

THE BOOK OF BERRYNARBOR

A Biography of Devon Life from 1920

Judith Adam

Berrynarbor nestles in a North Devon valley surrounded by other, larger, communities of Combe Martin, Braunton, Ilfracombe and the market town of Barnstaple. *The Book of Berrynarbor* is based on the memories of Ron Toms, its oldest inhabitant at the time the author came to live in the village in 2007.

Born into a farming family, Ron, apart from an occasional trip away, has lived here for 96 years. His story begins during the First World War but his memories include information and observations of bygone years handed down by family and friends. Contemporary photographs, and those taken in earlier times, help bring his story to life.

These words and images paint a fascinating picture of a time when agricultural communities were reliant upon horsepower and manpower; when things were home-made and home-grown: however, Berrynarbor villagers were also dependent upon their neighbours for goods and services, often requiring trips to nearby towns and villages which Ron recalls in vivid detail.

Alongside personal family photographs the author, Judith Adam, has trawled local archives for pictures that help record the countryside in and around Berrynarbor, and recreated the past as Ron and his parents would have known it: many of them scenes that have long since disappeared.

A small number of truly local families have histories that span centuries, and stories of these, and others who form part of Ron's memories, from his schooldays and working life, are included. This real-life story will give the reader an insight into how different our lives are today, at work and at play. It is a story that illuminates the recent history of this beautiful village, before all such memories are forgotten.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

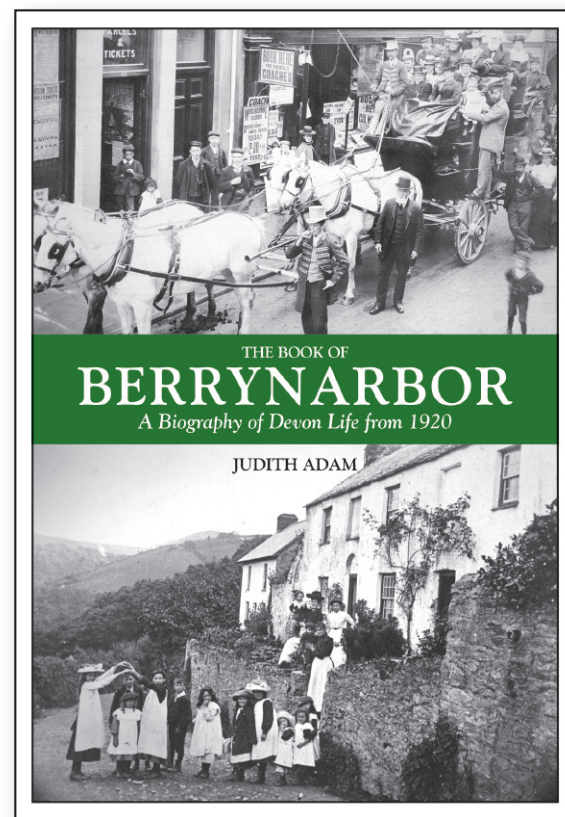
Knowing North Devon, the author escaped the south-east and moved to Berrynarbor in 2007 and, having met this village's oldest inhabitant, started a project simply to record the memories of a nonagenarian before they were lost. His reflections and the support of local historians and museums over the past two years have combined to create this book.

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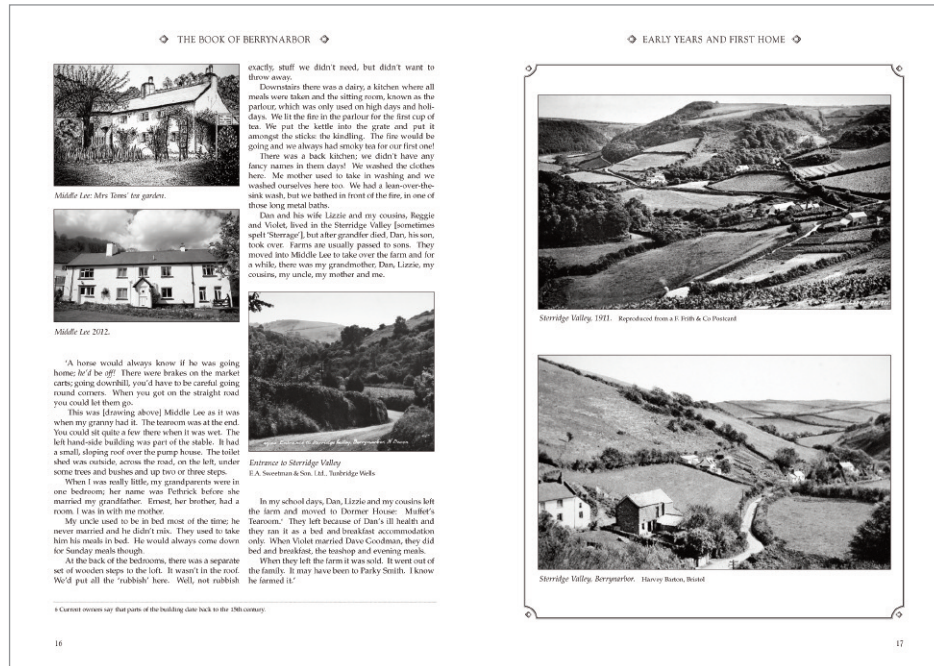


Left: Hele Mill water wheel, early 19th century.

Below: Henry L'Argent Twiss Hairdresser c.1890s. Trawin, Combe Martin



Barnstaple High Street, 1920s. Shows this town as it looked when Ron was a boy.



Example of a double-page spread.



A Christmas celebration, with Ron. Gladys and Ron were at this Christmas celebration, so this is post 1943.