

Chapter 9

People and recreation



Visiting shows were very popular in the mid-1950's. This troupe performing at Assembly Room in 1956 included (on the left) Ruth Perkins, Janet Balsdon and (on the right) Marjory Johnson, Ann Slade, Joy Methereil and Brenda Dunn.

Families

Most of Bradworthy's small mansions have never been in the ownership of families for longer than one generation. Outstanding amongst those this century have been the Bosanquets, Corletts and Lockyers at West Down house; Colliers at Blatchborough House; Colonel Arthur Fitzgerald, the Griffins and Spreads at Berridon Hall.

The names of some of Bradworthy's local families have been in our records for centuries, such as the Canns, Yeos, Tremeers, Okes, Walters, Bryants, Wades, Jennings and Bonds. However it is quite alarming how many old families have died out here in the past half century. Amongst these are the Westaways, Sles, Hawkins and Bromells.

Famous sons

Richard Walter, son of the landlord of the Bradworthy Inn, became a businessman in London. He was chief officer (skipper) of the Fire Brigade at Ponders End, and was at the scene of the crashed German Zeppelin shot down over London in the 1914-18 War. A breeder of pedigree poultry and goats, he won prizes at National shows, meeting personally King Edward VII and the famous Society woman Baroness Burdett Coutts.

Joseph Wilton, a dealer in hounds, married *Mary Ann Walter* when he was a Whip with the local Hunt. He launched into business as a hound dealer



John Bennett.

and became celebrated in his line of business in Europe and the British Colonies. Among the host of eminent people he had met were the Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany and Tsar Nicholas of Russia.

Lt.-Colonel S. Rogala-Roswadowski, a distinguished Polish soldier and war hero spent a great part of his life in Bradworthy and on his death was buried in

our churchyard. *Lt.-Colonel S. Rogala-Roswadowski* bought land here after the 1939-45 War, built and farmed Little Youlston, later moving to Whiteley Farm. He died in 1981. He started his military career when only 15 in 1919 fighting against the Russians in Poland. After the Armistice he entered the University of Cracow and later the Polish Military Academy from which



Richard Bond, accompanied by Mrs. Nethaway, Mrs. Fraser and Nurse Russell.

he graduated as an officer. Fighting against the Germans he was awarded the highest Polish military honour, the *Virtuti Militari*. Taken prisoner he spent some years in German captivity before escaping and joining the Allied 8th Army in Italy, to take part in the closing stages of the War as a Brigade Major.

Centenarians

There have been three Bradworthy centenarians this century.

John Bennett started life as a parish apprentice, working in the fields when he was eight years old. By hard work and thrift he performed a miracle for a poor boy in those days, eventually becoming a big farmer in the parish and a churchwarden for over half a century. He farmed West Ash, but died at one of his cottages at Ford Cross in 1905. His headstone states him to be 100, reckoned from the date of his baptism. As he walked a considerable distance with



Elizabeth Lea.

his mother for this ceremony, it was believed to be 105.

Richard Bond flourished more recently. He also had a varied career and sought adventure early in North America. He told me one of the toughest jobs he had was working in the winter cutting of the Canadian Pacific railroad through the Rocky Mountains. Here in England he and his wife (who was from Liverpool) worked in the household of the

Archbishop of York. He was a coachman for a time to Sir Joseph Swan (pioneer in electricity and photography) and also for the Bosanquets at West Down House, where his wife was lady's maid. Mr. Bond died here in his own village shortly after celebrating his 100th birthday, in 1962.

The third centenarian was *Mrs. Elizabeth Lea* who was born in March 1893 and died in December 1994 aged 101. Born in South Wales, Mrs. Lea had lived in Bristol and



Bill Seldon, Fred Cleave and W.J. Cory at a luncheon in the 1950's.

London. She went into service as a scullery maid at the age of 12, eventually becoming a cook in the household of Lord Chief Justice in London. After moving to Bradworthy in 1981 Mrs. Lea took an active part in village life and was Senior Citizen Queen in Bradworthy's Carnival in 1993.

Decorations

Richard Pomeroy received an M.B.E. in 1974, Barry Radford received an M.B.E. in 1980, and Ann Shadrick received an M.B.E. in 1997.

Some unconventional

John Short was not only looking forward to the Kingdom of Heaven, but claimed he was in possession of the Keys to the Kingdom. They were given to him by St. Peter and he could enter whenever he chose. Short was a member of a well-known local family and he farmed Waterlands. However he decided to abandon his farming and family commitments and take to the road. It is unknown whether he actually preached sermons to

groups of people, but he did proclaim as he tramped around the countryside his special affinity with the Creator and warned that Jesus was very soon to return

to Earth. Nobody seems to have taken him seriously and he lies buried in a nameless grave in the churchyard, having died in Holsworthy Workhouse.

John Downing was born with all the potential to become a comedian. He was naturally funny. To see him walking with his out-turned toes and his

walking stick one could not but feel that he might have been a second Charlie Chaplin. Yet he was a smart little man for one who was only an inch or two over five foot. He could square his shoulders and say his department was due to his early training in the militia. John had his peculiar verbal expressions. Any news was greeted with a 'Cu, Cu, Cu'. He even laughed with a 'Cu, Cu'. His greeting



Bolt Harding - a Bradworthy character of the 1920's.

was always 'What Ho', whatever the occasion or time of day. A massive moustache was the most striking feature on his round, deeply lined face, and when he talked or laughed the moustache became extremely animated, bobbing up and down most amusingly. He liked his beer and when 'merry' would give a demonstration of militia drill with his walking stick as a musket. He would also sing a song or two, possibly slightly vulgar.



Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Trewin of Lew Farm.

Cecil Elvin was found dead in his cottage, No. 2 Rosehill, in 1984 and Bradworthy lost one of its most remarkable characters. A Cornish man (and a very loyal one), due to family troubles he was brought up in a Children's Home somewhere in the south-east of England. Cecil came this way to work on a farm. Later he started up as a tailor, the one trade he had learned. Soon however, he was proving himself as a

man of extraordinary versatility - house repairing, electric wiring, plumbing, radio and TV repairing. He had an ear for music and he made two or three very good violins. He was ready to help anybody with his skills and ingenuity, especially in an emergency, with no thought of financial gain. In this way he befriended many people. He lived rough in his cottage, was independent in the extreme and unconventional in his ways to the point of eccentricity. He was always cheerful and everyone liked him. No relatives attended his funeral, yet the Church was full and the epitaph on his headstone (erected by distant cousins) truly claims that he was 'An esteemed resident of Bradworthy'.

Tommy Hancock lived in North Moor Cottage, a miserable little hovel in those days and so far below the level of the road that in heavy rain the water could run in at the door. His nickname was 'Rasher' and he and his wife lived a cat and dog life, hurling insults at each other and consigning each other to a painful damnation. They sold cigarettes - you could call there for a twopenny packet of five Woodbines. Tommy was a small bent figure with penetrating

blue eyes, a soft suave voice and a disarming smile. He loved having a deal - a pony, a dog or a ferret, or perhaps a bag of potatoes. He was a real sharper. People who had been caught by a shady deal



Alfred Hearn and Fred Gliddon posing in the stocks in the 1930's.

would try to get back at him, but as one old chap put it 'you can't catch Tommy with chaff'. It was said Tommy's wife was always 'six to his half dozen'. There was an evening when Tommy came home in a vile temper. He disapproved of the supper set before him and threw the plate and food on the stone floor. His wife cleaned up all the mess then put it, pieces of broken



The Ashton family owned Lower Alfordisworthy for nearly 200 years. This family photo was taken in 1915. Edward, Grace, and Richard are standing. Catherine, Mrs Ashton, George, Mr Ashton, and Dorothy are seated.



The Bosanquet's lived at West Down House around the turn of the century.

plate and all, into a dish which she covered with a pie crust. This she then served up for his supper the following evening.

Bill Harding was a colourful character, most conspicuous at political election times. He was very provocative at Tory meetings, and on one occasion a hot-headed military type came down from the platform and clobbered Bill. This incident developed into a free fight. Bill could be crude in his remarks, but he had a rustic

wit which would set people chuckling to the annoyance of the 'distinguished' folk on the platform. He was fond of children, who would follow him like a Pied Piper around the village, or ride round in his horse-drawn butt shouting propaganda for the Liberals.

Mrs. Eliza Langdon

The Langdon Charity was a bequest of Mrs. Eliza Langdon, and a distribution is made annually at Christmas. Mrs. Langdon was a daughter of Laurence Ashton of Cleverdon and she married John Langdon of the parish of St. Thomas, Exeter. Their story is brief and sad. John died at

The Bradworthy String Orchestra class is now making excellent progress, and the pupils are becoming very efficient musicians. Last week the orchestra went to Shebbear, where the members took part in the musical items in connection with the Parish Church harvest festival. Our Vicar (Rev. A.E. Dobson) expresses the hope that the local orchestra will be able to assist the organ in accompanying the singing at the harvest festival services in our own Parish Church. (May 1938)

Music

The late Mr. R. Stanley Oke, born in this village, was a talented musician. He was organist at Bude Anglican Church and a well known music teacher.

Mr. Joseph Coles was born at Blatchborough. He was blind and an organist at All Saints Church, Cheltenham.



Muddlebridge in the Marshes: The prisoner is Alan Cann.

A poem by Mrs. June Littlejohns appears in 'Autumn Anthology' published by the Regency Press. During recent years Mrs. Littlejohns has been the winner of a number of literary competitions. (January 1977)

In 1952 there are reports that a Bradworthy Male Voice Choir was formed.

Miss Emma Granger, born in Bradworthy in 1968 is a distinguished harpist. As a soloist she has given recitals throughout the country. Orchestral

work has included performances with the

Bolshoi and Moscow Festival ballets, and at present she is principal harpist with the Royal Ballet Sinfonia, which is the orchestra of the Birmingham Royal Ballet.

Mrs. Mary Trewin, daughter of the late Mrs. E.W. Worthy (a former headmistress of Bradworthy School) has had an outstanding musical career as performer and teacher. She holds a number of musical degrees and is a member of the Incorporated Society of Musicians.

Bradworthy Brass Band

Bradworthy had a brass band, founded by Mr. John Cholwill and the Rev. A.E. Dobson (Vicar) in 1912 or 1913. Mr. John Cholwill was the bandmaster, on whose death in 1930 the band began to break up and finally ceased to function. It did however temporarily reform for the Silver Jubilee of King George V in 1935, and again in 1937 for the first Carnival.



Muddlebridge in the Marshes was staged in 1962: Richard Furse and Valerie Bailey.

Amateur dramatics

Ivor Potter wrote and produced a number of pantomimes which were staged in February or March. The first, *Jack and Jill*, was staged for two nights in the Assembly Rooms in 1953, and was in aid of Church funds.

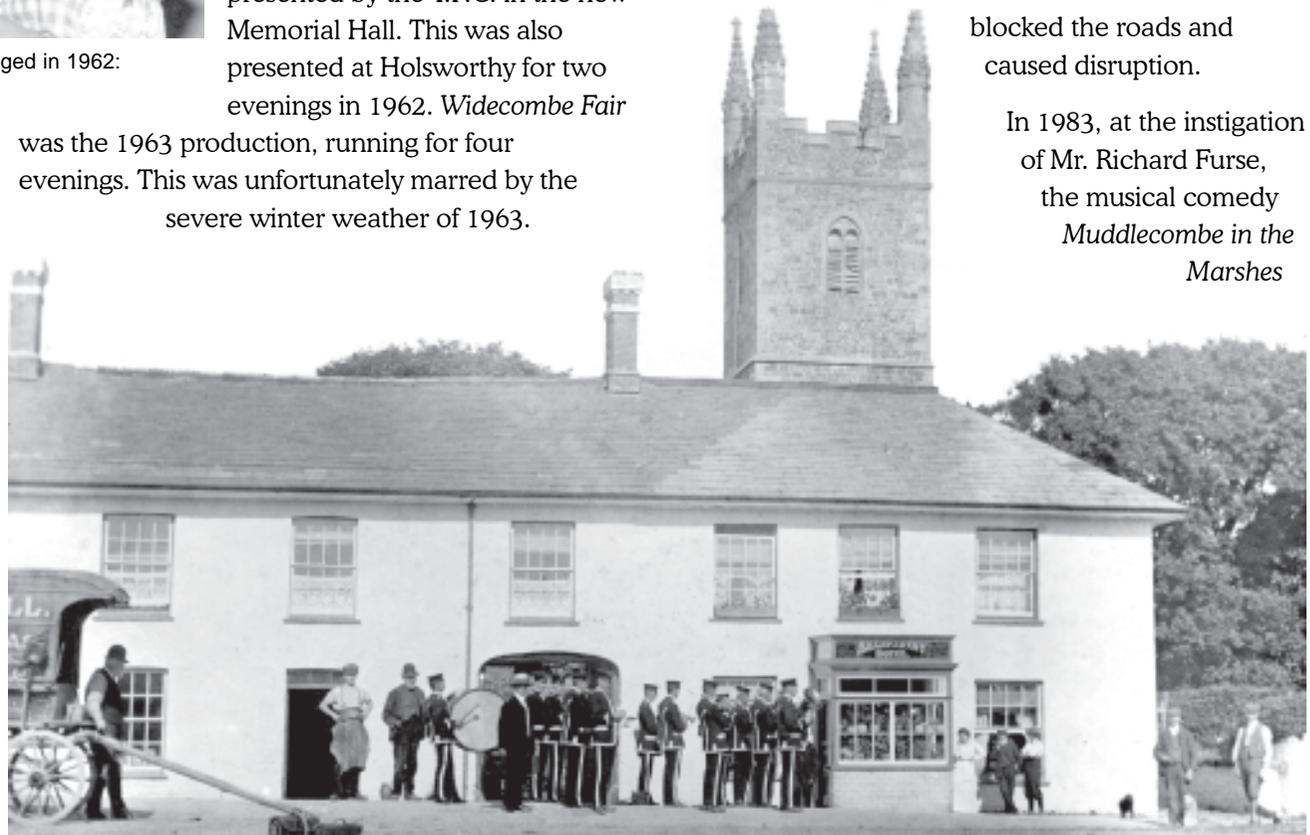
In 1962 a village musical comedy, *Muddlecombe in the Marshes*, was presented by the Y.F.C. in the new Memorial Hall. This was also presented at Holsworthy for two evenings in 1962. *Widcombe Fair*

was the 1963 production, running for four evenings. This was unfortunately marred by the severe winter weather of 1963.

The Young Farmers and Ivor Potter teamed up again to present *Robinson Crusoe* (three nights in 1974), *Old Mother Red Riding Boots* (four nights in Bradworthy and two nights at Hartland in 1975).

In 1976 Bradworthy Y.F.C. entered the county drama competition. *Dick Whittington* was presented on eight evenings in 1977. This was followed in 1978 by four performances of *Aladdin*. Again the weather intervened, and the performances planned for the second week were cancelled because of dreadful blizzards that blocked the roads and caused disruption.

In 1983, at the instigation of Mr. Richard Furse, the musical comedy *Muddlecombe in the Marshes*



Bradworthy Band outside the Inn circa 1915.

was revived for three evenings. The cast included some of the original 1962 cast.

1984 saw the production of the 'sequel' *Muddelcombe in the Moor*, which ran for four evenings.

1985 saw a change of setting with eight performances of the 'westerama' *How the West was Done*. This play was set on the banks of 'Tamarlaki' and involved the local cowboys having troubles with the 'Orniwinki' tribe of red Indians!

This was followed by eight performances in 1986 of *Brad's Army*, a World War II revue which was a great success. The last show to be presented at the Memorial Hall occurred in 1988, when *Treasure Island* ran for four evenings.



Bradworthy Band circa 1920. Back Row: Bert Cholwill, Will Ham, Lewis Slee, Richard Collacott, Bob Mitchell, Gus Roberts, Bob Stapleton, Charlie Ham. Front Row: Alfred Slee, Rev A.E. Dobson, John Cholwill (bandmaster), Reg Prior, Jack Colliver, Claude Cholwill, Bert Mitchell.

Literature

Charles Garvice, a writer of popular romances early this century, lived for many years in Bradworthy, mainly at Moorlands, a house he built on the site of former old cottages.

Mrs. Florence Lott, an ornithologist, wrote 'A Bell In Its Throat', which was an account of her wide travels and bird watching activities in the British Isles and overseas, including Scandinavia and beyond the Arctic Circle. She was also an accomplished musician.

Bruce Beddow, who lived for some years in the village was an author, his books of fiction have been published in America.

James Walrond Burrough, a former engineering and science master, who during the latter years of his life resided in Bradworthy, wrote a book entitled 'The Principles of Geometry', which was published by the Pergamon Press.

Winifred Bowler, also a resident for a few years (she died in 1979) was the writer of short stories and articles.

Cecil Collacott has researched and written much of the history of Bradworthy, neighbouring parishes and Colonial emigration last century, in booklets



Moorlands.

and numerous articles. In collaboration with Mr. Humphrey Toms (Vancouver) and Mr. Reg Walter (Erith, Kent), he has transcribed the Parish Church Registers from 1548 to 1860. The Rev. Peter Sutton continued the transcriptions to 1979 and also transcribed many other important records.

Tom Popham, a Bradworthy farmer who lived a Whiteley, wrote and published a novel entitled 'Kicked Overboard', which illustrated, through the lives of his characters, the evils of alcohol.

Mrs. June Littlejohns is a gifted and versatile worker in an artistic and decorative capacity and has given much voluntary help to village organisations. One of her hobbies is taking part in consumer competitions, in which she has had phenomenal success, winning numerous and valuable prizes.

Artists and sculptors

Bradworthy has produced no eminent artists, yet there is a well known artist today, Philip Jackson, whose mother was from here and a long line of ancestors. Philip is a versatile artist and has painted some fine landscapes and seascapes. He has put on many successful exhibitions.

Dick Whittington, so well played by Jennifer Pengilly, hears the call of the bells. As the Spirit of the Bells, Susan Heywood looks ephemeral enough, but is very real to those whom she appears, especially Dick.

He believes there is a great future ahead of him. But it is a long journey from Madworthy-on-the-Moor to London town and the hopes and fears of Dick and his resourceful cat, Felix (Jason James) are interspersed with gay diversions in music, song and dancing. Dick and his cat get to London and find their way into the household of Baron Fitzwarren (Leslie Heywood) and his charming daughter Alice (Ruth Ham), with whom they have had some previous acquaintance in the country.

Mother Sarah Whittington (Nigel Greenaway), who provides much

amusement throughout the show, gets there too, and although not a competent cook, plays her part in Dick's advancement.

From the streets of old London the scenes change dramatically, with Dick and his friends aboard Baron Fitzwarren's ship bound for Morocco. Later the jolly nautical atmosphere is superseded by diverting glimpses of life in the harem of the Great Shiek Abdul Hassan Mohamed Cascara (Phillip Cleave), enhanced by some songs and dances. Here our wanderers find the wealth they have been seeking. The bells are still calling for Dick Whittington in London, whence they all return for a colourful grand finale, when Dick gets his accolade as well as Alice for his bride.

Special mention must be made of the lithe-limbed, high-kicking dancers, displaying almost the precision

of the Rockettes! They are Gillian Burrow, Christine Goddard, Lorraine Moase, Gillian Cleave, Sally, Schiller and Wendy Vanstone.

Bringing humour to the action, in addition to Nigel Greenaway, were Martyn Glover (Bodger), Nicholas Tomlin (Dodger) and John Daniel (P.C. Nabb). Other members of the cast are Richard Feather (King Rat), Brian Heard (Mustapha and Scarecrow), Marlene Harris (Flower seller and Fatima), Diane Balsdon (Slave), Chris Heard (Night Watchman) and Keith Bailey and John Sampson (Camel).

Chorus singers are Diane Balsdon, Marlene Harris, Christine and Diana Philp, Alice Pocock, Keith Bailey, Chris Heard, Russell Bale and John Sampson. Musicians are Ivor Potter (organ) and Ivor Penfound (percussion). (March 1977)

resident here, painted both landscapes and portraits.

News correspondents

We are indebted for the news which appeared in local newspapers nearly a century ago, mainly in the 'Western Times', which was the most popular local newspaper for decades, to a man who signed himself 'Rambler'. The writer's name, we learn, was James Blight, who lived at Holsworthy. It is said that he travelled to Bradworthy with the mail cart and at the same time collected the news.

One of the headmasters at Bradworthy School, Mr. H.E. Dunstan wrote up the news for many years.

The present correspondent, Mr. C.T. Collacott began recording village events for the newspapers in 1929, with the exception of five years during the Second World War when Mary Balston was the correspondent.

Bradworthy News

A lively village magazine has been produced monthly since 1980. It has been edited by Graham Coles, Richard Loader, Paul Clarke and, since 1990, Phil Mayhall.