

Rodney

## SOAMES FARM

in 1961

I started work there when I left school as dairy lad. The owner was Cecil Childs who ran it with his wife, whose name I cannot remember. Start work at 7.30am. Half hour break mid-morning, dinner 1 to 2. Finish about 6. I helped to milk about 60 cows. They slowly increased over the years.

It was not just a farm with cows, pigs and chicken but a small holding with vegetables and flowers. These, and eggs, were taken to market on Thursdays. This was the day milking got done early as the other farm hand wanted to finish at 5.

It was in the first week of work that I put my back out. Told to lift a bag of corn onto a trailer, never being shown how to lift. No health and safety in those days. Suffered the rest of my life with a bad back. He had boar who was kept somewhere further up Soames lane and I had to go and get it. The boar could have been let out and he would find his way to the farm.

Cecil had a bull who was kept in a stable in the yard. Any cow coming through who was in season the bull would go mad. You made sure the top door was closed when the cows came through, except one day when I was told to let the cows through the year and Cecil had forgotten to close the door. The bull nearly came over the top of the door. Cecil beat the bull back, but lead him to have a proper bull ring built behind a door to the milking shed.

After two years it became apparent that Cecil was not well. New milking equipment was put in with pipework and a bulk

tank. Around this time there was Fowl pest and Foot and Mouth in the area. Hygiene was paramount. By now Cecil had got rid of the pigs and was cutting back on the chicken and leaving me to do more and more with the dairy. I was not 18, quite a responsibility. I was working seven days a week. I did get some help when a part time worker came. The day came when Cecil said he was selling up. The sale day was sad seeing all the cows I had looked after going.

The new owner was Gordon Martin and his wife Nora. They had two boys. The Martins ran a raw milk delivery service in Basingstoke. As the government made the rules for raw milk more and more difficult they gave up cows and I was out of a job.

This description of the farm is what I remember. Coming off Soames Lane you enter the yard. To the right was the garage also used as a workshop. Between the garage and the entrance to the milking parler are the grain bins. These held brewers grains, an offshoot of the brewing industry, for cattle feed. To the left of the yard are two stables, on held the bull. There was a lean to which housed the dairy. The milking parler had room for about forty cows. To the right there was one row of stalls, to the left were a double row. The cows came in and out through a door at the south end. Out of this door was the collecting yard divided in two. One for cows that needed milking and one for those who had been milked. The yard lead to a field. Go to the north inside the milking parler and there is a door that lead through a food storage area on the left and on the right the bull pen.

Beyond that were two barns. To the right a completely covered one and in front a Dutch barn. To the side of the Dutch barn was a large brewers grain storage pit. This got filled during summer when more beer was brewed and used during the winter when fodder was short. There was a track that led to Parkstone road. The pig pens used to be beyond the barns.