

Farming – Haymaking & Wildlife

I followed many a time after my father cutting hay with the horses and then lifting the grass and going round and around all day and then it had to be turned with a rake and fork so good and then it had to be lapped and maybe wee lumps that they talked about to keep it safe and then they come on maybe a good day you shook this all out and it had to be rucked.

Some men were real good. I seen it done but my father, he would of lapped it up and put it round the two of his hands made a hole through the middle of it' til it dried out. But them years there was very little fertilizers. Slurry was put on the grass. Hay was sweet, you could smell the hay then as you lapped away and it had to be shook out again. You would have been lucky if you had a horse and what you call a hay paddy, a tumbling paddy what they called it then. You tipped it over and forked it to somebody on a ruck. Many a time I rucked it and stood on the ruck and tramped it and then we had to take the ruck off and rope it and rake it and pull round the bottom to keep it tidy. The rucks of hay looked very tidy and then maybe after that they had to be drew in by the horse or float and pull it up by your hand and maybe went in the high garden and packed it and then it was left there 'til the winter time until you pulled and bottled it, give it around to the cows and the bale on your back and then in nineteen fifty eight the bailers came in and done away with all that work. Pick up bailer. You were luck if you had a horse and a hay rake, you raked up rows into rows and the horse tipped it. You just pulled a leaver and she tipped it. We still have a hay rig sitting in the house yet and then there was a turning thing more these modern farming had a hay turner, it turned it over and rolled it around.

There was plenty of wildlife in the country then. There was corn crakes in every field you heard them creaking all over the place, the larks hanging in the air, all this at that time up until the nineteen sixties and seventies once they started the slurring all this big machinery just wrecked the whole wildlife, rivers were full of fish then, fish all over, the place was teaming with them.

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