

A workshop full of memories...

ONCE there were three saddlers in Gosberton. Now no one carries out this trade, but Mr Norman Hutchesson, of Snowhill, remembers the time when he and his father had a hectic saddlery business, keeping 800 farm horses fully equipped with collars and all kinds of work saddles.

Mr Hutchesson's grandfather started the family business 125 years ago and it was handed down to his son and finally his grandson.

Trade flourished as farmers over a wide area had to keep their teams of work-horses fully harnessed.

But mechanisation spelt the end of the saddler's heyday and Mr Hutchesson, now 65, made his last saddle before 1960.

He had always made canvasses for agricultural purposes, mainly for binders in his early days, and so when saddlery began to bring in less trade he decided to concentrate on this side of the business.

Now he also sells leather boots.

FIRST FRAME

But his workshop at Snowhill still serves as a constant reminder of his days as a full time saddler. Hanging on one wall is the first frame he ever made for a horse collar, soon after he started learning the trade at the age of 15.

It was never completed because his father said it wasn't good enough.

The machine he once used for sewing leather is still there, as are the wooden



Mr Norman Hutchesson remembers when he and his father had a busy saddlery business. Now he earns a living by making canvases and he is pictured here at his sewing machine

frames that formed the base for saddles for farm horses.

He also has a trolley saddle that he made about 30 years

ago. It was returned to him last year and he plans to repad and repair it one day, as a keepsake.