

The police were very strict in those days, and if you were caught riding a bicycle at night without a light you were fined 5/-. Bicycle lights at that time were either paraffin or acetylene (carbide) I had the latter. They had to be trimmed before every journey. Occasionally, when putting in carbide it was possible to forget to put in the water as well. Water was needed to make gas. If this happened it was possible that during the journey the light would go out. Water had to be put in by some means and I have used the top of the bicycle bell to dip up some from a puddle in the road. Punctures were another nuisance as boots had nails which would drop out and hedge parings didn't help either. We always carried puncture outfits and tyre levers with us. Many a time I have mended a puncture by the side of the road. Cycling to a dance was a bit awkward during wet weather as one had to dress up with waterproofs so as to arrive looking a bit respectable.

During my later school days 1927-1928 a gang of men descended on the village with their tools and a load of poles. This was to be our telephone link with our neighbours and to the nearest towns, as up until then communication had only been by telegram. There were only a few wires to begin with but eventually there were between twenty to thirty pairs. The local shop was one of the first places to have the telephone. I remember their phone number '9' painted on the side of their delivery van beside the words '**20 miles per hour**'.

In 1947 we had a very hard winter, the worst I have ever known. It rained and froze, rained and froze and we had a terrific amount of snow. There was no traffic at all, we put our daughter Judith into some warm clothing and she went out to play in the snow with her bucket and spade. The hedges were frozen solid and the birds were frozen to the trees. Living in the country we were always prepared for the winter, and at times the water supply was cut off because the pump was frozen. Someone then had to unfreeze the pumps with a kettle of hot water.

During this particular winter the telephone wires became as big as a man's arm and eventually the weight of the ice and snow broke them down. There were literally miles of wires down, we were cut off once again. The G.P.O.(General Post Office) then decided a few years later to put the wires under ground. We then had a big gang of men and machines this time to dig up the roads. Not being very far sighted as usual this operation was done twice more over the years.

During my young days there were several occupations which one never sees these days. Billposting for one has long since gone. Newspapers were the only way to advertise a show or sale or anything doing as wireless was not available in the country until later on. The Billposter would leave Barnstaple or wherever with his bicycle and bundle of posters and a bucket of paste and a brush on his handlebars and stick a poster on every convenient flat surface, barn doors, walls etc, for miles around. Eventually little notices (stick no bills) went up.

A drover too was last seen many years ago. They had perhaps one or two dogs and drove cattle mainly to auctions which were held at many places once a month. There were no cattle transporters around then. Drovers would drive the cattle or sheep as near the auction as possible and leave them overnight and find somewhere to sleep rough in a barn or