

Farmers all over the area had difficulties getting their milk to collection points for the wagons (one was at Black Hall) and collecting water from the icy brooks in kits for the cows. Farmers with brooks and ponds near the buildings broke through the ice, and turned the animals out each day to drink. The River Hodder was frozen over. Arthur Preston remembers the ice was so thick, it was possible to drive a horse and cart over it, between Stakes Farm and Wardsley, near the stepping stones. Provender wagons were frequently stuck in the snow. The rural postman walked over hedges to deliver the mail. One postman recalls one particular gate on the way to Park Style. He never saw it for 7 weeks as it was buried all the time and he walked over it.

The depth of snow at Colte Coates seems to be well remembered. Many people walked up from the village to marvel at it, and Frank Marsden, still in the Army and home on leave, remembers a boy sitting on a telepole, the top of which was just visible above an enormous snow drift. Although ploughs were used to clear the snow, much was dug out with spades. Arthur Lord remembers doing this on the road below Nan King's Farm, when a solitary figure appeared struggling up the road. It was Lily Ellison from Abbot Barn, on her way to see her cousin Mrs Milner at Wolfen Mill. "An ye ord", she shouted, "Preston Tahn Aw's bornt dahn!". Preston Town Hall had indeed been burnt down on the night of 15th March.

By 24th March there was very little snow left, but up at Whitmore Farm there was a small drift left in June.



*Local men clearing snow west of Chipping in 1940. The group includes Council and Derby estate workmen.*

Although some farmers in the hills of Bowland had heavy losses of sheep, around Chipping this does not seem to have been the case, except for Percy Bradley at Wolfen Hall. They say the snow of 1947 was the longest, but have more vivid memories of 1940, when the snow came heavier and more suddenly, causing whole flocks of sheep to be buried. Many were dug out alive, using dogs and long sticks to prod through the snow to find them, but many others were not found until the thaw, when they were dead.

At Whitmore Farm, where they were snowed in for nine weeks, the clough at the back of the house was full of snow, with sheep buried under it which died. Prodding with rake shafts, they found 21 sheep in a long tunnel under the side of an outbarn wall, and they all managed to walk out.

John Hayhurst was at Wolfen Hall, and remembers his dog sensing some sheep under a drift on the fell, and two were dug out alive. They had been under the snow for 32 days, and had survived by eating the rushes there, and licking water which was running down a stone, which had been licked white by their tongues. He remembers that their horns were "like putty" after their ordeal.