

Chapter 4

Living in the Parish.

In the years up to the early 1900's the parish evolved around the Lords of the Manor, The Church and the influential forward looking people of the parish to hold the community together. "Probably even toe the line". Plus the fact that transport in the country was not very fast being walking, cycling, pony and trap and perhaps the odd car or two. So with this in mind ordinary people did not travel very far.

Having lived in the parish nearly all my life I feel I have just a little knowledge of the parish through my own experience as a school boy and through life there on. Also things passed on to me by older people of the parish and having studied some old documents and maps in the records office, with kind help from the record office staff, who have been very helpful to me over the past few years.

The parish has for many years been split into two parts, the urban and the rural areas. The urban area is the built up area of the parish bordering with Barnstaple, which has grown considerably over the years. Naturally the rural area is the country area which is not so densely built on and has less amenities.

In my lifetime I have seen the urban area of the parish grow tremendously. As a small boy going to Barnstaple with my parents in a pony and trap I can remember the High Wall being built on the left side as you come up Sticklepath Hill. The older houses on the right hand side were there and Sticklepath Terrace, but in the Torrington road from Sticklepath Roundabout there were only a few houses. Down the Old Bideford Road there was Hele Manor Farm and a few cottages. Woodville Estate did not exist only Deptford Villas. North Devon College, Tower View, Shorelands Road and all that area was green fields, except for Sticklepath Cottages which were situated on the Old Sticklepath Hill Road between what is now North Devon College and Shorelands Road junction. I can remember the second bungalow being built in Shorelands Road. Our neighbour Mr Nash who farmed Hillside Farm, Tawstock retired in September 1937 and had this bungalow built for his retirement in Shorelands Road.

As a matter of interest I found in some old North Devon Journals, mention of the widening of Sticklepath Hill. It stated in 1929 - as proposed public works in North Devon. Then in 1930 - Sticklepath Hill improvement work estimated at £13,000. 1933 - Sticklepath hill widening scheme discussed. It seemed Devon County needed Sticklepath Hill to be widened, because of more traffic and it took a few years to achieve it. So what's new regarding road works for North Devon. Now within the last few years we have seen Sticklepath Hill narrowed down to traffic at a cost many times greater than the widening cost in 1933.