

The countryside on the Devon - Somerset border is mainly pasture. On the Devon side of the border lies Hemyock, a village in the Blackdown hills. The River Culm flows through it beside the St. Ivel Gold Factory. There is also a small engineering firm in the village. There are 5 churches, 2 garages, and 7 shops including the Post Office and bakery, 2 grocery shops, 2 hardware shops a butcher's and the Fish and Chip shop. There is a bank, a building society and a public house called the Catherine Wheel. The surgery is in Station Rd. The old school is being converted into flats for the elderly. Sports facilities include a rec. for cricket and football, a tennis court, bowling green, children's playpark, and the village hall for badminton. There is a primary school to serve the area.

The Landscape around Hemyock is mainly a patchwork of fields and steep hills. There are approximately twenty two farms in our area. The hills are called the Blackdowns. From most parts of our area you can see Culmstock Beacon which is the end point of the Blackdowns. In the valley there is a river called the River Culm which rises at Culm Head. North of the village is Pencross Hill from which you can see the whole of the village. South of the village is Castle Hill. By the church runs a stream called St. Margaret's stream. It was once a moat for Hemyock Castle, but there is not much left of Castle or moat now. The stream used to be used for a waterwheel at Oxenpark farm where its shed is still standing. From Oxenpark the stream flows to Windsor farm.

Mr. Blackmore, my grandad, owns a farm; my dad helps run it and dad, mum my two brothers and sister live there. The farm is called Palmers Farm. We have 250 acres of land. Most of our land is nearby but we do have some fields quite a long way off. We have 98 cows, some sheep and some corn. Our farm is very old but some of the machinery is very new. We have six tractors but one is out of use.

Hemyock's water comes from Churchstanton out of the under ground springs. At the moment they are building a new pipeline. The new source of water will be from Wimbleball Reservoir. Many farms have their own wells or springs. In our square there are two wells and there is one spring in our square. The old water source came past Shuttleton Farm and it went past the butcher's. Hemyock has a pump in the centre of the village. They used to get their domestic water from there and the water to put out fires. The pump was built in 1902. The pump does not work anymore.

There are no major roads in the area of this survey. The roads are all unclassified and serve the village of Hemyock. There are four routes in and out of the village. The most used route leads west from the village, following the valley of the River Culm to Culmstock. This route leads to Exeter and Tiverton. In the other direction the road leaves the village to the north leading to Wellington and Taunton and is called Station Road. There are three other routes out of the village. Two of these head south from the village, joining about a mile from the village and leading to Honiton. Culmbridge Road leads to Clayhidon, Churchinford, Bishops Wood and eventually to Illminster. Between these roads there are many minor roads, some single track, connecting settlements within the area.

Entertainment is provided by members of the village who organise dances, talks, musicals and shows. Hemyock singers meet regularly and from time to time perform stage shows and concerts. To see professional theatre you have to go to Taunton or Wellington in Somerset, or Tiverton or Exeter in Devon. The school puts on plays and concerts during the year which parents and their friends can come to watch in the school. The village hall is used for most presentations as it has a stage and is the largest hall. The methodist church and the parish church both have small halls. Each year, in September, a carnival is held when villagers decorate floats and dress up for a parade through the village, followed by a dance.

There are many clubs around Hemyock. The football club has existed for years. They play on the Recreation ground in yellow and black. The Tennis club has only one hard court and that is by the Recreation ground. The Badminton club meets every Wednesday at the village hall. The snooker club is next to the Recreation ground in one of the old school classrooms. It is for over 14's. The Bowls club is next to the Recreation ground as well. It is being decorated at the moment. The Gardening club has shows twice a year and is run by Mr K Wakeling. Other clubs include the Ringers, Young farmers, Over 60's, Conservation group, Keep fit, Clayhidon history group, Mother's Union, W.I. and Playgroup.

In Hemyock there is a surgery that is open from 9.00 am to 12.00 noon and 2.30 pm to 5.30 pm on Mondays to Fridays. On Saturdays it is only open for emergencies from 9.00 am to 12.00 noon. On Sundays it is shut all day. There are four doctors. They are Dr. Meads, Dr. Griffin, Dr. McLintock and Dr. Wells. The nurse is Nurse Brown. Nurse Brown carries out jobs like dressing wounds and taking blood pressures. There is also a dispensary which provides medicine on prescription. There are four dispensers working at different times. Mrs. Etherington is the health visitor. She visits mums with young children and does things to help them. Mrs. Woodgate and Mrs. Matthews are the receptionists. The surgery was opened on 13th March 1982 by Kenneth Clarke, now the Minister of Health. It was built by D.W. Hart & Son.

In Hemyock there are five churches. There is St.Mary's church of England next to the castle.Its present Rector is Rev.A.Grosse who came in 1973.The church seats about four\_hundred people it has a fairly low tower with a clock on the south side. There are six bells in the tower.The church has two services most Sundays and the average congregation is eighty people.There is also a Baptist chapel.It is a high stone building at the junction of Station Road and Fore Street.It is probably the highest building in Hemyock except for the church and factory.It has a burial ground around the back where many members are buried.The chapel has a house where the minster lives.It is called "The Manse" in Station Road.They have two meetings on a Sunday,attended by about 40 people.

The shops in Hemyock are:the Post Office which is at the top of Station Road and is owned by Mrs.Sanders,the Mace shop which is at the bottom of High Street and is owned by Mr.and Mrs.Hodgett,and a V.G. general store owned by Mr.and Mrs.Harrison in Station Road.We have two garages in Hemyock one on Culmstock Road owned by Mr.and Mrs.Moore who sell car parts, sweets,hire videos and more,and one in Station Road owned by Mr.Graham who sells petrol,bikes and bikeparts.The pub is called the Catherine Wheel and is owned by Mr.and Mrs.Root.The butchers shop is owned by Mr.and Mrs.Jackson.The hairdressers shop is owned by Mrs.Jones.The fish and chip shop is owned by Mrs.Longford.It has not been here long.In our area there are lots of different builders, carpenters and electricitians.

The general stores in Hemyock are Mace,Harrisons and the Post Office store which is also Hemyock's only Post Office. The fish and chip shop has only just started and Mrs.Longford(the owner) also sells a few cakes. The butchers get their meat from Lloyd Maunder at Willand and C.H.Baker at Honiton. The hairdressers is owned by Mrs.Jones and called Peggy Ann.There is an average of 25 customers a day. Trading takes place at the village hall once a month and everything is sold from books to cakes. A hardware shop has recently opened in Station Road.

Hemyock has a Methodist chapel which is tucked in between house's in the High Street.It was built in 1838. It is part of a Wellington circuit and has one meeting on a Sunday at which the congregation is about 10 people. The Roman Catholic church is in Station Road.It is a small timber framed building which was built in 1939.It hold's one service a week on Sunday mornings with an average of 35 people.It is the only Roman Catholic church in this part of the Culm Valley.There is also a Community Church group which meets in the Parish hall each Sunday morning.The leaders are Mr.P.Partridge and Mr.M. Bendle. They also meet in smaller house groups during the week. About 80 people attend their Sunday meetings.

The factory produces St. Ivel Gold, a low fat dairy spread. About one hundred million cartons a year are produced, but soon production will rise to two hundred million cartons a year, one hundred million more because of an extension taking place. For the extra work they will only have twenty more people. That will make the total number of workers two hundred and twenty one. It will cost seven million pounds. Inside the factory people have to wear special clothes such as hairnets, overalls, hat and boots. There is an electrical work-shop and a new canteen being built. The employees work on twelve hour shifts. There are thirty eight lorries coming and going a day. A crossing patrol for the school is sponsored by the factory.

There is a variety of natural history in the area. There are three conservation areas called Hemyock, Shuttleton and Lickham commons. The old spelling for Lickham is Lakeculm.

Birds seen at Hemyock common include owls, kestrels, buzzards, sparrow hawks, hobby hawks as well as other common birds. Mammals that have been seen include rabbits, mice, grey squirrels, foxes, badgers and roe deer.

Amphibians and reptiles include toads, frogs, slow worms, grass snakes and adders. If you go for a walk you might find some wild flowers that include primroses, campions, dead nettles, cowslips and dog rose.

There are several main roads in Hemyock, each one with some houses in it. The road with the most houses in it is Station Road with approximately sixty houses. Then there is Culmstock Road with roughly twenty houses along it. The other roads have between five and twenty houses along them. All of these houses are privately owned, but the houses on the Eastlands estate are all council houses. The other estates are called Castle Park, Prowses, Churchills and Hollingarth Way (which is not yet completed). The houses in Hemyock are of different types. Some are detached, some semi-detached some are bungalows, some terraced and some flats. Most of the flats in Hemyock are on the estate called Churchills.

There are six local builders in Hemyock and my dad is one of them. My dad's name is Martain R. Pring and he does things like building, carpentry, decorating, D.I.Y.. He is also a funeral director. The other builders are D.W.Hart & Son, builder, plumber, electrician and decorator; C.R.Ayres, builder, electrical contractor, plumber and engineer; J.Hart & Son, builder, plumber, electrician and carpenter; R.A.Doble, small building jobs, decorating, plumbing and repair jobs; Denis Bale and Percy Salter, general building work.

The children of Hemyock attend the Primary school in the village from the age of five until the age of eleven, when they transfer to Uffculme Comprehensive School. Hemyock County Primary is a Devon County Council school. There are one hundred and twenty five pupils at the school, taught by four teachers and the Headmaster, Mr. Roy McQueen. The numbers of boys and girls at the are about equal. The children come from Hemyock, Clayhidon and the surrounding area. Two mini-busses collect children from outlying areas. The school was opened in 1877 but moved to a new building on a new site in 1982. Apart from the teachers there are a secretary, a classroom assistant three cleaners, a driver, two mealtime assistants, three dining centre helpers and a crossing patrol.

The area is served by a telephone exchange within the Taunton area of the British Telecom network. Most homes have telephones and there is a public telephone kiosk between the Post Office and the Baptist Church, at the Junction of Station Road and Culmbridge Road. The Post Office handles mail for the locality, and there are daily deliveries throughout the area. The "Parish Pump" is a monthly magazine produced in Hemyock and is very informative about events in the area. There are two weekly local newspapers, "The Culm Valley Gazette" and the "Mid-Devon Star" which began circulation on 24th. May, 1985. In addition to these papers "The Express and Echo" is an evening paper which provides local news on a daily basis.

There are a number of organisations in Hemyock which are especially to provide leisure activities for young people in and around the village. The 1st. Hemyock Scouts is the largest rural troop in the country at the present time. Much of its success is due to the energy and dedication of its leader, Mr. C.R. Loman. The scout group is fed by two cub-scout packs - "Valley" and "Blackdown". Similarly for girls there is a Guide troop, The 1st. Hemyock, fed by two Brownie-Guide groups. Two groups for young people are run by churches. They are the Baptist Junior Club and the Parish Church "Explorers". This summer a youth club has been formed in Hemyock at the request of a group of teenagers. There is a strong branch of the Young Farmers movement, the beginnings of which were at Hemyock.

The population is a mixture of natives born and brought up in the area, and people from other parts of the country who have moved in to the area because of their work or, in many cases, to retire. Many of the local people are inter-related, there having been little movement into the area until the last twenty five to thirty years. Local surnames are Clist, Doble, Hart, Blackmore, Pring, and Loman. The local Devon dialect is still common, Mrs. E. Clist of Mounshayne Farm being able to speak and write in dialect. Many of the businesses are now owned by people who have moved into the area, with the notable exception of all the local building firms many of which have been family run for many years. The Rector, Rev. A.C. Grosse, is not a native but over the past fifteen years has become liked and respected in the locality.