

THE PARAGON



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THE MEMOIRS OF LILLIAN BIRKHEAD 1896 - 1987

I was born Lillian Walton in New Houses, Greenmoor, in 1896. These were well-built, stone houses, erected by the local quarry owner, Mr. Booth, for his workmen. They are still called "New Houses", although at least 100 years old, and still testify to the good workmanship and material of those days, though they have now had modern amenities added by their owners.

One of my earliest recollections - rather grim - was the death of my grandfather when I was four. I had a fear of going past his bedroom door for weeks afterwards. Why should a child of four be afraid of death? On the day of his funeral I vaguely remember being taken to Dun Hill Farm, then the home of Charlotte and Fanny Crossland, while the rest of the family went to the funeral. This included my two older brothers, aged ten and twelve, dressed in new suits, who (gladly!) had a day off school for the event. I was lifted onto the flat-topped wall to watch the cortege go along Low Road to Stottercliffe Cemetery in Penistone. I wish I could remember more important things as well as incidents like this.

Ours was only a two-bedroomed house - they didn't worry about separate bedrooms in those days - and the larger room up to then had accommodated my parents, my two brothers and a small bed for me. There were no old people's homes, of course, no health visitors checking on housing conditions. My brothers were pleased to have the back bedroom on the death of our grandfather, but that still left me sharing the main bedroom with my parents.

When I was eight, my youngest brother, Leslie, was born. The doctor arrived with his black bag one Saturday afternoon, bringing, so I was told, my baby brother. A year later we moved into a three-bedroomed house - number seven - in the same row.

At that time, of course, there was no electricity, so we had paraffin lamps, a single burner at first, with candles in the kitchen and bedrooms. There was also one very small-wicked bedroom lamp, but later - as we became more affluent - we got a double-burner and the single-burner was consigned to the kitchen.

We used rain-water from the roofs, collected in two or three large tubs, for domestic use, but for drinking water

there was a "draw well". After a spell of dry weather the roof tops would be smoke-blackened, so the first rain which came would also be black and quite unfit for washing, so water had to be drawn from the well. In any case, there had always to be well water to start off the "whites" on wash-day.

There was only coconut matting on the stone floor, with a pegged hearth-rug, which we all helped to make on winter evenings. This was a boring occupation - how much less so if we could have had radio or TV! At one time, there was not even coconut matting, and there was only the stone floor in the kitchen, with a small rug near the stone sink.

We had a Yorkshire range, which had to be blackleaded every Friday, and the ornamental steel fire-irons cleaned with bath-brick and turpentine, then put away until Saturday noon. "Stainless" was as yet unknown. We liked that open hearth on Friday evenings, which was bath night, when we children were bathed in turn in a large brown pansion.

This same pansion was used on baking day for kneading about a stone of flour into dough, which was then left to rise twice before being baked in the coal oven. What a lovely smell on baking day, and what a wonderful sight those golden brown loaves on the kitchen table when we came home from school - eight loaves, four cakes for "starters" and two large fruit pies!

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WE USED RAIN-WATER FROM
THE ROOFS, COLLECTED IN
TWO OR THREE LARGE TUBS,

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PLAYGROUND GAMES

REMEMBERED BY MEMBERS OF THE DASH GROUP
AND COLLECTED BY JOAN BANKS

Blind Man's Buff		British Bulldog
Cat's Cradle	Conkers	Creep Mouse
Higher and Higher	Hoola Hoop	Hopscotch
In and Out the Dusky Bluebells	Lucy Locket	Marbles
Oranges and Lemons	Ring-a-Ring-a- Roses	Rolling Hoops
Rounders	Skipping	Sticks
Statues	Surrender, Surrender to the Duke of Barbarossa	Tag
Tiggery	Tick-can Lockey	The Big Ship Sails through the Alley, Alley-O
The Farmer Wants a Wife	The Grand Old Duke of York	What Time is it, Mister Wolf?
Whip and Top		

SELF REMEMBERED

PART 2

I had an aunt, uncle and cousin living in Sheffield and they came to stay with us in our house. When I came downstairs in a morning I never knew if the figure curled up on the settee would be my father, come off night shift, or uncle, overlaid for work. If you woke them up they were not best pleased.

There was no gas for light or for cooking, and water was not always available from the tap. We used to have candles on the mantelpiece to see by, the kettle was boiled over the fire and the old Yorkshire range was used for the cooking. If my memory is correct, we were without gas for three or four weeks.

Sheffield was in a poor state; you could no longer find shops and they were using cinemas and any sort of building in which to try to carry on business. Public transport had been badly hit, and if a bus did come along it could bear the name of other cities – I remember seeing an old red London bus with the outside stairs on the Stocksbridge route. This may seem hard to believe, but as late as 1947-8 I remember when we were standing on the platform, coming

into Stocksbridge to the Pictures, we would occasionally get off the bus at the bottom of the Bytholmes and walk alongside, getting back on at the top. This is not a tribute to my walking speed, but shows how old and laboured some of those old buses were.

This was also a time of rationing: about three ounces of sweets a week, butter, marga, cheese and bacon were in short supply, also tea and sugar. If you see anyone of my generation tearing open a tea packet to get the last few tea-leaves, it is not through meanness, just that you could be a cup of tea short before the next ration arrived. I always had to go to the Co-op for my grandmother's rations, and she having been widowed in 1937, it was just rations for one. The amounts escape me, but the cost would be one shilling and three ha'pence, less than sixpence in today's currency. Her total pension was ten shillings (50p) a week.

Rationing did not end immediately after the war. I was in the Airforce from 1949 to the end of my National Service, and even then we had bread rationing and had ration tickets for other items like soap, and I think it was 1950 when clothes came off ration.

DANGEROUS PLAYTHINGS

During the war we searched for shrapnel from bombs and shells. The Home Guard practised shooting in various places, and it was no surprise to find live .22 ammunition lying around. Any boy who had a football or cricket bat was popular, as these were outside the normal range of Christmas or Birthday gifts.

One memory that stands out above all the others is watching those huge Lancaster bombers training for the "Dambuster" raids, still dropping in height as they just cleared Oughtibridge Church before heading for Underbank reservoir, and a crew member waving to us. Did he survive the raids, or do his remains still lie in Germany?

Gas masks always had to be carried to school and these were checked occasionally. I don't remember how often this happened, but a big van would come to school and about ten of us at a time had to don masks and sit in this sealed van. It would only be a mild tear gas, but running eyes would show up any unserviceable mask.

Next: Looking for Work



The Diary of Willis Burgin

I was looking in a shop window in Stafford Street, Doncaster, when I noticed a large poster of Lord Kitchener with his right arm outstretched and pointing his finger straight at me ! And it read

YOUR COUNTRY NEEDS YOU !

I went into the office and signed for the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry on 16th. November 1914.

Mother and the family were upset, and so was my young lady, but two weeks later I received a letter, a form and a railway ticket for Pontefract. On the day of departure on Doncaster Station I was surprised to see the number of lads waiting for the same train, all for the same place.

The night was dark as we arrived in the Barracks Square at Pontefract. I handed in my form in the Orderly Room and joined the other recruits in the square. We were marched to a roller-skating rink in the town and issued with two army blankets and a palliasse (a linen bag filled with straw) that was our bed. Each bed was placed on the floor, two feet from the next, and that was how 250 of us had to try to sleep that night.

I heard one lad at 2 am. shout for his mother. At 6 am. a bugler blew the Reveille – time to get up, dress and wash in a temporary wash-house outside. It was December, it was cold and there was no hot water. Our breakfast we had in a temporary mess-tent: sausages with fried tomatoes and two thick slices of bread, a mug of tea, which was a ghastly colour and tasted terrible.

Our first parade took us to the Quartermaster Stores for clothing and boots. We were issued with a dark blue uniform and a civilian greatcoat and a kit-bag, which went with the soldier on all his journeys.

Next day a Corporal took 30 of us recruits onto the Drill ground. I was in the front rank and was in trouble all morning, not knowing my left from my right. That night I felt battered in leg and mind. The next day at squad drill I managed to get in the rear rank and never had my name called once – I was learning!

Our stay at Pontefract was a short one. A large number of us were sent to Harrogate to form a new Battalion of the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry (K.O. Y.L.I.) – the 11th. I was in D Company, 13th. Platoon, and we were billeted in empty boarding houses.. Ours was Teasdale House on Otley Road. We slept on palliasses in rows on the wooden floor, but we were glad of the shelter in this cold January.

FROM WALDERSHELF TO STOCKSBRIDGE

MORE ABOUT THE IMMIGRANTS 1851 TO 1881

This period, which came to be known as the Industrial Revolution, caused an enormous influx of people into the Stocks Bridge area. While many of those who came to work here did not actually take up residence, and there are many, listed by **Joseph Sheldon** in *Founders and Builders of Stocksbridge Works*, who do not appear in the Census Returns, there are many who do.

Firstly, there would be no living accommodation for them immediately, and secondly, many people from surrounding areas would travel to work daily. A man would think nothing of having to walk from Penistone or Midhope to work.

It was reported, that after Samuel Fox's death, some who came with him from Bradwell in Derbyshire, or followed him here, were eventually able to return there, having made enough to buy a freehold.

25 families are recorded as having come from Derbyshire by 1881: 11 from Bradwell, 4 from Hope, 3 from Derby, 2 each from Chapel-en-le-Frith and Dronfield, one each from Belper, Bonsall, Chesterfield, Clowne, Cresswell, Derwent, Edale, Glossop, Hathersage, Somercotes and Tideswell, and one whose place of origin is entered only as Derbyshire.

The families from Bradwell provide a typical example of the occupations followed by the immigrants: of the 26 workers amongst them, the majority could be said to have been attracted by the Steelworks. There were 2 commercial clerks, an engine fitter, a joiner, a plumber & gasfitter; 9 labourers – for brickyard, blacksmith's, railway and roll-mill, 3 general labourers and 2 ironworks labourers; 9 specified as steel workers, a Bessemer-steel worker, a cold-roller, 3 umbrella makers, a wire cleaner, 2 wire drawers and a wire softener. Only the 3 lead miners did not fit the pattern. Perhaps they came to work the old lead mines at Broomhead Mill in Ewden. In fact, **Joseph Kenworthy** recorded that Robert Evans from Bradwell, and Adam Hill, who married Samuel Fox's sister, worked there, and 3 of the Bradwell families were named Evans.

The workforce in the area had increased to 1,560, about 400 of whom could be employed at Fox's. This conservative estimate includes 9 clerks, 4 engine drivers, 5 engine fitters, 5 engine "tenters" or cleaners, 24 factory hands, 2 firemen, 8 furnace men, 70 general labourers, a hammer driver, 120 iron or steel workers, 2 mechanics, 2 office boys, 4 pipe fitters, 2 plate layers, 3 spring makers, 2 shunters, 3 stokers, 121 umbrella workers and 28 wire



Lance Corporal Willis Burgin

STOCKSBRIDGE & DISTRICT
HISTORY SOCIETY

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MEETINGS ARE NORMALLY HELD ON THE SECOND
THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH, AT THE UNITED REFORM
CHURCH HALL, MANCHESTER ROAD, STOCKSBRIDGE AT
7.00 PM.

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MEETINGS

❖ PROGRAMME 2006 ❖

JULY 13TH

THE EVOLUTION OF THE ENGLISH INN
HOWARD SMITH

AUGUST

SUMMER RECESS – NO MEETING

SEPTEMBER 14TH

THE HISTORY OF CASTLETON
PETER HARRISON

OCTOBER 12TH

IT WAS ON THE FRONT PAGE – SHEFFIELD'S
NEWSPAPERS
MIKE SPICK

NOVEMBER 9TH

THE SEARCH FOR BOLSTERSTONE CASTLE
WENDY GOODHIND

SATURDAY DECEMBER 16TH

CAROL SUPPER – CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS

Designed & printed by Mike's DTP 0114 246 4200 mike@spcb.co.uk

workers, but does not take into account 12 blacksmiths and 2 wheelwrights, some of whom might well be employed within the Works.

Another 62 men were occupied in coal getting, from colliery owners down to 11- and 12-year old hurriers. So the actual number of colliers had reduced slightly from the 70 of 1851, but very much more in proportion to the total population.. Some of these were certainly employed by Samuel Fox, like Amos Micklethwaite, who was a coal deputy in the Works. The Company "day-holes" were on the other side of the river, cut into Hunshelf Bank, but those who worked them may well have lived this side, in Bolsterstone Parish. There was certainly coal mining and coke burning carried on at this side of the valley, as Kenworthy recorded, and the 1881 Census description of the Enumeration District for the Hamlet of Bolsterstone mentions "Joseph Hattersley Coalpit".

Brenda Duffield

