Lighting & Heating in the village. 1913- 1991

Lighting was obtained by either candles or parafing lamps, usaualy one was stood onthe table with a tall pillar & containing a double burner. The glass around the burners had to be cleaned every day & the wick trimmed. One had to turn up the wick very little to start with as it could crack the lamp glass A ver useful lamp called the Tilley gave a more powerful light & consisted of a small mantle, this was a very fragile fitting & when lit it was pumped up to a preasure to retain the light. Candles were used mostly for going to bed & a candle stick was used with a small handle to hold it.
Heating was by parrafin for either a double burner (Beautrix) for slow heating & a primus for cooking or frying etc, this had a small area around-the burner & methelated spirit lit in the area around the burner, when this had burnt out it heated the burner & the vessel which had a pump was preasurised this gave out quite a good heat, quite often a pricker had to be used to clear a small jet
During approx 1927-28 electricty was installed in the village,a purpose made building was errected onthe down which has been turned into a bungalow known as "Grans Den". It was a brick building parted off on the South West Elevation to contain the batteries, these were approx 2ft x 18" containing acid & zinc/lead plates. There were 100 of the batteries making up an approx voltage of 200 (2.5 volts per battery.They were situated on a wood structure 3ft off the ground & all coupled up with heavy connectors.
In the generating section of the building there was a Gas Tangy Engine with a large flywheel, single cylinder & a large dynamo driven with a belt from the engine generating Direct Current of approx 200 volts. Starting the engine was by heating a cast iron block near the intake to the engine with a large blow lamp When the cast iron block was red hot , the oil was turned on & compressed air allowed in the engine which turned the fly wheel & away it went but not always The idea of the batteries was at 11 oclock each night the engine was stopped & the current collected from them untill early morning when the engine was started to recharge them . If more than usual people were useing the electricty during the night in the morning just a glow was obtained from the light bulb.
Very few people in those days had a cooker so mostly the electricty was for light The supply was carried out by Messrs Christy of Chelmsford & Sam James had the job of looking after the engine & its maintenance. All the poles carrying the wires inthe village were made of steel. When anyone came in contact with this D.C current it pushed one away with a nasty jolt not like todays A/c current which hold you.
When alternating current came to the village all the poles & wire were removed & replaced with wood poles & four wires plus a lighting wire onthe top ,the three were for three phase supply plus a neutral. People were encouraged to have one power point & two lights installed free to use up the current. The new generating station was built at Morwellham worked by water turbines with water taken from the old canal feeding a reservoir high above the generating station.
During the time we had D.C current wireless sets were operated with a wet & dry battery, the wet battery had to be charged up every so often & I had worked out a system where if a light was switched on in our house in Cornwall St it charged up our wet battery (known as an accumalator). When the time came for the changeO over to A/C current the electrician (Harry Cundy) was stumped as the old way of measuring the amount of electrricty used was by passing the current through a coloumb of mecury I had connected a switch via the meter to my bedroom behind the supply for charging our accumalator, this was making the wires he connected a short circuit.
Before the D/C supply came to the village we used to take our accumalators to a Mr Price at Bedford Villas who used to generate his own electricty to be charged I think it used to be ½ pence per battery

X WE COOKED WITH 'PRIMUS OVEN' AND COAL RANGE UNTIL 1940 WHEN OIL WAS IN SHORT SUPPLY. THE PRIMUS OVEN WAS MADE BY THE BLACKSMITH AS WAS THE ANTI-SMOKE DRAUGHT CHIMNEY FOR THE RANGE.