

Father's Leg was Amputated in Farm Parlour

Sally Hannah Robinson was born in 1895 and interviewed in 1991

We were born at 14 Queen Street which was the farmhouse where mother was brought up. There were stables all around and a pump at the top of the street. All the streams used to run down from Tenterfell into the pump. The pump was for horses to come and drink and, it is said, that people brought some of their washing. Grandfather lived at that house. He was a carter. He was brought up in a very humble home and worked himself up. He had big heavy horses and wagons and built up a timber business for the Government during the war. Also Mr Strickland would come up on a Sunday when he came out of church to order coals to be delivered at Sizergh Castle and father would pick the coal up and take it during the week to Sizergh Castle. He hurt his leg one day and they brought him from Sizergh to Kendal. He had his leg amputated in the little parlour of the farm. Mother said they had only so much chloroform to give him and he came out before they had finished so he saw them stitching his leg up. Always after that I remember him with his trouser rolled up and fastened up. He had just one leg and a crutch.

She was very tough was mother. One day she slipped and landed on the stone floor. The doctor attended to it and broke it and said to Grandmother "Now Mrs Thompson wouldn't it be better if you had it bent?" She was the most beautiful writer but she never could straighten her right arm and she could hardly do her own hair. That's why they broke it and bent it so that it would be better for her than one hanging down. Poor sole she didn't grumble a lot.

I went to an ordinary elementary school just in Beast Banks. However, mother got a little bit ambitious for me and when I was old enough she wanted to send me to Kendal High School and in them days you had to pay. But I said "I'm not going." They seemed snobby and I'd rather have a little job. We had a biggish playground and I had a little stall and sold things, mostly sweets, on a Saturday and holidays.

We used to go to Inghamite Chapel on Beast Banks (that's been done away with.) We used to go there. There was a little lady used to come once a week and she played the organ and quite a few people from top Beast Banks went and we had quite a nice evening.

Auntie Sarah and I and my uncle also used to go to the Gillingate Mission. There was one grand preacher there – Ernest Jones. He was a traveller for K Shoes and he wasn't always available at weekends and Mr Gilkes used to take over and preach. At Easter time we went on Good Friday at seven o'clock in the morning then we could go for walks during the day. A lot of them went round the farms singing. Then at Christmas time we had a nice evening service and they had cups of tea and different refreshments.

We were very musical. We played our violins in the morning and I had piano lessons in the afternoon. Fred had his violin. I went from the High School to the Royal College of Music where I studied the piano under a number of teachers. One wrote a rudiment book for children when they were first starting.

I understand before Gillingate Mission was built. Mr Johnson used to give Mother and Father tickets when he brought up celebrities to St George's Hall sometimes. One duo was Dame Clara Butt and Kennerly Rumford "Land of Hope and Glory" was such a lovely song. Oh they were a lovely couple singing together. They said Kennerly Rumford proposed to Clara one evening while singing on stage.

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