

David Cooper

Memories of the first petrol pumps and the Post Office during the 1940s and '50s.

My aunty next door, Elsie Bellamy ran the Post Office, they had the petrol pumps installed and I used to go in and help her – but the first pump they put in next door, they didn't have any electric, so it was a hand pump so I used to go in and serve petrol for her, pumping the blasted pump, darn hard work too, then of course in '63 the electric came and it went over to electric, and I think she sold up in 1965.

So was the Post Office a bit of at a centre of things?

Oh goodness me yes, and we had two postmen, Jack Bellamy, that's Elsie's husband, used to deliver post on horseback, then the other old boy who used to do it was called Bill Withycombe, he used to do the round in the morning, go out around Challacombe and around back via the Warren House in, on his motorbike, and in the afternoons he used to make all the local gates, and he used to make them up where the information office is now, the Dartmoor Information offices, and its always been known locally as Bill Withycombe's shop, that was his workshop.

So there were two postmen, one who did it on his bike...

One on his motorbike, yeah, and Jack Bellamy used to do it on horseback.