

# TIM LAMB

## Marford Farm in the Second World War

### POWs

Initially **Italians** followed by **Germans**. Made a great fuss of us children.

Germans seem to have been chosen with farming skills: eg they cut willow wands, split them, soaked them and then made it into potato skips.

They were dropped at the farm daily, from the camp at Batford. An asbestos hut was supplied for their use.

They went back to Germany in 1947.

### Land Army girls

**Betty** came from Felixstowe. She stayed and married a widower (Paddison – lived at 131 Marford Road). He was a draughtsman who was working on Mosquito design at De Havilland.

**Edna** Mears was a young local girl who helped out. It was rumoured that her father (who was a roadman) was a known drunk and spent all she earned on drink. They lived in a council house on Marford Road.

### Army

Supplied a timber shed, and erected it on the farm, to house a **Bren Gun** carrier and men. They wrecked farm post and rail fencing during their practising.

Farm **bomb shelter** at end of paddock, now next to by-pass.

### Farming

**Livestock** - bull in the timber barn next to the entrance, horses tied in stalls. Hay loft above.

**Dairy cows** - milked by hand twice per day with the milk fed through a well water chilled cooler and into 10-gallon churns for collection. Equipment was steam sterilized.

Cows grazed the river meadow. Horses grazed the paddock and pigs were housed in the dairy yard.

The previous farmer's wife had taken in washing. The 'coppers' they left behind were used to cook green/split potatoes for pig food.

### War Agriculture Committee

designated what crops had to be grown and may have provided old equipment as needed.

Marford Farm had a 1928 Standard Fordson tractor with studded iron wheels and a petrol/TVO engine.

## Crops

Roots, mangolds, potatoes, kale, wheat, oats, hay.

Harvested **potatoes and root crops were \*clamped\*** in a straw thatched row.

Headlands cut by scythes and sheaves were hand-tied.

Haystack normally where crop was grown but cereals brought and stacked at the farmyard for convenient threshing. Threshing drum (brought from Sheriff's Farm?) and would arrive drawn by steam traction engine, and rows would ensue about Mother's precious rationed coal stock.

I think the **bagged wheat** was taken to the Station Yard for shipment by rail and I have a vague recollection of a 3 wheeled tow-truck delivering to the farm from the station.

## Chickens

Kept in towable field housing. **Egg production** was closely controlled by the Egg Marketing Board. Eggs were sized (small, medium, large) using a hinged series of pierced zinc sheets. The small eggs would drop through the upper sheets. Trays of eggs would be stacked (30 per tray) in boxes for collection.

[notes from conversation with Tim Lamb at Marford Farm in November 2024]