

West Dean Village History Trail

No 5

ORCHARD FARM

In 1908 Herbert White and his family came to West Dean to live at Orchard Farm. After setting up his dairy herd he began supplying the villagers with milk, something the family was to continue for over 70 years. Herbert's son, Frank, was away serving in the Royal Artillery during the First World War but at its end, by then married and living at Number 13, he returned to work with his father on the farm. When Herbert retired in 1940, Frank took over the tenancy of Orchard Farm. In addition to the dairy herd the family kept beef cattle, pigs and chickens. Eggs were therefore available for their customers as well as milk. They also supplied coal, delivered to and collected by them from the railway goods yard.

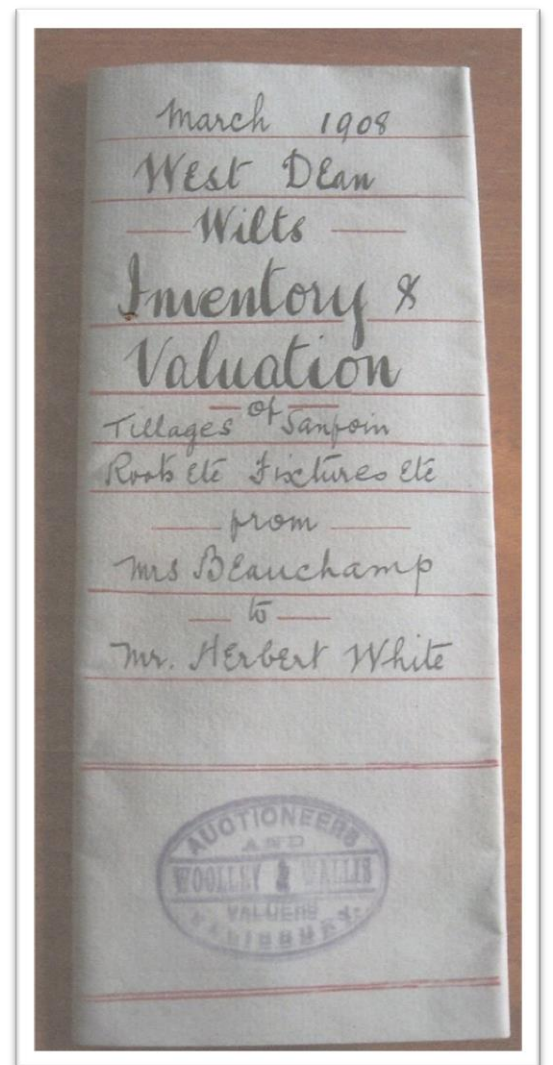


EARLY MILK DELIVERY

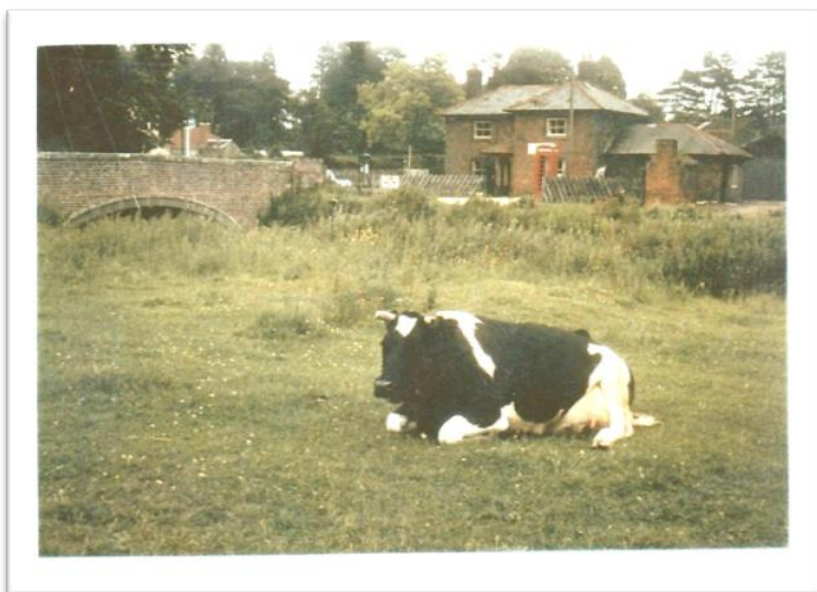
All work on the farm was carried out using heavy horses until 1948 when Frank White bought his first and only tractor, a Fordson. Similarly all milking was done by hand for most of the time that the family had their dairy herd, only the arrival of electricity in 1948 made possible the introduction of a milking machine in the early 1950s.

In the early years milk was delivered by taking a churn on wheels to the customer, using the appropriate measure for the pint, quarter or gallon that the customer wanted and pouring it into the customer's jug. Soon after the beginning of the Second World War Frank's daughter, Mollie, took over the milk delivery. This she did at first by bicycle with a crate of milk bottles on the front.

Later a van was acquired and this allowed the area covered to extend to East Dean, Lockerley and Tytherley. In 1955, well before TB testing became compulsory, Frank White decided to have his cows tuberculin tested and was granted a producer's licence to use that designation. When Frank reached age 70 in 1963 and decided he could no longer cope with a dairy herd, Mollie maintained the milk round by buying in milk from a wholesaler and continued to do so until she retired in 1982.



1908 INVENTORY AND VALUATION



AFTER MORNING MILKING THE COWS WERE FREE TO DRINK FROM THE RIVER, GRAZE AND CHEW THE CUD ON THE GREEN UNTIL TAKEN BACK TO THEIR FIELD