

annointing them with disinfectant... On with Taylor to Iken Hall, Iken Valley and Hill Farm Iken - saw numbers of pigs - & to Ferry Farm where were a large number of breeding sows - & afterwards we went to Orford to regale ourselves - on the way looking round at Butley & Sudbourne. Had dinner - a rather mediocre one - at the Crown & Castle & returned to Capel. '

On the Sandlings flocks of sheep were traditionally moved in summer from the dry heathland to graze on marshes and river walls, clogging up the roads in the process. At this time the estate had two shepherds and about 700 sheep in total. Stephen and Peter were involved in helping one of the shepherds move 500 lambs from Butley to Gedgrave marshes:

*August 10. Got up at 6.30 - had a small meal & went off to the Abbey where we changed to a cart & arrived at the Suffolk lambs about 8.00 (Fig. 5). We helped to conduct these lambs from Butley to Richmond Farm - via Chillesford & Orford. We really did a good deal of work for the shepherd: in any case a flock of 500 Suffolk lambs is not an easy thing to move five miles. However we did it in about 2½ hours and arrived at the marshes where some of them are to be fattened (the wethers & poorer ewe lambs)... After lunch spent the afternoon in the dairy. We found this to be rather small & congested. Milking is by machine with hand stripping & an automatic feeder (by pulling a lever 4 lbs of concentrate is released) - The head cowman does not approve of machines - & does not consider them as quick as hand milking. We did a little stripping, cleaning etc. Found it very dirty in the cowshed. Saw 4 calves fed from the bucket. Read etc. after tea. '*

In the 1930s the majority of roads in the Sandlings were still unmetalled. Despite this, motor transport enabled the distribution of animal feed to be centralised:



Fig. 7. Wheat harvested near Butley High Corner before the war

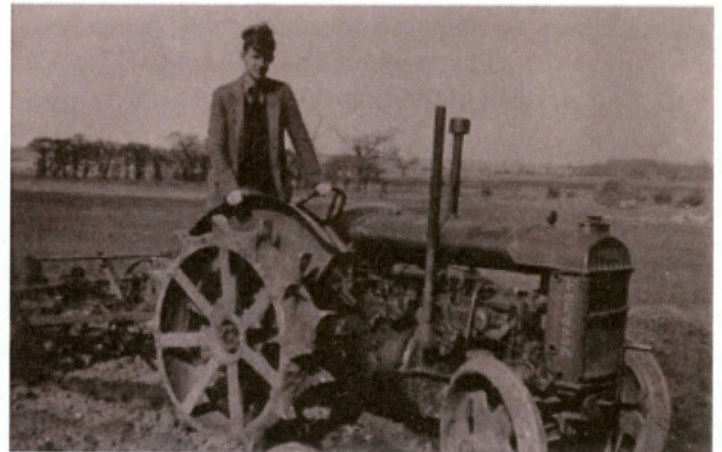


Fig. 8. Neighbouring farmer Alistair Watson at work on his Fordson tractor before the war

*August 11. After breakfast we went out with the rations in the lorries. The rations go out from the barn at Butley Abbey every Friday and are taken round to the various farms (Fig. 6). I went round with one lorry to Ferry Farm, Poplar Farm and Eiken Hall [sic]: the driver and I moved the sacks out of the lorry into the barn. After lunch went down to Valley Farm and Neutral Farm, both in Butley. Returned to the Abbey about 3.20 P.M. and went round with King before tea: he was giving the men their wages, which he does every Friday. Geoffrey Paul came to tea: afterwards we saw some wheat finished and chased some rabbits. '*

*August 12. Went cutting rye after breakfast. Another fine sunny day. The Fordson tractor had difficulty in getting round on the extremely sandy soil, but we cut a certain amount. The crop is pretty poor, partly no doubt due to the poorness of the soil. The rubber wheeled type of tractor is apparently best on this sort of soil - but it found the going very difficult. The Fordson is not so pleasant to drive as the Massey Harris. '*

*After a weekend break in Cambridge and Thurlow it was back to the farm: Pig weighing at Wansden [sic] Hall in the morning. Wansden is a fattening centre & the pigs have to weigh 14 stone 8lbs before they can go to the bacon factory, so all the ones likely to weigh as much must be weighed. It is a difficult job getting the pigs to go into the weighing crate & then weighing them & finding out their number marked on the ear. '*