

Then, in about 1949 or 1950, Mum and Dad took over the Blue Ball up at Countisbury.* It was a primitive old place in the early days – there was no water up there at all, no borehole and no spring, and all the water used to have to come off the roof and be collected in a tank. It was then pumped from that tank by hand up into another one in the main building. We had to be careful with water. I remember one Boxing Day I washed up all the glasses all day in the same tiny bowl of water! The toilets used to be outside and at the bottom of the building. To get to them you'd



Mum and Dad outside the Blue Ball.

have to pass the pump, and whenever anyone asked where the toilets were, you'd say, "Down the front of the building and past the pump – and give it a couple of pulls on the way!"

There was a little windmill out at the back of the Blue Ball which produced a tiny amount of electricity. When the mains electricity eventually came we put in a television to try to attract people, but they didn't like it. It got in the way of the nattering, which is why they went there, I suppose! My mum used to do Sunday lunches but no one wanted them; no one wanted bar food in those days. There were a lot of people visiting Lynton and Lynmouth – we were on the main route in – but they were all going down there and didn't seem to want to stop on the way! We put the petrol pumps in to try to get people

* The Blue Ball was originally a coaching inn with stables where fresh horses were kept to relieve the ones that had come up Countisbury Hill, and the additional horses that had been added for the long haul were removed. The same occurred at the Culbone Inn to relieve those that had come up Porlock Hill on the return journey. The local farms at each inn – Home Farm across the road from the Blue Ball and Yearnor below the Culbone, benefited by providing fodder for the stables, and from the manure that each produced.