

Memories of Violet Howells - The Forge

HAYWOOD

Some of this history has been passed down by different generations. In response to many requests we are now adding reminiscences of our childhood and the years we have lived at the Forge, Haywood.

The land is either arable or grass. Years ago hops were grown on most of the farms. Most of the land was owned by Doctor Wegg Prosser, then passed on to his sons, Major John and Captain Charles. The hops were dried in kilns on the farms. Many years ago there was a gate across the road close to the Forge. In the days of the Press Gang, if a man could get into Haywood he was quite safe and could not be taken. The roads were rough tracks with grass growing up the middle.

Haywood was not a Parish but an Extra Parochial. It first had a Dame's School in a small thatched house along Dewsall Road. The parents paid one penny each week for each child. Later Callow School was built. The person who taught at both schools was born at the Forge, Ellen Wilcox.

When Callow School was built some of the children of the parish went there, others walked to Clehonger. If they were late they had the cane.

The Forge is about four hundred years old. At first it had only two bedrooms, later made into four.

In Callow churchyard is a row of graves of people who have lived at the Forge.

At one end of the Forge was the wash-house, copper and baking oven. In front was the pent house where the horses were fastened up ready for shoeing and on the other end the shop, with two bellows which were blown by hand, and two anvils with the rest of the tools. The building comprising of cow shed, barn, calf cot, tool shed and pig cot had a thatched roof and was a few yards in front of the house.

This building remained standing until 1914 when it was destroyed by fire and a man who slept inside it. A new building was built in 1915 at the back of the house. The ground the old building had stood on was cleared and turned into an extra patch of garden. In the older part of the garden stands a cypress tree, a bay and a laurustinus bush. These were given to Tom Wilcox, who was an under-gardener at Hampton Court in Sir John Arkwright's time.

In the early 1900's the shooting used to be let and two keepers were employed to walk through the woods daily. When they found a nest they took the eggs or young away. But before this was done they had bought sitting hens to rear the chicks. The one keeper's two sons attended Callow school and they would ask us to come with them to see the baby pheasants. There would be a number of coops down the path which went down into the Forest Wood. It really was a lovely sight to see so many little birds. Originally this wood was named Royal Forest. Years ago lily of the valley grew in it. In 1911 Mr Rowe had the shooting and boys went as beaters. They made a clapper from two pieces of board. A shilling a day was paid and some food and the boys enjoyed their day walking round the woods making a noise. The next day the keepers went looking for any wounded birds to destroy them. The boys used to collect the spent cartridges, cut away the cardboard top and make a whistle out of two brass bottoms. In 1912 Mr Rowe was on board the Titanic when it sunk; also Mr Farr had a horse named Bonnie, which Father shod for him, and he sold it and the buyer was going to ship it abroad on the Titanic.

Many years ago the young bullocks were kept until they were about two years old. The only way to get them to market was walk them there. The cowman from Dewsall Court would drive the cattle along to Monkhall turn where they joined up with the cowman and cattle from Monkhall Farm. Coming on along to the Forge they met the cowman and more cattle from Haywood Farm, and then walked another four miles to the market. Horses which were going to be

sold were first brought to The Forge to have a new set of shoes called bevele. These shoes showed off the animal's feet better. Then the hoofs were blacked and shone. The waggoner combed the mane and tail, plaiting in red, white and blue ribbons and brushed it's coat. These horses looked very smart on their way to a horse sale, being led by the waggoner. Pigs were taken to market in a farm cart with a pig net fastened over the top to stop the pigs getting out.

Transport to Hereford was either by horse and trap or tub, a low vehicle which was much easier to get into, or walk. There were also two carrier carts, one that went down the Ross road and the other that came from Much Dewchurch.

Mrs Christopher from Dewchurch came on Wednesday and Saturday. She reached Haywood Forge about eleven o'clock. A passenger could sit on the seat beside her and two or three on the back seat. She drove to the Black Swan in Hereford where the horse would be stabled until she was ready to return. If the passengers had finished their shopping first there was a waiting room where they could sit. On the return journey Haywood was reached about four o'clock. The children made a rhyme "Mrs Kitty like lightening she flew, and arrived at the city by half past two". The pony did not trot very fast.

Mrs Addis who drove her carrier cart down the Ross road seemed quite upset when in 1919 the first Midland bus started coming from Ross and she noticed someone she knew travelling on it. She would say "Why do you go with that nasty smelly old thing"?

In the early twenties a private bus came down the Callow hill from Little Birch. It was a lorry with a top fixed on and seats. It did one journey to Hereford and back each Wednesday and Saturday.

One woman who lived at Kivernoll walked each Saturday to Hereford. The fashion was long skirts just clearing the ground. She always

looked so tidy and carried part of her skirt over her arm, but on her return with her load of groceries she could not hold up her skirt so when it was wet her skirt got in a terrible state. A lot of children only went to town May Fair and Christmas time, walking both ways. Mr Webb from Port Way, the cottages at the end of Knockerhill Lane, had a bicycle with solid tyres and as he came along his bicycle made quite a noise, in fact you could hear it before you could see him coming.

Roads to be repaired was quite a job. First Mr Read of Haywood Lodge sent his men to fetch dew stones from the Clee Hills. These were tipped on the roadside close to the road which was to be repaired. Next a man came with two hammers, one larger than the other, with long springy handles. He would put on a pair of goggles and start cracking the large stones with the big hammer. When all this was done he used the small one to break the stone still smaller. Along came the steam roller with a couple of rows of iron bars with sharp points. These would scratch up the road making it quite loose. When these spikes were worn down the blacksmith welded a piece of steel on to each one. The stones were then wheeled in a wheelbarrow and tipped on the road, evening them out. Next the steam roller went over them several times, but just before this happened old clay or soil was sprinkled on the stones, followed by the water cart drawn by a heavy horse. Across the back of this tank was a mass of small holes and when the man put his foot on a pedal the holes opened and let out the water. The roller went forwards and backwards over the lot until it was quite level and smooth. The water used to be drawn out of any pool close by. The roller driver lived in a van which was put close to the roller. When Callow Hill was being repaired the van would stand on the grass triangle at the bottom. In those days even the roller had a name - Marshall. It had a lot of brass-work on it which was cleaned each week. When the 1914 war came the roller was taken to make roads. Another took its place but it was not so good looking with far less brass. After the day's work the fire would be damped down and a piece of tin placed on top of its chimney, which helped to keep the fire in

so it only had to be poked up next morning. Each weekend the fire was allowed to go out. The man who drove the roller was a ventriloquist and after work the children loved to hear him.

In the yard of the Forge was an ash tree and on it was nailed a board which was used to put up all notices concerning the public. This tree was becoming unsafe so it was cut down in 1940. Close to this tree was the well with a pump and all household water was pumped from it. Sometimes it would give out, then, when we went to school we took two buckets and two pike handles, and when we were ready to come home we filled the buckets from the school pump and put the handle through the bucket handle. One on each end carried the water home but if you did not keep in step with each other the water could tip into your shoe. If that was not enough water for what was required, another journey was made to a spring at the Fountain which ran night and day. In the Knockerhill wood was a spring and when the pool was dry in summer, Father and Frank had a barrel on wheels which they filled from the well with a bucket. The, with a cord attached pulled it up the Knockerhill road for the animals.

A council meeting was held quarterly. There were three members, Mr Farr, Mr Hopkins and Dad and it was held at Haywood Farm.

Many years ago a man was employed on the farms as a rabbit and mole catcher. He had a small dog named Kruger which he always took with him. On his way home after going round his mole traps he would see the young lads of the village standing on the green near the Forge and he would stop talking to them, which delighted the lads for they would ask him to tell them a story and peals of laughter would be heard after. One of his tales was about a man going shooting with a muzzle-loader gun and he had forgotten to take the ramrod out of the gun. He shot at a crow, he did not kill it but it flew away. Next year he went back to the place where he had seen the crow and what does he see but the crow sitting on a branch with the ramrod through its body and a little crow sitting on each end of the rod. The boys called him Dennis the Liar.

He grew a beard and when it was quite long people used to ask him when he was going to have it cut and he said "I am waiting for the east wind to go".

In 1885 when father was a youth he carried chisels to Wellington Coppice, the wood previously known as Royal Forest, from the blacksmith's shop, for men to cut stones for Hereford street curbs.

The Quarry plantation which is along the Dewsall road has a sandy soil with gravel. Years ago this was dug out for use on the estate. The Knockerhill wood had some fine oak trees. A man named Jones was employed on the estate to cut down suitable trees for making gates, which he did and made gates for the estate, ready for when they would be required on the farms.

The bark was stripped off the trees and hauled away by horse to Barrs Court station and then it went for tanning. The tool used was called a bark peeler and was sharpened by the blacksmith.

The blacksmith had a very busy life; apart from shoeing horses and donkeys he soldered milk churns and buckets etc., made gate irons for the estate, chains, welded pieces of steel on plough shares, harrow tines and axes, also putting handles in pikes, spades, forks and pick-axes. Before a horse was shod the shoes were made from a long bar of iron. On a slack day time would be spent cutting lengths from the bars of iron and turning them into shoes with only the finishing touches to do when the horse came. Many strake nails were made before they would be required. When the farm carts or wagons came a fire of bushes and wood was lit in the yard and the band or strake, whichever the wheel required, was placed into the fire and the wheel was put on the banding plate which still lies in the yard. When the band was hot it was lifted out of the fire by two men with long handled tongs and placed on the wheel and tapped into place, quickly cooling the band before it could burn the woodwork. The wheels requiring strakes were propped up on an iron bar and the strake put on while hot and the nails hammered in and

cooled off. By then the fire had burnt down and only a heap of hot ashes remained. All of us children and others who had been standing by got potstoes and threw them into the ashes where they cooked beautifully, and tasted nice with a dash of salt.

Haymaking at the Forge was a great time. The grass would be cut by two horses and a mowing machine; before that, men with scythes and a stone for sharpening it cut the grass, taking a small barrel of cider and a drinking horn, which they were very glad of because it was a warm job. After a couple of days we went into the field and turned the grass over so that it could dry on the underside. A few more days and off we go to turn it once again. We followed one another round the field with a rake. When it felt dry and looked like hay, if Father was not too busy in the shop, Mr Farr lent him a horse rake. This would collect two rows of hay together which was called a wally. Next it was time to haul the hay. Mr Farr always lent Father a quiet horse and a waggon. Father always seemed to have plenty of helpmates and plenty of children. Each time the waggon was emptied all the children had a ride back to the field. If they were too tiny to climb on he lifted them on. When teatime came Mother carried out the tea with our help, for everyone shared in it. It consisted of cakes, scones and tea.

Mother's life was very busy, there were six children and an apprentice to cook for. Each week she baked enough bread to last a week. Out came a large steen and the dough was made in it, put by the fireside in the warm, covered over with a clean cloth and left to rise. Before all this a pile of dry wood was gathered and the fire had to be lit in the baking oven. This fire was stoked up until the oven roof was white hot. The ashes were shovelled out, then brushed out with a besom made from birch twigs and bound round with either a twisted hazel rod or a piece of iron. To test if the oven was too hot a little flour was sprinkled on the oven bottom. If it turned brown at once it meant it was too hot so it was damped down by putting the besom in a bucket of clean water and brushing around the oven. Next the dough

was carried into the wash-house where a table was fixed up ready for shaping the dough into loaves. After this was finished the peel was got out. This was a flat piece of iron fastened to a long wooden handle. Flour was sprinkled on it then a loaf put on. Having a long handle you could put the loaves to the back of the oven. By the time all the loaves were all in there was just room for some small batch loaves in front. If Mother was not able to go to town to fetch the yeast two of us would walk to Kingsthorpe shop to get it. Sometimes we were given a few pence to spend. On some occasions we would spend it on sweets, on others we would call in on our way home at the Pike House, which was a small house near the end of the Callow road, for a bottle of pop. These bottles had a glass marble in the neck. This little house has long disappeared.

When the 1914 war was on the Yeomanry held a Tattoo in the field below the Brickhill, now called the Grafton. The men were all dressed in full uniform. One of the men was our postman, Levi Hill - his horse was called Fly-a-way.

As the war dragged on the older men joined the Birch Fusiliers. They had a parade in the meadow outside Dewsall church; only a few had a rifle, the rest had only a stick.

Most of people's cloths were home made. Our Mother knitted our vests, socks and made our petticoats, liberty bodices, dresses and pinafores. Also she mended our boots except our best ones which were done by the cobbler, and Miss Bowen, who lived at the bottom of Knockerhill Lane, made our dresses. In fact she was dressmaker for the village.

Most cottagers kept their own pig. The pig killer, Mr Jones, lived on Ridge Hill. He would kill the pig early in the morning and come back the next day to chop it up. People also cured their own bacon so they always had some meat for a meal.

This man was also the undertaker. The family always found their

bearers and Father was very often asked to be a bearer - he never refused until he became too old to carry the weights.

In 1906, when children first started to school they were given a small tray with sand in it and a wooden skewer. You gently shook the tray to level out the sand ready to try at forming the letters and figures. If it was wrong teacher would shake the tray and you started all over again. When you were able to perform this task you were given a slate in a wooden frame and a slate pencil. What was done wrong on the slate was wiped off with a damp cloth. If you happened to be a left handed child that hand was tied to the seat so that you were forced to use your right hand. When you went out of the infant class you were given a piece of ruled paper and so on to an exercise book. One infant teacher used to take any children who were willing to go with her to pick primroses in the woods. She took two large baskets and a ball of wool for tying up the flowers. When we had picked enough we helped to carry them back to her house which was Callow Lodge. On reaching it we were all given a good tea. These flowers were for decorating the church for Easter Sunday which she did most of. When the Harvest Festival was held at Callow church you had to get there early because every seat was filled and chairs which were put down the aisle would be filled, and the porch, and the rest of the people stood under the light of the lamp which was over the gate.

Concerts used to be held in Callow school and the children used to dance, sing or recite. Frank recited "The only boy" and "The sinking of the Titanic". Harriet recited her favourite piece "Room enough for all". There were also singers from town.

Many years ago a huntsman was living at Haywood Farm. The pack of hounds were kept there. One night he awoke to hear the hounds making a noise, so he got out of bed but did not stop to dress properly and went to the dogs; they did not recognise him and set on him and killed him. He was buried in Callow churchyard. On his tombstone was carved his hat and whip. This remained until the churchyard was flattened.

Most of the farms had a couple of orchards of mixed fruit trees. Pears were made into perry which was sweet and the apples into cider. The workmen took a small barrel of cider and a drinking horn with them when they went into the fields to work.

Mr Lilwall, who lived at Callow Farm, was the first farmer to have a tractor. Mr Read invented a dredger for cleaning out pools. Most pools which had fresh water running into them had watercress growing in them, which people picked to eat. Mr Hopkins was first around to have a milking machine.

Mrs Farr of Haywood Farm would hold a jumble sale on the lawn, having a bran tub for the children, a greasy pole for the young lads to try and climb and a chance to have a pillow fight. On the green sward outside the lawn was a skittle alley where the men bowled for a pig. Sometimes the proceeds were well over £100 which she gave to the hospital.

At that time, when the May Fair was in Hereford streets, the Fair people gave two hours' takings on the Wednesday for the hospital. The nurses used to collect the money.

In those days if a person had to go to the hospital they had to go to a lady who subscribed to the hospital and ask for a form which they took with them to the hospital. The two ladies for around here were Miss King King and Mrs Wegg Prosser.

In 1912 a blind man with a small boy, Jerald Tredwell, who led him by the arm used to come round selling tea. Men selling fish came around with a large wicker basket on their head.

On the Forge wall is an ordnance mark. When the 1914 war was on Miss Berry, who was the school mistress, used to buy wool in the colours for the three forces and each girl knitted socks, scarves and mittens, taking it home to get on with the knitting.

The Vicar, Mr Evans, offered a silver medal for any child who attended school for a year and was neither absent or late. The first year seven children won one, the next year only one. Each Christmas the vicar and his wife gave a Christmas tree and tea. Every child had a nice story book. The last Friday in July they gave a tea and games for every child, such as races for a prize and looking for hidden treasure. All the parents had to do was give their children a mug to have their tea in. The vicar's wife drove a pony and trap and while the war was on children were asked to pick herbs, which were used on the wounded soldiers; many sacks of different herbs were picked after school and taken to the Rectory and Mrs Evans took them to the Red Cross station. She also made jellies for children who were ill in the Parish. Next came Mr and Mrs Fernandez, who drove a car. A soldier he visited who had been badly wounded, had not got an armchair to sit in, so Mr Fernandez carried one from his home to a cottage, past Haywood Lodge on his shoulder.

A man used to ride his bike from Hereford with his gun fastened to the cross bar. He had got permission from Mr Farr to go on his land not far from the Forest woods. There he built a hut of boughs and bracken. He sat in it and shot pigeons. When he was ready to go home the birds were fastened with a piece of string round their necks and dangled from his handle bars. If anyone wished to buy a bird he would stop and you paid sixpence for it.

Children made their own fun playing cricket and rounders. The bat was made out of a piece of board, wickets from hazel sticks and often the ball was home made, covering an old split ball with an old stocking or a piece of cloth and stitching it on. Hide and seek, marbles and hop scotch; in winter ludo, snakes and ladders, draughts and cards. The boys made their own whistles, pea shooters and catapults.

Six Council houses were built in 1919 and one tenant used to make a wireless with a crystal and cat's whisker. He sold these for £2.50. You bought a pair of headphones for £1 and fixed an aerial into a

tree, then brought the wire down to the window and made a small hole for the wire to pass through with a screw on the outside.

Our policeman was quite a favourite for he always warned the youths if he saw them riding their bikes without a lamp, giving them a second chance. Even when he was supposed to move on the gypsies he would call in home and have a talk saying "I will give them time to light their fire and have a cup of tea". Sometimes in the winter he would come and walk quietly to the window and unscrew the wireless which at once stopped the sound. Then he would laugh giving the show away, screw it up and come to the door.

One boy had a runt pig given him by the farmer his father worked for. He was lucky enough to rear it and when it was ready he put it in a pram, covered it with a net and walked to Hereford market with it. The policeman on point duty was so amused he held up the traffic for the lad to pass on his way.

If you kept bees you could sell the honey to a chemist. The wax was put into a pot and boiled down and put into a small basin. When it was cold it set into a cake. This was called beeswax and could be used with some turpentine for polishing the furniture. Also the wax was used for strengthening button thread by pulling the thread across the wax.

Boot polish was bought in flat cakes wrapped in wax paper. You turned it out into a lid and added a few drops of vinegar on top to make it moist. This polish was called Day and Martin.

Beds were warmed with a warming pan with hot coals inside and if you had not got one you heated a clean brick in the oven and wrapped it in a piece of flannel. There were also stone hot water bottles.

The farmers' wives used to take their produce to Hereford Butter Market. They paid 1/- for the use of a table and bench seat so that they could

spread out their goods.

The old Angel Inn was closed after many years and is now a private house.

Mrs Farr of Haywood Farm started the W.I. at her house. The meeting was held once a month.

To light their homes candles and paraffin lamps were used. Golding's tanker came from Hereford with paraffin and people had their tins filled or their small tank. Hurricane lamps were used; having a handle they could be hung on a rail. The wick had to be trimmed often for a hard crust would form on it and it would not have a level flame and so smoked the globe, putting you partly in darkness.

The Ark which had two families living in it was originally an ale house. Now it is a private house, but though it has been turned into one house the shallow drain which was used for emptying the barrels still remains.

We still have a windmill in Monkhall meadows. It used to be used to get water and sometimes it had to be repaired by the blacksmith.

Years ago people relied on a simple remedy for curing their illness. Rosemary and cider for measles, a tar rope bound with silk fastened around the neck for whooping cough, elder flow which had been picked and dried and a large spoon full of black currant jam for curing a cold. For warts the juice from a dandelion root. For a cold on the chest rub on some goose grease. A bandage soaked in crab apple vinegar wrapped around a wrist or ankle for a sprain. And for a sore throat wrap your sock around it on going to bed. People did not call the doctor without it was really necessary; then it was bottles of medicine for all complaints and some of it not tasting nice. He came with his pony and trap and his coachman looked after the horse while the doctor was inside the home.

Many years ago Mr Horton was vicar and lived at Dewsall Rectory. They lived on a grand scale; head gardener and an undergardener, coachman and handy boy, cook, parlour maid, kitchen maid, also a governess. While they lived here they paid for Callow church to be painted by an Italian. She also supplied the choir girls with cloaks, red inside and navy out. The church was painted in 1897.

Hay was always put into an oblong heap making a sloping roof, then after a few weeks when it had settled down a thatcher would come and thatch it with straw. The thatch was fastened on with long hazel sticks shapened at one end and boulting string which was bought in large balls. If you were selling your hay a hay trusser came with his hay knife and cut the hay into blocks.

The cattle were fed in winter with chaff and oat straw which had been cut up in the chaff cutter, then a little water was sprinkled on top and some cake. This cake was bought in large cakes and had to be broken up. I must not forget also mangolds which were pulped in a pulper then mixed with the chaff.

The farm workers wives were expected to help with the hoeing of the root crops etc., pick up the apples and pears and cut the bands which held the corn sheaves when they were thrashing.

The Drive field, which is at the back of Copper Beeches, used to be covered with trees and looked like a small wood. There was a path through this field and the children used it to get to school. At the bottom was one lonely poplar tree. Only a few hedges were cut and the ones that were, were cut with a hedge bill.

The workmen wore hobnail boots and to keep them soft they rubbed them with neatfoot oil. When the weather was stormy they used a sack over their shoulders to keep them dry. Children picked blackberries and Capel and Bevan came around to gather them.

Beds had iron frames and brass knobs. The beds were all feathers or flock. They had to be shaken up each day to make it comfortable and turned over once a week.

We went nutting in autumn to gather hazel and chestnuts, storing them for Christmas.

One of the large shops in Hereford, Greenlands, held a Christmas Bazaar with Father Christmas and really was a wonderful day for the children who were able to go. There was always the Penny Bazaar with something of all sorts, very often it meant walking to town and back.

After the harvest was gathered in, Mr and Mrs Farr gave their men a Harvest Supper. They ended singing songs.

When visitors came from Wales they walked from Tram Inn station with their luggage, doing the same after their holiday.

Beggars walked the roads, sometimes calling on a winters morning for you to fill a tin of hot water, sometimes asking for a pinch of tea. Their beards would have the hoar frost on them. You would also give them something to eat and they were always so grateful. If they had been lucky they had slept in some building or under a hedge.

Hens slept in trees, their night feed in winter would be small potatoes well boiled, then mixed with some meal and a spoon of mustard and given to them while still warm. It was quite a job hunting for their nests which sometimes would be in a bunch of stinging nettles.

Home made toffee was made and nettle pop.

In 1936 a scheme began for householders to pay three pence per week and one shilling a year for the ambulance, this entitled the whole family to have free treatment at the hospital.

In 1953 Callow School was closed owing to the small number of children.

In 1919 the Midland buses started running from Ross to Hereford.

In 1976 Mrs Holt started a painting club which was held in the Hall. The school had been sold and bought for a Parish Hall. Mrs Holt also helped greatly to buy a carpet for Callow church by getting and giving many things for a jumble sale to be held.

The Forge ceased to be a blacksmith shop in 1944. Frank had been ill and so was not fit for hard work and turned his thoughts to opening a grocers shop, which he was able to do in 1949. Then, in 1964, the Post Office was moved from Port Way to the Forge, finally closing on October 31st, 1985.

The gales this winter up-rooted a yew tree which was several hundred years old, thereby losing another landmark.

Three years ago a man and his daughter came from Australia to try and sort out the family tree. The man's father was one of the Wilcoxes who was born at the Forge and went out to Australia when a young man.

In 1977 a telegram was sent from the Post Office to the Queen.

In the last few years Haywood has seen some changes, notably several new families have come to live here, and again there are children in Haywood. Perhaps when they go past the Village Hall they will spare a thought for those children of long ago who went to school there and learned to write using a tray of sand and a skewer. They, too, may find that Haywood is still a green and pleasant place in which to live in the year 1986.