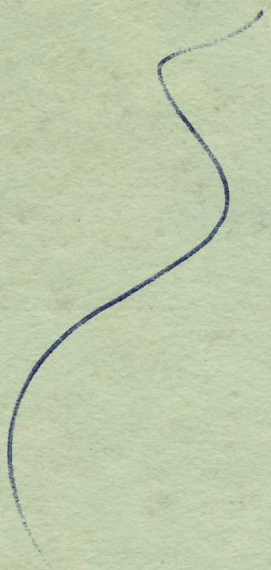
MY LIFE STORY



by

A. PEPPER

HILLSIDE BUNGALOW
NEWMARKET ROAD
ROYSTON, HERTS

Arthur Pepper

The idea of telling my life story is to show what a poor boy can do from a large family of twelve without any education or being apprenticed to anything, so long as one takes notice as they go about and take an interest in all what they do. I always took an interest in everything I saw and what people did, which helped me in later life, and I also tried to improve on everything, whether farming, carpentry, etc., as you will read from the interesting occupations I have been in during my 88 years. The facts are told in my own words as far as I can remember them.

Arthur Taylor

THE earliest time I remember was when I was with my mother and a woman said to her that if she got me any fatter I should not see out of my eyes. My father took me over to my grandfather's when my mother was expecting again, and he lived in a house where Melbourn Post Office stands now. When we arrived the police sergeant was having his supper, so we sat down to supper with them. As time went on, father said to him, "I must be going because I have got no light or bell" (although you could hear his old bone-shaker for miles). After father told him this, the police sergeant went out and caught father going round the corner and summoned him for being without a light, and I can always remember the policeman bringing the notice to the house and it costing father a 2s. 6d. fine, and his employer, Mr. Palmer, paid it. Father used to take me on his old bone-shaker to the copralite works at Whaddon and I remember once he sat in his barrow having his lunch when the earth gave way and he dropped down into the pit with the barrow covering him completely, but it did not hurt him. He also used to take us round Melbourn in an old wash-tub on wheels behind his old bone-shaker.

As I grew up I was always interested in everything I saw and father was always doing something with hammer and nails and I used to hold the light for him but not always so he could see. He used to say, "Hold the light boy. If you can see it, I can."

In those days they used to go trannelling with nets catching larks and game, and father used to put the larks in a drawer in the barn and screw it up so no one could look in as it was really illegal to catch them. They used to send them to London market where they made about 6d. each, which was good money then. They would see a covey of birds settling down for the evening in a field so they would then know where to go with their nets at night, and to stop them netting, the gamekeepers used to put bushes over the field so as to entangle their nets.

I started school at a very early age and as time went on my mother used to keep me at home to look after the other children and I never got above the third standard. They summoned father for not sending me to school but when he appeared at the Magistrates' Court there was nobody there and they never bothered father any more, so in consequence I never went to school again.

I was always interested in carpentry and went to the council wood class, and although they were half over before I started, I got second prize and my cousin the first. In those days the old carpenter in the village did not like anybody else doing anything in his trade and he said to me one day, "What tools do you use?" I said, "Chisels, planes and knives," and he said, "Do you know where knife carpenters go to?" I said, "No," and he replied, "Hell." So one day I was going by his place when he was using a knife, so I said, "You're off, then." He said, "Where?" I said, "The same place as you told me when I used a knife." I never had any more trouble from him.

After leaving school, I worked with a hay and straw tier and this work took me over the county within a 15-mile radius. It was nothing to walk 10 or 15 miles home at the end of the week, complete with tools, etc. The man I worked with and I went to tie a stack of hay on the Trumpington Long Road and after finishing on Saturday morning, we took a bee-line across the fields to Shelford, where his sister lived. He had a drink there and then we took another bee-line to Harston station to catch the train but we missed it so we had to walk home to Meldreth, which, I believe, was about 15 miles. Another time we were working at Coton and on the Saturday we took a bee-line to Haslingfield, Barrington and home—another 15 miles or so. While working at Coton, we visited a public house and on the wall there was a picture of a man and his dog. I remember asking what it meant. It said, "Poor Trusty is dead—bad pay killed him." In those days people used to set up their beer until the end of the week.

When we were working in Cambridge, I remember seeing a man putting the cockerel on the Cambridge Catholic Church, hanging on it like a monkey. The old hay tier used to go poaching before I arrived in the mornings, but on this particular occasion he was a bit alarmed. I found out that he had been out but hadn't shot anything with his muzzle-loaded gun. He had dismantled it, putting the stock in one side of his pocket and the barrel in the other side. When he came home he was going round the table and knocked the cap on the barrel and it blew a hole through his coat and in the shutter over the window—it was lucky the gun was pointing this way as he had a family of three children upstairs. The hole in the shutter remained there until it was pulled down.

I also remember seeing them digging a well for the extra supply of water for Cambridge as the Cherry Hinton wells could not supply enough at that time. This was at Fulbourn and we were on our way to Six Mile Bottom.

By this time I was about twelve years of age and it was a very hard life for a boy as we used to sleep in harness rooms and cornbins.

After the hay tier died I was a farm worker for a little time in Meldreth and went to plough with some very bad horses as my employer used to buy old London bus horses, and you can imagine they wanted to trot at plough. In hay-making time you were expected to work every evening for a glass of beer up to 8 or 9 p.m.

Once I was coming from Royston on my bike by Melbourn Bury when I picked up a mail bag, and, realising it had dropped off a mail van which had passed me, I took it back to Royston—about three miles—on my bike. When I got there the mail man said, "Let me have it," and I said, "Give me 2s. 6d. and you can have it." I got my 2s. 6d. After all this time I have just found out who the man was.

Also coming back from Royston once I met a girl with her dress caught in the gears of her bike—she was walking straddling the bike. I released her and she got on her bike again but I never knew who she was and doubt if I ever shall.

I remember one or two incidents regarding the Boer War. Colonel Rhodes called for volunteers. He said to one chap, "You daren't come—go out there." He then put a bullet through the chap's helmet and one under his armpit and then said to him, "Come here, here is your money for the helmet and jacket." The poor chap said, "But what about my trousers, sir?" I remember them surrendering all in a circle with equipment, etc., and the papers said we were not out for land or gold, but the first telegram that came said "Mafeking! Mafeking! Gold mines safe, machinery intact."!

From about the age of 14 I was gardening at Meldreth Court, working in greenhouses with a man named Jones. My employer used to go to London daily and I had to wheel the luggage up to

the station in a wheelbarrow to catch the train in the morning and meet the train again in the evening about 9 p.m., stoking up the greenhouse fires at the same time. You can imagine how tired a lad of my age was, sleeping in the evening and not being awake at the right moments. On a Jubilee occasion I always remember the trees in the grounds were lit up with candles in little lanterns and the fountains playing—a man being employed to pump the water from the tower to make the fountains play. I stayed here for a few years and then began to think about changing, so I applied for a job as journeyman gardener at Babraham Hall. I got the job out of 70 applicants. While working there I used to visit and go courting in Cambridge, walking the distance of about seven miles. I was only at Babraham Hall for about a year. The head gardener was very cross with me for leaving and sent my wages out by his little daughter. I said, "It's short, it isn't enough," and he shouted, "Go on with you or else I'll kick your backside." I said, "You had better come out here and see how you get on." He very soon sent the money.

We used to grow the double violets for market in frames called "Marie Louise", and also peaches on the wall round the garden, which kept a man employed all the time. I never found out what animal it was in one of the conservatories but I have an idea it was an Indian squirrel, although I have never heard this mentioned in any wild-life book. A pretty colour, it would squeak when jumping from palm to palm, but it died while I was there and the under gardener had it stuffed. A few years after I left I met one of the under gardeners at the chrysanthemum show in Cambridge and he told me of all the alterations which had been done since I left, as there was no sanitation and we had to walk about five chains to the lavatory. Several years later I revisited Babraham Hall to a tea party and was introduced to the heir of the place, who showed me round. During my retirement I took a ride round Babraham Hall and was surprised at all the alterations as it is now like a village—some difference to when I was there with deer in the park. I wrote to Sir Michael Adeane to say how nice it was to revisit the old place and he wrote me a letter as follows:

From the Queen's Secretary, Sir Michael Adeane.

Thank you for your letter of 25th February. It was my cousin, Mr. Charles Adeane, who used to live at Babraham,

not me. His son Robert inherited it when he died. I often went there as a boy after the First War. Thank you very much for writing and for your good wishes.

Yours sincerely,

(signed) Michael Adeane

I had thought it was he who showed me round the place but there had been another son born to the estate who I did not know about.

I left Babraham Hall to return to my former employer at Meldreth Court, as the old head gardener had gone, and Mr. Jones had taken his place and he, in turn, asked me to take his place as head gardener in the greenhouses, and so I came back for a few more years.

Meanwhile my brother Walter and I started a bicycle business. My brother was working on the railway at Cambridge and started selling jewellery from Samuels on a commission basis, and then we got an agency for selling cycles and it was the old cheap Wearwell; after that we got other agencies, such as Triumph and others. My brother got married and lived under the head chef at Leys School, and we started putting bikes in there at cut prices but the Cambridge cycle dealers heard of this and told the Railway Inspector about it. The railway wanted to send my brother away to the north, as it was against the rules of the railway to do any other work than their own work. Walter refused to go so they told him he would have the chance to retire on his superannuation, which he did and went for some time to Sturtons and to Chivers, packing jellies, etc. While on the railway Walter used to come to Meldreth by the early goods train, as he did night shunting in Cambridge, and go back by the next train. I remember once he came up and we heard the train coming. I said, "You had better jump on my bike" (it was one of the back-pedalling ones). He went and caught the train but as I was fetching my bike I met a man in the station yard. He said, "Was that man your brother?" I said, "Yes," and he said, "He didn't half go into the station-master's house there." I said, "Did he hurt himself?" and he replied, "I don't know, but he fell in the train." My brother wasn't used to the back-pedalling brake. And so we built up the business at Meldreth in the name of S. Pepper & Sons. I built the first

cycle shed and used to do the repairs and Walter all the correspondence. After a time we had been supplying Ernie Marriott at Royston with stock on Market Hill at cheap prices but he couldn't get along so he gave us the chance to take the business over. About the same time there was a head gardener's job going at Harston. As I wanted to get married I applied for this job and was successful and settled down at Harston for about ten years, my other brother, Albert, doing the cycle repairs for a time until Walter took over Marriott's place.

When I took the job at Harston I had £1 per week and a house, and I never asked for any more all the time I was there, but my employer let me do as I liked which gave me a chance to use my skill and initiative on lots of things. I rebuilt the greenhouse and peach house and laid a sewerage system. I asked the Cheap Wood Company whether or not they would give me commission for materials bought and they said I could have a safe any size I wanted. I said I'd have the largest they had and I have still got the safe to this day. My employer had great faith in me and allowed me to go to shows, etc. He came out one morning and said, "I think we have fever in the house," and I said, "I don't wonder at it, as your drains from the kitchen sink are nothing but holes in the ground and I have to send one of the men to clear them out every week. They are also very dangerous, being covered with just boards." He thought I could do everything, so he said, "Go to Cambridge and get some pipes and lay a proper drain in." I told him I did not know anything about drains, but I knew I could do the job and how it should be. He would make me go and get the pipes but I asked what the builders in the village would say about me doing them out of a job. He told me, "Never mind about them, I pay you," and I always made it a rule never to refuse to do anything my employer wanted me to do so long as it satisfied him and me. I finished the job and he gave me £5 for the work, and I understand the system is still working today. During my stay in Harston I used to do the fires and lamps in the chapel. We used to give lantern lectures in the school with nothing only paraffin for the lighting, so I made a carbide generator with three burners which used to hold all the carbide, which gave a better light than anything else on the market at that time. The carbide used to work rather irregularly, both in cycle lamps as well. It was either over wet or dry but on this particular occasion it had given good service all through the lecture but at last the water

saturated it and gave off an extra lot of gas, which was too much according to the capacity of the holder for working 1lb. of carbide. I was glad when he lecture was over as I saw the gas creeping along the room, but people cleared out without realising anything was wrong. I dare not have done it today.

From Harston I did a lot of exhibiting and last time I exhibited in Cambridge, at the Corn Exchange, in November, I took three first prizes for three collections of vegetables, and I had only one old man to work with me. I was showing against a man who had fourteen gardeners at the time, from Longstowe Hall. At a Red Cross show in September I was showing for a cup, but some of the committee came from Cambridge and spoke to my employer saying it wasn't right for me to show stuff out of my garden and his garden so they stopped me from showing in that class, but I took the stuff down and sold it in the Corn Exchange. After this the show broke up, for which I was very sorry.

As I said, I never had a rise all the time I was at Harston. Then came the time when the National Insurance came out and my employer stopped my contribution out of my wages. I did not say anything but thought I had worked all those years without any rise and without asking him for anything, so I decided to change, although Mrs. Hurrell would have given me anything to stop, but I had made up my mind. And so I heard of the vacancy at Dr. Salaman's at Barley.

At Homestall, Barley, I did all the alterations, laying terraces, lily ponds, sunken gardens and raising thousands of seedling potatoes for Dr. Salaman's experimental work; planting all the yew hedges and rose gardens. We made the front sunken garden and wheeled everything to other parts of the house to make the terraces. After sinking the garden it had left a chestnut tree high and dry, and my employer said, "Can you sink that, Pepper?" I said, "Yes, if you allow me time and money." So I had Mr. Flack and Mr. Harvey under it for a week, propping it up as we went, and when we got the hole deep enough to make it level with the ground, I had Mr. Drage's engine from Chishill to pull the props away, and the tree is alive today.

Then came the First World War. I was put in control of a gang of men to dig trenches to defend us if need be, and all the petrol

tanks were emptied at the garages and filled with water in case of invasion. I was called up and joined the Royal Flying Corps (Air Service Unit), erecting aerodromes and hangars. I was sent to London, dined at Buckingham Palace Hotel, and slept in the Crystal Palace. From there on I was sent to Blandford and kept with about 30 or 40 men and boys of all ages—some of them from reform schools and some always swearing. During the time at Blandford it was very bad food and you were lucky if you got a potato without a bug hole in it. A lot didn't like the stew either but I could eat it as I was always hungry, but at night I used to go out and buy myself some buns. I used to walk up a hill and look at the generating station, as they kept bees and I was very interested in bees. I remember one night meeting a man with tears streaming down his face. He said, "Have you sent your civvy suit home?" I said, "Yes." It appeared that in putting us through the gas chamber they always asked us if we liked it and those who said no got put through again, so I take it this chap was unlucky. I was glad I never had cause to use the gas mask. Some committed suicide rather than carry on rough army life and shortage of food, although they always said it was much better food overseas. On leaving Blandford we were all night travelling and got to Folkestone about three or four o'clock the next morning and then went to France the following day. I wasn't sea-sick but there were a lot below who were not so happy as I was. We went to Bolougne and then to a village to dismantle. There were supposed to be several cooks with us but no one wanted to take it on so I said that I could cook and eat it and so I got the job, as I thought that being a gardener all my life I should not have to rough it so much outside, although it was longer hours. At another village we went to they had dummy aeroplanes in the centre of the field to mislead the Germans, the hangars being at the corners of the field. I always remember being there the first week. They held a service in a big tent close to where I was doing the cooking and I felt I should like to have joined in as I never felt so much like singing in my life as I did then, but I had the cooking to do. From there we went to another village a long way away, travelling in the back of a food van, and on arrival I looked like a miller. When we arrived I had to get tea. There was no wood or anything for a fire and as we put the food down an old sow came up and ran off with a lump of meat—next day's ration. We found out also that we had been drinking water from a well where someone had been drowned. The French mated their sows up very early because

they were short of meat and we actually saw little sow pigs being supported until the boar served it. During this time invalid captains were sent with our little lot, although we had an Irish sergeant and corporal who had been through the Boer War. One of the captains started finding fault about the dishes not being clean but with no water this was impossible. He started on to the sergeant and corporal but they soon knew what to do with him and he wasn't with us many days. We then went to a place called Maurei, close to Cambria. I remember a church in Cambria being blown to pieces but Christ on the Cross remained standing as if nothing had happened. The Cambria road was the first place they used Churchill tanks. I saw them knocked out as they only wanted the travelling gear hitting and they were then no use, and I was told there were still men at the wheels of some of them, dead, so we must have been pretty close to the German retreat. There were holes in the Cambria road big enough to bury a bungalow in—I think that must have been the Hindenburg line. I had a narrow escape—I awoke to find a piece of shrapnel under my pillow. Another time the cookhouse was blown to pieces before I got there. I saw Lancashire looms in a little town used for manufacturing pins lying in great heaps in all sizes, and they were also used to ground the food that they gave to Belgians with a mixture of sawdust and meal, samples of which I sent home to the Salaman family. On our journey to Spey we got lost and the man driving did not know how to back round properly and if it hadn't been for a telegraph post we would have been down a forty-foot ravine. A corporal said he would like to come with me to fetch the post. I never had such a ride in all my life. I kept hitting my head on the roof so that it gave me a bad headache, so no more rides for me. From there we went on to another little village. The Americans had just come over with planes and my chaps went down to their cookhouse and came back grumbling, saying what they had got and we hadn't. I had been told that they had the first engines fiitted with silver piston rings but do not know whether or not this was right. We then went to a big farm, where they kept 12 oxen and 12 horses, all tethered in the same place with a keeper sleeping at one end high up, keeping watch on them at night. It was there I saw the first treadmill threshing drum. I cannot remember one being used in England as our portable engines followed threshing trail as far as I know. I was then demobbed from Spey. We came home by stages and then by cattle boat to London. I arrived at King's Cross very late and

I cut a hole in the hedge and had a bungalow built, all on borrowed money. In the meantime, having built sectional barn parts, these were ready to erect and for occupation. I came to Hillside in October, 1925, and have been here about 40 years. The first winter I used to go down to my birds in the houses and give them a late feed and sit there with them for the purpose of getting early eggs. (I should think I was one of the first to use night lighting for egg production.) I used to take all the eggs to market on my bike until I got straightforward. Eventually I got to 3,000 birds and 2,000 eggs a day, which was very good at that time of day, but plenty of times during the summer they were sold for 1s. 6d. per score—some difference from today! I built all my own appliances and to my own design. I developed my own box brooder, which took me some time to get the ventilation and heat in the proper proportions. I remember looking at one batch and when I passed my hand over them they went as if they were going to sleep, which showed me they lacked air, so I made a brooder with hollow walls and an inside galvanised lining with six one-inch holes in each side so that all the air could get in as was wanted, and what air I did not want, in order to keep the temperature even, I made a slide on the top which I slid back. My lamps had a square on the lamp turner and a long key came outside of the brooder so that by just looking in the brooder I could turn the lamp up or down as I wanted. If I hadn't, this would have made them colder still. I never lost many chicks after this. I also found you could not rear baby chicks under 95 degrees for the first day or so letting them have more air as they grew, and so I made a brooder house with vitaglass sliding windows, which could be opened by pushing up and down. I consider myself a pioneer in what I did for poultry farming in this district, as I sold incubators, brooders and night arks within a ten-mile radius and I can safely say that two of the biggest farmers in the district today started off with my poultry farming appliances. All the appliances were made with wire bottoms and slats, which were more healthy and easier to clean out and I think I was the first to use these in this district. I patented my appliances, night arks and field houses —the A.P. Long Range Field House—and I sold the patent to Papworth Industries for £100 and 2½% commission on all sales, on condition I got the patent through, which I did. Unfortunately the Second World War came and my carpenter did not return. All materials were dear and difficult to obtain so I didn't trouble any more about it.

telephoned to Homestall, saying I was coming home. I took a train to Hitchin that night, slept in the waiting room and then came down to Royston on the morning goods train and then walked home.

Heavy snow fell during the first few days back home at Barley and we had to knock snow off the fruit garden.

My brother Albert had been farming at Therfield during the war but he died so I left Homestall and took over his farm. I was not encouraged to do so by my employer but I did not take any notice of him and took the farm over from my brother. When my former employer came to see me he said, "You have better crops than I have, Pepper." I replied, "Why shouldn't I?" He also said, "You run a nice car, Pepper." I replied, "Why shouldn't I?" While I was at Dane End I started poultry farming, my foundation stock being selected from a few of my brother's best birds. After a time I found it paid all the men's wages with the egg money without drawing from the bank. I started making sectional fowl houses to bring away after the lease of the farm was up. Nobody knew how to rear poultry in those days. Every batch we reared we had to fumigate in a box to get rid of the gait worm—the smoke made them cough it up. Nobody knew what temperature chicks should be kept at after hatching or at what period they should be bed after hatching. On some farms it was old fashioned breadcrumbs and eggs cut up and in my case I used to bake puddings for them—rice and Quaker Oats with milk—and rub it up into a crumbly state. After a time they started with a dry mash, which made it much easier, and even then we were lucky if we reared six out of a batch in those days. There is no doubt that the B.W.D. germ was a lot to do with it. After blood testing and feeding with dry mash and knowing and learning the temperature of the chick made it much easier to rear. There were many brooders on the market but none efficient enough to depend on as most of them were on the floor and you got a draught and it meant tucking the chicks up at night to keep the heat in. At Therfield I paid the highest rent that had ever been paid there and paid the highest wages, but the man who took over paid the lowest rent and wages and went bankrupt at that. As I worked the lease out I heard the owner was going to sell the farm so I decided to buy a piece of land from my brother on the Newmarket Road, 29 acres, and so I came to Hillside.

During the war it was difficult to carry on. Fortunately I was lucky as the year before the rationing period started I reared a lot of chicks and consequently was allocated rations on that year's quantity of birds so I was able to help several old soldiers from the first war through their difficulties in finding food. I even got cake for my brother's bullocks on my rations, and the other farmers at market used to say they did not know how he got such a sheen on his bullocks and that they must come and see what he is feeding them with. We had to make an air-raid shelter and used an incubator house for this. The top was concreted and we lived down there for weeks with the radio. This threw a great strain on my wife, having to go out all hours of the night to the poultry. One time we had two baskets of incendiary bombs—about 36 bombs in each—dropped. One lot did not go off and the others just missed each building, including a barn with 100 quarters of wheat in it, which, by right, I should not have had. When we looked out of the door the place was all alight and the fire engine was at the gate thinking we were burnt out, but they were not wanted. We got through the war without any war damage, but as I said the strain played a large part in the illness and death of my first wife. After this I retired from poultry farming.

I was always troubled with poultry thieves. They had about 90 during the first year or two, which I could ill afford to lose. After that I developed a system with springs and fine trip-wire which used to ring a bell in my house. I halved the farm into two sections and which ever section was entered through, I could tell from the levers just outside my door. Unfortunately it was a rather sensitive system and even a bird or hare going against it would set it off, but that didn't worry me. One night, when the war was nearly over, I went out to see if my lad had let the water out of my lorry, and on going into the cart shed heard a bird "talking". I had a notice pinned up in my egg room telling one to "Think". I came in after heard that bird and thought "That bird would not be 'talking' at this time of night unless something was wrong." So I phoned my nephew nearby. He was out had some German prisoners indoors listening to the news so his wife sent one of them over to the cottage to ask a man to come over to me. We went down to Noon's Folly, collecting a gun from the egg room, and down the lane at the side of the plantation we found a lorry with two crates of birds. I said to the man with me,

"Up with that bonnet." I then pulled off all the leads of the lighting plugs, etc., and threw them away. We stayed for a few minutes, as I had a suspicion they were sitting on some more crates in the plantation. I said to the man with me, "We do not want to hurt them," so we came back to the house. I had phoned the police before I went, so I phoned them again and told them what I had done and that it was up to them to catch them now. One said, "Shoot the b——s!" but I said I did not want to kill them, only to catch them. Luckily there was a police "do" on at Melbourn so the superintendent and two officers came along and we walked behind while they went on. In the meantime they had phoned the Royston police, who met them on the hill. After a short time two men came along, so the police asked them where they had been and they said that they had been looking for work, but their clothes were quite dry and they had grass seeds in the turnups, which they said came from the side of the road; the cobwebs on their jackets, they said, came off the hedges. The police took them to the station and on the way there one said, "I should like to see that so-and-so again who pulled the plug leads off." I said, "You will be able to." They had five crates in all. The police wanted to take the crates of birds to Melbourn but I said "No," as the birds were all right as they were stock birds, and I put them back where they came from. I had to take half a dozen to Cambridge twice, to the court, and the court keeper said they might have laid some eggs for him, so I had a laugh the next time and put two or three eggs in one crate, and in the evening papers the headline was, "Hen laid eggs in court". The men got eighteen months, which I did not really think was sufficient, as they had been all over the county doing similar things and were also wanted by the Peterborough police. The police wanted the magistrate to compliment the police on catching the men but the magistrate said if anybody wanted commending it was Mr. Pepper, as he practically put them into their hands. I have always tried to help the police and put the £5 they gave me for expenses into the police fund. Some years later, however, I had an accident on the Trumpington Road. The man I ran into was eight feet from the curb. Something happened which caused me to turn off very sharply to get out of his way and at the police court they fined me £2 10s. and endorsed my licence. The superintendent told my solicitor that of course somebody crossed his path and caused him to turn sharply which I couldn't have avoided, but a friend in the back of the car said that if I hadn't have hit him, the other man

would have hit me, which left me helpless, and I shall never forgive the police for that action after treating them as I did previously.

My family were always interested in bees. We used to make the old straw skip. The straw was threaded through a piece of cow horn to give a fine rope and for the binding. I don't suppose we could get cane in those days because it was too dear to buy, so we used long brambles out of the hedge and would strip it down into four pieces and use this for the binding. In those days when we took the honey away we had to destroy the bees and then cut the honey up and put it in a straining cloth and hang it up to drain. After it was drained we used to make mead out of it, which was a very strong liquor—if you had a glass of it you would not get very far down the road. Then came the box hive with the brood sections at the bottom of the hive and the shallow frames at the top where the honey was in and which we extracted by a special extractor. There was what we call an excluder between the brood box and the shallow frames that was to keep the queen bee from laying her eggs in the shallow frames and sections. I always tried to improve everything I handled and I made all my bee frames and hives by a little circular saw I made from a free-wheel pedal saw. I got the idea from a pedal emery wheel and I developed from that. There was nothing on the market like it at the time. I made the bearings out of old lawn mower bearings and a mangle wheel for the fly-wheel and a free-wheel from a cycle. It would go through an inch of wood after stopping pedalling. I used to cut everything with it, shallow frames, etc. After I finished bee-keeping I gave it to a war-disabled man who kept bees and he used it for a good many years and as far as I know it is about today.

After losing my first wife I had several housekeepers, which was not very satisfactory. I was then lucky to meet a Miss Tremain, from Cornwall, from a well-known Cornish farming family, who was staying with friends in the district. They asked me to meet her and, as she liked being up here, we met and arranged for her to come and keep house for me. After a while we got married and we have enjoyed our retired married life. We have taken trips to Cornwall many times and had a delightful holiday in Scotland, enjoying the loch scenery. My advice to others after losing your first partner is to try to find another to make life happy to the end.

I could not have picked a better wife in the whole world for being interested in housework, painting pictures to painting walls, etc., and gardening. Together we have turned our hands to anything and we built a complete wall round Hillside with 6,000 bricks, which has set the place off nicely and is a model for anybody.

Finally, I have enjoyed my life through thick and thin, even with all the hardships of my young life, taking life as it comes and making the best of it, as the future always takes care of itself.