

Farming in the Lim Valley Introduction to the Exhibition

<https://www.lymeregismuseumresearchteam.co.uk>

Graham Davies, June 2020

This article is based on the *Farming in the Lim Valley* exhibition held in Uplyme Village Hall in May 2008. The exhibition was researched and curated by Museum volunteers Ken Gollop, also a trustee, and Graham Davies, a retired veterinary surgeon.

News cuttings and photos are used here to set the scene for the exhibition that was first held in Uplyme twelve years ago, when more than 1000 people attended over three days.

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BRIDPORT & LYME REGIS

Exhibition offers historic glimpse of Lim Valley life

A FASCINATING glimpse of agricultural life in the Lim Valley over the past couple of centuries will go on show in a three-day exhibition.

The exhibition, *Farming in the Lim Valley*, opens at Uplyme Village Hall on Thursday, May 29 and runs until Saturday, May 31.

Exploring the changing face of farms once prominent in and around Lyme Regis and Uplyme, the exhibition from Lyme Regis Museum will feature photographs, maps, documents and words, capturing memories of farming and agriculture over the last 150 years or so.

To date, 60 farms and small holdings have been discovered, many of which will be described in the exhibition, and 2,000 photographs, documents and maps have been copied, a selection from which will occupy more than 70 exhibition boards.

The major project was created by retired veterinary surgeon Graham Davies and ex-fisherman Ken Gollop who spent hundreds of hours researching and setting up the exhibition.

Mr Davies, a volunteer researcher at the museum, has spent much of the past year visiting farms and small holdings in the local area, recording farm and family histories, making copies of photos and documents, and photographing the current farming scene.

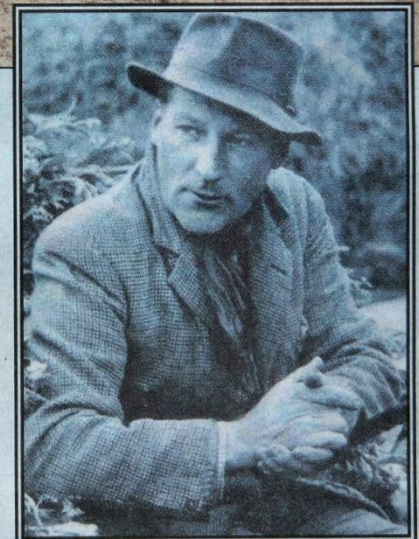
Mr Gollop's local knowledge has been invaluable for Mr Davies' researches and his experience in



putting together museum exhibitions has been vital. He is a trustee and volunteer at the museum.

Originally intended as the museum's winter exhibition, the project has grown beyond expectations and will be the first time a museum exhibition has moved beyond its walls.

Entry to the exhibition is free and is open between 11am and 5pm on the Thursday, from 10am to 8pm on Friday, and between 10am and 4pm on Saturday. It will also include a photographic record of the changing seasonal activities at Shapwick Grange farm in 2007.



LIFE ON THE FARM: This image of farmer Cecil Turner will feature in an exhibition on farming at Uplyme Village Hall. Top, a farming family in the Lim Valley during the 1920s (S)

LYME REGIS MUSEUM FARMING IN THE LIM VALLEY

EXHIBITION

Uplyme Village Hall

May 29th - May 31st

Thursday 11am to 5pm

Friday 10am to 8pm

Saturday 10am to 4pm

**ADMISSION
FREE**



A vast collection of photographs have been brought together for a Westcountry exhibition exploring 150 years of life among farming families. **Neil Young** casts an eye over images that reflect a vanished world

Henry Trivett



Extracts from Western Morning News, May 22, 2008

Old Henry Trivett loved the camera. With his broad and half-toothed grin, he gazed into the lens, his hat clasped in his right hand as if to bow, and a huge rake in his left hand...

His image is just one of a huge collection brought together for an exhibition at Uplyme Village Hall from May 29-31 of Farming in the Lim Valley over the last 150 years.

These pictures open a window on to a world that is long gone, and only a distant memory in older generations. These were the days before television, when road were for horses as much as a car, and when a telephone was a rarity.

Even the clothes of the farm workers and their families tell a story. These are toiling people, broad of shoulder, and often bent of back and mostly unfamiliar with the concerns of the outside world.

Their lives were often harsh – one display called Surviving in Hard Times looks at how farming families found enough food when money was scarce.

But there are also unusual glimpses of the outside world moving in. Consider, for instance, the 1920s picture of a man working at a threshing machine while a young woman in “flapper’s” outfit looks on.

The aim of the exhibition, being staged by Lyme Regis Museum, is to provide a record of farming history and activities before the memory of them is lost. Researchers Graham Davies and Ken Gollop spent hundreds of hours researching the project Mr Davies has spent much of the last 12 months visiting and revisiting farms and smallholdings in the area. He has made copies of photos and documents and photographed the current farming scene. In addition many hours have been spent in the museum and local record offices.

The exhibition concentrates on the parishes of Uplyme in Devon and Lyme Regis in Dorset. The museum had little information on the history of farming in the parish of Uplyme but it was hoped that Mr Davies, with his veterinary background, would have good access to the farming community. The results were impressive.

Some 60 farms and smallholdings have been contacted, and thousands of photographs, documents have been copied – a selection from which will take up more than 70 exhibition boards. Mr Gollop explained: “It was a mammoth task – 99% of the photos have never been seen before

What had been envisaged only as a winter display for 2007-08 at Lyme Regis Museum was revised because of the scale of the project It was decided that it would be appropriate to hold the complete exhibition in Uplyme in May – a first for the museum to go outside its walls

So, take your time with this exhibition – there are 150 years to explore.



Farm workers making hay while the sun shines in the 1920s

By ADRIANNE MASLEN

MORE than 1,000 people visited an exhibition exploring the changing face of farming in the Lim Valley.

The three-day exhibition at Uplyme Village Hall last week captured memories of farming and agriculture in West Dorset and East Devon over the last 150 years or so.

Farming in the Lim Valley featured 746 photographs and 110 documents and maps in a project from Lyme Regis Museum. It was led by museum trustee and volunteer Ken Gollop and museum researcher Graham Davies. The exhibition started out

as the museum's winter event but grew so far beyond expectations, it has moved outside of the museum walls.

Mr Gollop said: "This is just a small part of the stuff we have collected and we shall carry on with the project because we have had a lot of people promising us more photos and documents. We had 220 people in the first day, coming from all over East Devon and West Dorset. It has been very successful."

Over the three days, 1,081 people visited the exhibition, including local farming families who were invited to a social evening last Thursday.

Mr Davies said the exhibi-

tion and the social evening was the real test of the project's success. He said: "I felt we did a good job but I didn't know how other people would like it because it is so personal to us. They are the farmers, and if they like it, it is a success."

Mr Davies said the feedback was positive. "It was a rare occasion when the local farming community all came together, which pleased them almost as much as the exhibition itself," he said. "Some of the older members were meeting for the first time since they went to school together 60 to 70 years ago."

Mr Gollop thanked the farmers and farming families who lent photographs,

documents and told stories to make the event such a success. "We have only just scratched the surface," he said.

Mr Davies added: "The exhibition was the end production but we have now realised it couldn't be the end because it is part of a bigger project. It has just taken over."

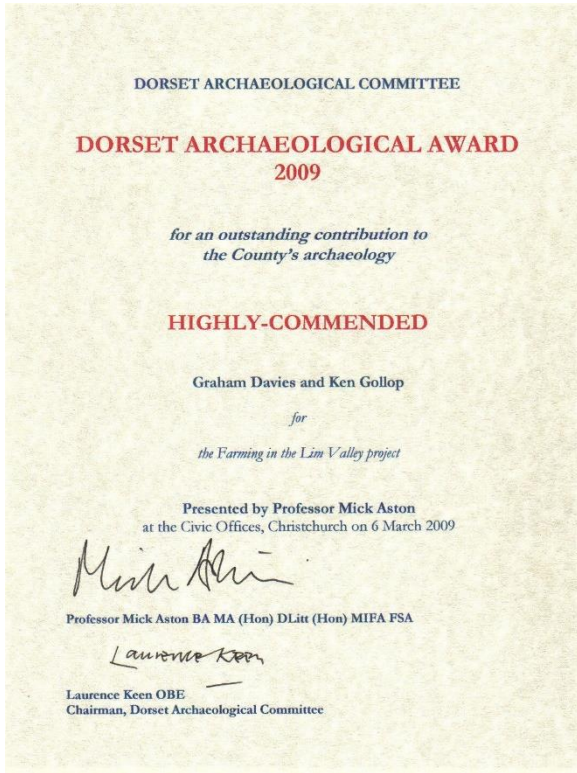
He said they hope to hold another exhibition in the near future.

John Marriage, chairman of the museum trustees, thanked Mr Gollop and Mr Davies and said the amount of work that had gone into the project had been 'unbelievable'.

Farmers reunite to explore past
Social evening for local farmers and
their families on first evening of
exhibition



Overview



The *Farming in the Lim Valley* exhibition was shown again in the Baptist Hall in Lyme Regis in September 2008.

In 2009 the Museum's Research Team curated a new exhibition, *Farming in East Devon* which was held for four weeks in June at the Thomas Whitty house, Axminster, when 2000 people attended. This exhibition included the Uplyme farms from 2008.

It became more difficult to find suitable and available venues to show the Lim Valley exhibition. It was shown in October 2016, reduced to 60 boards, for two days at Woodmead Halls, Lyme Regis, and at Uplyme Church for a morning in February in 2019. Covid-19 has put in doubt a viewing arranged in Lyme later this year.

Decisions had to be made about presenting the Lim Valley exhibition online. The *Farming in the Lim Valley* exhibition display boards were all photographed, but their impact and definition was somewhat reduced online.

It was decided to write individual articles on the farms based on the exhibition boards, with added new information, supported by this introduction and a map of the farm locations.



Lower Rhode Farm, Uplyme, early 1900s