

I heard of a firm of **Wheelwrights and Carpenters** called W. White & Sons in the next village of Atherington, they were looking for an apprentice so I went to see them and was taken on. The hours were 8am to 5.30pm and 8am to 1pm Saturday and I had to provide my own tools at (37.5p) per week. At last I had a constant job. I was paid 6s. 0d. (30)p for my lodge at home which left me with 1s. 6d (7.5.p) pocket money. By this time girls were beginning to come on the scene and I could do with all the money that I could get hold of!

Harvest time was my main source of income, it lasted for about three months, June, July, and August. I had my usual regular 'customers' but was always ready to take on a fresh one!

Every evening and Saturday afternoons were worked when possible. When I started my apprenticeship I had to buy a few new tools. I had brought some second-hand tools from an old wheelwright in the village (which I still have). I brought two new saws for 12s. 6d each and a hatchet for 5s 0d. (£1.50p the lot).

Although we did all kinds of agricultural work we were classed as wheelwrights, we made horse drawn vehicles for use on the farm, namely the ladder cart which was used mainly during harvest time and the butt cart which could be tipped up to discharge it's contents and was used for a number of purposes such as handling mangolds and dung etc. They were painted blue with red wheels and shafts.

When the farmer came to fetch them from the workshop he usually had his harness nicely cleaned and brasses shining. It was with pride that we watched them drive off.

The Butt cost £12.10s. 0d and the cart cost £14. 0s.0d. The vehicles also came in for repair, mainly the wheels which had to be 'felloed'(or vellied is the pronunciation). This would be done just before harvest time as they would be in for a lot of use. After they were 'vellied' they had to be bound by the blacksmith Mr Fred Loosemore that was where the fire blowing came in that was mentioned earlier.

I used to do this for a couple of days at a time if a batch of wheels had to be bound. The blacksmith would be occupied keeping the fire just right. When the bond was cherry red it was taken out of the fire and dropped over the wheel and cooled down immediately with buckets of water to make it shrink and be a tight fit on the wheel.

In winter time we needed a light to work by as we worked until 5.30p.m. This was a candle stuck in a hole in a block of wood. We managed like this for several years until we had Tilley lanterns.

Transport from workshop to a job in the country was by motor bike ridden by the boss Mr Tom White, with me on the pillion with a bag of tools on my lap.

There were a lot of gypsies around in those days, horse dealing and selling clothes pegs etc. You would often see them on the move with their caravan and perhaps nine or ten horses behind them and a young lad bringing up the rear. We used to get them coming for repairs to their wagons. Some were very friendly but you had to make sure they paid for any work before they left the workshop.