

hayrick, and then be off again early the next morning. They must have walked miles during a week.

The rag and rabbit skin man Gerald Lewis was a weekly visitor . A penny a pound for rags and a half-penny for rabbit skins. Rabbits skins were fairly plentiful as rabbits were a staple diet of the working class. In the early 1950's rabbits were almost wiped out by myxamatoxis, and farmers picked up dead ones with a tractor and trailer there were so many. A few survived and are now beginning to multiply though not yet as plentiful as before.

When we were young a lot of us boys used to catch moles for a few pence. Most farmers were pleased to have his moles caught as they made such a mess in the grass fields with their mole heaps. We could only afford one or two mole traps to begin with, but as we made a bit of money we bought more. We had to inspect the traps at least once a day - this was a winter's pastime, as the mole had his thick winter's coat on. When the mole was caught it had to be skinned and the skin nailed to a board or door in an oblong to dry. When dry the skins were sent away to be made into fur coats amongst other things. We usually received 4d or 5d a skin. It as a very closely guarded secret as to where we **tilled** our traps.

The rabbit trapper also disappeared. He would be seen with a dozen or so traps on his back walking around the fields looking for rabbit runs to till his traps in. He would revisit the traps he had tilled during the day, at about 10p.m. or 11p.m. the same night, take out his catch and till the traps again. I've been out many a time with the old oil lantern collecting the rabbits. On a rough winter's night it was a job to keep the lantern lit, we often had to hold it under our coat. A pheasant or a partridge was an added bonus.

The day wireless came to the village was really something, it was only better off people who could afford a wireless at first. Living on a hill as we do, the reception was good. We saw tall poles about thirty feet long being erected at about twenty yards apart and a wire stretched between them at the top with a wire coming down from them to a window, where the set would be inside. Another wire came out from the set and was connected to a metal pipe driven into the ground- this formed the earth. The people that installed these sets seemed very clever to us. Such 'foreign' words as '**positive and negative**' became part of our vocabulary.

The village store was the first place to have a wireless and we would rush to the shop when we came home from school for dinner to hear '**Big Ben**' chime and strike twelve o'clock. The set was driven by a dry battery and an accumulator or wet battery, which had to be charged up once a month, Two of these were needed as it took perhaps a week to charge one. This was done by someone who had an electric light plant. The dry battery would last about six months.

I remember collecting one of the wet batteries in my dinner bag where it must have tipped over and spilled some of the acid and in a few days the bottom of the bag fell out - burnt by acid. Lesson number one learnt.

The station we received was 2.L.O. from Alexandra Palace. Sometimes the reception was fairly good but very often it was terrible, caused by atmospherics. There was also the use of a radiogram. To provide music for dancing. I remember a demonstration of dance music