

The stock on the farm we sold at Blackmoor Gate. As a small boy I can remember taking cows with their calves to the auction there in a horse and cart. We'd put the calf on the cart and the cow followed along behind. When I was older I drove sheep to Blackmoor Gate, all along the road there, the A39 road – before it got busy.



Father in 1922

We had three horses in the early days: two heavy horses, Prince and Darling, and a hunter. I started ploughing when I was about fourteen wi' a single furrow plough. I can still remember the field I first ever ploughed. It was all right in the middle of the field, you'd be going along nicely there, but when you came to plough the forehead that's when the trouble started.* The horses knew they'd nearly finished and started going beserk – went like hell, they did, wanting to finish the job and get back to the stable! Father had to come along and help me

that first time. He helped me finish off that field.

One time, I remember, he bought me a pony at Brendon. This pony, if he took it into his head, would set off like a bullet from a gun. Nothing would stop him, he just took off, charged at gates, knocked them down. Father and I went to collect this pony and I rode him back. Well we got to the top of Ilkerton and that's when he suddenly took off. I clung on, I can tell you! I was about twelve, thirteen at the time. Cor, he could travel when he galloped – one of the fastest horses I ever rode. In the end Abe Antell, the shepherd at Hoar Oak, quietened him down. Abe was a good horseman, always riding. He was hard on his horses; he'd do miles and miles every week with the shepherding, riding everywhere.

* The forehead was the edge of a field which was left unploughed and where the horses were turned after each furrow. The two foreheads were ploughed last by circling right round the field at the end of the job.