



Farmmland Museum

THE HADDENHAM FARMLAND SERIES

NO.1. 35p.

The Haddenham Farmland Series

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THE FARMLAND MUSEUM.

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Designed by: Richard Ladds
Published by: EARO
Ely Resource and Technology Centre,
Back Hill,
ELY. Cambridgeshire.

Copyright: Lorna Delanoy. 1976.
Printed by: E.G.M. Mann and Son Ltd.,
New Path, Fordham,
ELY. Cambridgeshire.

I.S.B.N. 0 904463 11 7

35p

Acknowledgement.

To all Haddenham Farmland Museum helpers who range in age from 7 to 70.

HOW THINGS BEGAN

It was during the Summer of 1969 that the garden of 50 High Street, Haddenham, was ploughed up for the first time in many years. Until the early nineteen-twenties this area was a well cared for garden belonging to the farm next door. Ashes from coal fires, together with broken china from the kitchen, had been used to make a raised pathway on the south side. This was before the refuse cart paid its weekly visit!

Before the last war the garden had become neglected and overgrown: the "War Ag" reclaimed it, levelled the paths and uprooted the box hedges, nut trees and the superb mulberry tree which grew there. For several years it was used for market gardening, then in the fifties it was put down to pasture, and pigs were "put out to grass".

When this grassland was ploughed up, "buried treasure" came to the surface — bits of pottery, clay pipe fragments and pigs' teeth — showing varying signs of decay! These were collected up by a small boy, washed thoroughly and arranged neatly in cardboard boxes. He then announced to his family that on payment of a small fee, anyone could look at his "museum collection". The money raised was to help children who "couldn't see and couldn't walk".

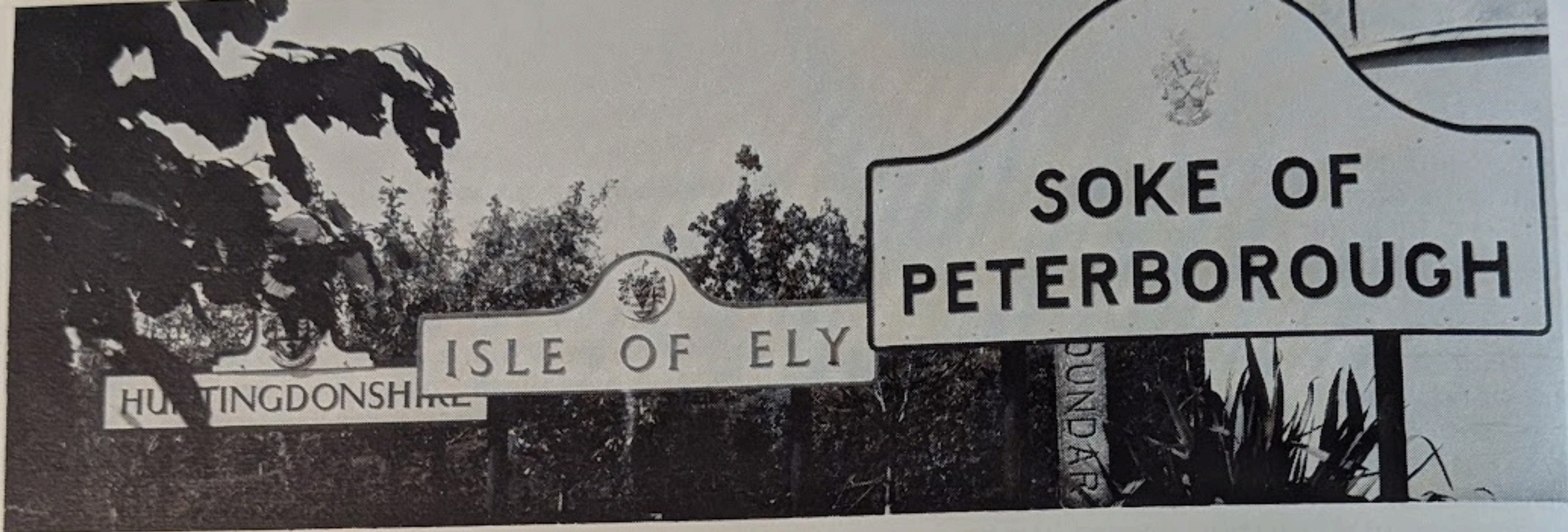
All visitors were asked to write their names in a book — and it really was quite exciting when the address was NOT Haddenham. This was especially true when one lady, who was holidaying in this country, wrote her address as "Abaco, Bahamas". On seeing sea shells with the label "found at Hunstanton", she announced that Bahamian shells were much more attractive and that on arriving home she would send us some. So many people do not keep their promises, but early in 1970 a big parcel arrived containing dozens of shells, which she had picked up on the sunny beaches of her homeland. The shells had been carefully classified and labelled.

Of course, the first visitors were family and friends. Within days they were returning with various items to add to the display — a commemorative clay pipe (unbroken!), real Roman pottery sherds and various bric a brac. One enthusiastic Senior Citizen brought along a prize possession which had belonged to her grandmother — a double baking dish whose design and shape was almost identical with some of the modern Swedish pottery!

Soon the collection was too big for a child's bedroom, so a shed in the garden was cleared of its lawn mowers and tools and the "bits and pieces" were arranged there on an old kitchen table. From then on the collection became known as THE MUSEUM and the appropriate wording was painted on a sign on the door. Friends, neighbours and acquaintances brought along all sorts of things for which they had no further use.

It is due to peoples' kindness and thoughtfulness that a child's enterprise has grown into the venture described in the following pages.

The entire garden is now the setting for the exhibits and the collection has been named — THE FARMLAND MUSEUM. Another sign has been painted — this time by one of the visitors who happened to be a professional sign-writer! — and this is displayed at the front of the house so that intending visitors can easily find the museum.



HADDENHAM VILLAGE

Haddenham is a farming village on an "island" in the Fens just over 120 feet above sea-level. Until 1965 it was in the administrative district of the Isle of Ely. In that year the 'Isle' and the old county of Cambridgeshire were amalgamated and similarly the Soke of Peterborough and Huntingdonshire were joined. In 1974, as a result of the Maude Report, these two recently formed local government areas came together to form the new, large Cambridgeshire.

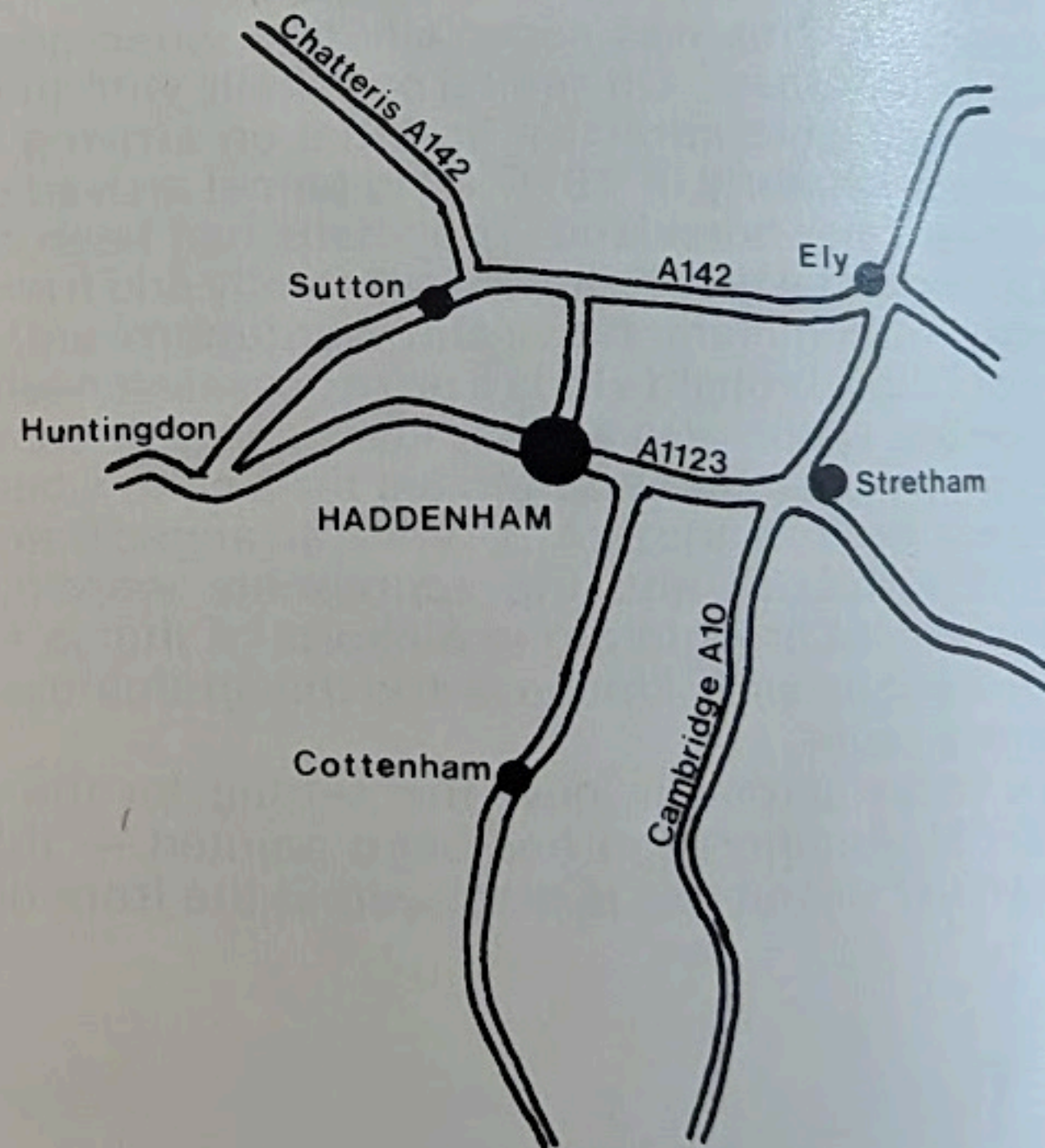
The 'Isle' sign was rescued from a metal scrap-yard while both the Soke of Peterborough and Huntingdonshire signs were bought from their respective surveyor's departments. Unfortunately, it has not been possible so far to acquire an old Cambridgeshire sign. When this has been achieved, it is hoped to make the shrub bed in which the signs are situated into the approximate shape of the new county.

Two elderly visitors were walking slowly up the hill one Summer's evening and on pausing to look at the signs one commented:

"Now ain't that remarkable!"

"What do you mean?" asked her companion.

"Why, that three counties should meet in this garden, of course!"



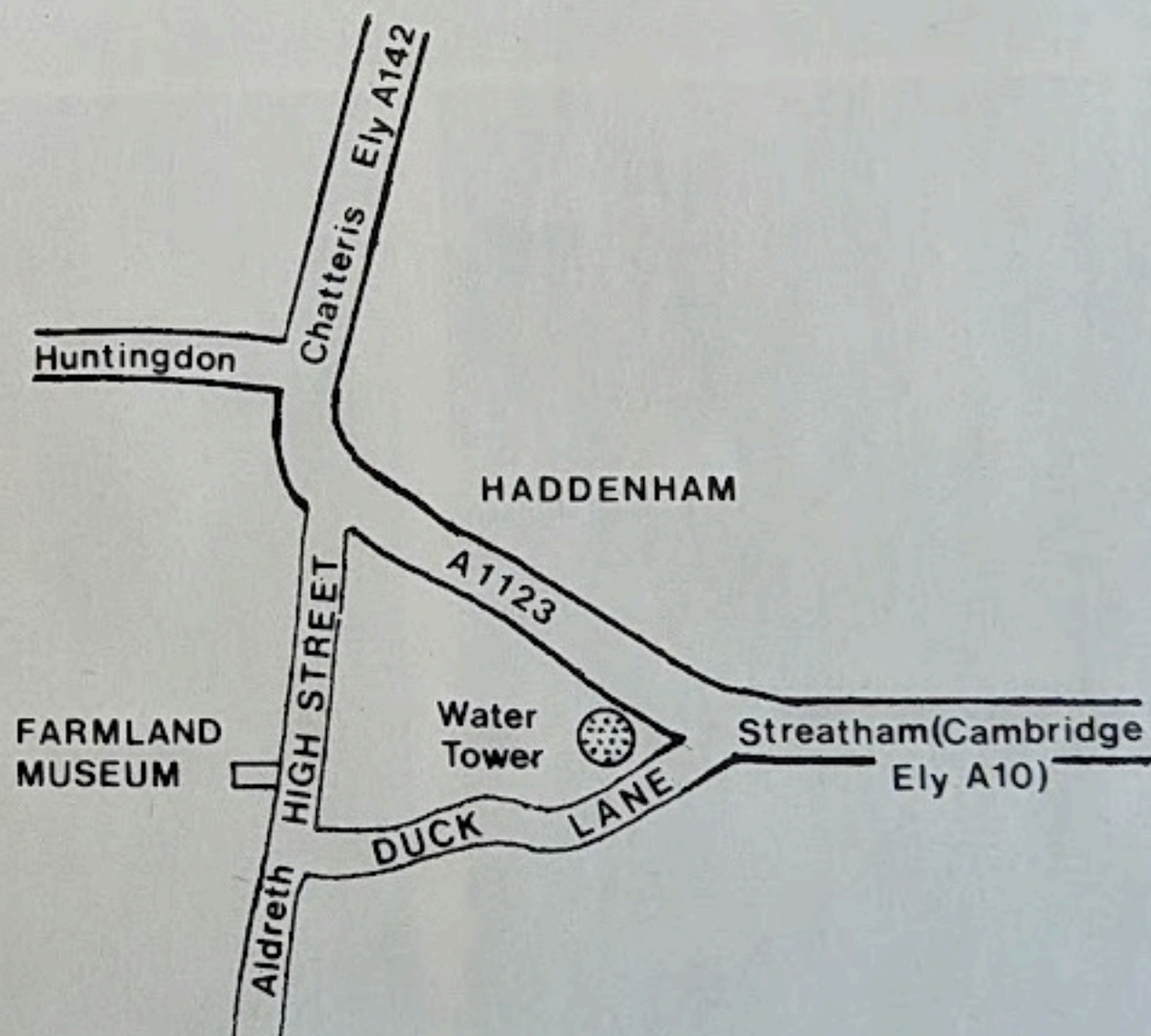


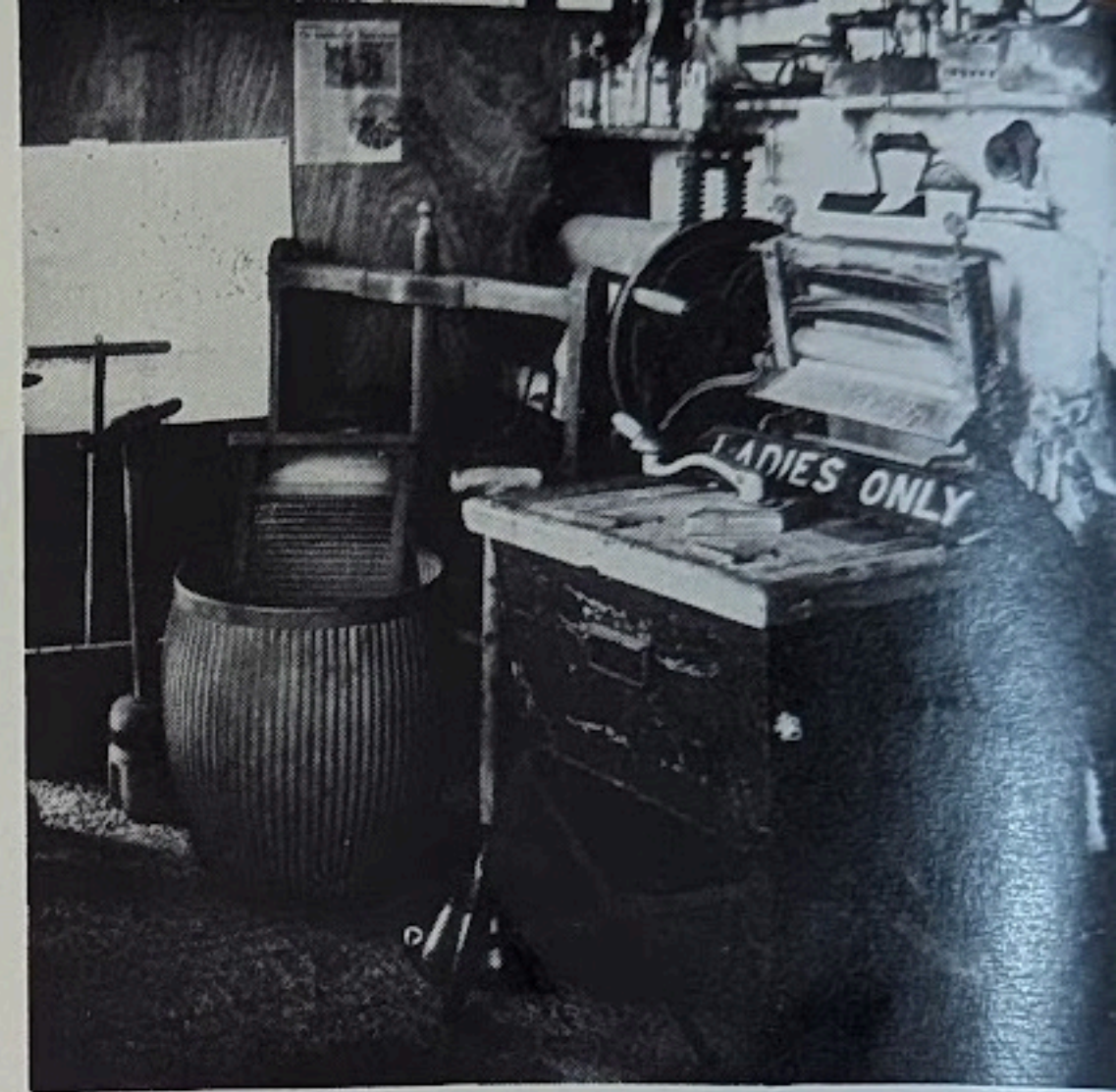
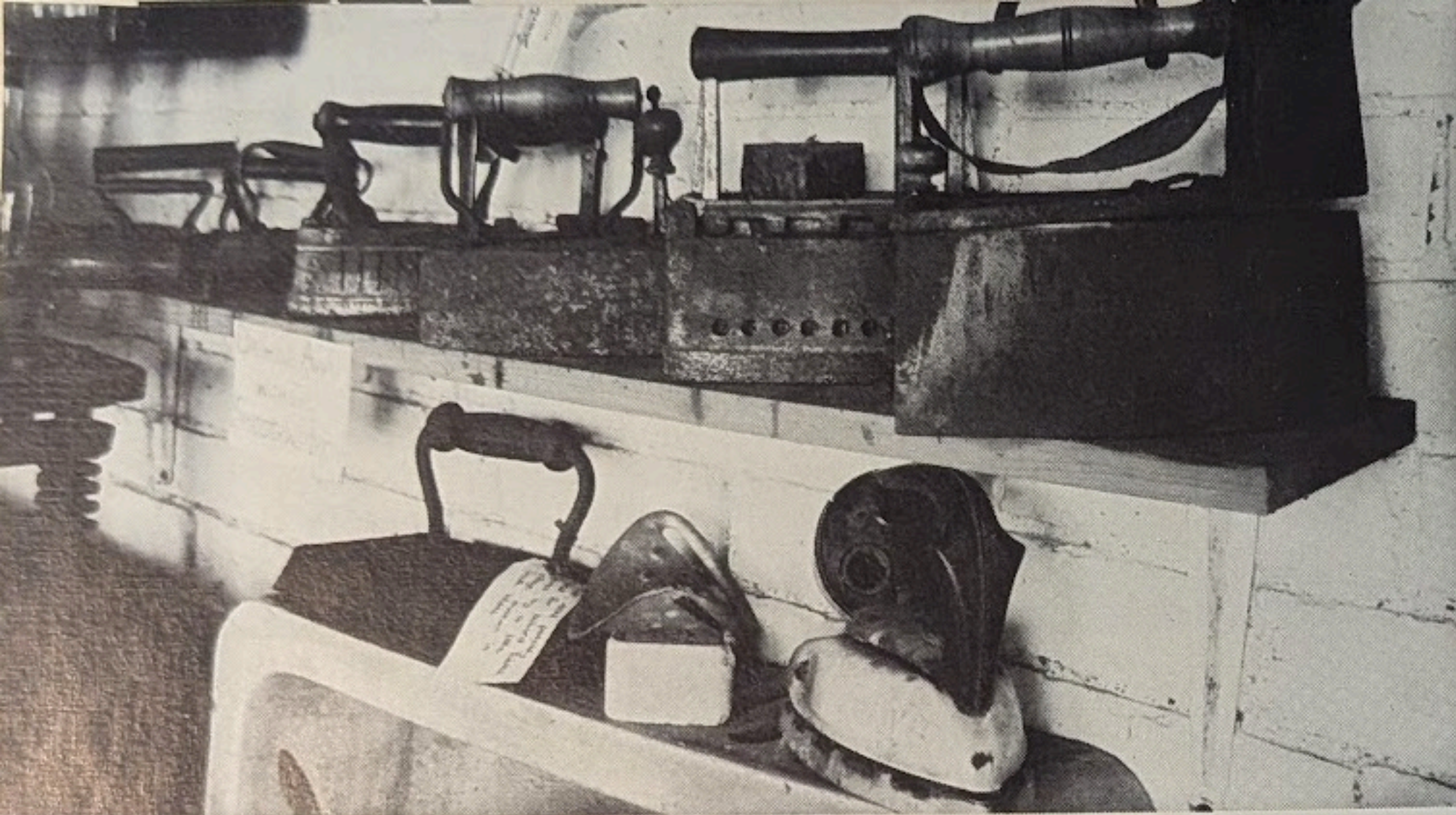
THE FARMLAND MUSEUM

Visitors to the village may notice the sign in the photograph on this page: it is displayed in one of the gardens along the High Street. Standing on the chaff-cutter is the founder of the museum — Craig Delaney.

The collection of Rural Antiquities is accommodated in the garden beyond the house, hence very little is visible from the roadway. It is open to the public on the first Sunday of each month from 2.00p.m. to dusk.

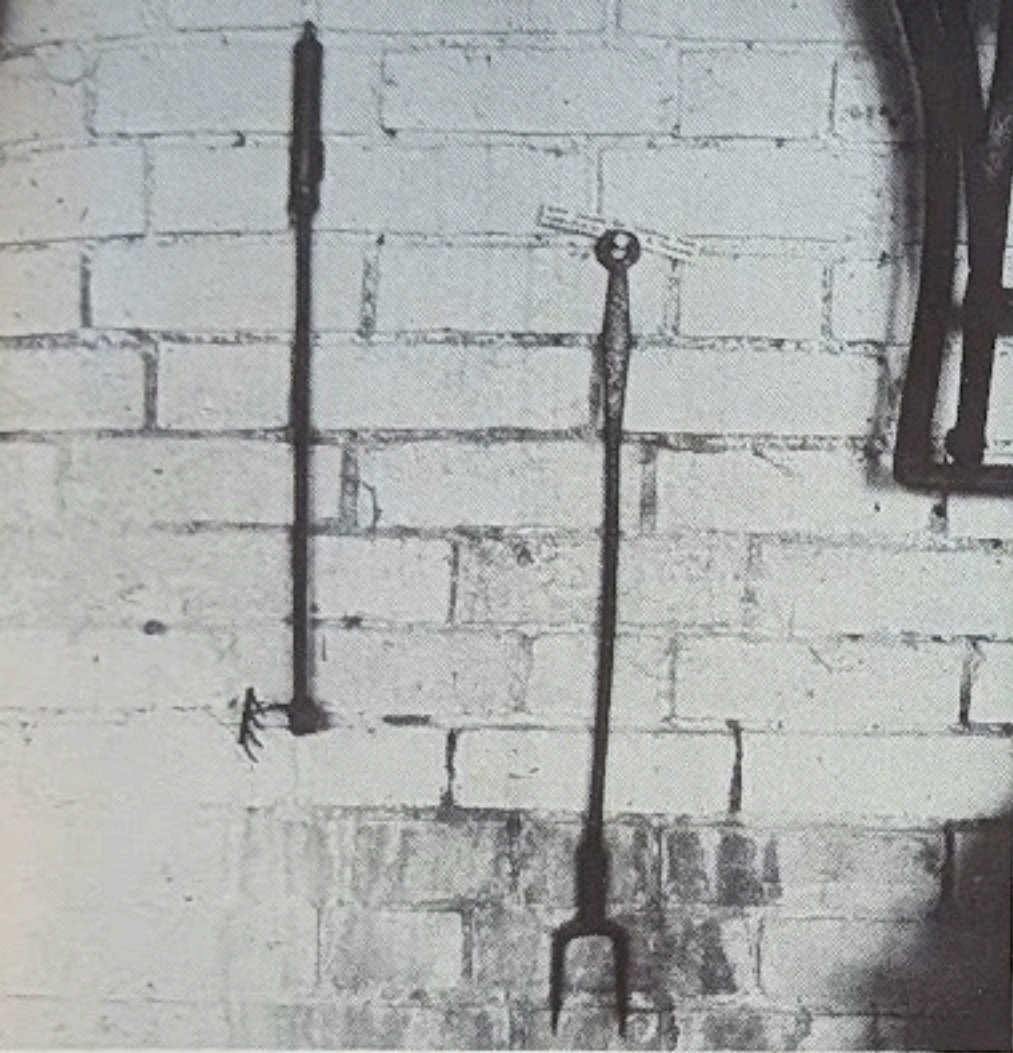
During the Summer months various activities are arranged on these afternoons — corn dolly making, weaving, pottery and blacksmithing, to name but a few. A specific charge is made at the gate for a different children's charity each month. Visitors at other times may make their own voluntary contribution to the charity box.



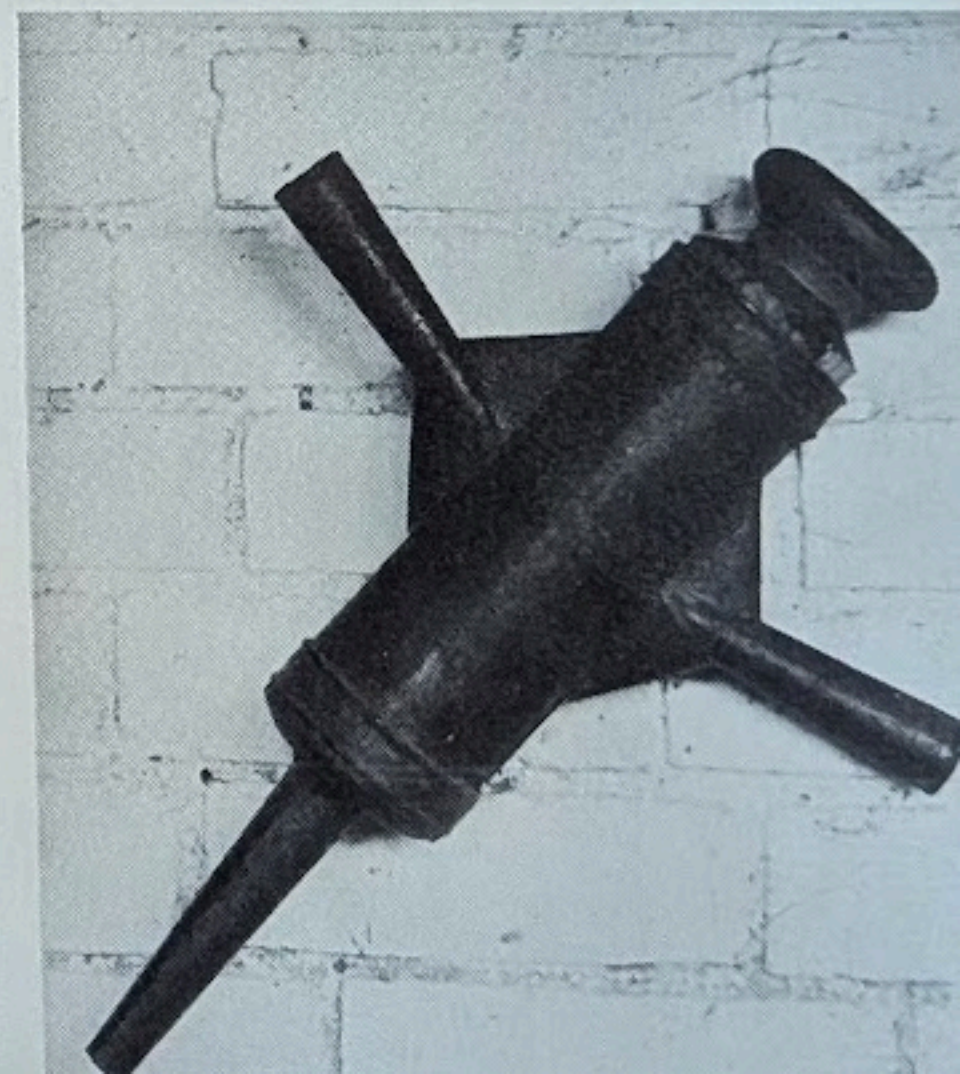
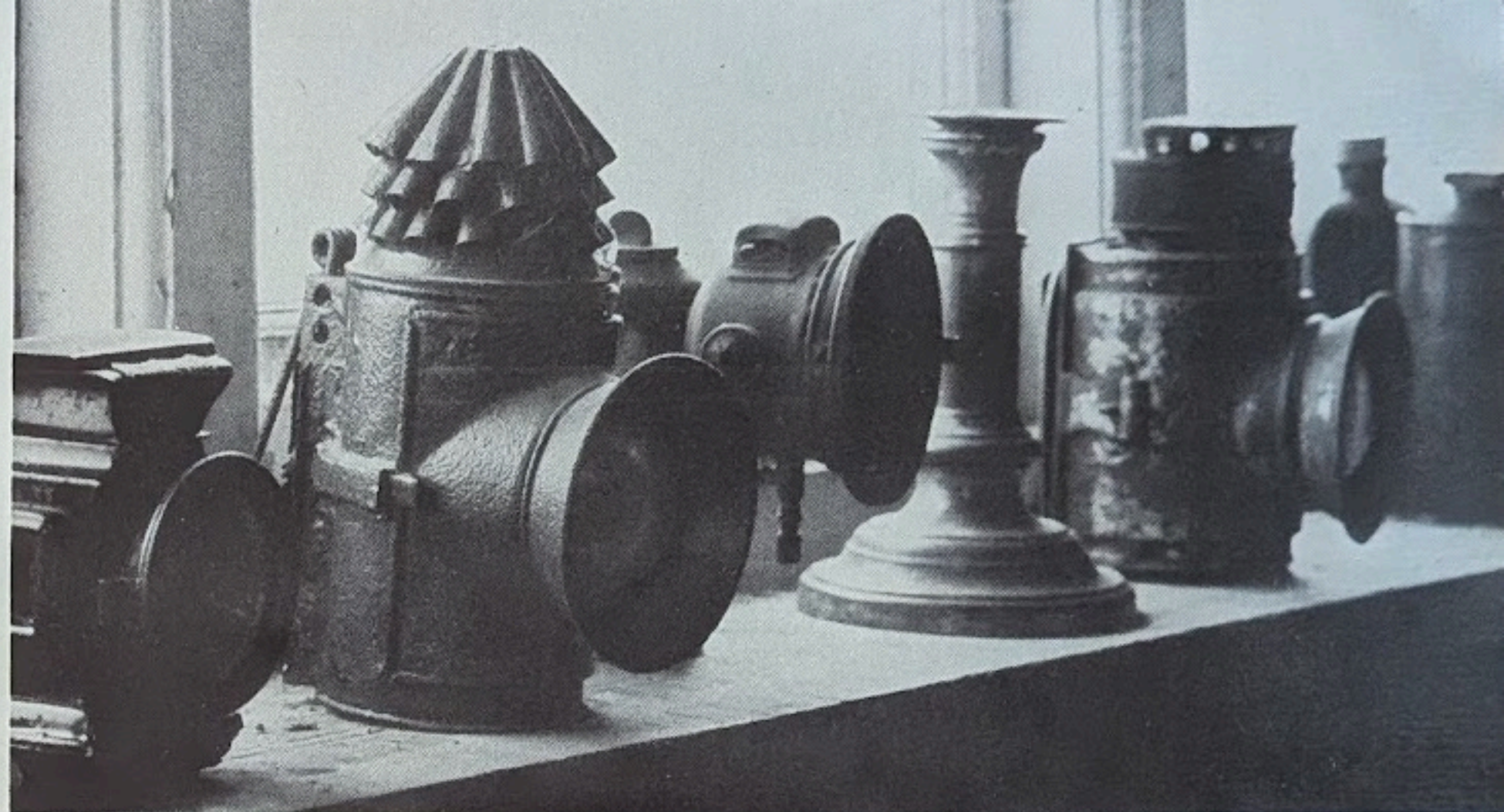


THE HOME

1. Washing was hard work! Notice the wood wash-tub, washing dollies, mangle and an early washing machine.
2. "Dashing away with the smoothing iron". There is a choice in size, shape and weight on this shelf.
3. Much of the cooking was done over an open hearth — calling for heavy iron boilers and adjustable pot-hooks.
4. The large copper kettle could provide enough cups of tea for any W.I. meeting!



5. 'Toast by the fire' is a luxury which many children today have never had. Here are two toasting forks.
6. Lighting for cycles, the village policeman and various parts of the home. No switches to press!
7. Up until the 1960's, this sausage-making machine was loaned to villagers on the day their pig was killed.
8. Lighting the fire each morning was made easier if one used bellows like this, made from leather and wood.





THE DAIRY

Until the end of the Second World War many farmhouses in Haddenham had their own dairying equipment, milk was sold "at the door" and butter churned twice a week.

The three butter churns in the photograph all came from local people and it is interesting to note that the three separators on the left were made in different countries — Belgium, England and Sweden.

Small quantities of milk did not require a mechanical separator — it was left in shallow pans, to allow the cream to rise naturally to the surface due to its lower density. This was then "scooped" off with a scimmer — a saucer-like structure with holes in it through which the "scim milk" could drain. The cream was then made into butter in a hand churn like the one on the shelf.

Wooden butter "hands" were then used to "knock it up", thus getting rid of any surplus butter-milk. The butter could then be shaped into blocks. In larger dairies this action was carried out by the "butter-worker" — the large wooden structure on the right of the photograph.

Farmers' and smallholders' wives would take their surplus butter to Ely on a Thursday morning travelling either with their own pony and trap, or in the carrier's cart. The Buttermarket is still known by that name, but the stalls there now sell such things as shoes, clothes and toys, although a first rate cheese stall is still the centre piece.

The three legged milking stool in the photograph looks just like an illustration from a nursery rhyme book! Haddenham farmers invariably used a T-shaped one. It was difficult for a novice to balance on, but very easily made from two sturdy pieces of wood.

Cows were regularly milked twice a day. A milking pail, which was held between the cowman's knees, is standing beneath the third churn. A brass rule fixed

inside the pail was used to measure the amount of milk given by each cow. The milk was then strained — to remove grit, hair, etc., and cooled. Until quite recently, farmers sold their milk in churns which were collected early every morning. Nowadays milk is collected in bulk by large tankers and the days of a small farmer keeping two or three cows, and milking them by hand, are over.

Milk deliveries to the householder used to be made by a milk cart on which stood a churn. One such churn is in the corner of the display, complete with tap and brass plate. A measure was used to pour the required amount of milk into jugs or cans which were left on doorsteps in readiness for the milkman's call.

Later 1/3, 1/2, 1 and 2 pint bottles were used. These were sealed with a cardboard disc. The machine for "topping" these wide-necked bottles came from a dairy in Ely. It was very difficult to find any of the original milk bottles but eventually some were sent to the museum from Coventry. Recently, however, several have come to light — including some from the two local dairies.

K. PATTERSON
HAND FORGED
IRONWORK



THE BLACKSMITH'S AND WHEELWRIGHT'S SHOP

A wide range of people were involved in the construction of this building. A local farmer heard that sufficient pan-tiles to make a fine roof were about to be broken up to fill in the holes along a fen drove — we saved them. A bank manager needed to have an old house demolished on his building site and when asked, donated the timber in it for use as walling. On being told about the project, a building firm allowed any suitable wood to be taken from the site of the old threshing tackle sheds at Stretham. A bricklayer travelled from Buckden on a cold Winter's morning to build the forge chimney and another from Chettisham put in the "footings". The rest of the work was carried out by friends of the museum, purely voluntarily. It is thanks to such enthusiastic workers that the entire building was constructed for little more than £70.

From the photograph opposite it can be seen that the pitched roof is of traditional pan-tiles and the walls are of feather-edged boards. The weather-vane, depicting a smith and his apprentice at work, was specially designed and made for the shop by the local blacksmith who gives demonstrations here very regularly.

The forge is brick-built and is equipped with pear-shaped bellows which gave years of service at the threshing tackle works in Haddenham. There are also cylindrical bellows which were donated to the museum by an officer in the Navy who owned property at Orwell.

The lathe, at the wheelwright's end of the shop, came from Kedington. It was repaired by a wood-turner from Willingham and made to work both by treadle (in the style of Edwardian sewing-machines) and by a pulley system using a beautifully made wooden wheel which had been part of a mechanism at the old brewery in Ely. Small boys of today love to be asked to turn the wheel much as they did years ago when the wheelwright really needed such power in order to carry out his everyday work.

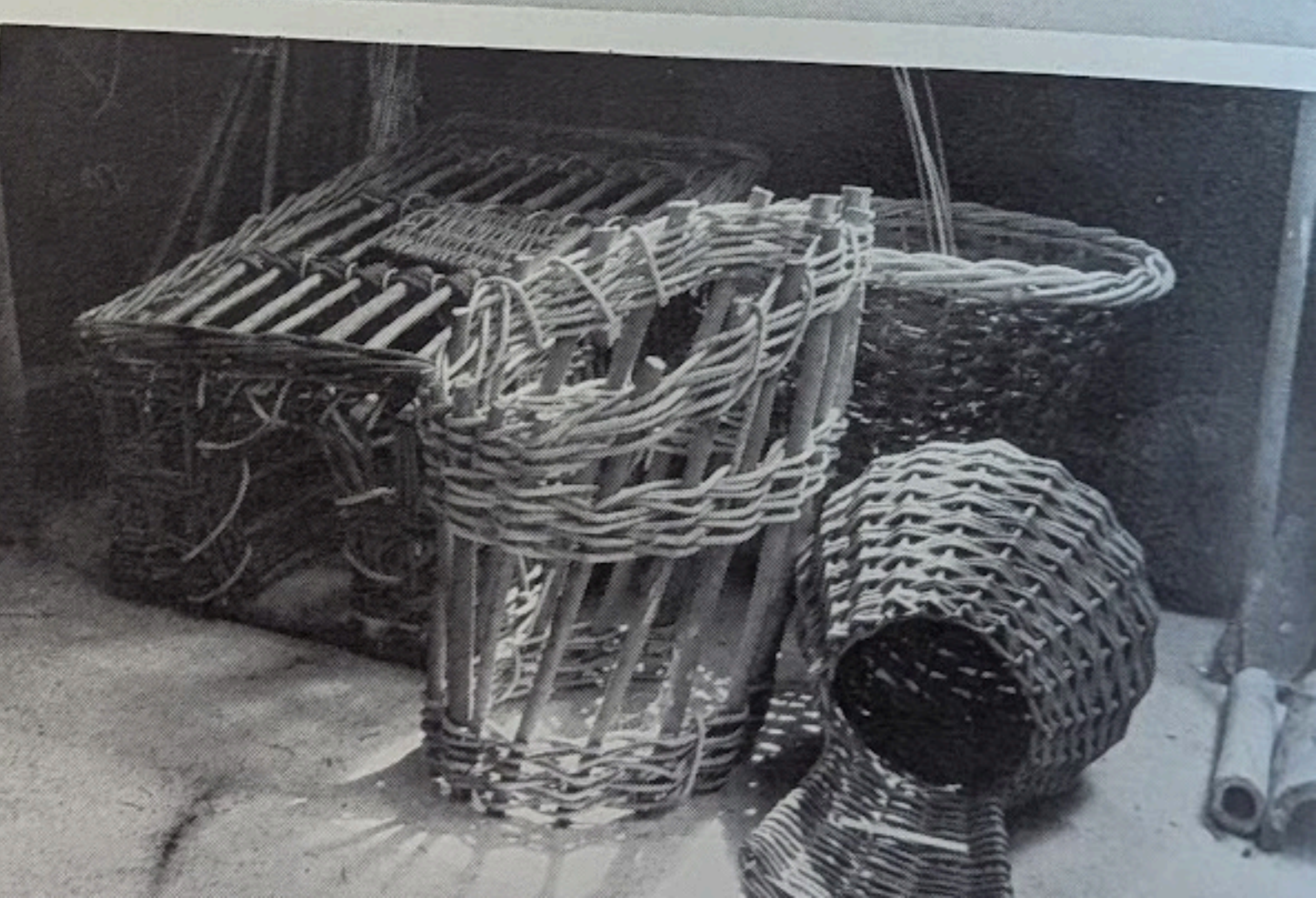
The work of the village blacksmith and that of the wheelwright was often inter-related. A wooden cart wheel which has a tyre in the form of a band of metal is an example of work involving both trades. It seemed appropriate therefore, to make this building dual-purpose so that tools to do with both trades can be displayed and used there.







Folk at the Farmland Museum



RURAL CRAFTS

1. Drainage hand-tools made mostly in wood, and various pipes designed to take water to the dykes.
2. Bottles from breweries in March, Beccles, Wisbech and elsewhere. The collection of beer mats illustrates the work of six different rural crafts.
3. Willow basket work made at St. Ives. Corn scoop from Haddenham Mill with mill-bill and thrift.
4. Traps for various animals including eel glaives, plover nets, mole traps, rabbit snares and gin traps in several sizes.
5. This horse collar came from Sutton-in-the-Isle and was repaired by a 90 year old Cambridge saddler.



HAND TOOLS

The changes that have taken place in the farming world this century, are too numerous to mention. Until the nineteen-thirties the amount of work on each farm could be measured in "man" power and "horse" power, i.e. the number of men and horses required to farm the acres satisfactorily.

Hoeing and weeding have largely been replaced by spraying, while the reaper and binder replaced sickle and scythe. Today all the harvesting operations are carried out by the combine — a machine whose action is well-described in its name. Threshing by hand with flails (commonly called a "stick and a half") was replaced by a threshing tackle which was powered by a traction engine (local farmers always referred to this operation as "steaming". Until the late forties special coal was purchased to provide power on Steaming Days.)

The photograph shows shears used for clipping the sheep's fleece in early summer. Often they were put to secondary use as edge-snippers around the lawn! The small two-tined fork was used to dig out the daisy roots from the Manor lawn and leaning on this is a "hedging hook" or chopper. The larger items include a scoop which lifted potatoes from the clamp into the "riddle" for grading, a turnip chopper which prepared root crops for animal feed, a becket used for cutting out the blocks of peat for fuel (as at Wicken Fen) and a curved cultivator for raking and aerating the soil.

The tool which is locally known as a "cut-knife" was used for cutting hay or straw into blocks of a size suitable for carrying to the livestock in the pre-baling days. Two of these were left on the doorstep of 50 High Street and to this day it is not known who gave them to the museum. Such is the thoughtfulness of local people that when they are tidying out sheds and farm buildings, items, for which they have no further use, are brought to the

museum for safe keeping. One such museum helper who had a fencing job to do which required the mallet-like tool, called in recently to "borrow" the beetle (a cylindrical-headed hammer made in wood) which he had donated to the museum some four years previously.

Older visitors often stand and "yarn" about using scythes — how to sharpen them, how to clear ditches "by hand" and how to train and lay a hedge. The tools used by these people vary in name and shape according to the district, for example the gadget known locally as a band-twister is called a scud-winder in other rural areas. The range in size and shape of "hedging hooks" has to be seen to be believed.

With very few exceptions, the Farmland Collection of hand tools has been built up by local farm workers and also by the helpful gypsy who retrieves all manner of museum exhibits from his loads of "scrap" iron.



THE AGE OF HORSE POWER

The very first large exhibit to be given to the museum was a tumbil cart made in 1939 by a firm in Stretham. On seeing the tumbil, a farmer from Hill Row Fen promised a special Hemingford-made cart, on condition that it was kept undercover. This necessitated the building of the large shed at the very bottom of the garden, where wooden implements could be on show protected from the weather. This was the museum's first purpose-built structure and it had to be economically priced. Second-hand sheets of zinc were bought at Cambridge Market; these formed the roof and back. The two ends were boarded in to form two separate lockable units for displaying smaller items. Voluntary helpers, some from as far away as Huntingdon, completed the project in a matter of weeks. The Delanoy boys coated the whole building with creosote to preserve the wood.

It was not long before the building began to fill with drills, dressing machines, reaper, binder, stationary engines and other barn based machinery. The end units were used to house Rural Crafts and tools at one end, and other small farming items — including a mass of veterinary tools — at the other. A prize possession, the one and only wood plough, was treated with preservative and kept there too.

All the other ploughs, cultivators, ridgers, rakes, potato harvesters, etc., are displayed out of doors. They number over sixty and are wire-brushed on arrival, repaired if necessary and then treated with a special preserving oil so that they do not deteriorate from being exposed to the weather.

It is very interesting to listen to the old ploughmen talking to each other and comparing the finer aspects of design and balance of individual ploughs. One such visitor, well over 90 years old, insisted on grabbing hold of each pair of handles in turn to "get the feel" of each of

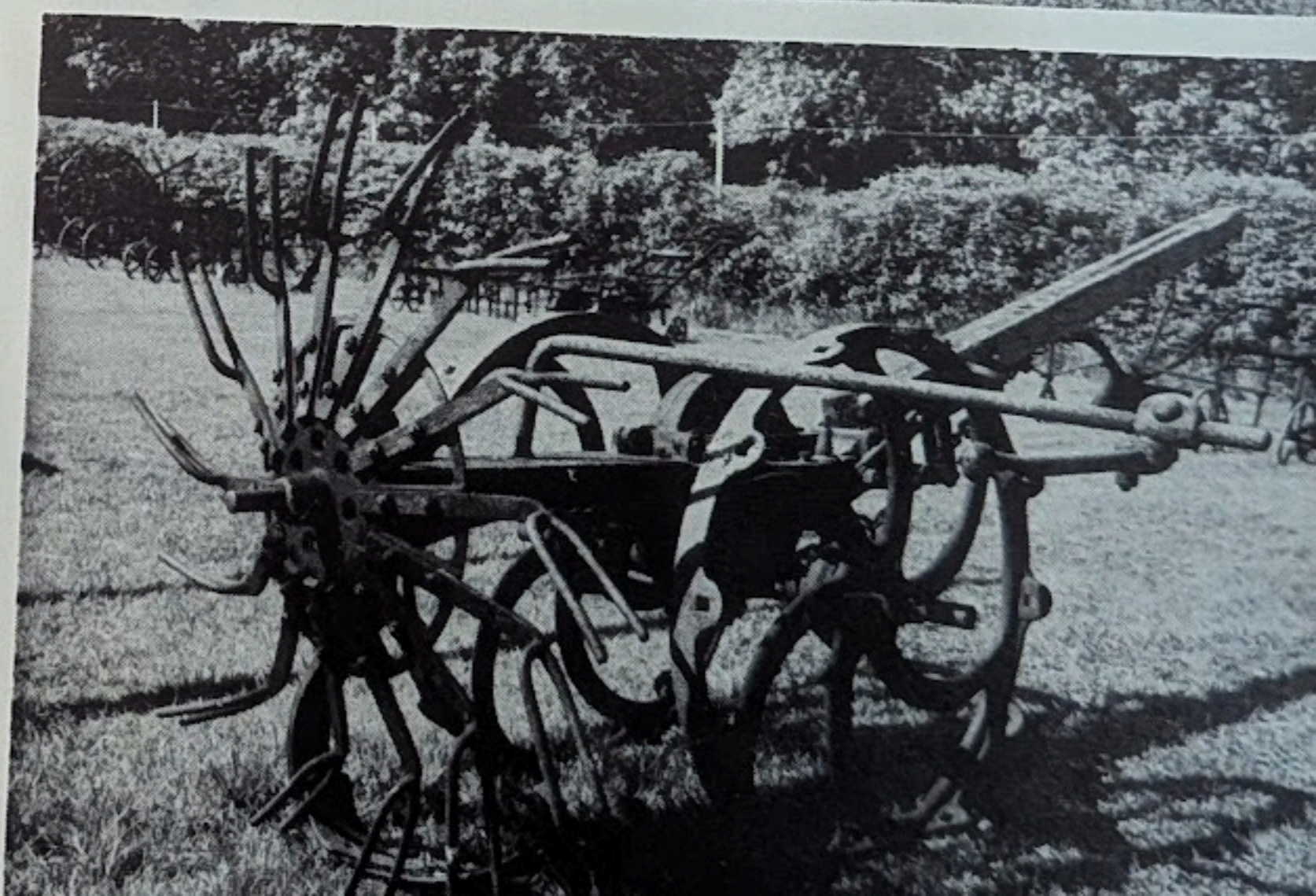
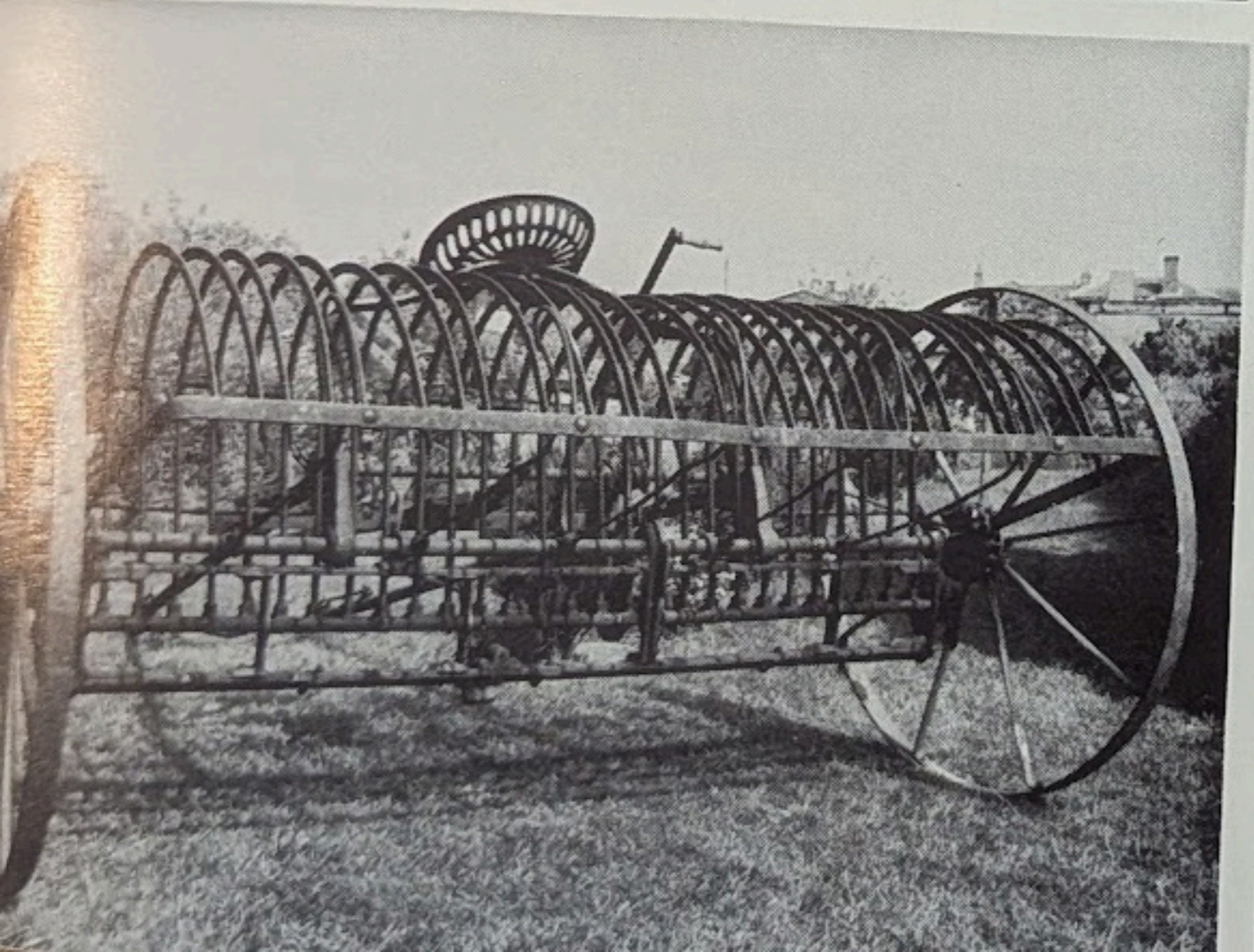
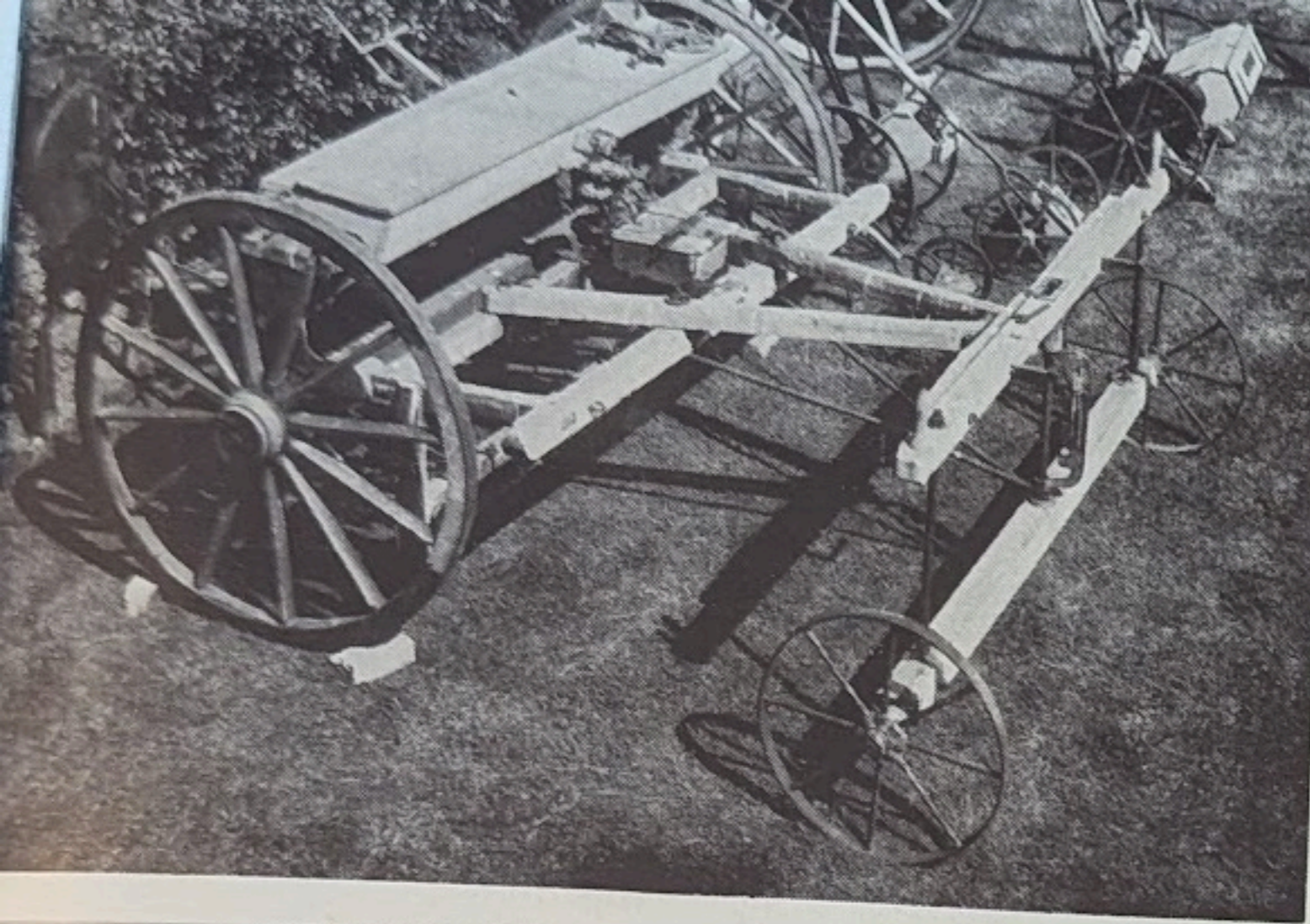
the ploughs. His working life had been spent as horsekeeper on various Cambridgeshire farms.

The horse-drawn reaper which appears on the cover photograph, was last used on a farm near Littleport in 1947. That year the corn was so badly damaged by thunderstorms, the binder could not cope with it.

Sugar beet was a crop which was introduced into this country in the early twenties and necessitated the development of a whole range of new implements. At about that time the tractor was beginning to make its presence felt on the farm and so, some of the sugar beet equipment is for use with horses and some with tractors.

The Smythe seed drill, thought to be supreme in its class, was originally supplied to a farm near Ipswich in 1919. It was bought at a farm sale later on and used until 1970 by the farmer next door to the museum. Like so many horse-drawn implements, the shafts were removed during that period and a tow-bar fitted. Knowing that farmers are renowned for not throwing things away — "it might come in useful someday" — it came as no surprise that the original Smythe drill shafts, which had been removed in 1944, were safely stored in the roof of the farm barn. This barn can be seen from the museum garden!

The other photographs show a single-furrow plough, a hay-rake and an early potato-spinner. All are horse-drawn.



ANECDOTES AND CARTS

Pages could be written, all filled with anecdotes concerning the various exhibits. Owners are more than willing to tell stories concerning their gifts to the museum.

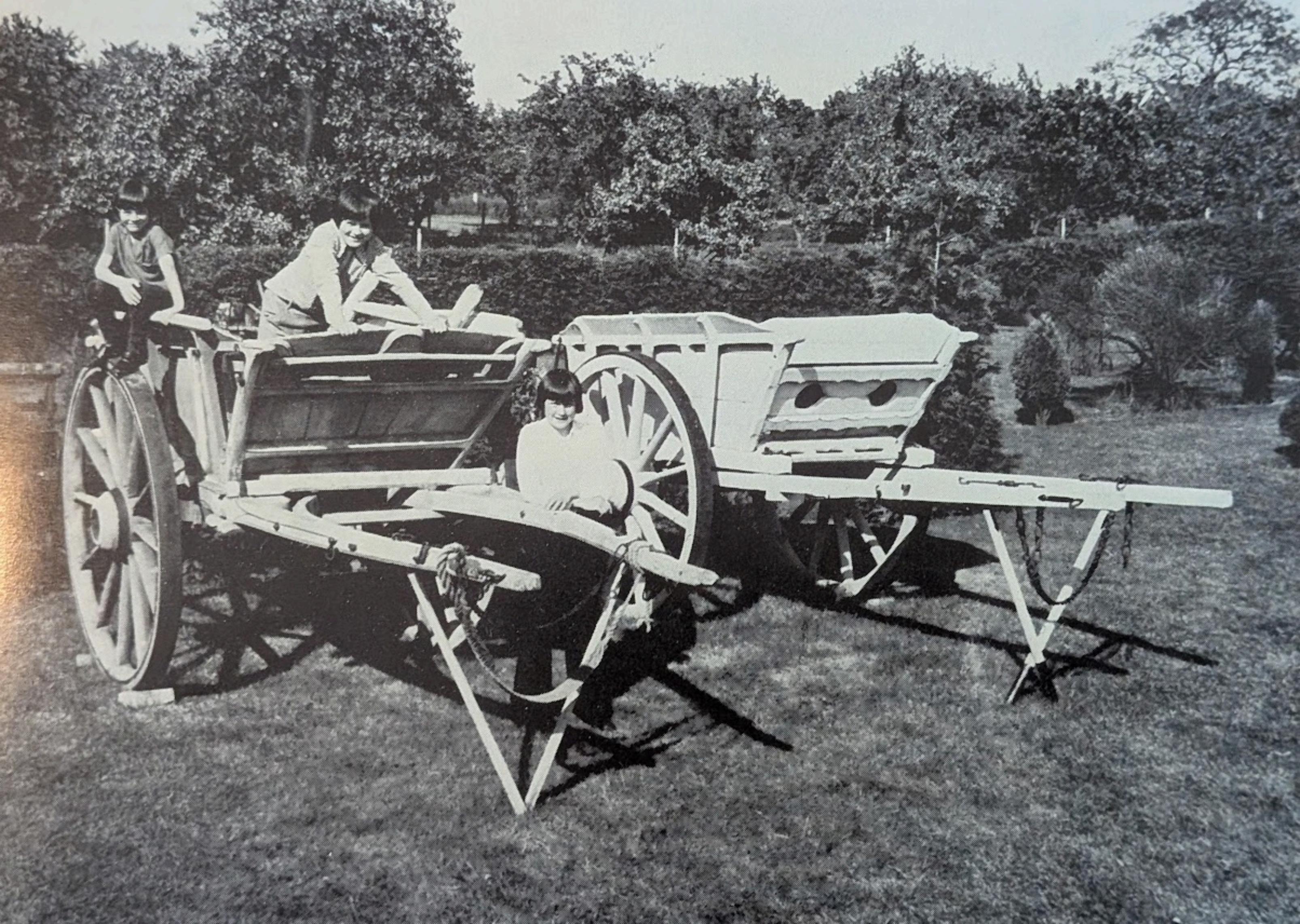
The cart on the right of the photograph, referred to earlier on in this booklet, had been converted for use with a tractor. Enquiries among farming friends, an advertisement in the Post Office window and in the Parish News Magazine, brought no offers of cart shafts. However, it was eventually discovered that a pair were leaning up near a shed just over the museum boundary ditch. Their owner, a strongly built man, agreed to let the museum have them — and delivered them personally by throwing them over the hedge!

The shafts were bolted on to the cart, red-lead paint was bought and much fun was had by all painting the entire cart and restoring it to its former glory. Sometime afterwards, a photo of it appeared in the local weekly newspaper and this inspired a carpenter from Stretham to call in and ask to see "the cart". "These shafts are wrong!" he exclaimed. How did he know? Such is the memory for detail of a true craftsman that although he had not seen the cart since he finished work on it in 1939, he knew these shafts were not planed and fashioned by him. Other people too have commented that certain things about the cart "don't ring quite true". Countrymen have eyes for detail!

The second cart was bought new by a farmer for £10. It served him well, but after the change over to tractors it was put at the back of one of the farm buildings. When Hill Row Fen was flooded in 1947 it was dragged to higher land for safety and returned to its shed when the floods subsided. There it lay for many years. After its owner died, his son continued to keep it — pausing from time to time to admire its workmanship. Over the years it

became something of great sentimental value to him. Now that it is at the Museum, many people can see it, join in the admiration of the craftsmanship and take photographs of it. It is good to know that the owner can rest assured that "Old Dad's cart" is being well looked after.

Craig, the founder and curator of the museum, can be seen in the centre of the photograph opposite. His younger brother James, who enjoys showing visitors round, is on the left and Kevin, the eldest and who for several years did much of the letter writing concerning the museum exhibits, is on the right. Since the project has snowballed, it is their father who has taken on the administration and planning, but the boys continue with their jobs of cleaning, painting, letter writing — and talking! Several of their school friends have become involved too and one is a regular helper with lawn mowing during the Summer months. Others help with activities on 'Open Afternoons' and quite a little gang become involved when friends of the museum offer buildings for demolition so that wood and bricks can be used for new building projects. Two older lads spend hours and hours renovating old stationary engines which visitors can see working on the first Sunday afternoon of each month. All this shows how members of the Younger Generation are looking after their heritage from the past.





ROCKS,
FOSSILS
AND
EARLY MAN



Rocks from various parts of the British Isles — and some from foreign parts — are brought back by holiday makers and collecting enthusiasts. A mining firm presented a complete display of the rocks and minerals found in Cornwall, geologically one of the most interesting areas in these islands.

It is essential in the Fens to keep the waterways clear, and as much of the arable land is lower than the rivers which drain it, 'pumping' engines (such as the Old Engine at Stretham) are required to lift the water from the drainage channels into the river and thence into the Wash at King's Lynn. Many of the fossils on display have been dredged up from the depths by mechanical diggers working on the ditches, dykes, drains and rivers. Sand and gravel working have provided fossilised parts of mammoth and bones of bos, an early type of cattle.

The variety and beauty in sea shells is displayed in a case containing collections from the Bahamas, the Solomon Islands and the Island of Gan.

A special case containing beautiful coral, was brought back to Haddenham by a young sailor boy before the First World War. It was looked after, first by his parents, then his wife and latterly his daughter. Now it is in the Natural History Section of the Museum — a memento of a journey made over half a century ago for children of today to admire.

Haddenham, with its underlying levels of greensand, is ideal for fruit growing. Many fruit growers used to keep bees to help pollinate the flowers. One display case has been filled with comb, beeswax and other bee impedimenta by a local bee keeper cum orchard owner.

Early man's attempts at tool making are illustrated with examples of deer antler picks, flint axes and scrapers. When picking up potatoes at Waterbeach, a little lad came across an excellent example of a Stone Age axe-head. A flint scraper was picked up by a potato

harvester in Haddenham Fen. A deer antler pick was found at the Grimes Graves Flint Workings near Brandon.

Deep ploughing on the farm land at Denny Abbey, just off the main A10 road near Chittering, produced a fine example of a Roman quern — the rotating of stone-on-stone produced coarse flour from corn.

Nearer home at Bedlam Farm, a dog, trying to "scrap" out a rabbit from its burrow, brought out pottery fragments which have since been identified as early Roman.

Excavations at the Vineyards in Ely produced a Mediaeval mortar which could well have been used by the Monks at the Monastery. All these exhibits prove the truth of the cliché "History is all around us!" Many of these items have kindly been identified and dated by staff at the University Museums in Cambridge.

The three photographs opposite show belemnites and ammonites — some of the early signs of life; the remains of two of the largest animals which have lived on these islands — mammoth and bos — and thirdly, tools made from flint and a Bronze Age spear-head (in the left hand bottom corner) which was ploughed up near the Old West River to the south of the Parish.

THE FUTURE

So, from small beginnings in 1969, the Farmland Museum has developed in the way described in this small booklet. It has involved many people in a great variety of ways, in the generous giving of gifts of building materials, in labour, in transporting larger items, and in the upkeep of existing displays. Above all people have given their time, perhaps the most valuable commodity of all.

The 'behind the scenes' activities of a museum are carried out as professionally as possible. All agricultural items are catalogued in detail and this is important because this collection of farm implements is the only one of its kind which specialises in the Fens — for example the specialist equipment required for celery growing. Both the Museum of English Rural Life at Reading and the East Anglian Museum at Stowmarket keep records of all the Farmland Museum exhibits here at Haddenham as a reference for students. Staff at both establishments help willingly with any query or request which we make.

Conservation work is very important — woodworm has to be cured in the wooden parts of tools, mould on leather items in the saddlery department has to be treated and rust kept under control on both the large and small exhibits. Inside the sheds, it is perhaps the dusting and cobwebbing which require more frequent attention than anything else!

During 1975 work started on a fourth building in the garden. When completed the original garden shed can be given over entirely to Natural History Displays because the Domestic Bygones will be moved to the new area. It is hoped to reserve one side of the new building entirely for Haddenham, its industry and communications; the opening of the railway in 1866, photographs and products of the old brick works, details

of the bone, grease and manure works which once existed there — to name but a few.

Children from the local school find the Museum very handy for topic projects — one class carried out an interesting survey on Harvesting, another followed the work of a Village Blacksmith. A display of children's work on similar varied themes would be of significant interest and it is hoped, therefore to reserve a small area for displaying such follow-up work. There could also be an area for temporary exhibitions to do with things happening in the locality and which would be of interest and value to visitors — a map of the public footpaths in the Parish is one idea which comes to mind.

All these ideas are for the future — in the meantime, new exhibits arrive on the doorstep almost daily. Until the new building is completed the larger of these are being stored by friends who have shed space to spare. The existing museum buildings are completely full. So far over 300 people have given items of interest for others to see.

Craftsmen and women give their time to demonstrate their skills while brass bands, including the village's own Silver Band, and a hand-bell group add a delightful musical touch to Open Afternoons. Other enthusiasts like model makers, photographers and local historians bring along their own displays to show visitors.

Children's Charities, particularly local ones, have benefitted by hundreds of pounds from the donations given by visitors and they wish to thank all those who have contributed. In their turn the visitors have gained from the delights which come from reminiscing about "the good old days".

