

Tickhill and District Local History Society

Eastfield Farm, Tickhill, 1925-1955

Jessie Newborn

Occasional Paper No. 3

© Frank W. Newborn and Tickhill and District Local History Society 2007

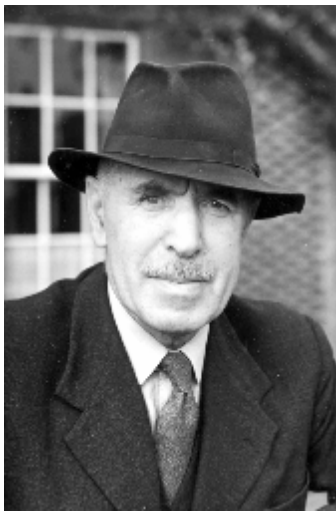
Acknowledgements

Frank W. Newborn has generously allowed the Society access to the notes and photographs made by his late sister, Jessie Newborn, which form the basis of this Paper. Jessie belonged to the Tickhill Local History Group led by Tom Beastall and was a meticulous recorder of life on Eastfield Farm, where she lived for thirty years, and of Tickhill's history in general. Mr Newborn has also been a great help in adding to our knowledge of life on Eastfield Farm. Thanks are also due to Hazel Moffat for editing this Paper, to Steve Payne for scanning all the pictures into the text and to Claire Brown and Peter Welch for helpful comments on a draft.

Eastfield Farm, Tickhill 1925-1955

Jessie Newborn

In 1925 Frank Stephen Newborn became the tenant of Eastfield Farm. Born on 18 July 1886 at Haxey, Lincolnshire, he was from a farming background. By the age of 14 he was already working on Cockwood Farm at Branton in Cantley Parish, where he lived with his farmer/butcher father, mother, four sisters and younger brother. Later Frank and his brother Harry farmed Limpool Farm, Tickhill, before Frank moved back to Cockwood Farm after his marriage in 1913. He returned to Tickhill in 1925 with his wife, Alice, and three young children, Jessie, Norah and Frank.



As well as being a farmer, Frank S. Newborn contributed to local life in many ways. He served first on Cantley Parish Council, Doncaster Rural Council and then Tickhill Urban District Council. He was a member of the Doncaster Board of Guardians, a founder member and later Chairman of the Tickhill Internal Drainage Board, and Chairman of the Doncaster Branch of the National Farmers' Union. He was made a J.P. in 1933 and became Chairman of the Doncaster West Riding Bench. A lifelong, staunch, Wesleyan Methodist, he was a local preacher on the Oxford Place Circuit, Sunday School Superintendent and a member of local Chapel committees. His service to the community and to National Savings was acknowledged with the award of the M.B.E. in 1956.

Eastfield Farm was the largest of Tickhill's farms, in 1925 extending to some 350 acres of mixed arable and pasture land on the northern side of Tickhill. The farm was of ancient origin. Leading citizens in the Middle Ages were associated with it, such as William of Eastfield (Estfeld) whose tomb is in St Mary's Church. From the later 17th Century the influential Laughton family lived at Eastfield. At the beginning of the 19th Century the Laughtons were the second largest landowners in Tickhill after the Earl of Scarbrough, their land holdings extending to some 388 acres. By the 20th Century the farm was part of the Hesley Estate and was owned by the Whitaker family of Babworth Hall, Retford.

An accurate description of Eastfield Farm in 1925 is given in the Farm Tenancy Valuation, drawn up when Frank S. Newborn took over the tenancy from Frederick Kitchen on 2 February 1925. The size and contents of every field are listed. The largest field at over 29 acres was Sand Pit Close (between the farmhouse and Common Lane) with wheat stubble for fallow. Seven fields in all were fallow. Much of the other arable land had been sown with wheat. Just under one third of the farm was pasture or had mown grass.

The Valuation document also lists fixtures and fittings such as the contents of the blacksmith's shop, various lead pumps and stone troughs, and wood partitions in the farm buildings.

The farmhouse contents were:

Back kitchen: oven boiler, metal pan and lid, lead piping from kitchen to garden and lead pump

Front kitchen: cupboard front with 2 shelves and one drawer, iron curtain rod and 14 bacon hooks

Drawing room: half register stove and marble mantel

Bedrooms: 3 fire ranges

Overall, the tenant right valuation was £1233 12s 10d (£1233 64p) and the annual rent set at £400. An endorsement in 1950, attached to the Valuation document, shows that Mr. Newborn paid for all the fixtures and fittings when he took over the tenancy. The amounts ranged from £25 for the drawing room contents to 10/- (50p) for an old trough near the kitchen door.

Frank S. Newborn also took over various other items from the previous tenant, the most unusual being a Whiting-Bull three-wheel tractor, possibly the first agricultural tractor in Tickhill, which had been imported from the USA in 1917. The tractor was really too weighty for the lighter, wet, peat soil and not powerful enough for the heavy, limestone soil. It ended its days as a stationary engine driving a grinding mill before being broken up and sold as scrap in 1930.



The Newborn family in a formal pose in the early 1930s with Jessie standing on the right

Eastfield had no mains electricity until about 1949. Up to that date, lighting in the farmhouse was by candles and oil lamps which had to be filled, trimmed and cleaned daily. The only illumination around the farm buildings was by oil filled hurricane lamps. These were used early and late when attending to horses and other stock. Scores of lambs and calves were delivered and sick animals doctored in that dim light.

Prior to the early 1930s water supply for the house and farmyards was from shallow wells each with a hand operated lead pump. One had an adjacent stone trough which had to be kept full and from which the horses and cattle could drink. Otherwise the water was distributed by hand, carried around in buckets. A hot water system, bathroom and internal toilet were installed about 1928. The water for this came from

the well in the back kitchen. It was pumped by a hand operated pressure pump into a large storage tank in the roof which had to be filled daily. Prior to this it was a bucket-filled hipbath on the hearth and an outside privy! Mains water became essential when pollution was detected in the wells and the pumped water was unfit for human consumption.

These conditions made very hard work for Mrs Newborn in looking after the domestic day-to-day running of the large old Eastfield farmhouse until the advent of electricity and mains water. All housework and laundry were done entirely by hand. Room heating was by open fires and cooking was done on an open coal-burning range in the front kitchen. Water carried from the pump was kept heated in a boiler in the side of the kitchen range, or in a separate 'copper' in the back kitchen if a larger quantity was required as on washing days. The hand pump was located over the sink in the back kitchen. There was also a limited supply of 'soft' rainwater from an underground tank which collected roof drainage.

Mrs Newborn's work in the house was vital to the farming operation. She had to provide substantial meals at irregular hours and these often had to be supplemented by additional food at short notice for casual workers and official visitors. She was an expert baker and cook and took delight in preserving fruit and making jam from the produce available. Many times she had to make space on the kitchen hearth to accommodate and revive weak or starved newly born lambs or piglets.

Mrs Newborn was assisted with general housework and cleaning by dedicated, local, daily help. The two large kitchens and the cellar area had stone flag floors; they were damp and cold and were regularly scrubbed with soap and water on hands and knees. Laundry was carried out by hand, often using a unique revolving wooden drum attached to the wooden roller wringer. This was very hard work. Milk and dairy equipment had to be washed and sterilised in the sink following each milking and milk delivery. Coal had to be carried into the house in quantity for the ranges and open fires. These had to be thoroughly cleaned and the ashes carried out. The open fires and oil lamps were dirty appliances which added greatly to the amount of general cleaning.

The advent of electricity was a dream come true for Mrs Newborn and her helpers. For the first time in her life, she was able to indulge in the luxury of an automatic washing machine, a vacuum cleaner, an electric cooker and clean electric lights at the flick of a switch. It all made for an easier life.

The rest of this paper looks at the Farming Year at Eastfield, before showing the great physical efforts of farm workers and horses in the 1920s and 1930s as various crops were planted and harvested. Jessie Newborn took the photographs during 1936-37. The Second World War had a considerable impact on the farm, for example, seeing a shift to mechanisation. A leaflet written by Frank S. Newborn reveals how he responded to the wartime farming challenge. The hard work involved in farming was interspersed during the year with a series of customs, culminating in Harvest Supper. The paper concludes with Frank S. Newborn's decision to retire in 1955 and the sale of many farm items belonging to the Newborn family.

Eastfield Farm Buildings



- A** The farmhouse, dating to the end of the 18th Century, with older buildings at the rear.
- B** Yard, where cattle were kept in the winter, with two covered wooden sections and a stone-built cow house at the extreme left.
- C** Old stone barn where corn was stored. A smaller barn beyond was used for cattle.
- D** Long barn with internal divisions giving space for horses' stabling and storage space for turnips and mangolds, as well as space for machinery used to chop the mangolds. The left hand end was known as the malt kiln.
- E** Dutch Barn erected in 1926 for sheaf grain. Each of the 8 bays held one day's threshing. To the right of the barn was the stack yard for outdoor stacks.
- F** Nissen hut used by RAF personnel on decoy attachment during the Second World War.
- G** Sheds where carts and implements were stored, also used for temporary lambing pens. At the left hand end of the upper range was a loose box where any animal could be held in isolation.
- H** Pigsties.
- I** Blacksmith's shop.
- J** Dovecot known as the pigeoncot.
- K** Steam house containing a steam boiler used to boil potatoes for pigs' food.

Farming Year at Eastfield

January

Attention to stock
Cut hay from stacks
Men sorting and delivering potatoes, when not frosty
Continue hedge laying and diking
Ploughing continued when weather suitable

February

Attend to stock
Lead manure from fold yards on to manure hills in convenient fields
Continue sorting and marketing potatoes
Market sheep as condition warrants
Thresh as convenient and market corn not required for use of stock
Samples taken to Doncaster Corn Exchange in 9-10 inch sample bags

March

Sowing spring corn, oats and barley
Preparation of lambing pens
Lambing begins on or about the 10th continuing throughout the month
Land prepared and manured and artificial manure applied in preparation for potato setting by women labourers
Land prepared for drilling of mangolds and sugar beet
Sorting and delivering of potatoes continues – a proportion of new Scotch seed potatoes was bought each year, remainder of acreage planted with home grown seed.

April

Conclusion of lambing season; lambs tailed and ewes clagged (cleaned to prevent infestation by maggots).
Sheep taken to summer pasture
Finish of potato setting and also sugar beet and mangold drilling and a few peas
Finish potato sorting and delivery
General clean up of yards and lambing pens



Lambs born during the winter of 1954

May

Sheep sheared by hand with shears, or hand turned machine clippers
Crop spraying and top dressing of artificial manure on cereals and grass
Sow small seeds, clover, rye grass etc. on oats and barley nurse crops, for grazing or mowing for fodder the following year
Work fallow for turnips and Swedes for winter cattle feed
Light harrowing on land set with potatoes to control weeds

June

Drill turnips and swedes up to 12th June
Side hoe mangolds, and single when plants have four or more leaves
Mow grass or clover and rye grass for fodder
Continue work amongst potatoes viz scuffling (using a horse drawn hoe between the rows to clear weeds and loosen the soil) hand hoeing and earthing up
Attend to sugar beet, horse hoeing, hand hoeing and singling
Top dressing with nitrate if needed
Cutting, leading and stacking clover and hay; trimming and thatching stacks on completion

July

Finish earthing up potatoes
Continue hoeing turnips, swedes, mangolds and sugar beet
Daily attention to cattle and sheep
Mow banks of ditches and roadsides if any
Clean and put reaper and other haymaking machinery under cover
Examine harvesting machinery in readiness for use – note spares required & obtain the same; give attention to binder-elevator canvasses and repair if needed
Have saddler visit the farm to work on repair of harness, collars, saddles etc, in readiness for the hard work of harvesting

August

Mid month reaping corn with self binder pulled by 3 horses (work for 3 hours then change for 3 others)
Stooking – 10 sheaves for wheat & oats, 12 sheaves for barley
Leave to dry
Oats should hear church bells 3 Sundays to avoid overheating
Leading and stacking, with horses, carts and drays
Wean lambs from mothers

September

Complete leading and stacking
Rake stubble and lead rakings for threshing
Cultivate stubble and kill weeds
Stubble harrowed, lumped and burnt
Hedge trimming and ditch mowing
Lead and spread manure for wheat
Begin potato harvest



Trimming (brushing) hedges

October

Potato harvesting and pieing - cover with straw and soil, leaving pie top without soil for ventilation
Plough for winter wheat 7 inches deep
Drill wheat on cleared potato land after cultivating
Commence sugar beet pulling, after loosening by beet plough – deliver to the sugar factory
First threshing – straw needed for potato pies, bedding and thatching

November

Complete potato harvest and continue sugar beet
Begin to cut mangolds and clamp before frost (1st frost usually 11 or 12 November)
Finish wheat sowing
Take cows and other stock into yards at the end of the month
Put sheep on sugar beet tops and later fold sheep on turnips
Statute hirings on Martinmas Saturday – new workers were hired by the year for a bargained sum of money
Continue hedging and ditching as convenient
Winter earth potato pies 8 inches to protect against frost

December

If possible complete sugar beet before keen frost and deliver to factory or put on wagons at station when permits are available
Deep ploughing of fallow ground
Continual attention to sheep and cattle
Pig killing and salting of bacon and hams (salt for 1 month and then put in cotton bags and hang from ceiling in the kitchen to dry).
Customary for married men to have ½ pig on easy terms
Threshing as required and when convenient for the machine, which was hired
Coal fetched for farm cottages from Maltby Colliery 5 miles by horse and cart
Rough timber sawn for firewood
Cut swedes and lead home for cattle – chop up and mix with chaff for cattle food
Occasional day rabbiting with ferrets

It should be noted that work on a stock farm could never be stopped. Saturday, Sunday, Christmas Day the stock must be attended to, fed and watered come rain or shine. In the event of unavoidable or unexpected absence of staff, Mr Newborn had to fill in. His bedroom window was close to the stock yard and kept open at night so that he could hear and detect an animal in trouble that needed immediate attention.



Cattle brought into the yard at the end of November

Ploughing and planting



Ploughing a straight single furrow with a two-horse team



Harrowing before corn is sown



Sowing using a 'fiddle' Drilling wheat



Harvesting



'Opening out' with a scythe for the binder Three horses pull the binder



Stooking oats



Raking



Leading



Stacking in the stack yard

Peas and mangolds

Peas are sown in April or June and pulled in June or September. Women as well as men (and sometimes children) are employed to pull peas. They are pulled into bags which hold 40 lbs. Pullers usually receive 9d (4p) per bag. The peas are bought by dealers and taken to big town markets, chiefly Sheffield for this district, and also Manchester. Mangolds are drilled in April in ridges about 18 inches apart. They are pulled up and the tops cut off in October or November and put into pies ready for feeding livestock in the winter.



Pea pulling



Weighing the bags of peas



Ploughing between rows of mangolds



Cutting off the tops of mangolds



Pieing mangolds brought from the field in the cart

Potatoes

These are set by hand (often women do the setting) about 18 inches apart in ridges that have been well-manured. Setting is done in March or April. When they are well grown (rows touching) the potatoes are 'earthed', that is the plough goes between the rows and the earth is turned on to the plants. Potatoes are taken up from August to November, often by women, and put into pies. They are covered by 4 inches of straw and then 9 inches of soil to prevent them from getting frosted.



The potatoes from the pie near (f) are thrown at (e) into the end of the potato riddle (d-c). The man (b) (Mr Newborn on this occasion) turns the handle which works the continuous 'escalator' (b). Then the potatoes pass into the bag at (a) which is attached to the riddle by being hung on to little hooks. When full, the bag is weighed at (a). Eventually a small petrol engine was attached to power the riddle.

When the potatoes are sold to a dealer, they must be sorted so that only the best pass through the potato riddle into the bags. The barrel part of the riddle is made of iron net, and the holes are graded from 2 inches square to 1½ inches square. Small potatoes drop through these holes as the 'barrel' rotates when the handle is turned. These small potatoes may be used for seed and for feeding stock. Diseased potatoes are picked from the escalator by hand.



Sugar beet

Drilled (sown) mid-April to May. When it is all growing in the rows it is 'singled' so that there is one plant every 6 or 7 inches. In October or November the beet is taken up. It is loosened by the plough going down between the rows. The roots are then pulled up, soil shaken off, tops cut off, and the beet is then ready for the factory. Sugar content is highest at this time of year.

Eastfield Farm during the Second World War

In a survey carried out in 1942-3 as part of college work, Dennis Stables, who was later to work on the farm during summer holidays, recorded various statistics about Eastfield Farm. The total acreage was 352 of which 280 acres were arable and 72 pasture. There were 7 regular workers tending the land and animals, including 23 dairy cattle, 50 other cattle, 200 sheep, 50 pigs and 30 poultry. By this time only 6 working horses were listed. Eastfield, along with many other farms, had begun the change from horses to tractors.

Following advice from the Government and intended to increase agricultural production nationally, Eastfield's first four-wheel tractor was bought in August/September 1941. It was a Fordson tractor obtained from Charlesworth's in Doncaster. The second tractor, a Ford Ferguson, had a hydraulic system. The third tractor was also a Fordson and the fourth acquired by 1945 was another Ferguson. Among the advantages of using tractors were drilling 4 or 5 rows at a time instead of 2, working heavier soils much more easily than was possible for horses, and providing power, for example, for the binder.

Apart from a shift to mechanisation, wartime was a period of other changes too. In December 1939 Mr Newborn received a Cultivation of Lands Order requiring him to plough up over 22 acres of pasture (a specific reference was given to fields marked on a 1929 edition of an Ordnance Map; the land bordered Dadesley Well stream north of the farmhouse). He had to grow, for harvest in 1940, preferably wheat or other cereals, potatoes, peas, beans or sugar beet. Mr Newborn also undertook various trials to find the best strains of crops for his land. He explained his approaches in a leaflet reproduced on the following pages. As a member of the West Riding War Agricultural Executive Committee he visited other farms and advised farmers on how to make improvements.

Eastfield Farm was not isolated from wartime tensions and dangers. A large decoy was built over two acres of the farmland, about half a mile from the farmhouse, to simulate Doncaster's railway marshalling yards and local airfields. Lights could be switched on the decoy and petrol storage drums set alight by RAF personnel to lure German bombers away from intended targets.



Frank S. Newborn in his uniform as Head ARP Warden

On many evenings Mrs Newborn was left alone in the farmhouse (with only a modified cellar to use as a bomb shelter) while her husband and daughter Jessie were at their ARP posts, and her son was on look out at the top of the Church tower as part of his Local Defence Volunteer duties before enlisting and going away on active military service in North Africa and Italy. Fortunately no bombs were dropped on Eastfield. The most dramatic sight from Frank Junior's vantage point on the Church tower was the normal glow of blast furnaces at Scunthorpe while he was on the look out for German paratroopers disguised as nuns.

Among the papers saved by Jessie Newborn is an example of a propaganda leaflet dropped over Tickhill by German planes during 5th-6th August 1940. Headed *From the Führer's Speech* the leaflet attempted to undermine people's loyalty:

'Until now I have ordered hardly any reprisals, but that does not mean that this is, or will be, my only reply. I know full well that our answer, which will come one day, will bring upon the people unending suffering and misery. Of course not upon Mr Churchill, for he, no doubt, will already be in Canada, where the money and the children of those principally interested in the war have already been sent. For millions of other people, however, great suffering will begin.'

No doubt the response to the leaflet combined disgust and defiance.

Eventually Italian prisoners of war were sent to help at Eastfield farm but were not held there. This was Frank S. Newborn's second experience of PoWs. While at Cockwood Farm, during the First World War when he was exempt from military duties because of his farming responsibilities, he employed German PoWs.



Jessie, Frank Junior and Norah Newborn in 1942
Frank at that time was a Second Lieutenant in the Royal Engineers
Jessie and Norah are wearing regimental brooches in support of their brother

Transcript of an Information Leaflet issued in 1944 by the
Technical Development Sub-Committee of the West Riding War Agricultural
Executive Committee.

FARMING TODAY

*A series of articles by practical men describing how they are overcoming the
difficulties of war-time farming*

No. 16

By Mr F. S. Newborn, Eastfield Farm, Tickhill, Nr. Doncaster

My farm is one of 350 acres with distinct variations in types of soil. One third is medium limestone, a comparable acreage heavy limestone and the remainder black peaty soil subject, until a few years ago, to occasional flooding. Fortunately the drainage problem has been remedied by the formation of an internal drainage board which has done very good work for the neighbourhood. Over the whole farm under-drainage is not too good but low places have been improved by taking out the old drains, cleaning the pipes and relaying with new where necessary. The variations in soil type present considerable difficulty in crop rotation as an attempt has been made to maintain a balanced acreage between the three types. This problem of balance has been aggravated by the fact that since the advent of District Committees over 80 acres of grassland have been ploughed out, of which 24 acres, largely derelict peat, have been very successfully re-seeded.

No rigid system of crop rotation is followed and when conditions warrant it, two cereal crops are taken in succession chiefly on the better soil. On the black land two fallow crops are found necessary to control weeds to which this class of soil is very subject. Recently on this soil I have followed a potato crop by mangolds, sugar beet or kale and then with barley undersown

with mowing seeds. About thirty acres of potatoes and ten to twelve acres of sugar beet are grown. The quality of both crops is good, thanks to the soil.

The beet tops make a very useful feed for sheep or cattle and assist when eaten on in maintaining fertility and keeping the soil compact. This is particularly valuable on the black soil which is naturally light and puffy. Most of the cattle are home bred, the steers being yard fed and the most promising heifers kept for milking. Twelve to eighteen cows are kept, the calves being suckled on the cow, each bringing up three to five calves in the lactation. These are suckled until 10 or 12 weeks old and then gradually put on dry food and turned out the following spring. A Lincoln Red bull has been used for the last four years following a pedigree Shorthorn and I very much prefer the Lincoln Red, its offspring meeting the requirements for milk or beef as adequately as any dual breed can.

Eighty breeding ewes are kept chiefly cross-bred and an Oxford as well as a Suffolk ram used. The lambs are sold if possible by Christmas, some of the land being not too suitable for wintering sheep on roots.

Formerly 60-80 Large White home-bred pigs were kept on the farm the youngsters being fed off porkers but

numbers have now been considerably reduced.

Three years ago a Fordson tractor was purchased and has proved an immense help, particularly with the cultivation on the stronger land which was heavy and slow work for horses. The tractor ensures working the land at the right time which is undoubtedly the most important factor in the successful management of strong land.

This year I have had a large number of variety trials which have proved most interesting and instructive to many others as well as myself. Of the spring wheats Meteor, A1 and Diamond II seem most suitable for this district and should prove very successful for patching winter wheat when necessary. In the past I have always grown plumage barley but in the trial Spratt Archer promises well, some of the ears showing 38 to 44 grains. The oats, of which six varieties were grown, are not quite up to the Onward which I have



grown for several years. Linseed has done well and was cut on August 11th by the ordinary self binder without any trouble. The variety Redwing appears likely to outyield Royal or Plate and it should prove a useful addition to home grown feed. It is my intention to thresh all the varieties from the stook and keep the yields separately. After all, yield per acre is perhaps the most crucial point though standing power is gaining importance with increasing labour difficulties.

Harvest, as everywhere, is very forward and cutting was finished on August 11th, three days before the average date for starting over the past 16 years.

No mention has been made of fertilisers but my policy today can be summed up by saying that I get as much as the coupons bring forth. Dung is an essential requisite for sound arable farming but fertilisers equally essential supplements.



Mechanisation comes to Eastfield Farm

Customs in Tickhill

Some customs ended with the outbreak of War but others were revived after the War, in particular Canon G. T. S. Cook, who became Vicar in 1938, revived all the country or agricultural services. Frank S. Newborn was the first Methodist farmer to read the lessons at these services and also when they were broadcast. The *Worksop Guardian* noted that a candle was kept burning in St Mary's Church in the name of all the local farm workers as part of the 'plough-lights' ceremony in January 1946. During the service three members of Tickhill Young Farmers' Club stood beside the plough which was blessed by the Rev Cook.



Frank S. Newborn provided the plough placed in the Church as part of the celebration of Plough Sunday at the end of January after the Second World War.

Courtesy © Chris Garritt

On Shrove Tuesday school children received an orange at school from a Manager and then went home at 11 a.m. when the pancake bell was rung at Church. Mothers hearing the bell, beat up the batter ready for the pancakes at 12 noon. It was said that a pancake was tossed over the Church tower on the first stroke of 12 – 'but if you are there a minute before you are too early, if you are a minute after you are too late'. In the afternoon children usually had a new whip, top, or shuttlecock and battledore, or marbles.

On April Fool's day an unwary lad was sent to borrow a wool-riddle from a neighbouring farmer who sent him to his neighbour and he sent him to the blacksmith, who sent him to the Vicar – his laughter revealed the joke!

On May Day, the Day School children chose the May Queen and she was crowned under the Butter Cross in Tickhill Market Place. The children did Maypole, Country and Sword dancing in the Market Place until 1939. The photograph shows the May Queen celebrations with decorated Butter Cross.



On Rogation Sunday (the fifth Sunday after Easter) the Churchwardens, Verger, Vicar, Choir and congregation went in procession round the village fields and Mill Dam to ask for God's blessing on growing crops, daily work and life in the village. Lessons, prayers and hymns were taken at each point.

On Ascension Day the boys and girls of the Choir and several children from each class at School ascended the tower of St Mary's Church at 12 noon and sang 'Hail the day that sees Him rise'.

For Lammas Sunday (the first in August) the Newborns gathered a small sheaf of wheat for the Blessing of the first sheaf.

August Bank Holiday Monday was when Tickhill Show was held. Frank S. Newborn revived the Show which was held at Eastfield Farm in the late 1940s. A particular intention was to encourage young farmers and Mr Newborn awarded a cup for one of the classes aimed at young farmers.

Harvest Supper in mid October was a celebration for the workers and their partners who came to the farmhouse for a supper and party. All contributed to games, songs and entertainment. Norah Newborn wrote songs to celebrate Eastfield Harvest Home set to popular tunes such as *Uncle Tom Cobley*. The 1950 song featured farm workers in most of the verses such as:

Charles and Albert love their tractors
Give them many a fond caress.
Stroke and tickle, and do they kiss 'em
As they tuck 'em up to rest

Norah did not forget the women whose forbearance was tested at times:

Oh what cheerfulness and patience
Have the womenfolk possessed
Meals were late, and shirts were torn
And trails were laid of straw and chaff

The chorus after each verse recognised all the farm workers, in 1950 these being:

Charlie Hoff and Albert Athey
Arthur Graham and Thomas Gell
Stan and Albert, Horace, Ernest,
Dennis, George and Little John



Frank S. Newborn with his workers in 1955

Into retirement

After 55 years of working on and managing farms, 30 of those years at Eastfield Farm, Frank S. Newborn decided to retire. As the equipment and livestock belonged to him, not the farm owners, a sale was arranged for Thursday, 31 March 1955. The sale was advertised widely in surrounding towns and cities. A lifetime's farming possessions went under the hammer with a large crowd of bidders in attendance. The sale began with small items of equipment including reminders of the dependence on horses: horse shoes, horse collars, harness and horse plough. Some of the items have featured in the photographs in this paper such as the fiddle drill, hedging bills, scythes and harrows. Then the much larger machinery was sold including 4 tractors and associated equipment. Finally the livestock were sold: 104 cattle, 27 lambing ewes, 9 fat pigs and 20 poultry. The livestock were by far the most valuable items sold, with a pedigree bull the most expensive livestock item fetching £116/11/- (£116 55p). When the family gathered in the farmhouse after the sale Mr Newborn, then aged 69, was asked if he had any regrets. He replied that he had only one – that he had not sold up years earlier! Mr and Mrs Newborn then moved with their daughters to a house in Northgate which had previously belonged to Mrs Newborn's family for many years.



Scenes from the sale

Further reading

Farming in Tickhill

Beastall, T. W., *Tickhill: Portrait of an English Country Town*, The Waterdale Press, 1995.

Newborn, J. M., and Wakelam, S., 'Changes in Farming' in Beastall, T. W., (ed) *Collections for the History of Tickhill*, 4, The University of Sheffield, 1980 (available for loan from Tickhill Library).

Sandland, J., Smith, M., and Wilcox, M. J., *The Place Names of Tickhill* (available for reference from Tickhill Library).

Farming elsewhere

Kirkwood, N. E., *To farm is to live: An autobiographical account of farming in the East Riding of Yorkshire from the 1920s to the 1990s*, Ridings Publishing Co., 1999.

Land at war: The official story of British farming 1939-1944, The Stationery Office, 2001.

Pilling, H. H., *Stainton: A South Yorkshire village*, 1989.

Porter, V., *Yesterday's farm: Life on the farm 1830-1960*, David & Charles, 2006.