

Nankins was a small grassland farm of 37 acres which with a little help from Chipping Mill kept the cattle and a horse. We milked ten cows and reared the heifer calves to replace the mature cows which were sold at five years old at their peak value. At first, milking made my wrists ache. The "girls" made the milk into cheese and stored it upstairs on the landing, until Mr Toulmin came from Lune Street, Preston, tasted it and bargained a price. In winter when the milk supply ran low they made butter.

The first horse I handled at Nan King's was Molly. She died suddenly on Tweedy Brow when I was bringing her home from Wardsley (account in Longer Sen 1993). Mr Whalley bought a replacement, Boxer, at Preston cattle market. I remember them both -- horse and farmer -- walking proudly up the lane into the yard. He was a handsome bay, about 14 hands, with a thick neck like a Suffolk Punch. He was good to handle and never jibbed at mowing (which was hard work) or leading in the hay. But most of the time our horse had an easy life. With so many human hands we had no haymaking machinery, and the family had no trap for the horse, so they walked to Chipping, and used Alf Brennan's bus for the rare journeys to Longridge and beyond. I had an old bicycle. There were few motorcars and most of the roads had no tarmac. But occasionally Mr Whalley would join Mr Cowman (butcher) and other friends from Clitheroe and take the train to Oban for the autumn cattle sales. Twice while I was at Nankins we had half a dozen Highland Scots cattle living outdoors for the winter to tidy up any old grass. In spring we walked them back towards Clitheroe, being met near Higher Hodder Bridge. So we did not often have sheep. The girls had some hens to help with the house expenses.

Each year a pig was fattened and killed on the premises for domestic use. There were no restrictions in those days and there were several men able to "stick" a pig. The ill-fated animal was brought out of the sty with a rope round its nose and jaw and a bucket over its head. Then it was tied down on a stock bench. I had to catch the blood, stir it and cool it in a bucket in the water trough for black puddings. Then I cleaned the intestines for sausage and pudding skins. The girls made very good black puddings and meaty sausages. There was plenty of pork to eat as well. There was always plenty of fat from the frying of fatty bacon and other cooking. This was never wasted but was put into a large old roasting tin. When it was full, it was melted and mixed together and caustic soda added which turned it into a yellow soap. When set, it was cut into 3 inch squares and used for washing the clothes and for washing hands and face, on which it was a bit rough. Occasionally we had "bought" soap, and I admit that I smuggled some in from home. There was no bathroom, but in a passage alongside the living-room was a slopstone about 4ft by 2ft and 3 inches deep. We washed in soft rain water in a bowl on the slopstone in front of the window. I used to have a bath when I went home, or have a swill down in a tin bath in a kitchen at the back of the house which was used for the family laundry and for cheese-making. The only other room downstairs was the long narrow pantry with stone flag shelves, always well stocked with food and with enough flour and oatmeal to last through a possible long spell of winter snow.

When I was 16 I began to wear long trousers, and my first pair for work was passed on from a brother-in-law who had been a conductor on the Rochdale trams. They had a red stripe down the side which amused the local lads. After a while I went to John Kenyon the village tailor at his shop up the steps at the end of the church-yard wall, for a pair of fustian knee-breeches. He got down off the end of his counter where he used to sit cross-legged as he sewed, and soon had me measured up.



He said that they would be ready in about a couple of weeks and would cost 12s 6d [62½p]. Most of my meagre wage was sent home to help the family purse, but I was saving what I could spare from my 6d a week pocket money via the Yorkshire Penny Bank organised by (I think) Mr Sefton and Mr Procter in one of the Brabin's school classrooms. My expenses were few -- an occasional set of clog-irons and a copper in the Chapel collecting box on Sundays. When the breeches were ready I had saved 12 shillings. But I had been taught never to have anything without paying for it, so I told Mr Kenyon, who was very understanding, that I would leave them until I had saved the other sixpence. Two weeks later I proudly went and purchased them, and felt quite smart in my new knee-breeches and leggings to match.