

Samuel Hansford - Photographer of the Charmouth Area

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THE WEB FRESHFORD SITE

Samuel Hansford has provided us today with an astonishing record of a long lost Edwardian era of both Charmouth and the surrounding area. This was the time before the First World War when the countryside was more rural and he was able to photograph both his family and friends at both work and play. It has taken a number of years to track down the images he took as many are unique and especially thank Keith Wiscombe, Elizabeth Fortescue and the Hansford family for their assistance. I am sure there are many more to find as it is rare to find duplicates. The postcards he produced are especially scarce and command a high price when they come on the market.

I have sorted over 200 photographs so far found that he took into four groups as follows:

(1) Hansford Family, (2) Charmouth, (3) Pass Family and (4) Wootton Fitzpaine and the surrounding area.

Click here to see Samuel Hansford's Photographs of the Hansford Family.

Click here to see Samuel Hansford's Photographs of Charmouth

Click here to see Samuel Hansford's Photographs of the Pass Family.

Click here to see Samuel Hansford's Photographs of Wootton Fitzpaine and the surrounding Area.



Samuel is seen here with his family: Samuel (Barnie), Isabel, David, Mabel and his mother Isabel.

What makes the story of Samuel Hansford the more poignant is that his job was that of Estate Foreman for the Pass family and photography was only a hobby. He produced and sold the postcards to supplement his income to pay for his daughter, Mabel's treatment in a London Hospital for a Hole in the Heart. Tragically she was to die in 1915, aged 16 and he was heartbroken. The photographs Samuel produced fall into four groups. They are those of his family, Charmouth Village, the wealthy Pass Family for whom he worked and Wootton Fitzpaine and the surrounding area.

Many older people remember Barney Hansford, who was the son of Samuel and ran a wonderful Fossil and Country life Exhibition which opened in 1968, in the centre of Charmouth. Sadly due to illness this closed in 1986 and all the items were auctioned. The area where it was established is now called Barney's Close after him. His family have been very helpful in compiling the collection and talk.

Samuel Hansford came from a family of local Blacksmiths who were always held in a position of esteem in the community for their ability to make all the necessary tools of that time including the shoes for horses and oxen. The blacksmith also made nails, hinges and handles for doors, wheel bonds and many other items and were among the more literate members of the parish. His Great grandfather, Frederick, lived and worked in Netherbury and with his wife Ann had 12 sons, 8 of whom were Smiths, and no daughters. He was over 90 years of age when he died in 1863. His eldest son, Samuel was initially a Blacksmith in Chideock where his four children were born, but by the time of the 1841 Census had moved to Wootton Fitzpaine, near Charmouth. He was to die young, aged just 58 and his wife and eldest son, Charles are shown in 1861 Census as continuing as Blacksmiths. It was this son who was to marry Martha Conway in 1868 and have a son, Samuel Barnard Hansford three years later. But tragically the father was to die soon after the birth, aged just 37, when a horse kicked him in the stomach and killed him instantly.

Samuel's mother sold the business soon after and went to live with her father, Barnard Conway, who had formerly been a butcher at Ryall, Whitchurch Canonicorum. It was his name that would be included in the names of a number of children.

Samuel married Isabel Bartlett in 1898 and returned to Wootton Fitzpaine where he worked as a Carpenter in both wood and stone. This coincided with the Pass family's purchase of the Village and in time he became their Clerk of Works. He and His wife had four children - Samuel Barnard (Barney), David, Mabel and Isabel. They lived in Nucombe Cottage in the idyllic village of Wootton, surrounded by fields. In 1916 the family moved to "Mintaka" at the bottom of The Street in Charmouth, opposite to Firlands House, where Barney, his son was to one day establish his Exhibition. Tragically Samuel was to take his own life in 1920 aged just 50, as he never recovered from the death of his young daughter, Mabel. He has though left us with a magnificent record of the times he lived in as a memorial to both him and his family. He would take photographs within walking distance of Charmouth and put on shows of them in the Local Village Hall. He would say to his audience-" If you have enjoyed my photos a little- you have enjoyed me a lot".

I have included here some photos of Samuel and his family. David the next youngest also died young at 26 with appendicitis in 1928. He and his wife bore 1 child - Mabel. Second eldest child Isabel born in 1900 is still alive today (1997) married and bore 1 child. Isabel Samuel Barnard Hansford 1900 the eldest Son. Samuel Hansford is shown as living at Mintaka on The Street in Charmouth in 1921. His wife Isabel died in 1944.

One of the stone carvings that Samuel undertook was the gateway to the cemetery at Wootton Fitzpaine. It is carved with the words "The rich and the poor are gathered here together." In the cemetery is a six-foot high stone cross that Samuel carved in Portland stone.

Samuel Hansford worked initially for Alfred Capper Pass, but on his death in 1905, for his son, Alfred Douglas Pass. Theirs is an interesting story of a family that made a huge mark on Wootton Fitzpaine and the area around that is still felt today. The father, literally bought everything that came up for sale in the way of property from 1895 until his death. He was Lord of The Manor of Monkton Wyld, Wootton Fitzpaine and Charmouth and owned farms both there and in Fishponds, Hawkchurch and Abbots Wootton, totalling over 5000 acres. His wealth was derived from a massive metal refinery at Bedminster in Bristol. Towards the end of his life he sought to become a country gentleman and endeavoured to create an Estate based on Wootton Fitzpaine Manor where he lived. The farming had previously been in a sorry state and he transformed it into a hunting and sporting estate employing many people from the villages. But sadly he did not live long enough and died in 1905, aged 68. His son was only 20 when his father died and as well as The Estate received £60,000 in stocks and a large income from the Foundry.

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Marriage in Netherbury of Samuel Hansford to Martha Tizzard in 1822

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Barnard Conway, Widower, formerly a Butcher, aged 71 living with Martha Hansford, Widow, Dressmaker, aged 41 and Samuel Hansford aged 10, in 1881 living in Greenway, Ryall, Whitchurch. Barnard died in 1887.

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1861 Census shows Martha Conway, aged 22 as a Dress Maker living with her parents in Ryall, Whitchurch Canonicorum.

Bernard Conway and his twin brother John were born in 1811 in Netherbury, Dorset. He married Joan Pitfield on 23 June 1835 in Symondsbury, Dorset. They had one child during their marriage. He had three brothers and two sisters.

When Martha Tolley Conway was born in January 1839 in Whitchurch Canonicorum, Dorset, her father, Bernard, was 28, and her mother, Joan, was 42. She was baptized on 17 February 1839. She had one son and one daughter with Charles Handsford between 1862 and 1871.

When Samuel Hansford was born in 1871, his father, Charles, was 38 and his mother, Martha, was 32. He had one son and one daughter with Isabel Louise Bartlett between 1899 and 1900. He had one sister.

The following census returns for Wootton Fitzpaine show:

16 June 1841_- William Bridle, blacksmith, aged 20, living at Wootton Farm. Samuel Hansford, blacksmith, aged 40, living at Wootton Cross with wife Martha and four children.

30 March 1851 - Martha Hansford widow aged 51, occupation smithing at Smith's Cottage.

John Shepard aged 36 at Longlane, blacksmith.

William Chedd aged 58, widower and two sons at Catherstone cottage,

occupation blacksmiths.

6 April 1861 - Charles Hansford aged 27, blacksmith. William Henley

blacksmith, both lining at Longfane.

John Shepard aged 47, blacksmith at Longlane.

2 April 1871 - Charles Hansford aged 37, blacksmith employing two men.

3 April 1881 - William Henley aged 44 and son James aged 19 both blacksmiths. 5 April 1891 - William Henley aged 53 and son Charles Hansford Henley aged 23 both blacksmiths.

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Mr. Samuel Hansford was living at Nutcombe in 1911 with his family.





Barney Hansford as a child with his Grandmother outside Greenway, Ryall, Whitchurch where his father lived when his father died in 1871.



The same view today

HANSFORD Samuel of Mintaka Charmouth Dorsetshire died 9
June 1921 Administration London 25 July to Isabel
Louisa Hansford widow. Effects £616 10s. 9d.

Samuel Hansford is shown as living at Mintaka on The Street in Charmouth in 1921. His wife Isabel died in 1944.

HANSFORD Isabel Louisa of Vale View Ryall near Bridport

Dorsetshire widow died 17 July 1944 Probate Exeter 11 September to Samuel Barnard Hansford and Joseph Caddy builders.

Effects £514 13s. 6d.

Body of Well-Known Builder Found in a Field

A painful sensation was caused at Charmouth on Thursday by the tragic discovery in a field of the body of Mr. Samuel Hansford under circumstances which pointed to his naving committed suicide.

Mr. Hansford, who was a builder and con-

ractor, and about 50 years of age, was missing from his home early Thursday morning. A search party was organised, but it was not intil the afternoon that his dead body was found by an employee on land near Stone-parrow Farm. So far as can be ascertained, leceased ended his life by tying a piece of cord around his neck and, having tied the ends to some bushes, cut an artery in his left arm with a razor. Apparently he fell forward through loss of blood, and was strangled by the cord.

Newscutting recording the suicide of Samuel Hansford in 1921.

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1924 Rates showing Samuel's wife Isabel living with her son at Mintaka

"The Lilacs" was another house with an extensive garden and was the home for many years of Fred Penny and his family. The next house "Mintaka" was built by Penny and is now occupied by his grandson Andrew Peach. - Reg. Pavey 1972.



Mintaka, The Street, Charmouth today

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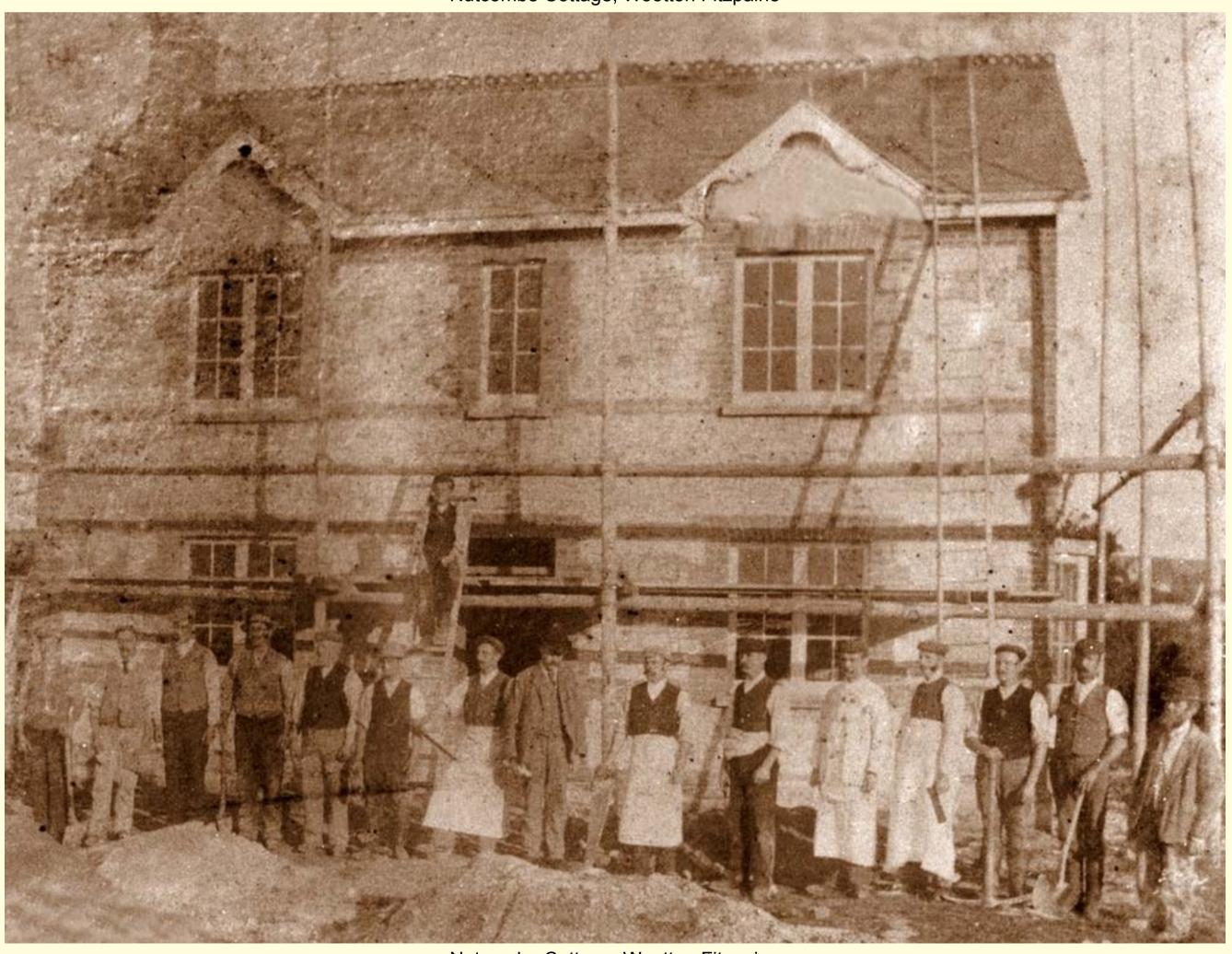
1901 Census has the family living at Nutcombe Cottage in Wootton Fitzpaine.

No one else must be included. (For order of entering names see Examples on back of Schedule.)		Ages of Males.	Ages of Females.		oun year write "under one."	Children Born Alive.	Children still Living.	who have Died.	(See Instructions 1 of Schedule.)	to 8 and Examples on back	If employed by a public body (Government, Municipal, etc.) state what body. (See Instruction 9 and Exam- ples on back of Schrönie.)	(2) "Own Account" (that is neither employing others ner working for a trade employer).	Industry at lease.	Nork.—In the case of persons born elaswhere than in England or Wales, state whether "Besident" or "Visitor" in this Country.
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1911 Census has Samuel aged 40 - Clerk of Works (Carpenter) born in Wootton Fitzpaine. Isabel, wife aged 42 from Sidbury in Devon. Mabel, daughter aged 11, born in Whitchurch, Samuel aged 10, Isabel, aged 8 and David aged 7. They are still living at Nutcombe Cottage in Wootton Fitzpaine.



Nutcombe Cottage, Wootton Fitzpaine



Nutcombe Cottage, Wootton Fitzpaine







Samuel, Samuel Barnard (Barney), David, Mabel, Isabel and Martha(Mother)



Samuel Hansford's Children: Mabel with her doll aged 11, Samuel Barnard (Barney) aged 10 with his toy train, Isabel aged 8 with her doll and David aged 7 with the family cat in 1911.



Samuel's children appear on a Christmas Card in 1911.



GORONATION DEGORATIONS

Looking up the Axminster Road in 1911.Reg. Grabham is the boy in the cap and George Rowland's brothee is in the sailor suit.









The junction of Old Lyme Hill with The Steet with The New Inn on the right in 1911





The junction of Old Lyme Hill with The Steet with the thatched cottage on the left in 1911.Mr. Spottiswood who lived at Lutrell House is facing us and Dr. Hine is the man with the straw boater.













John Hodder leads the Procession passing The Coach and Horses on the left and Charmouth Stores on the right.







The Procession passes Devonedge on the left and Pryers Monumental masons yard on the right in 1911





The procession passes The Queens Armes (Abbots House) in 1911.





The procession passes The George Inn on the left in 1911





John Hodder with the beard and Mary and Fred Penny standing on the right of him outside the George Inn in 1911."The Lilacs" was a house with an extensive garden and was the home for many years of Fred Penny and his family. The next house "Mintaka" was built by Penny and is now occupied by his grandson Andrew Peach. Fred was aged 48 - he was a capenter and joiner with 4 children.





A group of villagers on the County Bridge in 1911





Mill Cottage during The celebrations of King George V Coronation in 1911





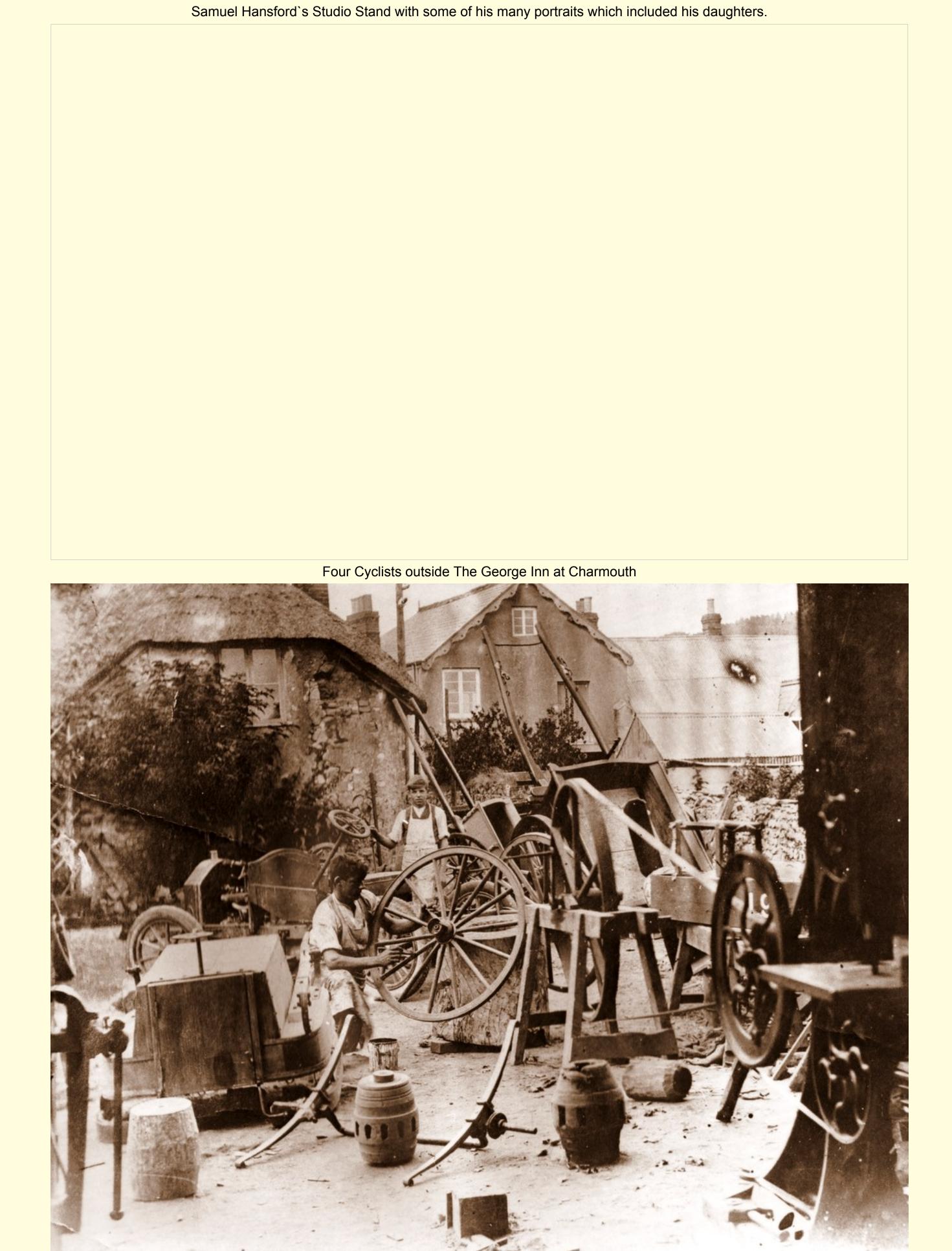
John Hodder standing outside the entrance to Rose Cottage at the junction of Bridge Road and the Street. As well as a carrier and furniture remover he manufacturered ginger beer. In addition to his wagonette he owned a wagon and was the general Haulier of the village.





Charmouth Coronation Festival in 1911

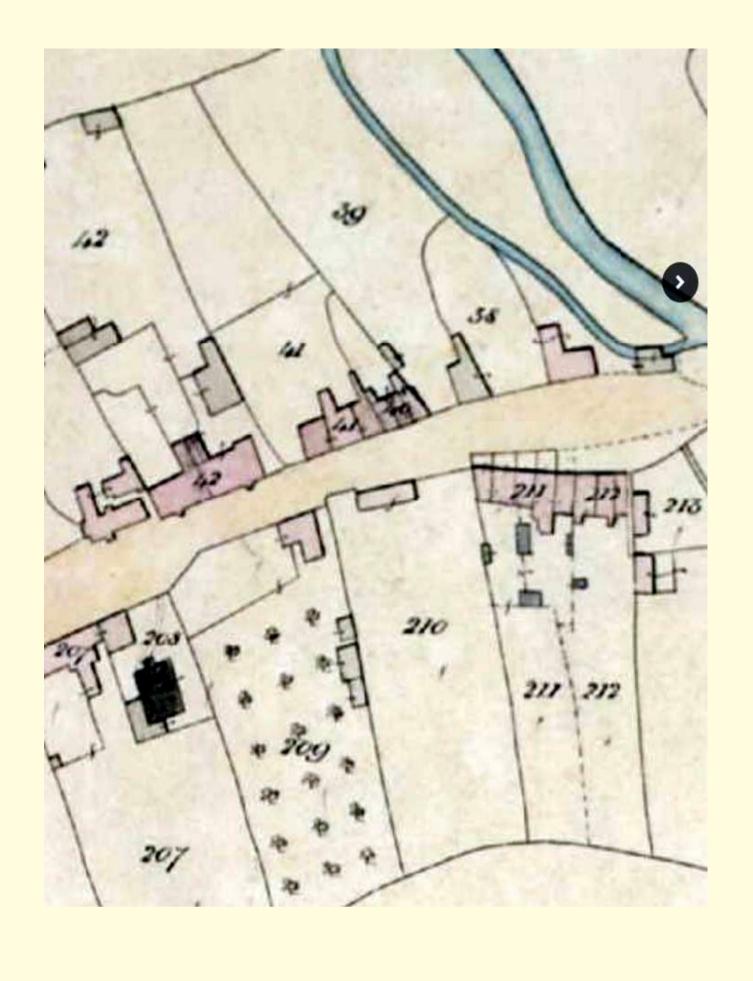


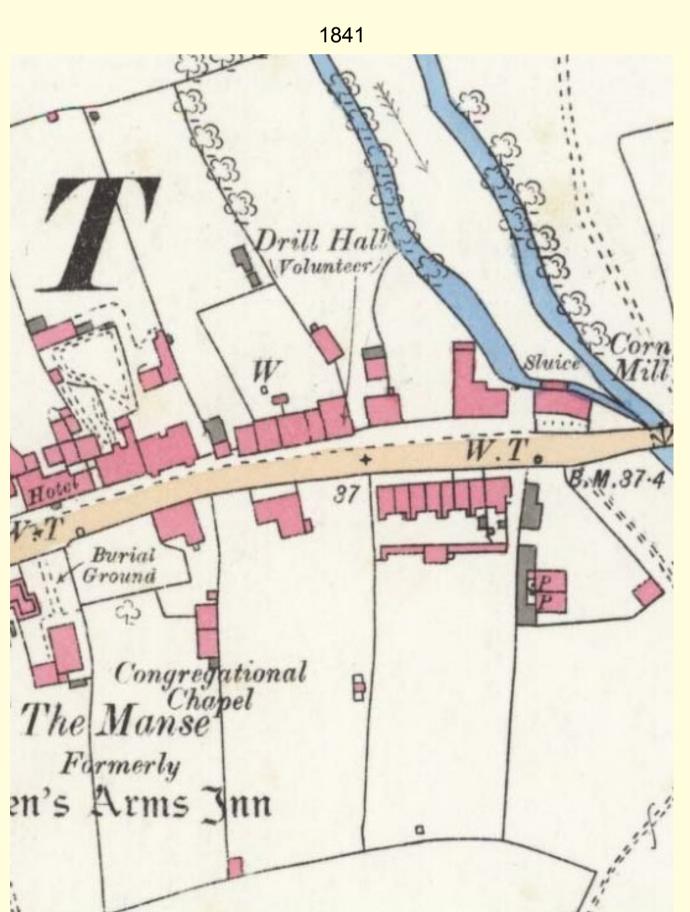


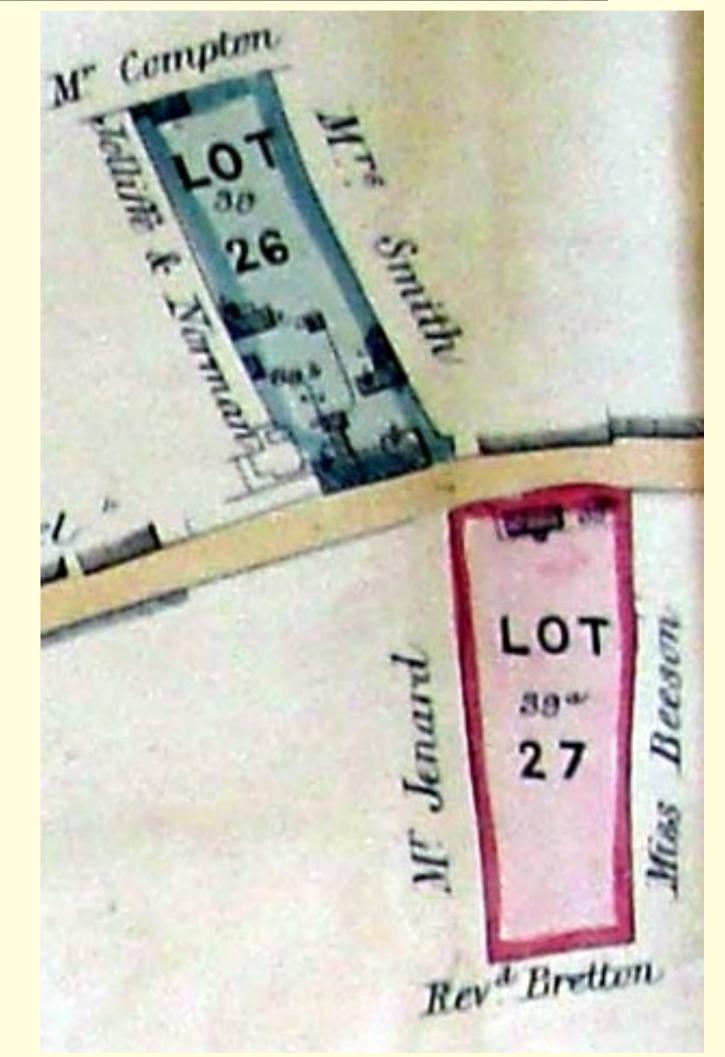
Barney Hansford and his brother, David in their Workshops. Opposite can be seen Firlands on The Street in 1911.



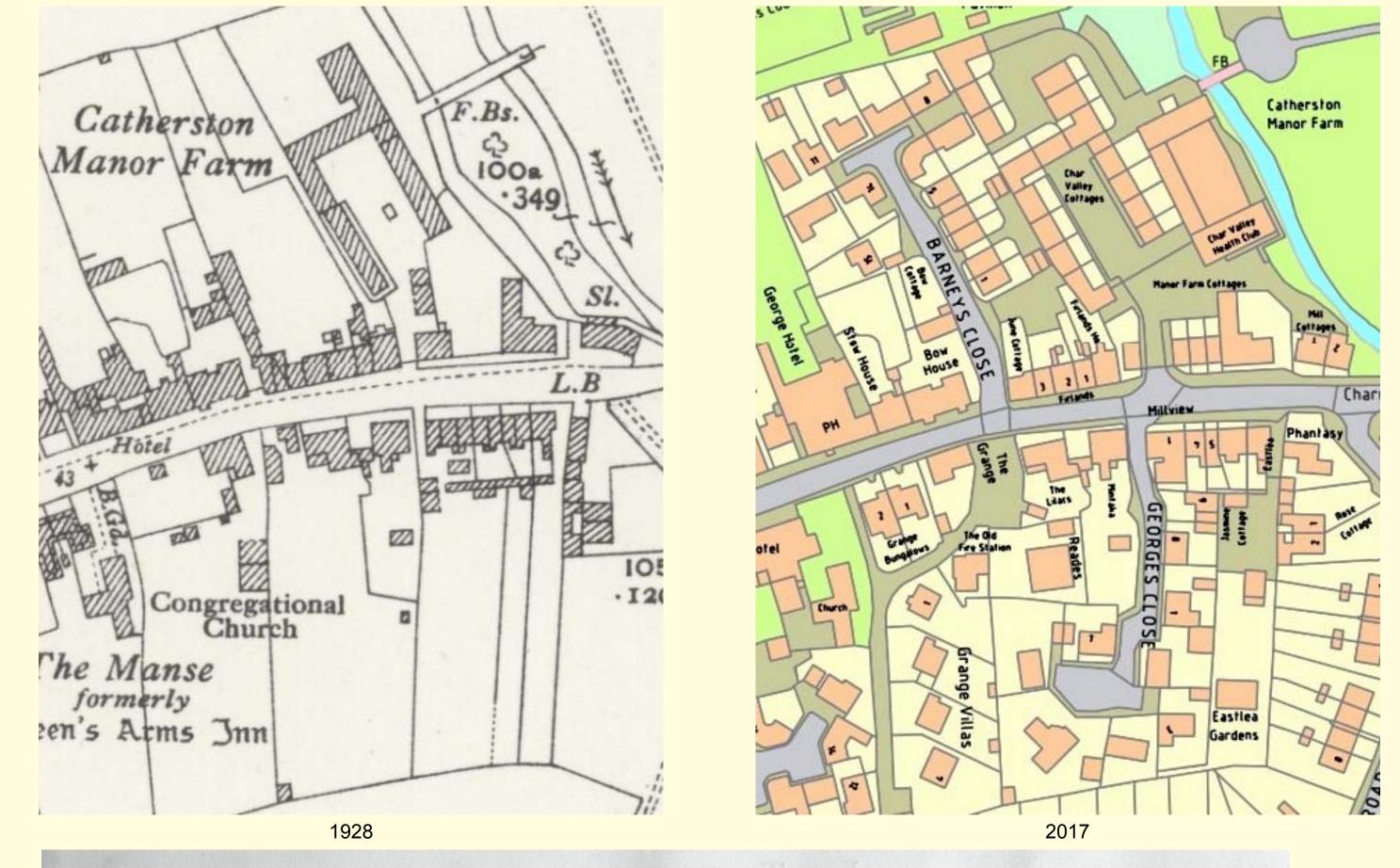












LOT TWENTY-SEVEN.

Numbered 39a and 39c on Plan, and comprising 3 Roods, 30 Perches.

TWO COTTAGES AND GARDENS,

No. 39c in the Occupation of Gale, Locke, and Payne, Yearly Tenants, at Rents amounting together to £8 12s. per Annum.

Note.—Gale's Cottage is two floors high, and is let at £2 12s. per annum. Landlord paying Rates and Taxes.

Locke's Cottage comprises also two floors, and is let at £4 per annum. Tenant paying all Rates and Taxes.

GARDEN, 39a, let to the Executors of the late Mr. G. PAYNE, with other lands. Yearly Tenants. Apportioned Rent for No. 39a is £2. per Annum.

No. 37, COMMON CLOSE (Pasters)

And Was so, SINGLE COLLWON

LOT TWENTY-SIX.

Numbered 39 and 39b on Plan,

COMPRISES-

TWO FREEHOLD DWELLING HOUSES AND GARDENS,

Containing 3 Roods, 2 Perches, and producing an Annual Rent of £37 15s.

Number 39 on Plan, containing 2 Roods, 18 Perches,

A STONE DWELLING HOUSE, with Entrance, Sitting Room, Kitchen, Parlour, Larder, Back Kitchen, Cellar, and W.C. and 5 Bed Rooms, Dressing and Box Rooms above. At Rear is a capital Garden, with Buildings thereon, Workshops, a Yard, in which are Wash House, a Potato House, C.C. Stable Loft, and a small Cottage adjoining containing Two Rooms, a Pump and Well. Let to and in the Occupation of Mr. Penny, at a Rent of £19 15s. per annum, Tenant paying all Rates and Taxes. Lease expires 11th October, 1868.

Number 39b on Plan, containing 24 Perches,

A STONE AND SLATED DWELLING HOUSE, having Entrance, two Parlours, Kitchen, Pantry, Scullery, and four Bed Rooms. In Yard at Rear, a Pump and Well, and covered Shed, also two Gardens. In the Occupation of Mr. Smith, Yearly Tenant, at £18 per annum. Tenant paying all Rates and Taxes.

mmediately **east of "Bow House"** is a **row of cottages**, which were at one time thatched. How old they are is difficult to say and they changed hands at the turn of this century in quite a romantic fashion. They were owned by Frank Coles at that time and one day he and John Toms, the miller, drove to Axminster and on the way they discussed the cottages. Before they reached Axminster the cottages changed ownership. Frank Coles was prepared to sell them for £500. The first cottage with a covered entrance way into the land behind had good, sheds which Toms was able to use as a store for grain. A room upstairs was built over the entrance and the cottage was let to miss Membrey, an aunt of Fred Penny. It was later acquired by Barney Hansford and became his grocer's Stores. The other cottages were all similar in build. Joe Turner occupied one of them, when he was Tom's dairyman. The gardens extended as far as Charmouth Meadows (now the Playing Field) on the north side.

The building adjacent was quite different. Its windows were an ecclesiastical appearance and people used to say that it was once a chapel. I could never find out that this was so. When I wrote to the Wesleyans they replied that it had never belonged to them. I can only remember it as the drill hall of the local Volunteers with a workshop belonging to Jesse Rapsey in the ground behind. According- to the Bridport News for 20th April 1886 the Volunteers first took hold of public favour in 1863, but the first official record of those of Charmouth appear in the army list for January 1866, where they are entered as the "5th Charmouth of the 1st.Dorset Artillery Corps, R.G.A.," and united to "I.A.Br.Devon Artillery Volunteers". In this entry no officers' names are given, but in the list for April 1866 Charles Brown is entered as First Lieutenant and in July 1866 Henry E.Norris as Honorary Surgeon. Later Dr.Morris was captain and George Pavey, lieutenant. In 1891 the corps was without officers.





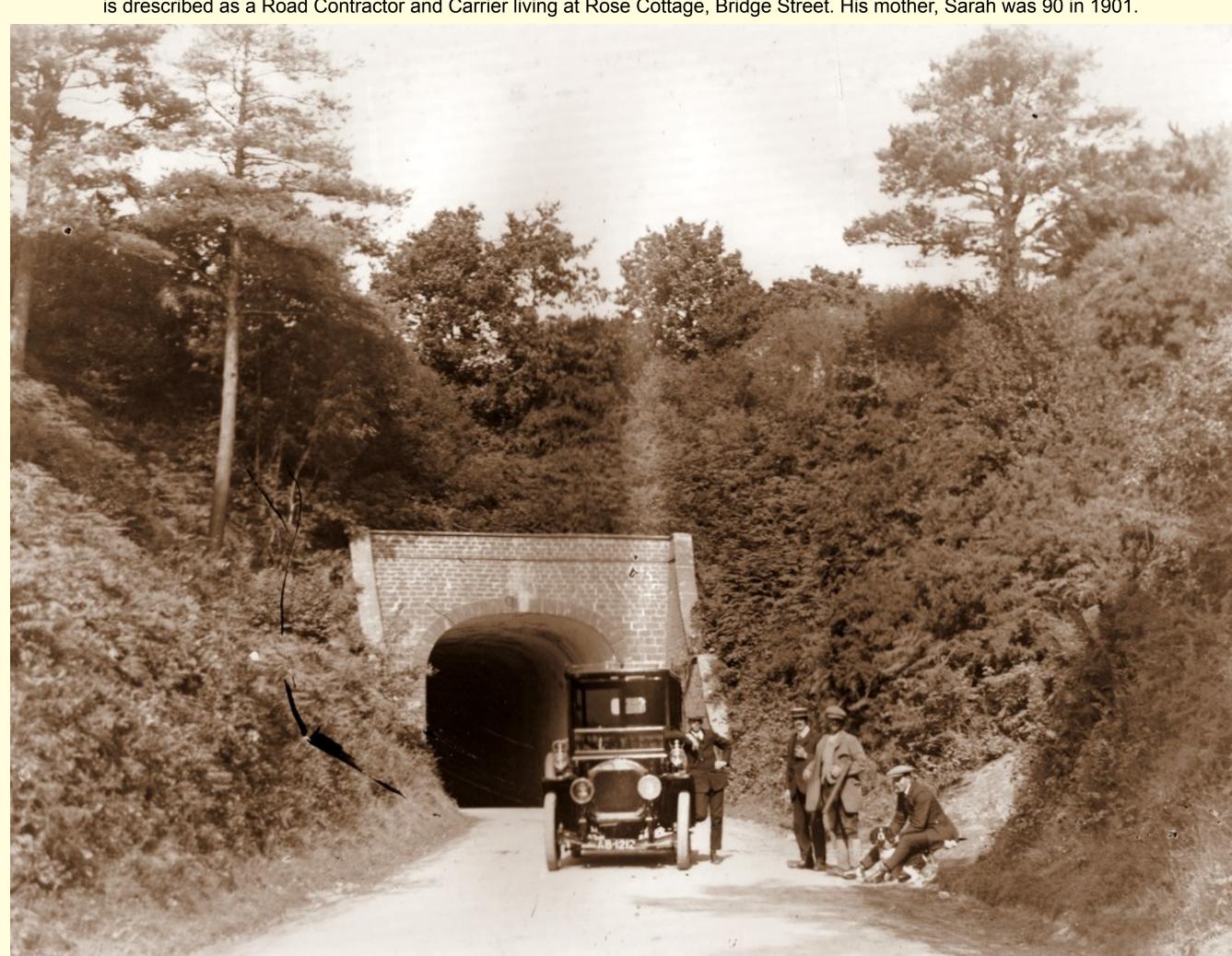
The New Commercial Inn at the top of the Street can be seen in the background covered with Ivy. Harry Wild, aged 62 was the landlord and is standing in the doorway on the right.



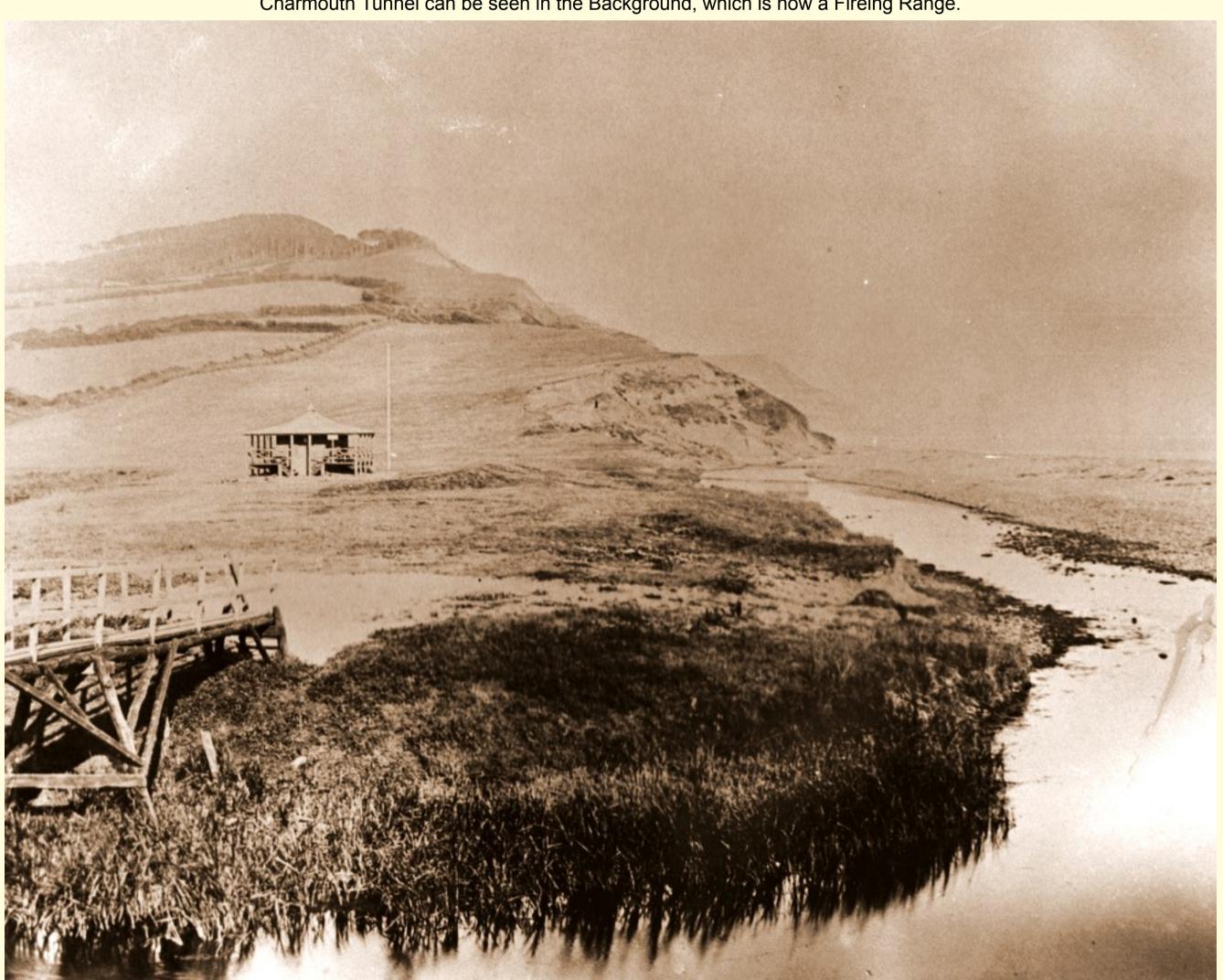
Harry Pryer who owned the Memorial Stone Masons yard at the corner of Lower Sea Lane and The Street is seen here with his grandchildren.



John Hodder who lived at Rose Cottage in Bridge Street is shown here between two of his working horses. In 1911 Census aged 65, wife, Elizabeth, aged 64. He is drescribed as a Road Contractor and Carrier living at Rose Cottage, Bridge Street. His mother, Sarah was 90 in 1901.



Charmouth Tunnel can be seen in the Background, which is now a Fireing Range.



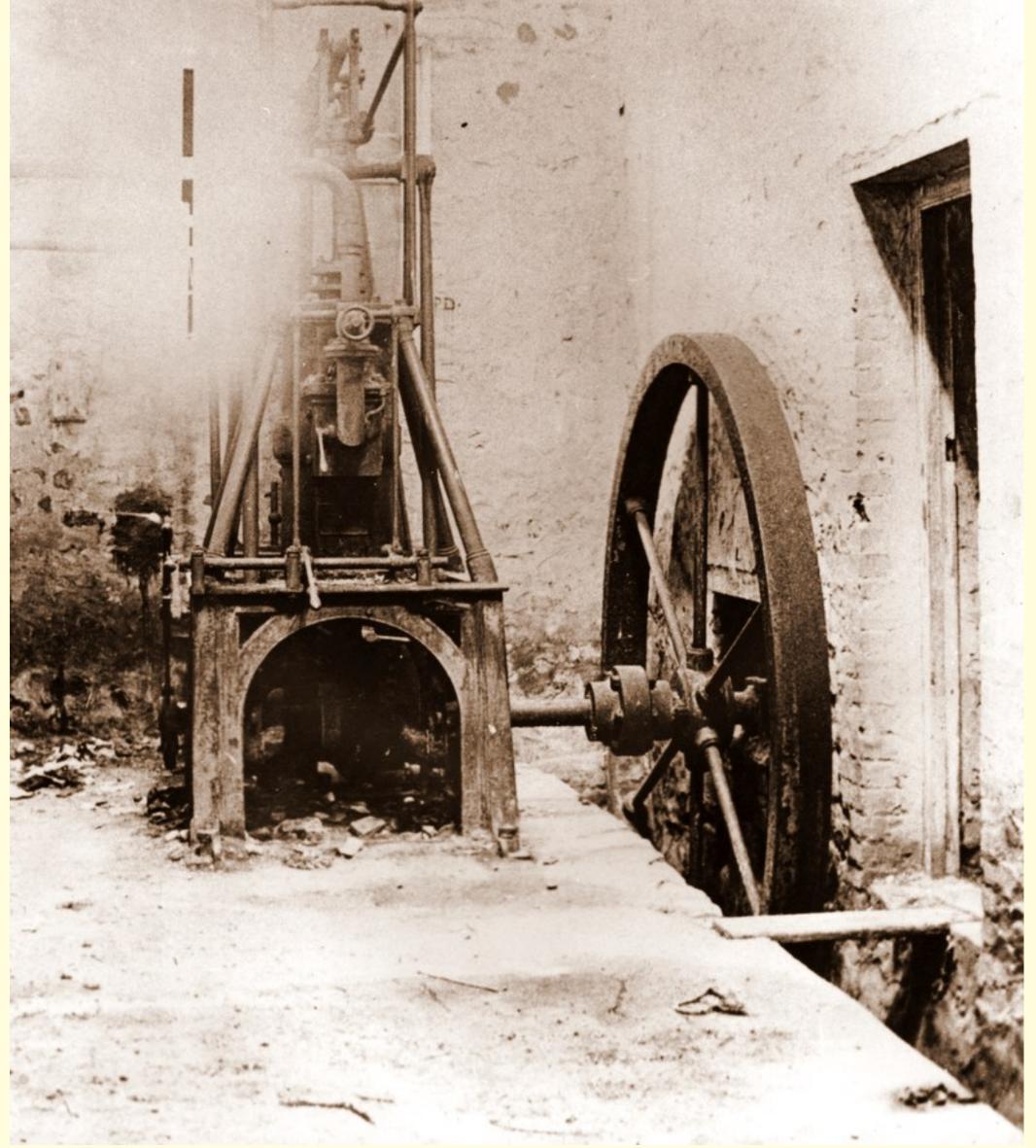
The Jubilee Shelter that was built round the former solid "Battery" which existed from 1895 to 1904. John Hodder foreshortened the distance the rivers path and it was named "Hodders Gap" after him. The original rickety bridge formed out of Tree Trunks can be seen on the left.



Charmouth Beach



The Curtis family who lived and operated their fishing boats from the foreshore of Lyme Regis are seen here with a net of Herrings with a crowd of visitors watching on.



This is the Steam Engine installed in the former Cement Works in 1854 by George Morcombe. The business ran for almost 10 years, but the building has survived to this day as The Heritage Centre. Reminders of this lost business can be seen in the giant Mill Stones which ground the stones behind the Centre.



A procession passes Sunnyside (Devon Edge) during the annual "Club Day" which finished at Fountains Mead opposite "The Court".



Picnic at Lamberts Castle. John Toms by dog. Mrs Toms with umbrella lived at Firlands.Mr. & Mrs. Wilfred Smith sat in front they lived at 2 Firlands., Frank Coles in cap with his sister lived at Sunnyside (now Devonedge), Miss Nichols far right. John Toms was living at Firlands in 1911 with his wife, Rose. He is described as a Corn dealer and worked at the Mill then owned by the Bullens. Wilfred and Edith Smith lived at 2 Firlands in that year. Frank Coles ran the Bakery where Devonedge is today, whilst his wife operated a Boarding House above it.





Barney Hansford bought Firlands House and the yard behind which he converted the premises for his fossil exhibition. It had orignally been the Drill Hall and later became the Telephone Exchange.









A photo of Charmouths foreshore showing the winches that were used to bring the boats in and out.



A group of over dressed young ladies with their children looking for shellfish on the beach at Charmouth.





A view from Claremont looking down the Street. On the left is Miss Tarr's shop.





Children paddle in the sea at Charmouth.



Children paddle in the sea at Charmouth.



A group of well dressed villagers look over the old bridge which went over the river by the Heritage Centre whose path was altered to its present position in 1904.



The Limes, now called Charmouth Lodge is the building in the background at the corner of Barr's Lane leading to Wootton Fitzpaine. The Whiitingtons were living there at that time.





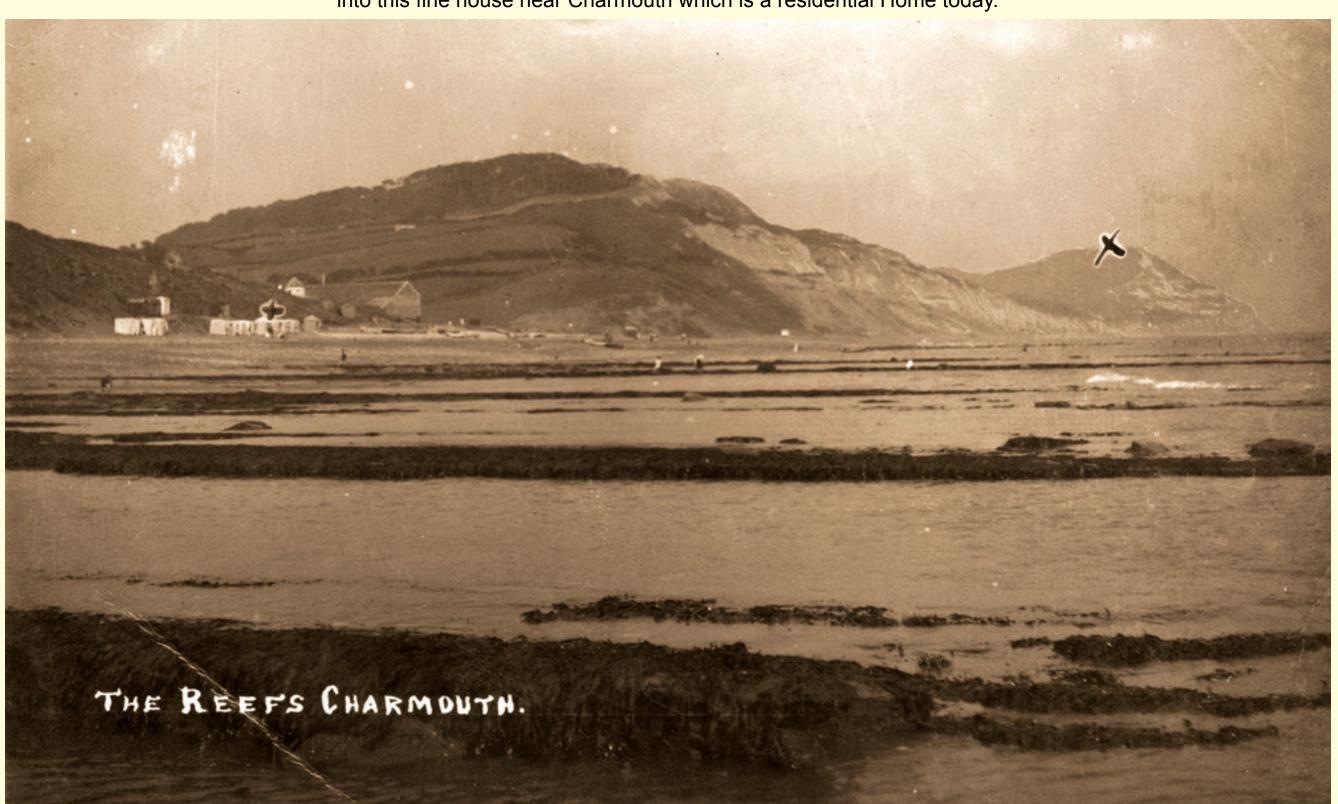
Mrs Toms feeding the ducks in the Mill Pond near the County Bridge.



The former Cricket Pavillion in Charmouth near the present Playing Fields.



When Albert Capper Pass died in 1904 he left his Estate and business to his son Douglas who lived at The Manor in Wootton Fitzpaine. But the mother moved into this fine house near Charmouth which is a residential Home today.



The Bathing Tents operated by the Hunter family which replaced the Bathing Machines are seen on the left of this photograph of the beach at Charmouth looking towards Golden Cap.



A view looking on to the Beach at Charmouth showing that coastal erosion is nothing new.





It is Iways astonishing how over over dressed everyone was in Edwardian times when they went on the beach at Charmouth.



George Bugler lived at Grange House at the bottom of the Street and is here shown with his workmen and friends with his traction engine at work in he neighbouring fields of Charmouth. The engine would have been a familiar sight with a man in front carrying a red flag.

The following photographs are a selection of photographs taken by Samuel Hansford mainly of where he lived in Wootton Fitzpaine and surrounding villages including Whitchurch and Morecombelake.





A close up of the Bell Tower at Whitchurch Canonicorum.Local Taylor, Charles Taylor who was the Bellringer foreman is seen here at the Church.





A moment in time before automobiles arrived to disturb the silence. A donkey is seen on the right towing a cart piled high with Hay.





The former "Ship Inn", which is now an Art Gallery is seen here on the left of this view of the main street in Morcombelake.





The Ship Inn at Morcombelake when it was still operating as a pub.

Barney's father's second cousin—the late H. O. Pitfield—kept the village inn in Morcombelake and, at the same time, ran a building business.





A tree lined lane in Wootton Fitzpaine leading to the Manor.





Samuel Hansford stands proudly alongside the Stone Cross he carved in memory of his beloved daughter, Mabel Martha who died at the age of 15 in 1915.





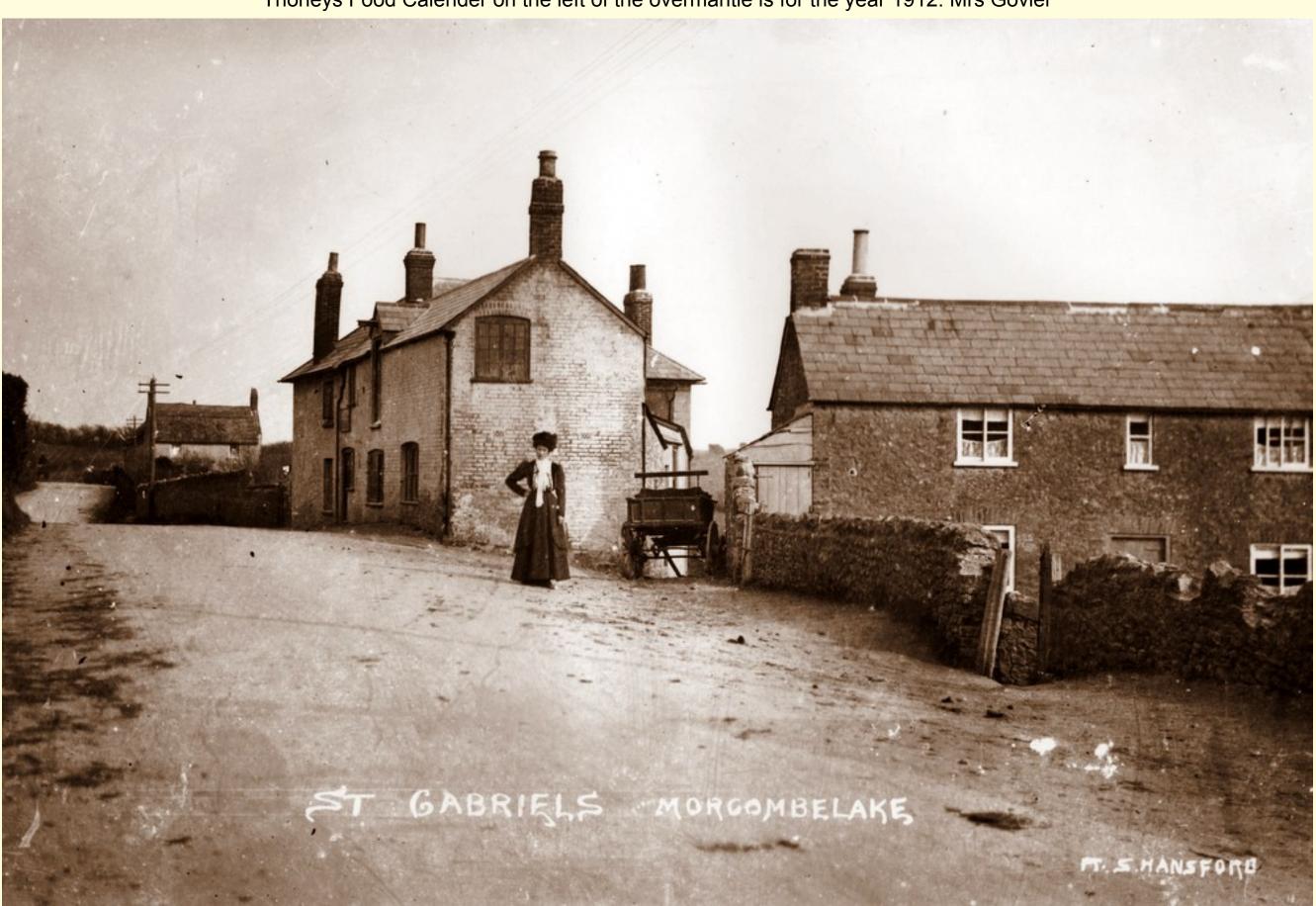
Mr. and Mrs. Govier sit by their fire. He was a shoemaker and also part time postman and carrier. A marvellous record of an ederly couple sitting by their wood fire, kettle boiling while she knits and he reads his paper.



George Dare is seen here with his wife, Annie of Mearhay Farm in Wootton Fitzpaine with their 12 children.



A wonderful record of an interior of a famhouse fireplace with a mother and her daughter stroking her cat. The photo graph is so sharp that you can see that the Thorleys Food Calender on the left of the overmantle is for the year 1912. Mrs Govier



This evocative photograph shows Moores Bakery behind the young lady, very little changed from how it appears today.





Moores bread cart in 1912. Samuel Moores began baking at Stoke Mill, Whitchurch Canonicorum, in around 1883, using wooden faggots. After the baking the cooling oven was used to cook biscuits after butter and sugar were added to any dough that was left over. These were the famous 'Dorset Knobs', said to have taken their name from their resemblance to Dorset knob buttons. Samuel's second son, Samuel junior, moved to Morecombelake and began his own baking business. Although wartime conditions stopped manufacture of the Knobs, Moores started baking them again in the 1950s, and a visit to the bakehouse, still in the family's hands, is a must for tourists.



The Old Post Office on The Green in Morcombelake managed by Mrs Miller.





Mr. Warren from Lyme Regis is seen here driving the Bus that ran from Lyme Regis through Charmouth to Bridport. Mr Welsh can be seen to the right of the bus which has stopped outside The Ship Inn in Morcombelake.







The photograph is described as "London Nurse and Dorset Farmer, Wootton" by Samuel Hansford. On the left is Samuel Miller is seen here taking his medicine from the young nurse. He lived at Champenhay Mill with his wife, Frances and their three children.



Members of the Hansford Family are seen here. In the front second from right is Miss Weeks, who commsioned Samuel to take photos of Chapels in Nottingham.







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The photograph above shows Rachel Case 's entry in 1911 Census aged 95 living with her daughter, Emma and son, Job Case a Maosn and labourere on the Estate at that time owned by Douglas Pass living at the Manor in Wootton Fitzpaine. The entry shows that she had 9 children. She finally died when she was 100.



The Old Five Bells at Whitchurch Canonicrum. This was later lost in a fire and rebuilt.





Timber Hauling at Wootton Fitzpaine. Frank Hooper and son with three horses. Note the action of the middle horse. By the stance of the carter, it looks as if he had just been given the whip. The family were farmers, but to help their income they would do timber, sand and gravel hauling. The wife and daughtets stayed at home to look after the stock, and make the butter and cheese.



Mr William Huxter of Knapp Farm in Wootton Fitzpaine and Mr. Thomas Spurle of Seatown Farm in Chideock who were horse dealers and farmers.



Lunch Time at Monkton Wyld. Men sitting: Joe Studley, Frank and jack Woodman standing left. Standing Left - Joe Case. standing right - Jim Powell known to have broken his leg when braking up the fly-wheel of the steam engine at the Cement Works at Charmouth.









Joe Studley, butcher by trade, sheep shearing at Monkton Wyld.









Mr. Northcott Doble of Manor Farm, Wootton Fitzpaine.









Mr Genge who was the Postman.





Samuel Hansford's Mother.







Barney and David Hansford.





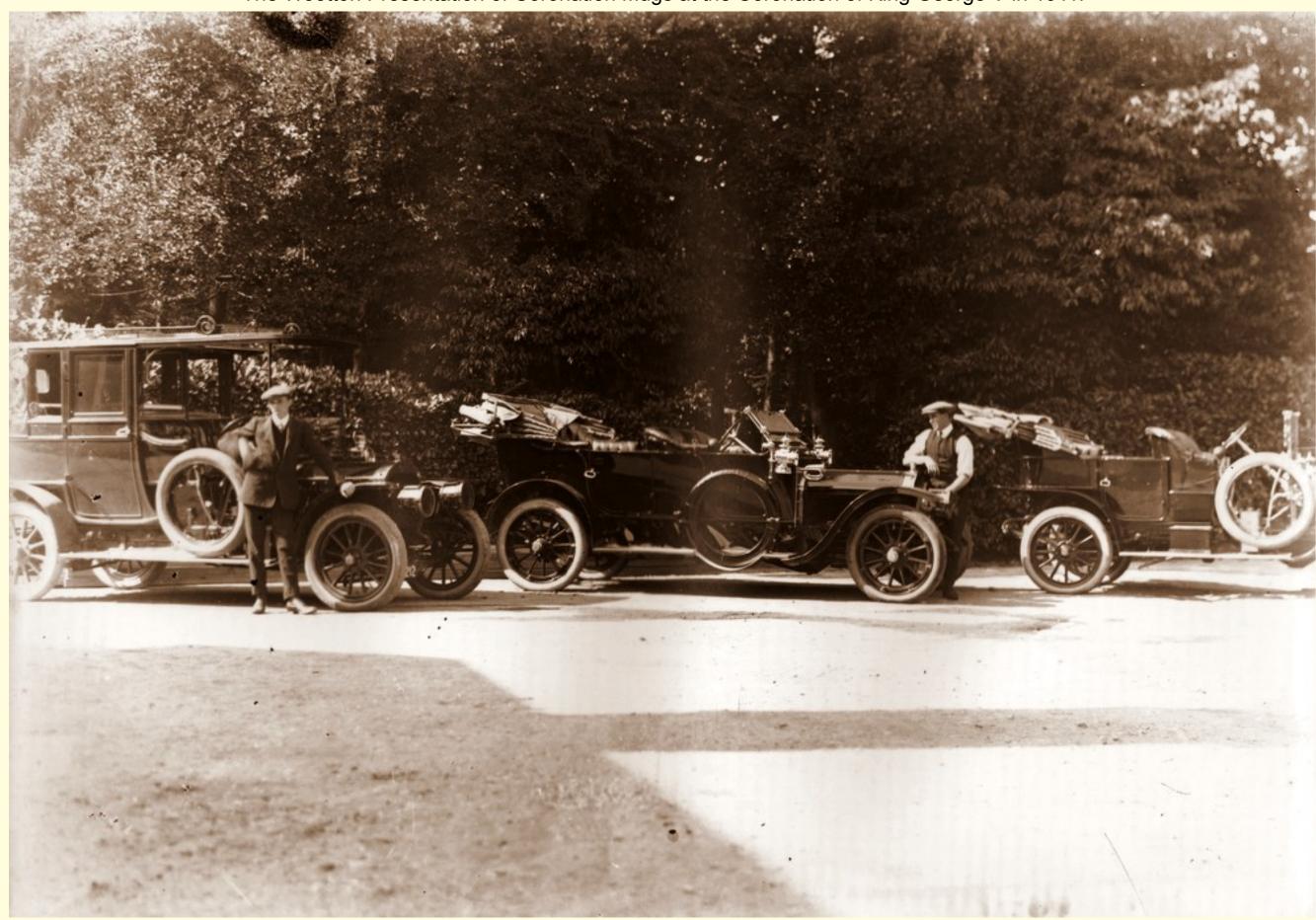
Estate Yard at Wootton Fitzpaine.



The Manor Rook Shoot at Wootton Fitzpaine in 1908 featuring Page Doble, Frank Hooper and John Toms.



The Wootton Presentation of Coronation Mugs at the Coronation of King George V in 1911.



Some of the Cars used by the Pass Family at Wootton Fitzpaine Manor where they lived from 1898. Mr. Finlay is the chauffer on the left and Mr. wakeley on the right.





Mabel, David and Joan Hansford with Frank Rapsey play in the fields. First house in the pincture in the 1940s was the home of Mr. & Mrs Burt. Mr. Burt was the Estate Manager, and Mrs Burt produced plays locally. Frank Rapsey lived at Whittey Knapp.



Coronation Sports at Wootton Fitzpaine - June 1911.



Horse raking. Photo taken in front of Nutcombe House in Wootton Fitzpaine where Barney Hansford was born.



Repairing the Manor Drive.





A buffalo's head for Wootton Fitzpaine Manor.













Albert Butler is the man in the bowler hat.



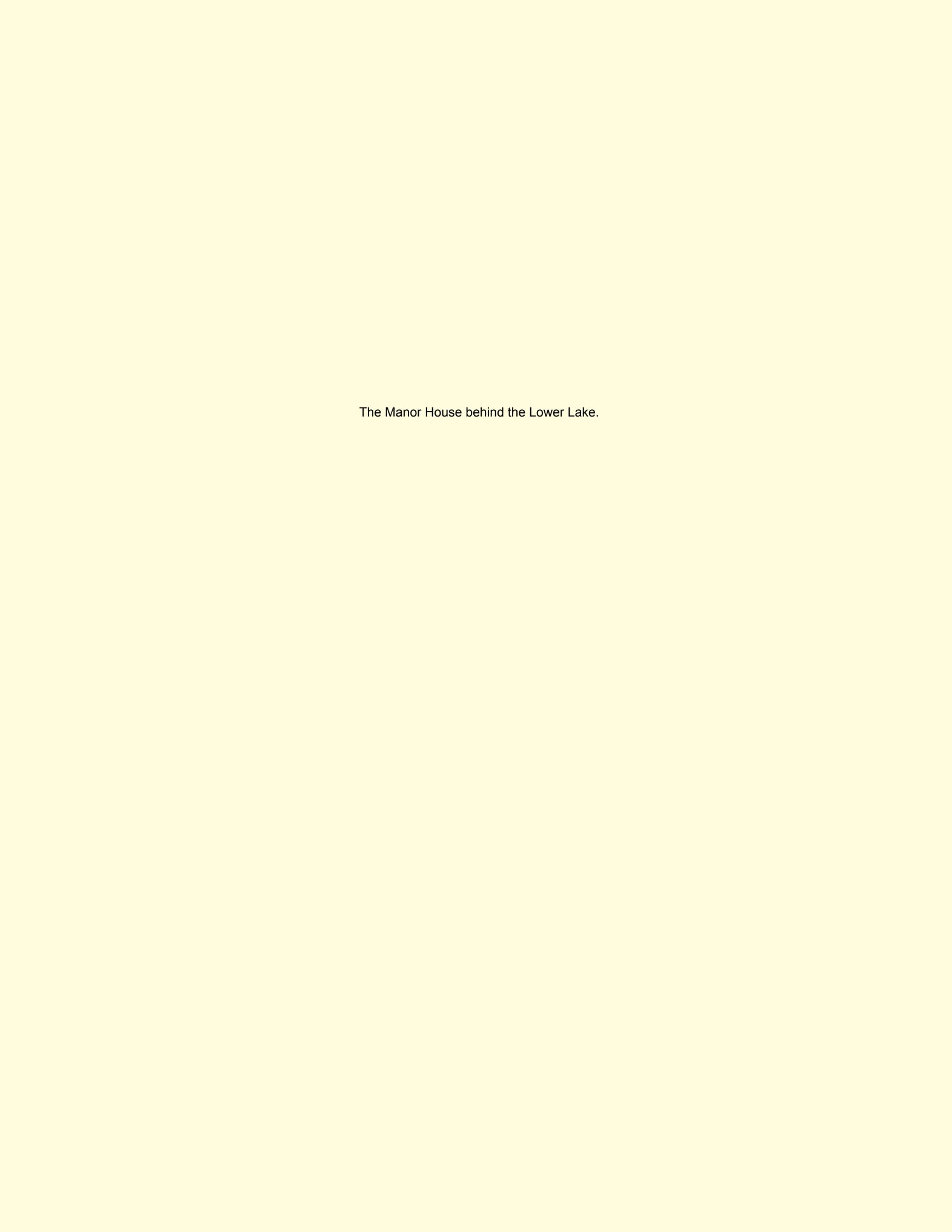
The wages of the Head Carter (in Bowler Hat was then 12 shillings per week.



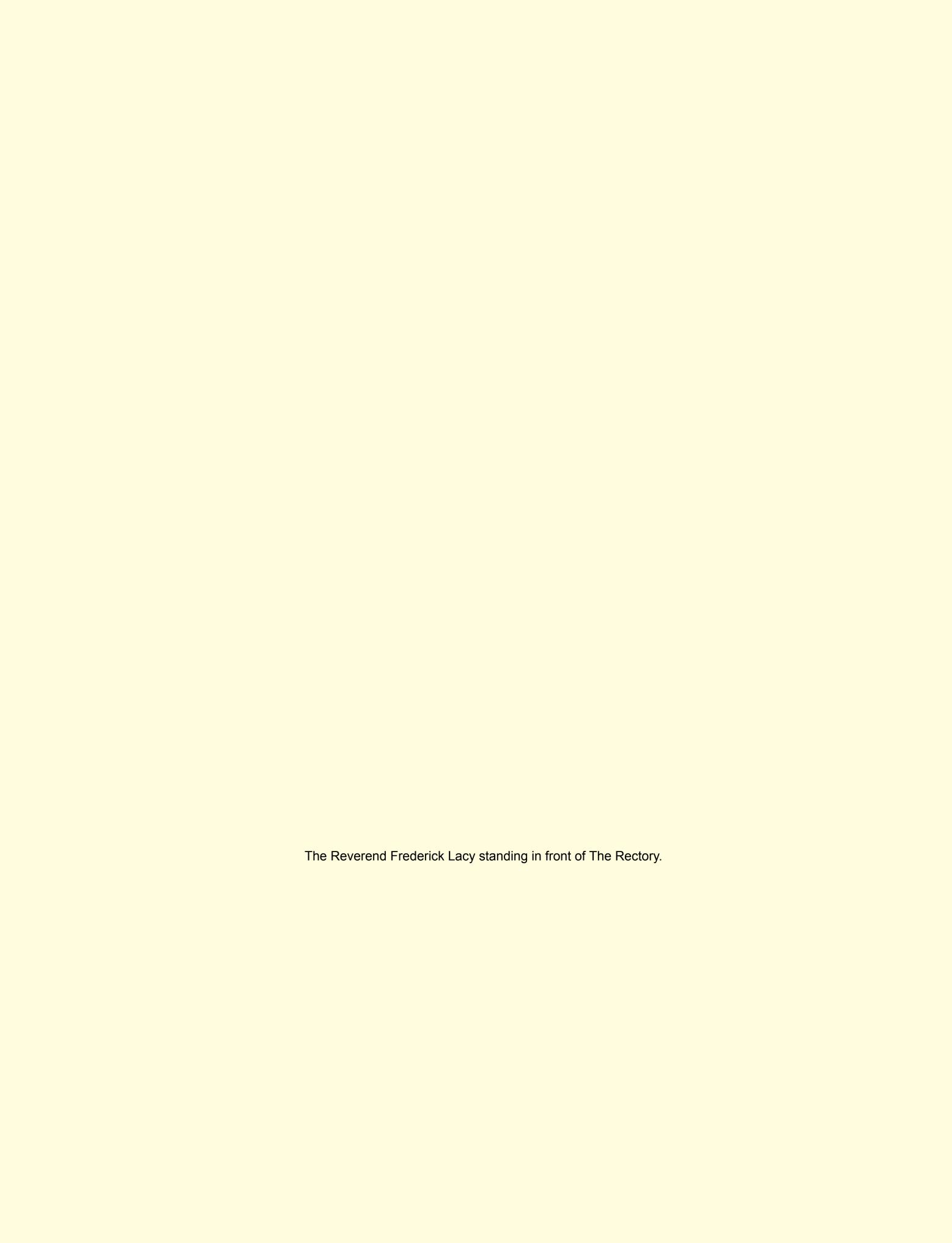
John Hodder on the right with his mother milking. John Hodder lived at no.1 Rose Cottage. Harry Smith lived at no.2 Aereated Water Manuftacturer and Haulier. Joshua Hodder, Father lived nextdoot. homas Genge lived in no. 1 Rose Cottage. Mother, sarah died in 1902, aged 93. John died in 1928, aged 82.













Vera Gale (Matthews) May Cottage 1932

Many people visiting this exhibition have inquired about the life of the collector, Barney. Briefly, he is an ordinary countryman who has gained knowledge through his own efforts and that of others. Although he left school at 14, with no 'O' levels and no 'A' levels, he admits he is still learning today. He possesses a great respect for other peoples' knowledge, and both the professional and the layman receive the same treatment.

But to understand the man, you must be taken back one or two decades and get an insight into his forefathers.

Grandfather Charles Hansford, a skilled man and the local blacksmith in the centre of the farming industry, was noted for miles around for his perfection in the trade and, in fact, made the first hay-making machine ever seen in the district. Many examples of his work are still to be seen in the village of Charmouth. But he was destined to die young. When his son, Sam, was only 14 months old, Charles Hansford was severely kicked in the stomach by one of the horses he loved and was dead on arrival at Lyme Regis hospital. They buried him at Morcombelake, and his wife, Martha, sold the business. Martha and baby Sam returned to her parents in Ryall to live.

Grandfather Barnard Conway (1810-1887) was a great character. With a butcher's shop in Ryall and one in Bridport, he also ran a butcher's round in Charmouth. Although horses were the 'mode of the day', Barney kept a pair of donkeys for his own personal use and for smuggling, and would boast that "they could race the horse bus from Morcombelake to Charmouth any day".

He boxed and he wrestled and was a keen cudgel fighter. He was one of the last men to fight in Charmouth. A special stand was erected outside the Coach and Horses Hotel and in those days they fought until they were declared beaten. The tale has it that one year a fair came to Lamberts Castle, and with it, a boxer, boasting that he was the "unbeatable" champion of England. This was too much for Barney. He fought this man for a week and neither would admit defeat. The fair travelled to Dorchester and Barney walked the 20-odd miles to the town to continue the fight, until the boxer gave in. He then walked home again, the victor. Years later, his great-grandson was to employ a man who turned out to be the grandson of Barney's opponent at the fair. He told the tale of how his grandfather's leg had been broken in wrestling and, although he was under no obligation to do so, Barney visited him regularly to see he had money and to bring him food. His wife, Joan, must have put up many food baskets in her time.

So young Sam was brought up by his mother and grandparents. In his old age, Barney delighted in teaching Sam to box and wrestle and made the young boy promise that if he ever had a son, he would name him Barnard.

Sam started his working life with six long, hard, gruelling years as a bound apprentice to W. Hobbs of Wootton Fitz-paine. Like his father he had skill in his fingers, and could carve and make anything. He was employed as an improver carpenter, and when he thought he had had enough experience, began to feel he wanted to improve his position. Making up his mind to go to Bristol to work, he told Jesse Rapsey, his employer, and immediately pandemonium broke. Sam was, at the time, carving a crest for the Bullen family at Catherstone. So that he would stay and finish it, Jesse Rapsey offered him £1 per week.

What a scandal. No craftsman had ever earned that money before. What was the world coming to? It was the year 1897. He completed the crest, which is still in the possession of the Bullen family, and arranged yet again to go to Bristol. And then the Wootton Estate was bought by a Mr. Capper Pass, from Bristol. Life changed once again for Sam. He was offered a job as foreman to manage the estate, which was in a very neglected condition. The ensuing rebuilding and repair work suddenly made employment for a huge crowd of men. A staff of indoor workers arrived with the Pass family, among them a nurse for young Douglas Pass.

She and Sam fell in love and were married within the year. They had two girls and two boys, and Sam honoured the promise made to his grandfather so many years before. His first son he named Barnard.

Sam Hansford, an only child, delighted in his children. He taught them to love nature and all things made by hand. He and his sons would walk miles over the estate and, as they walked, he would name every bush, tree or flower, and teachthem to notice the wild life. Charmouth foreshore once belonged to the estate and so the family came into close contact with the local fishermen.

Isaac Hunter, Bill Lock, Nobby Clark, Jack Lock, Bill Gorge and Brandon Hann. These names still linger in the memories of real Charmouth folk.

Young Barney listened, fascinated by their tales, as he 'helped' them with their nets. They told him of the prehistoric animals which once roamed the earth and of the mammals in the sea. And they told him of the casts they had left behind.

At the tender age of eight, Barney found his first fossil. He was encouraged by his father to start a collection, for Sam, himself, had once chosen a spot to open up for gravel drawing, which had revealed small pockets of round stones. These were identified by the British Museum as sling stones, which our forefathers had used against their enemies. And so the interest began.

Meanwhile, Barney grew up and was apprenticed to a carpenter, as was his father before him. But he had also inherited the strength of old Barney. Excelling at all sports, he was thought highly of by the author, Victor Macclure, who tried to get him to take up athletics professionally. He stayed 'local' however, and joined the Lyme Regis Athletic Club,he founded, with the late Mr. William Dampier, of Charmouth, the local football club and was a playing member for years.

In his youth he took part in many of Charmouth's activities. A member of the Scout troop, he was proud of the fact that he shook hands with Lord Baden Powell in Charmouth High Street!

The family moved to Charmouth in 1916 and started a building business. Barney rose early in summer and winter to walk the beach and search, and after the 1914 -18 war, when cars 'took over' from horses, and visitors started to appear in the tiny seaside village, he talked with them and all the time learned more about his hobby. As the years passed, so his interest grew. In 1920, Sam Hansford died and Barney lost the help of this clever man. He and his mother moved to Ryall, but he was still within walking distance of Charmouth beach and never lost interest in fossils.

Always searching, he was once nicknamed the 'stonecracker'. He was working with a London building firm at the time, digging foundations for a milk factory at Milbourne St. Andrew. A Roman villa was discovered and Barney would spend all his breaks down searching.

How envious he was that he could not take home some of the remains which were buried.

About this time, Barney's father's second cousin—the late H. O. Pitfield—kept the village inn in Morcombelake and, at the same time, ran a building business. He begged Barney to come home and start up on his own. Eventually he won and Barney re-rented premises in Charmouth that his father had rented to start his business. These he now owns—Barney Supermarket.

He was still learning and adding to his collection of fossils which, by now, was beginning to be of great interest to geologists.

In 1935 he married the only daughter of H. O. Pitfield and eventually came back to Charmouth to live. We have two sons, David Barnard (that name again) and Patrick.

At first I did not take much interest in the 'stones'. I had married a sportsman and just couldn't connect this with the keen collector of fossils he was rapidly becoming. But when I saw the pleasure they gave him and how absorbed he was in them, I joined him in his hobby. More and more time was given to collecting as the years went by. We didn't make records of the dates of species he found, as we didn't think, at that time, that the collection would become so important. When the word got round, people from all over the world started calling and many wanted to buy the collection. Barney was adamant. He wanted them to stay in Charmouth. He was regularly attending and showing at the Geologists' Association in London and elsewhere, and was begged by geologists to make a permanent show of the collection. He found all kinds of people wanted to see the ammonites and, at the same time, found that he gained great pleasure in showing.

The idea grew. Could he make a go of a permanent show? He had previously re-purchased premises in Charmouth on which had stood the old telephone exchange and which had been compulsorily bought from him during the war. Our friends suggested we start the show there.

Finances proved difficult. Much money would have to be spent on the building and we would have to employ somebody to be there all the time. The only way out was to make an entrance charge. This was much against Barney's wishes and right up to the very opening, in 1968, he hesitated.

In the end, I opened the exhibition, and the response been overwhelming. The show cases were made by and our son, David, and the whole layout presents a view of every 'piece' collected through the years. One collector thought it was too little to ask for such an exhibition, but Barney said that he was catering for the beginner as well as the expert.

One specimen, photographs of which can be seen here, have been given to the British Museum. It is much older than usual ones found here and they have named it 'Hansford''. He also found footprints which cannot be identified.

Over the years we have corresponded with several people abroad who have previously visited us and, among the local pieces exhibited, are minerals and fossils from many countres..

If we accepted all the invitations extended to us by foreign friends visiting the exhibition, we would be travelling for the next 20 years. We travel abroad, but we go independent! Visits to museums are high on the list of attractions, as you can well imagine, and Barney was very proud to be asked to sign the V.I.P.'s visitor's book in Rome Museum. While other people admire the scenery, we tell of the thrill of seeing how the Romans lived all those centuries ago. Brussels was a very good museum, but the best specimen we ever saw on the continent was a dinosaur at Vienna Museum.

This exhibition, now on its feet, is proving very popular, and I hope this has given an insight into Barney, the man who lives with the hope that he may find a new 'find' any day.

by Jane Hansford 1969 - wife of Barney Hansford

In 1968 Barney Hansford opened his collection of fossils and later his Country Life Exhibition. He became a well-known figure and was often interviewed on T.V. Illness forced its closure in 1986.

This book tells a story of the life and times of the people around West Dorset in the early 1900s.

Samuel Hansford, a local 'craftsman', took this unique collection of over 120 photos of Charmouth, Wootton, Morcombelake, etc. just as his hobby.

Not only is the collection of just one man, but this book has had the input of four generations of the Hansford family.

Samuel Hansford was born in Wootton in 1870 and was the son of the local 'smithy', Charles Hansford.

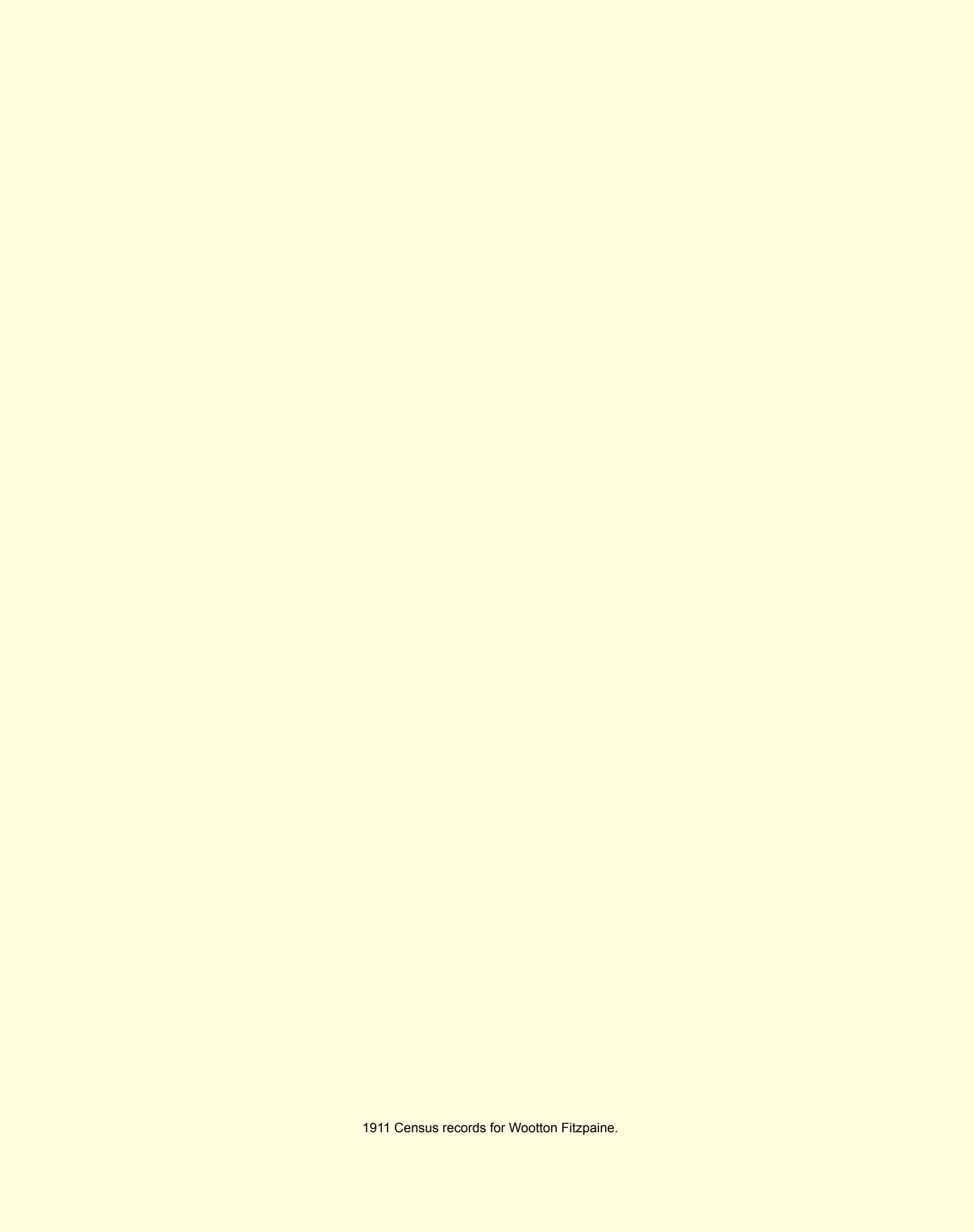
Samuel bought a camera and took photos of the surroundings that were within walking distance of his home. He sold some of his photos as postcards to locals to help raise money to pay the doctor's fees for his sick daughter.

Sunday, the day of rest, Samuel and his wife would put their daughter in her bath chair, tuck the camera under the blanket, and Samuel would use the tripod as a walking stick.

Thankfully the photos have stayed in the Hansford family and were on display in 'Barney's Fossil & Country Life Exhibition', which was put together by Barney Hansford (son of Samuel) and Barney's son David. However, due to illness, the exhibition which was known the world over, had to be sold in 1986.

Barney's son David recognised the subsequent interest the photos generated when they were on show in the exhibition, and he felt it would be a suitable 'tribute to Samuel' to produce a book of his photos.

A saying of Samuel's, after putting on a show of his at the local village hall, was 'If you have enjoyed my photos a little bit, you have given me a lot of pleasure.'



1911 Census records for Whitchurch Canonicorum

Mrs Bussell - Higher Abbotts Wootton Farm

G Bowditch - Northay Farm
F Coles - Charmouth
R Durrant - Foxley Farm
P Doble - Gummershay Farm
Mrs M A Dare - Bowshot Farm

G C Dare - Merehay Farm
W C Edwards - Wood Farm
H F Flambert - Reedsbarn Farm
R F Clyde - Lower Abbotts Wootton Farm
F W Hooper - Higher Pound Farm
W H Huxter - Dairy and Knapp Farms

W Hobbs - Wootton W Henley - Wootton

E Lugg - Penn and Smiths Farms
A E Miller - Little Coombe Farm
G Miller- Westover Farm

T G Miller- Champernhayes Farm S J Mille - r Champernhayes Mill Farm

R Morgan - Charmouth
Mrs E Powe - Fishpond
F Powell - Dodpen Farm
Jas Powell - Ridge Farm
S Powell - Marsh Farm

Tom Powell - Lower Pound Farm
Thos Powell - Bridles Farm
Wm Powell - Dares Farm
W Parsons - New Inn Farm
Mrs PowersMathews Farm
Mrs E Rowe - Higher Wyld Farm
Mrs S Rowe - Northwood Farm

J Rowe - Stubbs Farm J Rowe - Lower Wyld Farm H Rapsey - Wootton

The Wootton Estate Tenant Farmers in 1906

Household staff:

JLey, M Stamp, M Forsdike, F Venn, E Smith, S Williams, E Byhard, E Harris, L Amor, E Powel.I

Stables:

H Young, H Speed, E Wakely

Gardens:

A E Burge, W Slowman, S Bowditch, S Powel, I G White

Keepers:

T H Havis, A Bartlett

W Hodder

Estate: S Hansford, T Bowditch, H White, H Hallett, S Taylor, E Edwards, BGay, F Woodman, J Woodman, J Stoodley, S Powell, F W Powel, I W Brinson, J Case, J Powel, H Gould, S Rowe

Click on images below to see larger versions of them. The Coronation of King George V Celebration on June 22nd 1911 Hansford Photographs of Wootton Fitzpaine

		The Vi	llaners					
The Hansfords								
	Morco	mhelake and Wh	itchurch Canoni	corum				
		Inscianc and Wi						
		Rural P	ursuits					

