

memories in those days. One or two of the rectories had underground passages leading down to the shore.

When finally the car - I think it was a Morris - packed up, I would ride to Modbury for some of the shopping. I had my own short cut across the fields. In the periods when there was no horse around I rode a bike but I felt safer on a horse, my sense of balance has always been somewhat at fault, and I liked to feel that that which I was riding had a leg firmly placed at each corner. Another horse I rode sometimes was Candy, brown and white and fat and lazy. Never having actually owned a horse I would go to the gymkhanas but never had a horse that was seriously raceable. I must have been about 14 or 15 or so when I rode Star. Often the farmers would lend their hunters out, out of season, to be grazed, exercised, and generally cared for. Star was such a one. I had to go far afield by bike to go fetch him, and can remember being somewhat intimidated when I actually saw him because he was 16hh (hands high). As one hand is 4 inches or 10cm, that makes him 160cm high at shoulder, and that is a lot of horse. I couldn't get on him at all with out the use of a mounting block and as we didn't have a mounting block at Gabberwell a plan had to be made.

Star only knew one thing and that was that once someone was riding him the thing to do was to gallop off to where-ever, and get it all over and get home as fast as possible and this is what he did, hardly waiting until a person was properly mounted! I remember taking him back in tiptop condition though; he was all shaggy when I first had him but with much grooming he was the most beautiful shining chestnut when I took him back. Amazing the trust that was involved in this kind of arrangement, the farmer had my bike in his stable, and I had his horse.

I don't quite know how I came to know Ann May but we rode a lot together. Mr May managed a farm. My mother and Mrs May - who never met - would swap tea for sugar during the rationing years, my mom needed the sugar for the making of jams and so on, and the Mays supposedly drank the tea. As I write this Ann is now in her second marriage and judges horses all over Devon. My mum was a great jam maker, a favourite jam in the English countryside is Blackberry and apple jam. We would go picking Blackberries by the hour, Bridget, my mom, the little dog Sue and I. Another thing we picked large amounts of because they grew so prolifically were Primroses, a simple flower that gives its name to a pale yellow, and has the most incredible perfume.

After the war Hilde settled in London. For a while she had a job as the cashier at a night club called the Coconut Grove. There she had a boyfriend called Sandy who was an Italian. Hilde obviously told him about the folks at Gabberwell and once he phoned to speak to my mum, and on hearing that she loved all the Italian opera songs, promptly sang to her over the phone. Next time Hilde came down he sent with her the entire collection of Gigli records. We had a big square H.M.V. gramophone that you wound up. We loved those records.