

Hitchen In The Early 1900s

Queenie Dodge

The first council houses were built in Hitchen in 1924. Until then, the only houses in the centre of Merriott were the cottages at Old Hitchen. There were some strips of land, called 'land shares', and allotments where the Glebelands estate is now.

A wide track from Broadway gave access to the fields for carts and for farm implements. Paths formed the field boundaries. From Old Hitchen to Evergreen Path there were bigger fields.

From Broadway to the path which went from Knapp to the school in a straighter line than it does now, there were allotments in half the field. The rest of the field grew root vegetables and potatoes.

The other side of the path was one large field which grew in rotation corn and mangolds or root vegetables or cabbages.

We used to walk to school with no traffic to contend with and we could skip or bowl our hoops or play marbles. We were able to watch the corn growing with the poppies, see it cut and harvested. Whilst it was a peasant walk in the good weather, it was very cold and wet in the wintertime!

About Queenie

Queenie was born in Merriott and lived in the village all her life. She was very interested in the history of the village and accumulated a considerable archive of photographs and documents now held by Crewkerne Heritage Centre. This article was first published in May 1993 in the Merriott Civic Society Newsletter. The scene Queenie describes was much the same until the early 1950s.