

being given by Mr Harbottle being held in the hall which was packed. Mr Wansbrough introduced Mr Harbottle and passed a remark about this wonderful invention, of course his voice came out of the speakers, but nobody seemed to know where he was speaking from. We used to listen to Glen Miller and some of the popular bands of the time.

The first cars that came to the district fetched their petrol from the local shop, it was sold in two gallon cans and was stored in a concrete built structure. The motorist would fill his car up and strap a spare two gallon can on the running board of the car. Eventually we had two petrol pumps in the village, one sold **Pratts** and the other sold **Shell**, these have both now gone.

I remember seeing my first aeroplane. I wasn't very old at the time. This thing flying up in the sky frightened me and I ran home. I also remember seeing the **R100 airship** pass over, it seemed quite low, a remarkable sight.

My first trip in an aeroplane was also a memorable occasion. **Sir Alan Cobham** and a few other pilots started what they called a flying circus and travelled around the country giving air displays. They only needed a large field to operate in. There was a parachute jumping demonstration and all the usual tricks including a girl standing on the wings of a small plane. There was a daring stunt using a plane with hooks on the end of its wings to pick up a handkerchief which was dropped on the ground. The plane would swoop down and pick up the handkerchief off the ground and soar away up into the sky again, clever stuff! They also used to loop the loop and take people for short trips for 5s. 0d. (25p) a time. I remember three of us sitting in this open plane with the pilot sitting in front of us with just a bit of perspex in front of him. Although we were close to each other conversation was impossible for the noise of the engine and the wind.

Barnstaple Fair was an important date on the calendar and this was held sometime in September. The Sunday before we used to walk about two miles down to the Barnstaple Exeter road to see the big showman's steam engines with their train of wagons pass along. It was a wonderful sight to see the brasswork all polished and shining. Fortunately the old showman's engines have been saved from the scrap yard and have been restored. It brings back memories when I see them at traction engine rallies.

Before the days of the tractor, when I was young, horses played a big part in agriculture. Quite a number of big farms had a round house where horses provided the power. They also had a small barn thresher where they would thresh small quantities of corn as required. In the round house was a big vertical post which had three or four horizontal arms to which the horses were hitched. On top of this big post was a very big cog wheel which drove a shaft running through to the barn. As the horses kept walking the same way round in a circle hitched to these arms they provided the power to drive whatever was needed. I have seen this operation many times. If the machinery was beginning to lack momentum the farmer would shout 'come on' to whatever the horse was called. Sadly, all this equipment has been dismantled but some of the round houses still remain. Most farmers had one of these which varied in size according to their requirements such as grinding corn or cutting chaff. Latterly they were coupled to a dynamo to produce electricity as the mains did not reach the village until years afterwards.