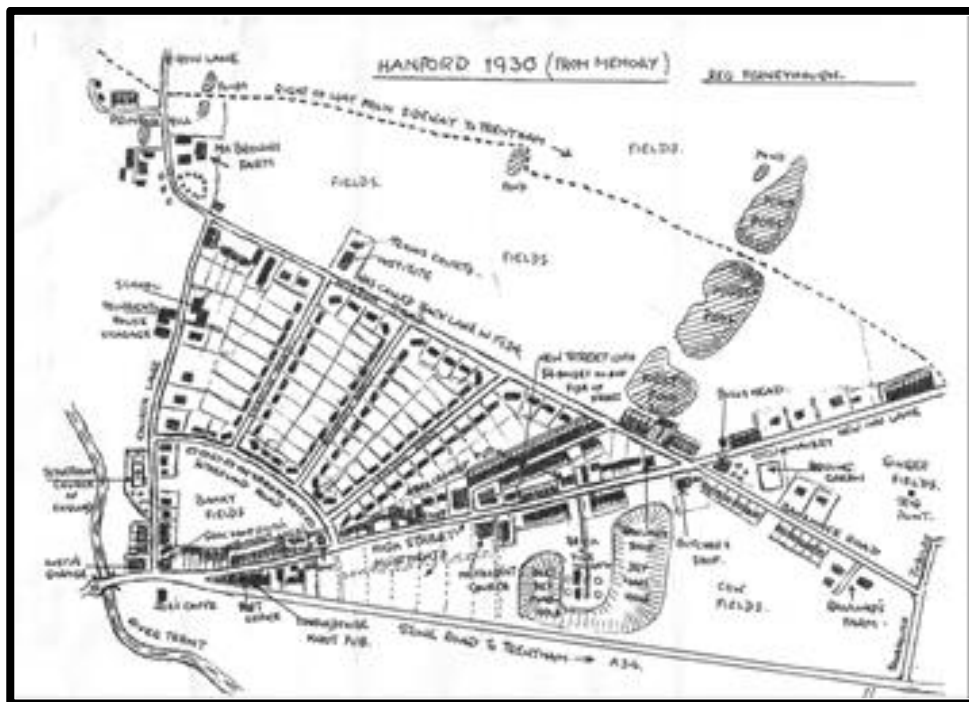


Hanford Memories

A Hanford Boyhood from the 1920s by William Salt



Map of 1930s Hanford drawn from memory by Reg Ferneyhough



Trentham Heritage Project

I was born on the 25th of June 1925 at 16 New Inn Lane, Hanford. I was the youngest of five, 2 brothers and 2 sisters. When I was aged 12 months Gladys, aged 15 died from an illness that today is cured. When I was aged about 5 my other sister, Mary died. She was cleaning the grate and her clothes caught fire, she was burned to death.

We lived in a row of houses and no one was well off. I used to go down asking if they could lend us half a loaf which we paid back when we could. I used to have bread broken up in a bowl with tea poured over it for my tea.

We had fields in front of us and fields at the back. We only had two bedrooms so us 3 lads slept together in one bed in the back room. No light upstairs, we had to carry a candle up. I left home aged 26 when I got married and went to live in Meir.

There were three farms in Hanford, one in New Inn Lane run by two brothers, Brassingtons, one was named Charlie (Billy possibly). By their farm was a bridge over New Inn Lane, a railway line going to Trentham Gardens, now knocked down. There was a farm in Bankhouse Rd, Rawlins ran that one. We walked through their fields when we walked to Trentham Park. The other farm was by Hanford School, the continuation of Wilson Rd, and their fields were behind our house.

There were three large pools back of our row of houses, two are filled, the remaining one is still there intact. I think it belongs to the Michelin firm for the use of their workers, fishing.

By this pool a local man named Sid Mason rented a small patch of land, built sheds and fenced it off. He then started to get old wood and make bundles of wood to light a fire with. He took them round Hanford in a pony and trap, he had got two or three ponies. One night we were woken up, his sheds were on fire. My elder brother and me went and got the ponies out of their sheds, by this time Sid arrived and looked after them. Sid Mason then went on to build a shop which is now the Co-op by the top of High St. Across the road used to be Bailey's shop who sold general goods. He had sugar in 1cwt bags and weighed it out for you in 1lb bags.

In New Inn Lane we had Finney's shop where you could buy cloth. They had a large table and would roll out what you wanted. Run by two elderly women. Across from Finney's lower down was The Bull's Head pub, the entrance right on the road, knocked down now, it had a bowling green at the back. We had the bowls for fire wood, they saved us some coal.

I remember as a lad there was a young lad drowned in the Michelin pool, they got him out the next day. He lived near the chapel top of High St. When they were filling in the middle pool, they used to take the horse and cart in the field back of our house, they would back the cart close to the pit and tip it up, it was very steep.

Joe Reeves who lived next but one to us, used to take cart loads there. One day the cart went too far and horse and cart went in the pool. The Reeves family were all business people, the father had horses and carts, one son had a lorry which he used to help builders in different ways, two other sons had a scrap yard in New Inn Lane. They bought old cars and took the good parts out and resold them. One son had a caravan built by my uncle Tom, when he delivered it everybody went to look at it, the first caravan we had seen. It was a lovely job, made with plywood, all fitted out inside. My Granddad was the head joiner at Trentham estate, I used to go and watch my uncle make the carts and wheels all by hand, they were proper craftsmen those days.

I was 14 years old when the war started. My elder brother was called up in August before the war started. He was in the Territorials. He was a gardener at a big house in Whitmore, he told me to cycle to where he worked and tell Jeff Maddocks, the owner, he had been called up, we had no phones then. He asked me to come and start work, the chauffeur would show me what to do.

I was gardening until I was 16 then went on a course in engineering at the Michelin factory. After 6 weeks training I started at the Dart Cash engineering firm making parts for tanks. I was exempt until aged 21 but, when I was 17, I volunteered to join the Royal Navy.

John Joseph Salt (my father) lived in Trentham until he married. (His brother was Thomas Salt)

My mother was Elizabeth Salt, her maiden name, I think, was Hollinshead.

She worked as a live-in worker in a large house in Barlaston Rd. Trentham

My father worked at the grocery shop in Brough Lane, Trentham. He delivered stuff all over Trentham by horse and cart, that was how he met my mother.

My father died in 1972 aged 82. My mother died in 1971 aged 83.