



Wayside, Worth Matravers c1965

The smell of catmint triggers fading memories of Wayside's garden.

A meadow of wild flowers, pyramidal and bee orchids, cowslips, buttercups, nettles and pink plumes of sainfoin surrounded by elder and brambles.

The arrival of swallows each summer, wondering if it were the same pair taking up residence in the garage.

In winter hearing the repetitive drone of the chimney cowl in an easterly wind or drawing back the curtains to nothingness and the distant sound of moaning Minnie.



Climbing over the wall at the foot of the garden, straying from the path leading down to Winspit. Meandering among flower rich slopes teeming with white, brown, and blue butterflies.

I remember the hours spent peering into rock pools looking for goggies and crabs shuffling among anemones. Prising limpits off the rocks and plucking wrasse from the sea only to return them a short while after.

Exploring the disused quarries and climbing the cliffs came later as did lots of other adventures and misadventures.



At dusk, feeling the gentle breeze of a summers evening, watching badgers at the sett above Old Quarry cottage and the exhilaration seeing cubs coming out to play. On one occasion with Ashly Ailes who took this black and white photograph with a red filtered flash - my introduction to photography.

A darker experience was listening to the hollow sound of dripping water pierced by torch light, looking for the tight clusters of greater horseshoe bats hanging from the ceiling of Port Arthur, one of Winspit's disused quarries. Later watching their silhouettes darting and weaving in and out of distant constellations.

At the end of the day, lying back and gazing up at the night sky punctured by bright planets and shooting stars - undoubtedly the most captivating experience of all.

When sunlight, reflecting from the full moon, strikes the sea, exposing the horizon beyond East and West Man defining their ancient lines.



My parents loved the countryside. When father retired early he spent many an hour glued to his binoculars, keeping records of all his ornithological observations. Mother's interests included wild flowers, samples of which she pressed under several volumes of Encyclopedia Britannica.