

THE FOLLOWING WAS SENT BY MRS.ALICE MASON TO DR.DI COLLINSON AND TYPED ON
12TH JANUARY 2012 for the Ringmore History Society Archive.

Dear Di,

I am writing an account of what my father told me about his father's experience with the colony of rats. Dick Farley was my grandfather. He lived with his wife Eliza and their seven children in Cumberland Cottage (No.2). My father was one of the children. Grandad worked on a farm. It was called Folly Farm at Bigbury-on-Sea as a labourer. Most of the village men did that kind of work starting at 7.00 a.m. and finishing at 5.30. One evening when he was leaving work he came out of the farm gate and was just going to travel down Folly Hill when he saw a colony of rats coming up towards him. He was frightened. Turned (back and got to the nearest gateway got in the field shut the gate and hurried across the field and saw a route he could take to get to Ringmore. He went on and finally got near the bottom of Cockle Lane a little distance from the end house where Pat and Barry live.*He went up the lane He went up the lane and through the village to Cumberland Cottage. He opened the door got to the nearest chair and sat down. Granny came into the room and said "What is the matter you look one in?" He told of what he had seen and how it had frightened him. So she made him a strong cup of tea with a drop of whisky. He was still shaken and did not feel like eating any supper. He said to my Granny : " I shall go to bed". So up he went but he did not sleep very well. He could still see these creatures.

When he was ready to go to work the next morning, he said : "I shall be going to work over the fields. I cannot face Folly Hill again and he went that way until he finally came to his retirement. He never forgot the experience he had gone through. I am glad that I can write about this tale which my father was able to tell me. Dorothea Terry was quite right to put us in the picture. I wish we could find out if any one else has heard of this happening. Would it be possible to find out if this happens to rats from time to time ? My father did say to me : " I hope they don't travel like that by night. We should not see them. I thought the same thing. It could happen in any part of the country. Well! This is my story and I hope it will be of interest to you and the Society.

I hope you had a nice Xmas and I wish you both a happy New Year with good health. Love,
Alice