

## CHAPTER IV

The hedge fruit ripens – Harvest time – Fagging begins – The reaper gets to work – Catching rabbits – Trussing the sheaves – Making the stooks – Loading the wagon – Steam power – Massy Harris – Threshing – Unricking the sheaves – Thatching the rick – Bradford's warehouse – September chill – Autumn cold and damp – Christmas cheer.

In August, all along the field edges, the fruits ripen... The summer thunder and lightning passes overhead... leaving the sudden rainstorm soaking the banks and ditches. The garden tiger moth dances past the river, the heat of the August sun entices the moth to spend sometime near the water and nettle bed – not far from the bank. The docks have almost gone to seed... and the purple and yellow loosestrife, lining the bank, give accommodation to the bittersweet, which wrap its tendrils round their stems. Just as I turn away, I notice a small frog crawling out of the water to disappear under a rotting bough. No chance there for an easy meal for the passing geese, preparing to migrate to more distant climes... the river giving a temporary resting place as they land in a flurry. The countryside look particularly beautiful giving a warm glow to the local elms given a three dimensional effect emphasised by the purple coloured distant hills. The recent heavy rains, battered the thistles - knocking the down off their heads, give an invitation to a large black slug - making its way amongst the vegetation. The last drops of rain glistening like diamonds on the blackberries slide off onto the ground. The radio forecasts a spell of fine settled weather.

At last, the countryside was prepared for the harvest to be cut. It was if the fields were in tension just waiting for the exact moment... for it took great judgement to make sure the corn heads were just right for cutting. Too ripe, the grains would fall out of their husks whilst cutting... not ripe enough - too much moisture, the grain would not separate properly and be left in the ears. It was now a question of a few settled days of good weather. Harvesting was not just for the farmer and his field crops but went on in the hedgerows attended to by his wife – also, part of rural life, habit and custom.

Now the stage is about to be set - the farmer has chosen his moment well. The latest weather forecast plus a final check of his fields tells him that the harvesting moment had arrived. He enters each field and checks between the crops leaf-nodes – the swelling, where a leaf joint show, for a slight greenness to show... it is just right – perfect for harvesting... he returns to the farm to tell his men.

The spare farm labourers, their friends, women not engaged in housework and we children would turn out to help. The men were all clothed in old Sunday best suit, much used and baggy, hitched-up with string, and wearing a waistcoat. Workers of the period, whatever calling - hedging, ditching, thatching or sowing, wore the same outfit come summer, winter, sun, wind or rain... cap, navy, black or pin-striped jacket [rarely taken off], trousers held up with bracers and belt, collarless shirt, waistcoat, with looped chain, and leather hobnailed boots... under them all, a pair of long johns. Their wives wore long voluminous skirts, petticoats, pleated blouses sleeves either rolled up or buttoned at the wrist with pinafore or apron... with scarf or shawl in winter. No one ever wore a jumper or cardigan except us children.

I remember much speculation about timing - order of which field to be cut, and workers to be engaged. The atmosphere created by the numbers of people involved and the noise and clatter of horses moving about. It was after all the culmination of the years work and meant a great deal to everyone in the village. The reaper, now thoroughly serviced after haymaking, hitched up and ready to go!

At first light, the horses are groomed and harnessed up. Some fields were sown with wheat, which was grown especially for thatching – required longer stalks. When it became time to harvest, it

was critical that there was some moisture left in the stalks – explains why the farmer has chosen the timing by the trace of green to the leaf joint.

One of the men would go around the field ‘fagging’ to cut an opening with a sickle, then the first swathe with a scythe, swinging it from side to side in easy motions, occasionally sharpening it with his whetstone. The object was to make the headland wide enough to get the horses or tractor in - without trampling down the corn. A farm worker could cut an acre of corn a day and his wife or mate could follow on and tie-up in sheaves with straw bands, women who stacked up the sheaves were called bondagers. A great deal of farm work was performed as piecework - by casual labour. In the twenties the harvest was still cut and bound by hand with a sickle or reap hook... taking four men to finish an acre a day.

Other cutting devices augmented the scythe: the reaping hook is an enlarged sickle, used to cut off the ears of the wheat – leave the tall straw standing. The sickle has a fine toothed edge whilst the fag-hook has a step just below the handle – the blade and handle on different levels, made to cut hedges or bramble without skinning your knuckles.

The main excitement was when the mechanical reaper got closer to the centre of the field. The field of corn was reduced in size - gradually gave way to stubble, whilst my brother and I became more and more excited in anticipation of how many rabbits would run out from the centre. The plan was to chase and shout as loud as we could for this confused the rabbits that ran down their holes then out again. This was what all the spare hands had been waiting for. Even Uncle Ken Larcombe, who had a metal leg, would throw himself on the rabbits. Eventually there would be a pile that would be divided up - their legs to be laced together, and strung out on a stick. How proud we were when we marched home to present grandma with our share of the spoils.

If the drying was too advanced, the stalks would snap – the thatcher would take a quantity of straw shake it and spread it out and re-sort...into a thatching bundle. Before delivery to the thatcher a part of the head or ear of the corn would be drawn off – knocked, rubbed by hand or shaken - allowing a small part to be left to give ‘grip’ to the straw – so that it would not slip when laid. A quantity of the thatch would be laid with the ears down and some ears up, to make the laid thatch even.

The mower or reaper would then start cutting the grass or grain stalks laying them flat on the ground. Men followed, gathering the stalks together into sheaves, which were about sixteen inches in circumference, pressing them close to their apron-sides whilst they tied-off the sheaves using twisted stalks, or string, to make a band. A good days work for three horses was ten acres and for one tractor a similar amount.

By this time - late morning, when the men had been at work for five hours, there was an easy stride to their work as they grasped another bundle of stalks together. All were sweating, clothed in just their shirtsleeves, with their waistcoats on... a watch-chain holding them closed about them. There would be a shouted conversation and the occasional burst of laughter – it is as well the women were not there to hear their ribald jokes. The sun shines overhead emphasising the stillness outside the circle of workers, all looking forward to their lunch break. Over the hedge - in the distance, a ridge of hills purple stand out against the white horizon. The air was thick with dust smelling of cracked nuts... The reaper continues circling the field – the flails flapping and cutters chattering... the horses trace tinkles. Old Dobbin snorts disturbing the rabbits hiding in the uncut centre... a flash of white, a rabbit darted out to find shelter in the hedge... Little realising he is one of the lucky ones to escape...!

It did not take long for many of the women of the village to appear at the right time to start gleaning. Children too were playing about excited by the alteration to their normal routine. Sandwiches prepared and bagged up, and bottles of ginger beer clinking in the basket... all that was required. The water in the stream that bordered the field is clean enough for the children to drink.

Cloths were laid out to place the gleanings into, whilst the broad pocket in the apron was for the loose ears. We prowled the field vying with each other to see who could collect the most. While this was going on the binder was following up. There was no let-up...

Not far away the farmer was using a binder to gather the loose straw into trusses tying them into sheaves. The binder, pulled by two or more horses, took the place of the reaper and gatherers. This machine always looked flimsy with its circulating bars whirling round. The binder's flails bent the stalks onto the knives, which cut the corn. A canvas belt conveyed the cut corn into the binder, which bundled and tied the stalks with twine - into sheaves, to be thrown out to one side of the machine onto the ground.

Whenever the first field was cut the binder, needed considerable adjustment to ensure the twine tied the sheaves properly - without breaking. Thereafter, once the team got into motion more corn was cut and bound - ready to be made up into stooks. The binder cut out hand gathering and tying the cut straw into sheaves. It still needed a team of men to stack the sheaves into stooks

Two sheaves were held in either hand to prop against each other. Next, the butts of another two rested against the first two, heads up, propping each other up. Six to eight sheaves was a common number in which these were stacked into stooks or shocks. Further sheaves added depending on the abundance of the harvest and set of the weather- but always an even number so that the ends were not blocked stopping the air blowing through. The ears, always standing uppermost, gave the sheave a top-heavy appearance.

The stooks were stood-up in lines facing east and west to allow maximum drying conditions and to cast off rainwater. The binding machine - using binder-twine, could take the place of a man gathering the stalks. The binder cast the sheaves onto the ground for us to stack them up, into stooks, ready for the sun to dry them out. If these stooks became flattened by bad weather - so that the ears reached the ground - in danger of sprouting, it had to be restooked. The combine harvester superseded the binder in the 60s - which cut, gathered and tied a bundle into sheaves, discharging the bale onto the ground... made stooks redundant.

The large, flat, high-railed wagon - shaped like a boat, circulated the field, pulled by two horses as the stooks were separated and pitch-forked, by the pitchers using a two pronged fork, to the stacker or loader, standing on top, who built the load higher between the corner poles. The middle of the wagon left until last so that the loaders had a platform to work from, for no man threw from the ground to the top.

More often than not, there would be a number of wagons working the field. The horses, pulling the swaying, lurching wagons, trampling down the stubble whilst kicking up the dust. The lead horse, led by one of the pitchers, making its way either out the field or to the next group of stooks. When fully loaded the sheaves were stacked in various barns before making into a rick in the field. Every moment was vital to get the corn under cover before rain set in.

In the 1840s, flail threshing and winnowing done for sixpence a bushel. Other farms hand-flailed but winnowed by hand-machine... by the 50s, horse threshing took over linked to a bar outside the shed that turned the flail... the winnower had either a single or double fan to blow away the chaff.

Extracting the seed with hummellers or flails was surpassed by steam powered tractors linked to thrashers and loaders introduced in the 1860s along with fan-tackles and chiggers which were supposed to divert the chaff. In reality, they spread it everywhere making the whole area a throat blocking haze. Allis-Chalmers tractors and combines considered very advanced lead to the Ransomes' 1930s threshing machine - towed wheeled thresher, that made an enormous difference and hauled from farm to farm... until superseded by Massey Ferguson. By 1941, a Massey-Harris tractor cost £365 and a hay-loader £48.

In 1950, it was still possible to see a threshing gang working beside a steam traction engine. Steam engines continued to pull wagons after the war - until the late 40s whilst the steam road roller continued for a further twenty years.

The threshing machine was due any moment – hired from the local supplier. It usually came with its own team of men who were familiar with its working. The decision to start threshing was a judgement made by the farmer. His starting point would be the price of flour, the position of his bank balance and the gamble he was prepared to make on the state of the local economy. Usually the corn was threshed in late autumn and early winter. If done outside, the state of the weather or what was forecast, the adjudicator. It wasn't long ago that the flail was used – mainly in the winter, to give work when bad weather kept the workers from the field.

Threshing was always done in a hurry - at that time by steam power, using the maximum number of workers. A full water cart was always to hand. It was no good finding you were out of water halfway through the job - having to close down the boiler. It was the farmer's responsibility to see that water was always available and sufficient coal to hand. If local water unavailable it was pumped from a stream or pond into the water tub. Welsh steam coal was shovelled into the boiler as gradually steam pressure rose... The tall chimney belched black smoke and the whistle blew – at last pressure reached... The great flywheel turned and the piston rod jerked backwards and forwards... the belt started to flap and the speed regulator spun...

The thresher started pulsating – humming its never-ending tune as every piece of loose metal, associated bit of tackle and worn bearing started to rattle and shake. One man started to go round the road wheels on the engine, to hammer in wedges – prevent the engine from moving closer to the thresher and another man wedged the thresher – the idea was to stop the belt from slipping.

Two men usually unricked the sheaves of corn onto a cart, which in turn off-loaded onto the elevator? The sheaves passed along the conveyor to the bond cutter who cut the string or untied the band to release the stalks, which were then entered into the drum feeder. At the other end of the feeder the now husk-less straw was taken off the drum to be taken to the straw-stack...the grain was bagged up from the side chute using a sack-trolley in two hundred-weight sacks and loaded onto the grain wagon. Ten men often carried out this whole operation. The spent straw not always taken immediately to make a stack – some farms would tie the straw into trusses using a straw-bond, sold-on or ricked-up.

The husks left to fall onto the ground although the very action of the belts driving the action, the spinning drum and conveyor tended to blow the husks out making a cloud of irritating, itching husks surrounding the whole operation – covering everything. From removal of the corn from the ear to grinding at the mill, as much husk was removed as possible - winnowing – by using draughts of air - by blower or fan...

The threshed straw went to build the rick. This straw would be animal feed for the winter and cut out of the rick by the 'fogger' using very long and broad hay-knives to cut away a truss, bound and carried to the field. Un-used ricks, which were surplus, broken down and spread on fields - to be ploughed-in or cut-up to make manure heaps. About this time, the ditches would be dug out and re-shaped.

Ricks could be either round or square-sided, with or without end hips. They were built mostly in the rick-yard reasonably, close to where the animals were to be fed – near to the chickens - to nest, feed and lay. If likely to be infested with vermin the rick would be built on staddle stones [*mushroom shaped stone or iron to prevent vermin from getting into the ricks*] - if not, a base of bundles of brushwood laid to allow air to circulate - kept the straw or hay off the ground to prevent rotting.

Once the rick built up the top was thatched. At the turn of the century, this would cost the farmer 2s for five hours work. At the sometime, the ricks were being built, the swedes and mangles made into heaps [clamps] and covered with straw and earth to keep off the frosts. Potato clamps

were specifically for humans although if sufficient, at the end of the season, they would also be fed to the pigs. Both these root crops were used as winter-feed for the cattle. In the winter cattle, food was not just trown on the ground but placed in large wooden troughs and hayracks. The carter's stockmen and shepherds were expected to administer to their animals when they were ill. Old remedies were used perfected over the ages to cure swine fever, foot and mouth and foot rot. Antiphlegestin, Stockholm tar and castor oil popular medicants. The only animals to be kept in close confinement were pigs. In some farms, they were allowed to feed off the apples in the orchards or in small fields to graze the acorns.

Very often, particularly for hops and soft fruit, town's folk would descend on the farms to do casual work – staying in purpose built wooden huts. They considered this not only a method to earn a little extra but as a holiday too. It was usually an expected and organized event at harvest time and the same families met up every year taking in turn to look after the children. The huts were provided with cooking facilities and a communal sink and the latrines very basic. After the harvest was over the huts were cleared out and then let to Youth Clubs, Boy Scouts and the Boy's Brigade for their annual camps. Just after the war I started to take my holidays with the Boy's Brigade in just such a camp, [over a period of six years], using the farmers straw for my palliases. We marched, wearing our uniforms, including pillbox hat, from St Helens railway station, in the Isle of White, to the campsite, led by the band playing St Georgia...

After the harvest had been gathered in and the festival blessed in the church, the village held its thanksgiving. In times past known as 'The Revels', but Puritanism soon put a stop to all that. Now the village fete and garden show took its place... still draws the inhabitant together... for the children to run wild, the merry-go-round spun - by the efforts of the showman and his cranking handle. There were country dancing, races and hoopla, ducking apples... and the maypole to be laced – danced round... However trivial it may seem, it was planned for, looked forward to, and continually remembered...

A demand was now made on Bradford's warehouse for coulter, ploughshares and dung forks, as the crops were cleared from the fields. Dung was tipped in piles across the fields and old ricks broken up and interspersed too, ready for ploughing. It was the time for the stable hands to start repairing the harnesses and to put right all those faults with the carts and wagons.

The morning started bright and clear. It was the most perfect September day... the sky was cloudless, the only sounds disturbing the peace - the cooing of the wood pigeons and the squabbling of the rooks high in the trees overhead. Not far away a stag rears on its hind legs to knock some more acorns off the lower branches of the oak... a shaft of sunlight through the branches lights-up a peacock butterfly - which settled for a moment before continuing its erratic journey. On one of the top branches, a kestrel swivels his head - to left and to right, surveying his kingdom...

The wet grass from an overnight shower sparkles and thousands of small cobwebs glisten from tiny water droplets that shimmer in the sun. Gradually the morning mist lifts from the ground as the sun warms the air... piles of newly dug soil advertise the underground rum of a mole. Autumn has begun, we put aside all thoughts of how well Somerset is doing in the cricket league... the football season is upon us.

The countryside now changes. The sun is still hot but comes to us lower in the sky. September kicks in with a sudden chill makes one reach for the jumper. The ground begins to show the first scatterings of fallen leaves. They are in a variety of browns, reds and oranges blowing about the ruts, rustling and chattering as they pile up. The dewy grass, covered with early morning webs, soak my shoes that are not waterproof - giving me wet socks again... The acorns and fallen twig lets crunch underfoot. The humming and squawking wildlife quiets as day by day their food becomes more difficult to find... finally the blackbird and song thrush leave for warmer climes...

Tomatoes are starting to ripen outside and the potatoes, onions, beans and marrows become staple diet. The weeds keep coming... it is a full-time job to keep on top of their growth. The pears and apples on the trees behind the privy are picked as they become ready. Those not eaten are wrapped in newspaper and stored on trays in the outhouse.

The local thatcher lays out his unthashed wheat straw... gathers and ties them, in handy bundles. On wet days, he whittles his pegs, sharpens his scissors and prepares for the next fine day. His first job Monday morning is the cottage in Perry Street, by Crossways Corner. It is there that he places his very long ladders – in readiness, carting and stacking his prepared bundles for an early morning start. He not only works for the farmer repairing barns, haylofts and making ricks but also re-thatched and replaced roof ridges in the village.

The fields, banks and ditches would show greater variety of plant life then, to now. There were trees of fruit, nut and thorn varieties of bush rose, vetch, yarrow, knapweed and birdsfoot. The ditches were deeper and damper, with grass more lush and succulent. Insect life not only of greater variety but larger: dragonflies, stag beetles, butterflies, moths, glow-worms, snakes, lizards, toads, frogs and crickets. Birds too would be more numerous. In fact, the whole flora and fauna would be almost unrecognisable by the profusion of differing types and species, especially the winged insect variety.

As September led into October... the cabbages displayed frayed edges as the butterfly's caterpillar nibble away - gradually reducing the leaves to skeletons, a number lay across the leaves producing a crosshatched colouration of yellow and black. Some of the cabbages have their hearts completely destroyed – going mouldy and black. There is no time to be sentimental the caterpillars have to be removed – pinched out. By now the beans are stringy and the marrows hard. Digging in earnest... preparing the ground to sow the spring cabbage must be concluded... All the old decaying crops removed to the compost heap. The time for sowing the broad beans that are going to stand the winter will give the New Year a good start.

The compost heap was broken into and manure from the yard made up the load to spread upon the stubble. Now is the time to start pulling and cutting the tops off the cattle-beet... followed by the autumn ploughing and the planting of beans... Immediately drilling the winter wheat, the horse teams prepared in advance, putting at least a two-horse drill on the light soils. The mangels could now be collected up and carted off to the clamp - which lay beside the potatoes. All this was done before the bad weather set in – in mid-November.

Autumn is well under way. October starts cold and damp. The early morning mist lies late into the morning giving the fields a ghostly presence. The river is clear and low and the banks encroach – the luxuriant grass weighed down by water droplets sags dipping their heads into the water... the water reflects the growth making the width of the stream appear even smaller. Lower down a pair of swans go through their bonding ritual ducking their heads then reaching up until finally they touch one another.

The thick hedges provided not only a field boundary but also give new material for future hedge and fence, shelter for the farm animals and birds and provide a byway for wild creatures – to pass from field to field. The hedgerows at the side of the lanes would not be cut becoming, in some cases, interlinked over the middle of the road forming a tunnel - which shut out the daylight. In the evening or winter nights these lanes were frightening places for us children; the trunks began to form faces and the long tendrils of the branches looked like arms ready grab any unfortunate passer-by. The glow-worms light twinkled in the dark ditches and lane sides whilst the bats flitted above on their set course to the nearest food. The hooting owls and barking foxes gave a sinister background to the shadowy undergrowth...

The hedge banks and ditches were ancient boundaries of tracks running from hamlet to village, from village to town... a source of wonderment at the diversity of wildlife, a fascination at the beauty of the leaf and branch - forming a varied, colourful picture.

The ditches flooded every year. Tall rushes, herbs and reed shoot up at the expense of smaller, less vigorous plants, when the ditches are lush and green – it is impossible to see the bottom of the ditch and quite difficult to extract oneself - if clumsy enough to fall in!

In early November, the wind penetrated the stoutest coat. The skies were washed out and threatening. The rooks were buffeted, being blown off course having to make an extra effort to regain their perch. They complained creating a tremendous racket. When they took off to find food, they swept over the fields in gigantic swoops soaring upwards to gain height and then down again almost plunging into the ground. They seemed to keep this up for hours, almost as if they were at play...

Halfway through the month, the better weather arrived and a walk by the river revealed a wider streambed - now that the dead and dying vegetation had rotted and fallen away. The trees were beginning to look bare - half their leaves had fallen. The reeds with their yellow stems and black rotting heads were flattened by the wind - lay in the river the fallen leaves clogging their matted remains.

The warm weather never lasts long for the rain settled in again turning the roads into glistening rivers of black ink, gurgling down the drain, leading to the river. Now the mornings were frosty quickly thawing out to leave just the shady areas icy on dead leaves and limp grass. The river changed again now reflecting browns and ochre's. It is going to stay that way for some time to come... Back at the cottage, work continued... the war had not changed the routines of life one jot. The butter factory, near Chilson Common took over the mantle of chief employer after the net making industry had suffered yet another poor year.

My grandfather and two uncles cycled off in December, as they did every morning, with their sandwiches and a tea can over the handlebars of their ancient bikes. They both wore cloth caps, faded jackets, open waistcoats and collarless shirts... and spoke in the traditional way of Somerset folk - punctuating the conversation with a fair sprinkling of ay, baint, twas, tis, thou, taint, thee, ee, bin, lor, cetchum, take'un, thee-self, thy-self, and gurt, Zs instead of S, and U instead of O. All used in a kind of spoken shorthand and quite difficult to follow – as if the language was only made-up of vowels.

The early mornings were crisp, the frost glistening on the roads. The forecast is two days of rain and sleet followed by strong winds. The river is high and unusually brown from mud washed down stream. Last weeks rain has made the current strong as the water rushes over the stones swept down from higher ground. Once again, the moles have been active on the grassy bank every so often the brown earth thrown up into soft crumbly piles. Out of all the greenery, left by the winter's blast the ivy remains bright and vibrant. The flowers of pale-yellow populate the tops... by the end of December the berries will be very dark green. Also looking strong, but not as colourful, is the holly with its many bunches of bright red berries - declaring a hard winter... should look a picture pinned to the beams in the sitting room, along with the mistletoe, from the oak in yonder field. There is just time for grandad to plant the shallots... before he sits down to the main meal of the day. Then off with his sons to the Poppe Inn... known before 1927, as the Country Hotel, this, the local pub, was the meeting place for most of the local village men folk... this is where they played darts, shove-halfpenny and dominoes, until about ten, when they returned home to sit by the fire, play cards or relate the local gossip to grandma.

After Christmas, when all the festivities were over, the farm-workers tried to keep indoors, or at least stayed close to the barns where the seed-barley could be thrashed. On dry days, the broken

fences and gates could be repaired or the stack-yard swept. There was always something to do even in the foulest weather to keep the men busy.

At Rosalie Cottage, life got back to normality after the Christmas jollities over. Other than during the winter the cottage door was left open – guarded by a large, cast iron dog. Step over the threshold onto the thick stone step, which spans the width of the door; take the cambered sandstone brick path through the gate onto the road beyond... Turning right, start up the hill; a few paces more and there... some steps, with a neat set of iron railings – supporting a handrail - lead to a gothic door. The school stands impressively tall, an official building... surmounted by the bell tower... the autumn term was ending - another year almost over... The children are practicing their carols; 'The Holly and the Ivy' filters out - in time with the piano... Another cold day, the third week in December – the last week of term.

The sun shines weakly as it tries to penetrate the moisture-laden air. Nobody dallies, head down, they move quickly to get inside out of the cold. There, the fire blazes up, casting its warm, flickering light, against the brass warming pan... the paraffin lamp is already lit, the smell of the oil another part of my memory bank... gives light, as well as comfort.

On the beams in the living room the pinned holly and mistletoe remained. The painted and crayoned cards still lurked behind the clock and candleholders. The table is set again as grandma bustles about cutting the bread ready for the evening meal...

Life in the village changed little. This was the quietest time, it was as if everything waiting for warmth to strike flesh or ground. Inside the cottage the fire crackled in the hearth and the clock strikes midday. The wind and rain of January has passed to clear cold days of February. The farmer over the hedge has started drilling the spring beans and peas. In a few weeks time the oats and barley would have gone through the same procedure. In the village school the children stayed in during their break times, the cold penetrated up from the floor making their toes as cold as ice. The coke fire did little to keep the cold at bay...

Tatworth was not a normal rural village. The lace mill, butter factory and railway junction made it more isolated from the affects of low farm prices - than an economy solely reliant upon what could be produced from the land. The offshoots to all three plus the corn mill at Forton gave it strength to resist unemployment. Even when there were hard times for lace, production one or other of the employers would come to the rescue, plus the largest landowners like Parrocks Lodge and Forde Abbey. This relative isolationism was reflected in the population's view of the outside world's troubles, as being a hindrance to the perpetuation of all that was good and normal. Life, like the language, was slow and ordered, in pace with the seasons. Within all his rural activity, the creative industries fed off the large manufacturers circulating wealth and jobs. This circular life in Tatworth, where all benefited from this mechanism - each part fed off the other, maintained the coherence of the complete social group.