

## Halfpenny Land c1940

Halfpenny Land which had originally been built as two semi-detached cottages, had been converted into one house and was quite old, listed on the 1871 census but not on the 1861 census\*. It had no gas or electricity and the water came from a well in the front garden that was built with large granite stones cemented around the sides and back and a much larger stone laid across the top, it had a green painted backwards sloping door on the front. Water was drawn up with a bucket tied on a rope, although there was a pump with a handle which we did sometimes use, but it had to be primed with water first so it was easier to use the rope and bucket. Although water was not scarce we used it very sparingly, around two or three buckets of water or so every day. The well never ever ran dry, even in the Summer, due to an underground spring in the centre of the field to the north of the house. Incidentally this same spring is the source of the small brook that ran under the road, down behind Jack Sander's garages and yard, past a quaint little derelict thatched cottage called 'Meravin' which sadly is no longer there, along beside a path that leads to Down Farm (where another of my school friends, Jim Perkins lived) along the bottom of a field covered in bracken - where the local Home Guard would set up their targets when firing their rifles, sten guns or their only other gun, called a Northover Projector (basically a tube with a trigger mechanism attached) from one of Mr. Ernie Heard's fields across the valley on Rectory Road - the little brook then continued on past Brooke Cottage which was along Brooke Road and finally ended up flowing down into the River Torridge.

*Submitted by Bill Baker who was evacuated to Dolton during WW11 and although he only stayed 3 or 4 years has maintained contact with many of the people he grew up with here*

[\*Research Editor's note: Although it is true to say that Halfpennyland is not mentioned by name in the 1861 or 1851 census, it appears in other records in the early 1800s though it is most likely that the current property was built between 1842 and 1847 on the site of an earlier dwelling which had fallen into disuse several years before.]

## ....and c1980's

Halfpenny land cottage was indeed two separate cottages once, when I bought it and carried out extensive renovations in 1983/4. I discovered that two of the back windows were originally door access to each cottage, divided by a cob wall, part of which had been removed to install a staircase. The well as far as i know is still there, approximately 15 feet deep and never ran dry. Before I bought it Mr.&Mrs Jack Sanders owned it and the plot opposite, from which he ran a haulage business, perhaps this is how he obtained Royal Canadian Airforce packing case wood (maybe from Winkleigh) to construct the upstairs bedroom wall divisions, and the railway sleepers for lintels over the windows? you could still smell the tar/creosote on a hot day! Rainwater and domestic water would all pass under the road through the lorry park and into the spring mentioned - untreated! The cottage mentioned, of which remains can still be seen, known to me as Pennygrew and can be found on local maps. Eddy Levett