

Our History Summer 2006

Extract from the Reminiscences of Louisa Longhurst (born c. 1896) former resident of Dial Post as interviewed by M. Bennett in 1980 - by kind permission of the WSRO.

Mrs Longhurst was the eldest daughter in a family of six of Mr and Mrs Philpot who kept the shop, stores and tea rooms at Hazel Cottage in Dial Post. She married Eli Longhurst (Cecil's uncle). She was born in Hazel Cottage which was divided into three parts. The ground floor of one end was used as a store for the shop. What is now an access area was fenced off in the early days and known as the 'Pen'. It often acted as one. Any stray cattle or other animals found wandering on the road were shut up until the owners collected them. This was not always appreciated by customers who had to pass the stray animals on their way into the shop.

In 1919 a first floor was added to the end of Hazel Cottages that had been the store room. This was where Louisa and Eli Longhurst lived. It was known as Rose Cottage to distinguish it from Hazel Cottage.

As well as at the village shop, sweets, lemonade etc were sold at several cottages in the hamlet including Hurst Cottage and the original Post Office, kept by Mrs Field. Louisa's mother started up the tea rooms at Hazel Cottage and in a few weeks business was booming. Louisa could still picture her mother with her hair plaited each side of her head and the plaits turned round and round over each ear to form 'earphones'; wearing a wrap-over apron on top of her dress, grey stockings and black boots standing over the old range and wielding a bacon and fish slice as she fried huge breakfasts for the parties of cyclists who arrived early enough for her bacon and eggs. Louisa's father cured his own bacon using local oak and hanging it in his chimney.

"It was so sweet and tender many of the tea room customers ate it uncooked with their fried eggs. It was quite a speciality. He didn't kill the pig. Mr. Turrell did that. He was the sexton and captain of the bell ringers at the parish church. Cecil Longhurst carries on today. He is Mr. Turrell's grandson, and Eli Longhurst's nephew. Mr. Turrell killed most of the pigs in the district - he was also an expert thatcher - all his family were."