

GRAND TALE

I WAS BORN IN 1924 AT 383 HANDSWORTH RD, ON TUESDAY 7TH APRIL. IT WAS AN OLD STONEHOUSE and although it WAS A WARM HOUSE - THE ROOF WAS ALWAYS LEAKING AND WET PATCHES WOULD APPEAR ON THE BEDROOM CEILINGS. WE ONLY HAD AN OLD LOW STONE SINK, A COLD WATER TAP AND A COPPER IN THE CORNER FOR HEATING THE WATER ON WASHDAY, WHICH WAS ALWAYS A MONDAY. THERE ^{WAS} A SMALL FIREPLACE UNDER THE COPPER AS WE HAD NO GAS OR ELECTRICITY. THE COOKING WAS ALL DONE ON AN OLD FASHIONED BLACK FIREPLACE WITH OPEN, A SPACE AT THE SIDE OF THE FIRE, WAS FILLED WITH WATER WHICH WHEN HEATED WAS USED FOR POTS AND FLOORS, THE ONLY LIGHT WE HAD FOR YEARS WERE PARAFFIN LAMPS WHICH WERE PLACED ON THE MANTELPIECE, AS CHILDREN WE USED TO HAVE A CANDLE TO GO TO BED. (NO WONDER CHILDREN GOT BURN'T TO DEATH IN THOSE DAYS.) WE ONLY HAD ONE FRONT ROOM AND TWO BEDROOMS SO AS CHILDREN 2 of us would sleep in a single BED IN THE SAME ROOM AS OUR PARENTS, IN THE BACKROOM THERE WOULD BE A DIVIDING CURTAIN WHICH SEPERATED MY BROTHER IN A SINGLE BED, FROM MY TWO OLDER SISTERS IN A THREE QUARTER BED, AS WE HAD NO BATHROOM, WE CHILDREN USED TO GET BATHED IN A SMALL TIN BATH ON THE HEARTH. THE BROWN UPS A FLANNER WAS A BOWL OF WATER, AS TIME WENT BY WE HAD ELECTRICITY PUT IN AND A METRE FOR THE COINS, OUTSIDE THE WALLS WERE FULL OF RAT HOLES AND MY FATHER USED TO GROW RED RAMBLING ROSES AND PINK CLIMBERS TO COVER THESE UP

THE TOILETS AT FIRST WERE THE OLD MANS
WOODEN SEATS WHICH HAD TO BE SCRUBBED
AND PEOPLE THREW ASHES IN. WATER CLOSETS
CAME IN AS TIME WENT BY. MY FIRST
RECOLLECTION OF SCHOOL WAS SITTING
ON BABY CHAIRS AT A BENCH. OUR TEACHER WAS
CALLED HILDA CARTER AND AS THE SEASONS
CHANGED SHE USED TO DRAW A PICTURE ON
THE WALL IN COLOURED CHALKS DEPICTING
THE SEASON - HER AUTUMN ONE WAS A TREE
WITH LEAVES BLOWING OFF AND A CHILD WITH
A SCARF ON AND HER HAIR BLOWING IN THE WIND.
THE NEXT CLASS TEACHER WAS ROROTHY SENIOR
AND A GEOGRAPHY TEACHER AS I LOVED GEOGRAPHY
I GOT ON LIKE A HOUSE ON FIRE WITH HER.
KATHLEEN GRAY WAS OUR HISTORY TEACHER AND
AS I COULD NEVER REMEMBER DATES I DID NOT
GET ON VERY WELL WITH HER. OUR SCHOOL WAS
HEATED BY PIPES & RADIATORS WHICH WERE FED
FROM AN OLD FASHIONED STOVE (COKE FIRED).
IN THE HALL, OUR HEADMISTRESS WAS MISS
PATRICIA BIRKER WHO CAME ORIGINALLY
FROM BRADFORD - AND - EVERYBODIES FAVOURITE
WAS MISS KATHLEEN HIGGINS WHO WAS
OUR P.E. MISTRESS AND USED TO TAKE US
FOR KEEP FITS CLASSES AND MUSIC, THIS WE
ALL LOVED AND WE USED TO GIVE DISPLAYS
I WAS PRETTY CLEVER PASSING THE 11+ AT 10
BUT BECAUSE MY PARENTS WERE POOR, I WAS
UNABLE TO GO TO NOTRE DAME, A THING I
REGRETTED ALL MY LIFE. I WISHED MY
CHILDREN SHOULD BE EDUCATED IF THEY HAD
BRAINS. I CAME OUT OF 96 ST GIRLS AND
TOP IN ALL THE CATHOLICS IN SHEFFIELD.

I HAD MANY SCHOOL FRIENDS AND WE USED TO CONGREGATE ROUND BY THE RECREATION GROUND IN THE WINTER AND PLAY HIDE & SEEK. MY MOTHER ALWAYS HAD TO KNOW WHERE WE WERE GOING AND WE HAD TO BE IN BY 8.30 AM. WE CHILDREN WERE PRETTY SAFE IN THOSE DAYS. KIDNAPPERS WERE HANGED. IN SPRING WE PLAYED HOPSCOTCH, WHIPS ON TOPS, BATTLE BOARD & SHUTTLECOCK AND OF COURSE SKIPPING WAS ALWAYS POPULAR WITH ORANGE ROPES FROM - SCORAH'S FRUIT SHOP, RAMBOIS FOSTER'S FISH SHOP. MONEY WAS SCARCE SO WE HAD TO MAKE DO AND MEND. I WELL REMEMBER MY GYMSLIP HAD MORE DAYS THAN GYMSLIP. BECAUSE THERE WAS MUCH POVERTY IN THOSE DAYS THE BOYS WOULD GET FREE BOOTS. THE GIRLS WOULD GET A DAY OUT AT SKEGNESS FUNDED BY THE STAR (PAPER) I THINK. WHEN THE TRAIN (WHICH HAD A LARGE PICTURE OF GHOOPS THE CAT) ON THE FRONT CAME INTO THE STATION, THERE WOULD BE A LOUD CHEER FROM THE CHILDREN. GHOOPS WAS A CHARACTER IN A CARTOON IN THE STAR WE ALWAYS HAD A GOOD LUNCH AND DRINKS. I WELL REMEMBER GETTING CUT OFF BY THE TIDE ON ONE OCCASION, WE ALL HELD HANDS AND THE SANDS WERE JUST LIKE SOFT MUD, THIS WAS VERY FRIGHTENING AND I HATED SKEGNESS FOR EVER AFTER. I CAN REMEMBER WHEN IT WAS PICKED TO DANCE AT I THINK IT WOULD BE OWLERTON FOOTBALL GROUND, FOR THE CORONATION CELEBRATIONS. WE USED TO GO EVERY FRIDAY FOR A PRACTISE. THE HEALIGHT WAS TRACKS AND MILK WHEN WE FINISHED, AND ALSO EVERY CHILD RECEIVED A SOUVENIER.

OF AN OBLONG TIN OF CHOCOLATE WITH THE
QUEEN Y PHILLIPS HEAD (PICTURES) ON IT. I
ALSO HAD A PAIR OF NAIL SCISSORS.
EVERY XMAS WE PERFORMED A PANTOMIME
AND MOST CHILDREN WERE INVOLVED.
I MOSTLY WAS A DANCER IN THE CHORUS.
IN MAY WE CHILDREN WERE ALWAYS IN THE
CHURCH PROCESSION. ONE SEVEN YEAR OLD WOULD
BE PICKED FOR MAY QUEEN AND ONE FOR
CUSHION BEARER WITH 6 GIRLS & 6 BOYS AS
ATTENDANTS, WE HAD 2 PROCESSIONS IN MAY
ONE FOR OUR LADY & 1 IN JUNE WHEN
THE CROAKS WERE RING FOR THE SACRED HEART
THEN WE WOULD STREW FLOWER PETALS
FOR THE PRIEST TO WALK ON CARRYING
THE SACRED HOST IN THE MONSTRANCE.
THESE WERE ALL DAYS WE LOOKED FORWARD
TO, I LEFT SCHOOL AT 14 yrs HAVING PASSED
THE MERIT EXAM.

WE QUICKLY HAD TO LOOK FOR WORK THEN
AS WE HAD TO CONTRIBUTE TO OUR LIVING.
I HAD TWO JOBS AT ONCE TO CHOOSE
FROM. THE FIRST ONE WAS TO WORK AS A
HOUSEMAID TO DR O'FLYNN. (NO CHANGE) THE
SECOND ONE WAS IN A SWEETSHOP (SILWYERS) AT THE
BOTTOM OF ECCEHALL RD AND THE MOOR.
THIS AREA HAS NOW BEEN REBUILT. I ENJOYED
THE JOB VERY MUCH, AND STAYED THERE TWO YEARS, MY
WAGES WERE 10/- OR 50/- A WEEK RISING TO 14/- IN
MY 2nd YEAR. MY EARLY NIGHT WAS 6.0pm AND 9.0pm
WAS SATURDAY NIGHT. ALTOGETHER I WORKED 50 HRS A
WEEK ROUGHLY 1/2 A HOUR. WE USED TO SELL BROKEN
CHOCOLATE, WHICH WAS IN BLOCKS WHICH THE MICE
HAD NIBBLED AT ONE CORNER!!!

AFTER 2 YRS I ~~WENT~~ WENT TO WORK AT NODWORTAS
 HAVIMARKET FOR DOUBLE THE WAGES VIA 24/6, A WEEK
 IT WAS NICE TO WORK WITH OTHER GIRLS AND I
 MADE LOTS OF FRIENDS. WE USED TO HAVE FIRE
 DRILL SOME MORNINGS, WE WOULD JUST HAVE
 PUT OUR MONEY IN THE TIL, WHEN THE FIRE BELL
 WOULD GO AND WE HAD TO CASH UP AND COME
 DOWN INTO THE BASEMENT. I GOT ON VERY WELL BEING IN CHARGE OF FIRST
 TINWARE, THEN THE ELECTRIC COUNTER, AND THEN
 PART TIME SUPERVISOR, WHEN OUR SUPERVISOR WENT
 TO LUNCA, ALSO I WAS ALWAYS SENT UP TO
 THE OFFICE FOR CHANGE, CARRYING £100 AT A TIME
 MY CAREER WAS BROUGHT TO AN END WHEN
 I WAS CALLED UP IN 1943 FOR THE WOMENS
 LAND ARMY. I HAD NEVER BEEN AWAY FROM HOME BEFORE
 BUT AS I ONLY WENT TO CHAPEL-EN-LE-FRITH
 24 miles away, I SOON settled down. We did
 NOT WORK WEEKENDS SO WE WERE ALLOWED TO
 COME HOME. OUR WAGES WERE £2-50p PER WEEK
 OUR BOARD AT THE HOSTEL (EAVES HALL) WAS
 £1-25p LEAVING US WITH £1-25p, MY TRAVEL FARE
 HOME EACH WEEK WAS 4/6. I USED TO GIVE M
 MOTHER 10/- FOR FOOD AS SHE WAS POOR AND
 MISSING MY WAGES. THIS LEFT ME WITH THE
 PRINCIPAL SUM OF 4 shillings & 7 pence TO BUY
 SOAP, SHAMPOO, STOCKINGS, WRITING PAPER & STAMPS
 AND OTHER ESSENTIALS, TOOTHPASTE, CREAM & SWEETS
 AFTER A WHILE I WAS TRAINED TO BE A DRIVER
 AND THAT MEANT AN EXTRA 5/- A WEEK.
 THE HOSTEL WAS A LARGE HOUSE, ONE MILE
 HILL FROM THE VILLAGE, WE SLEPT SIX GIRLS
 A DORMITORY. WE EACH HAD A BEDSIDE LUPIN

and a slim wardrobe. There was a washbasin in each
dormitory and a bathroom opposite our door and
one downstairs. A dining room and a large
recreation room downstairs. We each had a bicycle
to go to our place of work. As I and many
others could not ride this caused a lot of amuse-
ment. We used to wobble all over the place and I
used to get off and walk round corners. The bikes
were handy in the evening for visiting the farms
for supper. I was invited once a week to Reeves
farm at Coombes, having worked there for 3 weeks

as my first job. Girls who worked further out
a field were driven in the van or were
allowed to hitch a lift with Sam Longson who
had a fleet of lorries and a garage also
a grocers shop at Chapel-en-le-Frith. Needless
to say we bought our groceries from him.

I was born into ^{THE} an old stone ^{TERRACE} house.
Rat Holes ⁱⁿ the walls outside. ^{THE} room
HOUSE ^{ITSELF} WAS WARM but the
Telltale marks on the bedroom ceiling
TOLD OF THE ROOF WHICH WAS IN BAD
REPAIR. 'I do not know how old the
HOUSE ITSELF WAS, I should think at
Least 100 yrs old.'
WE DIDN'T HAVE GAS ^{AT ALL} OR ELECTRICITY
UNTIL I WAS ^{AN} Perhaps 8 yrs ^{OLD} / ~~only~~ ^{only}
TWO PARAFFIN LAMPS ON THE
MANTLE SHELF AT NIGHT - which
gave off queer spooky shadows
FOR ALL THIS MY mum pegged her
own Rugs and there was always
a warm coal FIRE. In the front
room THE CURTAINS & CUSHION COVERS
WERE ALWAYS A MATCH OF LOVELY
FLORAL MATERIAL. ^{ONLY} ^{NOT} ^{AT} HOUSE WAS
THE ONLY QUEER THING ABOUT OUR
^{THE} BACK BEDROOM. ~~WAS~~ IT DID NOT
[^] HAVE A WALL ON THE STAIRS SIDE.

MORE OF AN OPEN LANDING - BUT MY MOTHER HAD THE IDEA TO PUT CURTAINS ~~DOWN~~ ALL ALONG ~~THE~~ STAIR SIDE ~~MAKING~~ IT WARM & PRIVATE. ~~THE~~ OVER THE STAIRS ITSELF IN THE BACK CORNER WAS A SHELF OF SORTS, WHERE ODD ROLLS OF WALL PAPER & PIECES OF SPARE MATERIALS USED TO BE KEPT. I ~~WAS~~ SOMETIMES WITH MY SISTER & I WERE IN THE BED ROOM THAT ROOM - WE WOULD HEAR RUSTLING COMING FROM THE SHELF - BUT - MY MOTHER ALWAYS SAID IT MIGHT BE A MOUSE AND WOULD USE TO DISMISS IT. SO WE NEVER EVER WERE WORRIED AS NOTHING TOWARD HAD EVER REALLY TAKEN PLACE. UNTIL ~~WE~~ I WAS ABOUT 14 YRS AND MY SISTER ABOUT 18 YRS OLD. WE HAD TWO ELDER ~~THE~~ HALF SISTERS

and ³ a half BROTHER. and, of course
the two sisters were now married
with their own homes. However
one of sisters husband was
to have to work night shifts
and she asked if one of us
could sleep there alternately as
she had a brand new Baby and
lived near a wooded area
~~which~~ part of their estate which
had yet not been built on.
She was rather nervous at
being left on her own with
such a small Baby.
As it was ~~not~~ quite near to our
^{about 10 minutes} House ^{walk} we gladly agreed and that
meant ~~to~~ one slept on their own in
our Back Bedroom. THAT WAS WHEN WE FELT 'IT'
THE FIRST TIME. I REMEMBERED
SLEEPING ON MY OWN - AND IN THE
MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT I REMEMBER

waking up suddenly to feel some
one stroking the right side of
my hair, I was terrified
There was nothing to see but
I felt its presence. I just
could not shout out even
though I knew my PARENTS WERE
in the next room and would
have come to see what was
the matter - instead I pulled
THE BEDCLOTHES OVER MY HEAD
AND PUSHED MYSELF DOWN THE
BED. I must have fallen asleep.
THIS HAPPENED quite frequently
after this first time and I
would never have said anything
to anyone - but - when it was
my turn to sleep out, my sister
had the same experience - THAT
waking in the middle of the night
& finding something stroking her
hair - she screamed out and

my father came running in to see what was the matter.

The next day I was told about this and promptly told them that the same thing had happened to me - the week before but that I had been too scared to shout out.

My mother said it might be our grandmother who was coming to look at us - and - gradually, I ~~got~~ got used to these 'strokings' - so much so - that I ignored them mostly and just slid down the bed with the clothes over my head.

Now it had been established that there was a presence in the Back Bedroom - other stories came out - it seemed that some years before when my mother's first

Husband was alive - he must have slept in that room - and once told my mother - never let any children sleep in the Back Bedroom, but never disclosed anything else to her. My two elder sisters and Brother used to occupy the room years before we were born but never had any experiences of any sort.

Time passed - and my Father who had chest trouble was very ill I with suspected pneumonia. One evening my sister who had been at work all day went up to have a talk with him - as was the custom - when any of the family became ill. On entering the Front Bedroom she was in a happy mood bent on cheering him up. - HIS FIRST WORDS WERE 'THANK GOODNESS YOU



are than a better mood than you
 were this morning. To which she
 replied 'THIS IS MY FIRST VISIT
 TO SEE YOU TODAY. I WAS
 LATE 'GETTING' UP THIS MORNING'.
 MY FATHER THEN SAID 'WELL A
 YOUNG WOMAN CAME IN THE DOOR
 THIS MORNING GAVE ME A NASTY
 LOOK THEN WENT OVER TO THE
 WARDROBE DOOR IN THE CORNER'.
 IT SEEMS 'SHE' WAS WEARING
 A LONG SATIN DRESS OR UNDERSKIRT
 WITH A BODICE TOP JUST WITH STRAPS
 AND I HAD LONG BLACK RINGLETS.
 THE PLOT THICKENED.
 Some time afterwards, ~~when~~ in
 the early morning when it was
 barely light - my mother was
 disturbed from sleep in the front
 bedroom by a noise of a footstep
 near the door - she opened her
 eyes

(8)

and saw a young woman with
Long Black Ringlets and same
Bodice DRESS enter the Bedroom -
~~Saw~~ on thinking at first it was my
SISTER - she said 'NOW WHAT'
meaning 'what is the matter' - but
the figure gave her a nasty look
and disappeared.

We never had any more sightings
of the APPARITION as far as
I know - but 'she' still used
to stroke my hair and lean over
me.

To prove this is TRUE - I
married at the age of 23 yrs
and for a while my young
husband and I lived at home
and slept in the Back Bedroom.
Years afterwards he told me
he had woken one night to
feel something leaning over him.

at FIRST HE ⁹ THOUGHT IT WAS
ME WHO HAD GOT OUT OF BED
But putting his hand down
the Bed he felt me at the
side of him, So you see
we all say she had come
to see who I had married.
I can tell you he didnt relish
the experience.

Some years later my Parents
moved into a Flat and the
HOUSE WAS Demolished - I
wonder where SHE went.

TO BE CONTINUED ???

Describing the House

AN OLD STONE TERRACED HOUSE WITH TWO ROOMS UP & TWO ROOMS DOWN. A good coal cellar with a Round Roof and Stone Table and Swinging Shelf suspended from the Roof where Food could be placed safely from Rats, deer mice, Hooks also in the cellar Roof where ham could be Hung. My Father was a good gardener and had a large allotment. He grew all our own vegetables and potatoes to last all year round and soft fruits. - Kept Chickens I FOR EGGS and THE Table - BRED Rabbits and Pigeons for the Pot. In the Kitchen was an old stone sink with cold water Tap only. A copper in the corner which had to be heated with a small

coal FIRE - THIS WAS THE ONLY ~~MEANS~~
^{means} ~~of getting~~ HOT WATER FOR WASH DAY.
An old BLACK FIRE PLACE
complete with OVEN - No other
means of cooking. Toast was made
by sticking your piece of Bread
on a Longhanded Fork and
holding it in front of the FIRE
FOOD TASTED MUCH BETTER IN THOSE
DAYS. WE HAD NO BATHROOM
SO THE ONLY BATH WAS A TIN
ONE KEPT IN THE CELLAR OR
OUTSIDE - FOR THE WEEKLY BATH.
THE TOILET ALSO WAS OUTSIDE AND
I can remember when there were
ASH TOILETS - A SCRUBBED WOODEN
BOARD WITH A HOLE IN IT and after
every use we would shovel house
hold ashes over refuse below.
A copper in the corner which
had to be heated with a small