

This was a big occasion for the farmer's wife who had to **eater** for eight or nine men who were needed for the operation. The threshing machine was taken around by a big steam traction engine through the village and the narrow lanes and up the steep hills by Mr L. Munch.

The excitement for us boys was when the rick had nearly been thrashed and the rats started to come out. We were armed with sticks and with the farmers dogs, sometimes caught as many as twenty or thirty rats.

A man in the village who did a bit of horse dealing would let us ride his horses when he was putting them out in the field about a mile away, of course we had to walk back! He would ride one and lead one, or perhaps two, by the halter. All we had to hold on with was the mane. There were quite a few ponies in the village and we would get a ride whenever we could, taking them to drink at a pool by the side of the road. One such pool was at '**Jump**' or '**Headrow**' as it is now called and the other down near '**Dobbs**' now called '**Dobbs House**'.

School holidays were usually spent on my Uncle and Auntie's farm at **Shutely High** Bickington. I was always interested in animals, horses, cows, sheep, etc. I used to fetch the cows in for milking and turn them out in the field again, (only five or six cows not like the big herds of today.) this was done twice a day, seven days a week.

When the cows had been milked the milk was put through a separator, a machine which was turned by hand and separated the cream from the milk.

If real Devonshire cream was needed the cream would be scalded, and this was done over a stove or a pan of hot water. This would bring a nice head of cream to the top which would be used for bread and cream, or to be put on to a bowl of junket which we had just before going to bed .

The rest of the cream would be used to make butter, in a thing called a **Churn**. It was shaped like a barrel which was in a frame and was turned end over end by hand with a handle. The cream was poured into the churn and the cover secured by a screw clamp. The process of making butter varied according to the weather, sometimes it took about half an hour, other times to took an hour or so. There was a little glass window in the churn and one could see what was happening and when the cream was beginning to turn to butter. The churn contained a mixture of butter and butter milk. The butter milk was drained off and the churn was sealed up again and turned to make sure all the cream was turned to butter.

The butter was then taken out this time in a big lump. It was worked up in a big pan like one would need dough in water until it was perfectly clean. Then it was weighed into half pound lumps and worked into oblong blocks with butter pats, things like small bats with rib markings. Then it was ready for the market this whole process was repeated at least once a week.

Another holiday task I helped with was driving the flock of sheep about one and a half miles to be dipped. This was done as a protection against flies etc, during the summer.

Egg picking was another thing I had to do on holiday, as the fowls were free range and would lay their eggs in the hedge rows. After a while you got to understand where they liked to hide them.