BRADWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Up-coming events

In the first of this year's talks is by Joan Clough of Brough. Of her talk Joan has written 'I first thought of concentrating on Benjamin Pearson and the cotton mills but ended up also looking at Brough and Shatton parish during the years when Pearson came to Brough and those years when the mills were working. I used the, few, documents I could find and the 1851 census. Also photos from about 1905. So a better title now would be 'Farms and Cotton Mills of Brough and Shatton Parish in the early 19th Century'.

At our January AGM members once more agreed to maintain the membership fee at £10. So now when you renew your membership there can be no subsequent extra charge. As usual it would be most convenient for our treasurer Andy Smith if you could arrange your payment via BACS transfer. The payment should be made to the Bradwell Historical Society and the details are as follows - Sort code: 16-15-15 Account number: 10004599. Please make sure when you make the transfer that you are clearly identified as the person who is making the payment. Should this not be suitable for you the treasurer will accept cash ((preferably) or a cheque that you will be able to pay at Joan Clough's February talk.

Recollection of childhood visits to Bradwell Part II

Last month through the good offices of Helen Mason we reproduced the first part of a long memoir written by Christine Darneley. This month we complete the second section of Christine's recollections of childhood holiday visits to the village.

> The biggest treat of these holidays was to go hay-making. Granny's milk was delivered daily by Mr Wragge who drove down from his farm in Coplowdale in a small milk-float pulled by a brown mare called Darling. By the time Mr Wragge had completed his milk round in the village we would be ready with our picnic in a basket and climbed into the cart for the journey back up Bradwell Dale. (*Brother)* David held one rein and I had the other so that we were let drive Darling while Mr Wragge sat back and talked to Mother. Darling who knew exactly where she was going anyway took no notice of the amateur

steerers and just plodded on. We would be dropped off at the hayfield and had our picnic there while Mr. Wragge and Darling went home for lunch.

Afterwards he and a young lad called Douglas who was his helper, would return to the hayfield. David and I were given hay-rakes and Mother had a pitch-fork to turn and toss the swathes of cut grass. That let the air and the sun in to dry it. After a time the big wooden rakes got heavy so we just threw armfuls of hay into the air instead, which probably had much the same effect. I liked it best when the field we worked in was already dry and ready to take back to the farm to be stacked. Then we had to rake it up into haycocks. Mr Wragge forked it up on onto the cart where Douglas spread it evenly as the load got higher and higher. When it was high enough, one of us was lifted up onto the back of Dolly, who pulled the hay-cart. (Darling was having a well-earned rest), and the other one rode on top of the load with Douglas, as we went back to the farm. Once there, unloading was left to the professionals and Mrs Wragge would offer Mother a cup of tea in the farmhouse and find a drink for us children.

Then we could feed the hens. They scattered clucking after every handful of corn which we threw as far and as high into the air as we could. Mum always bought some lovely fresh Bradwell eggs to take home. Bradwell eggs always tasted quite different from the ones bought in Hull, and much nicer. Then we would set off to walk home back down the Dale, hot, dusty, sunburnt and tired, but very happy.

The daily routine of life at Bradwell was so different. The village tap-water came from a small reservoir in Bretton Clough, up on the side of the Edge, and in the heat of summer, levels could get dangerously low. Often the water was turned off at the mains for several hours a day and we had to carry in extra supplies from conduits emptying into the village brook. The source of the brook was called "The Lumb". We went down uneven steps between two high stone walls to where an iron waterspout jutted out on the left-hand side, spilling water into the brook . Except in extreme drought, water flowed from this pipe quite freely and a bucket was quickly filled. By the side of the large pipe and nearer to the steps, was much smaller one releasing a gentle stream of water. This was said to be drinking water and we children would be armed with a small milk-can each of which we filled from the little pipe. Above and beyond those two metal pipes were two much bigger stone conduits, which in times of heavy rain channelled down water from the moors, which thundered into the Lumb in a boiling brown froth, throwing spray into the air. In summer they rarely ran at all, but when they did, it was a sight worth seeing.

The Lumb was very nearly the site of a family tragedy, for when Granny's own family of seven children was young. Auntie Hilda, the oldest daughter, ever naughty and adventurous, had slipped on the spray-soaked steps and fallen in. It was only the brave and prompt action of the local fish-seller (*Freddie 'Fish' Middleton?)* who happened to be passing by and heard the cries that she lived to tell the tale. Auntie Hilda, of course, was also the one who took herself climbing up the crags in the Dale and got stuck half-way up. Who came to help on that occasion I do not know.

Although the Cottage had cold water taps, there was no hot water. That all had to be heated in pans or kettles and the copper out in the lobby was lighted to provide water for baths and the washing.

There was no electric light either. Downstairs the rooms had gas–lights with bright mantles in glass shades, and oil-lamps. When people went to bed late at night they took candles and carried them very carefully so that they did not blow out on the way upstairs. In summer it was always still light when we went to bed so we didn't have the fun of candles when we were little, but I can remember being kept awake for hours by

the cuckoo calling loudly and insistently from the bushes up on the side of Bradwell Edge. It just went on and on.

The other major difference from home was the outdoor privy across the yard from the kitchen. Come rain or shine every trip to the loo meant a walk across the backyard to the privy where a bin encased in a wooden frame served as the lavatory. The smooth wooden seat went from wall to wall with a rounded hole in the middle and a wooden cover which was replaced after use. Of course there was no flush, but a bucket of ashes was kept nearby so that some could be scattered into the bin after use. There was always a strong smell of disinfectant from the carbolic powder shaken daily into the bin to discourage flies. The privy had to be kept as dry as possible so we were encouraged to wee into a bucket kept in there go that it could be emptied down the outside sink. Upstairs we all had chamber-pots to use during the night as no one would not want to get out of a nice warm bed and walk across the yard! Of course emptying and rinsing the "potties" from the bedrooms was another daily chore for somebody. It was just something we accepted and adapted to as part of the holiday fun. The "Dust Cart" as it was politely known, came round the village once a week to empty all the privies, and one avoided it if one could!

Just across the road from the hillock where Dale End stood, was the small field belonging to Mr. Amos Wilson, who was a retired policeman. Mrs. Wilson died when we were very young and I can only just remember her. For company, Amos had a little Yorkshire Terrier called Floss. His house was opposite, at the corner of the road leading up to The Hills; and every day, morning and evening he would come out to the field to tend his hens and one or two sheep pastured there to keep the grass down. Granny was a true Yorkshire woman and never wasted anything so all the kitchen scraps and vegetable peelings were saved and we would be sent to scatter them over the stone wall into the field for the hens to eat. What didn't suit the hens was soon cleared up by the sheep. The hens were used to this routine and we liked to watch the mad scramble and flapping wings as they rushed clucking towards the feast. The sheep would just lie there chewing the cud and pick up their share later when they were ready.

Church on Sunday mornings with Granny was an occasion for very best behaviour and my straw hat with a ribbon round the brim! I liked the Church with its stained-glass windows, which as we were always there in summer, were usually bright with sunshine. It was not very ancient. My great, great grandfather had made all the oak pews in his workshop. At the back in the churchyard was my Grandpa's "garden" for when he died he had been brought back home to Bradwell to be buried.

We were sometimes there for the Harvest Festival and Granny would help us to make up some little gift of eggs or fruit and vegetables, beautifully arranged and packaged, to take to the Service. Somehow the words of being surrounded by fields of corn all stooked and ready to be taken back to the farm struck home .Behaviour in Church with Granny there had to be immaculate! She could be very strict. Mother used to make us laugh with a tale of her own childhood in Hull. One of her Great-Aunts used to go to Church with them and always wore a long black dress which rustled as she walked. The two smallest girls, Mother and Auntie Nette, wanted to rustle too. So one Sunday they got some newspaper and scrunched it up and put it in their long, lace-trimmed pants! They rustled beautifully on the way to Church. but sitting still on all that prickly paper with Granny on one side and the Great Aunt on the other through the whole of a long Service was highly uncomfortable and very difficult and as soon as they got home they were both well and truly ticked off for fidgeting. I hope Granny laughed when she found out why!

She was very good at entertaining us and would fill our days with opportunities for play. Clothes used to be aired on a folding wooden frame called an "airing rack" and this, placed on the ground on its sides, made a perfect framework for a tent. Covered with an old sheet or blanket it kept us happy for hours out there on the patio in the wild rock garden at the side of the house. It could be reached by a gate at the bottom of the garden and a long winding path with uneven stone steps, or you could use the "short-cut" and shin up the ladder from the backyard onto the flat concrete top of the privy and outhouses. Granny had saved herself a lot of walking by installing the ladder to reach her clothes-line and needless to say we always used it. Who would go up by the path anyway if there was a ladder instead?

The top part of the garden which ran completely wild above the rock at the back of the house, was full of ancient raspberry-canes, mostly self-sown, and we spent many a happy hour up there picking and eating so that Mum and Granny could make jam to take home for the winter. If you climbed over the stone wall at the end of the top part of the garden, you came into the Shrubbery - a steep patch of land that belonged with the house but had run completely wild. Just over the wall of the Shrubbery was the narrow, stony path going up to the Yeald from the hillock on which Dale End was built. We weren't really supposed to go into the Shrubbery, but we quite often did and could hide away completely in the bushes.

My memories of my Granny are all happy ones. except for one when we had a big misunderstanding which I found it very hard to forgive. I was about six at the time. Mother had gone to visit someone and had taken David with her probably thinking it would be easier for Granny to have just one of us. All went well until tea-time when we sat down happily at the table together. It was just an ordinary little tea - some potted-meat and tomatoes, bread and jam and a slice of cake. Now Granny suffered quite badly from rheumatism and certain foods did not agree with her. They made her rheumatism worse. So if we had stewed rhubarb for example she would always take just a little, saying "It's very acid!" If she had a tomato, she would always cut it in half and put one half back on the dish for the same reason. The left-over half, rather tired and limp was usually offered to me or David the following day. I loved tomatoes, but I wasn't too keen on the limp bits. When we sat down, Granny passed me the plate with the two tomatoes on it. There was one little one and one medium sized one. I hesitated while I thought it out. Granny would prefer the little one because of her rheumatism and if I left her the big one she would only have to cut it in half. So I took the bigger one!. Suddenly my nice, kind Granny was calling me a greedy, selfish girl and scolding me roundly for being so impolite as to take the bigger tomato! I was startled, then frightened and deeply hurt. Of course I was going to enjoy that big tomato, but I only took it in order to leave her the little one that should suit her best. Bitterly our lovely afternoon together was spoiled, ending in floods of tears as Mother came back to a report on her greedy, ill-mannered daughter. Mummy understood and loved me better, but it was a sad experience.

I found a friend who lived in one of the cottages nearby at the bottom of the road leading up into the part of the village known as "'The Hills". Her name was Nancy and she liked dressing-up and playing with dolls like I did. She was more than a year older and already very good at sewing. With a bit of help from her Mum she had made some lovely dolls' clothes whereas I had just about learnt to do cross-stitch!

In those days it seemed to be safe for children to go off by themselves almost anywhere, with permission of course. So we liked to go and play up on Hazelbadge. This was a huge field by High Peak standards, where all the fields were enclosed by dry-stone walls and tended to be rather small. You entered it by a stile made of huge slabs of limestone and the grassy pathway led up the hill which sloped gently at first

and then more steeply until you got to a little rocky outcrop known as "The Milking Stone". That must have been because in days gone by it was quicker to go out and milk the few cows in the field than drive them twice a day down to the old farmhouse at the far end. When we reached the milking-stone we were still only about a quarter of the way across the field. The stone was interesting for two reasons. In winter when it was snowy it was the start of a long sledge-run down the path to the stile, although we didn't find out about that until we were older and able to try it out for ourselves. It was also the place from which there was an amazing echo. If you shouted from the milking-stone facing towards one of the houses just beyond the dry stone wall at the bottom of the field, your words came back to you as clear as a bell.

Nancy and I once spent a happy afternoon up on Hazelbadge collecting seeds from different types of long grasses and stowing them away in three empty shoe-polish tins. In our game they represented treasure which we then attempted to bury by scraping out a hole in the rocky hillside. That was easier said than done because the limestone rock lay so close to the surface. We just about managed to cover them over and as it was the last day of my summer holiday we said we would go and dig them up again next year. Try as we would, we never managed to find them.

Every year when we arrived at Bradwell from Hull where the land was very flat, our legs had to get used to the hills and they ached terribly for the first few days. There was one very steep and narrow little pathway known as “The Shart”, which: I think meant be telling us of history of the Farms and Mills of Brough."The Short" (cut) in the local dialect, and that was the way we always went from Dale End to Hazelbadge. The last few feet were the steepest of all and getting up there was really painful. By the end of our holiday we would be racing up it with climbing muscles in good training. The same applied to Bradwell Edge. We went up in easy stages at the beginning of the holiday but at the end no rests were needed. As for coming down again we would slide on our bottoms down the warm, wiry moorland grass covering the hillside and looking back up the slope we could see the tracks we had made.

All good things come to an end and the return journey home began with a ride on Mr Pashley's little village bus down to Hope Station. He ran two buses. The little one held fourteen people and the bigger one took twenty-one. We went on the L.M.S. train to Sheffield. L.M.S. stood for "London, Midland & Scottish". As we left the exciting part of this journey was "The Long, Long Tunnel". It stretched from Grindleford Station and ended near Dore & Totley, and it took six or seven minutes to go through it. We had to close all the windows because in those days trains were pulled by steam-engines. The steam was made by a fierce fire in the engine heating up the boiler and a fire like that makes a lot of smoke. Outside the smoke blew away in the wind but in the tunnel it came in through the open windows. It seemed to take ages to go through the tunnel, but then it was the second-longest tunnel in England! The lights were switched on in all the carriages, but just occasionally they would fail and we all sat in the dark. That was really scary.