

The "Lettre Jèrriaise" Saturday 12th June 2021

Good morning everyone. It is Jean Le Maistre who has the pleasure of presenting the Lettre Jèrriaise today, Saturday the 12th June 2021.

Today I think I should 'open up' again the subject of agriculture.

What has made me think about it again recently is having noticed some fields of potatoes around us here in Millais. It was sad to see the potatoes, perhaps through lack of rain or perhaps of fertiliser. I can use such an expression as it is in the dictionary and the explanation given is..... it is fertiliser which makes crops grow fast, as for example potatoes. Certainly they look as though they have suffered or are stressed..... which is a good Jèrriais expression. Have a look good people in the dictionary.....it's wonderful to be able to discover, in some small corners these rich expressions. It really is "gold" or perhaps even diamonds that one can find from time to time in our ancient language.

I often think how all the work on the farms has changed, as I understand it, since the war. Nearly everything was done by hand except for the large tasks which were undertaken by the horse or even sometimes by horses.

Ploughing the land was with a horse and then scarifying in differing forms and then 'banking' potatoes was with a horse. But there were exceptions when we scarified and 'banked' one row at a time it was sometimes by hand and that was really hard work.

When we came to 'lifting' the potatoes it was all by hand with a fork. We had someone to 'shake' the stalks and the third one would pick up the potatoes in a basket. We had to tip them very slowly into a small barrel, ready to sell them to the merchants in town and then export them by boat to the markets in England.

In today's world nearly all this work is done by machines, except perhaps for planting. They have started using planting machines with good result, so I gather.

But I have a great deal of sympathy when I see the workers walking all over the potatoes when they are filling the one-ton boxes on the trailers. Eventually someone will be buying these potatoes to eat them! I wonder will the customers return a second or third time to buy our 'lovely' Royals or will they be buying English potatoes instead, which look much fresher? Certainly, they call this progress but for me, I think we are risking to kill our market. We shall see and I hope that I am wrong.

I understand very well that everything is expensive nowadays, but I have never seen so many slopes abandoned at l'Étacq as I have this year. And even more, there are several fields at l'Étacq which have not been cultivated. Perhaps it was caused by the rain at the beginning of the year which came right in the middle of the planting season. When that happens, it is impossible to do much about it, so I feel sorry for the farmers who encounter those conditions. But we must always live in hope that things will be better next year. I wish them good luck for the rest of the season and for next year.

Well, everyone, that's enough for this week.

Thank you for listening to me.

Stay safe and goodbye.