

Didn't we have
a lovely time!



For all the children and teachers who have
come to the farm over the last forty years

M.M.

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It takes six long hours by coach from London down to Devon, and there, in a large Victorian manor house with views over to the hills of distant Dartmoor, we all live together for a week, all forty of us, teachers and children, and we all become farmers. We practically live in our wellies! Every day, from dawn to dusk, we're out working on the farm. We go for long muddy walks, eat three good hot meals a day, sing songs, tell stories around the fire in the evenings, and sleep like logs.

I'm a teacher in London, in the inner city. I've been taking the children down to Nethercott once a year for nearly forty years now. For me and for them it's the week in the year we all look forward to most. I love to see the children working hard and purposefully out on the farm feeding calves, moving sheep (and helping to lamb them too in the spring), making hay in the summer, planting trees in the winter. They groom Hebe the Haflinger horse who everyone loves, muck out stables and sheds, dig potatoes, collect eggs and logs, and pick apples and blackberries too, sometimes. The children do it all, and they love it – mostly, anyway.



The great thing is that we all work alongside real farmers and get to feel like proper farmers. We know that everything we are doing is useful and important to the farm, that our work is appreciated.



Every year after our week in Devon, we come back to school and the whole place is buzzing with excitement. Everyone wants to hear all about it. In the playground and in the staff room, all the stories of our time down on the farm at Nethercott are told again and again. Some are true, some are not so true, maybe a bit exaggerated, but they all make great stories.

There are the magic moments: a calf being born, the glimpse of a fox or a deer in Bluebell Wood, an otter slipping into the water of the River Torridge. And the triumphant moments: moving two hundred sheep all the way down through the village with the children as sheepdogs, and not losing a single one of them – child or sheep!

