

Many of the postcards we have featured in earlier issues were sent with a halfpenny stamp — even one that made the journey to South Africa. Those were the days!

Ghosts of the past



All around the country there are still 'ghost signs' that have survived long after the things they advertised have disappeared. We have discovered that there is considerable interest in recording these surviving examples of the advertisers' art before they fade away. This sign, in Oakham, Rutland, is a reminder of the days when grocers blended their own brews to suit their customers' tastes. We still can learn a lot from the typography used in the early part of the last century when names like Ceylon were commonplace.

It must have taken many hours of work for a large sign like this one to have been created. It is placed above the shop window and perhaps the signwriters had to keep moving their ladders in times when health and safety considerations did not exist. To work close to such a large surface made the spacing of letters quite difficult as you

need to study the work from the other side of the street.

SMITHS were careful to announce that their blended teas were contrived "to suit the water of the district".

Perhaps an Oakham historian could tell us when this grocer was in business.

Country style

This splendid smock is in the collection of the House on Crutches Museum, Bishop's Castle, Shropshire. It shows the favourite garment of the countryman in the nineteenth century as it provided protection for his clothes and helped to keep off the rain.

This example shows just how skilled the countrywoman was with the needle, and the decoration often reflected the occupation of the wearer.

Shepherds, carters, ploughmen, hedge layers and many others used smocks which were made from a coarse linen and different coloured material was favoured in different regions. Working smocks were rather plain but those used for Sunday best

