FARMS IN THE PARISH OF BERE FERRERS, DEVON

by Rex Toll in 1989, retyped Helena Rogers

**RUMLEIGH FARM**

The farm is situated near the river Tamar and close to the workings of the Rumleigh Brickworks. The farm, which is very old, was once said to have been a monastery. The front porch has an old granite arch with stone seats on each side of the porch, and above the porch is a small room, unusable due to the condition of the floor and walls until the occupation of the Bolts. Mr Ron Bolt married a Miss Gerry of Calstock and they required this room for an extra bedroom. So myself and Barry Peek set about making the room habitable, which proved more than we expected. The floor consisted of worm-eaten oak and the joists were cut from oak trees and were all twisted. We ignored this and laid newly-treated joists and flooring. The walls were so rough it was not possible to straighten them. We noticed a small door opening and we were requested to make this a doorway into the next room. This proved a disaster, because these walls that were just earth and stones and almost three feet thick fell down completely!

The house was occupied by three families: Mr and Mrs Bolt senior, Ron and his wife, and George Pearn and Audrey Bolt, with much work carried out to accommodate them all. During this time, Ron asked us to build a small kitchen adjoining the porch and as we removed the old plastering, we found a small granite arch in the exact position for use as a doorway approximately two feet wide, which must have been at least four hundred years old.

A new water system was required as a building was converted into a new shippon. (*cowshed)*  So we improved the existing system by digging and forming a drainage to collect spring water up the left area of the farm. This was taken into a new reservoir we had built. But a mistake was made in building this reservoir and using the spring water because it was extracted from BLACK RAM (?) which contained acid that destroyed the cement in the concrete blocks and the whole reservoir collapsed. A firm of water engineers completed a new system with a reservoir up on high ground to supply the field, farm and farm house. This existing water supply used to flow into a large granite trough near the house which, I think had the date 1600 on it. However, a new owner of the farm sold the trough – which should not have happened since it was part of the history surrounding the house etc.

Ron Bolt was known well for his rearing of day-old chicks with pens in several of the fields containing his hens – around 50 hens per house.

During the last war a gun crew were situated away from the farm as the German bombers used the old chimney stacks as a guide following the Tamar to bomb Plymouth. I have heard that some bombs were dropped near the stacks, perhaps thinking it was a factory area.

Rumleigh brickworks was part of the farm and many thousands of bricks were carted to Bere Alston by a team of horses and wagon.