

# I REMEMBER ...

Mr. William Panting of Leamington Drive has many things to remember in a lifetime spent in the Faringdon area. He was born in Oldfield Cottages, Eaton Hastings in 1896 and retired recently after 62 years of work on the Wadley Estates.

When, as a boy of 13 he went to work for Mr. Adams at Wadley Manor, most farmers then employed their own blacksmiths, wheelwrights, carpenters and painters. Living in Littleworth as a boy, Mr. Panting remembers walking into Faringdon to the Corn Exchange to receive the "Tommy Loaves" (small loaves, one for each in the family) which were given out on Boxing Day morning. He says he used to take a pillowslip in which to collect the loaves and can still remember vividly the call of, "Can you hear me, Littleworth?"

One of Mr. Panting's memories is of numbers of tramps who, on arrival in Faringdon, had to report to the Police Station for a ticket which, when taken to the Workhouse, would entitle them to a bowl of soup and a night's rest. But in the morning they were only given breakfast if they had earned it by sawing up a railway sleeper.

Mr. Panting's grandparents lived in Coxwell Street, and he remembers having to go to the iron stand-pipes near the Chapel to draw water for them. The pipes were shaped like lions' heads and the water gushed from their mouths.

To the people living in Littleworth in those days, one of the excitements was waiting for the horse and van of Boucher the Carrier who would transport you - if he had room - to Oxford each Wednesday. Mr Boucher would blow his trumpet as he approached. If he had nor room then you had to walk to Faringdon and catch a train.

Mr. Panting started on the farm at 13, working from 7a.m. to 5p.m. six days a week for 6d. a day. Another 6d. could be earned from 8a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday for scaring crows. He worked for many years in the stables with 14 great Shire horses and then received 6/- per week, plus 30/- Michaelmas money. A ploughman was then paid 14/- per week, but he had to start at 5 a.m.

There was plenty of amusement in Faringdon in those days and, in particular, he remembers a visiting Menagerie held in a large marquee in the Market Square, charges for which were:- 1d Entrance and 1d for Feeding the animals. He would earn the money for this by extra jobs, such as cleaning his employer's pony and trap.

This was at the time of the Lloyd George Insurance Act and Mr. Panting still recalls clearly the words of a song performed by the circus clown. Sung to the tune of "Meet Me In Dreamland Tonight" it went as follows:-  
"Lloyd George caught us in Dreamland  
With his Insurance Bill.  
And he expects us to swallow it  
Just like a Beecham's Pill.  
But when the time comes for payment  
There'll be dreadful stew.  
And if he's not careful,  
Very, very careful,  
He'll be in Dreamland too!"

A particular memory of Mr. Panting is the Tuesday Market, with many rings in the wall on Stanford Road for the tethering horses and traps, the cattle being driven on foot to "Crowdy's Field" down the Radcot Road, bulls being led in with a stick attached to a nose ring and calves, sheep and pigs in hurdle pens in the Market Place.

He can recall clearly the Faringdon Mop Fair, held just before Michaelmas - entertainments in Bull Close, the field behind the Police Station, and stalls in the Market Place. At the Hiring Fair those seeking employment waited, with an indication of their trade in their hats:-

Cowhair for a Herdsman.  
Wool for a Shepherd

On being given a job the bargain was sealed with a shilling which bound you to that employer until next Michaelmas.

One thing Faringdon was very proud of in those days was the band of men, known as the Volunteers, who paraded around the town regularly. They were all keen riflemen and had their targets in a field at the end of Southampton Street, firing at these from the Butts at the foot of Jasper's Hill - hence our modern Butts Close. A great event then was the gymkhana held in the Whit Monday Sports Field, the grandstand for which was close by the hedge running up to Wicklesham.

Captain Haynes was the C.O. of the Volunteers and their greatest occasion was the presentation of shooting prizes in the Corn Exchange. This was always held before the haymaking commenced.

## 5/- For 2/6

Mr. Panting himself saw service in the First World War and well remembers the Enlisting Sergeants coming to Faringdon. They made the Bull Inn their headquarters. As they received 5/- for every man they enlisted, and as beer was only 2d a pint, they considered it a good bargain to spend up to 2/6 per man in their efforts to persuade men to enlist!

On his return from the war Mr. Panting found jobs difficult to get and for a while earned 8/- a day digging for a

