

## Dresses for Winter Dances and the First Motorcar

### Anne Vance was born 1905 and interviewed in the 1990s

We used to play all sort of games as children. One such item was a "booley". It was simply a circle of metal and you had a little stick and we used to bowl this hoop along the roads.

We also played a lot of marbles. We used to dig a hole in the ground and we would stand or kneel a certain distance from the hole and bowl a big marble and try and knock the smaller marbles into the hole.

I also had a doll until I was twelve years old. It was a beauty. It had the most beautiful face made out of china. I always took this doll in a pram and my brother got so mad. He was a short-tempered child and one night he was in a thoroughly bad temper and he got hold of the doll and smashed it on the road. I cried for weeks

We used to skip a lot both at home and school. We had songs when we skipped and I can remember one. I don't know how we skipped to this but I know we used to say it.

"I dreamt a dream the other night, the dream was really mine  
That I was washed instead of clothes and hung upon the line  
The washer lady took me up, she had two monster pegs  
And when she'd rung me out like this, she hung me by mi legs  
I shan't forget the awful fear of flapping in the air  
And what was more and was not least, that no-one seemed to care."

Clothes were very interesting when I was young. From layer to layer: For a start you had bloomers. They were either pale blue or pale grey with a fleecy lining and they were lovely and warm.

As well as those we wore what we called 'drawers' and they were simply a leg with a very wide band that came down to almost your knees and they had the most beautiful lace bottom with a frill. You wore the drawers underneath and the bloomers on top. Then there about three layers of flannel petticoats. There was always a layer which matched the drawers with lace round the bottom. We used to make these at home ourselves. On top of that we had a scarlet petticoat and that was done with white scalloping and in the middle of the scallop there would be a small shamrock of daisy or something like that.

During the winter we used to go to dancing classes at the Underbarrow Institute. The teacher was Tommy Cannon and he used to play the fiddle and teach us to dance. His son used to play the piano in accompaniment. We used to be taught all the national dances, Scotch dances, reels, hornpipes, quadrilles, the Lancers and all those sort of things.

We used to have twelve weeks of teaching and then the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> weeks we used to have what we called balls. We all had new dresses. I remember one I had that I was very partial to. It was pale bluey-green and it had a fichu (*a type of scarf which wrapped round the neck*) edged with coffee lace.

The boys would learn to dance as well as the girls. My brother was a great hornpipe man. He used to give exhibition dances at these balls. He was very good.

Our family would be invited to four or five farms. The barn used would be cleared of hay and we would dance in there. The dust was terrific. They would lug a piano into this barn and they used to put farm lanterns all round to see the dancing. This would be about Christmas and it went on until March or even April, until we had been round all the farms.

When I left school it was my job to make breakfast at the farm. I used to get up at 5.00am to make the oatmeal porridge. We had our own oats and the miller in the village used to mill it

for us. We used to have black treacle with it. Sometimes as a special treat we would have golden syrup.

The men would have got up early and worked outside for a while. At 9 o'clock they stopped for what was known as 'drinking.' It would be tea, milk and sugar, no coffee in those days. As soon as they finished their drinking I would start on the midday meal. Our father, when he was butchering, brought the meat from the slaughterhouse and it would have been in the black-leaded, coal heated, oven slow cooking since around 8.00am. There would be home grown vegetable and always either a huge sago or rice pudding. Another thing we used to make a lot of was spotted dick with white sauce.

I remember a conversation – this was before motor cars were seen in our area. A farmer and my grandfather were standing against a wall, as farmers often do, and they saw something going along the bottom road. It was red coloured and it was going very quick, as far as things were concerned in those days. This farmer said to my grandfather "Did tha see that thing along t'bottom road? What does tha think it is?"

"Ah me lad," said my grandfather, "I don't know what it is but neither God nor man nor t'devil will see that again."

My father had the first motorcar as far as the district was concerned. It was dark olive green and it was a van really. He used this instead of the horses for the butchering and you could take the butchering part off and put the seats where that had been. On a Friday he used to go past my school to deliver meat and he used to let me sit in the seat next to him. I used to sit and feel like a Duchess.

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