

A BRIEF AWAKENING.

Many, Oh' so many years age, in the nostalgic days of "Once upon a time", there was, and still is today a village steeped in history straddling the Great North road, owing its existence to Roman Legions, fanning out as they occupied the whole area, subduing the native dwellers. This place was Bramham, although when the story unfolds one will realize it was but a Hamlet.

The Church, small initially, enlarged over the centuries to accommodate the swelling of the populace. It was in this consecrated building raised to the glory of God that the toil weary downtrodden folk gathered on Sundays and Holy days, grateful for a respite, leaving the fields, the plough, and other necessary but soul destroying jobs.

As the Church bells rang there were to be seen, clad in their best clothes, (kept for such an occasion as this), other members of the community, the various labourers and tradesmen, Wheelwrights, Boot makers Saddlers, Masons and tinsmiths, who together with their womenfolk and children listened attentively to the Vicar extolling the need to look towards Heaven and how, that by prayer and the forfeiture of pleasure in this world the next one beckoned, assuring the faithful of a place therein. The workers, clutching at straws, hoped that once there they could lay down their earthly burden.

The stagecoaches, almost a timepiece in themselves, which at regular intervals rocketed through the village, onlookers nodding approvingly as their time varied but slightly, piled high with luggage, passengers on the outside wrapped up against the cold wind or the choking dust swirling everywhere **me** the coach lurch from one side to the other as it hit the potholes in the unmade road. The north bound coach descending the Bowcliffe did so gingerly with brakes hard on, for laden as it was, all the seats inside occupied plus those atop, truly a not inconsiderate load, that, combined with the steepness of the hill and the bende made the coachman heave a sigh of relief as he hit the bottom and released the brake, which had more than a suspicion of smoke issueing from the shoe as it overheated then whipping his team into a gallop hoping to make up for lost time.

A team of four pulled the coach with having changed at Aberford or due for fresh horses at Wetherby. The ;South bound coach had to take the front street at a gallop to reach as far up bowcliffe as possible before the momentum was checked by the steepness, thus making the animals labour and strain in their collars.

Boys, aware of the coach times, (if they were not bent on mischief elsewhere), were on hand to give a rousing cheer hoping for a wave back or another blast on the horn which had already heralded its approach at the start of the village run.

One day, and it was the spring of 1832 (for after a hard winter the land had once more awakened), as a group of boys and girls, with a few men loitering near the Bay Horse Inn awaiting the passing through of the coach from the South, sheer excitement took over for it was slowing down then brought to a halt, the horses pawing the ground restlessly, doubtless aware of the unusual stopping place. A surge was made to surround the vehicle the youths clambering on to the footrests, pulling themselves up with the door handle to peep inside. A quick jump down was necessary, for the handle turned, a man alighted then helped a woman to clamber out. Some luggage was passed down, the coach moving off with scant attention paid to it for all eyes were on the couple.

The woman asked if it would be possible to find lodgings for a short period of time, her accent it was noted seemingly of this locality softened by living elsewhere, at least that was the impression given, and somewhere south it was safely suggested by the men, for had not the coach come from that direction.

Having been told that lodgings were to be had at the Bay Horse for most conveniently this was opposite where the coach had come to a halt. It The woman, with a word to her companion to "stay with the luggage" made her way into the pub, closely followed by a motley crew, for had not the arrival of the stage broken the pattern of their drinking and there was some lee way to make up. Speaking to the landlord she said that with her husband she wished to stay in the village perhaps for a week or two, he noting the good quality of the clothes worn by her had no hesitation in giving them accommodation. Making a move to open a bag carried as hand luggage, and offering to pay in advance, the landlord said the bill could be settled when they wished to leave. One of the men asserted that he had heard the chink of coins and caught sight of the glint of gold. His imagination had run riot for as yet the bag had not been opened.

Asking one or two of the onlookers if they would help to carry in the bags, a mad dash was made to oblige with half hoping for some reward. A key, hanging with others behind the bar on a row of hooks was taken down by the wife of the landlord who took the couple up to their room, the luggage carried up the staircase by two of the men, leaving behind briefly an excited chatter as to who they were. Descending the stairs came the landlord's wife with the two men stating that all were to have a drink this finding favour with all in the bar, voting the newcomers a jolly fine couple. Meanwhile a supply of hot water was taken to the room, for a wash was most necessary after the fearsome journey.

Mrs. Jakeman amply proportioned, rosy cheeked and ever present smile, advertised the benefit of eating at a bountiful table, heartily endorsed by Mrs. Richepin who with her husband, having breakfasted substantially on numerous eggs and hare cured ham set out on a keenly looked forward to inspection of the village, heading first in the direction of the church, for her mother had impressed upon her that this was the focal point. As they made, with slow deliberate steps, pausing at each cottage on the way they were not unobserved, for faces would peer, not necessarily discreetly from behind lace curtains eager to glean any crumb of information which could, after exaggeration be poured into the eager ear of a neighbour who would with further embellishment, pass it on.

Particular attention was paid to the cottages as one walked round the back of the church, Rose cottages, the next one; the bungalow, also the two after that, then through the churchyard, peering at gravestones. Over the next few days walks round the village were frequent, not wishing to miss any detail, then travelling to Clifford, for her mother had spoken of a few friends there, although it was so many years that perhaps they were no longer alive, for times change, and things are seldom the same. However all avenues must be explored for their parents would be keen for every scrap of information.

Visits were made to the local seamstress where materials chosen were made up to her exacting specifications, also visits were made to have boots made for her husband.

In the evenings, after a sumptuous repast, Mrs. Richepin would sit whilst the landlord's wife would tell stories of village life, juicy bits of scandal overheard in the public bar or gleaned at the local shops with many a nod and whisper. It was here then that Mrs. Richepin made known the reason for the visit to Bramham for, as many a local had pondered, "What was there in this outlandish place"?

Her Mother's sister, who with her husband had a farm close by the Great North road in the area between Stilton and Yaxley near Peterborough. Many letters had been written urging her parents to pack up at Bramham move in with them and work on the farm, the decision at last being made, she, Mrs. Richepin being about five years of age had only childish memories of the packing and the coach journey.

An added incentive to leave the village and as it were start life anew with hoped for a better way of life, lay in the fact that times had been very hard at Bramham, for her father had picked up work where he could, casual farm jobs, or gardening at one of the large houses in the area, with the ever present fear of hardship and the dread of eviction; the cottage her parents had lived in was, as her mother had told her, in full view of the Church.

As she grew up on the farm, after the initial period of settling in, the buildings were explored with the attendant thrill of the livestock, pigs, hens, and of course the cows which had to be milked, having to help in as many ways as possible, with an eagerly looked forward journey to Peterborough market, where amidst the bustle their produce of butter, eggs, and various vegetables could be sold, also hens and chickens, although as she was very tender hearted it was her impression that as she fretted, so **k** also would the livestock miss their home.

It was a great adventure at the market for many children were about, and most of them, living in the fens as they did missed sadly the companionship that all children craved so that, as the elders concentrated on the serious business of selling which was a most essential part of the reason for coming to town, games were played by the young ones among the stalls in the shadow of the great cathedral. Before the journey back purchases had to be made, for although regarding food the farm was self reliant material and thread for clothing was needed with perhaps the luxury of ribbon, and great extravagance, new bonnets.

Her mother and aunt had, whil'st in the process of selling, (most essential this), been exchanging the latest gossip and news; the two husbands bartering in the ale houses of which there were many surrounding the market square, either buying sheep or pigs. At last after a long but satisfying day a tired party headed home, many travelling the same route for at least part of the way.

As the years passed by, her aunt and uncle, older than her parents, sadly died, the farm, now theirs, having to take a more responsible role, she, being of marriageable age had often worried about the future of the farm when her father and mother, not quite as active as before were unable to pull their weight in the heavier tasks that on a farm were numerous, in fact her father had voiced his fears, saying , surely she must have had her eye on some young blood on the visits to market.

A road, leading from Peterborough cut across the great north road, continueing on to various villages. The junction in its ancient name was known as Northmannescros, later to be shortened to Norman Cross.

It was here that a wooden prison camp was built to house captured French soldiers brought over from the Napoleonic wars; one other camp was built but more substantially of stone, this was at Dartmoor. Gossip at the market told of how the prisoners, to while away the time made, from straw and bone, trinket boxes, sailing ships, and all manner of intricate articles painstakingly and skillfully fashioned. They were allowed to sell these periodically to the locals who would bring produce, cakes, eggs, butter, vegetables, or money to supplement prison Cations, bartering could then take place.

She, Mrs. Richepine, (unmarried then of course0, decided she would find time if possible to take a chicken or two, with a few other things more out of curiosity, perhaps picking up some interesting articles. As she had not been before, although aware of the site, it was arranged she went with the wife whose husband worked the next farm to theirs at Stilton.

Arriving at the camp entrance, the horse and trap secured along with others to graze at the roadside, she mingled with the throng albeit not without some trepidation. A babble of the French language smote her ears accepting that not having heard such a sound before, it must be so, bearing in mind where they were. Her attention was drawn to a beautifully carved trinket box, held by a young prisoner, and by dint of showing him what her basket contained, and his command of some English words, a deal was struck.

On the return journey, chatting to her companion, having thoroughly enjoyed the trip and the experience, being unable to wipe from her memory the young but gaunt face of the frenchman, shabbily clothed, his sad eyes speaking volumes; If work and time allowed she vowed to visit the camp again.

On regular occassions, feeling drawn to the place, and by dint of putting long hours in at the farm, she with pounding heart sought the young mab out, he also was peering at every face until he caught sight of her Without requesting articles in return, a basket with fresh baked bread and dairy produce was passed over.

Gradually relaxing in each others company names were exchanged. After telling him her name was Mary Bateson, she, with some difficulty and after various attempts, amid peals of laughter, slowly pronounced the words; Pierre Richepinr. His face, usually etched with pain, and racked by years of privation, lit up at the joyous picture she presented.

Now this was 1813, no one knowing how long the war would continue and what then?. The thought of him being sent back to France with the **withinis** of their parting filled them with dread, added to which, he told her of the numerous deaths in the camp resulting from malnutrition, and outbreaks of fever, this her main worry for, bringing a regular supply of wholesome food had filled him out somewhat, wearing apparel, or to put it bluntly assortment of rags draped on his body, had gradually been replaced by clothes brought by her, making a more presentable picture.

In daydreaming her mind pictured their marriage and working the farm together, but was not that beyond one's wildest dreams?. Her parents, noting frequent camp visits, her voice, whil'st about the daily chores, often raised in song, broken up by spells of despondency during which period they were unable to communicate with her. On being pressed she poured out her heart and how the frenchman and she had spoken of a life together, but as her mother and father agreed how could that be possible for would he not have to return to France at some time?.

Arriving at the barrack entrance one day a notice was observed fastened to the gate, and as people arriving to trade, jostled round the board, those unable to read, and there were many, depended on the literate to explain what had been written. Signed by the Governor, it stated. "Prisoners will now be allowed to work in the area during the day and each day picked up by those wishing to employ them and returned each evening to be fed by the employer of labour. Application to the Governor through the head Warder at the gate entrance office, stating the number of men required. . Now the same governor, not an idiot by any means was making a thoughtful approach to the vexed question of those in his charge.

Rumours were being bandied around that the war would soon end (these had been voiced before), put it down to wishful thinking, also if sufficient men went out to work the food situation might be eased for sometimes there were shortages; supplies held up, or to be really cynical pilfered before in sight of the prison camp.

The prisoners, whilst having a type of rehabilitation would be helping, mostly on farms, particularly at harvest time, all in all a well planned operation, needing only sufficient applications for workers. (incidentally the governor lived in a stone built house outside the barracks).

He need not have worried for many applied. Mary, on seeing the notice dared to hope would it be possible to actually specify a particular individual one might say it was almost too much to hope for, however, having placed her request in giving the name of Pierre Richepina, no objection was made.

Each morning carts from various farms gathered at the gate, the prisoners grateful for work outside the camp were waiting to be picked up, Pierre, delighted and astonished at his good fortune in being informed who his employer was to be clambered aboard and arms round each other set off. Quickly falling into the routine at the farm her parents took to the young fellow, life, now rosy he quickly losing his pallid complexion taking on a rich outdoor tan.

Time, the friend of no one slipped by, but in this instance it proved a boon for the war, so long a source of discussion at last ended which to Mary (and many other young ladies who had made friends with the prisoners at the gate either while bartering or with contact on the farms) plunged them into depths of despair, for it would herald a return to their native France. It was with a feeling of profound joy that prisoners who so wished could settle in the locality, many choosing to do this, Mary and Pierre visualized a wonderful future ahead of them.

(At this point I would like to point out, that Prisoners, who were Officers were kept in far better conditions than the rank and file, as is usual in all armies, being allowed out of the barracks mixing and invited to various functions and socializing as their station in life demanded, having to, supposedly, on the word of a gentleman, be back in their quarters each evening, this was not always the case, Officers covering up for each other at morning roll call).

To revert to Mary and Pierre; plans were eagerly laid for a wedding which took place, after much preparation, in 1817 at Stilton Church, neighbour friends from all around attending, with some of Pierre's prison friends who had settled in the area. merrymaking went on far into the night, with no shortage of home brewed beer.

Now, having two sons, 12 and 10 years of age with the dark hair and features of their father, the children, just as she had done (history repeating itself), making themselves useful on the farm in between very elementary schooling. it was in this vein that as her Mother and Father spoke sometimes with nostalgia of Bramham, they felt that an effort must be made to come over, notwithstanding the hazardous and uncomfortable journey, also to take back home as much information as was possible.

The landlord's wife, and Mary looked forward eagerly to these cosy evening chats with pauses of appreciation as they sipped reflectively from a glass of stout fully aware, that as the evening wore on the glasses could be easily replenished; So they grew accustomed to the noise of the men in the bar below. Mary, having been filled with as much information of the village as it was possible to accumulate, knew that they must be on their way back, for almost three weeks had passed by, and it would not do to leave the farm too long.

Meanwhile her husband, Pierre had settled into pub life, having made himself popular with the natives. His strange interpretation of the English language with a few French words thrown in for good measure which could have been; (on reflection almost certainly were) swear words gathered into the locals vocabulary, and repeated at every opportunity, irrespective of their meaning and relation to the subject under discussion.

All being seated comfortably, drinks close to hand, the clay pipes would be charged, those having another preference cutting a piece from a wad of tobacco with relish and anticipation, then setting about the pleasureable task of chewing the stuff. A generous layer of sawdust covered the flagged floor, a spittoon positioned within reach, he told the story of his boyhood in france now and again making a pregnant pause whil'st with unerring judgement he shot a jet of juice at the spittoon, where with the following thud as it hit the bottom, the liquid then shot over the side, the sawdust now serving its purpose , Not to be outdone, splashes came from round about with various results as others got into the act, a few boots and leggings proving lack of accuracy.

He spoke of his early days in a remote part of the country, with the ever present fear of the English in their forays, sweeping with blood thirsty intent through France, pillaging and raping the womenfolk, and being, whil'st young forced into the army, where after suffering untold privations, he was at length captured, not knowing what his, and many more of fellow compatriats fates were to be.

A long forced march from inland to the coast was made with many dropping by the roadside from sheer exhaustion and lack of food, being either forced to their feet at bayonet point, or if too weak to continue were brutally bayoneted at the roadside, such was the horror of the situation. At length arriving at the coast they were herded on board ships, crammed into the holds commencing a fearful journey. Reaching England the ships edged round the coast. It was only many years later that he knew how their final destination had been reached, for the Fens, a mass of waterways and dykes allowed almost unlimitted water transport inland. Many of the ships came by way of Yarmouth, Lynn, or Wisbech, some crossing Whittlesey Mere, thence up the great dykes to Yaxley, and but a short march to the camp.

Brief appearances were made on deck for many had died below in the cramped conditions; food, if such a name could be put to the swill dished out to them was never of sufficient nourishment to sustain; the stench unbearable, and the dead, short shrift, for they were tossed overboard, it was an undisputed fact that the English had no love for the French.

At last their destination was reached. With many hoarse commands, those who had survived the horrendous journey were called up from the confines of the bowels of the ship, many more berthing at the same time, Blinking in the unaccustomed strong daylight it was realised that a small settlement with a crowd of curious and hostile onlookers were gathered to watch the unloading of the prisoners. Marshalling them in some semblance of order, with their few pitiful worldly goods draped over bowed shoulders the motley crew, now swollen by the inmates pouring out of other ships shambled on their way, amid stone throwing and jeering from the bystanders.

After what seemed an eternity, walking on the leafy country lanes, a huge camp came in sight, rows upon rows of huts built entirely of wood, with lookout towers at strategic points. Stumbling through the entrance overcome with fatigue they were placed in huts, thirty to each building, wooden bunks down each side, having a straw palliasse and a coarse type of horse blanket. Each thankfully claiming a bed they were called outside where the welcome smell of food almost overcame them; each man being given a metal bowl and eating utensils they proceeded to file past huge coppers where a ladle of steaming soup was poured out, a hunk of bread, and a piece of mutton; they all fell to and ate ravenously. The troughs, filled with water were outside each but where after washing piles of coarse cloth was at hand to dry oneself on.

Interest waned slightly when, speaking of his first meeting with Mary Bateson, (now his wife), and their life at the farm, for this had been told on many occasions by the landlords wife who had spread the whole story in the local shops; where, having been bandied about with absolute emphasis on embellishment, the husband's ears, on caning home from work were forced to listen to the womenfolk droning on, retelling the village gossip. Only when Pierre returned to the camp activities were they once more attentive.

Now, as Mary had already pointed out, it was with reluctance that the journey back had to be undertaken. Many friends had been made in the village, the Coach, having been booked at the change over place in Wetherby, the pub, it was with a great deal of sadness that Mary took her leave of numerous lady friends , while Pierre drank the last night away, regaling bawdy stories from France to his drinking companions, in his inebriated state, as the night wore on, the stories losing their meaning for he had lapsed excitedly into his native language.

Dawned the day of their departure, which was the following morning, Pierre, still unsteady on his feet, doubtless receiving a chastisement from Mary, a large crowd of wellwishers thronged the area outside the Bay Horse, as the coach, dead on time drew to a halt. The crowd, made up of all walks of life, from the youngest upwards, surged round the couple entreating them to come again; Amidst many a moist eye the coach drew away, disappearing round the bend in the bowcliffe.

Excepting for the seemingly ceaseless toll of the "Death Bell" proclaiming some family's sorrow, and the rattle of the stage coaches, the hamlet returned to its slumbers.

HARRY TINDALL.

A new interest

My Uncle, who was a Policeman at Liverpool, wrote to father *asking* if he would like a dog, this was an Airedale bitch named Banty.

arrangements were made to travel by train and she would arrive at Thorparch Railway Station, being transferred from the direct line at Leeds on to the branch one. Arthur and I would walk to Thorparch to collect her, taking with us a dog lead. Pleased no doubt to get off the train and wearing a muzzle, the journey home without incident took place.

once having settled down with me accepting the role of kennel boy, father in due course decided it would not be a bad plan for Bunty to have a litter, this event being looked forward to eagerly, great excitement prevailing when six puppies made their appearance.

Polly, Fudge, and me being fascinated by these happenings, were inclined to neglect our normal (or should that read abnormal) ? operations, an reflection not a bad thing, until one day **the litter** being about five **weeks** old, it was our considered opinion **the time had** arrived when we would introduce them to the beck to see how they would cope with swimming.

Into a cardboard box they went, with Minty, bemused and unsure what was happening tagging along, quickly through the garden gate (Mother not in sight) **to the** bridge down the New Road. Ducking through a gap in the hedge on the village side a few yards into the field, **the box was** tipped up and into the water the naps dropped. In jumped Bunty **as the current span them about**, at this time a hint of panic crept **over us** as under the bridge the puppies were swept. We dashed aver the road and down the other side into the water grabbing **them** as they were swilled about, having shot through at breakneck speed we pleased that our arrival had been in time. Thank the Lord we muttered as the pups were put in our jerseys, the box having been left at the other side.

Bent wait a moment, having a head count there were only five, looking down the stream a small brown shape could be seen, the little perisher hell bent on making it to **the river** either voluntary or having no option, splashing in haste down the beck he or she having been rescued by us quickly joined the others,

The planned operation, so enthusiastically started seemed to have misfired, thus leaving a lot to be desired. Hurrying up the road the church clock, in no uncertain terms, informed us the time was fast approaching when the old man would be thinking of leaving work.

Up church lane we sped, into the house without ceremony, mother, on seeing **the pups** in their distressed state, resourceful as ever set about drying them, I telling her they had been in the beck, in retrospect this was pretty{ obvious. As she busied herself rubbing them, Mother remarked °`If your dad knew he would kill you: That didn't worry me unduly for it was a **regular statement in** reference to me, and I had more lives than a cat, an added safeguard being that she would never split on me.

However I as not out of the wood yet for everything had to have the appearance of normality. Back into' the hut went Bunty and the pups, with Mother preparing their food. I arrived back with the empty dish, the litter now warm, dry and feeding from their mother, father entered the house, his first words being, "Are the pups **alright**. As I truthfully answered 'Yes" Mother, in the background nodded approvingly, and I with a warm glow spreading over me looking forward to my tea, knew that I was saved once more.

A few of the village lads; on reflection it is with sorrow that I specifically refer to chr^eror boys, had eyed the church clock over as to its target potential, and if it would be possible to hit the hands with cobbles.

Gathering a supply of stones, then standing at the side of the footpath, just in front of the sundial an imaginary line was toed, and bearing in mind the distance and height any success brought forth shouts of approval.

There would be a scattering to the four winds on the appearance of Mr. William Smith, (the sexton), he lived on the left at the entrance tp Fine Garth, there being down at the bottom of the gardens a pair of very old houses known as Rose cottages, his daughter lived in the other one..Being elderly he was far from agile, an added bonus (from our point of view) , his eyesight left a lot to be desired and fell far short of those of a hawk, chance of recognition therefore almost nil, however making a calculated guess as to our identity he got it spot on.

The Vicar, obviously having been informed, invited the miscreants to the vicarage at a specific time one evening, I knew that it was unlikely a dinner jacket would be needed. On arrival we were shown into the study by Agatha, (one of the maids) and with trepidation as his footsteps echoed along the passage, waited for the opening of the door when a quick assessment would give an inkling as to his mood, Ira jovial greeting obviously out of the question). Telling us to sit down for we had been standing in uneasy postures, Mr. Hicks, with a sort of hopeless frustration/patiently pointed out that if the hands of the clock needed to be moved forward, or for that matter at our whim backwards, machinery in the tower could be used for this purpose; on the point of saying "Iwas unaware of this" prudence prevailed my wit would not have been appreciated.

With the now familier request and our agreement mumbled through dry mouths he moved I am sure with unseemly haste to a cupboard and produced a rope end(he must have had them squat everywhere), the knot, in my hypnotised state of mind appeared to be the size of a man's head. Knowing by now the routine, each boy in his turn bending over. I tried to wait until the end, reasoning that his arm would have slowed down by that time; it was a sheer waste of brain cells for am sure the pace increased when the vicar politely asked if I minded stepping forward.

Harry Tindall.

DEVILMENT IN THE OFFING.

Making *our* way up the Haygate from a summer afternoon adventure, in front lay the pond at the junction with windmill hill in the corner of the stackyard, part of Prospect farm.

Swimming here were some ducks, now this looked promising and our flagging spirits were revived. A quickly worked out plan would be to keep them there, heaving clods of grass and lumps of clay to make sure they entered into the spirit of the game and didn't make any attempt to escape, the idea on our part not to actually *sink* the confounded things. The ducks being unaware as yet of our intentions, sailed serenely about.

As we went into action the noise became deafening, feathers flew, the birds, dodging us hightailed it up the stackyard, where Mrs. Chambers, alerted by the noise put in an appearance, shouting, "I know who you are": This was not surprising, the question arises, who didn't know us?, it had come to a pretty pass when innocent lads, going about their lawful pleasures were subject to harassment. The only course left open to us would be to adopt some sort of disguise. Sufficient to say, that with pounding hearts we bolted.

Father came home, Mother set the table, the smell of meat and potato pie was everywhere. On it being served I sat in my chair petrified, everyone but me tucking in for the food would have choked me, Mother, ever knowledgeable glanced at me with worry etched upon her face. On the point of wetting myself I just managed to hold back, bearing in mind what surely-must come 'could do without any added discomfort. Spotted Dick came next with Custard, I loved it, but there was no way-that could be swallowed.

At last the door vibrated, no gentle tap this far it had a large knocker. Who can it be? everyone speaking at once, that *is* except me for I knew. Herbert, *having only* partially consumed his pudding rose with reluctance, now this *was* a bad sign, he didn't like being broken off from his meal, I surely was in for it.

Of course *the* voice of Mrs. Chambers came along the passage leading from the door, Mother said, "what have you been doing?" *No* answer was forthcoming for my tongue,, being dry stuck to the roof of my mouth.

Mrs. Chambers went, the old man charged in, picked the strap from the side of the fireplace where it hung ever threatening me, grabbed *my* collar, which unfortunately was attached to me, half carrying, mostly dragging me down Church lane, up Vicarage lane and to the back door of Prospect farm house. Mr. Chambers answered the door to a knock from the old man, then holding me body off the floor by the neck of the jersey I was spun from one side to the other, father seeking fresh *areas* to strike, after a while there wasn't any, for having excelled himself, all areas had been covered.

Feeling on fire, it came as a relief when Mr. Chambers said, "That's enough Herbert I couldn't have agreed more, if only it had been said before the punishment started, being dropped to the floor with as much speed as I was able home I went. Mother took me to the bathroom, rubbed ointment over my back and on the angry weals covering my legs, I vividly recall tears in her eyes as she bore with fortitude and sorrow my obvious suffering.

Father, with profound victorian beliefs, heartily agreed that the use of the rod made sure the child would not be spoiled, he improved on that, using the strap, working out that he could cover more of my body in quicker time.

MECHANIZATION

At various times throughout the year, endurance trials were held. to cater for the ever- increasing popularity of the motor vehicle, these would be, Motor cycles, with in some instances, a side car attached, then there were the Motor cars with a *very* sporty line in three wheelers, one well known being a Morgan. We gave our allegiance to particular makes, sporting on our jerseys or coat lapels an array of badges,- each one depicting a specific motor bike.

It was evident when a Rally would pass through Premium, for a trail of dark blue powder snaked its way either down the Wetherby road or Tenter Hill then to the foot of Almhouse Hill then upward.

One night be fortunate enough to actually see the vehicle laying the scent, but as this was always on the Sunday morning prior to the afternoon assault, I at least would be at Church, but the word *was* spread and our excitement knew no bounds..

The tracklayer did, (we were led to understand), attempt to climb the hill but in most cases prudence prevailed, one walking up the hill sprinkling the powder and the driver making his way up the Bowcliffe road to rejoin his mate at the top of the hill.

Now the Almshouse Hill led upwards in a most vicious and spectacular way, being akin to a stony river bed, with two stone grips crossing the hill diagonally leading into grates, the idea being to check the rush of water and gravel before it hit the square *at* the bottom, with very little or no success.

Long before the appointed time (if that existed), crowds would gather, sitting on every wall end. wedged tightly into the sides, a most dangerous Practice. A roar heralded the first optimistic assailant, each one of us speculating before it have in sight, with a finely tuned ear and apparent mechanical knowledge, as to its identity. There *was* no way that speed could be the climbing factor due to sharp bends and the stones, in fact the cards were heavily stacked against an ascent..

As each one either stalled on hitting the stones, or the sheer steepness *beat* them, willing hands helped to push the vehicle(s) out of the way before the next one *came along*, it often happened that three or four were stuck at the same time, chaos reigning, adding ^{to} our enjoyment. 'We knew not from where they came or their destination, we had thoroughly enjoyed the Sunday afternoon.

Before attending the Sunday evening service, it was the custom for a few choirboys to assemble at the lych gate where a serious discussion would take place as to how our various undoubted talents could be used to their best advantage in the short time at our disposal before exuberance, ever present would be curbed under the ever watchful eye of Mr. Walker, organist and choirmaster.

The decision, having been made with no dissenters gave Mr. Jack eastwood (a retired joiner from Bramham park), the dubious honour of receiving for a brief but hectic spell our undivided attention.

Since the bells had ceased to be rung by a team owing to the instability of the timber framing on which they were hung, a wooden structure was fixed to the wall in the belfry with six cords connected to the bell hammers, these being plucked in various permutations; he, Mr. Eastwood whose job it was to work this contraption (calling the faithful to prayer with a show of eagerness, and the doubters with reluctance) evidently already engrossed in his work and earning his keep judging by the sound escaping through the louvres in the bell chamber.

With our weapons to hand, which were; elastic bands, placed over the fingers as catapults ready for action; ammunition in the form of paper chewed to a hard pulp, then a quick dash round the tower and up the spiral staircase. Our prey, (with some justification naming him as such) was, due to the position of the playing frame, sat with his back to the door. Going into action quickly the missiles thudded on to the back of his neck and trilby throwing him out of his stride , as it were. A hurried descent was called for, knowing full well he would be loth to, or emulating the Roman sentries at Pompeia, would not desert his post. Panting slightly we entered the vestry, there, once robed the facial expression of cherubs was assumed, then in the stalls raising our voices in unison, glancing upwards to where the Almighty resided happy in the knowledge we met with his approval.

Harry
Tindall.

At a later date the tower was scaffolded, pointing and making good being carried out on the steeple with the weather vane being coated with gold leaf, this work carried out by employees of *Mr. hayley*, builder, Boston Spa. As the scaffolding was taken down, reaching clock level the clock faces were blacked and the pointers and numerals also freshened up with gold leaf, (incidentally the pointers were brought to the ground, and huge they looked). This part of the work undertaken by *Mr. Ryle*, painter and decorator low way Bramham.

Harry Tindall,