

What Happened Was - 17

As well as working on site for Bryco Concrete I also provided some metal fittings for the concrete buildings. One such job was making cleats for bolting sections together, made from 1" x ½" steel bar. I would buy two tons of bar at a time and cut the pieces to length on a circular cut-off saw ready for drilling and bending.

The drilling I found easy, Janet did it. She sat in front of an ancient pillar drill quite happily drilling 5/8" diameter holes, two or three in each bar. The bending wasn't so easy, I did that with a hand bar bender. As more of these cleats were wanted I had to make life easier, so I made up tooling to do the job on a ten ton power press.

Now back to the drilling it was time for an upgrade so I bought a new radial drill with all mod cons so now we could really motor on. One small snag Janet hated the new drill, couldn't get on with it, wouldn't use it and threatened to withdraw her labour (technical term for strike). So we came to a clever arrangement, I drilled the holes.

Work were coming steadily by now and then in February 1972 the country was put on a three day week and S.W.E.B. informed me that I was only to use electricity for three days in the workshop.

This was fine by me as it gave me a chance to get stuck into renovation work on the cottage. Ceilings to come down, plaster hacked off walls and floors which were always damp as they were only bricks laid on dirt, to come up as well. The problem of what to do with all the rubble was easily solved, tip it down the well in the out house, after all water was plentiful and cheap so who needed a well anyway. While I was at it I put in part central heating downstairs, upstairs another time, (always keep a job in hand). The first tank of oil cost eleven pence per gallon, and on the subject of prices, in with the clutter you tend to keep I have a rates bill for 1972 for £62. 78p for the year and that included the water rate. In no time at all things were back to normal and I probably had used more electricity than I would have if I had been left alone.

A drilling job that comes to mind was a tractor drawbar some two and a half inches by one inch by two foot long with holes along its length to take pins.



It was made of Manganese steel and was known as "work hardening" which is extremely tough.

When the drawbar was made the holes would have been punched. The farmer had tried to drill a hole about half an inch diameter and failed. The lad who brought it in blamed the drills even though they had about a pint of oil. I set it up with a one inch drill, put the machine on auto feed and stood back. It did send up some black smoke and the swarf (drillings) were dull red towards the finish but it made it. The lad said "What's that going to cost him then?" two and six said I. Coo that's a bit steep said the lad so I said, Roly if Richard spent two thousand pounds on a machine like this and another thirty pounds for a drill he could have done the job himself for nothing.

I think he got the message.

