

JACK CORNELL 1918 -1988

Although born in Windsor, Jack spent his early life in Bulmer, initially at Laundry Cottages. He was the eldest child of John and Emily Cornell, and brother to Mabel and Evelyn

During his childhood, Jack's parents moved to the '*Cock and Blackbirds*' public house in Bulmer Street. Brought up in a family of highly esteemed rural craftsmen, Jack developed a love of country life, traction engines and the threshing machine business in which his Father was a part owner.



Jack working in 1940

During the Second World War, Jack served in the Bulmer Home Guard, and achieved his own 'record day' of threshing—some 214 'comb' of oats at Brook Hall, Foxearth.

On June 29th 1946, he married Dorothy Halls at Gestingthorpe Church. A few years later, with the demise of the threshing business, they moved to Mosses Farm, Little Maplestead where he took on the smallholding, and also worked at Smith and Frost's Mill in Halstead.

Steeped in rural lore and with a wonderful gift of reminiscence, Jack's memories were an utter delight for any local historian. From his earliest recollections of the freezing temperatures of the 'old School', to the children's Christmas treat at the 'Big House', or of making whistles from the twigs of a Horse Chestnut tree by the Church, he continued with descriptive—and loving—accounts of Bulmer life from the nineteen twenties to the nineteen forties. Village cricket, the Home Guard, evenings in the '*Cock and Blackbirds*' and threshing machine memories were all evocatively—and humorously recalled.

Jack was both the inspiration and the guide for two local history books which were dedicated to him: *Vintage Steam Owners and Operators of the Colne Valley Area* by Robin Harding, and *The Long Furrow* by Ashley Cooper.