**Sheep Fair in Marlborough**

*These are Miss Lily Head’s own words (1905-1997) transcribed from a Dictaphone by Susan Monson. They give an insight into life in the early 1900’s.*

They used to have seventeen thousand sheep at Marlborough Fair on August 23rd and all those the drovers had to get away at night. Sometimes another farmer would let them have a field so that they could take them on the next day. They would bring them at night to Stitchcombe Farm and then they’d drive them onto the Common in the morning. It was all sheep. And for all the ones that had to go a distance my father was up the station loading them. They had to drive them up the road to the station and you would hear them quarrelling because one man was getting his mixed up with another man's. My dad used to go at four o clock and he was up at the station still at midnight loading them. But then it didn't hurt did it? He lived to be 89!!

All the gipsies bought all their horses. In those days there were any amount of gipsies, real gipsies. They used to barter with one another with all these horses, selling them to one another, which was quite fun to listen to. They always did that. I suppose they thought that where there was all these other dealings with the sheep they would stand a good chance of someone wanting to buy them.

I suppose it was horses they used to find round about in those days and them kept them on to feed them, look after them and then sell them for money. They didn’t dress in special clothes but were untidy, you could tell who they were. Some of them had beautiful painted caravans, a mixture. They were all out to make money, it was traditional. The children ran about up there playing with little dogs, they all had dogs so that nobody could get in a caravan and take anything.

There was a proper beer tent for the men. The hired chaps and auctioneers had to be careful when talking, who bought this flock of sheep and who bought that. All these big farmers – the farmers seemed bigger - would talk to each other.