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under 18 yrs
under 18 yrs
Women & Girls
M. Over 21 yrs
Under 21 yrs
Women & Girls

Casuals

▼ 5 acres RSP 39 # ElsP

EVEN IN THE LAST 20 YEARS some of our farms have changed greatly in character. Gone, too, are the big estates, and with private ownership there is greater freedom. When Burton Court Estate was sold in 1950 we rejoiced in the fact that the farms were in each case bought by the tenants. Now only six farms are tenant-farmed: they are Lyme Farm (Mr. R.E. Jones, 100 acres); Lower Hardwick (Mr. James Hope, 65 acres); Upper Hardwick (Mr. J.V. Duggan, 46 acres); Broom Lane (Mr. G. Corfield, 37 acres); Upper Hardwick (Mr. Williams, 24 acres); and The Barr (Mr. Kington, 18 acres).

It is difficult to say whether farms in Eardisland have increased in acreage over the past 100 years, as there seems to have been a great deal of taking and adding over the period.

An analysis of the present farms and smallholdings is interesting

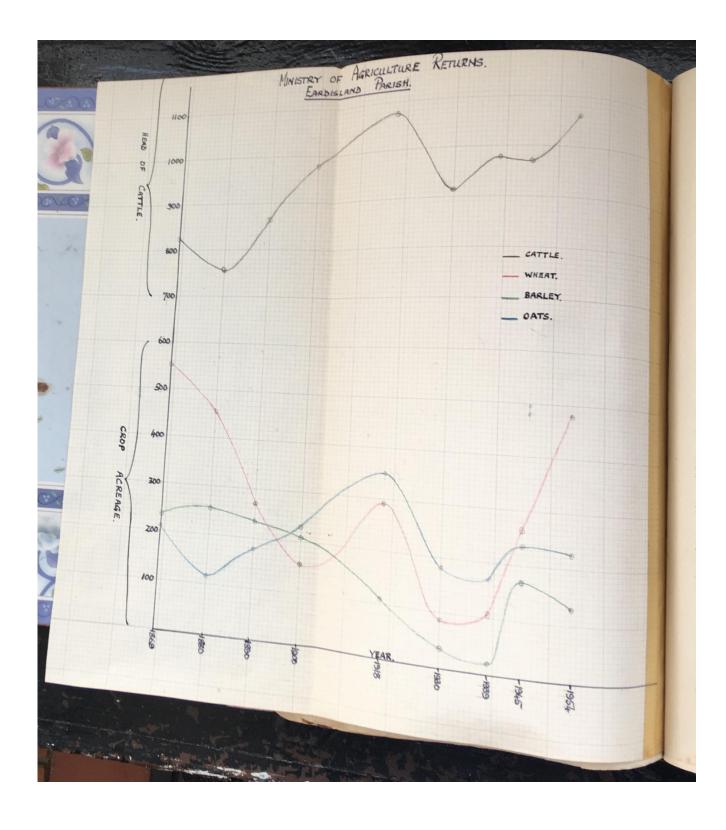
Over 220 acres: Upper Hardwick (including land in neighbouring parish), 428; Hinton Manor, 328; Twyford, 306; Lower Burton, 260; Lynch Court, 221 acres.

The Tithe Map of October 28th, 1842, gives the acreage of our Parish as 4,316; the Census Report of 1951 gives the acreage of land and water as 3,656 - detached parts of Eardisland Parish having been amalgamated with Dilwyn and Weobley, by an order which came into operation in 1884, under the Divided Parishes Act. Even so, it is clear that there was far more tillage in proportion to grassland 100 years ago than there is to-day. The Tithe Map figures are as follows:

The Agricultural Return for 1954 gives the following position:

Tillage . . 1080 acres Grassland . 2148 acres Hop Ground . nil

The contrast between 1842 and 1939 (when our tillage was under 400 acres) is even more striking. When one plots figures for the 100 years on a graph, one finds a slight (but only slight rise in stock as the tillage comes tumbling down in the 80's and 90's. Then, during the First World War, there was enforced ploughing up of land and for a time the land was well stocked and well cultivated. After the War, however, everything came tumbling down, tillage by 1930 was down to just over 400 acres, and there was no corresponding increase in the head of stock



62.

carried; indeed the stock, too, was down. Right till 1939 this star of things maintained, and if anything worsened, only sheep showing an increase.

In the old days every precaution seems to have been taken by the Landlord to see that the land was kept in good heart, and encouraging allowances were given to an out-going Tenant against manure used on the land. We quote here some of the clauses in a Tenancy Agreement (Burton Court Estate) of 1873:

"No claim for Acts of Husbandry, Tenant Rights or Allowances, other than those herein authorised, shall be entertained by the Arbitrators."

"The Landlord reserves all game, Rabbits, Fish and Wild Fowl... for the purpose of preserving, illling and taking the same."

"The Tenant shall consume... all the Hay, Straw and Stubble grown on the land and expend... all the manure arising therefrom."

"He shall pay £100 per acre for each and every acre of old grass land ploughed up or converted into tillage without consent."

"He shall... observe such a rotation of crops as never to have two crops of white corn in immediate succession..."

The same precautions to protect the land appear in an Agreement of 1904, and there was still a fine for conversion of land into tillage without consent. However, by 1904 the Tenant had been allowed to keep his land free of rabbits, and his position generally seems to have been improved by the Agricultural Holdings Act of 1883.

We were greatly interested to come upon an agricultural return for as long ago as 1875! A form was sent then by the Secretary of the Herefordshire Chamber of Agriculture, to all farmers in the Count asking for a return to be sent to the Guardian of the Parish of the number of animals (Bulls, cows in milk, calves, fat cattle, store cattle, sheep, lambs and pigs) attacked by Foot and Mouth Disease during the year 1875. The letter says: "I need hardly point out tyou the importance of this return, as it must be obvious that it is most desirable to compare the amount of loss among our Home Stock with the value of Foreign importations of Stock, so as to have some tangible statement to lay before the Government in urging our claims for better guarding our herds and flocks against imported disease."

So it would seem that there is nothing new in either Agricultural Returns nor in Foot and Mouth Disease!

In this Parish milk production had already got under way before the Second World War, "the draw", as one farmer put it, "being the weekly cheque". Since the War it has developed still further and seems to have come to stay. Another innovation is soft fruit, and several acres of dessert apples have been planted since the War. Even so the total acreage of orchard is still considerably down on the figure for 1890.

There are at present about 100 acres of let grazings in the Parish. They are frequently let by auction; and in 1952 one of our farmers let 20 acres of grass from April till November at £13.18s.0. an acre! In spite of the high quality of our pasture prices do not, however, often reach this figure.

The majority of our farms follow the usual pattern of the Herefordshire mixed farm. On a number of farms, however, there have been changes in the use being made of the land, and, because we think this is interesting to our generation and will be even more so to generations to come, we have asked the farmers

To face Page 63.



Dick Harris with Dragon and Duke at the Nunhouse, 1920.



Jim Kington and our First Tractor privately owned.
International Junior, 1920.



One of the Lynch Tractors, Diesel; 1955.

concerned to tell us something about what they are going. This they have most kindly done for us - and here are their stories.

HINTON MANOR. (Mrs. Chapman: 328 acres.)

The following account was given by Mr. J.J. Eckley, of Saynden, Staplehurst, Kent, who farmed at Hinton for 30 years.

"When my father bought Hinton in 1924 it was mostly a stock farm, carrying largely sheep and cattle and comprising 368 acres, of which 49 were arable and 17 orchard, mostly cider fruit. It was approached by a cart-track; therefore one of the first things to be done was to make a road. That required about 1,000 tons of stone. We used 400 tons (40 truck loads) of iron stone from Pontypool, costing about 10/6d. a ton, and 600 tons of local stone, obtained from a quarry on Sugar Loaf, a field on the farm. Fortunately we were able to economise a little on cartage costs, as, having started growing sugar-beet (it was 1925, the first year the Beet Factory opened at Kidderminster) we took a load of beet to the station and brought back a load of stone, of course with horses and waggons, and in so doing quietened one or two spirited young bloods.

The beet acreage to start was only 8 acres, increased to 32 by 1927. Sugar-beet prices were quite worth-while in 1925, as it fetched 54/- per ton; but during the Thirties 36/- was a bout the best we could get, with an added 2/6d. per ton for each % of sugar-content above  $15\frac{1}{2}\%$ , increased to 3/- during the War. Beet-pulling was always done by hand until about 1951, when we introduced a mechanical beet lifter and harvester.

Hops were apparently grown about 50 years ago on two of the fields: the old Hopyard (now the Currant Field - 8 acres) and another which we called the Clover Field (12½ acres). I remember a few years ago meeting a man who worked on the railway, whose name was Ball; who told me his wife had picked hops at Hinton "in the field by the line" - the said Clover Field, now sold to the Broome.

The old hop-kilns since 1950 have been used as a deep-litter house for laying hens; and during the War they made a very useful potato store for the Government's compulsorily-grown spuds! For one short period in the early Thirties, when times were very lean, they housed pigs; but that venture brought more pain than profit and is best forgotten!

Hinton, too, produced its share of home-made cider, the old stone mill having only recently been removed to make storage-room for cattle-cake, etc.

Sheep have always been a successful line at Hinton. registered Clun Forest flock, started in 1934 and built up to 230 breeding ewes with their lambs always showed a steady profit, even in the Thirties.

Milk production started in 1935, after taking up the old cobbled stone cowshed floors and laying new concrete ones, installing drinking bowls and making a dairy. All water for milk-cooling, dairy-washing and drinking-bowls was pumped by hand from a well near the house. It was not until 1943 that water was laid on, being driven by petrol-engine from the River Pinsley. By 1952 we were very thankful to get on to Mains Water from Shobdon Aerodrome, which supplied the house, buildings, and tanks around the farm.

The Dairy Herd started with Shorthorn cows crossed with a Hereford bull, but in March, 1943, I bought a Friesian bull and gradually built up a Friesian herd. Although a Friesian bull was always temperamental we got by without any very outstanding incidents, and it was not till 1949 that we went over to artificial insemination. The milk has always been sold to Cadbury's, and at first it went to their factory at Newent. 1952 a modern milking-parlour was installed in a converted cow-The herd became attested in 1950 and T.T. in 1953.

In 1939 War found us with only 25 acres of arable land, but in the Spring of 1940 we ploughed up 68 acres of old pasture and by 1943 160 acres were under the plough, producing wheat, oats, barley, peas (for canning), potatoes and sugar beet. The Air Ministry requisitioned 33 acres in 1941 to add to Shobdon Aero-In consequence of the extra arable land there was much more work to be done, but thanks to the "good old faithfuls" who worked with a will we got by, with the occasional help of the Women's Land Army (God bless 'em), and later by Prisoner-of-War labour, both German and Italian.

Black currants first started in 1945 with 12 acres, increased later to 71. Picking was done by local labour, and the price paid for picking was 21d. per pound.

The change from horses to tractors was hastened by the War, as prior to that we had at times a dozen or more, counting unbroken colts; but for several years now we have managed with one horse and three tractors, and during hay-making we made good use of the pick-up baler.

Female Labour.

At first - that is, 1924 and onwards - women were employed only for thistle-cutting in the corn; to pick cider fruit, and plant, pick and sort potatoes. They were paid by the hour, and it was about  $4\frac{1}{2}$ d. to 6d. But by 1934 men and women were paid (for apple-picking) from 6/- to 7/6d. per ton, picking from 15 cwt to 1 ton per day.

A good currant-picker would earn around £2 a day. Usually women earning around £1 a day had already done someone's daily chores before coming on the currant field.

The Land Army Rate was £1.13.6d., plus board and lodging and uniform. The agricultural rate for casual women workers at present is 2/ld. an hour, or 96/- a week. It would have been difficult to get the work done without female labour, certainly

at Hinton, and I guess that goes for most Eardisland farms.

Gipsies have been employed for apple-picking, beet-hoeing, and beet-pulling. They usually worked well for a time but when tired would soon go. I don't think their visits would number more than 6 in the 30 years we were at Hinton."

In 1954 the farm was sold to Mrs. Chapman, wife of a Leominster Chartered Accountant. The new owners are meantime building up a pedigree Friesian Herd. They are also concentrating on a new cross of sheep - Clun ewe crossed Hampshire ram - which is reputed to produce the "ideal butcher's lamb".

### COURT HOUSE FARM. (Mr. B.M. Lowe.)

It would appear that this farm followed the usual pattern of a Herefordshire mixed farm till 1917, when it was sold to Mr. Harry Gittins. Mr. Gittins was a great hunting man, and it is said that he had as many as 30 hunters - which he hired out for the hunting season - on the farm at a time. The following account is given by Mr. Jack Hunt, who was groom to Mr. Gittins:

"I was groom to Mr. H. Gittins from 1928 and stayed with him till he moved his horses to Severn Stoke. I was with him for about 8 years. I have known as many as 13 to 15 horses out on hire a day; also we had Point-to-Point and Steeplechasers. We also supplied about 50 to 60 horses for the local Yeomanry. We also had a large stock of feeding cattle."

Mr. Gittins was followed, in 1936, by Mr. Robin Powell, who was the first to start a dairy herd. It was not a large one (about 10 shorthorns) but the milk, instead of being sold locally was sold to E.W. Langford of Hereford in the beginning and later on to Cadbury's, in each case being collected from the farm by milk-lorry.

Mr. Powell left in 1940 to join the Army, and was followed by Mr. Morgan. Mr. Morgan also did a certain amount of dairying having a mixed herd; including Shorthorns, and his milk was retailed to Cadbury's.

Captain Arkwright took over the Court House in 1947, and in his day the farm carried a milking herd of about 12 Shorthorns. His milk was also sold to Cadbury's.

In 1950 the farm was sold to Mr. Bernard Lowe, who was then farming at Bodenham. Mr. Lowe still carries on his Bodenham farm and at Court House now runs a milking herd of 70 attested Ayrshire cows, the milk of around 200 gallons a day going to

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The land has all been ploughed out of old turf and reseeded to young leys in order to carry the increased head of stock. The leys are strip grazed with electric fencing. No hay is made on the farm, the herd being maintained through the Winter on silage, kale, and cattle cabbage, the latter also being grazed behind electric fences.

#### TWYFORD. (Mr. Evan Evans: 306 acres)

Twyford lies, as its name suggests, between the fords, starting just below the Arrow bridge at Pembridge and flanking the river on both banks for about  $l\frac{1}{2}$  miles, not quite reaching the ford near Eardisland.

In 1918 the farm was offered for sale as 170 acres, but during the next 20 years, during which time it had 4 different owners, adjacent land was added to it, first from Broome Farm sometime in the 1920's, and later the noted Lynch meadows from Lynch Court. When it sold again in 1938 to the present owners it comprised 306 acres.

About 1911 the original black and white farmhouse was burnt down and about a year later the present one was built on the same site, typically late Victorian in design - undoubtedly equipped with the "mod. cons." of its day but lacking the mellowness and beauty of the former one. Two cottages were built in 1901.

With the well watered river meadows, Twyford has always been primarily a stock rearing farm, and for over 50 years it has been well employed feeding and breeding Hereford cattle.

At Mr. Hayter's dispersal sale in 1918 two records were set up, not to be broken for over 20 years: his stock bull, "Ringer", was sold for 9,000 gns., and a female for 2,000 gns. That sale and later successes gained by Mr. Tinsley in the years immediately following gave Twyford a fine reputation in Hereford Herd records.

Now in 1955 the farm carries about 150 head of cattle, most of which are pedigree Herefords, and also a flock of Clun Forest sheep. Success in the stock breeding world does not come easily but is well worth trying for.

# UPPER HARDWICK FARM \*\* (Mr. Theodore Sanger: 243 acres)

Before Mr. Sanger - 25, graduate in Natural Science of Cambridge, and ex-journalist - bought this farm in 1943 it had been farmed in the traditional Herefordshire manner, and had only 20 acres of arable land. Indeed it is said that the Lewis family decided to sell the farm mainly because they did not want to conform with an order to plough up a further 60 acres.

The first thing Mr. Sanger did was to plough up all the old swards, amounting to 150 acres, the first year. Now, in 1955, only 5 acres of old pasture remain. It is probable that this land had not been ploughed up since the 70's; at all events excellent crops of Winter wheat were produced the first year, and of green crops the next. Between 1944 and 1950 100 acres of brassica (cabbage and Brussels Sprouts) were grown, these being rotated round 3-year leys and corn.

The Sprouts were sold mainly in Birmingham and South Wales, with an occasional load to Covent Garden when the price was good. In good years they cropped as much as 5 tons to the acre; rabbits and pigeons, however, were often a menace. 5 acres of Runner Beans were also grown.

The Sprouts were picked by local women, on piece work: 1/for 20 lbs. The cabbages were seen to by the male workers.
(Mr. Sanger has a permanent staff of 10).

In 1945, 1,000 blackcurrant bushes (Baldwin's Hilltop) were purchased from Capt. Haggard of Ledbury. From these cuttings were taken and planted, other varieties were introduced, and now the farm has 32 acres of blackcurrants, all grown on contract to Carters', makers of Ribena. They are picked by women, the rate being  $2\frac{1}{8}$ d. per lb., and on a heavy crop a good picker can earn 30/- a day. Up to 250 are employed daily, the whole crop being got off in 3 weeks. It is, of course, impossible to supply all labour locally, and Leominster and Kington pickers come on the farm lorry, or by chartered bus, arriving at 8.30 and knocking off at 5.30. They bring their own lunch, and at the week-ends their husbands also come along to help pick.

A further soft-fruit innovation was made in 1949, when 5 acres were planted with strawberries, variety Malling 40. They cropped for 3 years, but were abandoned owing to Botrytis infestation. They were all put up in 1-lb. punnets and marketed in Birmingham, the fruit dealer fetching them from the field by lorry every day.

In 1949 a start was made in converting the Home Field into an apple orchard, the first five acres of bush fruit being planted that year. Now, in 1955, there are 20 acres of fruit, the varieties being Cox's Orange, Worcester Permain, Laxton's Fortune, and Laxton's Superb. This orchard is now being grassed down, to provide nitrogen for the trees.

In 1948 Mr. Sanger bought the Court House Farm, Pembridge, thus bringing his acreage up to 532. On the two farms together

he grows about 250 acres of corn every year.

Since 1950 he has been slowly building up a pedigree Hereford Herd, and has now about 50 beasts. In the past he has been in the habit of letting grazings, but now he has his own flock of 100 Clun ewes. He has always kept about 10 breeding sows.

Three years ago another new venture was started - turkeys. They are kept for egg production, 2,000 hens being kept and replacements being hatched on the farm. Only the surplus stock, the culls, is fattened for market. The breeds kept are Beltsville Whites, and Broad-breasted Bronze; the breeding stock lay out in open grass compounds, and the eggs are sold on contract to Hallmark Hatchery, Essex.

Mr. Sanger has always kept 2 brood mares (thoroughbred) from which he has bred several foals which have distinguished themselves at Point-to-Points.

Since Mr. Sanger came to Hardwick he has carried out great improvements in the house and the farm-buildings. Mains electricity arrived in 1944, and a bore-hole was sunk in Jones's Orchard (at a depth of 83 ft.) to supply the house and the entire farm. (When he came to the farm the only "mod. con." was one tap in the scullery!) Several new brick and asbestos buildings have been put up, and old yeard have been pulled down. A new drive was laid in 1947, and a porch was added to the house in 1950.

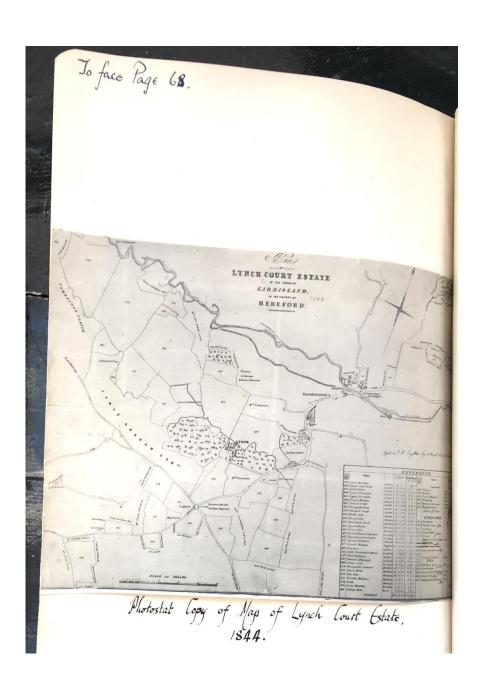
## LYNCH COURT (Mr. P. Glazebrook)

The Lynch, like most Herefordshire farms, is by nature a stock farm, and it has only changed because of the Wars and the inclinations of the owners.

Many years ago, however, there were at least two fields the Old Hopyard and Doctor's Hopyard - where presumably hops
were grown. The present Garage is the old hop kiln, and an
old stone cider press is in the next building (now used for
wood storage).

About 20 years ago the two best fattening meadows, totalling 75 acres and bordering the River Arrow, were sold off, and this probably finished the Lynch as a stock farm. Latterly two very inferior fields - for fattening - have been added, totalling 35 acres.

Comparing an old map of the Lynch with the present, the boundaries of the fields are almost unrecognisable; even in



the last 10 years the main ditches have altered considerably.

The hedges must have changed very slowly, and largely to square up the fields, to make mechanical cultivations easier. In the last 8 years odd corners have been planted up to mixed plantations of deciduous and coniferous trees, and two dessertapple plantations, totalling 25 acres, put in on the higher ground. Of the remaining acreage - there are 225 acres in allabout 10 to 12 are in main crop potatoes; 10 to 18 in main-crop peas; 28 in permanent grass, let off for grazing; and the remainder in corn.

Wintering cattle in the three open yards was found too unremunerative, and an attempt to keep up the fertility of the soil is made by ploughing in all straw and undersowing when possible.

Allowing for normal West Midland weather such a programme would have had poor prospect of success with horses and man-power only. However, with the help of 3 tractors and a Combine, operations can be done very quickly during the short fine spells. Even in 1954 all corn was got in - although yields were poor, as the grain had died rather than ripened.

The buildings have changed as much as the land. In two of the cattle yards there are a few hens scratching about, and implements are in the third. In another building potatoes are stored, where formerly bullocks were fattened. The brick haybarn has been converted to grain storage on the upper floor, and to apple-sorting and apple-storage on the ground floor.

On the question of the place of women in the farming year Mr. Glazebrook said: "I hate to have to say it but, with full employment elsewhere, it would be impossible to get perishable crops like blackcurrants, peas and apples picked without the help of casual labour. We did manage to pick our apples last year (about 1,500 bushels) without the help of outside labour, and at a pinch we could probably pick the potatoes, weather permitting; but it takes about 60 women to pick an acre of peas in a day, and as we have about 29 acres of them this year I should not like to tackle that without outside help! Normal rates of pay are 2/1d. an hour for women, and they seem to prefer that to piece-work for most jobs like potato planting, picking, sorting and hoeing. The picking is on piece-work at about 4/6d. per 40 lb. bag, I think, and most women earn between 15/- and 20/- a day. The season for casual labour is not very long, as mechanical aids have done away with a lot of hoeing, but if ever the apples crop really heavily when mature a lot of hand labour would be necessary, as each apple is handled three times - picked, graded and wrapped - and no machine can do that. Men's pay, of course, is fixed, and few farms dare pay much more than the minimum rates, even to the best workers, owing to the risk of a bad season, preferring to make it up to them if the season is a good one by means of a bonus at the end of the year."

We asked Mr. Glazebrook to let us have a list of the machinery which he carries on his farm, believing that this would be of interest to anyone reading this history in years to come. Here it is:

```
3 Diesel tractors
1 Land Rover
1 4ewheel drive Army truck
1 Combine harvester
1 Allen scythe
1 Hedge trimmer
1 Rotovator
3 Ploughs
1 Ridger
1 Corn drill
1 Manure distributor
1 Flat roll
1 Cambridge roll
l set of disc harrows
4 sets of harrows
1 Cultivator
1 Scuffler
1 Sub-soiler
1 large Hayter cutter for orchards
1 small Hayter cutter for odd jobs
6 carts and trailers
1 Manure loader and bull-dozer blade
2 Pick-up reels for combine
1 Beet drill
l Potato spinner
1 Mowing machine
1 Swathe turner
1 Hay sweep
1 Machine for picking up hay
1 200 gal. corn sprayer
1 30 gal. low-volume fruit sprayer
l apple grader
Boxes for fruit and ladders
Small tools, saw bench, etc.
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Since the History went to the Judges the following little poem from the past, linking the farming of that day with his schooldays in Eardisland, was recited to us by Mr. William Kington of Withongton, now a sprightly youngster of 88. He lived as a boy at Arrowlea, and well remembers the children saying this - with relish:

Evans for Industry, Turner for Crops, Thomas for Thistles, Coates for Docks. (Hardwick)
(Lynch Court)
(Styches)
(Court House)

Certainly one way of memorising the past: