

BRIGSTOCK FARMERS IN THE 1920s

MR F.J. STEWARD

Mr F.J. Steward lived at Whitehall. His farm was in Park Walk. He also farmed Nichol's Farm, Stanion Farm and quite a lot in Brigstock Parks.

On the farm were several hundred sheep, most of which were obtained from Cumberland in the lamb sales. The lambs mainly bought were Cheviots, these being small and hardy. The lambs arrived by train at Corby station. They were driven by the shepherd, Jack Deans, his son William lending a helping hand.

Also on the farm were short horn store cattle which were fattened for the markets at Kettering and Thrapston.

Mr Steward also bred Shire horses on the farm. These were worked on the farm as well as being in shows where they won many prizes.

Mr Steward opened a sandpit in a field called Spring Hill which is situated between Dusthill Road and Stanion Road. Most of the sand obtained from these pits was sent to Corby to help in the building of the new town. He also opened up a stone pit at the end of Dusthill Road. The stone from here was used as a base for Old Dry Lane. The stone on this lane was laid by the unemployed men living at Brigstock Camp. Their wages were three shillings a week in old money.

Hunting horses were also kept at this farm, and his two sons Jack and Jim rode in many point-to-point meetings.

Miss Washer was housekeeper at the farm for many years. Mr Jim Packwood was the gardener and Mr Sam Lettin the chauffeur and odd job man. Several men were employed on the farm. Some I remember include G. Starsmore, G. Edins, J. Starsmore, D. Flecknor, G. Sturgess, P. Flecknor, G. Bailey, F. Clark, P. Deans, J. Edins, H. Streater, Ron and Lionel Shiells.

Mr Steward's land was later sold and British Steel now owns it.

MR JIM STEWARD

Mr Jim Steward is the elder son of the Mr Steward above and he farmed Stanion Lodge for a short time. Mr F. Mogford, his wife and daughter Elsie lived in the farmhouse. I worked for Mr Steward, this being my first job after I left school at the age of fourteen. My wages were ten shillings a week and I received two shillings extra for working on Sundays. I started work at 7 a.m. and finished at 5 p.m. These hours were, of course, longer at harvest time. For overtime work I received 3 halfpennies per hour.

On the farm were kept pigs, short horn cattle, which were bred for market, and a flock of sheep which were farm bred.

Mr Steward later farmed Nichol's Farm and Chase Farm for short periods. Later he took over his father's farm. Stables were built and more hunting horses kept. He also kept store cattle. He then moved into Walton House. Since his retirement his son Anthony has taken over the farm.

MR T. VICCARS

Mr Viccars lived and farmed in Brigstock. His house was in Church Street and his farm situated along the Syke. He had a dairy herd of cows which were milked twice a day by hand. The milk was sold around the village. The churns were placed on a frame supported by two wheels and buckets were filled from the churns. The milk was then sold in one pint and half pint measures straight from the buckets. The milk was sold at several points in the street and people brought their own jugs as there were no milk bottles in those days.

Miss Rippon helped him for many years. The milk was lovely and fresh and was sold at 8 – 9 a.m. Butter was also made and sold in the village, and skimmed milk was ½d a can.

MR J. LOVEDAY

Mr Loveday lived in Church Street and most of his land was off Dusthill Road. He also had a herd of milking cows which were milked twice a day by hand. He also owned a saddler's shop which had previously been owned by his grandfather. This was in Church Street (opposite the high pavement).

Mr Loveday had the contract from the Post Office to run the night mail. This meant a journey from Stanion to Thrapston, then on to Oundle before returning to Thrapston. Horses were changed at this point and the second part of the journey completed, which was to Kettering, back to Thrapston and finally returning to Brigstock. For this he received twenty-five pounds a month, out of which he had to keep the horses and pay the driver's wages. The drivers I remember were Sam Brown, Jim Beal, and their last driver Bill Julyans.

Horses and carts could be hired from Mr Loveday for trips to Kettering and other places. The horses were stabled in the Angel yard at Kettering.

Mr Loveday was a keen sportsman and he played football for Brigstock. His favourite sport was foxhunting. He rode to hounds and, when not riding, would go on foot with his great friend Mr G. Bailey. They both kept terrier dogs which would go to ground and bolt the foxes.

Mrs Loveday's daughter, Dorothy, and her husband, Maurice Hawkins, live in a bungalow built on a piece of land near Dusthill Road. The rest of the land they farm, keeping sheep and bullocks.

MR JOHN STURGESS

Mr Sturgess farmed Chase Farm. He kept store kettle, sheep and a few goats. Most of the farm was grass. The farm changed tenants several times. These included Jim Steward, Jack Steward, Bob and Hugh Hamp, Mr Ormond and Mr Walker. IT is now farmed by Mr Shrive and is much bigger these days than it used to be. In 1920 a father and son lived in a hovel on the farm and in the summer. They would make willow baskets which they sold in the village. The hovel was situated near Clay Dick.

MR FRANK SMITH

Mr Smith for many years farmed Park Farm. He kept many Hereford cattle. He dealt mainly with cattle and sheep. Mr Arthur Braybrook was the stockman and he would walk many miles taking cattle to and from the markets. The fields on this farm were very good for mushrooms and women from the village would get up before dawn to go and pick them. Mrs Hannah Adams and Mrs Eliza Wills were two of the most regular I remember. A Mr Leach would come every year from Manchester to buy mushrooms and blackberries. He had a stable in the New Inn public house yard as shop. The mushrooms and blackberries were sent to Manchester from Corby station every day.

Mr J. Jones now farms Park Farm.

I shall write about more of the farmers I remember , such as Mr Beeby and Mr Ellis in the next issue of the magazine.

V. Shiells February 1980
Bygone Brigstock Issue 2