

## 0591 Wilfrid Sheldon summing of closing days 1800s

In those days, the whole family worked in the cornfields. The men earned ten shillings a week for cutting the corn by hand while the women tied up the sheaves. The children gleaned round the edges of the fields and girls of thirteen were hired for six months work on a binding payment of one shilling. They raked and turned the hay and cooked the meals and for this, they could earn about six pounds at the end of the six months.

Towards the end of the century the mechanical reaper came into use, although Will could well remember the old Windmill working when he was a schoolboy.

The main source of work was of course, farming, although many worked in the stone quarries and brick kilns. Wages were very low. If you had a good trade you could earn as much as fifteen shillings a week, but the farmers only paid their men ten to twelve shillings a week. The rents were quite low at about three shillings a week and food a lot cheaper but it must have been hard to bring up a large family.

At this time, if a boy had reached standard four by the time that he was ten years old, his parents could apply for a labour certificate and the boy could leave school and get a job on a farm. His small wage must have been more important than his education when the parents were trying to bring up a large family.

### **THE FRIENDLY SOCIETY**

Times were hard. If people didn't work, they didn't get paid. A special fund was set up for people who were sick or in financial difficulties and district visitors would inform the vicar if he found anyone in this situation.

There was a Friendly Society held in the 'Chequers' at the bottom of Friday Lane where members were entitled to sick pay or a doctor if they were ill.