields' at Plymouth, nothing particularly serious but the first thing I was told was that it had previously been one of H. M. Prisons, this I can well believe but I have other reasons for remembering it, Hazel was taken there when Helen was born in 1951. Now March 1999, and I have just had a short spell in hospital, first at Treliske and then at Warleggan Ward, Bodmin. I had trouble with my breathing and they soon put me right. Now when asked how I am I say, "Fit's a fiddle!" - a Stradivarius of course, you describe one and that's me. (Old, best ever made, rare, of great value, good appearance, etc!!!).

First of all, let me clear the point I was making concerning Freedom Fields - I had my operation and was told I was going for an X-Ray. The chair arrived and I was taken along the passages and left with other patients outside the X-Ray Department - no seating but fortunately there was a wall to lean against - and I was not feeling on top of the world. After a while a lady came out and called a name - eventually it was my turn for which I was grateful. This same lady was the chief cook and bottle washer, there were two X-Ray machines with a curtain between them. I was sat on the bed nearest the door, she told me to lie on my back and pulled me into the position she wanted, arms tight to my side. She then attended to the other chap and apparently went behind the machines - I could not see anything that was happening. After a few minutes she called out, "Turn on your right side." - which I did, and that was when things went wrong - she was not talking to me but how was I to know?

She told me off in no uncertain way and I was not in a fit state to answer back, all I could think of was that she had been left behind by the previous administration - I could picture her as a chief warden. I have since forgiven her (but not forgotten) as she was obviously doing the work of several people, organising wheel-chairs, door-keeper, keeping records, working the X-Ray machines, etc. and probably had a bad day. End of that story.

Another contact with the National Health was when Helen was rushed to Tehidy, at the other end of the county, when she was 13. It was a very worrying time for us, especially at the beginning, when we nearly lost her but things got better and Hazel and I spent the next six months travelling daily to Tehidy. When you live in a highly populated area with a hospital on your doorstep you don't always appreciate the distances involved in hospital visiting in the country!

Bringing things up to date, at Treliske, thanks to Dr. Evers and his knowledge of drugs to charge the nebuliser, within two or three hours I was breathing fairly normally again - I also thank our local medics who knew which way to steer me when really needed. It was the specialist I needed and that is what I got, all on the National Health with which I have no complaint.

Their work done at Truro, as soon as I was fit to travel, Doctor asked if I would like to be nearer home (really they were looking for spare beds) and what do you think I said?? Twice they tried the East Cornwall Hospital but they had no beds available, the next offer was to Warleggan and they took me there the next day by ambulance, an old Mercedes which was past its 'Sell by date'. I had a lady driver and co-pilot but they had to change down to second gear for the slightest incline. I offered to get out and push but that was against their rules. They certainly need a new vehicle.

I discovered that the end of March '99 had been fixed for Warleggan's demolition. All patients and staff are then to be transferred to 'Fowey' Ward in the block opposite and Warleggan is to be knocked down the following day. Trees and shrubs outside my window were already being removed before I left and the nurses were talking about it continuously - and the other main topic, 'their pay', which I can quite understand - they are not paid enough.

Warleggan is the site for the new hospital, some think that the 50+ bed unit, (some say 100+ but I don't know) to include the transfer of East Cornwall, is not large enough but apparently it will be well equipped

and able to deal effectively with a wide range of cases. I believe that the new hospital will be a big step forward. However, in some respects, Warleggan is still in the dark ages and time is overdue when it should be up-dated. There are no X-Ray facilities and the like, there is no shower and when I asked if there was a pay-phone there was none, but I was given permission to use their private 'phone. I had a wash-down using the hand basin in one of the toilets but there was no stool, mirror or anywhere to hang your clothes except on the floor. I imagine that there will be a sale of surplus fittings very shortly and one of the things which could possibly make a good price is the one and only bath, which is rather 'pitted' and dark brown, presumably with age. This had to be seen to be believed, I did not accept the offer of a bath whilst I was there.

We did have some fun and of course, there were difficult times and a particularly sad one. One evening I saw a familiar name on the board outside a ward and asked to see him, he greeted me with a smile and was delighted to see someone he knew. We agreed to have a natter the next morning - but when I went around at about 10 a. m. he had passed on. What more can you say?

The nurses passed by my window on their way into work (about 5-30 am). One came by singing "Oh what a beautiful morning" and others in the nurses' room joined in - it's good to start the day with a smile. The nurses were really very good, my bed was by a window in the corner of the men's ward with six beds. They kept my window open and brought in a fan for me. One night I thought it would be a good joke if brother Josh and I changed places, he visited me quite a lot and they all said we look alike, even when I introduced him as my father. We could have easily made the transfer through the window, I mentioned it to him but I don't think he was too keen. About nine o'clock one night they were doing their rounds and one nurse came to me and asked if she could 'put me to bed ' as they did the others, I told her that no-one had done that since I was three. The staff were busy enough anyway, changing a bed three times in ten hours (not mine) without a complaint!!!

It is in no way harmful but I wish they would not say "for me" each time they ask you to do something - they bring you some medicine and say, "Will you drink this for me?" I felt like saying, "I would rather you did." One thing I most definitely did not like, I suppose it did not really effect me as at one stage I was the only one on the ward able to go to the toilet - the others had it brought to them! It's not nice to have the used bottle on your tea trolley with your breakfast! It reminded me of the painting of the family at dinner with the little dog on the table licking the plate - no thank you. I was not particularly keen on their plastic cups either - they should have been white on the inside but a lot of strong tea must have been drunk from them! They tell me at home that I'm particular about what I eat - I know what I like - but I think their hospital meals were very good, quite a variety - and an alternative available if there was something you did not like.

I do not sleep particularly well and one night I had been sitting on the side of my bed for ages waiting for a nurse to call around and get me a hot drink. At last one called on the chap next door and I managed to attract her attention with, "Could I have a hot drink please?" but her response was, "God, 'tis 3-25." I said, "God does not want an early call as I have just been talking with him, and I don't want to know the time - all I need is a hot drink please." The drink arrived promptly and without ceremony. Warleggan reminds me of olden times when anyone unfortunate enough to be sent to such an establishment was presumed to be non compos mentis and immediately treated as a geriatric patient. On arrival your clothes (sometimes new) are taken from you, labelled and put in the washtub. Usually when you have to go there you are very ill and sometimes not fully aware of what is going on in unfamiliar surroundings. Fortunately when we have been involved there has always been a member of the family around who can say, "Hold on a minute".

The three men around me were very ill and talked and mumbled all night in their sleep. The chap next door had a very refined voice and was giving instructions to his men - I think he must have been a fairly high ranking army officer, once he said, 'Oh, what a blackguard!' I had not heard the word for years. It was strange that one night, at separate times, the other two men repeated the Lord's Prayer. It makes you wonder what was going through their minds.

Someone came around with a questionnaire and one question put to me was, how would I describe my 'mood'? After a little thought I said 'placid' - when I received the full copy back I was pleased to note that she had added 'and happy'. Not a bad exercise to try on yourself, I think they call it 'self assessment'.

Grateful thanks to everyone at Treliske, Warleggan and our local team, I'm fine now thank you, fit's a fiddle.

## Language & Dialect

I always looked upon the word 'Brogue' as local slang for our pronunciation of 'B.B.C.English' but apparently it refers to the Irish rather than any local speech. You can usually tell where a person was 'brought up' as soon as they speak, even here in Delabole I know our speech stands out a mile, particularly from West Cornwall, or even Port Isaac, just six miles away. The nurses in hospital had a

debate and agreed that I was an American - I can quite understand that with my slow Cornish 'drawl,' and that word is in our English dictionary.

I am reminded of the biblical story which could well have referred to Medose verses Pengily - the opposing forces had to pronounce a particular word, if they got it wrong, to put it politely, they caught it in the neck. It's worth reading, see Judges chapter 12 verses 4 - 8.

Now for our Cornish lesson:

<i>Avon</i> - River.	<i>Crows</i> - Cross.	<i>Bre</i> - Hill.	<i>Chy</i> - House.	<i>Tre</i> - Village		
<i>Als</i> - Cliff.	<i>Golowjy</i> - Light House.	<i>Gwwedhen</i> - Tree.	<i>Un</i> - One.	<i>Pol</i> - Pool.		
<i>Bugh</i> - Cow.	<i>Eglos</i> - Church.	<i>Cath</i> - Cat.	<i>Howl</i> - Sun.	<i>Forth</i> - Road.		
<i>Gwely</i> - Bed.						
<i>Mor</i> - Sea.	<i>Ky</i> - Dog.		<i>Pons</i> - Bridge.	<i>Try</i> - 3		
<i>Deu</i> - 2.	<i>Tesen</i> - Cake.		<i>Pymp</i> - 5.	<i>Bal</i> -		
Mine.						
<i>Den</i> --Man.	<i>Yar</i> - Hen.		<i>Men</i> - Stone.	<i>Peder</i> - 4.		
<i>Ula</i> - Owl.	<i>Lor</i> - Moon.		<i>Kiss</i> - Cheese.	<i>Jyney</i> - Engine		
House. <i>Leth</i> - Milk.	<i>Margh</i> - Horse		<i>Scath</i> - Boat.	<i>Glaw</i> -		
Rain. <i>Porth</i> - Cove.	<i>Flogh</i> - Child.	<i>Oy</i> - Egg.	<i>Enys</i> - Isle.	<i>Edhen</i> - Bird.		
<i>Hogh</i> - Pig.	<i>Whegh</i> - 6.	<i>Bara</i> - Bread.	<i>Hayl</i> - Estuary.	<i>Eth</i> - 8.	<i>Seeyth</i> - 7.	<i>Gorhel</i> -
Ship. <i>Baner</i> - Flag.	<i>Pysk</i> - Fish.	<i>Cader</i> - Chair.	<i>Tyak</i> - Farmer.	<i>Dowr</i> - Water.	<i>Pel</i>	
- Ball. <i>Naw</i> - 9.	<i>Pen</i> - Head.	<i>Davas</i> - Sheep.	<i>Lyver</i> - Book.	<i>Dek</i> - 10.		
	<i>Kernow</i> - CORNWALL					

**Surely this confirms that snooker originated in Cornwall !!!**

## **The Liberal Club**

During the night I was thinking of this booklet and what I needed to do to complete it - and as usually happens, my mind turned to something that I had omitted - The Liberal Club. My autobiography should include everything which had influenced my life over the years and the Club played no small part in this as many youngsters and myself made much use of it as a meeting place and spent many hours there. I wish that similar conditions prevailed today.

What led me to this line of thought was the fact that at my home, Lundy View, I was within shouting distance of a lot of things which I have mentioned in this booklet. Firstly, Hazel lived with her family just across the road, my friend Alf a similar distance to the right, the Cinema at the rear of the house, The Police Station next door, The Setters which was the Chemist Shop where my friend Cyril Lobb worked and right opposite was the first fish and chip shop in Delabole - the Osmonds. History on one plate!!

Boys were not allowed into the Club until they were fourteen and the caretaker at that time was a Mr. Jose who saw that the rules were adhered to. At fourteen we signed on and never looked back, we played billiards and table tennis whilst the older men, Tom Richards, Josh Matthews, Arthur Tremain, Alf Collins and others played dominoes and cards on the table in the corner, I think it was 'solo whist'. They played for matches so no-one made a fortune but it was the older generation together with the younger ones in the same room which made the 'Club', there was no running around and shouting and everyone knew their place. The billiard room was heated with a slow combustion stove and in winter-time it was lovely to see it with the top bright red. Christmas time was special when we congregated there to play 'cork' etc. I must admit that we all had a smoke and the aroma from the various cigars was terrific, as we grew older and wiser very few of us continued with the habit.

Table Tennis was played in the Hall but billiards was very serious and we had regular matches in the Camelford and District League where I was our representative. After a couple of years I was made secretary, with Joe Hooper as Treasurer and we carried on for a number of years. I think the membership fee was 8d. a month. Joe and I sat at a table at the top end of the room on the first Monday of the month to receive the fees. We usually did well in the Billiard League, and often vied for top place with Camelford War Memorial Institute. We had several fairly good players from which the team could be picked but I suppose that Jim Benoy and Bazil Trewin would have been the best, with Frank Colvill and a few of us youngsters not far behind. My first experience of a billiard match was when there was a spare seat in the taxi going to Camelford for a match, brother Roy was in the team at that time with Arthur Standlick, Harry Keat, Reg Burnard and one other.

We soon had our team of 'juniors' and did very well - there was Cyril Pethick, Jabez Williams, Boxer Rowe and myself. Billiards was our game and it was not until much later that we purchased snooker

balls - my first experience with snooker was with Ivor Bartlett at The Workmen's Club - his father was the caretaker there and they ran it on similar lines to the Liberal Club. A couple of afternoons when all was quiet, Ivor took us in and introduced us to snooker - but I still prefer the three ball game. Seeing so much snooker of the T.V., I believe that our game would have been much better if we had this facility in those days, I am certain that I would have benefited from it.

Perhaps some of the older billiard players will remember the method of booking the table for a game, there was a long book into which you entered your name if you wanted the next game and you put your 2p. (for two) into the glass fronted box with sections one to seven, seldom would you be able to get two games in one evening because of the queue and you were not allowed to enter your name twice. In those days you played '100up' and this could take some players anything from fifteen to thirty minutes. It was not until 'modern days' that a time clock was fitted and this was adjustable from twenty to thirty minutes. I used to brag that I could play half an hour in twenty minutes but I don't think anyone took me seriously.

We took out a piece of the billiard room to make a reading room that has proved most useful. We did the work ourselves, as we did in days gone by and I believe brother Reg made the seats - it's time he came back and repaired them. The Club is looked upon mainly as a Community Centre and used by most organisations in the village. The Tuesday and Friday mornings are very popular with the 'over 60s' for a cup of tea and a chat - eggs are also available. Thanks to Doris Chapman and gang the whist drives have started again and this brings back memories - the weekly press reports listing the prize winners and M.C.s was always given space in the C & D Post.

There is no longer a membership list at the Club but anyone can book the table for a session of billiards or snooker for an afternoon or evening and the Hall is available for meetings and functions, being in the centre of the village this is always an advantage. I am still secretary to the Trustees which owns the property and we have a management committee with the usual officers who look after the premises and the day to day running of things - but fund raising is a problem always with us. Some of our younger ones are working hard to raise funds for which I am very grateful, I would hate to see the Club closed and sold.

We did have some disruptions at times but they were quickly and severely dealt with. One evening about four lads, from Camelford I believe, were standing in the front porch, they were noisy and making a nuisance of themselves - Reg Burnard the caretaker went out and politely ask them to leave, this had no effect and in a few minutes Frank Colvill also asked them to leave - his method was slightly different, he opened the inside door, threw out his chest and with his great arms wide open, walked through them saying just two words, '**Get out!**'. They didn't come back.

One of the major events for Delabole, which we organised, was the visit of Joyce Gardener, the World Ladies Billiard Champion. Charlie Pearce and I were Chairman and Secretary, and with a good group of helpers we put on quite a show. Stan Hillman collected her from Launceston Station in his two seater Fiat, accommodation was arranged at St. Michael's and we put on an afternoon and evening exhibition. Six of us played her for half an hour each for the afternoon session and we had the six top players in our league to play her in the evening. I recall the names Wally Masters and Clem Martin but not the other players - I have the press cutting and pictures somewhere but cannot find them. That was the one and only time I can recall a world champion being in Delabole.

## Market

The Market Field at the rear of 'The Bettle & Chisel' ceased to function as such in the late sixties but there have been subsequent special sheep sales and Christmas Markets. Prior to that, cattle markets were held in the Fair Field (the field next to our Playing Field) but as business grew a market Committee was formed and they purchased land from the Brewery to provide better facilities. Money was raised by a market toll and there were toll collectors to provide funds for the market's upkeep. It is believed that the land is now owned by the Parish Council and the former Market Committee was generous when making the hand-over. No longer a market of course but the land is let for general farm purposes.

I only recall visiting the market a couple of times as there was little there to interest me but I do recall some of the stalls and side shows outside the market in former days when they were held in the Fair Field. For some reason the market was referred to as the 'fair' but I know of no reason for this. The 'fairs' such as Anderton Rowlands, Jones, Rowlands and Whitelegs were the 'real' fairs with their round-a-bouts, swings and side shows, they nearly always made their stand in this field but on a few occasions they used a field at Pengelly, which is now the entrance to Penmead.

My main recollection of the Market Days, which was usually the third Thursday of the month I believe, when several of us boys from school, during our lunch break, would go over and watch the 'Cheap Jacks' selling their wares, they were offering some terrific bargains, or so those gathered round thought. The man behind the stall would hold up a parcel but before anyone could make a bid he would unwrap it

and in addition to the goods he mentioned there would be a pocket watch inside. Several more parcels would then be on offer and sold but no one seemed to get a watch.

Another market stall-holder was selling some kind of medicine which would do all sorts of wonderful things - he put his hand on a boy's shoulder and the arm went limp (he dislocated it in some way) then he treated the boy's shoulder with his medicine and he could use his arm again. I did not volunteer.

Now-a-days I believe farmers have their day-out visiting the larger markets at Halworthy and the like, there seems to be quite a lot of activities there on certain days with several cattle lorries around. My brother-in-law has told me that this is the only way to buy your Christmas turkey - and he knows I have tasted them several times.

Chicken were the only livestock I purchased and then it was by 'phone or letter and the day old chicks came by rail. I was at Delabole station to meet the passenger train and quickly got my consignment home and under the lamp in record time, usually without the loss of one bird.

## **Milk Round**

One of the things which has seen most changes to our village life style over the years is our 'Daily Pinta' or to bring it up-to-date, the 'daily litre', but whatever they like to call it I shall always think in pints, gallons, 240 pence to the pound, and 36 inches equals one yard. To confuse us further they are still tinkering about introducing new coins even before we see the new 'euro'.

This was supposed to be about milk - at the time I began school we had our own supply direct from the cow, but two things about dairy products I remember prior to that is fetching milk and cream from Park House, the Davey family home, grand-parents of Colin Davey who lives there at present. I was armed with a jug, a small glass dish and probably a couple of small coins. The second incident was fetching milk and cream from William Blake who lived in the end cottage at Roseland Corner. On the way over that morning I struck gold - or rather, I found a ten shilling note. Ten shillings in those days was probably half a quarryman's weekly wages but I knew that anything found had to be passed over to the police and, as they were friends and lived next door, I was in there like a shot displaying my find. P.C. Mallett was very sympathetic as he took the note from me and said that if no one claimed it within six months the ten shillings would be mine. (Good job I didn't find some fish!). That was the longest six months that I can remember, I went in to see P.C. Mallett on the slightest pretext and he knew without asking what I wanted to know - nobody had claimed it yet, I would have to wait another (so many) days.

At last the big day arrived and no claim had been made, there was a great handing over ceremony and I ran back home asking what I could buy with this fortune. Mother had an agency with Kay's and I thumbed through their catalogue many times trying to make a decision. As I was just starting to learn to play the piano, I don't know how it happened but somehow I had decided that I needed a music case and there was one in the catalogue - but it was 12s.6d. Mother said she would give me the extra half-crown, and so I got my beautiful soft leather light brown case - and we still have it.

I had better return to the subject in hand - MILK. I would still prefer the strained milk direct from the milkpail and the scalded cream fresh from the large enamelled pan - that thick crust that mother skimmed off with that large white spoon. I can still see that on the top of one of our home made splits with some raspberry jam.

We had the clip-clop of horse's hooves through the village long after they had the electric milk floats in towns going along silently about their business. The horse was pulling a pony trap with one or two milk churns at the back, the horse knew where to stop for his regular customers. The householders would come out with their jug and the milk would be measured out in a pint or quart scoop. Some milk producers did not make house-to-house deliveries but served it from their homes. The names that stand out in my mind are Male, Lugg, Broad, Davey, Commins and there were probably others.

This was a seven day a week job but I heard of one man who made such late deliveries and was so irregular that he could catch up on one day a week - I take that with a pinch of salt.

## **Musical Tradition**

As a child I was not particularly keen on singing, few boys were, but when I became a teenager and found I could sing the bass part at school assembly and Chapel, this aroused my interest and since then, music has been a part of my life. I was not in the bass class of Gerald Thomas nor have the tenor quality of Stanley Broad - more a middle of the road baritone, but I enjoyed my singing, particularly by the side of Sidney Smith when you soon learnt to sing what was written and not simply harmonise.

I was never more aware of this than on the occasions we joined with District or Circuit Choirs, although many of the members had really good voices what some of them used for tenor or bass was nobody's business.

When I began this section I intended to restrict it to the musical side of the village but then realised that the music and my Church life was so inter-twined that I could do no other than include it as one. There is one further point, my apologies for giving any prominence to 'Medrose', but as a small boy that is the first place that I can remember apart from my home. My mother was 'brought up' at Wesley where she attended the Sunday School - and then joined Mrs Gill's Bible Class, a fact that she often mentioned and one of which she was very proud. I have my Grandparents' Class Tickets from Wesley.

When my parents married they lived at Rockhead and attended the Medrose Chapel where father was a trustee and held several offices. I joined him as a trustee when I became old enough and also took over his Sunday School Class and the task of S.S. Treasurer. We also helped to run the Sunday School at Treligga with the help of Horace Hatcher.

Going back to the 'Singing' side of things, Mr. Smith took over as Choir Master from Mr. Brown at Medrose and I remember him well from when I was a boy as he sat in front of the pipe organ, by the side of Mrs. Radcliffe, the organist.

After some time Hazel and I helped with the children and young people and when Mr. Smith found that it was getting too much for him he gradually stepped aside and encouraged us to take over. Inadequate as I felt, with Hazel on the organ and the terrific support of all the friends, we managed for several years. We were by no means professional, few could read music but we enjoyed ourselves and carried on until our numbers grew smaller and smaller and the time came when we decided that we must sit down in the Chapel with the congregation for the services. One thing I missed in particular was the Cantatas that we sang for several years, with the help of a few from the other choirs. It was perhaps a little ambitious but with Kitty providing considerable help with the singing we managed the solos, duets and quartets - and again - I'm sure the choir enjoyed it.

We also made up a quartet party and went around to several churches over the years - Kitty, Ivy Rush, John Tinney and myself, with Hazel as the accompanist. We once had another concert party with Bill Nute and his monologues; the two Alfs were also very much involved. We gave some musical items (if you can call them that) I did some conjuring and we performed some sketches. It is good to recall that we were invited back to some places several times so that must be some recommendation!!!

I felt that the T.V. was mainly responsible for the decline of the choir, it became so difficult when arranging the next practice, you had to consider what programme was on that evening - a question of priorities. We used to meet on Tuesdays and Fridays for Choir practice whenever a special event was coming up - Chapel Anniversary, Harvest Festivals, Christmas, Easter or other occasion - we were a happy gang and always had a good evening together. We often helped one another in the Choirs for these special events and I believe that this was just one of the things which helped to bring the three Churches together as one Society in 1981. Other occasions will come to mind, even going back so far as the 'Band of Hope' when we met together with services and socials, sometimes having a special preacher on the Sunday - and there was the 'Big Do' when we marched through the village with the Band playing. I can just recall helping to carry one of the banners; it was some heavy in the wind! We had sports in various fields, and then tea in the Wesley Schoolroom; the whole village was involved. Trewarmett village continued with their Band of Hope for several years after us.

Strange as it may seem, one of the things I remember about our B of H is something that was said by the visiting preacher on what was probably our last meeting. It was a Mr. Winkless from Plymouth I believe. He was a very tall man and he was talking about leading by example. He spoke of his little son and how they had fitted a long full-length mirror in their hallway but not high enough for dad to see to comb his hair. So each time he was going out he would go to the mirror and as he passed, would bend his knees, comb his hair and move on. He and his wife were intrigued to see their little boy also bend his knees to comb his hair in front of that mirror. The theme of the service was leading by example.

Going back again to the Music - I often recall one evening when about thirty members turned up for choir practice and Hazel and I were absent, we had both forgotten that we had changed the practice night and went to the cinema instead. Another incident stands out in my mind and if you have heard me tell the tale before just switch off for a minute. We had several young people in the choir and one of them had been learning to play the piano for a few months. We were having a yarn before practice and I asked him how he was getting on with his lessons, he summed it up in just four words, "I've finished, I've learnt." Learning music and how to play an instrument is not so simple as that, or so I found. I don't know if there is such a thing as being musically dyslexic but I think that I may well have been - I was just too slow in putting chords together for sight-reading. I memorised a piece by practising it and until a short while ago could probably struggle through some of the pieces today.

We were a large family and our parents wanted all of us to be able to play the piano. Alfred Worth of Bodmin was our tutor and he came to us during the lunch hour and after school on Tuesdays. Brothers Arnold, Roy and I had half an hour each and were expected to put in a similar time of practice each day, sisters Margery and Kitty were younger and I don't suppose they needed so much pressure as we did.

Arnold did very well and later progressed to the pipe organ, Roy played duets with him at socials and concerts but he then digressed to string and wind instruments. Margery and Kitty kept with the piano and the pipe organ. I often wished I had the gift of playing by ear like Iris, my late sister-in-law. We must be grateful that our daughter Helen has musical interests.

Christmas was not so long ago and I was thinking about the singing at Chapel of the old Christmas Carols, but for hymns like "Lyngham", where are the men? It was only a couple of years ago that we had Carols around the organ or outside the Chapel after the evening Service. After another generation I can imagine a child saying, "Dad, what's Christmas singing?"

Hymn Singing is not what it was, even in Delabole, but hearing some of the singing on the T.V. brings back lovely memories. One evening they had "Bethsaida" (H&P 467), it was a pleasure just to listen to the beautiful chords and harmony.

I feel that the 'new' hymnbook is partly responsible for this state of affairs. Many of the new hymns have beautiful words but some preachers with little knowledge of Cornish traditional hymn singing include far too many unfamiliar hymns - and those are usually in unison. One in a service will suffice. We must be grateful that our forefathers maintained the tradition for music, poetry and writing, the names of Broad, Kellow, Hawke and others come to mind.

In more recent years (I refer to the early 20s) there was the Wesley Quartet with Josh Matthews, Ernie Geake, Will Richards and Wilfred Hawke. There was also the quartet with Harry Smith, Harry Keat, Wilfred Hawke, Jack Collins and Len Dungey. The Wesley Octet and The Glee Singers followed them and gave concerts over a wide area for many years. I went with them a time or two when someone was sick. The group was made up of Gerald Thomas, Ken Richards, Wilfred Hawke, Ted Ellacott, Chris Richards (Heard), Polly Hawke, Barbara (Geake) Prout, Audrey (Geake) Warren and Olive Richards. The two 'Geake' sisters (Barbara and Audrey) sang beautifully together.

There was also the 'Butcher's Ladies Choir'. Mr. Butcher came from Plymouth and assembled a large group of ladies choirs from the district - they met in the Delabole Co-op Hall. I never heard them sing but I have a picture of them in their long black dresses.

We still have some wonderful choirs visiting Delabole and we always get tremendous support from the surrounding areas. Delabole was always noted for its good singing but for me I always preferred the mixed choirs, there are not many of them around these days.

For some years we had an annual music festival in the village - at one time it was held in the Wesley Schoolroom and then in the Cinema (I have probably mentioned this under another heading) and Ron Thomas was very much involved with this - as secretary I believe. In more recent years (say the 60's) our youngsters took part in the Circuit Youth Festivals and did very well - not only in handicrafts but with the singing as well.

I reckon my most favourite musical instrument is the pipe organ and it was the end of an era when the village lost three about twenty years ago. I suppose much of my interest was because Hazel played at church services for so many years and now she finds it hard at times, as her sight is not too good at the moment. I will list most of the other organists that I remember, with apologies for any that I have missed. They have played little or much, but all their voluntary service has been appreciated.

At St. John's there was Elsie (Amy) May, Olive Cox, Gwen Hayne, Alva Cockle, Maida Hayne and my sister Kitty. At the three Methodist churches there was Mrs. Radcliffe, Henry Cory, Hazel (Hill) Hicks, Ron Thomas, sisters Margery and Kitty, Colin Cook, Stuart Biddick, Mrs. Popplestone, William Hayne, Sibley Elford, Dorothy Davey, Mrs. Cowling and Peggy Wilton.

I don't think that I have given sufficient space to our Annual Pantomime and the ranking of importance it holds when listing the musical traditions of Delabole. It involved the children from the Sundays Schools and many of our friends, several from nearby villages. Not only was the presentation good but the scenery, electrics and the musical renderings were superb throughout. I cannot mention all the names as it would take at least a full page but as this is MY autobiography I have special dispensation and must include Hazel with all the work she put into the dress-making side of things in the early days and Helen's involvement from day one with the productions - until the final curtain in 1994. In the early days a lot of money was raised to provide holidays for children from inner cities. Many happy times were spent during the summer holidays entertaining children from Lambeth and Birmingham. They had a good time - and so did we!

I must not be too despondent about our musical tradition and the future - only this week a group of our ladies presented a 'Musical Service' in an adjoining Circuit and an excellent job they did, even if self-praise is no recommendation.

## **Parish Council**

I have given this matter some thought and it comes to mind that Hazel's Uncle, (Walter Hill) and I covered most of the century as Parish Clerks for this Parish, which of course included both the villages of Delabole and St.Teath.

In the mid sixties it was suggested that we had two Parish Councils, one for each Ward but this idea was frowned upon as it was government policy to reduce the size and number of Councils rather than enlarge them. At that time Delabole had eight councillors and St. Teath Ward had three, we did manage to get the three increased to four which was more in line with the electoral register apportionment. I still appreciate the point in having two separate councils - I was more aware of the happenings in Delabole than St. Teath, with about 40 items on the agenda for each meeting probably more than 90% related to Delabole.

I was appointed Clerk to the Council at a meeting on the 14<sup>th</sup> January 1958. The Delabole Ward Councillors then were H.R. Goodman, (Chairman), W. Colwill, W.R. Hawke, G. Iles, J.A. Kent, W.O. Martyn, L.R. Sanders and myself - I left the meeting of course during the discussion.

It was our custom in those days to keep an item on the agenda until it was resolved or cleared in some way and I shall always be grateful for the Cornish and Devon Post for the space they gave us each month, often a full column. The meetings were on Monday evenings and they had our report on the next Wednesday mornings, it was not professional reporting, I think it was known as gossip writing but the public knew of everything that was going on and were interested. My salary at that time was £15 p.a., the Council providing minute book, cashbook, letter heading and stamps.

There was one exception to clearing things from the agenda - our Tithe Map, this was held in the St. Teath Vicarage. I only had occasion to refer to it a couple of times but the Parish Council insisted that it was Council property and should be with the Clerk or County archives. We never got hold of it. It is in the minutes of the very first meeting of the Parish Council in 1895 - (I was not present but I knew some Councillors who were) and I still don't know where the map is but it should be traced and included in the annual Parish inventory. (Auditors please check).

The council was made aware of the differing cost between the two Wards when Councillor Oliver Hoskin asked the Clerk (that was me) what was the expenditure for each Ward over the past year and he was 'disappointed' that I could not give him an answer immediately at the meeting. I said that I would need notice of that question - and posted him the information within a few days. I thought it a very relevant question and should have been followed-up.

I served the Council as Clerk from 1958 to 1987 and before that I was a Parish Councillor - the only one surviving from that time. I was very familiar with the proceedings even before that date as Hazel and I produced the minutes for circulation and had permission to type the minutes and stick them in the minute book. When I was Clerk I had the 'OK' to tape record the proceedings, this was useful for the minutes, press reports and for confirmation at the next meeting - even Councillors forget what they actually said. Of one thing I was always well aware - the Council made the decisions and I was their paid employee to advise and carry out their wishes. I am disgusted at the way some Councillors in nearby towns carry on today with their childish antics, and they look upon themselves as role models - I put Launceston at the head of this list - and it's rather a long one.

The Council nominated me as their representative on the Board of School Governors, I was always pleased to serve on the various committees but this one was the exception, it was the most frustrating time I had. That was possibly because I was the youngster sandwiched between a group of elderly men, probably there when the schools were opened in 18 whatever. It was not my intention to become involved with the day-to-day running of the schools but I thought they might have listened to my views on structural and other matters. When interviewing a prospective teacher, who arrived that evening by train, he asked if he could have a day to look over the school and village. I supported him but one of the 'gentlemen' said, "What do you know about it?" The next year I did not accept the nomination.

One of the last projects carried out by the Council during my term was providing decent roads at Treligga. The C.C.C. was most helpful, they agreed to carry out the scheme if the P.C. would arrange for each of the householders to make a contribution and it was left with me to contact them (about 20 as far as I remember) and they were very co-operative. Soon after I had collected the money, the old rock surfaced road was transformed into a fine tarmac highway, with spring boxes under the road to take away the water from the underground springs, the water that once ran down over the 'road' and had been enjoyed by the pigs, ducks and geese.

The government once had a Manpower Services Commission, which gave practical and financial help to any suitable body that would organise projects for the benefit of the community. I attended one of their seminars and put forward several schemes to our Council, which they were pleased to accept. The Commission did in fact give the Council several thousand pounds during this period. John Prout acted as foreman on several of these schemes, which gave employment to a lot of local chaps.

One of the first things we did was fixing the 'Delabole' stone signs at each end of the village, I probably mentioned this at some time in our 'Slate' but big head as I may be, it's worthy of repetition. Once when we were on holiday in Wales we saw similar stones with the name of the village at the entrance to a quarrying district, we immediately said that this would be ideal for us. It was two or three years before our Parish Council accepted the idea but with Brian Setchell in the chair and some funds available from an event, we got it passed and accepted by the M.S. Commission. I think each stone weighed 30 cwt, and was set in half a ton of concrete.

Many other improvements were carried out under these schemes under various names, we built the shed in the playing field, made the memorial garden, extended the Cemetery and made tarmac paths, cleared paths at Tregardock, Treligga Downs and Helland Woods, repaired bridges, repaved and replanted the War Memorial Garden and fixed the flagpole. I'm out of breath - but to continue - improved the steps at Tregardock, made the allotment gardens, built and fixed playing field equipment, tidied the Church-yards at Delabole and St.Teath and levelled the graves, moving unwanted kerbing etc. I well remember when one of the chaps drove the tractor in the playing field with the forklift raised - right through the goal with the cross-bar in position!!! If I had a red card I would have given it to him.

There were other projects, which I can't think of at the moment, but this list will support the St.Teath Ward councillors in their claim for more equal distribution of funds.

A major scheme carried out was the restructuring of the former Medrose Chapel, this went on for nearly a year and they allowed us eight men, half for the church and half to be employed on council work. I had been designated as Clerk of the Works and it was at this stage that I was asked if I would be interested in joining their permanent staff. I would have enjoyed it but I was nearing retirement age and already had sufficient to occupy my mind.

An enthusiastic Parish Council can achieve much and a lot depends on the Chairman and Clerk. For some years I was involved with the area Association of Parish Councils and found this most helpful. There was plenty of work to be done with the reorganisation of Local Government in 1972, three clerks from the County were invited to attend a Summer School at Bristol University, dealing with the forthcoming changes - I was fortunate in being one of those chosen.

When we returned we conducted Clerk Training Sessions throughout our area and I was also engaged in arranging promotional meetings for the M.S.Commission, in fact, some of the meetings included visits to Delabole to view schemes which we had completed - and they left a favourable impression.

Anyone at all interested in local government I would encourage to put his or her name forward as a candidate for the Parish Council when the opportunity occurs. It is not a fact that they can't do very much. A lot can be achieved if there is sufficient interest and I always maintain that it is the Parish Council that can get money spent on local projects - money which otherwise would go to the larger centres with their swimming pools and the like.

To end with a couple of incidents which I thought amusing at the time. I was on duty as presiding officer at one of our local elections and a candidate for the Parish Council came in complaining that it was not a secret ballot as anyone outside could see through the windows what was being done. The election was being held in the C.P.School and there were not many 10ft. people about to look through the windows - but we re-positioned the polling booths. Another prospective councillor marked his ballot paper and stayed in the schoolroom for a long time before he had courage to tell us that he had made a mistake. There were several candidates but he had not voted for himself - after some time and a little leg pulling we told him to spoil his ballot paper, return it to us and we would give him another.

Over the years we had some excellent councillors who could hold their own with the best - I was never ashamed to say that I represented St.Teath Parish Council - and lived in the Delabole Ward of course. Those at present serving on the Council are Patricia Molloy (in the chair) Tricia Hicks, Sally Holden, Ann Hopkins, John Lugg, Alan Shore, Andrew Stacey & John Welford. For the uninitiated the Parish Council was once known as P.P.P., or 'Parish Pump Politics', however it has grown out of that and it now affects much of our lives, when the opportunity occurs why don't you try to get on the Council?

## **Pengelly Pump**

Our Pengelly Pump is one of the four listed buildings within the Parish. Before the coming of piped water all the way from Crowdy Marsh, Roughtor, direct to our premises, it was customary for householders to draw water from a well which often served a group of premises - in my case it was four houses.

There was access across the backs of the dwellings and our particular well was at the rear of what is now The Setters Restaurant. There was the windlass and galvanised bucket, you went a couple of times a day with your buckets and it became a matter of routine.

We often think that in former years the weather was much better than we experience today but it can be recalled when many of the wells became dry, leaving pumps such as this one as the source of supply. It seems that this pump was one of the last wells to run dry. Many of the residents of Pengelly found it necessary to collect water in buckets and similar containers from the spring at 'Well Lucky'. The quarrymen would fill their tea cans from the spring and bring home the fresh water. I well remember drawing water from Pengelly pump in an earthenware pitcher whilst visiting my aunt on Saturday mornings. I expect that there are still several folk around who also drank the water from this pump - to me it was better than the stuff we get through the pipes now-a-days, even if it is high pressure treated, purified, filtered, loaded with chlorine and other chemicals.

I used to really enjoy a nice glass of cold water with my Sunday roast dinner - the 'Band of Hope' has gone out of fashion but if I was at one of the meeting today I don't think that I could have sung with any conviction "My Drink is Water Bright".

There is a popular post-card picture which everyone seems to have, of the Pengelly Pump with an elderly gent pumping for water. I should know who he was but I don't - can you tell me?

## **Policemen & Postmen**

The old song says that 'The Policeman's lot is not a Happy One' but I would not think that applies to those stationed here over the years - probably 'The Laughing Policeman' song would be more appropriate.

The Police House was then next door to Lundy View and living next door to them for many years we got to know them quite well. It was a sad day for Delabole when the Police Authority in their wisdom, or lack of it, sold their property in the village.

Constable Healey was the first that I can remember but he had retired by that time - I never really knew him but he lived in Medrose Street, where Mrs. Sweet now lives. I received enquiries from America about his family but could not get much information. He was an Anglican but there was some disagreement between the vicar, Rev. Jack Bucknell, and some members of his congregation and Con. Healey then attended Medrose Chapel where I saw him regularly. I never knew him when he was actually in the police force, nor remember seeing him in uniform.

Unfortunately I can't put these in chronological order and everyone I ask seems to have a different idea, however I think I can list most of Delabole Policemen of this century - P.C. Benoy (mentioned elsewhere in this booklet) then probably P.C. Pomery, and P.C. Truscott - P.C. Mallett, P.C. Ebbett, (these are definitely out of order) P.C.s: Webber, Brown, Clark, Davies, Mitchell and Sheppee.

I well remember the Truscotts. There were two sons, Ivor who was more of the intellectual type and Vernon, a practical engineering chap, we knew him quite well, he was about five years older than me and there was a gang of lads here around that age - my brother Arnold, Cyril Jerkins, Reg Fry and others whose names I cannot recall.

I mention elsewhere about the communal water well that served a number of properties - we had one next door to us at the rear of The Setters, serving four properties, there was an access gate through to the police house and a heavy door between Lundy View and the cottages which was then occupied by the Pethicks and Pearces. It was usually the lady of the house who went across to the pump, passing our kitchen window, and they often stopped to have a word.

Following the Truscotts we had P.C. Mallett. My main recollection of his stay in Delabole was the day they left - they were waiting for the furniture van and it was nearly dinner time, Mrs. Mallett asked me to run over to Harold Jacobs' at the top of Medrose for some ham but I could do no better than bring back some bacon. I was very young at the time and didn't know the difference. I have thought of it many times since - what do you do with raw bacon for your meal when all your kitchen equipment is packed away ready for transport?

I knew the policemen who followed over the years and I believe many of them gained promotion with their move from here. P.C. Ebbett and his wife we knew very well and I expect that several of the other names will be familiar to the older folk of the village. They were all of the friendly type and as they were known so well, I can't imagine any parents threatening their children with, 'I will tell the policeman about you.' I still feel that taking away the village Bobby was a retrograde step.

The first Postman that I can recall was Mr. Leverton who lived near the top of Medrose and the thing that strikes home most was his postman's hat which was almost in the shape of an inverted boat. He made a lot of deliveries to us at Lundy View and at one time there was a mid day delivery but I'm not sure of the date when this started or ceased. Names of postmen of more recent times come to mind and I recall Postman Brown and Postman Farrow. Nowadays our post is delivered to us in a van.

## **Delabole – the name & the Quarry**

Let's admit it, if there had been no QUARRY there may well have been no DELABOLE village. The village took its name from the Quarry and it would probably have been something like 'Dineboul', as this was the spelling used in an American magazine when it was recording a quarry accident on the 16<sup>th</sup> February 1755. But going back further, it was recorded as 'Delyou Bol' in 1284 and as 'Delyoubol' in 1302, meaning 'Deli with a pit'. 'THEY' reckon however that the original name was 'Deliou' in 1086 and this survived as 'Deli' which seems to mean 'leaves'. Records show however that there were in fact two

manors here in 1086, with the same name, (Deli with a pit) and adding 'Bol' we have Delabole, the other was 'Delyoumur' (recorded in 1284), is surviving today as 'Delamere'.

Sorry about that, I don't like dates either, but I thought it necessary in this case.

As you possibly know it's not like me to set the cat among the pigeons but according to the above, our quarry has been there for over 700 years !!! Before my time the area was split into areas of 'Pengelly village', 'Medrose' and St.Teath was known as 'Churchtown' - as we were all within the same Parish of course. Our High Street was known as Pengelly Lane End and even I can remember this.

John Jenkins wrote that in the years 1841/43, the 'village' of Medrose sprang up like a mushroom, and states that the Pengelly Methodist Free Church was built at the 'Head of Pengelly', he further mentions St. John's Church having been built at 'High Lane'.

At one time there was a Mr. Clapp who was Station Master at Delabole (to keep our facts straight, he lived at Camelford Station) and I worked at S.W.E.B. with his son, Arthur, for a number of years. His father later became the Divisional Superintendent at Exeter Station and he wrote to Mr. Frank Bartlett at Delabole, questioning the name being given to our Station, asking for his advice. I have the original correspondence and it is quite interesting reading - they could not find 'Delabole' mentioned on the map (nor could I) but the railway station was near St.Teath (which was on the map). Mr. Bartlett replied to the letter, stating that as Delabole Quarry was a valued customer he did not think it wise for it to be known as St.Teath Station and the Quarry would not be well pleased !!! A similar thing had already happened just north of here, although it was in the Parish of Forrabury and Minster, they named it as 'Camelford Station'.

The Railway came to Delabole in 1894 (my mother remembered it well) and a siding was made on to the quarry for the ease of loading the slate and other quarry products. Prior to this, slate was taken by road for local projects and larger consignments, often for overseas, were taken by horse drawn wagons to Port Gavern ( and Boscastle in the winter months I believe). Wives of the quarrymen helped to move the heavy stones at the quarry and also helped to load the vessels at Port Gavern and Boscastle.

My write-up is mainly about olden times of course and things have changed considerably, even during my lifetime, with all the mechanisation, shorter hours and better pay, slate would possibly be considered a by-product now-a-days, but I write that 'tongue in cheek' (if that is possible). I confess that I do not know a lot about the industry.

I do know that a quarryman's life was not an easy one and they have always been the backbone of our village. Quarrymen from Delabole have gone all over the world and started several quarries. When I was Clerk to the Council I received numerous requests from overseas for help in tracing ancestors of old Delabolians and I met some very interesting people during their enquiries. One couple sent me a slate plaque with an engraving of the Statue of Liberty on it and part of the inscription reads, 'This plaque of authentic slate is in commemoration of the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the S of L, a comfort to those who came to the U.S. to work the Slate Quarries.' - I value that slate.

As children we were not allowed to go the quarry to play but the children from Pengelly and Medrose used the quarry regularly as their playground. My parents were afraid that I would fall down into the pit or something but I never heard of any of my mates being injured. Consequently, I knew less about the quarry than many others of my generation did, particularly as their fathers and other members of their families were employed there. In many cases children took 'crib' to their fathers so that they didn't have to make the journey home for a meal. This was usually on foot as few of the men had cycles. Imagine having to walk to Delabole from Tintagel, Boscastle and even further afield.

From my bedroom, every day except Sunday, I heard the men walking to work early in the morning. For about five minutes I could hear their hob-nailed boots scraping along the hard stone road, scrape, scrape, scrape - I close my eyes and can hear it now. Then all was quiet. I would hear the sound of the quarry hooter and know that the men were then at their work. I can recall their 'tally system' being introduced, the men had to go through the time office to collect and return their tally. I have heard them tell how they 'missed a quarter' if they were not there before the door closed. I take it that would mean they would have no pay for the first quarter of their 'shift' as it was called.

The men took pride in their work, particularly the splitters I believe - handling the stone in winter must have been a very cold job, sitting in a draughty shed with the slate slab, often wet, resting against their legs whilst they split it for roofing slates.

I know of one splitter who went to Bristol on holiday and whilst there went for a walk which led him past a building site. He stopped to see what was going on and noticed the builders unloading a delivery of Delabole slate. They were piling them high on top of each other as you might do with concrete blocks. He went on to the site and told them off in no uncertain way. I don't know the outcome but when he told me the story it was as if they were ill-treating a friend.

I prize very much some slates that I have had for a number of years. Some are fossils, a pair of 'Delabole Butterflies' and a single one. They came from Delabole Quarry but I have a few rustic slates, given to me by an old friend, Jack Amy, when he worked at Trecarne Quarry. These have beautiful markings and colourings and, looking at them from various angles, you can picture almost anything.

When I was little I had an uncle who worked for a number of years at the quarry on the popped-head, the haulage system pulling wagons up from the pit. When this was reorganised he was given a job on

the weigh-bridge, weighing the vehicles as they came and left the quarry. He was very concerned at losing his old job, which he thought was responsible and important, imagining this was a step towards early retirement. My trouble was that I had never heard of a 'weigh-bridge' and thought he was being given work at Wadebridge - and my little mind was asking however was he going to get there!

I have dealt mainly with slates but there are of course many other products from the quarry, monumental work of course, the place names at the entrance to our village are excellent examples. I understand that they are now opening a showroom and have made a pleasant walk around the quarry.

Writing about Delabole, Arthur Mee wrote that, "It is like a vision of the end of the world to look across this marvellous hole dug out in Mother Earth." - but as my old friend Bill Shakespoke told me, beauty is in the eye of the beholder - which any Delabolian would confirm! You may well laugh at the sayings of my old friend 'Bill' but can you dispute his theory that 'If things don't change they will remain as they are!?' Many a true word is spoken in jest!!!

## The Railway

It would be incorrect to say that the railway came to Delabole on WEDNESDAY, THE 18<sup>TH</sup> OF OCTOBER IN THE YEAR 1893. As you can imagine, there was considerable activity in and around the village long before that day. That was the date of the official opening of The North Cornwall Railway to Delabole and I have a programme for a concert given that evening in the Wesley Schoolroom.

Mother would have been about 6 ½ years old at that time, yet she used to tell us about the events and the activities of the workmen passing in the street - I should think a lot of it was information that she had picked up over the years. A word in common use in those days was 'navvy' or 'Irish navvy'. I understand that the Railway authorities brought in a lot of men from Ireland to work on the 'railroad' and they lived in the railway wagons that they moved along as their work progressed. The sleepers, ballast, railway lines and other equipment was brought along for their use as each section was completed. Something I cannot understand is the picture I have of these navvies - men in heavy boots and brown corduroy trousers, dark coloured jackets with a red handkerchief or scarf around their necks - it must have been a verbal picture I was given as a child - even I was not around at that time, I must have a word with Alf Hooper.

I can well understand them bringing in men from across the sea as I imagine there were very few in Delabole who were out of work as the Quarry was working full time with 400 or 500 men - looking forward to the time when they could load their slates direct on to the railway wagons on the Quarry instead of horse transport.

There were great celebrations in Delabole when the first passenger train pulled in with many celebrities on board.

My early recollection of the train and Station was going to Padstow with my Aunt Kate for a day trip. Some did this trip fairly often and some went shopping in Launceston but it was a long walk to and from the town. In later years we used the train for some of our Sunday School outings which I helped to arrange, mainly with a colleague at work, Horace May, and Arthur Loman who was our local contact on the railway. Delabole Station would be full of children and parents and the Pengelly or Medrose Bridge would be crowded to see us off.

I attended Lansdowne School at Wadebridge and went by train of course - my travelling companions were Ern Smith, who changed trains at Wadebridge for Bodmin, where he worked in the Guardian Office, Dorothy Heard, she worked for Brewers the Outfitters at Wadebridge, and Dorothy Symons who was going to the same school as I was. She was in very poor health and sadly died as a teenager. The four of us met at the station each morning, not necessarily at the same time, but I must say that I seldom needed to run to catch the train - the odd one out in this respect was Ern, he cycled down from High Street and left his bike in the ladies waiting room at the station - with special dispensation no doubt.

We knew the drivers and guards very well and they would often hold the train for Ern if they saw him, head down, coming down Station Road. We would leave the carriage door open for him, he would jump off, push the bike towards Alf Howard or whoever was nearby (for them to park it) and jump on to the train. We would give him a clap and cheer and the train could then proceed - can you imagine that happening these days? We had season tickets and seldom had to show them, as most of the railway staff seemed to know us regulars. The problem arose when new staff were on the gate - then we held up proceedings whilst we searched for the tickets.

The return journey was smoother. We caught the 5.57 I think it was, and in the winter I would use the half-hour to do some homework on the train. In the summer we made use of the school playing field until the last minute then run down through the town to the Station, very finely timed. Lansdowne was a Boarding School and on the final night of term we would often have something doing at school. I stayed there over night only once at the end of a Christmas term, the boarders were allowed to leave for home on the following morning. We sometimes met at Wadebridge with those using the Delabole line and

travelled up together - why I don't know as we had been together all term - I suppose that having friends is what it's all about. I did enjoy my school days there.

I rather liked the smell of the old steam trains (I still like the smell of burning wood) and when we were playing in Vale Lane we would lean on the crossing gate to watch the trains go by. I have some old invoices from Nutes and Teagues - they did some work on the new Cemetery in 1929 - and I was pleased to see that these old firms also called it 'Vale Lane' and not 'Vell Lane' - obviously it should be 'down in the Vale'.

The last passenger and goods trains to pass through Delabole Station were on the 1st October 1966. There were still some goods, old carriages and bits and bobs that had to be taken 'up the line' but I believe the official date that the Station closed was the first of October. After this date quite a number of tankers were taking powder from the quarry to Wadebridge Station for further transportation.

## Schools

In 1878 James Allen published a notice that he was starting a Night School in the Wesleyan Sunday School at a charge of 4d. a month for two evenings a week. I have one of his posters and it says he was to teach English Grammar, History, Geography, Geometry, Mensuration, Algebra, Rudiments of Music and Drawing. I noted that there was no mention of Computer studies! There was to be an 'Excellent Tea' at the end of term.

My friend Alf Hooper tells me that he went to Night School at Medrose way back in the year dot and paid 4d. a week. He later attended our C.P. School for two years before going to Camelford Grammar School. Alf was older than me at that time and I started school in September of 1923. Lundy View was almost next door and I never recall having permission but I always ran home for a snack during the morning and afternoon break.

I had a very happy childhood and liked going to school but I would not include the hours spent there as 'the good old days', some were OK but some days I would like to forget.

Recently I was reminded of my schooldays by an old classmate, he told me how a teacher had once thrown a piece of coal at me during lessons, possibly because I did not give the correct answer. I had forgotten this incident but I've no doubt that it was true. Joining in the conversation was a lady who was also in the class at that time and she recalled the whole class having the cane for some misdeed. I have seen tempers lost and screaming teachers on many occasions.

As I mentioned earlier I enjoyed my time at school but this was probably because of friends. However, looking back, it could have been much happier if some of the teachers were more helpful, understanding and sympathetic. I'm pleased that the methods of teaching have greatly changed over the years. I shall probably get shot down in flames for saying that I can name teachers who may well have had some degree of paper qualification for the profession but would have been more suited to another vocation.

Writing as one who was never in the top half when the exam results came out, I could see that it was those near the top of the list who received the attention - several of us were left to plod on and make the best of it. Seventy years ago it might have been but it was reminiscent of Dickensian times, the boys were shouted at by their surnames, or possibly 'blithering idiots', and it was not unusual to have a rubber or other missile thrown at you. Being hit on the head with a ruler without notice was a daily occurrence, I have seen girls in tears after having their hair pulled.

I often think of the boy who could not remember his '6 times table'. The lady teacher stood him at the front of the class and all through that arithmetic lesson he had to say aloud, again and again, '6, 8s are 48.' I can see him there now and I shall never forget him - or the teacher. There was also the boy who could not read particularly well and he was told to read aloud a certain passage from a book that included the word 'horizon'. He could not pronounce it correctly and most of the children laughed - the more he tried the worse it became. The teacher did not encourage it but she made no effort to stop them. I did not join in the laughing but there seemed to be little I could do to help. I have thought many times since that it may well have been me at the front of the class. I was a junior in the class but there should have been an older friend of his who could have come out to the front and stood by him. A quotation has just come to mind - (I've just made it up) 'The younger the child the longer the memory.'

We did not have much homework but would sometimes have to write lines as an 'imposition' - that was usually during the playtime and teacher would not then have to stay after hours. I think they found the cane quicker and less bother. If I remember rightly I had the cane only once during those 'good old days'. It was known as 'having the stick', but I don't remember why I was caned, it left me with a 'welt' across my hand for a few days. I showed no emotion, in my childish way I suppose I thought this would have given some satisfaction. It was one stroke for a minor 'crime' and two for something more serious. The older boys would tell how they pulled their hand away at the last moment, only to receive another stroke at no extra charge. They also did things to harden their skin but I was not in on this.

My best subject was sums, later to become arithmetic, then mathematics, if you were very young it was 'numbers' I believe, but I was terrible at spelling. I once wrote 'ofice' for 'office', and, living only about

100 yards from school, I was sent home to look on my father's office door to find out how to spell it. They knew how to humiliate a child.

There was of course the other side of the coin but those incidents were few and far between. I don't remember children running up to a teacher, grasping their hands and chatting away as they walked up across the playground - as we see happening today.

I was not allowed to cycle when I severed my connection with the Delabole School and went by train to Lansdowne School, Wadebridge - I have dealt with some of this under the 'Railway' heading. This was by no means the biggest and best school, it had no great academic status and is no longer in being. For me it was a great improvement but I don't think I settled down to serious learning until my final year. I then seemed to have taken a little more interest in why I was being sent there.

However, when end of term exam results came out I was still not in the top half but we had great times and I think I benefited from being treated as a person and not as one of the objects of ridicule.

Special awards never came my way but I well remember one occasion when each member of the class was given a sheet of paper, (this was unusual as it was normal for us to use a separate exercise book for each subject) and told to write an essay on a certain topic. Exam conditions were set, a time limit given and no talking. At the end of the period the papers were collected and we were then told that we had taken part in a hand writing project. Perhaps this was not particularly academic - but I had won my one and only prize!

## **Shops**

Many years ago, when I was a lad, there were hundreds of shops in Delabole. That is probably a slight exaggeration but there were several shops, and I visited most of them. Nearly all of them sold sweets and other nice edible things such as ice cream, rock and the like. That is a little ironic really as shopping is now one of the things I dislike - I'm seldom asked to shop for anything, the exception would be if it was from a garage, ironmonger or electrical shop.

There was little of this pre-packed stuff that you see nowadays but the sweets were weighed out from the tall glass jars by the handful into tall triangular paper bags. There was one shop where you knew you would not be served too much as the last sweet might well be broken in half to get the correct weight!

Flour, sugar and such items were weighed out on the counter in front of you and the ham and bacon put through the slicer while you waited. Shops such as the Co-op sold almost everything - there were of course separate departments for the groceries, bakery, drapery and furniture, whilst outside was the corn store with the coal yard down on the siding at the railway station. Delivery vans went around the village and carried almost everything and at one time there was a roundsman travelling the area taking orders for delivery.

At a rough count taking just a minute I can visualise 33 shops, plus one owned by Harriet Ann Healey at Treligga. She sold a lot of pop and piles of chocolate to us as we came around that way from Tregardock. Those were the days my friend!

I mentioned earlier about rock being sold - further than that, it was actually made in Delabole at Medrose by the Commins family. I have on loan the wooden shop sign, which was the property of Marwood Commins, and he travelled around with his mobile shop to almost every function in the area. It was a horse drawn van with an open side - the top section forming a shelter, the middle section was the counter with Mr. Commins standing behind it saying to the youngsters, "What are you going to have with the other half-penny?" and "When I'm sold out I'm going home." There is one thing that has confused me, that is the wording "Tea Blender" on the sign. I'm sure Marwood didn't go by clipper to India or China to collect his tea. However, I do recall the old ply-wood tea-chests lined with tinfoil, and when you found one for your fretwork handicraft cut-outs there was always tea in the bottom of the chest.

Mentioning the half-penny earlier, this reminded me of the ice creams from the vans, I would run out with a penny to get mine but I always asked for two half-penny cornets, I thought I was getting more that way, it looked more anyway.

The nearest shop to Lundy View was opposite and in the early twenties Mrs. Gill owned it. It was a really old fashioned shop and changed little until more recent times. Mrs Gill was grandmother to Horace, Kathleen and Colin Prust. My mother held her in very high regard, as she was the leader of the Wesley Bible Class, which my mother attended. That particular shop holds very special memories for me for one thing in particular. One Saturday morning Mrs. Gill asked my brother Roy to deliver a parcel to Mrs. Boyce at Treligga and gave him something, probably three-pence, and I went with him - it was probably the first time I had been to Treligga.

The Osmans, (Mr & Mrs, with their children Gladys and Franklin) were there for most of my school days, and I reckon that theirs was the first chip shop in Delabole. The chips were served from the little annex on the northern end of the building and were handed out in a square of greaseproof paper in the shape of a cone. A piece of old newspaper was available for the larger amounts but mine was usually one

“penneth”. You could have as much ‘help-yourself’ salt, pepper and vinegar as you wanted and I shall always thank (or blame) them for their introduction to vinegar as I now have it in plenty with fish, cabbage, salad and whatever you like.

They also sold ice cream, not quite the same as you get from the mobile vans but made on the spot I believe. I know Mr. Osman used to meet the train at the station at 6 o’clock on certain days and brought back with him a bag of ice - to freeze the ice cream I suppose. He also sold the ice cream in small cones at ½d each, which was within my price range.

The shop also sold newspapers and magazines. We had The Children’s Newspaper but, as mentioned earlier, I was sick for some time and I suppose I received preferential treatment - I had a boy’s comic each week, NOT the “Bean-O” or such trash but “The Skipper”! I remember it well. Mr. Osman collected his papers off the 6-37pm train, I allowed him about ten minutes to come up Pengelly, then I was shouting for someone to go across and collect “my paper”, I used to read it from cover to cover.

One shop, which I remember very well was Alice Dawe’s at the bottom of Pengelly, which was where I bought my sweets with the 3d. my Aunt Kate (Matthews) gave me each Saturday morning when I visited her in West Lane. Later on this became 6d, half for sweets and the other 3d. for the matinee at the cinema. There are some interesting stories to tell about that but I have included them under “Entertainment”.

Another shop that I visited round about Christmas time was Cleave’s, right opposite to where I now live. My purchase there was a penneth of monkey nuts and I got quite a lot for my money. I might have gone there more often but I was scared of the massive white dog that was always in the shop, usually attached to a large armchair, or in it.

Apart from pre packed goods and self-service, things have certainly changed over the years, these days if you want a hot pasty or a pint of milk, where do you go? To the local garage of course.

I have been writing about ‘Shops’ but there were more than I have mentioned here of course, down Medrose there were Ruse (later Thomas), Colvill’s, Commins and Munday’s. The Post Office, with a grocery business next door was in Medrose Street. Father would ring them and ask them to hold the post for a couple of minutes as he had not quite finished his accounts - and Mr. Munday would oblige, waiting with his mail bags on his push-bike to go to the station.

The fish and chip shops are worthy of mention. My favourite was Bill Hill’s. Several of us would come out of the cinema at about 10 o’clock or soon after and make our way over to Medrose. It was usually full at that time, there would be about a dozen or so sitting at the table in the back room and Bill would pass back the plates, loaded high. I could not do it now but then we would pass back the empty plates and he would refill them!!! What a way to carry on.

The Osman’s had a similar business, also Mrs. Nicholls at her home in High Street, opposite Kelland’s works. Once there was a fish and chip shop at Bridge Hotel, that was run by a Mr. Payne I believe.

I do think of things other than food but this booklet would not be complete without mentioning ‘Bread’ as Delabole supplied most of the area. It reminds me of a tale always told in the office at Bodmin where we had the wife of a man who worked in a large bakery nearby. She said that the bakers were supplied with bundles of different wrappers for various customers, apparently, or so she said, the bread was all the same but ‘in sheep’s clothing’.

There were also numerous workshops, Carpenter’s mainly. I had my Uncle Jack Prout at the bottom of Water Lane, before he moved to Rockhead to live. I visited his workshop on occasions, did some minor jobs and listened to his words of wisdom. He told me never to buy a handsaw with less than four studs and gave me a piece of advice that I shall never forget - “Measure twice, cut once!” His son, Cecil, was also always helpful. My last session with him in his workshop was to make six hinged windows for my own workshop shed. Cecil was always ready with his helpful advice.

Apparently there were several carpenters in the village, the longest established firm was probably the Nutes at West Downs and there was Ned Chapman in Station Road. Strangely enough there was a saw pit at one time on the grass verge at the front of our bungalow at the top of West Downs Road and I seem to have faint recollections of this, with a man in the pit and another at the other end of the big saw cutting trees into planks. The name of Moses Pearn comes to mind and there was a similar saw pit on the grass verge at West Downs, owned by the Nutes. Several of these carpenters were involved with the Undertaking business. I believe the Nutes were, Sam Blake, Frances Dawe and Moses Pearn certainly were.

Another shop was the blacksmith’s shop at West Downs, owned by Bill Nute. I well remember him shoeing horses - particularly the smell - for which I cared not.

Talking of shoe repairs we must not forget Kendall’s shoe repairs at the bottom of Pengelly and Tom Martin’s hut in High Street where we now have the hairdressing saloon. Bandsman Rogers also had a shoe repairing business in a hut in High Street, near the Co-op. I remember the hut better than the owner as father bought it for me and I had in our back garden at Lundy View – more of that later.

The shop with which I was most familiar was the Chemist Shop next door. Cyril Lobb was in charge and he lived with us for quite a while. It was a real Aladdin’s cave but we were both interested in photography, I had a small V.P.K. and he had a larger camera. We would go down to Tregardock or somewhere similar on a summer evening or to the powerhouse at the Quarry (now the Fire Station) in

the winter. We usually took a full film, came home, developed and printed it and did a few experiments. The Chemist Shop was of course where the Setters Restaurant now is and our darkroom was at the back of the restaurant. I still have some of those snaps.

The home of the Davey family in High Street was once a millinery shop. Mother used to tell of the ladies hats hanging in the window. My mother was a dressmaker and milliner; she worked with her friend Nel Blake in Camelford, in what is now Walkey's shop I believe. Whenever she spoke of her dressmaking experiences she would tell how local people often asked them to deliver messages or parcels on their journey to Camelford - the trouble was that they always walked. They called on someone to pick up a parcel as arranged - only to find that it was a pig's head in a box!

I can recall only one tailor and that was George Moore - he had the shop opposite the War Memorial with his workroom in the room above, he later moved to Atlantic Road where he continued his business. I once had a suit made there but we as a family usually went to Launceston.

## **War Memorial**

The War Memorial Garden was laid out shortly after the armistice of the First World War. Our Parish Council was involved in the organisation but the funds in the form of donations from local residents, amounted to £250, and were sufficient to cover the total cost. Not a large amount by present day standards you might say but with men earning less than a pound a week it must have been a difficult task for the fund treasurer.

The Memorial was unveiled by Sir George Croyden Marks, our Member of Parliament, on the 11<sup>th</sup> February 1922. And the memorial, in the form of a granite cross, lists the names of those who fell and served in combat, further names were added after subsequent conflicts. The Prince of Wales visited Delabole and Roughtor in June of 1927 and laid a wreath on the Memorial, he also visited the Quarry and went down into the pit on one of the wagons - probably given a special spring clean for the occasion.

There are many photographs around of the Prince during this visit, I imagine the school was closed for the day and many of the youngsters gathered around the War Memorial and at the Quarry. I was one of the fortunate ones who went to Crowdy Marsh to see him turn on our water supply - I don't remember much about that but I do recall losing my dinner ticket - I shall probably mention that under another heading.

The Quarry was quite generous to us when we re-arranged the Memorial garden and paths just a few years ago - they were probably equally as helpful when it was first laid out but I was not involved at that time. I was Clerk of the Parish Council when it was decided to remake the paths and replant the garden a few years ago. The Council agreed to cover the cost and I was in contact with Probus Gardens for their advice - they prepared plans for the Council, suggesting what was suitable for our area and delivering what was required, together with several bags of compost. We planted several hydrangeas around the village about that time but only a few survived - and they don't look too special.

The work on the Memorial paths was carried out by the Manpower Services team that our Council had running at that time, with John Prout as foreman. The Gardening side of things was left in the capable hands of Jack Burnard. My photocopy does not do it justice but I have the colour print with hundreds of daffodils - admired my many.

## **During the War**

Until a couple of years ago we often had an elderly aunt staying with us and when she used this phrase we would ask, 'Which one?' Being in her 90s it was quite normal for her to mention something that had happened early in this century, some would take it as a joke but to her it was a serious question. I can quite understand this as I am getting there myself. I was born during the First World War, in fact they ended it when I was born although I remember nothing about it and cannot take any credit. In view of that I will confine my comments to the Second World War - although I have no first hand knowledge of that apart from its effect on Delabole and what we were told on the wireless and in the press.

Apparently there were preparations in hand for the conflict well before September 1939 as the government brought in the 'Militia Scheme' in mid 1939, this was to give the 20 year olds some military training. The net caught six of us from Delabole and we had to report to the Drill Hall, Redruth, for a medical examination. Thinking of this, it brings home to me the passing of time as I am the only one of those six surviving today - but at that time it was something of an adventure for us youngsters.

At that time I was keen on photography (and still am) and I had visions of aerial photography with the RAF. At Redruth a couple of doctors examined me and I shall always remember when they went into a huddle with two other doctors and I could hear every word they said. One phrase that I overheard will

always stick in my mind, 'Does he know?' They bundled me into a taxi and sent me to Dr. Rivers, a heart specialist then sent me off home in the train. A few days later I received a letter telling me I was unfit for military service. One other of the six received a similar letter and within a few days the others received their call-up papers and were already in uniform when the war was declared.

I continued work with Cornwall Electric Power and one day a few of us were in the Delabole Showrooms (now the Doctors' Surgery) for lunch discussing the one subject, the war, and we all thought it would be over in a few weeks - that was not to be.

Daily you would hear of young men and girls being 'called up'. Hazel went into the Nursing C.N.R. and my four brothers were in the Services. Arnold, Roy and Josh in the R.A.F. and Reg in the Army. He was a cook but don't tell him I told you.

We could not find sufficient men to continue with the Boy's Brigade and unfortunately this ceased to function but Alf Hooper and I were very much involved in other activities. We had a canteen in the Liberal Club for those in the services - men and women. They came from Davidstow, (many of them Americans,) from Treligga and the two radar stations at Treligga Downs and Treligga Downs Road. We also organised various money raising efforts, including concerts in the Wesley Schoolroom in which they also took part.

The L. D. V. (Local Defence Volunteers) was formed which we joined, so together with our armbands and my father's 12 bore shot gun we patrolled the streets of Delabole at night. Soon after it was re-named the 'Home Guard' and we were issued with a uniform. I was never issued with a firearm or ammo' but soon Alf and I were transferred to the Civil Defence A.R.P with Sidney Smith as our Section Leader. We met for training at his home, later at the Church Rooms and The Vicarage when Rev. Greenaway took over as Leader. Frank Marchant from the N.C.D. Council was the Area Leader and between us we organised regular exercises with other C.D. Units, involving the Police, Rescue, Ambulance, Fire Services, etc.

Most of us took First Aid Training, which was useful, but I would hesitate at putting it to the test after all these years. One of my biggest problems was distinguishing the various gases, I couldn't tell mustard from jam!!! Alf took over area control of the Fire Watchers (or Stirrup pump gangs), Ladies formed most of this group.

One T.V. programme I enjoy is 'Dads Army', but we took things seriously and if we were called upon I believe we would have pulled our weight in the H.G. and C.D. if the need arose. Of course we had our Capt. Mainwaring and the rest of his gang but we could always share a joke. Two points of contact on a cold winter's night were the Co-op and Radcliffe's bakeries - I wonder why, you may well ask. Another place of interest where we could have a warm-up and use our flask of Oxo was the Quarry powerhouse. This is now the Fire Station and it was on Quarry property in Grove Street. The older readers will remember the area being known as Grove Haulage. Anyway, we often met with the Special Constables there for some reason.

One night whilst on H.G. duty at Trecarne Quarry we heard the bombs drop on Pengelly - we had an idea of the direction but with the hollow sound and echo it was impossible to tell how many and where they were. At first light Alf's brother Joe came out to tell us what was happening. The houses concerned were occupied by Mr & Mrs. Harris and my Uncle and Aunt (Matthews) at West Lane. I was down there later that day and took a couple of snaps. I also took some snaps of our sub-station at Barton Farm where one of our planes came down - the only casualty in both of these incidents was one cow killed.

A call-out early one Sunday morning was to search the coastline from Tintagel to Port Isaac, an aircraft had come down during the night but we found nothing, I don't recall being told if it was one of ours or not - it's too late now anyway.

During our parades through the village at night we had to call attention to anyone showing a light, usually with a curtain not fitting properly or a door not closed. Most people had heavy curtains or a frame to fit into the window, usually made up from a roll of double thick paper with bitumen in between. Sometimes it was a car without the slotted tin over the headlamp, but we never had any trouble and everyone was very co-operative as they knew the danger.

As they say on the telly, "Did you have any embarrassing moments?" One we recall - Irving Keat loaned us his caravan for a holiday at Polzeath - a lovely site, looking out to sea. The two Alfs (Hooper & Thomas) and I had a fine time (even cooking Sunday dinner on an oil stove after chapel). But one night we heard banging on the caravan door and someone shouting, "Make out that light". This was an A.R.P. Warden. We then realised that we had left the skylight open, probably to let out the smell of our fish and chips. Not very good for two air-raid wardens!!!

## Water

Water - probably a subject to be handled with some delicacy following the problems it has caused in recent times but, it's one thing with which we cannot do without.

You will probably think I am over-doing it with my 'I remember' but what better way is there to start a discussion - you know that I am going to write or talk about days long gone. So, I remember when mains water was first brought to Delabole, the roads were in a terrible mess with trenches everywhere, not only for the main pipework but also for the service pipes to the various properties. The main trenches were of varying depth as our roads were not level and some of the pipes were so deep that you could not see the men working on them. It seemed to take a long time and although I was small I can picture it in my mind today. The roads were fairly wide of course, with no sidewalks.

We had Mr. Donnithorne from Port Isaac to install the plumbing but we were more interested in the slat crates that the bath, washbasins and fittings came in than the actual work that was going on. It was during the summer, and a nice one it was, we had cousin Betty from Launceston staying with us and with a few friends - we were quite a crowd. The long slats had their nails still in them - we laid them out on the back lawn and with a saw and hammer we made ships, trains, cars and whatever came to mind. It was one of the best summers that I can remember.

The next thing, which has always been upper-most in my mind, was when the Prince of Wales turned on the water at Crowdy Marsh. It was not the Prince that I recall but my missing dinner ticket.

Some of the school children were taken to Roughtor and others went down to the Quarry where the Prince went down into the pit, some stayed around the War Memorial and saw the Prince lay a wreath. I was taken to Roughtor with brother Roy to look after me. I don't remember anything about the day except that when we lined up outside the marquee for our dinner I couldn't find my dinner ticket. I was some concerned but Roy must have sorted it out and I suppose I had my dinner with the others - I still wonder what happened to that ticket.

You can depend that I remember funny incidents, anyway it was funny to me. Mr. Donnithorne was on the ladder almost vertical, fixing drainpipes down the outside wall. Lundy View was quite a tall building and the passageway is fairly narrow, I know, as some years later I painted those pipes. Whilst Mr. D. was there, Roy went upstairs and turned on the taps! I realise now that it was a stupid thing to do but everything turned out all right in the end.

For a few years after that Mr. Oswald Martyn 'phoned us many times to check if we had any water on the top floor, I suppose that was one of the highest points. After a few years I imagine that larger pumps were installed at Crowdy Marsh and the phone calls were no longer necessary. There was a time however when the water supply was taken down west through Delabole and it seemed to by-pass us but this was later rectified in some way.

The water reservoir in Treligga Downs Road, opposite where we now live, was a favourite play area for us youngsters but actually is was a dangerous spot as we used to lift the metal covers on top of the reservoir to see how high the water level was. A large metal tank was later installed high over this spot and was a landmark that could be seen for miles around. The fire siren was fitted to the top of it and for some time I believe this was its only use. Just a few years ago I think the firemen were each given their own bleeper and the siren was no longer necessary - the tower was taken down but I don't think many people noticed that it was missing.

I often wonder how they managed years ago without a main water supply, as it must have been most difficult. I know they had their wells and there were a few pumps around but it's not quite the same. When you wanted water you took along your pitcher, bucket or whatever, there was a bucket attached to the windlass, this was let down into the well and the handle turned to bring it up. Sometimes the water level was up to the top but during a dry period it could be a long way down or even empty. I will write nothing about drowned cats. In time of drought those living at Lower Pengelly or Lower Medrose would sometimes fetch water from the spring on the Quarry, known as "Well Lucky". I could not decide if this should be "Will" or "Well" but after a few 'phone calls I decided all was "Well" if you see what I mean. Many of the quarrymen would fill their tea cans with this water to take home - the best water you could find they would claim and I am inclined to agree with them - better than the stuff we pay for!!!

Many houses had the communal wells but at Lower Pengelly they had the village pump which was later registered as a Historic Monument. I used this pump many times when visiting my Aunt at Pengelly, I would go out with her brown pitcher and bring back about a gallon of water. I believe everyone in those days made good use of their rainwater butts for their weekly wash day etc. Just imagine what it must have been like !!!

There were some disputes about ownership of wells and paths after the mains water arrived but I think this was resolved by abandoning the rights-of-way with the well being claimed by the owner of the land - which would seem reasonable. It was most probably shown on their deeds anyway.

I won't go into the more recent problem when something was put into the wrong tank - enough has been said about that to last a life-time so I will leave this to someone from the next generation to include it in their memoirs.

My final word on this subject is that I don't like the flavour of our water, it's not just the chlorine but the horrible taste. I used to enjoy a glass of cold water with my roast dinner - but not anymore from our supply.

## Weather

A lot of people around the district often talk about the dreadful weather which they imagine we have in Delabole but it's not quite like that. The wind from St. Breward for instance is spent out by the time it reaches here. Rain and water from Camelford has been a topic for generations. Mr. Bogle of Camelford used to record and publish his rain fall figures until he was pressurised into keeping it private - and enough has been said and written about a more recent unmentionable water incident there to last a lifetime.

I believe that we get our fair share of sunshine but it's difficult to show this on a small black and white "snap" that I try to print below. I will try to include a snow scene of when I got stuck one morning on the way to work at Camelford, also I have a "snap" of some flood water along High Street, near the top of Water Lane. To reuse a couple of my old jokes, the weather in Delabole is not always as bad as this, sometimes it's terrible. Anyway it's better than having no weather at all, what would we have to talk about?

At the time of writing this we have quite a nice autumn morning with the sun shining and the garden looks beautiful. I can see Roughtor in front of me and I know the Atlantic Ocean is only just a mile away on the other side - who could wish for anything more - by choice I would not live anywhere else.

## Work & Hobbies

I incorporate these under one heading as I have difficulty sometimes in telling 'tother from which' if you understand such Cornish sayings. I have been most fortunate over the years in never having been unemployed, even for a day. On leaving school I spent just a short while at Camelford in the office of J.H.Hayne & Son. The Delabole Electric Lighting and Supply Company had just built their showrooms in High Street (now the doctors' surgery) and I applied for the job in the Showroom and as battery charging attendant and started work there immediately with Charlie Parker as my boss.

Remember that we were on a D.C. Supply - when you just stuck your thumb up into the lampholder to see if the electricity was there (don't do it now please). I was always playing with something electrical at home and they got me out of the house by getting me a garden shed, what a wonderful present!!

Bandmaster Rogers was retiring as a cobbler, he had a wooden shed sited where the old public convenience still stands. He probably thought that the shed was not worth moving and as it was on father's land, he must have sold it cheap - after a little dealing of course. The first thing I knew of it was when some men lifted the shed over the wall and put it on some blocks in our back garden. It was about 8ft. by 6ft. and I soon had it lined with plywood and a bench fitted the full length under the window. I ran a cable across from father's office and we were in business, no more bits and pieces strewn over the kitchen table.

Arthur Hamblyn and I spent many happy hours there making up something from 'Practical Wireless' or trying to repair something - not that we had a lot of success but it was good fun. When we were there 'working' poor Alf Thomas would not come near us, he was always expecting the place to blow up. The shed eventually went out to Higher Court Farm, still in good condition but I doubt if it is still there.

My hobbies were mainly anything to do with electricity or photography but billiards and table tennis came fairly high on the list. Cyril Lobb the chemist from next door lived with us for some years and he was dead keen on his camera. We often went out on the cliffs in the evenings or down to the quarry to run off a film or two. Cyril had a dark room at the back of his shop where we would go on until late into the night to develop and print our films. I still had my shed of course if we needed to make anything.

The garages were then built 'up by the Cinema'. There was, (and probably still is) an inspection pit in one of the garages - that one I had as a workshop where I could play with the car engine, decarbonise it every few months and grease and oil it very often - when it was not necessary, but again, I was enjoying myself. This was my father's car and he was not bothered what I did provided the car would go all right - he was usually working hard elsewhere. I still have a fair size garage and large shed where I can amuse myself - when I have the energy. It always annoyed me when I received the rate demand, my garage was rated ten shillings more than the others were because I had the inspection pit - every time I received their notice I would say that I would fill it in - but I paid and never did.

Enough of hobbies or you will think my life was all play and no work - not so, as mentioned above. I started with Delabole Electric in 1935, charging wireless and car batteries, they were mainly from Delabole but Radcliffe's vans brought some to us from on their 'rounds'. The wireless batteries varied in size and cost from 6d. to 1/6d, to charge. The charge in the smaller ones would last about a week and up to three weeks for the large ones.

We sold lighting fittings and small appliances, wireless sets and electrical fittings - it was not a particularly busy job but for me it was a stepping stone. Delabole Electric was bought out by Cornwall Electric Power and van loads of cable and electric fittings were delivered for the 'change-over' of

Delabole from D.C. to A.C. I was then fairly busy. Wireless sets with wet L.T. batteries were converted by eliminators to mains supply or the owners were given the option of taking £4-10s. towards a new set. Stan Pearce of Launceston went around the village, house to house, offering the new supply, testing for faults and getting the owners or tenants to sign on for the new terms. Most properties needed to be rewired as a lot of it was installed by the owner who knew little about electricity, this was OK for the D.C. supply but nothing was earthed - essential for A.C. supply. There was a 'two-part-tariff' where-by they could get a considerable reduction off their re-wiring bill. Appliances with a motor needed replacement or compensation was paid.

As soon as the Delabole change-over was completed I was moved to Camelford, first helping with the stores needed for the electrical installations around the district - then I moved into the office where I looked after the stock books and did the billing for the contract work, nothing particularly onerous about this either but we did have a busy time with stock-taking at the end of each quarter. To me it was a stupid system, counting every yard of cable and lamp, a professional stock checker could have dealt with it in a fraction of the time. Moan ended.

C.E.P. Company, in their wisdom had now closed the Delabole Showroom and Hazel was given an office job at Camelford, she worked there for a time before going into nursing. I was at Camelford until the end of the war and then that office was closed down, the Districts were rearranged and our District Office was at Bodmin, covering quite a large section of Cornwall. I was given a job there and it was not long before I took over dealing with queries from consumers - this was more in my line and I was allowed to carry on very much on my own.

I could go out to visit a consumer when necessary or they would come to Bodmin to see me, mainly it was by 'phone or correspondence and this was rather routine - I received my mail first thing mornings, investigated the query and by lunch time hopefully had a satisfactory answer. One of the ladies from the typing pool came down immediately after lunch and I dictated a reply with each file - in a couple of hours the files and letters came back for signing, these were passed on for vetting and posted. I suppose I cleared just over a hundred letters a week and reckoned to have very little in my 'in' tray at the end of the day. What a boring day you say - but I found it interesting. As I used to tell the meter readers, they had a wonderful job, just reading meters - and they were all different.

During my years at Bodmin we had two visits by the big white chief - the Chairman of the Board. Everything had to be 'spick and span' - they had a 'good housekeeping' exercise occasionally, when you got rid of all unwanted rubbish - this was such an occasion.

The first time he came the manager introduced me as the 'trouble shooter' and he wanted me to explain how we dealt with certain problems. If only he would come when we had someone interesting in the enquiry office - as I sometimes did, one of them said he would pay his account when he came up on the pools. Anyway, all went well until the next chairman of the Board came, the advance warning was duly given and all was well. I had been corresponding with a customer at Newquay who owned some hotels, he agreed to come up to Bodmin that particular day to sort out his accounts with me.

The receptionist rang to tell me that he had arrived and was in the enquiry office, I went down but as there was a lot of paper work involved I took him into the conference room which was quiet and where there was plenty of room. I did not know that he had come in his Rolls and had difficulties in parking in our St.Petroc's park, he had parked side-ways over two spaces. Apparently the Manager looked out of his window, saw the Rolls and imagined that the Board's Chairman had arrived. Everyone was in a flap, he had them running everywhere looking for the Chairman. The receptionist was able to tell him that the gent with the big car had gone off somewhere with Cyril., and they couldn't fine me either. All ended well, we resolved the queries and I missed seeing the Chairman, Oh botheration!!!

St. Petroc's was the best office I ever had. (It's now an old people's home - perhaps I should have stayed!!) I had the front rooms along the first floor, they were once bedrooms but an archway had been cut through each dividing wall and a desk fitted into each of the alcoves. The doors opposite led into the passage - I remember it so well. Our gang was quite comfortable thank-you. The powers-that-be however must have thought that we were too comfortable as they built a large pre-fab in the back orchard and moved us all down there, crowded into one big room. This was not to last as the Board had property at Green Lane and another pre-fab was built out there to house us all, the staff were not happy. St.Petroc's stayed on for a while but was soon sold.

It was there when I retired at 64, I would have come out earlier but several older staff had received the 'golden hand shake' and as this put me into my last year, no such handshake was available. I have since told them that the best day's work I did was when I retired - but I didn't really mean it.

I hope this section has not been too boring but may-be in the future, when I am bored, I shall read it and remember what a good time I've had!!!



