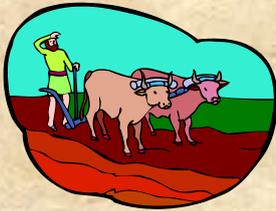


WHAT THE BADGERS

SAW 9



Bits from 1750 to 1918



Hello, I'm Shadow the fox. I live in an 'earth' near to Motte and Bailey. They don't mind me being around, but we all know that they own the place! But they aren't around, so I've come to introduce you to the next bit of the story. Read on!

A bit about agriculture: (Motte and Bailey's favourite subject - where there's a farm, there's food!) This was a time of change for agriculture in County Durham. Old methods were dying out, and machinery was being used more and more. Until about 1750, arable fields were left *fallow* every couple of years or so. (That means it wasn't used to grow anything - it was left to rest.) Moors and 'waste' land was only used in the summer for grazing animals. Young children often took the animals up to the moors and lived in *shielings* or small huts until autumn, when the animals were brought back down to the farms in the valleys.

About 1750, farmers here began to notice the changes going on further south. They began trials with different crops, such as beans, turnips and clover, and found they didn't need to leave land fallow. (This is called crop rotation.) Clover is a useful crop. It's a member of the pea family and puts nitrogen into the soil, which is just what other crops, like barley, need.



Two brothers, called Robert and Charles Colling, had a farm near to Darlington. They became famous cattle breeders. The Durham Shorthorn breed was begun in Sedgefield. Charles Colling began to buy good bulls, and eventually bred the famous 'Durham Ox'. (Look for photos - wow!) When the first sale of Shorthorns was held at Ketton, one bull was sold for more than £1000, when the usual price was about £17.

Cattle are very useful to badgers. Badgers will often root under cow pats for the worms and grubs that live there. (Lovely!) Some people argue that bovine TB is spread this way. They say that it is spread in badger dung. But others say that is not true. Consider: badgers will feed under cow pats, but cows will not feed near to badger dung pits. So which way around do you think it might be?



By the middle of the 18th Century, the land began to be enclosed into the fields we know today. Lots more land was now improved and cultivated. Even some of the moors were enclosed.

Some people actually lost the lands they farmed on, if they couldn't prove it was theirs.



Until 1750, the only town of any size here was Newcastle. Only three other towns had more than 400 houses – Sunderland had 792, Darlington 444 and Stockton 431. (I wonder how many they have today?) The growth of the towns caused problems. There just weren't enough homes. The rich men who owned the factories began to build houses for their workers. They were often not very nice to live in! The builders often didn't put in drains, sewers or clean water! You can imagine what that would be like! There were lots of epidemics, such as cholera.

People who lived near to factories and mines had to live with smoke and fumes. Rich people lived on the western side of towns, as the prevailing wind blew the smoke from west to east. Poor people lived in the east of towns, where they had to live with the filthy air. Many people died young.

In the 1870s, things finally began to change. The worst houses were pulled down. But before the Great War, in 1914, there was still a shortage of good housing. (After 1918, when the war was over, why did they call it 'The Great War', rather than the 'First World War'?)



Before the death of Bishop William Van Mildert, in 1836, he helped to set up the University of Durham. The Bishop gave his castle to become University College.

When Bishop Van Mildert died, all of the lands and money were taken by the government. It was the end of the Prince Bishops.

