

Up to the late 1930's house modernisation had not moved on very fast. Two main things that were lacking in many homes were running water and indoor toilets. A lot of country homes did not have water laid on in the house, those who did probably had a lead pump in the back kitchen. For a lot of people water was somewhere outside the house maybe 20 - 150 yards along the road. Washdays and bath days were really hard on water carrying. Most households would put water butts or water tanks under the down pipe from the roof guttering to catch rain water which came off the house roof. This rain water was a very soft water good for washing clothes and bathing.

Saturday nights were usually bath nights for the children. The long tin bath would be placed in front of the fire in the kitchen and you took your turn for a bath. Water for the bath was heated on the open fire in kettles and big boilers hanging from the chimney crooks over the fire. Now the toilets were "really modern", usually outside the back door in the yard or in a very conspicuous place sighted at the far end of the garden in view of all the neighbours. They consisted of an earth closet or a toilet bucket, which was considered a little more modern. All the deposits of these toilets had to be buried by trenching it into the garden. Once I saw an old toilet which was sited over a very small stream that was coming from a spring, I guess you would not stay there long it could be a little draughty. "Now that must have been a real Water Closet".

For lighting in the house paraffin lamps were used in the main rooms down stairs and candles for bedrooms or sometimes a small paraffin lamp. For outside use there was the paraffin hurricane lantern. With the invention of the incandescent mantle lamp lighting in the home was much improved. Eventually the pressurised oil lamp made things a lot better, but all these things were before the arrival of the three mains services in the countryside - Water, Sewerage and Electricity or private septic tanks. It was only the big houses and some properties which had been modernised which had flush toilets.

The postman for our area lived at Harepie, he was called Mr Parr. He did our post round for a good many years sometimes he would walk the round and on others he would cycle. His son Arthur Parr still lives at Harepie today. The Baker used to call twice a week it was Barnstaple Bakeries they used to travel around with horse and bread van. The roundsman was called Mr Muxworthy but later he retired then it was Mr Welsh who did the round in our area. If you were not in when the baker called you could leave your order and the money on the kitchen table he would walk in deliver the bread and pick up the money, no problem. "A far cry from today". The grocer would call fortnightly he would bring a fortnights supply of groceries and take an order for the next fortnight. Locally it was Ford and Lock of Bishops Tawton. The butcher called weekly our way, it would be Mr Oatway of Prospect House or Mr Yeo of Netherby. With all the various callers delivering provisions, etc it was a completely different life style from today with all the super markets, etc.