

ERIN SMITH'S INTERVIEW

WITH HER

GRANDAD SEAN SMITH

School holidays were mostly spent in Co. Limerick helping my mother's people on the farm. I worked at hay making for the most part as I was no good at milking. It was all manual work as there was no tractors or balers, all had to be done by fork. The horse was used instead of the tractor. When the holiday's were over I'd come home fit and tanned.

We ran a public house in Kells, Co. Meath with a small grocery section at the front. We made beef sandwiches and also tea and bovril. My father carved the roast of beef and also sliced all the bread by hand. The bread came from a local bakery and was delivered by horse and cart. Roast beef was usually on the menu in our house. We also had rabbit stew once a week. Peter Rogers had permission to catch rabbits in the Headfort Estate. He used a ferret and nets to do the job. I often saw him walking home with about two dozen rabbits hanging from the handle bars of his bike. Petey was the only rabbit supplier. All before the awful myxomatosis arrived.

My favourite past time in my young days were shooting and dancing. The wild foul (ducks) season was from 1st September until 31st January and other game (pheasants) was from 1st November until the end of January. For this pastime, a good dog was essential, therefore during my life I have owned black labradors, springer spaniels, german pointers, an English pointer and a Brittany spaniel, all of them had good and bad points.

In Kells, school days started in the Convent of Mercy ran by the nuns then moved to the Christian Brothers. This was a 'quare' shock to the system as the brothers were hard men who were very willing to hand out corporal punishment using a leather strap on the hands. Children have it much easier nowadays but the teachers maybe not.

Ballroom dancing was mostly in the local St. Vincents Hall. The crowd was mostly people who were within cycling distance as cars were scare those days. After closing time in the pubs the dancing would get a bit rough as the 'drunks' arrived. An odd row would break out over the messing. All harmless stuff, no knives involved.