

Hoppicking menwar.

School broke up at the end of August for the hop-picking holiday which lasted for a month or was extended for a week if the picking was not completed.

My dad hated hoppicking as there was no-body at home to take his Horlock drink into the blacksmith's shop, ~~so~~ he had to have a cold dinner and ~~the~~^{no} house work got done and we all came home tired. We children had to get a stack of morning wood ready for the fire beforehand - that was ^{our} job. We walked ^{happy as eye-opens for the bull} across the fields to Mam's at Ooleton Creek. carrying Kettle dinner bags & a big knife for cutting the bines. We usually had half a crib with Mrs Field whose daughter Minnie was my best friend. There were 4 hop yard, the

Tank' (named because there was
a big tank in there for tanning poles)
'the Chapel' - this one was a pole
hop-yard. where you pulled up
the poles, 'Candy's', a small hop yard
near Honeystile & 'the Teme' down
by the river. When we were small
we didn't help much with the
picking - but there were plenty of
children to play with, and you
could make 'gardens' in the rows or
make swings with hop branches on the
breast wires as long as you didn't get
caught. The pickers from the Black
Country who lived in the buildings
round the farm were a constant source
of interest. There were whole families
with lots of children