ONE LAST TIME

OLD MIRFIELD DAYS & WAYS

(History, Illustrations & Pictures of Old Mirfield)

F. G. PILLING

The Ferry at Battyeford from the Kirkheaton side before the Halfpenny Bridge

Mirfield Research Edition 2003

PREFACE

F. G. Pilling writes from a rich experience of Mirfield's fascinating past. People predominate more than places — Witches, Gypsies, Luddites. Farm Workers, Tradesmen and many others. Facet upon facet of Victorian and Edwardian village life flash before our eyes as the author draws on his storehouse of memories, to give us a new vision of Mirfield's past, as we share the joys and sorrows of a village community and trace ever changing historical events. F. G. Pilling is a local artist of some repute and in many of his paintings he has captured the sights of old Mirfield.
GEORGE WOLSTENHOLME
Author of "Peeps into the Postcard Past"

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"One Last Time" combines both of F.G. Pillings "**Old Mirfield Days, Old Mirfield Ways"** books. The second book "**One More Time"** differed only slightly from the first and these differences have been combined to form this new 2003 edition.
Both original books are long out of print and the library's copies are falling to pieces.
Rather than letting the memories fade along with those books. This new volume makes it possible for future generations to share Bertie's memories for at least a few more years. This edition most certainly breaks his copyright, but I would like to think he would welcome the chance for his memories of the town he loved to be passed on to future generations.
I have endeavoured to leave the text much has Bertie wrote it, but I have taken the liberty of adding a few more pictures.

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INTRODUCTION

DURING a long life spent solely in this lovely village, I have listened to a thousand tales and told a thousand more, some to make you laugh, some to make you cry. Some I dare not tell again to anybody, but on lots of occasions, perhaps after a good laugh, or when they have wiped their tears away, the listener will have said "you should write all these tales down they are the life of the place". So here goes.

My folks have not been far away from these hillsides for several hundred years, my wife's folk too, she is George Walker's grand-daughter, the George Walker of Geo. Walker's Leather Mill at Kitson Hill, so you may safely say that we are heafted,

Our story is largely geared to the horse period, motors had not arrived yet. Horses, I suppose are my first love, inherited, I should say from my parents, whose people were both in the livestock business, a daub which I have had the good fortune to be able to continue. The horse is usually associated with a more leisurely approach to life and its problems, although there was a greater degree of organisation in a business which was horse operated, than we are apt to be aware, the stagecoach period is an example of a very tight timetable, my father drove one when he was in his early twenties, those were the days eh? Generally, horses got you there and back and were fairly reliable.

The period which our story covers, roughly 150 years, was a make or break time for the area, until perhaps twenty five years ago, we had survived more or less intact now the face of the village is scarred and blurred almost beyond recognition, but it is still a lovely place, walk on Eastthorpe Lane on a summer's morning, see the few stalls in front of the "Bull", look in Charlie Ramsden's shop, Jonas Beardsell, Herbert Senior, Jackson's Boot Shop, Smiths, all tied up with the past—long may they continue to do so.

The survival of the area over a long period was made safe by the efforts of a few well known families whose knowledge of the skills required, both in Industry, Building and Agriculture, enabled the village to generally, not only to survive, but to keep abreast of the altering times, as long as we have plenty of Ellis's, Sheard's, Jackson's and of course any amount of more good people we can look forward to a continuance of the place as we know it.

For a lot of my information I relied on a source on tap at home. I have nine brothers and sisters, some of whom would be nearly 100 years old had they lived, they were blessed with good memories and could go back to the year dot nearly between them they had a huge fund of records of the long past. May God Rest Them.

F. G, PILLING.

CHAPTER 1

We'll walk from the "Fountain" to Whitley Hall, from the "Swan" to Yetton Moor, from the "Three Nunn's" to the "Woolpack" at Whitley, and from the "Ship" to Bradley Bar and from the old "Flower Pot" at Hopton, all up hill and never down dale, until we come to the Old Hall at Liley, and from there we begin our tale.

BEFORE we leave our place at Water Royd, just take half a turn, .you can see the white stone erected to the memory of Caroline Ellis who was murdered, along with her employer James Wraith and his wife, in the famous Mirfield murder at Water Royd Hall on May 12th 1847. Two tinkers, Michael McAbe of Dewsbury, and Patrick Reed from Roberttown were arrested, Reed turned 'Queen's Evidence' and was pardoned. Reed later returned to the area and hawked gypsy fashion for a long time, the inquest was held I believe in the old "King's Head" that adjoined the scene, but later in the school higher up the lane, an old type print depicting the scene used to hang in the bar there. McAbe was hanged at York, the deadly tools used in the murder, a soldering iron and a razor, were recovered from a well in the nearby field, Jane Frost (an old witch) well no less. Jane Frost later drowned herself in the same well, it was filled in and piped away through the nearby field into a trough, it was never known to run dry, even in the driest time, during subsequent building operations a house was built over this trough, I wonder if old Janie ever calls on them?

During the 1939-1945 War the well was uncovered by a collapse of soil, at this time my son who was a sailor and on leave from his ship, scrambled down the exposed steps but did not find anything of note. The old "Kings Head" pub was the oldest pub in the village, and would date from the 15th Century, its cellar unique in that it was cut from solid rock, during its life time it had a fairly notorious history and being the first pub after leaving the Mirfield Mooredge by Cripplegate, it was the rendezvous of doubtful characters who were cutting across country to escape any pursuers, our account later of the highwayman, Nevison, who was a frequenter of this area, was one of many of similar types and characters, later, during the life time of the adjoining pit, it became more respectable, and was the calling place for a great number of men in business usually associated with the horse and livestock trade generally, and on several nights a week, a bank manager or two, perhaps putting 2 and 2 together. Perhaps a poacher or two would turn up with a rabbit to raffle at a penny a time**,** or if near Christmas, 'could you do with a good fat goose' at one period an armed war, although at most times silent, usually persisted between the keepers and the poachers, and if you listened in the "Kings Head" bar you would hear all that mattered, one night I saw the belly of a well known fellow that had been well and truly peppered with shot, In fact it looked all of a piece, and had happened weeks before on a rabbiting expedition. The keepers' employer had tried to make amends by visiting the victim in hospital and so it was said paying him a lot of money to let the business lie on the table. I believe that this was the end of this matter, but the forerunner of another case that finished in court, when a keeper was threatened with everything up to death, he arrested the fellow, hauled him to Dewsbury where he was fined 57/6d., an impossible sum at that time for a working lad. When you think that most of these escapades were not concerned with game, but usually rabbits for the pot, you see how loaded the whole business was against the man who wanted a rabbit for his dinner. On the other side of the coin, some keepers that I knew carried a thriving trade in trapped rabbits, a well known landlord who kept a fast driving horse on the other side of the river, used most nights to run these rabbits into Bradford or Leeds markets, and be back at home in the early hours with a rubbered tyred cart as if nothing had ever happened. Other characters used to add to the scene at the old pub, two couples "Soldier Harry" and his wife, and old "Pancrack" and his wife. "Soldier Harry" lived very precariously on a tiny pension, and by getting loads of coal in for people at 3d a go, "Pancrack" and his wife sold a concoction they called "Wash Liquor" at 2d a go from a donkey and cart, previously they had kept a pub called the "Blacksmith's Arms" at Shepley Bridge, the atmosphere there was very much "left bank", in fact too much for the bobbies, who I think turned him out, the tales he used to tell, terrible!

Occasionally the ladies would form a singing duo their favourite song being "Mona, The Collier's Dying Child", which the lassies would sing with gusto "one more time" all night and nearly to the next morning. One night Mrs. "Soldier Harry" was telling some lads all about her being on the "Stage", some wit reminded her that the "Stage", was at Liverpool on her way from the Emerald Isle. "Ah, I was there too, it's true sor, but I learned my trade in the far West of Ireland."

"What Trade?" they called.

"It's singing that suits me, and sor, I can sing all day somedays, other days — why sor, I'm reminded of

home, and the song gets fast in mi throat, and if I might say so sor, tis a day of that soart today, and if you please to disuse me sor, I shall have to get across the yard some way, and fairly fast, and when I get back sor, I'll sing better for it, I feel full o' wind like that fizzy stuff that old "Pancrack" sells — it's full to the top with it I am, or else it's the thin beer we're getting."

My father-in-law used to save Pancrack the empty whisky bottles which we had, he would stand under our kitchen window and nearly fall over backwards when he "sarped" 'em, he little knew they had been "sarped" many times before he got them. We got them from Tetley's at Leeds, 4 bottles of Whisky at 7/6d a time, and a nine gallon barrel of beer for 9/-. Charley Harrison, Tetley's man used to ganter the beer and have the first pint.

If there's a Jenny donkey between the Church on the hill at Hopton, and the "Flower Pot" by the river, and from there to Water Royd, and the same Connemara Jinny is seeking a husband, why its sure I am that the little woman and her Pancrack will know, but their sweet Jackass will have got to know before them, no less. Once, with a truss of hay on his back from Walt Hunty's on Cripplegate, he heard the signal from across the valley, and would have been away with the hay besides, but he stopped to rort and scream, and when just stopped they got him. Sometimes he rorts for fun, and sometimes, when he's courting, just a sweet whimper, or so it seems."

One night I was singing the "Mona" song in this very pub, I was a bit way off from the little woman, but she had a good voice that night, I could hear but not see, I stopped to get mi wind, and believe me sor it was the ass I was singing to, he had a better voice than her that night. Although at another time I blamed the donkey for the poor song, but it was the little woman herself which sang. The next day I told the Father I had blamed the poor ass for the offence he never did. There is a Saint for the ass, but I forget his name, she said she used to sing a lot better if she cleaned her specs a bit, so one night after a party she takes her specs from her hair gives them all a great polish with a drop from one of their bottles. She got a glass of the thin beer for herself, she did not for me tho'. The Pancrack had a pint of the stuff for himself. I thought never mind to you, I'll have the best drink in the Pub when I've finished my next song, a man from the Bank is here, a farmer or two, a butcher or two, a corn miller, a leather man, these are the men who are likely to pay (sometimes) but this night. I decided to sing in the Gaelic sor, these are the fine fellows who understood the old tongue about the mountains and the glens, but told to them like my mother used to sing to me "Where as the man said, 'Where the mountains of Mourn fall down to the sea!' I'm very good at the Gaelic 1 think, I could do it when! was with my old mother, and on the night my youngest brother left our cabin and its storm-washed doorway, my mother sang to him before he went to Americky, she was telling him not to forget the £10—in the Gaelic—she had lent him, and never mind the £5 he owed his dad. I put all the words in just as she did. But I was taken in with the company, if they understood the Gaelic sor, they did not show it, and believe me sor, a story I was told about the crew I sang to, proved to be true. I was told that compared to these gentlemen, the Great Turpin, the robber and highwayman was like a Bishop, or the Pope himself, they would strip him and leave him stark naked and he not knowing at the time. But just one old farmer said I had sung very well. I had beaten "towd fussack" any road, and I could have just a little sup o' whisky which he pinched from the man sitting by him. But worse was to follow, when the Pancrack came round the corner he laid his head on the bar, and said he thought we'd been having a wake and the poor ass had been singing. Had my poor mother seen me this night sor. and heard me sing like an old Irish Prince in the Gaelic besides, and watch these people who had just crept off the moor to the pub because it was warm, and then to compare me with the Pan-crack's ass, she would have made me walk to Liverpool with her the same night.

So much for these singing lasses and the wild nights at the old "Kings Head". Soldier Harry had indeed been a 'Soldier of the Queen my lads', although his wife said that apart from partly killing her many a time, he had never killed anybody in all his life. At one time he lived in some property belonging to my wife's family. Harry paid a shilling a week for the house, a greengrocer paid a shilling and two pence for the stables. Times change don't they?

The whole of this area is of tremendous historical interest prior to the compiling of the Doomsday Book it was the most important part of Mirfield, which was then largely in the Northorpe district. The large area which we know as Westfields was subsequently mentioned in the Doomsday Book as the place where the food required by the inhabitants of Mirfield, that is the old Mirfield of Northorpe, was grown. It was farmed largely on what we now call the Saxon strip system, a certain proportion was left fallow each year, this was largely to allow the weed problem to be dealt with and also to allow the land to recuperate from the fairly intensive cropping programme that was very common at that time, records prove that they were very efficient, especially when we take into account the implements to hand. Turnips and other roots at this time were unknown, but good crops of oats, wheat and barley were grown along with limited amounts of linseed, the actual seeds for use as cattle food, and the like, or flax, for linen weaving, although there is not much evidence of this being practiced locally.

The area abounded in game, but the Game Law which have been in existence since the Norman invasion that is 1066, were very oppressive and the ordinary fellow could not enjoy the abundance that nature provided at the time. The centuries which have passed have seen very little modification of the laws, in my time I have seen men, indeed whole families, prosecuted for the taking of a rabbit. Until very recent time's partridge were very common here, hare abounded, 1 once counted fifteen altogether. One April day a well known Mirfield tradesman got two hares with two shots, in this case, which happened perhaps thirty years ago, he was threatened with the direst penalties, fortunately no corpse could be produced. The whole of this land was held, and farmed on a communal or common basis, perhaps this ceased when Mirfield Church and fifty acres of land along with additional tithes, wood, etc., were granted stolen or just taken over by Kirklees Priory, and there was terrific opposition to this exercise, which extended up to Papal level.

All this land was very intensively farmed until the late 1950's when the builders laid their hands on it with the only too obvious results. It had been farmed from the year dot, or at least since the Saxon times, and when the Prioress of Kirklees held sway in the area, her cut, in the form of corn grown here, over the 250 years that she was In possession of the advowson of Mirfield Church, must have been tremendous, and for all this land, the best in the village, to end as it has done, was a tragedy. Charlie Walker, a corn miller and farmer, was the last man to farm it in one block, if he had lived the position would have been different, the deaths of Charlie Walker, Dyson Walker and the Misses Walker of Holme Dene, laid the way open for the state of affairs as we see them today.

GETTING READY FOR A DONKEY CART RACE ON EASTTHORPE LANE

CHAPTER 2

AS we leave the Water Royd area and approach the Nab, away down the lane is a fairly busy district, the Walker family occupy Wasp Nest Farm, they keep several horses here to furnish power for the canal carrying business which they operate, usually between some coal loading point, and Hull, they would deliver their outward cargo and then take on a load new to this area, cotton cake for cattle straight from the oil presses at Hull, they were prosperous in the new business and made money, a double row of cottages here were the Wasp Nest itself, some time occupied by the tenants of long standing, sometimes by a more migratory type, a bit nearer the bottom of the lane is Widow Row, a row of low deckers, cosy little houses which the Walker family John Willie and George, let for very low rents. I should think that today they would be held in great esteem and would be in great demand. Just a bit further on and we come to another little place, Nab Farm, and just past that a Market Garden and Nursery, Nab Gardens, I can remember going to this place when worked by William Peace.
Another thriving business at Wasps Nest was that of John Lindley a nail maker, but there was a darker side to his life, he made pikes for the Luddites, drilled and marched with them and kept alive the movement in the district, he was later taken by the Dumb Steeple as you will later read, he did his time and returned to Wasp Nest and started up his business again. My second sister married his grandson.
This John Lindley was taken along with another Mirfield man, called Ben Barker at the Dumb Steeple, one night in November, 1824. They had way laid two men who were on their way to Leeds, they had wounded them with the pikes that John Lindley had made, subsequently they died, Lindley and Barker were arrested and tried at Leeds Assizes, but a re-trial was ordered and they were again tried, this time at York, the men who were killed were suspected of being informers against the local Luddites who at that time, 12 years after the Rawfold massacre, were very much underground, although the two arrested men were very active and kept alive the protests against the introduction of the machinery that they thought was to put them out of a job. They were sentenced at York to transportation for 14 years to Van Diemansland, now Tasmania, usually an informer would be taken, along with any other suspects, to a pre-arranged rendezvous, where, under a threat of death by shooting, they were made to swear on oath that they would not disclose what they knew, and they would thereafter, make any one that they suspected, swear the same oath that they had taken, under the same threats and penalties. Anywhere, "Under God's Canopy of Heaven".
A good friend of mine had a distant relative involved in the affair, he was hanged at York, his mother pleaded that she may have her lad's body and bury him properly, for some reason he was not put in a coffin like other men from the Huddersfield area, no, he was left at his mother's house in a sack with the rope still round his neck, his mother had him buried, I had better not tell you where.
This area near the Dumb Steeple Three Nuns-White Gate, was the stamping ground of the Luddites during the activities in 1812, the field immediately behind the Dumb Steeple was a favourite parade ground and was used on the night of the attack on the Rawfolds. The men concerned commenced to arrive an hour before the off, they had numbers and were formed into squads for different duties, at the off, all were present, later, it was found that one man was missing, he had jumped over the wall up Brighouse Road, and was away, he was a professional runner, and made it in his way to say "Good Night" to the Verger at Brighouse as the church clock struck 12 midnight. This alibi enabled him to escape any sentence at a later trial, it being contended by him that it would have been impossible for him to have been a member of the raiding party who had paraded at the Dumb Steeple on the fatal night. His name I think was Raynor.
As a result of the attack, a lot of men were taken, one on his way back called at the "Star" at Roberttown. he was badly wounded but soon left the "Star", he called at the "White Gate" where he died in the doorway. Altogether seventeen men were hanged at York In addition to those transported.
We will now enter Fox Royd, a lane which was originally a way across the moor to the Church at Mirfield, later just a farm road and footpath which it now is, it has not altered much over the years, save for the pulling down of the farm buildings and a few cottages which had curious stone mullioned windows.
Have you ever heard of a Highwayman called Nevison? Well it is said that at the time of his activities, he did, on occasions when visiting his local girlfriend at Royd Nook, stable his horse here at Fox Royd.

You can almost see him now, leaving his girl at Royd Nook, cutting across country to emerge behind the old "King's Head", cross the road there and get into Cripplegate. keep along the hedge to Fox Royd, into the yard there, give his famous horse a drink and away, up the lane, across the common, and up the Slipper and into the moor road proper, to await the Leeds-Manchester coach and then on his way again, perhaps on the very night when he killed the landlord of a public house at Batley, he called at this man's house for a drink, the landlord recognised him, and hoping to reap the reward offered, raised the alarm. But he was too late, Nevison was aware, and was out and mounting his mare when the landlord tried to stop him, he was shot and killed and Nevison was away again, eventually to be caught at Three Housess Inn, Sandal, and hanged at York.

Away on our left we can see all the land enclosed from the moor, the little farm spots that are still there, the chimney at the Leather Mill, I like to think of the time when the builder of the mill, George Walker, would walk across John Farrah's nearby enclosed land, from Hartshead where he lived, to view the site for his new venture, he was a brave man and did succeed, he was my wife's grandfather. John Farrah's place faces us when we stop by the gypsy camp and look across the road, it is still a sound place and has witnessed much during its life as the Moorlands Farm. The comings and goings and the rattling of feet on a morning as the colliers went to their days slavery at the Kings Head Pit, or the Battye Day Hole, of the horses and carts trotting over the common to Huddersfield or perhaps farther over.

Stop now and turn around, and look across the valley where Hopton is still asleep, away to the hill beyond, and then, far away, just bursting out of the rising mist, you can see the start of the old Pack Horse track that runs down to the river at Battyeford, look carefully, and you can see the double row of old trees that bound and mark out the track, if you were a bit nearer, I would show you the paved causeway down which the poor old horses jostled with their loads, usually of cloth from the outlying weavers on the nearby hillsides, they cross the beck at the bottom, up the hillside by Woodcock Hall, out to the top, and along Chapel Hill, down Hopton Hall Lane, across the road and across the North Moor by a path called now the "Iron Stee" and out to Boyfe Hall, to join another pack train that came from Kirkheaton and Kirkburton and along the old road where the paved track remains, down to the river. If you listen you can hear the bell horse as he gets near the ford, you can hear him when he stops, and the pack master urges him into the water to guide and decoy the train to the other side and up the shelving path to the main road, little more than a track itself, running West to Huddersfield, East to Dewsbury, the velvet weavers' horses leave the train here and scramble up the opposite hillside on their way to Heckmondwike where their velvet will be sold. The whole of the Hopton hillside remains as it always did, some of the old family names are still fairly common, the old cock fighters' grandsons and great grandsons are still here, but I should think no longer cock fighters. When we cross the road across the common, close your eyes, and now, just now, stop and open your eyes again and see before you the panorama that is unequalled in this country, far away in front see the hills almost to Skipton, nearer, those purple and gold patches are away to the heights above Oueensbury, see the tall chimneys of the Black Dyke Mills of Brass Band fame. In August time, on a fine day, these purple and golden hills are like a vast carpet laid out before your eyes.

Before we leave this area we will have a peep at the remains of Kirklees Priory, the gatehouse now which Robin Hood shot his famous arrow is still intact, the distance from here to his reputed grave is a long way, his bow would take plenty of pulling to get his arrow all that way, but he did didn't he?

THE DUMB STEEPLE AT COOPER BRIDGE

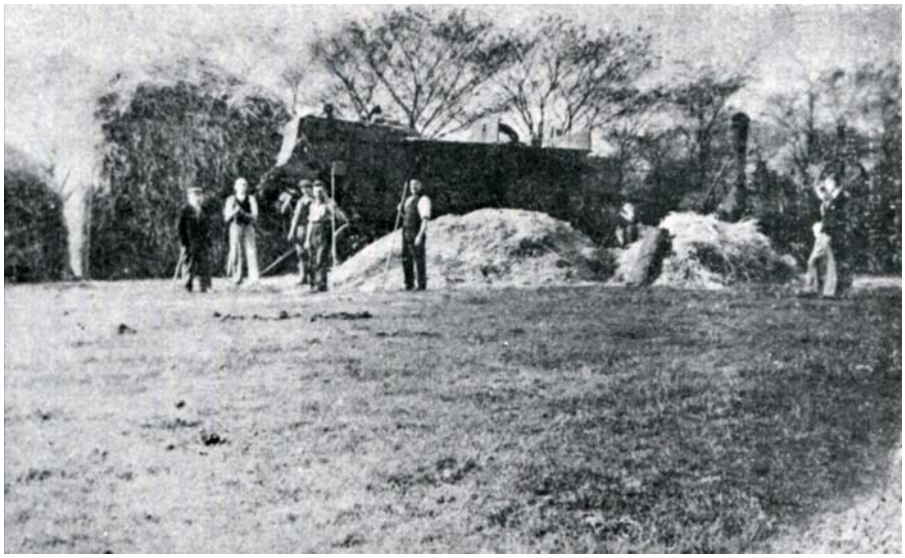
CHAPTER 3

JUST by the gatehouse is the Home Farm, behind is the Brew House and just a bit further back the imposing Kirklees Hall the home of the Armitage family since the 1560's, in the yard by the Home Farm is the site of the former Priory of Kirklees, and the corner stones are still there to see, in an adjoining yard you see the tomb of the Prioress of Kirklees, Elizabeth De Stainton, and also the grave of two other Nuns. Now you know how the famous Inn of which we shall speak later got its name. Around the tomb of Elizabeth runs this inscription "Sweet Jesus of Nazareth, Son of God take mercy on Elizabeth De Stainton, Prioress of this House". You can imagine the peaceful scene here when this was indeed a priory, and the perfect rustic atmosphere is still here, once inside the gates and you are a thousand years away and many miles from the hum-drum times as we know them, look over the trees by Kirklees and not far away, just peeping through the morning mist the little church at Hartshead, look carefully and you can see the porch with a beautiful Norman arch overhead, we are told that it was built about 1090, many famous and infamous heads must have passed under it, we know a few, both sorts. Turn and face the North now, and just in front of you see "Roehead" famous as a school in the time of the Bronte Sisters, their father Patrick Bronte was vicar at Hartshead from 1810 to 1815 and one of his daughters. Maria was christened there on April 23rd, 1814. After leaving Hartshead and when years had passed, and his daughters had grown up, they returned, I believe Charlotte came just as a scholar and stayed to teach as did, I think Emily, can you see the little wicket gate out onto the road behind the "White Gate" inn, this gate led Into the garden at Roehead and obviated the necessity of leaving or entering by the front door and drive, you can imagine them on a summer's night walking quietly up the moor and turning when they got to the top and looking back across the hills and moors which were to colour all their writings, they would see their famous last home at Haworth, or at least the fold in the grim moors that enclosed it, it is seldom you can see far over these hills for the almost ever-present mist, they might have walked further up the road towards Birstall the scene of "Shirley" one of the famous Bronte novels.

We have nearly passed the famous inn which I just referred to, "The Three Nuns", It must be one of the most famous in the country, its history is steeped with the events of the years, both national and local and probably dates from the 12th Century, at the dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII in the year 1538. It was included in land and estates sold by the King, they used a polite phrase to describe this circumstance at the time, they said the King had granted or licensed these monastery sites to different people, he just plain sold them, amongst them the "Three Nuns". Over the years thousands must have called at this famous place, listen to the Manchester-Leeds coach flying down the moor, hear the horn, blown to warn them to be ready, listen to the commotion as the change horses are run out. all ready to yoke, so that the coach may be away within the minutes allowed, see the maids rushing about, helping the ladies down and guiding them to other places, let it be dark and blowing hard and with little time to spare, the horses are changed, the horn blows for all to be aboard, and they are away again, a yard full of steaming horses and barking dogs, the Inn keeper seeing that all is well and preparing for another call later and the cooks preparing the meals for which it has always been famous. Time passes and the coaches pass into history, but it is still a calling place, come with me down the moor road and sit on the wall and watch the drovers as they pack their sheep and beasts into the pens, and into the yard across where they draw them, for Leeds, straight up the moor road for Wakefield, on the lower Roe. Dogs bark, men shout, beasts low and sheep bleat, eventually all are sorted out. The local butchers and farmers put theirs in a corner to wait until they have had a drink, perhaps two or three, perhaps more, altogether a busy sight. I can remember this when I was a boy and have helped in what in retrospect seemed a stirring sight. There were grimmer and sadder sights than this. Listen! Can you hear the shuffle of feet, steady this time and in step, they are the soldiers marching up the moor in the wake of the Luddites, they have marched from Huddersfield, when the landlord closes his door on that dreadful night, he knows that a number of the Luddites have been caught. It's nearly dark now, we will come again in the morning and stop outside the inn and watch the wagon drivers stop by the little bridge over the Nunn Brook and lower a bucket to the beck below, when full pull it up and their tired horses may drink and be refreshed ere they start again up the moor, probably to Leeds, a long weary way on a rough road, they plod on, head to tail in an endless procession.

These were rough days for both men and beasts, the Industrial revolution was in full swing, goods had to move fast, and horses and men were cheap, a nearby blacksmiths shop catered for a loose shoe, or a lost shoe, or a shoe like King Richard's horse only required a nail in. Just off the moor road was a

thriving wheelwrights, who would fasten on a loose hoop, mend a broken shaft, or if the Waggoner was well off, make him a new wagon. This procession would start to alter later in the day and by 5.30 or 6.00 p.m. would be in full swing, tired, steaming horses, men half asleep, they were on their way home to Slowit, Marsden and other towns and villages in Colne Valley. We pass the blacksmiths shops, just below it Nunn Brooke Farm, an imposing place with a good house that must surely have seen better times, years ago, a family called Bickers lived here, besides being farmers, they were joiners and cabinet makers they took a shop in Mlrfield, near to the top of New Gate, it is now a stationers and printers shop, here they founded a business which prospered, and they took it to Dewsbury where it prospered more. After they left Josh Buckley took it as a bicycle and furniture shop, he was a good fellow. Before we leave this part of the moor road, and just after we pass Nunn Brooke Farm, see the long garden in front of a double fronted house, well this was once the "Old Yew Tree Inn", I think one of the last landlords was called Frank Balmforth, he was an old butcher who came from over the mountains, he came from Delph and ended his days in a low decker at the end of Stocks Bank Road. Look just a bit further up the moor, you can see the old Horse Shoe Inn, just a few yards nearer where we stand than the Yew Tree, in its day it was a busy place and a coaching house, you can imagine the bustle and stir as the coach approached although I do not think it was a horse changing call. We walk on quietly with the sun on our backs, watch the light trotting horses on their way from Huddersfield to Leeds and others trotting the opposite way, prior to railways. Before the mail became really efficient, trotting ponies and horses were in great demand and the 17 miles between the two towns would not be a great obstacle to the good horses of the time. We now approach the White Gate Inn at the fork road where the left fork leads to Hartshead village and Roe Head, in the old horse days this area was alive with them, the famous Rangley family having their business here at the inn and adjoining farm, it you listen you can hear the clip-clop of some tremendous shire horse as he is being shown on the road to some prospective buyer, probably a newly prosperous manufacturer from Huddersfield, he must have the best they have, these people were judged on the quality of their horse turnouts, and they were really good to look at, the majority of the horses they sold came from Wales. You can see them now, the man giving a show up and down the road, the buyer being critical. Mr. Rangley himself, standing with a long whip in one hand and a stick in the other, he would stand with arms outstretched and be extolling in a loud voice the virtues of the "best we ever owned", the buyer says "he's too much" "well come here if you alter at all you'll buy him". "Alright, I'll give another pound and that's it" "come here then, hod up". Mr. Rangley slaps the buyer's hand and the deal is done. "Sold again", goes up the cry, and everybody adjourns to the inn for a drink. Oh, these were happy days, never to come again.
I have heard my wife's father talk about playing truant on Fair days at Huddersfield with other big lads, he would ride a horse and lead another, they would leave the White Gate perhaps with 50 horses, they would sell a few at Deighton Corn Mill, one or two more before they got to the Fair and what a day they would have, they'd sell up and walk back with the shilling they got for taking two horses to the Fair. Look straight beyond the White Gate, you can just see, through the trees Hartshead Hall, in its day it was a lovely place, marvellous ceilings in the rooms, portraying the seasons of the year. It must have been wonderful place and a big area of land was farmed from here. It was farmed for a long time by the Rape family who came, I think, from Pickering.



THRESHING--- WEST ROYD FARM, MIRFIELD---1940

CHAPTER 4

THERE was a wonderful carved doorway facing Hartshead village, the door jambs and lintel being good examples of the stonemasons art, in fact almost the whole of the Hall portrayed great craftsmanship.

It's getting dark now and nearly time to leave the top of this hill, did you hear the clock strike eleven? Just before we go, look again towards Roe Head, you can see the flickering candles as they are carried past the windows as the scholars or teachers make their way to the upper rooms, and into bed. You can imagine the Bronte sisters after a last look at their pupils make their last devotions, and then to bed; slowly all the lights are out and all is quiet.

The farm dog at Hartshead Hall barks, it is echoed by the yard dog at Kirklees and so on down the moor to the Three Nunn's, where a few lights remain in the farm buildings and one in the front room of the inn, but presently these lights are turned out and the night is truly quiet.

Midnight has cast her dark cloak over all the countryside, all is quiet now, all is still, it is October 1850 and the darkness thick and impenetrable; stick close to me as we go back to Water Royd, we will go over the fields, I know the way, do not be frightened with what I show you, can you see the faint red light far across the fields, it's a light in the end cottage in Cripplegate. We are getting nearer now, do not make a noise, we are nearly there, come here and stand close to me you can see into the house if you stand on your toes. Watch now, can you see the two women one moves quietly about, the other nurses a boy of four or five, surely the angel of death has stroked his fair brow, his pale face and hard breathing peak of pain and suffering, his mother soothes him, and passes her hand over his fevered brow and speaks soothingly to him, the other woman comes near to the fire, and places before it a small earthenware bowl, I wonder what she is going to do? Watch now, can you see she has a bird of some kind in her hand, it is a pigeon, she is cutting its throat, what is this? A few struggles and it is dead. The blood drips slowly into the bowl, she plucks the pigeon quickly and places the feathers in to the now bright fire, she takes the pigeons heart and puts a steel pin through it and places this on the feathers and pours the blood onto the fire too, the poor boy suddenly stretches out and screams, the women try to comfort him. Suddenly we hear a dog howl in the Kings Head yard and draw away from the window to see what makes him bark. Look carefully, can you see someone getting over the wall by the graveyard, yes, it is the local witch, she has come over the field in front of the murder house through the graveyard and over the wall, she is coming towards us now, a tall gaunt figure covered in black, the clock is starting to strike 12, she quickens her pace and ere the clock has finished striking midnight, she is striking hard on the door of the cottage and shrieking to be admitted we see the door open, and in the chink of light through the open door we see her fall on her knees before the women and hear her beg to be forgiven, they reply they cannot, but she touches the boy, he seems to wake up look round, he looks better and smiles. The witch strokes his face and rubs his hands. He gets off his mother's knee and quietly trys to walk a few paces, next day, he is better still, and ere a week has passed he is well again. The spell of the other good witch had prevailed, the bad one said later that she would do it no more. Some day when you get a bit older I will tell you who these women were, they have relatives still about and you know them. Tomorrow morning as soon as it is light we will go to the top of the Slipper again, there is just one other thing for you to see.

Come on now, it's day light and a lovely morning we will go over the land at London Park, and stop when we get to the top, look round now, can you see across the valley to Hopton, just waking up. Whiffs of smoke rise slowly as fires are newly lit, and the mist is slowly giving way to the sun, look across to Whitley Hall the tower stands like a sentinel bathed with the brilliant first light, turn round and you can just see Hartshead Church still struggling to shake off its misty shroud, look the other way and far away to the West, you can just see the tops of the dark moorlands as they peep through the fog that still fills their dark valleys, and where it will remain for a long time yet. Listen! Can you hear the commotion further over towards the top of the Moor Road, its the coach coming up towards the Fountain from Leeds, can you hear the horn blowing? Hurry up, we will perhaps see them if we get a bit higher up the field. Yes look, they are just drawing on to the front they have six horses, they are sweating and blowing hard, its a long hard eleven miles from Leeds, and not too good a road, the passengers are getting down, the horses are loosed out, the change horses are being run out, all ready to just yoke up. The wheel horses are already made fast, the pin horses next, and last the pair of grey lead horses, the coachman is talking to the landlord and suddenly the horn blows. All aboard again, sparks fly as the impatient horses pull away over the hard setted yard, and they are down the moor road.

Watch as they pass us, what a sight, the horses fit and fresh, the coachman has them all well in hand, they are going at a rare rate, the passengers outside all look content and happy, the sun is shining on them and another half-hour they will be having breakfast at the Pack Horse in Huddersfield.

THE OLD THREE NUNS INN

CHAPTER 5

TOMORROW be ready in good time and we will go to as yet unexplored country, Hopton. As the older people say 'ovver 't 'river or 'ovver 't watter. Well, are you ready? Aye I see you are, so down Knowle Road and Doctor Lane, the big houses that you see in the process of being built are the first of a long series that seems to go on for ever, down between the fields on both sides of Sharpe Lane, we are near the bottom now, the old low deckers at the bottom and in front of the newly built Ings Grove Park, across the road another one between the Huddersfield Road and the river, a beautiful site, on the other side of the road and near what is now called the Railway Inn a busy place, the tailor's shop operated by Stocks Hirst, he usually employed nine or ten journeyman tailors and his clothes were the best. A lot of his trade was the making of clothes for the gamekeepers, bailiffs, etc. of the newly rich of the area in the newly efficient cloth trade. It would never do for the "Lord of the Rings" to invite his pals, who were similar to himself, for a day's shooting, and for his gamekeeper to appear with his 'britches arse out', so he forestalled this threat by providing him with a good suit, that would also enhance his own paternalistic image, the Keeper got his suit, and his boss's prestige as a father figure was assured and everybody was happy or nearly anyway,

Incidentally, I think that this suit business could operate today with good effect, sometimes if you have time to watch the racing on television and in the pre-race parade you will be told how much this colt cost, 10,000 guineas perhaps, the lad who is leading him round looks as if he got his clothes from a 1900 nearly new shop. However we will get on with our exploring. The Council Offices are a cloth shop owned by a fellow called Barker, there are a set of farm buildings behind from which a big area of land was farmed including the now St. Paul's Road area. Once when I was a little lad I saw a drove of horses that had been Dublin Cab Horses they had walked over Standedge from Liverpool on the way to Lee Gap.

Harry King bought one, a dun horse for £3. 10s. and wore him for years In his father's hay and straw carrying business, which he started when he ceased to be bailiff at the Three Nunn’s, he operated this business in the Black Bull yard near Ramsdens butchers shop for a long period. Before we get there though, we pass the Post Office, Jefferies Printers and Mackinels tinkers and tinsmiths .we next encounter Rhodes' chemist shop. Here they did everything you were likely to require, they would pull you a tooth, poison your dog, make your hair grow whether it would or not, cure your bad cold and toothache, cure your poorly horse or cow, in fact anything. My father did a lot of horse and cow doctoring at this time, and old Mr. Joe Rhodes was in league with him, they had an old greasy bottle filled with some concoction that my father called the "Kicking Mare Bottle", it would quieten anything, including fractious kids at bedtime, aye it would. At the corner where the Bank now is, we had Slaters Tea Stores, where the windows facing the Black Bull were full of the prizes you would get if you only bought enough tea. Across the road at the top of what is now Station Road we had the Lion Stores, always with millions of eggs outside in boxes packed with straw and shavings, lads used to say they were snake eggs, but they had to eat them just the same, usually about 36 for a shilling. Adjoining the Lion Stores, a boot shop, old Mr. Gauls, he sold the best boots in town. Rawnsley's had also a good boot shop near Rhodes' chemist shop. I nearly forgot, I once went to Rhodes' one Sunday dinner time (yes it was still dinner time in Mirfield at 12.30, people had not become so fancy that they had lunch at that time), of a tooth pulling, he nearly pulled my head off with a pair of pliers and then said I'd better go to a dentist, why my mother sent me on this trip alone I never knew, I had ten brothers and sisters, anyway, although he did not pull the tooth it never ached again.

One hundred years ago Henry Lynas Cook started his fruit and greengrocery business down Station Road. The newly built station in 1865 attracted people in great numbers, it was unusual not to see a crowd back to the kiln wall on a Saturday night. Oranges would be 24 for a shilling and fruit in season would be few pence for a basket, a bit higher up the road another shop, Sam Willie Holts fish shop, Mrs. Thornton's next door, toys and sweets, altogether a very busy road on the other side of the road Crowther's new kiln. The biggest industry then in Mirfield was malting, the aroma of roasting malt would pervade the area for usually a few days a week. At Mirfield Feast time a row of stalls stretched from the Black Bull to Parker Lane and every house was open house, lumps of beef, legs of mutton, the set-pot was put on for plum puddings, it was really the Feast Week, I don't think anybody would get seriously into debt for this, most people were family providers and food was cheap. On the Sunday there was a concert in the Feast Ground, music provided by the Feast organ and then a fashion parade in the cricket field, all the girls in their new frocks and hats. We will go down the New Gate now, it is literarily the New Gate, the canal was cut in the year 1776. This area at this time must have been a very

pretty place, no railway yet and in front of the Corn Mill a small grass croft it was called the Croft. This corn mill was a very much used and important place, Hopton Old Bridge, that is Ledgard Bridge, was built chiefly so that farmers, etc. could get over the river to have their corn ground and to provide a crossing for people who had left the stagecoach at the Blacksmiths at the top of Kirkheaton Moor, they then had to walk down Hopton Lane to the North Gate, turn right along a much worn field path and over the Iron Stee, down the nursery and Chadwick Lane, to come out at the Hopton end of the bridge. They could now cross the river and go up New Gate and into Eastthorpe Lane, the river would be much lower than it is now, after the canal was cut and the weir built, it would be higher by a few feet and provided the power for the corn mill built 1674, incidentally they were the owners of the water rights at this mill for a long time, the proprietors at this time was John Pilling. Across the road and off New Gate a kiln was built to deal with barley for malting that could now come by canal.
To the right of this kiln and standing in a lovely garden was a big stone house and farm buildings, it was a lovely house, but it fell on evil times and finished up as part of a foundry after being a boarding house. Behind the kiln and nearer to Station Road a boat building business was started and flourished for a long time, it provided boats for all Mirfield boating families, Schofields, Websters, Cloughs, Walkers, Ledgards, Barkers, Whitfields, Normantons, Wilsons, Burns, and Duttons, there are probably more I forget. The first railway station was built I believe in 1847, and was at the bottom of New Gate, just before you cross the river. I have read an article on its opening, it was a grand affair and special reference to the mill is made and the view presented when passing in the new fangled railway truck, so we have some idea of the importance attached to a corn mill at this time. Flour would be largely home-produced and all animal feed that required preparation would be the product of the local mill, although at this time very little in the form of bought meal was used on the farm. Turnips had just become popular and along with the home grown corn provided most of the farms requirements.

THE BLACK BULL HOTEL

CHAPTER 6

LOOK over the river and you will see an outstanding example of "The Dark Satanic Mills", we have often read about, here is one in full blast, if the devil himself jumped into the river by the Ship and paddled the length of the Calder to Hebden Bridge, he would come to the conclusion that he was good to his tenants, the accommodation he furnished far more pleasant than the majority of the holes he passed, for which people were imprisoned for anything up to 14 hours a day, his place would traditionally be a bit warmer, but that apart, there would not be much in them and now. One hundred years later they have not improved much, in outward appearance at least. The benevolent family who first started them departed the area decades ago to pleasanter climes where they would not be reminded where and how they got it all, these deadly holes must be far away from their every day thoughts. Mills were not the only terrible places in which to earn your daily bread, the area was honeycombed with day holes, small local collieries usually cut at an angle into the hillside where coal was known to lie, there were a few in the Cuckoo Hill district. One at the bottom of Dransfield Hill, and also here a row of cottages to house some of the pit workers. One family I knew when I was younger did not do very well in spite of the fact that everybody was roped in to work, they lived by the Flower Pot. Their youngest child was a little girl aged five, at that time she said she was too tired to walk all that way daddy, so he carried her to her work, where she worked with a rope tied round her tummy and she pulled buckets filled with coal out to the daylight. She did this from daylight to dark most days, have I to tell you her name? Well I won't just now, I'll bet you know her grandson. The more efficient pits in the area would be rather better places to work in but people had to work long and hard for very little, and in terrible conditions, many times 1 have seen men leave the old Kings Head Pit and should they stop on their way they would leave a pond where they had been stood, they were wet-through. Should they get across the boss their chance of getting work of any kind was slender, 1 heard of a man when I was a boy to whom the proprietor of a pit took a dislike and sacked him, he could not get a job anywhere for a long time. Then he got a labouring job during some alterations at a church, the parson saw him and said he would be back in an hour and he had to get off the church premises and he did, so he starved a bit harder and a bit longer, you know this fellow don't you? You don't! Well if you call at the ?????????? tonight he will buy you a drop of whisky. But it wasn't all gloom, if you could make do with little there was abundance, the sun shone, the birds sang, the grass grew and the trees burst Into leaf, regattas at the Battyeford Sands, rowing matches at the Ship, running races on the riverside, horse trots to Nont Sarahs and back. A local butcher would trot any man black or white, in daylight or dark, rain or shine, snow or hail, thunderstorms or in a fair wind, with his trotting pony Red Apple. He'd trot for a thousand pounds or drinks all round at the Saville Arms, he wasn't fussy. Donkey and cart races were held on Eastthorpe Lane the drivers had to have black faces, this encouraged the donkeys to further effort, a later and rougher pastime of 50 years ago was swimming round the Navigation yard newly covered with cinders.

Cock fighting had long been a popular pastime in the area, some of the old cock fighting families are still around, although I do not think they do any now. It was a highly organised business and not the haphazard affair folks usually think. I suppose there is a certain amount of cruelty involved but there was plenty too when you got your backside cracked too often. The birds were strictly handicapped according to weight and all the mains as they were called, were run very fairly. I have painted two cocks which I knew very well, one fought a few times at the huge place of a titled fellow, he was a good chap too, but his cocks were no match for the duck wing.

My Grandmother kept a few fighting cocks (not my Granddad).

She had all the bits and pieces relating to the business, she, had a little tin shovel about 4" square with sides on, this she would fill with corn previously steeped in a drop of whisky, shake it over the fire a minute to toast and dry all the excess moisture from it, if a cock got this in his crop the night before It would make him fight whether he wanted to or not. When I was a little lad, hanging over my mother's mantelpiece was a pair of spurs worn by some of my distant uncles to encourage a doubtful horse to go a bit faster. Inside each spur was the breast bone of some famous cock who had ended his days in the pot, one day a parson from the Parish Church called to see ma, (she said he always called at tea time), he usually inspected the horsey gallery of photos, my mother would tell about the latest addition, why he hadn't won when he should have done and why the jockey tummelled off because he was drunk. This day he was keen to know about the spurs and the fighting cocks' breast bones, he asked if these were some smaller spurs that her lads had been making, my mother did not tell stories, but I believe

that on this occasion, in order to safeguard our collective journey to another place in the far away future, a journey that her parson friend could veto in the event of an unsatisfactory answer, she just smiled, and the parson smiled too. His name was McWatters, he was a curate and perhaps being just a curate would prevent from having all the powers he would later possess. This was before the time of Mr. Krushchev and his friends. Had my mother's visitor been other than the parson, she would have acclaimed the origin of the spurs and lucky bones from the fighting cocks with some relish. They were part of the family's traditional connection with hunting, cock fighting, horse dealing, dog running in fact all the sports and pastimes of a bygone age, some now frowned upon.

Compared with things that have happened since in the name of sport, why, these old sports were as bright and fresh as a primrose on Easter Day, (a German soldier tried to kill me one Easter Day). It is recorded that Charles II gave Nell Gwynn a pair of silver cock spurs, he also had a Master of Cockfighting, and Sir George Vernon of Madden Hall received £2 from the household purse every time he went to a cock fight, so it was truly one of the Royal sports, I should think that my Grandmother would think nothing wrong of the fighting involved, the men folk in her family have fought for everything including fighting Cromwell in the Civil Wars, a Captain James Schofield commanded the Royalist forces charged with the defence of Bolton, in the process he was skinned financially and was as poor as a crow he said. Since then they have worn black eyes over a lovely girl, a doubtful horse, a screw cow, and many times on cocking days. My eldest brother told me of going to a main between Yorkshire and Lancashire in the narrow ride near Toppits top, he said he never thought there were as many golden sovereigns as he saw that day. Another cockpit was near Boyfe Hall with one nearer to Colne Bridge and Yetton was the home of the "Cockers".

All in all, I suppose that cock fighting in its day would occupy a place in the social life of a village on a par with the present day cricket or football team. My Grandmother's family, the Schofields, she was my father's mother, were heafted in the Stannage area, they have been so since the 1500's. an area where parsons and bobbies did not abound and the wild moor edge was the venue for all the old sports. Hunting days were nearly every day; in its turn the wild moor cock would be coaxed end beaten from its heather bed, on the few days it could be so treated. There is a lot of hypocrisy regarding the so-called blood sports, a woman blasted me not many weeks ago about the horse trade and the final destiny of a lot of these animals. She wore a sheep skin coat, had leather shoes, a feather in her hat and was in a butchers shop! She was buying chops, steak and liver, when I asked her what she thought these poor so and so's thought of the job she seemed surprised, but told me that all these things were the source of the protein she required including I suppose the old "tups" coat she wore. I detest cruelty of any kind and so do most of my friends.

Poaching was a popular pastime too, both for the pot, for fun, and to beat the keepers. It was usually a family tradition, well known local families would indulge and were prepared to take on all-comers which they did many times. I remember once a gang had been caught in the local wood and the keepers and one policeman took them to the big house, and ushered them into the drawing room, and behold, the big man's son and a well known local butcher, they were all good fellows and kept law and order themselves.

One morning, very early, a fellow I knew well had to go up the Toppits to his work at Lepton, this morning a family and friends were netting the wall from the middle gate to the bottom, and a good job they made, they had dozens of rabbits fast in the net and as my friend approached he was saluted with a cheery "How do", but much to his surprise he was shanghaied, and set to work. He was aboard the "Bounty" alright and for once Captain Bligh and Fletcher Christian were good pals. Everybody worked for the next half hour all the rabbits were gutted and put in sacks and other fellows were taking a net in that had been set on pegs for hares or used as a draw net for partridge, they had six hares and two partridges a good night's work, they had parked an old van in a yard that they passed, they would pay the farmer a toll in the shape of game and everybody was happy. Our friend prepared to leave his fellow crew members, but do not be so sharp, "you had better ride back part way with us", Dick protested and said he would be deaf and dumb as far as the hair was concerned, but he had to go and finished up walking back from this side of Barnsley. He was no "Flaidly Cat". Before this book is done you will have an account of on escapade of his that will both surprise and shock you, and it will all be true.

Directly facing you when you cross the old bridge at Hopton, the Ledgard Bridge 1800, there is what was formerly called the coal yard, it was in fact the coal yard, and was an area that provided the exit for a day hole that operated under the land above the Waste, an old Hopton fellow Harry Oldroyd used to tell me about riding back into the pit to an engine house, properly built, with winding machinery installed, situated under the Co-op Field, do you remember where we used to sit on a steep bank to listen to Punch & Judy on the old Co-op do days? Well it was lower down the field and nearer to the Nursery Plantation. At the exit end in the coal yard a scoop track started and ran on the roadside in

front of the pub, alongside Butt End mill yard to a coal staith just above the newly built weir, or damstake as we call it, here scoops were tipped into boats waiting to take coal further up the canal to the new mills that had lately started. Tom Taylor another Hopton fellow who would now be 150 if living, told me that he could remember a wooden bridge at this point before the Iron Horse Bridge was built, both are of course now demolished.
After this pit ceased to operate, a mineral water factory was built, it was a busy place and would keep eight or ten horses busy with deliveries, also a coal business continued to function, but now in bags or loads, no longer boat loads.
About this time a smallpox epidemic raged in the area, there were several cases in Mirfield, a few in Hopton, I think the Hopton cases were nearly all in one family, the feeding and general looking after of this family was undertaken by the new proprietor of the mineral water factory, Charlie Appleyard, he was a brave fellow and saw at the end of the epidemic that the family had survived.
Just before this factory started and when the pit had ceased to work, a travelling theatre would call a few times a year, it was operated by a family called Rhodes, they all took part in the presentation of different plays, and would sometimes lapse into the local bingo, one night, during the acting of a Shakespeare play, a fellow rushed on stage to announce that "the Duke hes getten lamed" "by gum not soa badly I whop", replied the Prince, everybody laughed but everybody understood. Money was tight in the area "ovver t' watter", Hopton that is, depended largely on the textile industry, now being carried on in the newly built mills and no longer a cottage industry as it had been until now, a large number of people worked on the river, coal carrying by barge from lower down the Calder to Huddersfield, Brighouse, Elland and Sowerby Bridge. Flour mills had been built at Elland, Brighouse and Sowerby Bridge, and a brisk trade was done by the boating families at Hopton, anyone called Schofield at the time was engaged in this trade. Their boats were built near the canal behind the Navigation pub, a family called Thornton operated the yard for a long time, it was fantastic to see the vessel that the local fellows built. Launching day was a big event, a big dinner and a booze up at the 'Navi', kept for a long time by the Blackburn family, one of the very last craftsmen employed here was a fellow called Willie Hennel, a superman in the art, a boat he built is still afloat and bears his name. Hopton generally at this time was just being built to house the textile operatives and men employed at the newly built Engine Sheds, a new race emerged, "t Drivers", they were the elite, they lived on drivers steak, supped whisky, had the best of clothes, and in every way were a cut apart, they were all good fellows, brought their families up to be good people. Yes they were good fellows but people at the other end of the railway labour rooster were a long way behind, at the time of which I write the labouring chap got 17/10d a week, textile wages were low, conditions harsh, hours long. An old woman in Hopton told me about her husband being laid off for six weeks, they lived on the wage he had drawn that week prior to being sent home, 16/2d, they lived on potatoes and "ducks" from the butcher at 1/2d each. Another old lady I knew well lived at Whitley when she was a girl, one morning she awoke at four o'clock to see a foot of snow, she got up, got dressed, and set off to walk down the long lanes through Hagg Wood, down the lane and into Hopton, instead of being at her job at 6 o'clock it was nearly seven, she was locked out and had to wait until 9 o'clock to be let in, for being late she was fined 4/6d, another 1/6d for being fined and instead of the 6 shillings she should have had for full week, she worked all week for nothing. But people managed to laugh and have their fun. A Gala at Hopton Mills, a fire-work display, all the cracks were there, and cricketers, George Herbert Hirst, Wilfred Rhodes, Schofield Haigh. Beer was 2d a pint, best steak 1/- a pound, mutton chops 10d, and eggs usually 24 for 1/-. Ned Wilson would make you a good suit for £2 and if you wanted a bit of horse trading he would do you a bit of a swap.

BOTTOM OF CUCKOO HILL

CHAPTER 7

The boating trade attracted a lot of men not of the Hopton Schofield tribe, and the condition which prevailed in these lesser firms were not always good. Our picture portrays a fairly common circumstance, the boat in question belonged to a Dewsbury firm they would provide 15/- to hire a horse to pull the boat to Sowerby Bridge laden with wheat, the horse to be left there, evidently a system worked whereby horses would be available on the bank if wanted and the boater able to pay. In the instance we are looking at, this boat tied up by the Bull Bridge, and the woman on the boat as part working crew made her way to her mother's house not far from the Black Bull, she sought her younger brother, a boy of 12, he was to go with her and her husband to Sowerby Bridge aboard their boat, sleep aboard that night, and be the boat steerer down stream back to Mirfield, they had a drink of tea which their mother made, and then joined the boat and set off on the long haul to Sowerby Bridge. It was late summer, but they hoped with luck to get there before dark, they were lucky and managed to do so. Jack, the husband handed the horse over to a new hirer near the Flour Mill to which they were going. Men worked most of the night and got the boat unloaded, and at first light the following morning they were up drinking tea, but our young lad, now the boat steerer, was still asleep. His sister shouted for him to come up on deck, it was time to be framing, a long haul back to the Bull Bridge awaited them, he had a drink of tea, nothing to eat, and then his sister jumped ashore followed by Jack, who carried a bundle of straps and ropes, he proceeded to sort them out and finally Sarah was ready to be yoked up like a donkey, yes, she had a set of harness on, Jack arrayed himself in another set, and fastened a ring in Sarah's harness to a long line attached to the post on the boat used for this purpose, young Dick was so stricken with remorse when he saw his sister yoked up as she was, that he jumped ashore, clung to her and said he would be the donkey and her to be boat steerer, a long discussion took place and finally this happened, at tea time they were tied up at the Bull Bridge in Mirfield.

They went to Sarah's mother's house and had a fair tea, young Dick said his shoulder was sore and he was tired too, he had saved his sister the humiliation of being treated as an animal, and also the hard physical work that would have been entailed. I knew a man connected with the family responsible for this exercise, in fact he was well known, not a member of any of the Mirfield boating tribe and where ever he is now whether in heaven or the other place. I hope he's yoked with a bad donkey to a boat that always scrapes the bottom, anyway Sarah survived and lived to be an old woman, young Dick is still about I saw him yesterday, he must be nearly 100 years old. So much for the BAD boaters. The Bull Bridge to which I refer is of course, still near Cook's old shop up Station Road, the house adjoining the Bridge was formerly a pub, (The Jolly Sailor) I think, and a butcher's shop. It was also the rendezvous of smugglers, the door they used is still there and still opens onto the canal with ease of access for boats from the coast, a relation of mine used to tell me about this. Spirits were usually the smugglers target, and it was a fairly easy business to get them from Hull via the Canal, to Mirfield, although this business was fairly well tied up by just a few families, you can visualise some barge Captain drawing fairly near the old Pub's cellar door, it would quickly open, receive the spoil, shut again, the horse now across the Bridge, and scrambling down the steep bank on the other side, the line hooked on, and they were away again, perhaps a few pounds richer for the escapade, the Captain wondering if the marine, that is the man on the bank, had twigged it, if he had he would want his cut. The butcher's shop I think did quite well fitting the Canal people with their requirements, at this period it was the only shop on the bank after leaving Shepley Bridge. I can remember a chap called King having the butcher's shop (not Harry King) when I was just a small lad. So much for the Bull Bridge.

Before we walk further along Hopton, we will walk up Chadwick Fold towards the old Chadwick Hall, a marvellous old place, but fallen on evil times, now farm buildings. Years ago it was inhabited by human beings at least, what tales its narrow passages could unfold, its mullioned windows tell of the stirring scenes, perhaps little episodes of the '45 rebellion, later stories of the canal being dug, of mills being built, of the moor just a bit higher up the hill being enclosed. We will walk as far up the lane as the Iron Stee, turn and look towards Colne Bridge and Upper Heaton across the North Moor. Today it is indeed the North Moor of legend, a bitter north wind rakes the hillside, every living thing turns it back towards it, hangs its head and waits for it to pass, but it is an area that has suffered North winds before, had its face raked and plundered by both man, beast and nature. Now it endures the worst of all, the Enclosure Acts. Prior to the enactment of these dastardly bills the little man could live on his few acres, he kept a cow or two, a pig, a few hens, if he was well off a pony too, times would be hard and

the North wind would blow. But he was independent, he did not touch his cap to any man, his wife would weave him cloth for a coat, spin his wool from his few sheep, all he requested was his salt pot to be kept full and a pack or flour now and then, his crown and glory, or so he thought was his little place, it had been his father's and his fathers before him, aye, it was his alright, but one fine morning a man came with papers, he said the place was now his, they had papers to prove it, "read this", the man said, but he could not read, he could not write and did not understand the papers, he listened a long time and then said it was still his, he did not care what any man said, and he would shoot the first man to enter his place, but he was too late, the other man was agent to some wealthy person who had access to maps, could read the orders relating to the new acts, our little man and his father before had held his place without papers and also more important, without question, now it was over. It he wanted, he could become the tenant of the man with the papers, now a new problem arose, he required money to pay his new landlord his rent, or without the money, to get off, this was usually the case.

All this coincided with the Industrial Revolution. The new factories required workpeople in their thousands, so the hitherto independent small farmer with common rights which his family had enjoyed for generations, had to leave the hillsides to take up a job and to live in the ghettos already being provided for him. When you walk on Hopton again just look up the narrow streets and find out when and why they were built. He must eat at least once a day, without money he could not do this, the new mills were the answer, the whole family would become engulfed in the pursuit of cash for bread. Children 4 or 5 years old, old men and women, In fact everybody, it was said at the time that 75% of the people of the Yorkshire Dales had left as the result of the operation of these acts, the majority of them called Metcalf and living in Bradford. The Church was one of the chief villains in this sordid exercise, and enclosed thousands of acres, whole hillsides being enclosed by them, and some local upstart manufacturers who had the cash for the legal formalities and a tame agent to carry them out. Large areas were enclosed by titled people. As distinct from the machination of the Enclosure Acts, there are huge areas of land occupied by people, or let to people they say are tenants, who at best have a very shaky title to them, I know one family who have held a farm for above 600 years, another man who says he is the owner of 14,000 acres of land including their farm, which they have maintained in good fettle all this long period, I should think the production of a full and legal title would be required some effort. I know another family on the East Coast who were turfed off their place at the dissolution of the monasteries and have since been landless but on open or Fete days, they go to the old place for a look round, however, they are always very well dressed, can run a car and generally entertain you in a manner to which they are accustomed. In the process of their evacuation I think they salvaged plenty cash, but their Grandpa was hung, drawn and quartered and to make everybody alike, he was cut up and all his pals and relatives got a bit. Incidentally, the path we are on now, that is up the Nursery side, marks the Western boundary of the enclosed land, to the East of this lane and running back to Penistone lies the Beaumont Estate, an estate which takes in practically all the land with which we are familiar.

We have already mentioned one old Hall, Chadwick Hall. Another two further East of here, one at Waste, this was a wonderful stone building marvellous mullioned windows, a hugs hall which was the entrance, a stone bench ran the whole way round, providing a seat, the windows looked down on Hopton, it must have surveyed a wonderful scene in the old days and been the centre of a big farming area. Some equally old farm buildings are found across the rough road from this house, I never came across anybody to whom the history of the place was familiar. Another old house which I should think has over the years enjoyed fame, having been regarded as the birth-place of the famous John De Hopton, Bishop of Norwich and "The" King maker, I refer of course, to an old house situated up Han Bank lately renovated. I think that it its name of the early days, "Black Hall" is largely the principal cause of its claim to fame, I should think that it is unlikely that any important family, as the Hopton's were, would be likely to live here. The house itself is a very ordinary one, being built at the period when scaffolding was not used, a gradual slope to the roof started fairly near to the ground level provided the means of access to the apex of the roof and higher parts of the walls, in addition it is a sandstone building, very little dressed stone is used, and the stone required was probably quarried at an adjoining quarry, or indeed on the land on which it is built. Now, as the result of improvements, it is a wonderful place but the basics of the place are not altered, no, I would be surprised if the De Hopton family lived here. When I was a little lad it was a farmhouse, one lovely summer's day along with some more lads and lasses we visited the place on a bird nesting expedition, in the process, one of the girls fell down the well, after a big hullabaloo, she was rescued and her aunty who lived nearby, gave her a good hiding for falling down, no kissing you better in those days. Poor lass, she did plenty falling after this day and not just down a well. Further up the hill is an example of building with hand-made bricks, a whole series of farm buildings and a lovely house are as good today as the day the bricks were burned. In a largely inaccessible area this would be the best material to use, it did not require carting, it

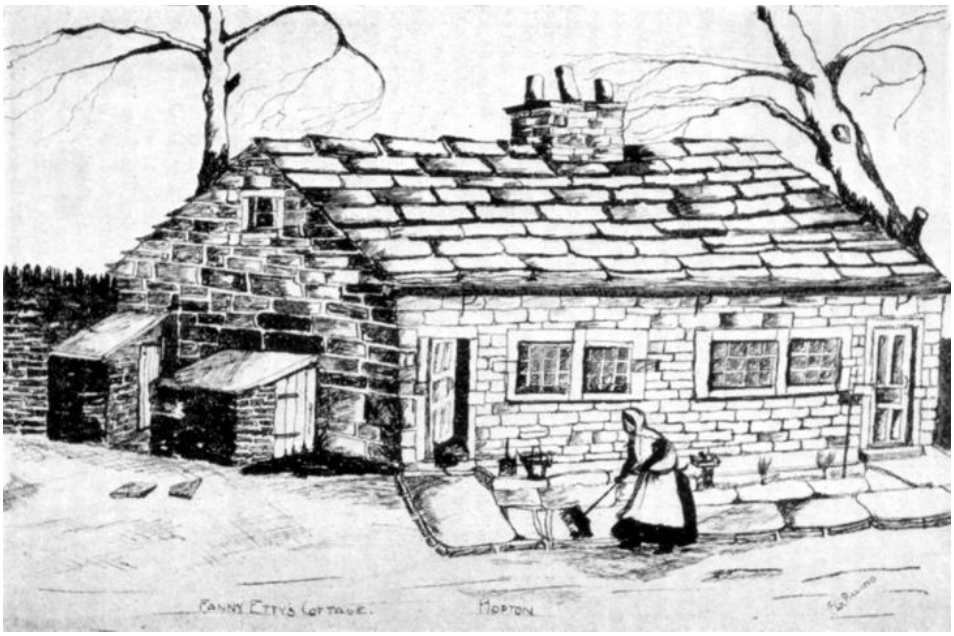
was on site and was used extensively in Hopton. At one period, a fantastic suggestion was put forward to the effect that the De Hopton family did actually live at Black Hall in Mirfield, but another "Black Hall" was dug up, Blake Hall being now the fashionable domicile of the illustrious family, but seeing that the Bishop had left his See about 600 years before Blake Hall was built the two items take some reconciling. If you look East from where you are now you will see just peeping its chimneys through the trees, the old New Hall, now a farmhouse, when first built it was a place of some importance although a farmhouse, its position commanded a view of most of the land farmed from there, the Beaumonts left, and afterwards it became tenanted, usually by a good type of farmer, although its worst tenants were two firms and not individuals, between them they were responsible for its gradual decline. One of its best tenants was a man called Ed Hartley.

We are now viewing from Hand Bank some of the most glorious scenery in Yorkshire. Let's walk down the Bank, we are now in Hopton Lane, near the Flower Pot, we will turn through a snicket by the old Hand Loom Weaver's house, the path will take us over the Cuckoo Hill, but just look at this old house now jazzed up and made quite modern. One hundred years ago this was a busy corner, two brothers Henry and David Oxley were hand loom weavers, imagine the scene, up the outside steps would go all the yarn probably hand spun from a neighbouring farmer's sheep, all the weft from the same source, a long and busy weekday, probably the same every day, the finished piece would be put on a pack horse and taken to Huddersfield, there to be sold. This activity was the base of the economy in the area, plus of course, the farming which dominated the whole life just here, in fact when you look around I think you find it still does, although the number of people employed in farming Is very tiny when compared with the pre-machine age and when every little job was hand done.

If we proceed along this path we shall pass what is now a very elaborate farmhouse and buildings, formerly it was the site of a pit, Buzzer Pit to be exact, it did not operate for long, I think that the water encountered made it a very unprofitable proposition, during its lifetime the coal obtained was run via a scoop track across the fields and into Granny Lane, across the road and to a coal staith almost opposite the mill on the other side of the river, here boats tied up and were filled, this would be about the limit to which a broad boat could travel up river, although occasionally, I have seen a horse drawn barge dredging for sand, tied up behind the Flower Pot on the top side of the new bridge. After its demise as a pit it soon became a farm and believe it or not, the site of the first depot for Silcocks Cattle Cake, in fact, at the time I think it was the only one, too. Johnny Ritchen was the agent, he combined his agency with a bosses job at the mill at Wood Bottom, I used to take his dinner for him on my way home from school, his daughter used to give me a halfpenny and tell me to run all the way to keep the pudding warm, and as I went over the Cuckoo Hill it was quite a feat, more times than not though, the pudding would be cold. Tom Kitson had his leg cut off at this pit, can you remember him? He became a milkman. Through another stee hole, and now we are on the wood side at Gregory Spring, across the fields on our left the harvest in full swing, two horses in a reaper and two men sitting on the machine, not a self-binder yet, one man is the horseman, the other sits just a bit further back, and with his foot operates a gate that holds up the cut corn until enough for a sheaf has been cut, then the gate is released and with a rake, the head not set at an angle to the shaft, he pushes off the new sheaf. Round the field we go until a complete round has been cut, then the men dismount, and with other helpers proceed to tie up the corn, all by hand with hand-made bands, eventually all is cut and tied up, then the sheaves are collected and set up in kivvers of ten facing usually in an East-West direction so that only the outside sheaf would catch the prevailing West wind, you thought they were set up anyway didn't you? Well they are not you see. Further up hill and a few fields away what must be the most beautifully situated house in Mirfield, Woodcock Hall. This hall merits anything the agents could say about it, every morning when the owners arise they must think they are in heaven, I have never, anywhere seen a more lovely place, it used to be the home of the Whitehead family who farmed it for a long time. I bought my first bike at the farm sale here when the White-head family left, Joe Parkinson of Mirfield was the auctioneer, he'd sold a lot of the stock and when he got to the bike, Mark Appleyard called "Let's have a goa Joe", so have a "go" he did, and I bought the bike for 10/-. Everything is very quiet here, not a sound save perhaps, a partridge calling, a lark singing if you watch you will see a rabbit scurry along the dry and dusty path to its burrow in yon hedge bottom. Over the field at the cop and out into the bridle path, now again a most beautiful scene. the Whitley and Liley Wood facing you, Wood Bottom hamlet, and the cricket field in the bottom. Years ago the venue for the class cricket matches and a delightful setting just like you see on the pictures, down the bridle path and along Springwood Bottom, now here is heaven, walk on this wood side on a September morning with the sun just breaking through the tall trees opposite, every drop of dew becomes a diamond the humblest bracken frond a bejewelled necklace, the little beck a splash of quicksilver as it gurgles under a single stone and before it falls with a tiny roar to the underground way which eventually takes it to the Calder. Listen, did you hear that? It was a fox barking, a vixen calling for her cubs or perhaps her mate, there are quite a few about here,

Watch that cock pheasant tread daintily across the path, he's going to dust in the gateway, that's a hen following him, keep still, and we shall see the remainder of his harem. Ah, here they come, another three of them, their young now old enough to take care of themselves. Let's go now, we can see this scene nearly any day here, but it’s ever new, and ever delightful. I once heard my father say that he didn't think heaven would be any nicer than here, he was right. From Liley Lane and down the Toppits, the Dransfields would pass on their way to the Church at Mirfield, they were the big pots in the area prior to the arrival on the scene of the Beaumonts. If you look carefully nearer the Liley Lane end of the Toppits you see evidence that this path was fairly important, and was maintained as one that was used fairly extensively, a drainage system was a part of the scheme, this would be prior to wheeled traffic of course, and would be for the benefit of people on horse back, they would pass down the Toppits up the bridle path down New Hall Hill down the Boat House Lane to the Ferry at the bottom and across to the church.

THE FLOWER POT AND GALA CART



FANNY ETTY LIVED HERE --- NEAR THE FLOWER POT, HOPTON

CHAPTER 8

THE Boathouse at this time would be indeed the boathouse, a ferry operated from the Lane end to the far bank of the river, although there is not much evidence of this now, any that remained until the construction of the new road, would I suppose, disappear at the time. An alternative route to this point from the Liley Lane area would be down Dransfield Hill, called I presume, after the famous family, this I think would also be a bridle path, although If you rode a horse over it during my time it was only at the goodwill of the tenant farmer, a pack horse track did operate over a good part of it all the same. The Waddington family were the owners of the Boathouse estate for a long time, how long I do not know, the family seat was Broad Oaks, a marvellous old house complete with a set of farm buildings, it still is a wonderful place, now with the occupation of someone else, the Waddingtons belonged also to a large area of land and woods including Hagg Wood. The land on both sides of Hagg Wood Lane belonged to them, and in a building at the bottom of Hagg Wood Lane they, along I think with some people called Cardwell, installed the first steam engine to drive machinery in Hopton, all has now disappeared. They were a very nice family, very well educated and generally really good people, ardent Chapel goers with strong political views. Stancliffe was their middle name, they were cousins to the Stancliffes at Over Hall. A scoop road ran between Broad Oakes and the Boathouse, it provided an exit for coal got in Whitley Wood and delivered to the boat tied up at a staith opposite their place. After the building of the railway, a wooden bridge was made to run inside the bridge on Steanard Lane. The man with the horse on the bank would walk along the bridge with the rope end while the horse kept to the road under the bridge to be united with rope at the other end of the bridge, a story used to be told of a time when the river was in flood and some of the Waddingtons were leaving home in a pony trap, when the pony bolted and threw everybody into the river, all were drowned, after this a fence was erected largely at their expense. A few personal episodes relating to myself and the Waddingtons are worth recalling. 1 often had to be milk lad for them, this would be when I was about seven, one morning I had collected the half-gallon can of milk, lidless this day, from Dick Marshall's Farm, at this time a huge rookery had its base there, it was alive with crows as we called them, and the area around was liberally bespattered with white blobs, well suddenly I felt a big white blob sliding down my hand into the lidless can of milk. I did not know what to do, but resolved to carry on as if nothing had happened. I got to Broad Oakes, gave the can a good swill round and emptied the milk into the usual bowl, not a thing to be seen, all was well, Miss Elizabeth said "Good morning" and told me to run to school. Nearly a hundred years later, or so it seems, I sold the same Miss Elizabeth a lovely stand pie one Christmas Eve, the week after Easter the following year, she said the pie had been lovely, they had finished it that week, it was their custom she said, to put a spice cake and any pie they had left into an airtight box to be eaten the following Easter, this exercise was now completed for this session, they were all still alive and very wick, my little milk episode compared with this was, well, just a crow bite. Later still I bought a horse from a local corn miller, it was the worst horse I ever saw, sometimes it would not even walk, one day, along with my father, I put it in a part set of harrows in a field up Boathouse Lane side, we were going along nicely, my father said he was going alright, when suddenly, he jerked up his head, and he was away down the field, the harrows bouncing about like shuttlecocks, my father said the hedge at the bottom would stop him, but it didn't, he went straight through, on to Waddingtons front garden, and there he stood and surveyed the scene. My father said how were we to get him back, I said "You'll have to fetch him won't you", he said he wouldn't, I said he would because he was older than me. To save the situation the horse himself solved it, he came back through the same hole as he went through, I never heard anything more about this. What happened I don't know. The following Sunday morning I spent a long time making him into a cast iron good worker with a sythe stone, I put harness marks all over him, he looked as he had worked day and night, and as prim and straight as a bishop. I sold him the following Monday at Huddersfield to an old fellow with a long white beard, poor old chap, but he should have had more sense than to buy a horse he didn't know.

Time rolled on, and my eldest brother went to live in a Waddington's house, a lovely house with a good garden too, I went one Tuesday tea-time to see him, it was November time, but a bright afternoon just a touch of frost, I looked through a dividing hedge and saw in Waddington's garden, yes the same garden, a big pheasant, he looked like a coloured turkey, one of the afternoon's last rays of sunshine caught him, he looked lovely. I quietly got my brother's gun, put a cartridge in, crept back to the hedge and bang, I got him alright I knew that Waddingtons were away on Tuesday so no danger there, my brother envisaged the direst things happening, he told my mother who said in a loud voice, that the

worst thing would come to pass and that I must not fetch it, let them think someone else had shot it, but she also told me privately and in a much quieter voice to wait until it was properly dark before I got him, get him I did, he was a good bird, so much for the Waddingtons, they were good people and I hope they are all in heaven, I think they will be, they never did much wrong.
As we leave the Boathouse/Waddington enclave, we pass on the new road, Steanard Lane, towards Hopton proper, we first encounter a really delightful place, the Old Wire Mill, it has now been modernised, but I think without unduly robbing the place of the old mill atmosphere.
In the old days it was operated by the Hamerton family, a board fastened to the outside wall facing the road announced to the world that "Joe Hammerton, Wire Worker & Cab Proprietor", carried on business there, although I do not think that the cab business operated this century. The place was driven by a huge water wheel fed from a dam that almost adjoined the house, the darn was fed by a very ingenious system, a much smaller dam at the bottom of the New Hall Lane, fed by a brand of the beck that started at the Clough at Whitley provided the water supply. It ran under the road, across the adjoining field, or rather fairly near to the field wall before emptying into the main dam. In the event of an over supply of water or overflow at the Hagg Lane end of the dam operated, water would run back under the road to remerge in the plantation opposite on its way to the beck, to continue its way to the river. I think the wire industry here was largely connected with the coal trade, a fantastic number of riddles were turned out and were despatched, at a later period in the firm's history, by rail to different collieries, prior to the railways, horses and carts would be the transport.
Joe Hammerton must have been a progressive fellow, he was the first man in Mirfield to utilise the new source of power, electricity, this he did, coupled with his water power although it was only used for lighting at this time. A man called Jim Wood who lived up Hand Bank was the chief operator of the machinery, along usually with a boy or two. Across the road from the wire mill is a field that runs across to the river, "Hepper Ings" by name, meaning, I suppose the field by the river. The bank near the river is artificially raised to prevent flooding, or If flooded to keep the water inside the raised perimeter to provide in winter time, a skating rink, I have not actually seen skating here, although older people have told me that in the older days, it was a very usual local sport and was illuminated by candle power, it must have been lovely. I have seen a sham light further along Steanard Lane in front of Cote wall, this was illuminated by candle too, very impressive It looked too, the candles in small coloured jars being hung from the trees about, people made do with the things available and everybody was happy.
Turn left now and walk a few yards up Hagg Lane, on your left a fairly large brick building now a small factory, originally built I believe, as a coaching stable by a fellow, who it was said at the time, wished to impress one of the Miss Beaumonts at Whitley Hall, it eventually didn't work. One of the things 1 remember about this place was a horse drawn manual fire engine the type pumped by a wooden bar that ran on each side of the machine, I think that four men on each side were required to work the pumps, the exercise would be for the horses to gallop to the fire with the men aboard they would find a water supply somewhere about, put a pipe end in, they were then in business, the machine was painted red and bore the name of an Insurance Company. It was kept in a yard here, where it went, I don't know. I remember a fire at Battyeford Flour Mill; and because it took the horse nineteen minutes to gallop from Huddersfield there was much criticism. We are in this area surrounded by reminders of life as it was in more leisurely times.
Look at the little beehive kilns in the little field across the beck, when these kilns were working, the open tops received the coal ex scoops, that ran from New Hall wood on a rail track, they were tipped into the kiln, fired, then the coal produced the coke required in the new industries in Mirfield, largely for malting I should think, the gas did not matter, nobody wanted it then, we all had oil lamps. A nice house was erected on the site and was occupied I should think for a hundred years by the Bentley family, a son, Joseph, was quite a character, one of the few men about, who was absolutely fearless, the big pots did not awe Joseph, he was a very intelligent fellow and could converse on most things and the fact that he lived on a bit of land, and occupied a house over which he had absolute jurisdiction made him unique fn the area, where most ordinary fellows had to touch their cap to somebody or other, not Joseph.
Apart from this Joseph Bentley a few people who lived in the area could be truthfully described as characters, or at least as people who were worthy of note. One, a Bill Haigh, I think one of the very first engine drivers who lived in the top house of a terrace at the "Beck", I can just remember him, it used to be said that he walked to Leeds to see Charlie Peace hanged, Charlie the notorious murderer, a crowd of 10,000 watched the public execution. In the next house and facing the road lived William Southward a shepherd, who came into the area to be, yes, a shepherd and bailiff for a local land owner, he had several sons and daughters, one of whom became the wife of Dick Marshall of Hagg Farm, another son, Johnny married a farmer's daughter at Emley, William Southward stayed in Hopton where

some of his family still live. This corner of the Beck was a fairly important function prior to the building of the Hopton New Road, that is from the Beck to Boathouse Lane, it was common at this time and perfectly legal to continue up Hagg Lane, cut across the Wood to the right, continue up Long Jones side in the wood, and emerge at this end of Mouse Hole Lane and thus to Whitley. I have done this trip with horses and carts many times. The actual building of the new road was undertaken to relieve unemployment at the time I think, after the 1870 French War when the demand of war materials would be over and the new factories would be either out of business or working at very low rate, again though in this area there was for a short time quite a spurt in the opening up of pits. Buzzer Pit and one in New Hall Wood, the original one at the Cuckoo Hill are examples, they were short lived and did very little to alter the economics of the natives.

The Beck was just a few houses and a beck and was a bottle neck through which people passed on the way to our Metropolis. Mirfield, or Eastthorpe Lane, you could have left your home in Whitley, Briestfield, Grange Moor, Liley Lane, the Toppits district, perhaps you lived in one of the 'big' houses of which there were several round about. You could have descended literally via Long Jones, Crow Croft, the Briar Knowle or the Toppits and New Hall Lane, to get to Mirfield you had first to pass the Beck. In a day's time, if it be nice you could spot people from all these districts, perhaps a collier from Grange Moor, going to the station to collect a poor little school lad from an orphanage in Liverpool, perhaps two brothers would be collected, they would look like frightened birds as they peered up at their new protector, little did they know what was in store for them, a long day in some pit, pushing scoops, trams, call them what you like, five, six days a week, perhaps 10 hours a day, their new found benefactor had given them a home and hard job to go with it. A lot of these lads were killed in the 1914-18 War, as they got a bit older they would come down into Mirfield to the new fangled pictures at Mirfield Town Hall, 1d for the pictures, 1d for fish and chips and 1d for a bottle of “pop”.

The biggest noise would be Heblethwaits farm dog 'Prince' letting off steam, perhaps occasionally a beealling cow that had just missed her calf, perhaps the cuckoo calling; you could sit and listen and watch the world you then knew pass by, if it was a warm day—with your feet in the beck. Suddenly you would hear the orderly clip, clop of horses' feet, a stylish pair of horses yoked to a lovely carriage would be coming along the road, it came from Cote Wall, a lovely place with its back nearly to Hagg Wood, passing it and going the other way, a pair of horses and carts taking coal from Whitley to Dewsbury or Ravensthorpe, from September to April, Jack Mathewman would pass you with his three horse team leading barley from the station to a kiln at Shepley Bridge, he used to put four tons a time on a tremendous wagon built for the job.

On a Monday after 4 o'clock you would see Mr. Dawson, all the lads knew Mr. Dawson, he was a master at the Reformatory School and collected lads from the train at Mirfield Station, usually from Sheffield where they would have been sentenced to some years at the school for some offence in their home City. They always looked poor, little, thin lads, with white pasty faces, some looked fairly wick, others sickened with the business and mostly in rags, sometimes there would be five or six of them in a little gang. Mr. Dawson, who looked a giant in those days, would shout at them to keep them together and get them through Hagg Wood to the school, they never tried to run away on a Monday night, some did on a Tuesday night though, at school time next morning when we were all ready for off, my mother would say "Oh dear, look at those poor lads again", perhaps there would be two or three this time in the custody of the keepers, who I think got paid for capturing these poor kids, my mother would cry and call out to the keepers not to hurt them.

But this part of our home ground was heaven itself, everything that God intended man to enjoy was here, lovely woods, fields, becks. all the wild animals and birds that the country lad lived with, scores of rabbits, pheasants, a hare or two, a hedgehog, sometimes a weasel. You might hear his prey screaming out if he had not been quick enough to get away, you might find a partridge nest with a dozen eggs in. these you had to surrender to the keeper. I once sat on the wall near the bottom of New Hall Hill listening to a grass drake calling, now under my feet, the next call far away by the iron hurdle fence, the next in the middle of the field where the wild dog daisies grew. A new born foal and its farm mare mother called Violet, were near to the last call, she held her head high and still, she seemed to be listening, then a few pulls of the longer grass, now another listen, this time she moved away in an excited manner, called to her foal and whinnied again, her ears pricked, she now left her foal and galloped towards me, swung round and held her head high, called gain for her foal to join her, listening. This time I could hear the noise that upset this poor mare, it was an aeroplane, the first ever seen here. I saw it quite plainly and ran home to tell mother. It did not seem long before I saw one of these things at Ypres with a chap hanging out trying to kill me with a machine gun.

If you could spare the time, you could wait by Hebblethwaits, have a bit of crack with one of the lads, Ernest was my pal at this time, maybe sit on the wall, hear the birds sing, watch the fancy horses trot by, the farm horses rattling the chains of a set of plough gears or mowing tackle, if in Winter time a

heavy sledge with broad wooden skids which would ride over the hard road. Perhaps watch my father pass with a young horse in some breaking tack, driving him quietly in a pair of long lines, occasionally he would put me carefully on his back, he might speak very gently to him in a soothing voice to see how he framed with a lad on his back. Every Monday we would see the "Blind Man" and his wife, the man would have a strap over his shoulder and every hole of the strap would carry a brush head, his wife carried reels of cotton, pins, lace, safety pins, cards of wool, most little domestic things in a basket. They would start at the Ship Inn, Mrs. Normanton's and call at all the cottages, all the outlying farms, he was blinded in a pit and never again able to work, they were nice people, and this was their way of life ever after.

Sometimes on a Saturday tea-time we might see 'Winnie Waxlight', a little old gypsy woman who came from Lepton, she would call at all the farms and outlying cottages trying to sell little tiny brooches, black lead, boot polish, the type you spit into and polish when it gets dry, she would sell lamp wicks. My mother used to buy lamp wicks from her, occasionally a lamp glass to fit our lamp, usually our best lamp which we used on Sunday. My mother would trim the wick, polish the glass and we would be ready for another reading from "Mothers Last Words" perhaps five or six of us: "Higher, higher, up she trod, until she reached those Golden Gates, but a wicked sprite, as black as night, sped close behind with rapid feet." Then somebody would cry aloud, my mother would cry and wallop the loudest crier for making too much noise, she would wipe her tears away, turn the lamp up and start again. This lamp was lovely and shed a soft mellow light, it was our sole means of illumination, apart, of course from the humble candle. No electric light, not even gas, no cars, buses, radio, television, no aeroplanes apart from the one we have Just seen, the pictures were just about to start, and believe it or not, no w/c's, just one had been installed at this time in one of the stately homes nearby, but the man only half did the job, he got the half alright where you pulled the chain, but after that little exercise, nature took control, and assisted by the force that made Sir Isaac Newton famous, all meandered on Its way to the sea, along hedge bottoms, old drains, into a field dyke perhaps, all on the way to sea at Hull, after a brief call at the Ship. But everybody lived, most folks were happy. You could go to the Flower Pot or the Ship with a shilling and get seven pints. If we could go back to those days and those things, live at the same slow speed, with things at the same prices, and the ordinary man. instead of having 16/- a week could have, well, how much? £16? Heaven would be here; allied of course to the non-existent things that we quote. There was a perpetual shortage of money but about this there was one virtue, if virtue it was. there just wasn't any money about for the ordinary fellow. I once heard an old woman in Hopton, say that she didn't believe anybody who said they had money left on a Thursday, but everybody was alike, some more alike than others, some way we did not have the pretenders that seem to be about today. Everybody seemed to manage some way or other. Just about this time employment was really bad, and the attraction of the colonies, Canada especially, held out hopes for the future that seemed non-existent here, the Hirst lads from the Boat House, Francis & Arthur and I believe another brother, went there. George Firth, whose mother had a hat shop in Knowle Road, went to New Zealand and came over again as a soldier in the 1914-18 War. George Scott from the Knowle was a butcher and a bit of a case, prior to going to Canada, he worked for a period as a butcher for the Co-op, one day, a gardener from one of the big houses had called to pay his boss's bill, and accused him of over charging them, George in turn accused the gardener of being a so-and-so and mentioned In detail and with great colour, the denomination to which he belonged, especially on a Sunday. George's final ultimatum was if he did not apologise, he would get his head chopped off "yer bloody ---------" needless to say the threat had the desired effect.

George went to Canada in pursuit of gold. He worked his way across the Atlantic and fired an engine across the prairie to Dawson City where he got a job as a barman for a time. He saved quite a good sum and (he said) bought a donkey and some tack, and set off to the gold fields, when he got to the area where the claims were to be marked out, he found it was like being at the bottom of Dransfield Hill at Hopton. only white over with snow, and all the likely claims were already allotted, he palled up with some more lads who were equally unlucky, they were hungry and dirty, and pestered George to kill the donkey, he got what he wanted for it in cash, killed and dressed it, he said it was lovely, that it had re-minded him of being at home when his mother would buy some old cow from a cow butcher, the thing that reminded him he said, was that it was just as "bloody tough" only more so, anyway he never left it until it was all eaten and he sold the donkey tail to an Irish man for 10/-, that was the end of that, but Geo was an ardent gambler and went to a saloon one night, he got more to drink than he should have and said good-by to his last quid from the sale of his poor donkey, he ended up 'skint', but took note of the chap who had skinned him, he too seemed to be suffering from an overdose of whisky. Geo waited until this fellow had to leave the room, followed him outside and (so he said) hit him with a wooden stake, rolled him into a ditch adjoining the saloon and was about to go through the chap's pockets when some other fellow came along. Geo decided to wait until the morning to complete his nefarious

scheme, this he did, the man was as dead as a stone, what he had done with the cash he had taken from Geo he could not tell, it was not there, but he had a gold watch and chain which Geo said he took with the intention of borrowing some cash on it, and then (he said) if the chap "came round" he would give him his watch back, and that, Geo said "was the only bloody gold I saw in Canada". He told me this tale a dozen times and always insisted on its veracity. I once saw Geo fall from the top of the steps to the bottom at Mirfield Station, he still had his bowler hat on when he arrived, he dusted his light blue overcoat which nearly trapped his toes it was so long, adjusted his hat a little, then set off to walk home to the Knowle. He finished up selling buns from a basket, but George would live when most chaps would die.

I have almost overrun my perusal of the 'Beck' stories. One, closely related to the area, is fairly important, it is the story of the hedge or hedges that start really near Liley Hall, when you enter the Toppits by the gate off Liley Lane, near the Hare & Hounds, you are about to pass a fairly historic hedge, starting when you encounter the second gate. A hedge on your right hand, or on the South side of the path starts here and I am almost sure dates from a good few hundred years ago, it would be planted according to a plan operative at the time of the Dransfield family and during the period of their residence at Liley Hall or its forerunner, if you look, you will see that it is composed of usually five different types of tree, sycamore, ash, maple, thorn and holly. Occasionally, elder, looked upon as a weed will have become established. This type of hedge continues until the wall starts near the third gate where of course the wall takes over until having reached the Spring Wood bottom, and the bottom of the Bridle Path at Wood Bottom, we now find that the hedge on both sides of the path is composed of the trees I have mentioned, this continues until we are near Royd House Lodge where a thorn hedge takes possession on the South side of the Bridle Path, and is so until we are near the Hagg ,where it is perhaps slightly mixed again, we descend New Hall Hill to the top of Boat House Lane where on the right side of the road, or the South side, the mixture of trees is again complete, only unfortunately, it has been so mutilated in some stretches as to be almost non-existent, years ago when it was kept in trim it was a picture in Autumn, when all the different coloured leaves were maturing at different times. I think that this type of path demarcation had some religious significance, this was the route that would be followed daily by the Dransfield family on their way to Mirfield Church via the Boat House, for which they were responsible, and the boat that was kept there would be in daily use, these people were tremendously powerful in the area, and were largely responsible for the handing over of the Advowson of Mirfield Church to the Priory of Kirklees in the early 1300's, a long time before the appearance of the Beaumonts on the scene. This type of marker for religious routes was I think fairly common and had one great virtue, it was nearly everlasting as witness of our local example.

I think that the oldest family in Hopton and probably Mirfield, the Hebblethwaites, would be connected with this coke producing business their land adjoined. They were good sound people, and their Sheep Ings Farm, still intact, is a little oasis in the midst of change, all my life it has been a hive of agricultural industry, a big stack yard at harvest time, a picture of trim stacks, properly thatched and at threshing time buzzing for a week with the sound of Hamshire's threshing machine, I can see and hear it all now, the men carrying the full bags of corn to the granary, another son building a stack with the newly threshed bats of straw. The boss himself, Abraham Hebblethwaite seeing that all was right, he was the absolute embodiment and example of the Yeoman as you would picture him, a giant of a fellow in all ways, he was tall, well built, wore a good suit always, and a blue and white spotted stock, a good white collar and all crowned by a box hat, he did not carry a stick as any little drover would, he carried a long staff and walked up the middle of the lane, a bit of an autocrat, not much to say, and most of all a gentleman, measured not by today's "Gold Standard", but by the bit of good breeding that showed through as it did in all the good cattle and horses that he kept. Another two similar gentlemen spring to my mind. John Farrar of Moorlands Farm, and William Sheard of Balderston Hall, all farmers, all gentlemen according to the old book, and all as sound as York Castle. So much for the families living on this riverside road, a road that stretched from the bridge at Hopton to the Ship at the other end.

Coal did for a period, provide the basis of the economy of the area, although it was so for a shorter period than we should probably think, a hundred years would see the start and finish of the whole exercise, and I should think that a fair amount of money would be lost. If we start at the Lady Wood end of the series of pits and day holes involved, we shall be surprised; the exit for coal from this day hole was a paved way for horse traffic that joined the road near the Ship, I should think that this place shut down in the 20's. We next come to the end of the scoop road at Broad Oaks and Staith immediately opposite, boats tied up here were horse powered, the horse walking on the road side, I think that this finished business last century. The "Buzzer Pit" would close in the very early 1900's, it was never a paying proposition, water was the problem. Another pit, probably to work the same coal seam, was sunk in New Hall Wood, an engine house and other pit head buildings were erected, but this place never got a

shovelful of coal and was eventually pulled down, the staith built to deal with coal from the "Buzzer Pit" survived for a long time just over the hedge on Granny Lane in a field called "Little Steanard". The staith that dealt with coal that came to the light in the coal yard at Hopton also managed to remain intact until well into this century. Although coal has always been fairly prominent in the area as supplying fuel on the one hand and work on the other, strangely enough, in a very detailed survey required by the Doomsday Book no mention is made of coal, we lie well within the area that was totally devastated in 1069 by William the Conqueror and it was well into the 12th Century before the district showed signs of recovery. Wood and peat were the fuel used and these in great quantities, of course there was good supply to hand, the whole of the area being well wooded, as indeed it is now, surprisingly. Iron stone was mined In the area in great quantities, and at Colne Bridge a forge or bloomery, as they were called, was erected, this dealt with the iron stone mined beyond Boyfe Hall and on to the North Moor and up to Rastrick. Small diameter shafts were sunk, when the desired depth was reached the ore was mined on all sides of the shaft, thus producing a bell-shaped area, hence the Bell Pits that we read of. The whole of this business was conducted by monks connected with various religious houses, however, whether these people were the originals of this industry we do not know. This lack of knowledge regarding the industry at this time is solely due to the absence of any records relating to it, the monks on the other hand, left detailed accounts of the whole industry, their pit sites, fuel sources, amounts of iron produced, etc.

The forge at Colne Bridge was owned by the monks of Fountains Abbey and it is recorded that a fellow called Ralf Fitze Nicholas of Cridling Stubbs, gave them permission to take the wood they required from his woods at Bradley, and also any iron that they came across. A strip of land behind Whitley Village and running back to Long Causeway, was the scene of extensive iron mining and the place from which the mineral had been taken were plainly visible when I was a boy. I should think that the iron mined here would be taken to a forge at Flockton, this was owned and operated by the monks from Rievaulx Abbey, all these religious houses owned and farmed vast areas of land and iron was required in large quantities both for their farming and building operations. All these activities persisted until the end of the 13th Century, when coal was being more mined in increasing amounts. With the mining of coal becoming an increasing industry in the 14th Century, the smelting of iron in the area by the use of wood or charcoal for fuel, rapidly declined. The foundry at Colne Bridge closed down although this was largely due to the exhaustion of the supplies of iron stone in the area up to Rastrick. Any smelting required from this time was carried on at Low Moor, where another seam of iron stone was worked and a foundry erected which functioned for a long time. With the commencement of the Industrial Revolution, coal was required and in the late 1600's was being mined in greater quantities and at a large number of points. In our own area this situation persisted for a long time in fact until the late 1930's when a number of pits and day holes closed down, conditions of work in these places was very harsh, hours were long, pay low, lack of supervision through any official source was responsible for large numbers of accidents with usually a terrible death toll. Strikes were frequent, but did not achieve what they should have done. I knew one pit where the owner said that because he only made £6,000 profit in the current year, instead of the £12,000 he had made in the previous year, he had lost £6,000 and if the men would not take a substantial reduction in wages, he would shut the place up, they would not work for less, so close down he did. Most of the men never worked again, but the boss died. I believe at the time that they had, £l a week for six days. I know a fellow, he's a very old man now, who worked as a hurrier, six at night till six in the morning for 4/6d. At the present time there is not one working pit in the area and a good job too.

BARGE LAUNCH LEDGARD YARD BEHIND NAVI

JIM DEAN

They left poor old Hartshead on a raw winter's day,
They had no money, but they left no bills to pay.

They were tramping to Skipton, and then forrard to Settle,
And they were just taking with them aye; two tin pots and a kettle,
They didn't tarry at Skipton, then forrard to Settle.

They slept in a stable through the long winter's night,
Then up in the morning, at the first steely light.

Jim sang near some houses, his poor wife begged,
For old boots, or coppers, or just dry bread.

They're on the way now to Wild Shap on the Fell,
Hear the old tramping colliers, and the tales that they tell.

They found an old house and a big torn cat,
Two chairs, no table, and a big mucky mat.

They camped here a day, and boiled the old kettle,
Ate dry bread, drank hot tea, and felt in fair fettle.

Then up in the morning and away 'oer the Fell,
When they were over they heard the church bell.
It was just striking twelve, another day half gone,
They were near the pit now where the sun never shone.

They got to the gate, it was bolted and barred,
They saw a notice on a big white card,
It was closed down for ever, no work for them here.

His wife had to cry and shed the odd tear,
"Come on lass doant cry, I could blast and swear,
For folks like us lass, nobody cares, we'll get back to Hartshead,
We know 'em all there."
They picked up their traps, two tins and a kettle.

They scrambled over Shap, then forward to Settle,
Hot meals for ever now, they boiled the old kettle.

Two days to Skipton, a night on the road,
Nearer now to their own little abode.

Away 'oer the fields their own cracked bell tolling,
No more tramping to Skipton and forward to Settle,
Back home for ever now, and they just brought with them,
Aye, two tin pots and a kettle.

F. G. PILLING.

CHAPTER 9

For a long time the Oakes family carried on a Wheelwrights business in Hopton off Waste Lane.

The last proprietor being Walter Oakes, he would build a cart or wagon absolutely and completely by hand, in fact, apart from the wheels HE made, I do not think there was a wheel about the place. He would start from scratch with blocks of ash, and he would rive, which is a very descriptive word in the circumstances. The spokes for the wheels and riven spokes, as distinct from sawn spokes would last almost for ever. The naffs, would be cut from blocks of oak or elm, and bound with 2" iron band. I have seen him with a finished cart so nicely balanced that he could lift it off the bucksticks with one finger and slowly let it go back to rest on them. He was a dab hand at lettering and the general decorating of carts, his customers were farmers who also did a bit of coal and barley leading, mill owners and the Co-ops who usually kept their tackle in good trim. Elsewhere in this book, is a picture depicting the wheel hooping procedure, although Walt Oakes did not actually do the hooping, I've no doubt he could do so. This part of the wheel making job was done at Shepley Bridge by Bill Normington, Walt Oakes would get the yet unhooped wheel to Hopton Lane top and await a cart laden with coal on its way to Dewsbury. He would hoist the wheel on top of the coal for its trip to Bill Normington, and the reverse would obtain for the return trip, probably the same horse would later be pulling the cart furnished with the new wheels. This craft was one which depended solely on the 'man', no amount of fancy tackle, even if available would have been much use it was the man's know-how which made the cart. Another operated on Liley Lane near the Hare & Hounds, another nearer the Blacksmiths shop on there did a bit, although his business was really that of estate joiner. His shop is now a slaughter house. Another one in Lower Hopton near the Volunteer Pub was a shop which did all the jobs connected with the trade, including the hooping business which I will try to describe.
This business operated for a long time at the bottom of Johnson Street at Hopton near the Volunteer pub. The art of hooping a wheel with an iron tyre must now be nearly lost. A strip of iron usually 3" wide would be measured with the ends welded together in the shop. It would then be wheeled out of the yard where a fire had been lit, a fire just the circumference of the wheel, and kept going at a great heat by an underlying perforated pipe operated by bellows in the shop. In the meantime the wheel to be hooped was placed on the steel table shown here, the wooden pole with the chain attached would be tapped quickly all round. Now the pole with chain would again be swung around, it would lift the complete wheel and drop it into the adjoining well, a series of terrific bangs and cracks would ensure us the tyre was tightened, it was fast on forever now, and could last any cart the whole of its working life. The shop belonged to Halmshaw Bros., but one of its regular craftsmen was Eddie Whitehead of Woodcock Hall. With the decline in the horse drawn transport, trade of the type we describe became very steady. In fact, apart from the local farmers the trade was nearly finished, but the one in Lower Hopton remained fairly busy until the proprietor's death, with a largely unexpected source of business, that of carts and wagons for gypsies which this shop did in fair numbers, a fellow called Benny Smith who usually wintered at Hartshead had almost always one or two carts on the stocks, he would pay usually a £100 at a time, and when this was absorbed would pay again, always in advance. Another good customer was a Newcastle gypsy called Shaftoe, who adapted the same procedure, he would send cash by road with some of his tribe and was always well covered. When complete, these carts and waggons were sent by rail from Mirfield to Newcastle. They were works of art when finished, scrolls, flowers and beautiful lettering all in gold leaf, NOT gilt paint, thus has a little village craft and business said good-bye.
The Hopton side of the river usually produced the militant types, the boxers, wrestlers, poachers, cricketers, footballers, kur and spell players, in fact, the fellows who, in modern parlance, dare stand up and be counted. The Smith brothers from Upper Hopton famous cricketers in their time. All the Appleyard lads who were famous for everything, some more families who lived nearer the river, who produced lads who would take anybody on at "heading 'em", they would gamble everything away, and then give up, tell their mother they would never do it again, then next morning try to borrow a shilling from her and swear to give her a pound back. But in addition to all these sports, we also had a far more serious section of the community, people who were concerned with the spiritual side of life, with education, with the need for saving and some financial stability although this latter was a difficult proposition, there was nothing to save, or very little, but people saved pennies and half-pennies and perhaps over a life-time left enough to buy a coffin and a good tea for the people he left behind. Religious persecution was rampant in the area in the 1600's, nonconformity was alive and practiced in

farm buildings, laithes, odd houses, one at Upper Hopton became famous as a meeting place, the Chapel near the river was born here, at Chapel Hill, as it became known. Richard Thorpe, a forerunner of the educationalists who were later to become more numerous, took part in the services I believe. Also the Ingham family from Blake Hall who were amongst the leading dissenters at the time. The Baptists, who came to life at this time, sometimes conducted their devotion actually on the riverside near the Corn Mill at New Gate, all these people were persecuted for their belief, it is hard to imagine people with feelings so intense today. One of the most important outcomes was the determination to improve life through learning, both spiritual and academic. It was a gesture of defiance, it was not the intention of the powers that be, that the masses should become aware, through the ability to say A.B.C.'s, or to count up to ten, of the state of the world generally. The good things that nature provided were a closed book to most people at this time, the bare necessities of life were the only things that counted. The provision of schools by these religious off shoots of the official Church were a gigantic achievement. Imagine the cash required to build a school similar to the Hopton Chapel School, a standing monument to the determination of these people, a perusal of the famous people who have passed through the doors of this building are amazing, long lists of men who have passed on to become important in the commercial life of the country, scholastic, banking, shipping, and public office generally. All taught by the masters and mistresses provided by the various Chapels, Churches were later to become involved. The Wesleyans School at Water Royd still continues to function, now of course under the wing (or foot; as you view the circumstances) of the Local Authority, personally I think It has a very good record. The school at Hopton operated on a ready cash basis, you paid your 2d a week, school wage it was called, and finished a good scholar, able to write copper plate when you were six years old, become an expert mathematician, skilled in the arts and also a good knitter, boys and girls alike. The teachers were very good, in my time the Kaye sisters (not the ones on television) Emma, Emily and Gladys were magicians, they taught every mortal thing, including singing, sewing, knitting, and painting any laggard on any subject rued the day. These lasses were dab hands at "braying it in" and bray it in they did, mostly by hand .sometimes with a stick, but they were respected and usually liked, they certainly produced results, I only came across one lad to whom reading and writing were as big a mystery when he left school as when he started. We daily are treated to long diatribes in the press, on the television or by the local clever clogs in the deterioration of the behaviour of children today, they are more violent than ever, they lack respect for their elders, in fact there is not much that is right about them. Listen to this; one afternoon, Mr. Edwards the school master, was taking a class in the classroom behind the gallery at Hopton, suddenly, there was commotion in the main room outside, Mr. Edwards left his class to investigate the affair, he found the teacher of the class on the floor, standing over him a big lad who was evidently the victor. Mr. Edwards stopped the fight, peace was restored and learning resumed.

The teacher was called Frank Brooke, he left Hopton and became a policeman, a chief constable, an Inspector of Constabulary, a Knight and a lot more things. His opponent I have referred to in a poaching incident when he was "shanghaied" do you remember? I dare not tell you his name, he has relatives in the village. This incident would not be isolated although I am not suggesting that it was usual for scholars to set about the teacher, it happened nearly 70 years ago and was one of many affrays involving young people, I do not think that children are either better or worse than they ever were. Holidays were the things that were wholly good. A hot summer's day when you could dam the beck up at Collie Wood, take your boots and stockings off, your britches too if they got wet, paddle all day until you were dyed like a red indian with the ochre water and the sun, asleep in the long grass, drying your legs perhaps your bottom and tummy, listen to the grass drake calling in the field corner where you were laid, his next call at the other end of the field. Listen to the cuckoo, the thrush, the blackbird, hear the spink call "spink, spink" all day long, watch old Bonny the farm mare tossing her head incessantly to get rid of the flies—these were happy, happy days, and they cost nothing. They are all here today too but no longer fashionable. Not all, I am wrong, you can no longer hear the grass drake call, and only infrequently hear the cuckoo, one of my neighbours used to complain that we were "cuckoo'd to death and he'd screw his neck round it he could catch him." All these days were happy days, everything was geared to the speed of the horse it was a day's journey to Leeds, Bradford and Halifax, half a day to Huddersfield, a full day to Marsden or Slaithwaite or anywhere in the Colne Valley, and now another method of leisurely travel. I can remember my mother along with a lady called Mrs. Sykes and her husband William Sykes, travelling by a steam powered river yacht called "The Rook" tied up at a staith near the bottom of Boathouse Lane, they went to Stamford Bridge on the river Derwent, it was a lovely boat, everything so cosy, facilities for cooking, good seating and a fair turn of speed, measured, I presume in knots per hour or mile, I don't know, anyway, it was a great affair and lasted from Saturday dinner time until Sunday night when they duly disembarked at Burn's staith outside the Ship. This would be about 1904, it nearly sounds like a hundred years ago. The boat belonged to Joseph Wheatley

of Hopton, and only recently I saw a photograph of the boat with a party aboard and about to sail, the men in dress of the time and the ladies likewise. Spacious days when time didn't matter, money went a long way, beer was 2d a pint at Mr. Norminton's Ship Inn adjoining the river, rendezvous of the working boat men of the area; dressed in their best blue suits they were very smart chaps, bell-bottomed trousers, a double-breasted jacket with velvet collar, a good blue jersey and a pair of good boots, a billy-cock hat and usually a white silk dog knot or muffler, but best of all at this time the "Jones" had not arrived, who cared a----------what so and so had or did.

BARGE OUTING AT NEWGATE FLOOD LOCK

St. PAULS ROAD --- MIRFIELD

CHAPTER 10

WE cannot leave Hopton without recording the means of transport, the Hansom cab, the ordinary four wheeler, or the waggonett. The hansom cab was an elegant affair, a two wheeler, usually a dark green body and yellow wheels ,the driver high above the whole contraption, it was usually hired by the better-off customer, a well known cab proprietor in the village, Joe Woodcock, bought one almost especially for the use of E, B. Wilson, Town Clerk & Solicitor. John Tipling another owner had one on hire, usually driven by the best known driver in Yorkshire, Joe Mellor. Joe was once hired by a railway contractor called Jim Pearson, who lived in Hopton, to take him to Grange Moor races, they arrived alright and arranged a rendezvous for one hour later, at the subsequent meeting there was bad news for Joe, his fare had had his gold watch and chain and sovereign case pinched and was all for calling the police but Joe counselled patience and they arranged another meeting one hour hence. The hour passed and Joe had news, he had found the burglars alright. Mr. Pearson was again eager to call the police, but Joe had made better provision for the recovery of the valuables. They had to be at the Fountain at the head of Mirfield Moor at 7 o'clock that night with £12, when the loot would be restored to the owner. They got back down to Mirfield, Joe changed horses, picked his fare up, and was away up Sunny Bank, to be at the Fountain at 7 o'clock, the burglars were already there.

Although one of them was a teetotaller and preached daily about the evils of smoking and drinking, he ordered whiskies for all excluding of course, himself, all to be paid for by the fortunate watch owner. He duly handed over the £12, when Joe was given £2, the paymaster enquired what this was for, he was told "for looking after thee", he was also told not to lose or sell the watch as they might require it again, Jim was eager to get back down into Hopton again, but Joe could not oblige, he had other and now more important business on hand. These burglars, or call them what you will, were well known local fellows, they were three card men besides not being adverse to a spot of picking pockets. They seemed to prosper and both had small farms, one of a particularly benevolent appearance in his parson hat and frock coat. He had a nice daughter who married a well known Mirfield lad, this cab was used by a well known pillar of the Church when visiting his girl friend in Huddersfield (she was not just HIS friend) on one of these visits Joe had a tour of exploration in the vast cellars of the girl's house at Edger-ton and found bottles of champagne all laid out on their straws. He borrowed two and on the way home next morning his fare rattled the top of the hansom, he dismounted, opened the cab door and was asked how much he would take for the champagne he had pinched. Joe denied this, but when told they had cost his fare 25/- he said he could have one for the same price, and they drank champagne up Leeds Road at 4 o'clock in the morning. I dare not tell you who the fare was, you wouldn't believe me.

Joe Mellor had been a post boy on one of the very last coaches to run from Dewsbury, he was in great demand at weddings when he would drive a pair of greys if the bride could afford it, or just one grey, if they were poor. It was said, that if he had a wealthy client on a Saturday night he would stand him on his head, and shake him until all his cash dropped out, he was a good fellow and lived until he was well turned 90. Incidentally at the Grange Moor Races I have just been to, my father trained three horses and they all won, "Redbrooke", "Red Finch" and "My Girl", quite a feat, I should think. I had my photograph on the front page of the "Daily Sketch" the following Monday, I led from the ring the winning mare "Redbrooke", with my father just behind me. The caption over the photo — "The Pitman's Derby on the Yorkshire Moors". I should be nine or ten at this time and as Grange Moor Races were one of the red letter days in the year, the incidents above lasted for another year in all the pubs and farm stables after "laying away time". But all days were not race days, the Band rarely played, and the sun didn't always shine, for some it never seemed to shine, employment was generally a very spasmodic business, affected by Wars, both at home and abroad during a War, work would be good. Cloth was required from the newly built mills, coal to fire them, railways to move the products, but when it was all over, BANG, work was finished. This state of affairs always persisted, the mill owners applied the sacking and short time approach, the railways had men working for very low wages and jobs on any of the different companies lines were coveted, usually in preference to one in the new textile industries, but to get a railway job there were many preliminaries, knowing the immediate foreman or chief clerk helped. It also worked in the factories, a foreman would be paid perhaps a shilling or two a week more than the other men, then became a bigger tyrant than the boss which was the way it was intended to work. Rough times usually caught the women and children first, in spite of the low cost of food, if cash was not available to buy it, it might as well have been a thousand times more. Milk was 1sd a pint and old milk, or skim milk which the farmers sold at 1/2d, but if you had not the pence required, well you didn't buy it. It seems like a hundred years since the old school days in

Hopton, but I can well remember lads bringing bread to school with lard plastered on instead of butter, one family I remember well, in addition to eating this combination had the additional penance of burnt bread, these lads had to wrestle with their burnt offerings every day, it wasn't half burnt either, the sole and the top were like tarred felt, I once heard a farmer say "He'd nivver seen ony meat he couldn't swallow". These lads performed the swallowing trick daily, yes down it all went, if a lad had an apple he was a king, and would be surrounded by a motley crew all begging for the "coke" (the core in Hopton lingo). Seeing that Mirfield was then almost a rural area with huge gardens all producing the basic needs it rather emphasises the poverty of the ordinary man, the cash just was not there. Epidemics would sweep the area, scarlet fever, small pox. diphtheria, the schools would close for weeks on end and when it was all over some poor little lass or lad would be missing. The Fever Van would carry scarlet fever victims to Hospital, and its appearance would strike terror into your young heart, it was a dark brown/black affair, built like a cab and drawn usually by a butcher's horse. The same horse you had an hour before flying on Eastthorpe and ridden by a butcher lad, his smock flying out behind him and shouting for you to get out of the way — but this was a more serious job than taking chops to Blake Hall. Some poor kid would be carried out from a house in one of the narrow streets by a nurse, he would be wrapped in a blanket, laid on a seat in the van, the black windowed door would close, the driver would give the familiar click with his tongue, the butcher's horse would start off. This time not to Blake Hall, but to the Hospital at Nickhouse, and if all went well the lad would return after six weeks. Immediately after the departure of the fever van a man would come from the Council, to stove the house, all nicks and cracks were plastered up inside and on his departure the man would plaster all round the door with white paper, every nick was covered even the key hole. The occupants had to remain outside for a long time, I forget how long. Thus did we fight the fever in older days. The operation was called stoving, and I presume consisted of burning some disinfectant, after the lock out period the set pot would be put on, and everything washable would be washed, including all the children who had up to date escaped the onslaught. These were bad times, but it is said that Wars usually throw up people to deal with them, so with domestic affairs, the mothers of this time could deal with, and surmount almost anything, it used to be said that some women could make a good dinner out of the dish-clout, and so it was. A penny-worth of suet, a penny-worth of bones, a handful of flour, a scrape of "traycle" and you had a dinner fit for the King, and a good smell that brought all the dogs in the village to the door. Home-made clothes were the vogue at turn of the Century, sewing machines were just out and a few fortunate households usually had one, a lad in a suit made from a jacket that his mother wore before she got married were fairly common, as were cut-down britches inherited fro his dad or older brothers. My mother once had a long cape that would have covered a load of hay, she had discarded this in favour of one a bit more fancy and decided that she would make me a suit from the now redundant one, the cloth was nearly half an inch thick with fancy braid on, but she made it on her new machine, it should have been made in a foundry, every morning she had to catch me, get an elder sister to hold me until she had slotted me into it. I was enclosed until bedtime in it, there was no escape, to get out myself I should have required a spanner or a hacksaw, and to make it worse, my eldest sister knitted me a pair of stockings to go with it, and they were like motor tyres, big squares were the pattern, but the Gods helped me, I quickly grew out of the contraption, my mother gave the whole ensemble to a poor little lad who easily slid into it, but he never grew a bit after this time. The people of this area were a hard-bitten breed, obstacles were put there to be surmounted. You might be turned off your place, lose your job, lose a leg or arm in the half equipped pits or factories, but life had to be lived and some how it did continue, but the biggest trial ever to be endured by the people of this valley was yet to come. It gets nearer and nearer, it is the 1914, War has started, and here it is over the river which has been the life of our Village and which over the years has been the boundary between the "Two Nations", will run salt with the tears of fathers and mothers, sweethearts and wives, and red with blood of the lads who have died, lads from the wild moorlands at Stanage, from the little cloughs and ginnels of Hebden Bridge, down through our own Hopton on Granny Lane, on Steanard Lane to our own Ship Inn, and tomorrow I am going for a soldier myself. I am seventeen years old nearly eighteen, it is 1916.

SOLDIER BOY

He fought for the German,
He fought for the Jew.
He sailed in the Hell ship "The Lisbon Mam".
He'd be sixteen, eighteen, twenty-one,
Aye, maybe twenty-two.
A lad from our village, whom we knew well,
Was called to join the man-made Hell.
He kissed his mother,
And he said "Good-Bye",
On a beautiful Summer's night.
Hew as going to the war to end war,
To help the oppressed gain their rights.
The hot Summer months sped quickly by,
In a pattern that millions knew well.
He was trained to kill, or to be killed,
In a war that was surely Hell.
Brown Autumn came.
Nature's sweet, mellow time.
Then, suddenly one morning,
Bold Winter's first frosty rime.
His training was over, the end was night,
The ways he'd been taught to make the other lad die.
"Us yer bayonet, lads" the Sergeant cried,
"In", "Out", "On Guard", "Long Point",
"Short Point", "And Jab".
"Aye, that's the way" the Sergeant cried,
As he laughed and ranted on.
"Aye, that's the way, mi bonny lads,
To use the Gelding Iron".
And the other lad died,
And his mother cried.
And the Sergeant shouted, as he laughed and ranted on.
"Aye, that's the way, mi bonny lads,
To use that Gelding Iron".
And the other lad died,
And his mother cried.

F. G. PILLING.

THE DRUMMER BOY

Come on mi Lads, mi Bonny Lads,
Step out mi Bonny Lads, Ah know them packs are heavy,
And yer hungry and weary too, But I've beat and brayed this bloody drum
And got yer here all ready. Yer fears of death from wind-blown gas,
An' wounds from screaming shells, Will soon be past, mi Bonny Lads,
Yer on the way to Hell. And when the morning comes mi Lads,
We'll all in Heaven be, Or just a few maybe get back
Across the narrow sea. Bright morning came,
And the Drummer beat softly on muffled drum, We're marching now mi Lads,
Marching to kingdom come. Listen mi Lads, quietly,
Do yer hear that tolling? Aye, its the old churchyard bell, Good-Bye Lads, Good-Bye
Mi Bonny Lads, Now yer scrambling up to Heaven above
Or sliding down to Hell. Good-Bye mi Bonny Lads, Good-Bye, And the Drummer lad cried,
He no longer tried, But he lay down beside them,
And he died, ...and he died.

F. G. PILLING.

FLERS, NEAR ARRAS, 1918

CHAPTER 11
Old Mirfield and its Relationship with The Priory of Kirklees.

THE Cistercian Priory of Kirklees was situated in the township or parish of Hartshead in Dewsbury. Its present claim to fame is its relationship with the outlaw Robin Hood.
It is usually acknowledged to have been founded by one of the Fleming family, who were domiciled at that time at Wath-on-Dearne. They were a branch of the family sent originally to subdue the area by William the Conqueror, which they did in no uncertain manner. Yorkshire generally was laid waste, a scorched earth policy was enforced and not only this, but the whole of the populace was massacred. This founder was called Reiner Le Fleming and he granted to the Priory of Kirklees a stretch of land that covered the area from the old Walton Cross at Hartshead, across to Liversedge, to the Mirfield boundary, which would be roughly as it is now, that is, to the Northern side of Mirfield Moor, bounded by the beck that crosses under the road at Roe Head near the present boundary sign and down to the river where they also built a mill, still there, and taking in the district which we knew as Blake Law or Low, now part of the new M.62.
The Priory was now the owner of this fairly big stretch of land, its meadows, waters, woods, pastures and twelve additional acres of land which they held as tenants of the Fleming family, so that they may pray for their souls and for the souls of their fathers and heirs for ever.
The charter granting this land is confirmed by one William, Earl of Warren who died in 1240, who states that the founder was the son of William Fleming, more or less fixing the date of the actual founding of the Priory in the reign of Henry II. It is usually accepted that Elizabeth de Stainton was the first Prioress; this is sometimes doubted, but it is recorded that she held conversations with the Abbot of Roche (who held land from Rotherham to Saddleworth) regarding their respective domains. The Kirklees Religious sphere of influence covered the same area practically as the Kirklees area of 1975, that is from the Dewsbury-Batley boundary at Morley to Stanage, still bounded there by the Friarmore area, a large part of which was held by my own ancestors as tenants of the Abbot of Roche prior to the Reformation.
This same Elizabeth de Stainton is buried in a tomb behind the Three Nuns at Mirfield. An inscription round the tomb reads "Sweet Jesus of Nazareth have mercy on the soul of Elizabeth de Stainton, Prioress of this House". It is possible that she was the relative of Robin Hood usually accepted as being responsible for his death by bleeding him, after which operation he shot his famous arrow.
The Priory enjoyed the income from various tracts of land, benefits of crops from areas as widely distributed as Slaithwaite, Boroughbridge, Shelf and an especial grant of 18 acres of land and messuages at Hartshead. An Inquisition was taken at York on the 22nd of January 1395 and it was decided that it was not to the injury of the King or others if the King permit a knight, John of Monteney, John Wodehouse, and William of Landale, to grant the Prioress of Kirklees 50 acres of land with the appurtenances in Mirfield, and the advowson of the church in the same place, they find a chaplain to celebrate divine service daily in the Conventual Church of Kirklees, and to receive the said land and advowson an to appropriate the said church at Mirfield to their own use for ever. A later licence in 1400 mentioned in addition to the above men, one William de Dransfield; this would be the Dransfield who originally hailed from Liley Lane.
At this time the Prioress was to have all tithes in the form of sheaves of corn, hay, and the whole of the fallen wood in the area together with the use of the rectory, the vicar to enjoy any small tithes and profits accruing from his vicarate. As part of the surrender of Mirfield Church to the Prioress the Convent undertook to provide, at their own cost, a dwelling house for the vicar and to bear all the burdens likely to occur, the vicar paying 6/8d to the convent per annum for this. All their tithes in the form of corn, etc., and any other income from Mirfield Church continued to be exacted by the Prioress until the dissolution, in the case of Kirklees Priory, in 1540. The fifty acres of land granted to the Priory along with the advowson of Mirfield Church would, I should think, have been the land surrounding the present church and running down to the Northorpe area where the Mirfield of the 1500's was largely located. The actual 50 acres and its situation I have never seen pinpointed, in fact, the circumstances regarding the granting of this land and church to the Priory gave rise to much controversy at the time, it had evidently only been a very infrequent procedure and its legality was

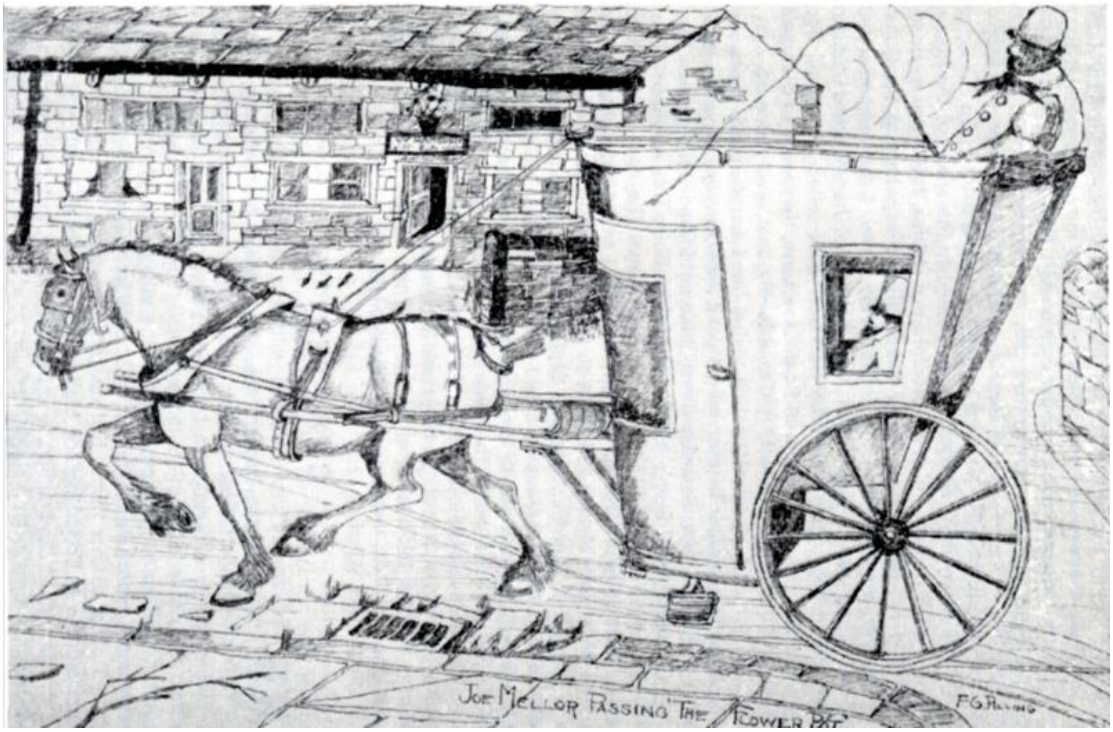
contested; actually, at the time of the grant, at least in 1329, the advowson of Mirfield Church belonged to the De Bourgh family and it was of such Importance that eventually a papal bill was issued by the Pope, although even this is inconclusive.
The Priory itself was a miserable place, badly built, largely of wood, and only being possessed of two chimneys. During its lifetime it was ill conducted for a great part of the period, and was classed as a very minor Priory. At one time, even after the Act of Suppression of Monasteries had become law, it was allowed to function, but surrender shortly followed. The Priory not having a clear income of £200 per annum which the King required. The Prioress at this time was Cecilia Topcliffe, at the actual closing down of the Priory the Prioress was Joan Kyppes.
She was granted a pension of £2 per annum and along with four others took up residence at what we know locally as Paper Hall on Flash Lane. She lived here for a good few years and was buried in Mirfield Church; a stone recording her burial is in the old church tower and her death is also recorded in the church register of the time.
Later the Thomas Saville to whom the rectory had been granted was granted a licence to dispose of all tithes, the Vicarage and the advowson of Mirfield Church. It came into possession of the Armitage family of Kirklees Hall and later it passed into the ownership of the Inghams of Blake Hall in Mirfield.
At this time Dewsbury Church was an important factor in the religious life of the area and, coupled with the authorities of the Prioress of Kirklees, was dominant in the area for a long time. Hartshead Church especially being held, or rather advised by Dewsbury. Mirfield was thus held, religiously at least, for a period stretching roughly from the late 1300's until 1540, a long time during which the people of the area would have provided Immense sums and vast amounts of corn, etc., in the form of tithes. So much for the relationship of Mirfield with Kirklees Priory.

KIRKLEES PRIORY

Roe Head

If the Fleming family, the founders of the Priory of Kirklees could return to the area which they dominated in the 1100's they would see that the wheel of fortune had come full circle, and that the Catholic cause from Rome was enjoying again the freedom which we usually associate with religion. The old Roe Head House has been transformed into a beautiful and well equipped College for the training of future Priests in the Catholic faith. It looks over the whole of the former Priory's land and the actual site of the buildings.

During the times that the Bronte sisters were here they must have often looked far away across the grim hills that surround their home at Haworth and perhaps wished they were there. Roe Head itself at this time must have been a pretty grim place, incidentally the name itself seems rather a puzzle. Nearly a hundred years ago a sign post at the Mirfield end of Stocks Bank pointed to "Lower Roe", on an old map, an area half way up the moor road is posted as "Middle Roe", it is the word "Roe" that is evidently the important factor in this series of names, what it means I do not know, and have yet to meet anyone who does, the fact that the nearest big building is christened with this "Roe" is a coincidence.



JOE MELLOR DRIVING JON TIPLING'S HANSON --- NEAR THE FLOWER POT AT HOPTON. John Tipling ("Owd Tip") was famous for accidents, his usual first reqirement was "Hes onnybody a lahle bit of band, jist, a lahle bit'll dea", he could loose a whell and this would be his most help.

CLAIRE

Our river sluthered over the Damstakes,
On a bright sunny morning in June,
It looked like shiny black traycle,
You could nearly cut it out with a spoon.
Now two ladies walked on our river bank,
One said it looked lovely, it was beautiful,
And sparkled like a casket of jewels.
Oh, ah doant know, ah think it looks like shiny black grewil,
An' ah'd ti hod mi noase, it stinks!
Oh. an ah've summat to tell yer,
Ah'll tell yer afore ah forget.
Last neet when ah'd ed mi teah, ah'd just an ahr ta spare,
So I gate me weshed, an ah gate me donned,
An ah walked upt' Cuckoo Hill,
Ah saw yor Clara, an that big gawby lad,
Yer know, that big lad, that last cop't un,
Sho caw's im Dick.
Oh! Indeed, but her name is not Clara,
Never has been, and is not now you know,
Her name is Claire, it's new, it's nice and it's all the go.
She goes to collect fossils, and old dry bones,
She's quite a collection of old carved stones.
And sometimes Dick goes to help her if the digging gets really tuff.
Oh aye, Dick wor helping her, he wor helping reight enuff.
But ah could 'a' sworn shoo wor christened Clara,
Ah've yeard yoh caw'er that.
Bud ah brade on arh George ah think,
He once did a fornit i' Wakefield Jail,
An when he cam whom, eh'd to ax mi mother what we caw'd t' cat.

F. G. PILLING.

SOME THINGS WE REMEMBER

Joe Mellor, fetching Florrie Forde from Dewsbury Empire after the last house in his hansom cab and getting to Wood Bottom at nearly one o'clock in the morning, she stood on a table and sang a few songs, one "Any rags, any bones, any bottle today". It was said at the time that Ned Briggs of Liley Hall, threw his bedroom window up and told her to shut up, he couldn't get to sleep.

*** * * ***

"SAM SPEEDY" or "A HARE PIE"

After the first battle of Cambria in November 1917 in which the Duke of Wellington's Regiment took a great part, I was sent on a draft to replace the killed and wounded in the battle. I eventually landed with other lads, at a village called Allougne, near Bethune, the second day I was there, believe it or not, Ben Dyson, you know Ben Dyson, he lived with his mother on the riverside at Hopton, he came to me and asked me if I would be the butcher for a few days, I think their lad had got killed. Ben was a sergeant, so of course I had to say yes, I had a pal, a Whitby lad, also a butcher, who could help me. We were duly installed in a loose box in the courtyard of the Mayor of the Village, his name, Philip Decroix. Sam was a bit of a case, he used to sing the old Whitby whaling song when he was fresh; he said if he sang at the harbour mouth at Whitby on a stormy night, they could hear him at Middlesboro and shipping would turn back; we were to sleep in an out-kitchen used as a Quarter Master's store, an upstairs room was occupied by a big fat lass called 'Isabella', also quartered with Sam and me, a brussen Cockney lad called Fred Quinn, more of him later.
Old Mr. Decroix seemed very eager to foster a close relationship with Sam and me, if we would like to go to the big house for supper, we could join him, his wife and maid, at a great "Hare Pie Feast", he inferred that it could be even greater with the addition of a bit of beef, which we promptly supplied. The time came for the Feast at 7.30 that night, old Decroix came out, marched round the yard calling, "Issabelle, Issabelle, Issabelle", he sounded like a kid playing at engines, he little knew that Issabelle was in bed with the mighty Ouinn in the loft over the O-M. stores; Quinn had forfeited all his rights in the Hare Pie Party for a bit of fun with Issabelle, Sam said he was welcome to her, "Ah wouldn't 'ev swapped a last week's taty pie for her". Eventually they both made a tardy appearance at the party, but it was very good to see that Issabelle wasn't very keen on the pie, although it was very good we thought; this was the sequel; next morning Sam and me were getting on with the job when we heard a gun shot quite near, and very quietly, a small green door in the courtyard wall opened, old Decroix looked all round and swiftly nipped across the yard to the kitchen door, carrying, what do you think? — a big black tomn cat by the tail. Sam nudged me to look, "Well, the owd — thoo looks like hevving some more hare pie toneet, if ah'd known we wan going ti hev a tom cat for't supper, ah think, noo, that I would hev swapped mi share for orther Issabelle or anybody else, whats thoo say?"

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FAIRIES

My mother says that fairies cross the field where old Tinker is to go to the well to drink. "Aye look old Tinker is by the gate, put me on his back." "Nay, if the fairies see you on horseback they will run away I'm sure, let's walk on the wallside to the far gate and we might see some, we shall have to be very quiet though shan't we?" Look, can you see the baby partridges with their mother playing in the dusty gateway watch now! The silly hare is watching them and jumping about and running round about them, he's running to the well now, and blow me, all the partridges are following him, all go to the well to drink, the hare running backwards and forwards first to the well and then back to the partridges to show them the way. Well my mam was right wasn't she? The hare must be the fairy just for today. All this on the now vanished Westfields, my little friend a little lad of three, I wonder if he still believes in fairies? I hope he does now he's thirty.

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PIPERS

I listened intently and thought that I heard pipe music, It was a grey cold, wet day. One of the days that you get in France at this time of the year. I was outside a village called Roclincourt, on the Arras-Lens Road, I had just seen Willie Wood, a Mirfield lad {he was Leonard's brother) he was a Quarter Master Sergeant, and the same night he was killed when taking the rations to the line. Suddenly, the music came nearer. It was a pipes and drums band playing troops from the front line and I quote something I wrote 60 years ago: —

"It was cold, miserable, misty, dark and dreary, suddenly the sound of bagpipes, it sounded in the sky almost, sometimes a loud burst, sometimes just a whisper, corning and going with the wind. I waited a bit longer, and round the corner of a battered church, the pipers appeared, they were playing Scottish troops out of the line. These lads had been fighting for perhaps a week, coming back perhaps a yard at a time, they were dour and dirty, covered with clay and chalk, they marched with heads down, glad to be leaving the Hell that was Vimy. This music and the beat of the drums would sound to them like the music they had learned at their mother's knee, but it would not last. No, before many days, they would march the other way, the way for a lot of them to a certain bloody death, to lie in the same cold ground where their elder brothers lie. Not for they a lead-lined coffin, or one of stately oak, but a blanket torn from a comrade's bed, and stained with the blood and sludge in which they had lived until this day, their shrouds the sods that covered them, their monument a rifle thrust muzzle first into the ground to warn still living comrades to "Tread light oer his grave in the valley" and ere his birthday comes again, the wild corn will be growing through his ribs like it does through his elder brother, this is war for the ordinary lad."

The same afternoon I saw another Hopton lad, Charlie Whitehead, he had been to see if he could find the grave of another Hopton lad George Harry Dyson, Charlie had been told by someone I believe that Geo. Harry was buried at Roclincourt, but if he was, he'd never be found, the place was churned up, the church was about the only partly intact building, poor lad, he was never found.

At 2 o'clock the following morning a loud bang on the tin hut we were in was "reveille"—every man, every horse on the road in ten minutes. Every man was presented with either a pick or a shovel on falling in; this you shoved down behind your full pack, bandoliers of arms round your neck, a bag of Mills Bombs laid across your full pack anything else they could think up, they piled on your back, we marched from 2.30 that morning until 5.30 at night, fall out 10 minutes per hour, the lads said that we carried all included, 90-98 Ibs. and that we marched 40 miles, nothing to eat, a drink of water, and we had stopped when we did because the horses were done in, all this for 6d a day which we never got.

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I mention Sam Speedy quite a few times, here he is in the flesh, or as near as we can get; he's sitting in front of men, just in the row from the left. If he's had a few, he would burst forth and sing some old Whitby Whaling Song, he was a Whitby lad, the other lads in front were "Geordies" and would sing "Bladen Races" till the cows came home. They were all very much front line soldiers, a few of them having been wounded two or three times, all at least once, they are all tougher than they look. I watched Speedy kill a German lad with a bomb, he blew the top of his head off. Incidentally, the photo here was taken by a farmer at one franc apiece a time, the sheet hanging behind us is scenery, to obscure the farm building against which we stand. He had two lovely daughters who helped on the farm, but not in the photo business. In a little beck that ran through the yard and out into a field I saw a chap's leg blown off, just below the thigh, complete with an old boot on the foot, nobody seemed to know who the owner was, "C'est la Guerre".

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HOW WE GOT THERE IN OLDER TIMES-TWO WELL KNOWN MIRFIELD PERSONALITIES

Mrs. Bob Hall lived at the bottom of Knowle Road, here premises had formerly been a livery stable, where the cab horses for a stand at the junction of Knowle Road and Huddersfield Road formerly operated. A painted sign fastened to the wall of what is now old Water Hall announced that it was an official stand for six cabs, it was properly drained and setted, and I should think that the last chap to operate from there would be "Owd Tip", John Tipling. who left there to farm and operate his cab

business from Gosling Hal! Farm at Hopton, I believe Billy Whit-field followed him there you knew Billy didn't you?
Mrs. Hall was an astute business woman, she ran a fish and chip shop near the Black Bull, and along with her husband. Bob, and son Cecil, operated a horse powered carrying business before the days of motors, everybody knew them "Cec Hail" was a household name. Well, our story relates really to Mrs. Hall, every year she had a fantastic holiday, she had a lovely pony and governess car, the week before her trip she would get a, now older than he was then, young fellow to exercise her pony in the Bull field and get him fit on stolen corn, or at least corn from her working horses, you know this young fellow, he is now rather more rotund, and bigger than he was then, he's the proprietor of Messrs. Ramsdens the painting contractors, himself a descendant of a long tine of horse dealers and himself still a horsey chap. He would help Mrs. Hall to yoke up at 6 o'clock on the Monday morning on the first day of her trip, her target on the first day, her brother's farm at Easingwold, she would stay the night there, yoke up the following morning and then forward away to Hinedrwell, north of Whitby where she had other kinfolk in the Ironstone trade, a day or two there and then back home by the same route, and in time to open her shop on the Saturday night. She had driven there and back, 204 miles, and her pony as fit as when she left, she was a very good horsewoman, a kind and gentle person, I can see her now, with big feathers in her hat, a long tight horsey cut coat and a trailing dark coloured frock, there are no more like her today, she was, according to any standards, a real "Lady".

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JACK MATHEWMAN, OUR OTHER PERSONALITY

One Thursday summer night, it would be nine o'clock, he had two horses tied to the gate at the top of Boathouse Lane, he had been a few times round the field, and his mowing machine had broken down, he was laid down and taking the broken part from the machine, it was a Kearsley and made in Ripon, he got the part off, cleaned it up a bit, and told me that he was going to borrow a flat cart or shandy and some light harness and drive through the night to Ripon. I helped him strip his horses of their mowing gear, and his black mare that was now without a job until the machine was mended 1 turned out in another field, I helped him yoke his other mare called 'Bonny' into a shandy, he part filled a sack with corn, put the broken part on the cart, put a handful of hay in another sack to sit on, asked me to call and tell his wife where he had gone, he jumped aboard and was away to Ripon. He did drive through the night, he got his new part, got it fixed and was mowing again on Saturday afternoon. He himself was made of iron, never had a clock going and was stone deaf. He would be the last Shire Stallion keeper in this village, 'Hopton Lad' he was called, a truly remarkable fellow but blessed with bad luck, he had driven 108 miles.

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A CHANCE MEETING

Amid a welter of dying horses, dead horses, dead and dying men, noise of bursting shells and clatter of still living horses and men, the rattle of Limbers, G.S. Waggons, the shouts of men freeing the wounded or dead horse from their team, those which could still gallop making their way from the Hell through which they must pass. Along with some few more lads I was trying to make my way out of the same Hell, a shell burst near us, we made a dive into a shell hole on the roadside, we were not hurt. Suddenly, I felt a tug at my sleeve, "Have you a drink of water." "No I've had no water today yet, we must have missed the cart", I said. I looked round to see who pulled my sleeve, do you know who it was? It was George Barrowclough of Doctor Lane—you knew George didn't you? He had seen me before I saw him, he had no water and so far that day had had nothing to eat. he was in the same boat as me, I'd had nothing to eat since the day before and along with others of my Company making for a church spire in a village called Elverdinge, a red brick church which looked far away. George was with, I think, a Company of Engineers who were trying to repair and drain the road. He said "We'll never get out of this bloody hole will we." I said "It looked doubtful but we'd have a try and make a run for it George and see what happens." He didn't reply, he just looked at me as if to say 'Cheerio' I'll never see you again'. We made it to the church and from there to a camp called Orrilla Camp.
Well, we did see each other again didn't we? I've been in a thousand scrapes of all kinds with George since that afternoon, once when we went to buy some bullocks near York and they turned out to be lions the chap had to sell; failing lions, would we buy some monkeys? No, we've enough---------

monkeys in our village without tacking any more.
But all this is another story. He was never fast, never at a loss for a reply, I might see him again sometimes but not in a Hell hole like the one I describe I hope, do you know where it was? It was. YPRES in the Spring of 1918. You will have heard of YPRES whether you know George and me or not!

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"TWO WELL KNOWN HYMNS"

"Jesus lover of my soul, let me to your bosom fly, While the nearer waters roll, while the tempest still is high."

This lovely hymn used to be sung each Sunday at about 12.30 by two little old ladies, standing by our front gate. As time went on they seemed to shrink, and get less and less, their sweet little voices less powerful, on a rainy day with the wind from the East, they would stand with their backs to it, facing down the lane, their poor little song floating down towards the Nab; they were on their way to Eastthorpe where they had another few calls. They came from where do you think? THE WORK-HOUSE AT STAINCLIFFE.

"Oh happy days, oh happy days, when Jesus washed my sins away,
Oh happy days, oh happy days, when Jesus washed my sins away."

Three lads with only three legs between them, singing in the street at Hopton about 8.30, they are trying to catch people leaving the mills at breakfast time after sleeping out near the Flower Pot. They are on their way to Huddersfield with their wives and two children besides. It is 1919, thousands of lads in similar straits, I am just home myself after being in France, but I have both legs on. I gave them two bob as did Leonard, and we both cried.

Owing to reproduction problems I am sorry we have been unable to produce a few pictures to which I refer.
F. G. PILLING.

INTRODUCTION TO THE SECOND BOOK “ONE MORE TIME”

Since I wrote the preceding Introduction, the rape of the Northern side of this village is almost complete, should a rabbit or hare get off course, and land by some mischance in the Cripplegate district, he would hard put to it to find enough grass to keep him the day out, where he would find enough to keep him on this side of the river I do not know, should he be a good swimmer, and a better walker, and could make it beyond the station, to the river, and from there cross into what is still "HEAVEN", he would be saved, otherwise he'd die, there isn't a yard of ground without some house either already built or planned, having said all this, we survive, and have the good fortune to live in a wonderful place, do you lie awake of a morning before nature has fully drawn the blinds, and listen to the blackbird as he opens his eyes, shakes his feathers and announces to the world that he's still here, and challenges anybody to invade his staked out domain, his challenge is taken up, and in seconds the area vibrates with the most wonderful song that it is possible to listen to the "dawn chorus". This goes on for a few months, until the time has arrived when families have to be attended to, the young fed, and the nest kept tidy and ere the first week of June be out, all is quiet, bar perhaps a commotion when a marauding cat should try to catch a still only partly feathered youngster. The sun still creeps slowly up and shows it's face through a thin mist not far from the Church, yes, the sun still shines, the rain still falls, the winds blow, sometimes the North wind, nearly always until June, the East wind; and believe it or not, we still have twenty-four hours everyday in spite of all the clever clogs who seem to be able to alter almost everything they touch, aye, the world is a wonderful place, made, and maintained so by the basics, maybe a bit more comfortable perhaps by some of the little fancy bits easily obtainable, My grandmother had to clip the sheep, spin the wool, weave the cloth, take what she didn't use to the Clothe Hall at Huddersfield & Halifax, and blast them there if she did not draw enough for it, now she would go to Marks & Sparks, C & A's or some other fancy shop, she said one of her sister’s lads wore a coat that his mother made for him, the right pocket big enough to put a calf in, the left big enough to hold a wheelbarrow, and enough cloth in the collar to make a little chap a pair of breeches. Where she would get this style of coat today I do not know. Still we survive don't we? As I sit here, I can hear a lark sing his little soul out he's climbing higher and higher—now just a whisper— now he's singing to the dormant stars; nearly as high as the aeroplane trails across the sky, long may I listen to him. I used to hear the cuckoo from where I sit, every year on the 29th day of April, a cuckoo would come and sing in the ash tree on Cripplegate near to Walt Huntington's yard, he's sing until June and then be away on his Africa trip, but he never failed. His lads never come now, there's a fancy house where their dad used to sing—I think I would rather have the cuckoo, wouldn't you?

F. G. PILLING.