

Chapter 10

The Village.

Tawstock Village is an old type village nestling under Tent Hill on the side of the valley. I suppose for those of us who have known the village for so long tend to take it for granted. But a lot of people have passed the comment over the years "What a lovely unspoilt old world village and quite pretty". In the 1930's the village consisted of 21 properties, 1 farm, 18 cottages, 1 set of Almhouses and 1 lodge. Just to the edge of the village stood Tawstock Court Mansion House and The Church.

The water supply for the village came from Smemington Wood. It was gravity fed to taps situated at various parts of the village. These taps were old fashioned, they had a cast iron casing around them about 12 inches in diameter and stood about 3ft high with a domed head. To turn the tap on you turned a round knob on the side of the casing this opened the tap and the water would come out in the front through a short spout. Later on as they became worn out they were replaced by brass taps secured to a back post.

Approaching the village from the New Bridge or Smemington direction or as I will call it the top of the village down through the village we come to a three crossway. Turning left takes us to the village school, Eastacombe and Barnstaple. The right turning takes us to Tawstock Court and the Church, also to Lake and on to Barnstaple.

On the crossway was a very prominent feature of the village, the Old Elm Tree. It must have been a very old tree as the stock or trunk of the tree was about 4ft in diameter with cobble stone paving around the base also one of these water taps was situated there by the tree.

Now lets mention something about the houses and the people who lived in them in the 1930's. Starting at the top end of the village was Park Gate Farm. A big farmhouse roofed with slate and a farm yard. Mr & Mrs Bedford and their 3 children lived there. His farming method was mixed farming, livestock and arable. The farm also supported 3 workmen and their families, Mr Court, Mr Sussex and Mr Lewis.

Coming on down into the village we come to Park Gate Cottage this had a slate roof, Mr & Mrs Lewis lived there. The mens club was next, this was a galvanized building with interior wood cladding. I believe Sir Bouchier Wrey was at one time their chairman or patron, I understand he gave them their skittle alley. This building was attached to the next one which was called the Reading Room. The mens club occupied both buildings.

Next door the cottage had a slate roof, Mr & Mrs Hill lived there. Mr Hill was the head gardener at Tawstock Court. Mrs Symons lived next door she was a widow with 4 children. This cottage had a thatched roof. Then came the almhouses which consisted of 2 properties with a slate roof. The first one was let as a cottage and the other was made into flats. In the first one lived Mr & Mrs Jennings and their 3 children. Mr Jennings worked at Tawstock Court, Mrs Jennings was licensed to sell tobacco and cigarettes. Next door in the flats lived Miss Hill, Mrs Harris, Mrs Grigg