

The certificate awarded in 1956 by the British Friesian Cattle Society to Edgcott Lilly's Sunflower for 'persistent production'.

As she said this I noticed her face lit up as if she'd been given a surprise present or some special piece of news.

"She won an award for the heifer yielding the greatest quantity of milk and butter fat in 1956. We were all really proud of her."

She told me that Grampy thought the world of 'his girls' and that they did have their own personalities: some of them were bossy, some grumpy and others had a more laid-back, happy disposition.

"We often had fun and games at milking times," she continued. "All the cows had their own 'favourite' milking

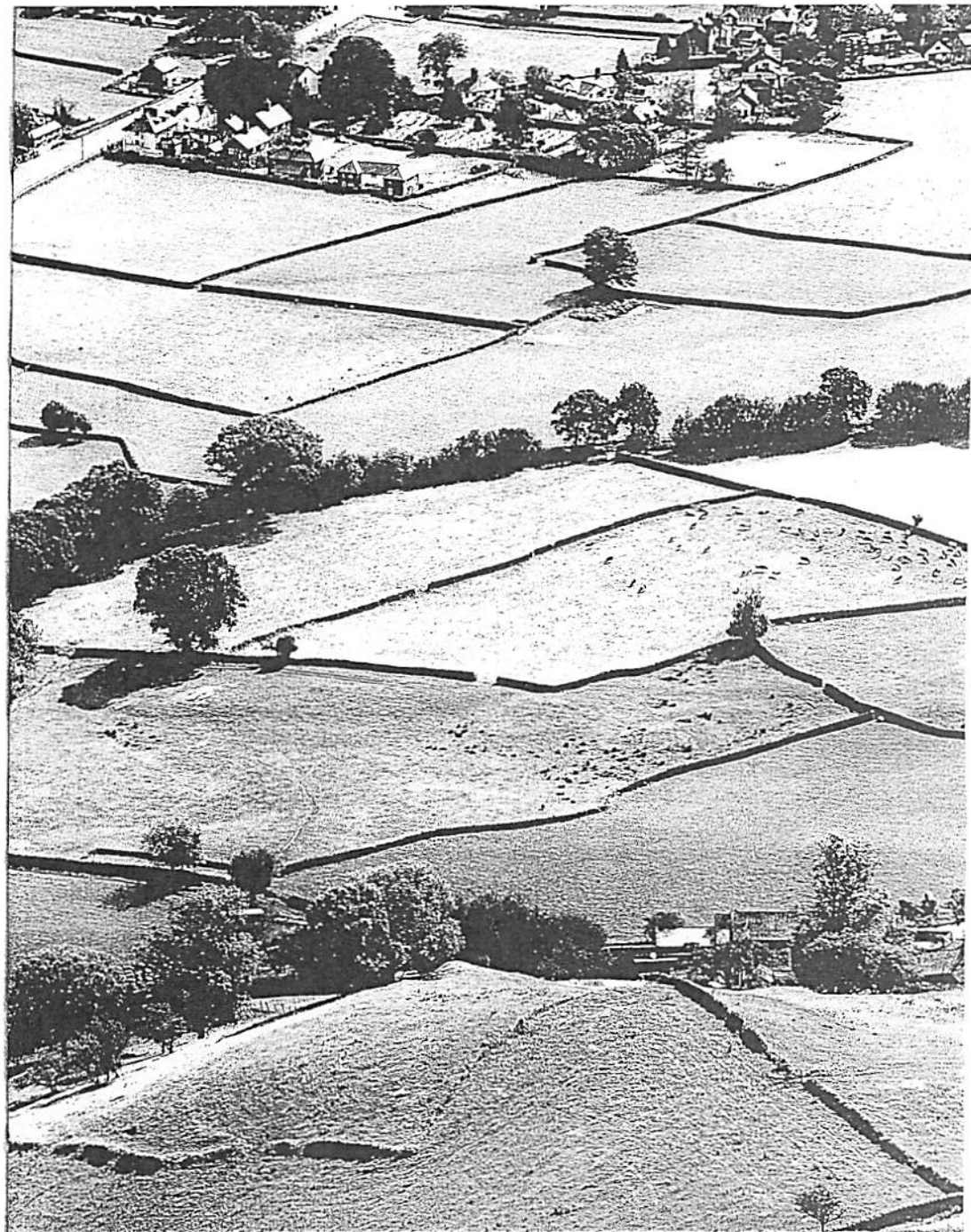
stall and, if one of them went into the wrong one, the rest of them wouldn't settle until the intruder could be persuaded to move."

She told me that one of her happiest childhood memories was in the springtime when the herd were finally let out into the open fields again after a long winter inside the barns. They were always 'over the moon' and would run around for ages, kicking their back feet in the air and enjoying their new-found freedom.

But it's not just these facts and figures that make me feel proud of what my grandparents both achieved in their working lives; what really fills me with pride was the way my Grampy cared for his herd and how much they really meant to him.

With that thought in mind, when I read through the auction catalogue for the sale of the farm (which incidentally describes the cattle as "one of the leading British Friesian herds in the county") I tried to imagine how he must have felt on that day. Mum reassured me when she told me that the whole herd had been sold to one of Grampy's farming friends and that, although it was obviously a very sad day, that really pleased him.

Finally, several weeks after the sale of the farm, he visited his friend to see how 'his girls' were settling in to their new surroundings. As he walked towards the field in which they were all grazing, he called to them, and they all came running up to greet him — even the grumpy ones. ■



Country lens

Grasmere in the Lake District. Photograph by Mark Laird. "This was taken on a stroll up to Helm Crag," Mark recalls. "I liked the way the different greens, bordered by the walls, glowed in the sunlight."