

HAPPY DAYS, AND HORSES

By these Modbury school days, the house at Gabberwell as it would finally be, was just about complete. Doc was then sixty-six, which meant that he pulled down one partial house, and built another in his early sixties - small but strong! My mother did a super job making mats and covers for things with that linen that had been bought for the big house. She then worked hard on a veg. Garden which was called 'the kitchen garden!' Gooseberries red and green, Redcurrants, and Blackcurrants, the strong smell of Tomatoes, which we picked and ate like you eat an apple, still reminds me of that veggy garden in Gabberwell. We also had a glasshouse, or greenhouse as it is sometimes called, in which grew cucumbers. When you go into a hot house - another name for it - and pick a cucumber it is often uncomfortably hot and humid in there, and as you put your hand out and pick the cucumber, it will be found to be surprisingly cool to the touch - hence the expression. She also of course had a flower garden. Both were an absolute joy to her. Doc built what he called a 'Japanese arch' which was a sort of doorway to a bower housing a garden seat. Bridget left for school round about here. From Doc's medical practice we had quite a few friends by that time locally and in the neighbouring villages.

From considerably earlier than this we joined in with the harvest efforts, it was just about the end of those everyone-climbs-in days because greater automation was soon to come. I can remember taking large picnic baskets to the fields at lunch time, and the children played while adults got dry hay in and made hayricks. Hilde was around for periods on and off these days, and she, because of her great strength, would compete with the farm boys in the tossing of hay onto the top of the rick, where another would arrange it to make the rick the right shape.

A lady and her son from just out of the village opened up a local cinema. My mother was delighted, would inspect the poster to judge if it was to be a good film, if she liked the look of it, off we would go. Doc often came if it was likely to be his type. This was an entirely new world to me, and thus was born my love of films. They had a signature tune, did the two that ran this cinema. It was the 'Tritch Tratch polka' and they would play it just before, and as, the lights went down and it added to that feeling of excitement at the prospect of a three hour entertainment where the world as it was simply did not exist. The film was usually accompanied by a running commentary by one of the locals "they be droiving that there o' car down the road neew" or " 'e be enjoying that there ol sausage then." Other than this if one wished to see a film or play you had to go to Plymouth. Which of course one did from time to time for shopping and the rest. There was a bus once a week on Thursdays. To Plymouth in the morning and home again at night.

We had wirelesses for our entertainment, of course. In the early days they had 'wet batteries'. These had to be charged in Modbury, and bringing them home by car was quite an issue because the 'wet' was acid and was quite a problem if it spilt. Then later the normal dry battery kind. There was no T.V. so serials and the like were listened to only. There was 'Dick Barton - Special Agent' Dick had two assistants Snowy and Jock. I sent away for their autographed photographs, the only one that I got back was from the player of Snowy, he did not look a bit as I had imagined and brought me to an understanding of the acting scene with a bump! Then there was 'Children's Hour' where they ran serials like 'Storm of Green Hillocks' - I had beautiful black Alsatian called Storm after the one in that story. During the time that so many children had been evacuated to various places safer than London and the big cities, at the end of 'Chidren's Hour' they would say "goodbye children" then pause for effect "everywhere" this just about brought my mum, who was particularly fond of children, to tears. I have always since thought that it was rather un-English actually.

Of these patients of Doc's that became our friends, one family from Ringmore was the Nash family. Mr. had some important lighting job at the Admiralty headquarters in London and the rest