
The Council Road Man

The County Council employed a "Road Man", and he would travel from boundary to boundary with his wheelbarrow, keeping the culverts free of debris, and in general keeping his "patch" very neat and tidy. You could have set your watch by him as he travelled to and from work, although he worked unsupervised, his "boss" arrived on pay days by car and no doubt to check that all was well. The traffic of course did very little damage to banks, I use the word "banks" as opposed to "verges", as it comes more naturally to me, could it be a local thing?

The work was of a very different nature to that, which would be required today, though in point of fact it is now only done spasmodically. The fact that he would know the places where trouble such as flooding might occur and put it right, must have been of enormous value. Probably in my very early days one road crossed through a ford, "Pollicot Ford", but a bridge was later built, certainly if not before I was born it would be sometime before my memory began to function.

In the case of deep snow reinforcements in the shape of those that couldn't get to their normal place of employment would be taken on to dig out the deep drifts. For this you would need an in date insurance card and plenty of energy, as at times the snow nearly reached the telephone wires. Particularly on the Pollicot to Ashendon road, where the snow drifted between the hedges, though at the same time it might be only a few inches deep in the adjacent fields. In those days it was not unknown for these outlying villages to be cut off for a week. The last time I remember this happening was in March Nineteen Forty-seven. I joined up on the sixth and had difficulty walking to the station, which as the trains on the L.N.E.R. Marylebone to Wotton were not running it meant a walk to Dorton Hall to catch the "Puffing Dart", to Princes Risborough. The snow was certainly waist deep in places, both on the road to Wotton, and then on the road to Dorton. It was considered impassable when the milk lorry or later the buses were unable to get through. In later years, such as nineteen sixty-three, the roads were never allowed to get so bad, as by now there were applications of salt, limited local snowploughs and when required the Ministry of Transport heavy snowplough which could cut it's way through several feet deep.

One snowy day we decided to ambush the Road Man as he came home from work. Unfortunately for us he was accompanied by his son in law and a wheelbarrow load of snowballs. We were just slightly outclassed.