

TRANSCRIPTION of a TALK given by ROBERT PARR to the
BROUGHTON SOCIETY September 22nd 1993.

200 YEARS AGO.

The title of the talk is "200 years ago" and the reason I chose this title is we have a lot of information of that time. The inclosures took place about 1790, I shall talk about them later; we have maps dating to that time and a lot of documentation relating to them.

Starting here at the village hall, 200 years ago we didn't have a village hall. One day, Bert Bevis, of fond memory, the gardener at Broughton House, was planting some trees on the other side of the road, in Mr. Dents ground at that time. He came across some footings and he asked one of his old friends, a gentleman called Judd but I don't know which Judd. Judd said "Oh yes, there used to be a barn there, we used to meet there if there was a village occasion."

Some little while ago the maps I mentioned were found hiding under the stage here in the village hall. On these maps, the inclosures map of 1790, was a barn, just over the road, a long low building which is exactly what Bert reported to me Judd had said. So it looks as though the village had used it as a communal meeting place. It couldn't really have had much other function as there wasn't much there going on there, it was quite a big barn. It was obviously destroyed or fell into disrepair and disuse, so perhaps we have had a village hall for 200 years or so.

The interesting thing about the map is that on the original map, the part of the village, from roughly Manor Farm to the end of Rookery Lane, is about ten inches long. So what I've done is to blow it up to the size of the next map, the tithe map of 1837; which was also lurking under the stage here. With the tithe map is a complete record of the size of the plots, the owners and the tenants of all the properties in Broughton. So really we are very fortunate, we are very well supplied with information.

Tonight, though she doesn't know it, my wife has parked her car in Paradise, which is no reflection on your driving, dear. The piece of land where the car-park is now, roughly a third of an acre, behind Owl Cottage and The Thatch, was exchanged at the time of the inclosures in 1790, between a gentleman called Courtney and Robert Thistlethwayte who was the Lord of the Manor.

In the exchange documents it is called 'Paradise'. I am dying to know how it got that name; I rather hope it was some long dead courting couple who

It is an odd piece of land and people say it belonged to the Dowse School Charity, but in fact it didn't until later. The affairs of the school are a bit odd anyway and the land we are on now did belong to the school after the inclosures, when some more exchanges took place.

The buildings that were about at that time, 200 years ago. We have the barn over the way. This area was, I suppose,

pasture or arable land, we don't really know, but it was quite a large plot, as you can see on this map. To the south, Robinson's corner was divided up into four plots and the house, Henry and Mildred Robinson's, was one building, a pub called the 'Sheep Shearers'. Next this way was a small thatched cottage, now called the 'White Rabbit' or something - White Cottage.

There was this plot here, which was empty. The only building between here and the school was the Thatch at that time, which is a very good example of an agricultural cottage. (Interuption - I keep looking at Maurice as he knows far more about this than I do.) The Thatch was a very good example, before it was modernized, of a genuine old agricultural cottage. It was supposed to have been built in 1603; this date appears in many modern documents, like sale particulars, about the cottage and Mrs. Williams assures me it was so. I am not sure she was there. It was two rooms down and two upstairs with steep stairs in the middle. The cat-slide thatch, this side, probably enclosed a small out house. When I first knew it, Miss Jeary lived there, fortunately she wasn't a tall woman. You had to crouch to go into the downstairs rooms, judge your height and stand up between the joists and ascend the stairs in all fours. to the upstairs rooms which were even lower.

The important thing tonight is that with that cottage went the right to graze animals, probably a cow but we don't know, the right to graze some animal on the open fields; which is the point of the talk tonight.

The Thatch we know is 1603, and belonged to the Lord of the Manor at Norman Court. It was bought by the Steele Tomkins family of Broughton House in the Norman Court sale of 1907 and was sold in about 1930.

Owl Cottage, next door, we don't know much about. It does not appear on the inclosure map but does appear on the tithe map of 1837-8, it was a Robinson business then.

As I explained, the 1790 map I have had to enlarge so much that the printing has got a bit lost and I have tidied it, made the blobs representing buildings roughly rectangular. The Thatch appears at inclosure as a small square, so it must have been just two up and two down. There is no sign of Owl Cottage among the blobs, but it does appear on the tithe map as roughly the shape it is today.

In 1790 the Thatch was occupied by some people called Beams and six years later by some people called Bailey so there was a turnover of people.

Next to Owl Cottage is the school, altered in 1864 by Ted Munday's grandfather, according to Barbara Aitken, who did a lot of recording of what people told her. What it was like before we don't really know, it probably didn't change much, it probably wasn't thatched. She says it had new windows put in, from Taskers.

It owned a lot of land at this time, all this land here shortly after 1790, it owned the land opposite Manor Farm on the Stockbridge Road, called School Land; it owned the Taylor's cottage, in Rookery Lane which was two cottages then with an orchard behind. Some cottages it owned seem to have dis-

appeared. One we know it owned was the butcher's shop, Morgan Hinwood's, now known as Hinwood Court. We have in the collection, given by Tom Hinwood, the actual eviction notice issued by the Reverend Woodin as Chairman of the Dowse Trustees, telling George Hinwood to get out or to buy it. I think George said "How much? Seven and Six?" "No, ten bob." "O.K." I think he got it quite cheap. It was a long thatched building with the meat hanging outside.

The school was a boys school only, so the boys from The Thatch and around would attend there.

The Cottage next door, Mr.Sclater's Cottage, was a thatched building in 1790 and is quite a different shape on the tithe map. We know the present house was built between 1810 and 1816 and was owned by the Steeles and Tomkins estates. These estates started with William Steele of Grandfathers who did very well and bought Broughton House, Oake Manor and Roak Manor. They pulled down a thatched cottage which was a joinery business; there is a saw-pit beneath the floor of Mr.Sclaters house; a man stood in the pit and a man on top of the log pulled a saw between them.

The small thatched workshop cottge was in the middle with workshops each side, one roughly where Mr.Sclater's garage is and the other an out building close to the Dowse House.

Mr.Sclater's Cottage was built as a Dower Cottage for the Steeles and Tomkins estate. It was sold about 1930 when it was no longer required as a dower cottage. It was named The Cottage but I think the "Dower Cottage" is much nicer and expressed the function it had for 150 years.

Now we reach an important feature which is The Drun. I have looked up the word in various small dictionaries and haven't been able to find it, but somebody told me it means a gap between two houses. I am not sure that is specific enough. There is a note in an old book that it is a gap between two fences which sounds to me to be the hole you look through to watch Southampton play. The word drun obviously means more than a gap between houses.

The Drun was very important because, where Mr.Sclater's chalk wall ends, where the hedge begins, was the beginning of an ancient open field called Bared's Field, one of the old open fields of the village.

The chap who lived at The Thatch, his right to graze an animal would be on the downs and on the waste parts of that field. Almost all the villagers would have had these rights. The chap who lived at the Thatch would have been a tenant and employed by the Lord of the Manor but would also have been able to survive and look after his family on a few strips of that field. He had the right to have a cow or whatever, possibly a sheep, and graze them on the downs and on the waste land between the strips.

When inclosure happened that right was extinguished, so the poor got poorer and the rich got richer; which was unfortunate. Until then all these people had the chance of self sufficiency. They were able to keep, quite legally, an animal, cow, pig whatever, they had the right and the chance of self-sufficiency.

In the act of parliament and other documents it was always spelled inclosure, always with an I.

As soon as the land was enclosed, inclosed, the downs were enclosed and they couldn't graze their animals. The strips were enclosed so they couldn't graze their animal on the wastes, where one of the younger children would have held it on a halter and walked it up and down. If he let go it ended up in the pound and he had to pay a shilling to get it out again.

An act of parliament was passed, they decided, quite sensibly, that these small strips were not good agriculture. A strip would be roughly the size of a present day allotment. If you had three or four strips in your family, you juggled them or swapped them with your neighbour so you finished up with three strips all together, which was a lot easier to work than three separate strips.

Bareds Field - let me describe where it is. It went from the end of Mr.Sclater's wall up the Drun. The footpath in Mr.Sclater's paddock was moved from the side nearest to the High Street to the other side, where it is now. Mr.Steele Tomkins paid £60 and had the footpath moved, so he had a paddock and people weren't walking across the end of his garden.

The Croft, the field to the right of the Drun as you walk away from the Post Office, was never part of Bareds Field, never part of the open strips. Bareds followed the path to the Pound, across to Buckholt Road and up to very nearly Mr.Bentall's house. From there across the Romsey Road Turnpike which is much younger than Bareds Field, to roughly John Halford's new house. The sloping field above his house was not part of it. From there to the hedge which marks the end of South Road. The land in the angle was held by Mr.Blackbourne, the land now referred to as Blackbirds. Beyond the hedge was Hyde Field.

Bareds field was 75 acres and held 60 separate holdings on it in 1790. About 10 years before it had been over 100 holdings, and before that obviously many more. After inclosure it was 10, so that 60 holdings of just over one acre became 10. After inclosure most of the land was Coolers Farm held by a widow called Betty King, something like 40 acres. Blackbourne was allotted eleven acres behind Blackbirds. Manor Farm had a little bit but it swapped it, there several odd little bits. The area where Pound Cottages are, two widows had bits. Widow Headden had some, nearly an acre, but didn't have a cottage on it, she was the widow who lived at the Tally Ho, her family were the surgeons of the village. The other widow had about one eighth of an acre, a tiny property.

So at inclosure there was a tremendous upheaval. The poor working man no longer could be self sufficient, it just wasn't possible. There was nowhere to graze an animal, very little land, probably just a garden. He was allotted land in lieu of his rights to graze, his rights were converted into an allotment of land. This wasn't very much and the first thing he had to do was to fence it, to enclose it. It all had been open, so there's this poor chap having to fence it, he just couldn't afford it.

The only thing he could do with his allotment was to sell it. There may be two or three buyers, but it was almost always a forced sale. So really there wasn't much paradise about at that time, in the 1790's.

It is interesting that Old Church Farm was not in the inclosures. If you look at the map, it was the house, a lot of buildings and the field behind, the Croft, a 4½ acre field. That was Broughton Farm, originally the Broughton manor farm. There was a tenant, Richard Cole, with a very detailed tenancy dated 1714 from Lady Kingston of Norman Court. It details the barns, stables, buildings; the land behind, even then, was called the Croft.

And Dennis Lane was called Dennis Lane! Every time I talk to Ethel she says "It's Genesis Lane." (E.D. In Rookery Lane, all of us, we always called it Genesis Lane.) 'Genesis Lane' was another of these old roads which lead to the open fields, this particular one lead to Futchers meadow.

Going back to the Croft, Broughton Farm, when the present George Petty's grandfather came to the village, he came to take the tenancy of Broughton Farm. People have been looking for Church Farm in the records and it wasn't there, if they had looked for Broughton Farm they would have found it. It is on this 1714 lease, it shows the land dotted around in these strips. The house we think was built about 1730, various people have given dates but someone who ought to know said 1730.

In 1790 Old Church Farm, Broughton Farm, was no longer required because a new Manor Farm, John Dents house, had been built. So all the land it had in the open field, in Bareds Field was not required; they were able to exchange the allotted land in Bareds field for land by the water meadows by the pumping station and particularly the land both sides of the Stockbridge Road.

It meant that the owner of Manor Farm and Broughton Farm was able to make a good thing out of this; but the poor chaps at the bottom end of the scale were faced with starvation, a spectre in paradise. Their children could easily starve, they had to find work, this time was a time of rising prices, there were no jobs, the farmers didn't particularly need them.

For the first ten years most of the agricultural labourers who lost their jobs were employed fencing in the new allotments. There was some work for about ten years, they had to make paths and roads which, in the inclosure act were specifically defined. Six feet seems to have been the minimum width, in the act, of a footpath; so what happened at the bottom of Rectory Lane?

All this was laid down. There was quite a lot of work involved in making roads, making footpaths and fencing. They were told they had to plant quick-set hedges, which is a form of hawthorn, within a year of inclosure.

They worked about ten years, after ten years people were getting a bit fed up, miserable, life was very much a struggle. The bigger landowners were getting bigger, buying up the little ones at very cheap prices. The middle ones, people in the middle of the social spectrum, if they were astute, they did quite well.

But the ordinary chap, who really only wanted to raise a family and possibly a few animals or poultry, couldn't do it anymore. Life was very very difficult.

Shortly after all this, in the 1820's, machinery started to come in. These men who were struggling anyway, saw the farmers, who were relatively wealthy, buying machinery, reapers, binders and particularly thrashing machines. Thrashing was a very good job to have, it was carried out in barns; wide barns with doors front and back, doors open and they hit the barley or whatever grain with a flail. It was indoors with a gentle breeze blowing through, the husks blew out. It was quite a good job and it took a long time to do, so there was work.

Then somebody comes along with a threshing machine, which is called a thrashing machine in Hampshire. Came along with a thrashing machine and this upset everybody, they could see even more of their jobs going, even more of their children in trouble, even more difficult times.

So the Chartists and the Swing riots started. People ganged up together, probably over their work, they met and said "Old Bloggs has bought a thrashing machine, what are we going to do about it?" There wasn't much they could do. There were no policemen about, but everybody was known to everybody else. So they simmered for quite a long time. The educated ones wrote to the Times, some just worked on, others just grumbled on but there was nothing much to do. The landlord, the Lord of the Manor, lived in West Tytherley; it had just changed, the Thistlethwaytes had become Charles Baring Wall.

But by 1830 people were very upset by all this. If I read you this little piece which is quite interesting as it relates to Old Church Farm. I believe it probably happened where our television set at home is now. This is from the Hampshire Chronicle. On November 22nd in 1830, a threshing machine, property of Charles Baring Wall was destroyed by a mob in the parish of Broughton. William Noble, Charles Forder, Henry Gale, John Lush, William Kelsey [all names we know] were recognised among the mob. The same mob also visited the premises of John Box [which is Old Church Farm, Broughton Farm]. They told Mr.Box they had come to break his threshing machine, and Mr.Box opened the door of the barn where the machine was housed and the mob destroyed it. If they did that today it would be our television set. probably a good thing.

They had reached the end of their tethers. A lot of people had a lot of sympathy with these characters. The five were arrested and taken to Winchester where they were put on trial. William Noble was bound over to keep the peace, yet one would have expected him to be hung or something dramatic like that. A few years earlier you were hung for stealing a sheep, which was cheaper than a thrashing machine. He was bound over, so there was quite a bit of tempering justice with mercy.

We know where William Noble lived, in half of Butlers Cottage along Rookery Lane. Charles Forder was bound over to keep the peace for a year and he lived at the Old Mill Cottage, down by the mill. Henry Gale was the same, bound over to keep the peace for a year; he lived at the corner shop. This is

bringing it all to life. The corner shop wasn't like it is now, it was a tiny cottage on a tiny plot of land next to a dangerous corner, if this was the Weymouth Road !

Now, William Kelsey, he lived opposite Old Church Farm in the Smithy Cottages and he was the son of the village blacksmith. I think the law, the Justices of the Peace, didn't like the look of him because he probably was a big strapping chap, so was sentenced to a years hard labour. He disappears from the village records.

John Lush, who lived in Chapel Lane Cottages. Looking through the lists we come across a lot of Lushes who were bricklayers, almost all bricklayers, or possibly agricultural labourers. John Lush, he was sentenced to seven years transportation, but the the dignitaries in the village said, this is unjust, they had sympathy with them. So people wrote to the Justices of the Peace and they pleaded for him, so his sentence was reduced to one years hard labour.

But they wrote again and this time he got a pardon. The interesting thing is, the man who organised the petition, who did all the writing, was Charles Baring Wall the owner of the threshing machine.

This does show that people had some common sense, they did rally round, and they had sympathy with the people who had literally been dispossessed.

Any questions ?

Why was Lush given the sentence in the first place ?

I think it was because he was probably the biggest of them. The others may have been tiny and here we have a big strapping man. He probably was a bricklayer.

People were very very frightened by this lawlessness. The Rector's wife here in Broughton, at this time, was so frightened by the reports of the Chartist violence and riots, that she fled to the Close in Salisbury, into the Close, where she died of fright. It was very alarming.

Just over the hill, at East Tytherley, Mrs. Goldsmith who owned the big house by the church, the mansion called Tytherley Mansion which is no longer there. Not Lockerley Hall but next to the church. A vast Georgian mansion. The Chartist rioters came knocking on the door, demanding money and food. She had two or three daughters and her agent, by salesmanship I suppose, managed to get rid of them. Mrs. Goldsmith and her daughters immediately got into their coach and travelled up to London. They never returned and the house fell to pieces.

I think everybody was very frightened. In court if you were five foot nought you were probably bound over to keep the peace, but if you were six foot tall it was Australia or Tasmania for you.

All these names are common round here, they were all respected people. They are all people the Lord of the Manor probably knew so he took trouble over them.
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Yes, it was possible to do well. This part of the village was owned by Robert Thistlethwayte, later Charles Baring Wall, as the Lord of the Manor, but the Rookery Lane and Roak Farm

area, called Michelton, was owned by the Steeles. They started at Grandfathers in a small way and did very well. They bought Broughton House and Roak Farm and the Manor that went with it. They were timber merchants.

So it was possible to start with very little and to do very well. They finished up with a very large estate, the second biggest estate in the village.

But my sympathy is with the people who suddenly found themselves, in 1790, with very little future. Though agriculture was made more efficient it could have been handled much better.

Transcribed from tape July 1995. R.P.

Tis bad enough in man or woman
To steal a goose from off a common;
But surely he's without excuse
Who steals a common from the goose.

Anon.
From the Faber Book of Comic Verse by Michael Roberts.

or

They hang the man and flog the woman
Who steals the goose from off the common,
But let the greater criminal loose
Who steals the common from the goose.

Taken from a television programme by Jack Hargreaves in 1988.

From an anthology of Hertfordshire history; Ralph Thorsby, May 8th 1695 - "Had some showers which raised the washes from the road to that height that passengers from London that were upon the roads swam and a poor fiddler was drowned which prevented our travelling for many hours. Towards evening eventually some country people who conducted us over the meadows though we rode up to our saddle skirts."

That was what it was like to travel on the roads of England at the very end of the 17th century. The roads of England of course, were notorious at that time. The reason for it was twofold, first of all because they hadn't yet learned about field drainage, about land drainage. The great advance in that science came in the century afterwards. Secondly, because the method by which the roads were maintained was that each village was put in charge of its own stretch of road and had to maintain it, without any funds to do so. In fact, there was a man called the overseer, who was appointed to see that it was done. He wasn't paid for it but he could be gaoled for not accepting the job when he was offered it. So naturally, road building was pretty rough. It was an odd way to do it. That was the way the Czar of Russia kept the telephone line going, from Moscow to Archangel. He left a coil of copper wire at every village and when there was a break in the line, they sent the Cossacks to the village where the break was. I suppose it is still the same.

However! The only roads on which you could travel well in those days, were the old roads along the tops of the hills which had been used by the ancient British from the very beginning of inhabitation. These were the roads King Alfred used; these were the roads the iron age people used and these were the roads which, still in the 17th century, you could travel in wintertime. The only ones. They were therefore, regarded as important and as much traffic as possible travelled on them.

That is where we get the phrase the King's Highway. Because it was the high road which you had some chance of moving on in the wintertime, very little chance of travelling at all down below. Right up to the Civil War you hear of armies disappearing into winter quarters, the King taking his army into winter quarters at Oxford, as soon as the winter came; and not coming out again until the spring. They just could not move about. This went on, our roads were notorious, even to foreigners, until the 18th century.

In the 18th century they thought of another way of doing it, they started to build the Turnpike Roads. This is one of the famous turnpike roads of England. From Salisbury down to Blandford - from Blandford to Dorchester, from Dorchester down to Lyme Regis. It is the road on which the Prince Regent travelled in his coach when he wanted to go down to Weymouth.

It was built by a Turnpike Trust. What happened was a bunch of local gentlemen obtained a right, through act of parliament, to build a turnpike road and in return were allowed to put gates across it and charge people a turnpike fee. When this road was built it was a piece of engineering absolutely equal to the

building of the M1. They actually did experiments to discover that a coach and horses, fully loaded, the team could stay at the trot, as long as the road didn't rise at a rate of more than one in thirty. If it rose at a steeper rate than that then they were broken down to a walk. All the slopes on this Great Western Turnpike, which is the name of this road, were engineered to that rise. That is why you always seem to be going up a long slow hill, on a road like this.

At intervals were the toll guardians. The last one still remains. At that point on the road there was a gate across the road called the turnpike. An unfortunate man had to guard it, because a lot of people didn't like the turnpikes, drovers with their herds of cattle and so on. In fact, there was so much trouble that they started off with six months in prison for breaking a turnpike and they ended up with the death penalty.

At intervals down the road were the famous coaching inns. Surprisingly small intervals actually because if a man was going to travel fast his coach changed horses at least every ten miles. The number of horses on these roads was amazing. There was a publican at Barnet who had twelve hundred horses in his stables as coach changes.

Here we come to another of the inns, but this time this is no longer an inn, it is a farm. Behind it the coach yard is still intact.

Turnpike roads were amazing bits of engineering. When you realise they still stand, successfully, the heavy traffic to the coast. They cut out the old roads. On the right is a bank which was the old road which came this way, where it could find comparatively dry ground.

You will notice always there are villages to left and right, some distance off the road. They used to be on the road but not after the turnpike was built.

If we turn off here, taking this road towards the hills, leaving the metalled road in the valley behind, we can get a glimpse of what things used to be like on the King's Highway, in the days when George Borrow wrote. When the road people travelled in their tilt-carts and camped at night at camp-sites which were always chosen, if they could, to have shelter round them. Hollows in the side of the road - dingles. They camped in the dingles.

They travelled up here. We leave behind us the wet vale where the dreadful roads were. We climb up this hill, a famous hill called Whitesheet hill, and as we go round this corner we jump back two and a half centuries.

The jeep disappears and we are back in the eighteenth century.

At last we have finished the vehicle we need in order to conduct this sort of journey. It was back when the snow was on the ground that we first bought this horse Blue, the Blagdon horse that was appropriate for the job and started to train him. At the same time we started to build the tilt-cart on the old original and genuine wheels that we found. Now it is complete, as near as we can to what it used to be.

Now we are travelling on the King's Highway and we are travelling at the pace of the eighteenth century. A pretty good pace actually, for a cob bringing a cart up that hill.

You can scarcely believe it, as we go along the top here and look down below, at the valley where the wet roads were; where the tarmac road now is, that this is what the King's Highway was like. It wasn't quite like this, because, in those days this was open downland and the track of the road would be about 40 yards wide, 30 to 40 yards wide. Among other things it was a law that you mustn't leave hedge clippings or any other mess within 40 feet of the roadway because the footpads hid behind it, and they sprang out on you.

We have to get off the cart to look at the next thing we are passing. We walk up to the edge of the wide highway and we find a milestone. It seems extraordinarily inappropriate in this place, yet it says 94 miles to Hyde Park Corner, 14 miles to Salisbury, 1760. It's almost impossible to believe.

This of course, was the pace of the travel then, 94 miles to Hyde Park Corner; by my calculation it is 108 miles by the new tarmac road below in the valley; which means the Highway was a very straight route along its journey. Blue and the cart and I would get to London in between four and five days at this rate. Down below on the new road you would get there in about an hour and three quarters, in the cars people drive nowadays.

I must say this seems like the way to travel. Nowadays we expect almost never to meet anybody up here, except an occasional tractor running along the tops. In those days along this top, with at least two counties in view on either side of you, you would meet the travellers, the dealers and the gentlemen in post-chaises, the great wagons which carried goods and the droves of cattle driven by the drovers, the flocks of sheep driven by the shepherds on their way to the sheep fairs at Wilton.

On this ancient road we pass a long barrow. That is a burial mound from the iron age. The chieftain was buried there and almost certainly, all his slaves and servants were buried with him. When he died they did, when he died they were slain. They used to say it was because he needed their attendance in the after-world but I don't think it was. It was in order that during his time they didn't plot with a neighbouring lord for his death. They knew that as long as he lasted, they lasted, and when he went, they went. So they looked after him. I am sure that was the reason.

There are some people still living, still travelling, in the way everybody did who was on the road in those days. There are few such families, they like their privacy. One thing they don't like is to be hunted out by photographers, but because we met Dave Rawlings and his family by accident, we were made welcome. They have been travelling at the pace which was natural to this road in the old days.

The reason they are up here is quite simple, it is spring and one of the mares that they are travelling with has foaled. They don't want to load the foal on a cart. It is possible, in an emergency, to tie the legs of the foal and put him on the flat cart which follows the wagon. What they like, is to wait until

the foal is ready to walk and then he can travel alongside his mother. Thus it learns its road sense.

One of the daughters is wearing the dress of the fortune teller, the family bread-winner.

The famous gypsy kettle iron [holding the kettle over the camp-fire] - an old gypsy said to me, "When the knives come through the tent, that's when you grab the kettle iron". To make a cup of tea, they take the dairy with them on their journey. That goat, incidentally, gives about a gallon of milk a day, and of course, gets very good grazing. There is nothing they like better than the mixed herbs of the roadside, rather than the single variety grass of the fields.

It won't be many days before the foal, the reason for the delay, is ready to trot a short way alongside its mother, who will probably be in the shafts as they go. There they are, the original travellers.

The road has really grown in by the thorns to which the whole thing would run back, if the sheep were not here. Blue doesn't like this very much, he has never felt the trees rub against his cart before. He soon settles down to it.

For the last century or so, this road has been known to the country people, and still is to the older of them, as the Shaston Drove. This means the Shaftesbury cattle track. The drovers and the shepherds used this road after the wheeled traffic went down on to the turnpike below..

If you look on the oldest maps of all, you will see it is called the Herepath, H E R E. An amateur archiologist of the district told me that it was obviously HARE path, but it isn't. I found the word, eventually, in the biggest Oxford dictionary, H.E.R.E. which may have been pronounced HERRER. I wish I had learned Anglo-saxon, I would have swapped the science subjects for it. After all, no civilised man wants to understand technology. The word was HERE and it means a host, an army. I think it may be that Hereward means guardian of the army. This was a military road which Alfred used when he went to fight the Danes; no doubt, King Arthur before him.

Here and there you run into a crossroads. On the lefthand side, the track is used because it goes down to a farm. To the right, it has almost disappeared, it is fascinating, that track. If you follow it down, it comes to a village in which there is an old stone building, now used by an agricultural merchant, which was built by the Knights of St.John, the original Hospitallers whose job was to look after travellers.

When the pilgrims came along this road, when night came they went down that path to the village and the wet lands below. They stayed the night in a dormitory as the guests of the Knights Hospitallers, the ancestors of the St.Johns Ambulance. Then they came up in the morning again, to carry along the way.

Everywhere you see thorn bushes. When this road was first used it was all thorn bushes, because it was the sheep that came in the Middle Ages that produced the downland turf, and also the riches of Britain. Incidentally, at intervals along this road, there are still the sites of sheep pens, which the shepherds used when they were travelling the road on their way to the fairs.

The track to the left goes to an area which once was a great sheep pen, where sheep were put. Nobody knows who it belongs to today, this is still the King's Highroad so presumably the sheep pen is still the King's sheep pen. Every now and then you find somebody living up there, for a while. This family is stopping there. They have bought their daughter that very nice little Welsh pony which she is breaking to ride, and what a place to do so.

This crossroads is now a modern road. Once upon a time it was just green tracks running down to the valley on either side of what was the highway. Incidentally Blue was puzzled by this. He travelled so long along this top road walking straight across every cross roads he came to that he had forgotten about crossroads. When we had to stop for the traffic, he practically said to me "What are you waiting for?"

At this crossroads you find what used to be at almost all of them. This is called Hut Farm. That's because there was a Hut there. A Hut was an ancient word for an inn, a trading place. The villagers used to bring the water up and all the goods and things to sell to the travellers. They used to bring it up to the hut every day and serve the travellers and then take their carts down again at night. That's why, now and again, round the countryside you will find pubs called Huts. In our district there is the Meon Hut, the Cribbage Hut and that one is the Hut Farm.

Past it is one of the established camping places which is going to be the end of our first day's journey along the King's Highway. Horses are terribly fit on this sort of grass. I once read about a man who drove his pony and cart to Cornwall and back, camping by the roadside. He had never known his horse so fit as when he was eating the herbs, there they can find almost everything they want. What they can't find up here is water, and as nobody is bringing it up to the huts these days, we have to take it with us. Blue is terribly polite, he never interferes while you pour his drink, he waits till it is ready.

Now we put the curtains up and prepare to spend our night alone, at a camping place which was once upon a time, crowded with the people of the roads. All camping together for the night, knowing one another from previous journeys, on this and other roads. There was quite an elaborate set of social conventions, for instance, it was always up to the first people who settled in the camping site for the night, to have a can of tea ready for those who followed them.

There is always a bit of a wind, with the noises of civilisation to be heard distantly down in the valley below. This is a thing I've been longing to do for months, to get on this road with the kind of cart that belonged to this road in the days of George Borrow. Blue and I will settle down alone to spend the night amid the memories of George Borrow, guarded by the ghost of his giant girlfriend, Isobel, the female prize fighter.