

FAMILY RECOLLECTIONS BY DOROTHY SWANN

My parents, Charles Wallace Farrar and Sarah Annie née Armitage, were married at Hemingbrough Methodist Church on January 29th 1913.

At first they lived in a cottage at Burn, next door to my grandparent's house, Holly House then they moved to Temple Hirst, to a house near the river bank. I have been told that is where I was born in 1919. I was about 9 years old when the family moved back to Burn to live in Holly House, (I have been told that Holly House was once a public house called the `Shoulder of Mutton') the house my father's parents had lived in. It was a four square house containing four bedrooms, a sitting room and kitchen at the front, and a back kitchen and pantry. Outside was a big wash-house containing a fire copper, a pump from a well and a big tank for rain-water.

Father had a threshing engine and machine and went around farms in the area threshing corn for the farmers. It was a hard life getting up early to light the fire in the engine to get steam up before the men came to work. After a day's threshing he had to move the engine to another farm ready for another day; this work was usually carried out in the winter months, with dark nights and mornings. Father would come home very dirty and tired. Times were hard in those days, the farmers could not sell their corn so could not pay for the threshing, some paid in kind, potatoes or anything they had.

Dorothy & Father pictured with engine



When father was out of work he had to do any sort of job. I remember once he got a night job at the Hippodrome Picture House in Selby. He had a red uniform and looked very smart. Father was a Methodist Local Preacher and on Sundays went to various chapels conducting services. If it was an afternoon and evening service, some member of the chapel would invite him to their home for tea.

My mother's parents were very good to us in those days. They had a farm at Hemingbrough. I was sent on the bus to Selby, then on to another bus to Hemingbrough and brought back such things as eggs, bacon, butter, lard and anything they had to spare mother's sister made some of our clothes.

I attended the Church of England School at Brayton and had to walk about one-and-a-half miles to get there and took sandwiches for dinner, there were four classrooms.

In 1933, I left school at fourteen and went to work for mother's parents on Holme Farm, Hemingbrough. I helped in the house and on the farm. The house consisted of three bedrooms and an attic, two front rooms, a kitchen at the back and a dairy down three steps and under the stairs. For water we had a pump outside the back door (the well was under the kitchen floor) for lighting we had oil lamps, candles and outside stable lamps. The stable was next to the kitchen, on the wall near the door was growing a plum tree, under which was a stand with a bowl on for us to wash ourselves. Next came the granary steps, above the stable was the granary. The lavatory was next under the steps. We had a two seater with buckets which granddad emptied into the fold. Next to that was the pig-sty and the wash-house with a fire copper and mangle. After that came the coal house, the farm buildings and stack yard.

Apart from feeding and milking, there was no work done on Sundays. Granddad was a Sunday school superintendent and chapel trustee. The Methodist chapel was next door to the farm and we all went there.

We had cows and reared calves, sold milk at the door and made butter once a week. There were hens in the stackyard and we sold eggs. A pig was fattened for our own use. At pig killing time we made pork pies, sausages and brawn. We rendered fat for lard and gave a fry to relatives and friends. A fry consisted of liver, kidneys and pork pieces we could not use for pies etc. When relatives and friends killed a pig we got a fry back in return. The hams and sides were salted down and later hung.

The farm house had an attic with a stone floor in which apples were stored. In the winter when there was not much work on the land we would have a rug on the go. This was a piece of harding or sacking stretched over a frame into which we put clips with a peg. Clips were pieces of old clothes cut into pieces about an inch wide and four inches long. Sometimes we made a pattern, depending on the colours of the clips, often with a dark border. It took a long time to cut up the clips and to make the rug. It was a dirty job too for some of the clothes we cut up were not very clean. They were hard wearing and lasted long time. We always had something to do grandma knitted socks on four sock needles.

I stayed there about a year before, in 1934, going to work in a house in Burn belonging to Mr. Thurston who had a chemist shop in Selby. It was also a farm run by his son, Eric. It was not far from where we lived and I went daily, going home to sleep I stayed there for about eighteen months. I lost that job by falling off my brother's bicycle and breaking my elbow while on an errand for Eric.

In 1936, I went to work at Haddlesey Manor. It was a fairly large farm where men from the village came to work. The farm house was right on a corner between Haddlesey and Temple Hirst. There were five bedrooms, dining room, sitting room, two kitchens, two dairies and a large room we called the ball room. Two horsemen lived in it as well as me. There were four in the family, Mr. and Mrs. Stoker, John and Jenny. My wage was 12/6d (*approx. 63p*) per week which I gave to mother and she bought my clothes.

Dorothy & Friend – Temple Hirst



I stayed there for about three years after which I went to work at the Midland Bank in Selby. I was maid for Mrs. Brooks, the manager's wife. I was then getting 15/s (75p) per week and I was allowed to keep it and buy my own clothes. Life was different in a town. The food was not as good as on a farm. I had Sunday off and Wednesday night. I saved up and bought a bicycle for £8. 2s (£484 historical calculation today) paying one shilling a week until I could pay it all off, then I could go home on Sundays.

I made good friends in Selby. I went to the James Street chapel where there was a club which I joined. The meetings were held in the Sunday school.

In summer we often went on cycle rides. In winter there were indoor activities. I think I was there just over a year and was there when the war broke out. I lost that job through having my finger bitten by a horse. Blood poison set in and I had to have my finger nail and my toe nail removed. I was home for a while and being war time, I tried to join the WAAF, and I was graded 3C owing to the blood poison in my system.

I went back to grandma's at Hemingbrough in 1940 where conditions had improved. We had tap water and later electricity, there was a bus service to Selby and Hull. Soldiers were billeted in the village and food was rationed. We had ration books and clothing coupons.

The Methodist Club at Selby was turned into a services club so I went to help to run it. We worked on a rotor system.

There were airfields all round us at Burn, Riccall, Brighton and Pollington to name a few. Servicemen could come and have a snack, tea or coffee. There were games, darts, dominoes etc. It was during this time I met James W Swann, my future husband. He lived on a farm at Osgodby with his parents which I passed on my way to and from Selby.

We were married at James Street Methodist Chapel on March 20th 1947. My sister Gertrude married W Broom on the same day. The winter of 1946-7 had been bad, we had a lot of snow. When it melted the rivers became very full. On the way to Temple Hirst after the wedding we went through flood water.

Double wedding Dorothy & Jim (2nd & 3rd from left) Bill & Gertrude (4th & 5th)



Jim and I rented a house at Hemingbrough, we did not go away on honeymoon and went straight to the house. It was a Thursday when we were married, during Saturday night the river burst its banks at Barlby and flooded the villages in the area. Early Sunday morning Jim had to go to Osgodby to help riddle potatoes. Many people had to be rescued by boat and lost belongings. The army came with boats to help. We moved as much as we could upstairs and watched the flood water coming nearer, but it did not reach us and we did not lose anything. Jim was able to get to Osgodby by going a long way round.

The house we rented was small, 2 rooms and a pantry downstairs, and 2 rooms upstairs. We had to kneel to look out of the windows, but could look into the room downstairs through the bedroom floor. There was no running water and we had to fetch it in a bucket from the land-lady's (Miss Carr) yard. There were three cottages in the yard, the first occupied, the next was empty, and ours was the last. We had to share a bucket toilet, down the yard. It had to be emptied in the land-lady's hen run. There was a fire copper in the coal house for heating water to wash with. Rain water ran off the roof into a water butt which we used for washing. To have a bath we had a tin bath in front of the fire. The rain water was not very clear but was very soft.

We bought the furniture in the house from the land-lady for £30 and paid 7/6d per week in rent. In 1947, milk was 4½d a pint delivered to the door by friend Kathie. A large loaf of bread was also 4½d bought from Harry Hallet's shop. Paraffin for the lamps was one shilling a gallon from the same shop. We had a wireless set which ran on accumulators which had to be charged up. My brother Herbert did that for us, taking one away and bring one back. I still went to the farm to help grandma.

On December 23rd 1948 my daughter Carol was born and in April 1952 my daughter Mary was born, we had electricity by then. When Mary was about 2½ I went to work for Mrs. Falkingham, she came with me while Carol was at School.

In 1955, we got a Council house (No 7 Hull Road). We had been at Main Street for 8 years. Number 7 was a better house having 3 bedrooms, living room, small kitchen, pantry, and a downstairs bathroom. It had electricity and cold water. Outside was a cold house, wash house and a bucket toilet. We had to dig a hole in the garden and empty it ourselves, later the Council emptied for us. The bath had a cold water tap and we had to light the fire copper to heat water for a hot bath and carry the water to the bathroom. We could empty the bath by its plug. There was a Yorkist Range for cooking, at the side of the fire was a small boiler with a tap on the front. We had to fill it with a bucket and it heated enough for washing up etc. but not enough for a bath. Before we left in 1970, we had hot and cold water, a new fire place with a back boiler, and a water toilet.

We attended the Methodist chapel and I taught in the Sunday school, at one time there were about 50 children attending. At the Sunday school anniversary, the chapel would be full of parents and friends to hear the children sing and recite. After the Anniversary we went round the village singing hymns and then had a tea party. This took place during the week. We had a trip to the sea-side in July. I arranged the coaches sometimes too, the children travelled free, but parents had to pay.

Carol and Mary were christened in the chapel and they attended Sunday school when they were old enough.

We all worked hard for the Sunday school and chapel raising money to pay for prizes. We went carol singing round the village, had autumn fairs.

Hemingbrough had two pubs, the 'Crown' and the 'Britannia'. Cowlings had the post office. We had a fish and chip shop near us run by Mr. Driffill. Mr. Hallett had a shop too. Mr. Howden, who killed his own meat, was the butcher and there was a yard where bricks and tiles were made. Mr. Tune sold petrol, Mr. Faithwaite was the undertaker and joiner. There was a tennis club, first in granddad's paddock, then in Brick Yard Lane. A new school was built in about 1964, if we needed a doctor we had to go to Selby. A committee was formed in the village and money was raised to buy a field for athletics, cricket, football and a children's play area. The tennis club also moved there and I was elected treasurer. The field was opposite our house in Hull Road.

I worked for Mrs. Falkingham for about 14 years and later for Charlie and Fred Terry. Carol and Mary attended Hemingbrough School until aged eleven, after which they went to Barby where a new school had been built.

Carol left school at 16 and went to work in the sewing room of Wetheral's Contracts. When Mary left school, she went to work at Sturge's at Selby as a laboratory assistant.

We were at No 7 Hull Road for about 15 years. Jim's father had taken Millfield Farm over in 1920 when the house was built. Such farms were intended to give ex-service men a start in farming after the First World War. Jim had his name added on the

agreement, so that he became half tenant at 21, and when his father died, he could occupy the farm without having to apply for tenancy.

After Jim's father died in 1968, his mother moved into a hospital in York where she stayed for 9 years.

It took 2 years to modernise Millfield farm house as it was in a bad state. It had three bedrooms, kitchen, scullery and pantry, coal house and a bucket toilet across the yard. It was a small holding belonging to East Yorkshire Count Council, headquarters at Beverley. They put in new windows, fire places, sink, cupboards, new floors upstairs, a back boiler behind the kitchen fire place and they took part of one bedroom to make a bathroom. Electricity was put in, an outside water toilet built and the outside of the house was repainted. The farm buildings consisted of a Dutch barn, barn with granary above, stable, half covered fold and two other buildings. There was 67 acres of land. Some grass, other arable and 16 acres privately rented.

Dorothy & Jim riddling potatoes at Millfield Farm



On the farm we grew wheat which we took to Rank's flour mill in Selby. Barley partly sold and partly fed to the cattle which we kept in the fold. Oats we grew for cattle food. We had a mill in the barn for crushing grain. Potatoes were grown for sale, they were stored in a pie at the end of the field until spring when they were sorted and sold keeping the small one for sets for next year. We grew sugar beet under contract to the British Sugar Co. who provided the seed (which we had to pay for). Jim took the beet to the Selby factory (until it was closed) by tractor and trailer. When it closed we had to employ a lorry to take it to York

In 1982, after twelve years on the farm, Jim and I retired and bought and renovated a railway cottage, No 1 Baxter Lane. We have an acre of land, half of which is farmed by a farmer, the rest are lawns and flower and vegetable gardens.