

AFTER THE WAR 2

Iris and I had our first home together in Quex Park. Iris was very good with her handicraft and at that time she was into making leather gloves. We both thought it would be a good idea to have some rabbits. Our neighbour Ted had already got a few and there was plenty of room for some more, so off we went to buy them. Ted and I had only been keeping them a short time, when there were already 20 of them. Ted had killed one, so Iris asked if she could have the skin. She spent a bit of time curing the skin ready to make fur gloves.

When we started breeding these animals our daughter Barbara was only small - about 4 years old. One Sunday morning we were about to start the actual process, but I said to Iris, "Keep Barbara with you." Ted and I went into the garden to put the Doe in with the Buck. Just about everything was happening - when who should be standing beside me but Barbara! Of course she saw everything that went on. I told her to go back to her Mum, so off she went. She was so excited and told Iris, "You know that Ted, well he put our rabbit in with another one and it was jumping all over our rabbit. It was nasty!"

Our "Rabbit Firm" went from strength to strength - there were rabbits everywhere. In those days it was a good business for food and for skins. As money was scarce and wages poor, we had to do the best we could. We would sometimes have a pigeon or two from the trees in the Park. Then were the mushrooms from the meadows as well, so we didn't do too badly. One day I heard a rushing from one of the evergreen oak trees and a pigeon fell to the ground in front of me. I picked it up and killed it as I thought it would help with things indoors. Iris took the feathers off and cleaned it out - and what do you know - It had 54 whole acorns inside it, beside those that were in its crop! No wonder it couldn't fly!

Around one Christmas time I had a fret saw, so I was into making calendars. Iris would get lovely pictures from Birchington and I would stick them onto plywood and cut round them. Iris would then stick small calendars beneath the pictures and when she went shopping with Barbara, she would walk into Birchington and take the calendars in the pram. The man in the paper shop used to sell them - and he couldn't get enough. Then the price of the wood got too high, so we went round the shops to get old tea chests, which I could pull to pieces and use the wood for the calendars. If I went to collect a box, I would go on our bike, or if Iris went, she would use the pram. This went on for quite a while, until the Paper shop and the Baker's next door were knocked down to make the road wider. Sadly, that was that, as no-one else wanted this sort of thing.

Then we had some chickens; they were very good while they were young, but they didn't last long, as Mr Fox came round and had the lot! "AMEN"