



West Moors - A History in Images . . .



PINo 1 STATIONROAD WEST MOORS Copyright G. T. Hook West Moors Premise



PINo 2 WAR MEMORIAL WEST MOORS Copyright G. T. Hook West Moors Premise

Based on a Library presentation in May 2022.

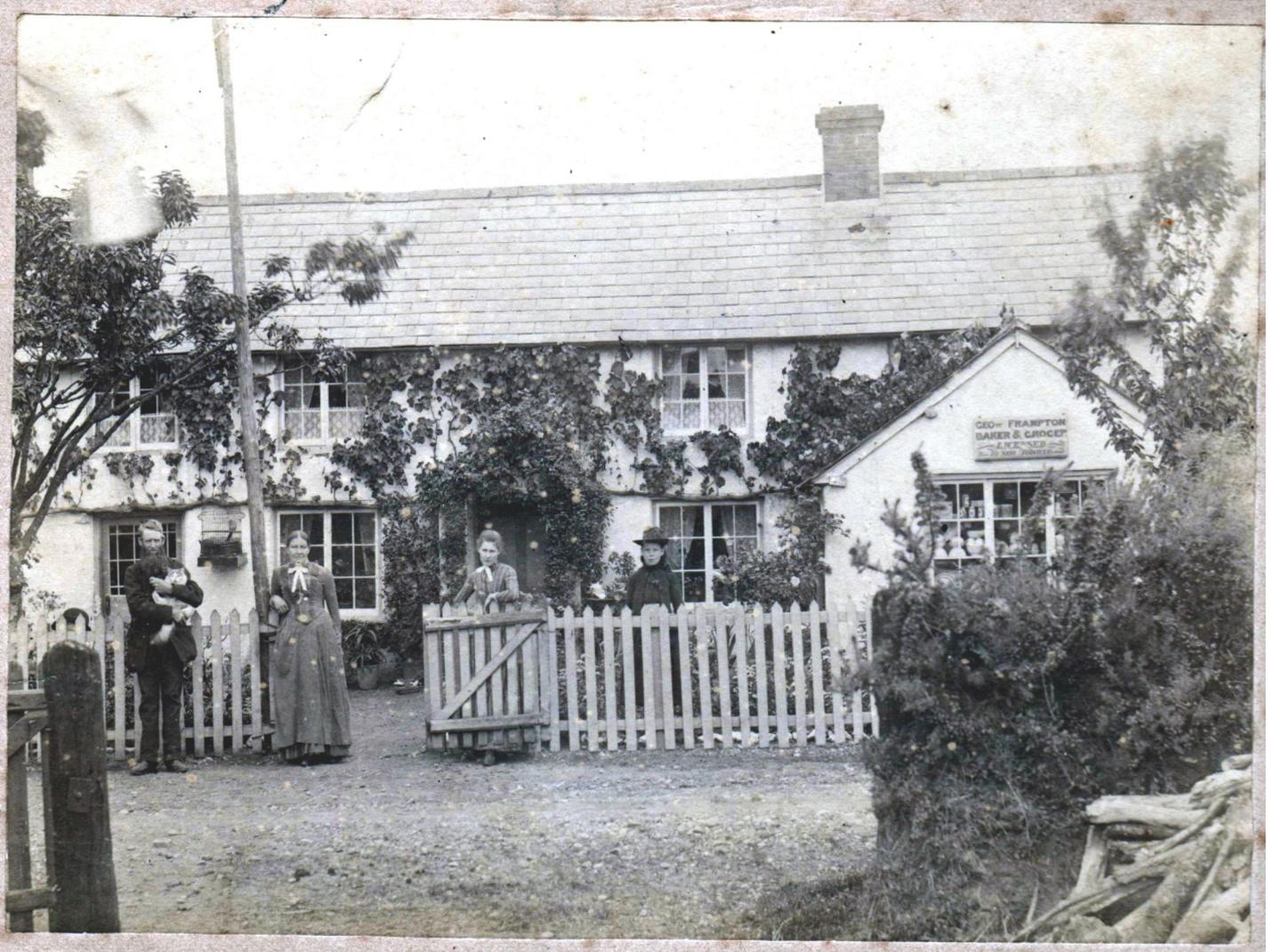
These photographs and accompanying text were put together for a local history exhibition in our Library during May 2022. The images were gathered from a variety of sources - not always credited - but the resolution has been kept deliberately low to avoid the charge that they might be 'lifted' by pirates and turned into profitable postcards!

The great Dorset author and poet, Thomas Hardy, described life for a small community of the Dorset heathland thus: "*... a place perfectly accordant with man's nature - neither ghastly, hateful, nor ugly: neither commonplace, unmeaning, nor tame; but, like man, slighted and enduring; and withal singularly colossal and mysterious in its swarthy monotony ... solitude seemed to look out of its countenance...*"

... and the area that gave birth to the modern community of West Moors would have fitted that text exactly - this rural area of east Dorset was tucked away from the hurly-burly of life: the community, such as it was, consisted of a patchwork of fairly small farms scattered on either side of the Mannington Brook & Uddens Water with no doubt a few rough dwellings dotted about the edge of the moor ... and then the railway arrived ...

And the landscape was essentially unchanged for several centuries ... but in 1847, instead of being ignored, the new railway carved a path across the moors and farm fields, initiating change that would bring about the West Moors we know today.

These photographs cover our story from *late in Victoria's reign until early 21st century*. The Town Council is the guardian of many records of our history, and the Library holds publications and other data that can be referred to. The Dorset History Centre also holds many records of local history. We hope you will enjoy browsing these snapshots from our past!



The first 'shop' in West Moors! By the time of this photograph (late 19th century) it had been around for over 3 decades - selling basic tinned foodstuffs, teas, household requisites, beers and other beverages as well as products of the associated market-garden and produce brought in by itinerant traders. The family were the Framptons - this spot is opposite St. Mary's, just a little way up towards modern-day Bond Avenue. The development of the Station Road shops early 20th century ended the business.



Not long into the 20th century and these are the earliest known images of what is now the 'heart' of the shopping area on Station (then Ferndown) Road. Note nothing on the western side (that comes in the twenties). Of the two buildings, one of them is still there; can you guess which?



A very early photograph of St. Mary's school. Opened in 1896, it wasn't the first school - we've had a school of sorts since 1843.



St. Mary the Virgin parish church on Station Road (though probably referred to as Church Road at this time) ... during the Edwardian era, not many years after construction of it, and the School / Schoolhouse (background). No pavement and the road is composed of crushed stone - very little traffic to disturb the peace of what was essentially the village 'core': it would be a little later that significant development occurred down the road.



Long gone, but a very important event: the opening of the reinforced concrete footbridge in 1902 - this avoided pedestrians waiting for the gates to open after a train's passage.



Almost unrecognisable now but the 'signature twist' in the road in the distance gives it away. This was taken roughly where Brewer & Brewer are, looking south. The hedges are well-developed and planted trees full-grown, suggesting early 1920s. The building nearest the camera was the village (and wider local area) post office - now a tea-room. The hedge to the left of the pedestrians is part of the Congregational (now United Reformed Church) property.



Station Road shops ... coming along ... in the early/mid-1920s. Still nothing on the left, but the post Great War development of West Moors housing has encouraged several commercial operations - the classic 'family over the shop' model for the most part. No overhead cables (electricity) but isolated telephone lines. Gas would be available. The shop with the awning is a bakery - the basic building is still there!



A rare photograph - dated 1907 - of somewhere other than Station Road! A testament to the growth of West Moors is that in the first decade of the 20th century, we gained our first resident GP. He was Surgeon-Commander Dr. Henry Hadden. The house ("Kathenmoor"), in Woodside Road, was not only his residence but also the surgery. It no longer exists.

[courtesy: Lawrence Ottley, who also provided much of the information.]



A rare early photograph of Pinehurst Road, taken from near the turning for Avon Road looking back towards the Station Road end. Poorly maintained - but then these houses only just built in the early 1900s. Until the turn of the 19th/20th century, Pinehurst was little more than a trackway avoiding the need to cross the boggy land around Uddens / Woolslope. Within 20 years of this view, development would be steady, aided by the advent of wider car ownership.



This is believed to be the first 'bus' (actually a converted lorry) to provide a regular service to West Moors & surrounding areas. Goods were carried below, passengers above - a link with the 19th century carriers cart. Dating a little difficult - probably pre-Great War. The coming of bus services was a boon and helped encourage development of areas of West Moors away from the railway station. Women especially appreciated the presence of a friendly conductor.



This view of St. Mary's is taken, unusually, from The Avenue - note the very new crosses - helps to date this to the 1910s.



1914 - 1920 ?

Difficult to relate to modern-day West Moors but the nearest building is still with us!

The building nearest is, heavily modified, the 'core' of the units that now house the fish & chip shop, hairdressers, card shop, wool shop etc. Nothing on the left and apparently even Brewer 'corner' hasn't been developed yet ... hence the estimate of date.



An early view of the Brewer & Brewer offices on the corner of Farm Road with Station Road (opposite the Library). The building opened in 1920 and this image is dated 1925. Note the relatively unmade appearance of the road (no paving). The Brewer family were (and still are) at the heart of the development of West Moors with operations dating from very early in the 20th century.

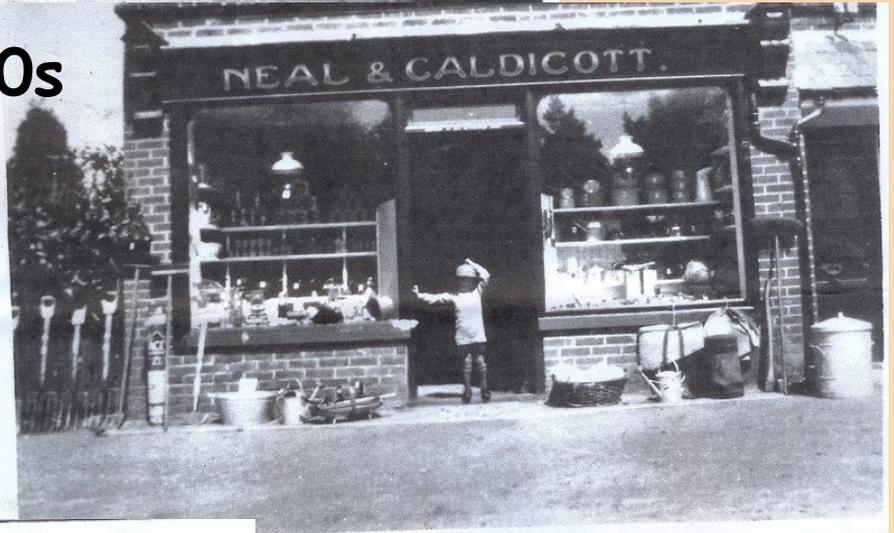


Taken from just outside where the modern-day dental surgery is: looking south towards the railway (look for the signal box) and showing near / left the horticultural supply stores - which later became the village post office. Further down, Barton's "Station Garage" with what looks to be a 'Bull-nose' Morris coming towards us: tentative date late 1920s or very early 1930s. Note road name used!



Early 1920s

Where Tesco Express now stands!



At this time, we had a population of no more than 1500: yet there were two 'general' stores in the community.



Before the days of once-a-week shopping trips everything was brought in to the local shops: here Neil & Caldicott's then Pulsford's supplied all our needs!



The Bailey family had originally taken over the older Railway Inn - then built/ran the Railway Hotel (now the Tap & Railway). The car above was used as a sort of station taxi when required.

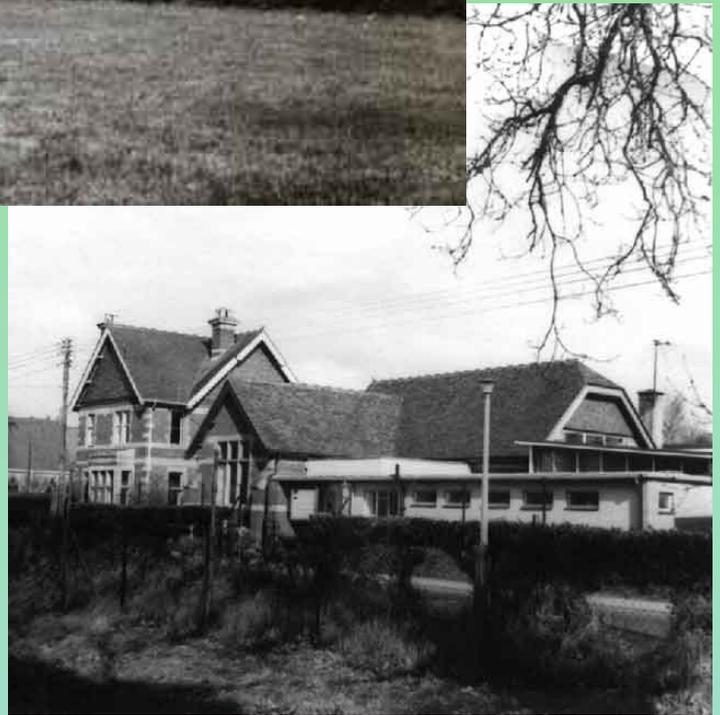


The Baileys were coal merchants, hoteliers and property developers.

Late 1910s or 1920s



Two views of St. Mary's school - the earlier showing all the chimneys and bell tower as built - the later with a more 'reduced' appearance & extensions! The foreground shot in the early image is now the car park etc., of the Memorial Hall - this wasn't opened until 1929.



1970s or
early 1980s

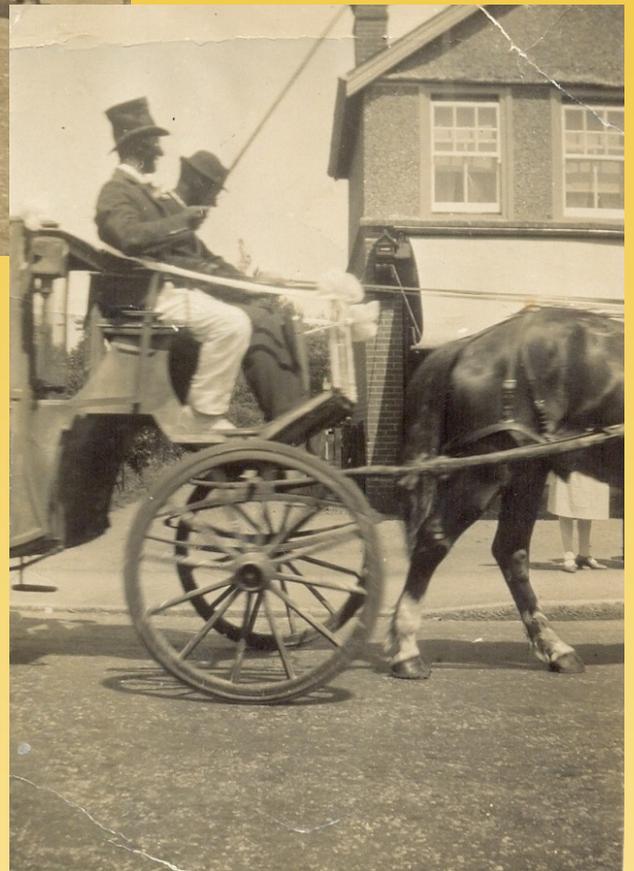


1930s

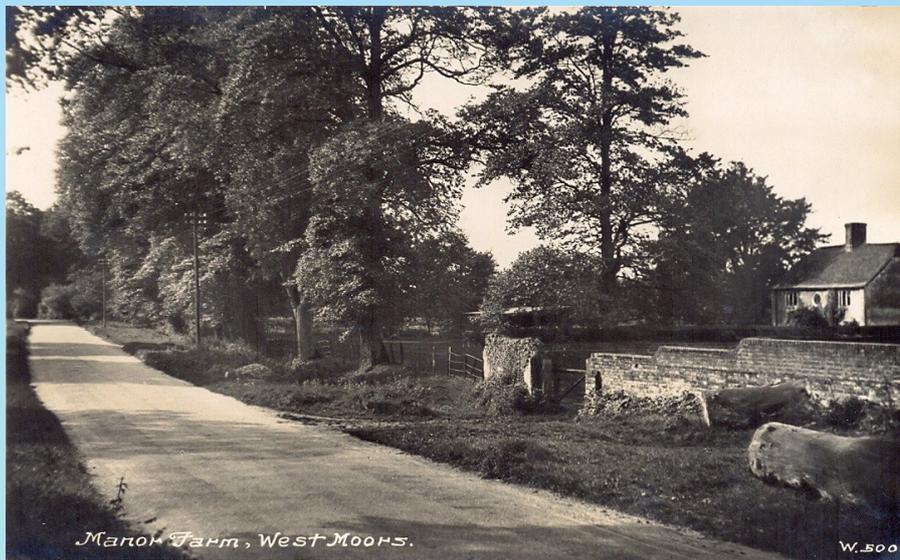
The gentleman in the shot is Walter Stickland (parish clerk), with his wife (Mary, former Frampton) and daughter. The bungalow was effectively the West Parley parish office - and, heavily modified, is now the dental surgery opposite the Riverside shops.



Along Station Road in 1937 - parade possibly in connection with the coronation of King George VI.



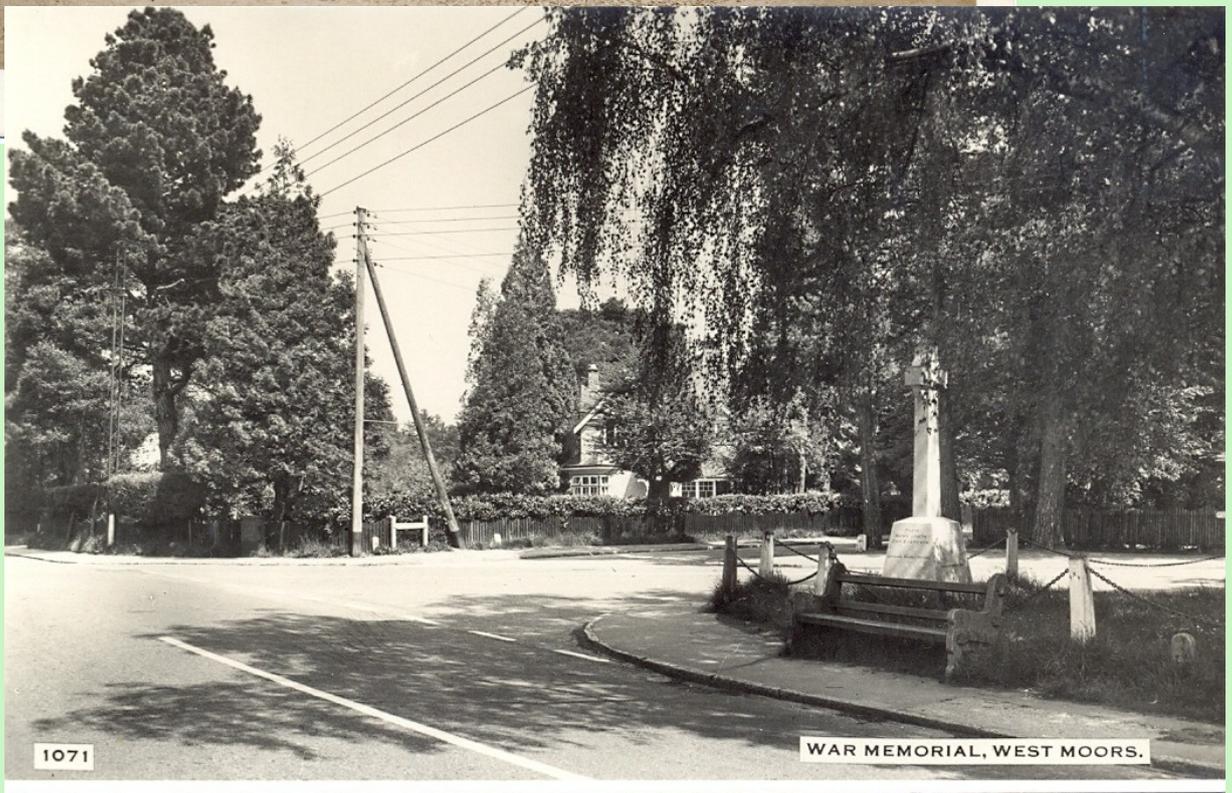
The population at this time not great (~1500 souls) so a good effort for a small community.



Two views of Gullivers (or Manor) Farm.
Top: dated to the inter-war years and the farmhouse may be the original (pre-fire);
Below: dating uncertain but probably 1950s or early 1960s. The barn (clearly seen in the second photograph, late 18th century) is now the 'core' of a very successful farm-shop enterprise.



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Our War Memorial: erected in 1920, the top image is an early photograph, the bottom image, with Second World War names, sometime in the 1950s or early 1960s. The Memorial was moved in 1971 due to safety considerations from traffic.



PC Samways:
circa 1950

Not the best of images (on right) - but important as it shows the village policeman George Samways in (we think) 1950. He is outside what was then the police house (No. 14 Ashurst Road) and the modern image on the left is an attempt to relate old with new. West Moors had a resident policeman (in Ashurst Road) from the 1930s (PC Hyde), and the police house was for a while next to the parish church but expansion of population meant the abandonment of the 'village bobby'.



Galton's Cottage in the 1950s: but before it was so-named, this was a working farmhouse dating from the middle part of the 19th century. The land farmed is now occupied (in part) by Brook View nursing & residential development and the adjacent fields and copses. The cottage/farmhouse is of course still there on Riverside Road.



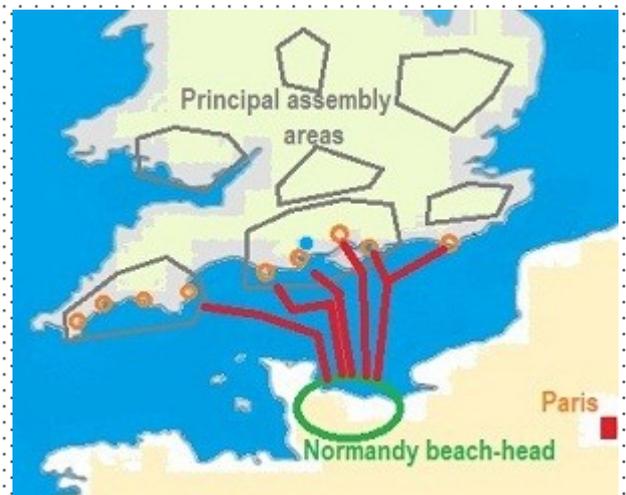
Women's Institute (WI) Choral Class in 1957: this appears to be in the main hall of the Memorial Hall, where the WI hold meetings to this day.

The WI (nationally) was formed in 1915 and was immediately popular across the country. West Moors gained its branch in 1921, just six years later.



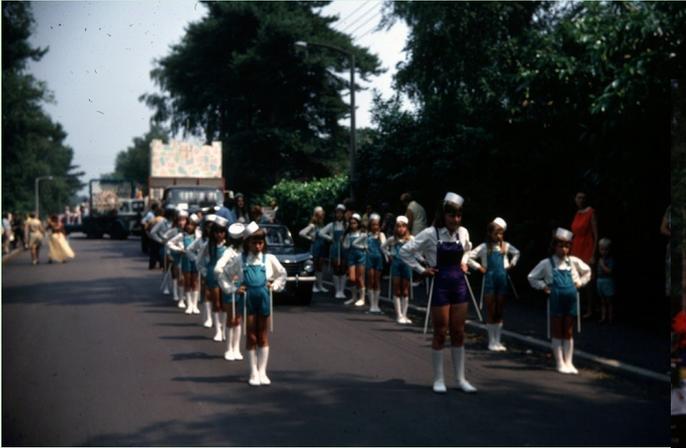
At first sight, just another railway photograph: but the 3-arm signal gantry testifies to the important part WM and its railway played in the D-Day landings. The middle arm (with the circle) was installed in 1943 to control access to the Fuel Depot sidings - pivotal to success in June 1944.

The West Moors depot (blue dot) was BY FAR, the largest supplier of fuel to the liberating land forces.





Station Road shopping area in the latter 1950s. A typical scene of a community well-settled in years - cars more in evidence than the pre-war images, but the bus heading south towards Ferndown & Bournemouth shows that for many public transport is still important. The garage and shops would be replaced early in the 21st century with the shops we have now.



*** WEST MOORS GALA - 1971 ***





Remembrance parade, early 1980s; West Moors has always had a well-attended commemoration of its fallen of both World Wars. The lady in the light blue jacket, with regalia and holding the wreath is Daphne Harrison. She was responsible for leaving a considerable sum of money after her death to benefit various organisations in the parish ... including this Library.



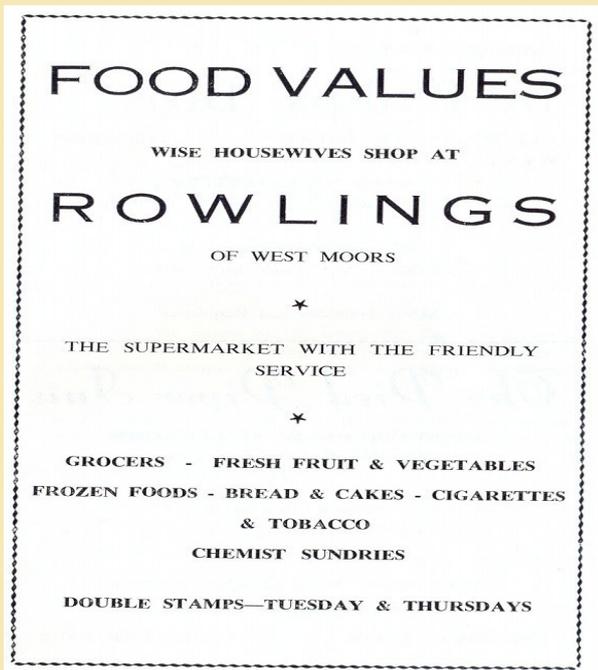
Mid-1970s school bus run between West Moors and Ferndown. This was operated by the then nationalised bus service Hants and Dorset, based in Bournemouth. The vehicle itself would have been a familiar sight around the village as this type was used extensively by the National Bus Company constituents from the mid-1950s until the 1980s.

HARRY POTTER ... AND THE WEST MOORS CONNECTION



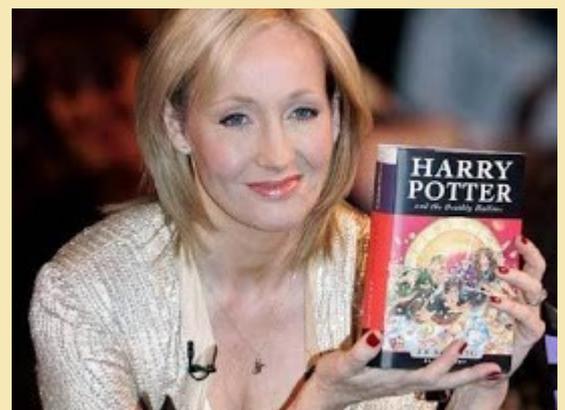
In 1995, Joanne, a thirty-year old mother of one living in Edinburgh, with not much money, put the finishing touches to a first novel; it was submitted to a dozen publishers - rejected by all.

Joanne had moved to Scotland to be near her younger sister when Jo's marriage foundered: the sisters had always been close and as youngsters in the early 1970s, could be found playing 'shops' - in a real shop, here in West Moors. The grocery store was run by their paternal grandparents, Ernie and Kathleen Rowling. The shop no longer exists (Tesco sits on its site) but the image here shows a contemporary view familiar to Jo.



Eventually Joanne found a publisher (1997) and the book hit the shelves as "Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone". Jo was asked to adopt a 'pen name', and not having a middle initial, she chose 'K' after her much-loved (and not doubt patient) grandmother.

As "JK Rowling" she would write several more 'Potter' books in that epic saga and spawn an entire 'wizarding' genre - becoming one of the most influential women of modern times as well as a major contributor to charity.





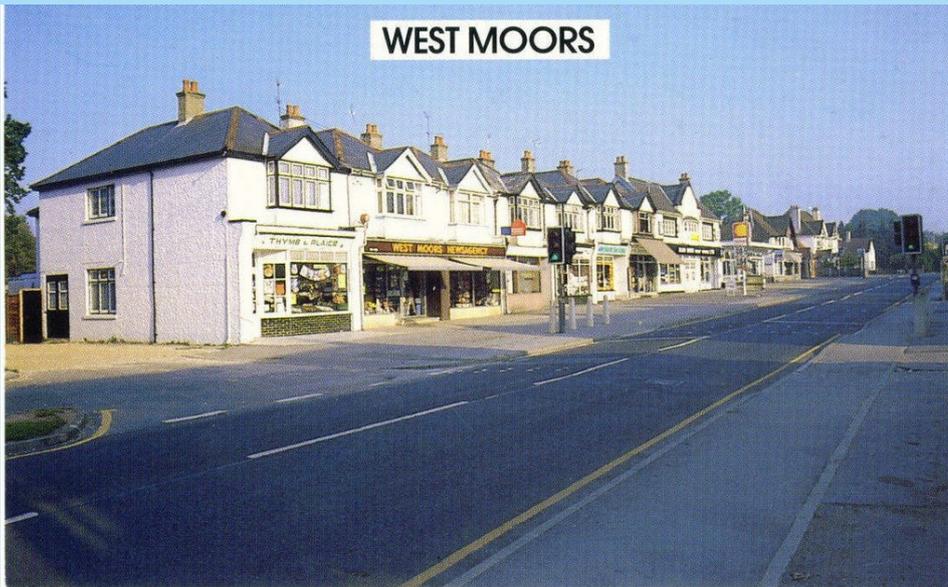
On the left, the last days of Woolslope farmhouse in the '70s; a sorry sight for a farm that can be traced back to Tudor times.

The Woolslope farm extended for a considerable way between Uddens Water and Pinehurst Road. In the 1970s, the Fryer family, owner of the land sold the farm for development as Heron Pines. Today we have a park as legacy for the benefit of all.



As part of the residential development, the Fryer Arms pub appeared - this lasted until the first decade of the 21st century - replaced by Fryer Mews.

STATION ROAD SHOPS - A RESET!



LATE 20TH
C.: strangely
deserted
road!
Functional
but long in
the tooth.

*Early 2000s:
near the end
of the line
after over
70 years of
service.*



Safety barriers up
- post a major fire:
ready for complete
re-building.

Buses serving West Moors: old and new

