

COPY

June, 1965.

25, High Street,
Chinnor.

I was born in the village of Chinnor in 1882 and have lived there the greater part of my life. The earliest memory I have (a very vivid one) I saw my Aunt pushing her way through to stop our Brass Band playing on the corner outside our home where Mother was very ill. Mother told me I was $2\frac{1}{2}$ years old at the time.

Ours is a church school, but has always been called a National School.

We have a British School but was closed as a school (years ago) and the pupils came to the National School. It was and still is a mixed school. The classes ranged (in my day) from Infants to the 7th standard. The age was 3 years old for starting school. Leaving was 12 years old. I was very fond of our Infant Mistress when I was small. The chief lessons were the 3 R's. The girls had needlework lessons; the boys, drawing lessons. Evening classes for girls were cookery and for boys carpentry.

The boys on leaving school worked on farms, errand boys in shops, etc. Some were apprenticed to the Blacksmith Trade of which there were two in the village.

The girls were chiefly in domestic service, the wage for both boys and girls was 2/6 weekly.

The boys had their football or cricket. We had a Girls Friendly Society Branch up to 1902. We went to Sunday School twice on Sunday and to Church after school, morning and afternoon. We also went to Church in the evening with our parents.

The majority of boys and girls did stay in the village at first, but gradually went further afield. The only holidays were the usual Bank Holidays. We had a Fun Fair on Easter Monday.

The chief industries were Farm work, chair leg turning or Bodging as it was called, blacksmith, thatching (with straw) and a lot of duck rearing. The ducks were sent to London Market weekly in Hampers by carrier cart. There was a lot of lace making. My mother told me they had to start at 5 years old. They also put heaps of very large stones at the sides of roads and the roadmen broke them with heavy hammers (earing goggles) to repair the roads.

We only had wells and pumps for water and no drainage when I was born. My mother had to fetch our water from a well from across the road, and empty all waste water also across the road, down an open drain. We only had earth closets. Only oil lamps and candles for lighting and hurricane lamps for outside.

It was chiefly open grates, they had to cook everything in a large iron boiler, cook potatoes in a string bag (bought from the gipsies) then use a skimmer. We did send Sunday dinners to the Bakehouse sometimes. The chief meat was bacon or pig meat. Some of the villagers kept their own pigs. There were one or two old bread-ovens cottages with bread ovens. There wasn't much warmth in the old cottages. Everyone was neighbourly, friendly and helpful to each other when the need arose. We were quite content with our lot and made our pleasures.

The only transport was carrier cart, horse cart or waggonettes. A few had penny-farthing bicycles.

My father died when we were very young - four children ages ranging from 9 to 1 year. The Parish paid 1/6 weekly for each child - Mother was paid 1/- for a day work. Our Rector was a great help visiting re. business matters.

We had no outings like they do today. Parties of children often came in to spend a day on the hill. To celebrate any special occasion the men and lads marches from the village in a torch-light procession to the top of the hill then lit a large bonfire. For May Day celebrations we children made garlands then went round (before school) singing at the doors.

"Please to see my Garland 'tis the 1st of May
Please to give me something I'll call no more today."

Later on they had Maypole dancing at the school.

The mail man walked daily with the mail until they changed the area to Wallingford then he came by horse and cart. We had a resident Doctor for several years then when he left the village we have doctors coming in twice weekly. There was no dentist in the village.

The doctors had to use horse and carts for their visiting, so did the tradespeople for their work.

Chinnor is completely changed today.

If I had a grandchild I should tell it, make the most of the great advantages you have today, that I didn't have when I was young.

(Signed) A. Mayden