POVERTY AND PROSPERITY:

A portrait of rural lives

in nineteenth century Hunshelf Parish

by Phyllis Crossland

Our part of Yorkshire is the hilly area of the Upper Don Valley near Penistone's old market town. When looking at the sweep of grassy hills on a bright summer's day I recall to mind a phrase used by Winston Churchill in one of his memorable speeches – 'broad, sunlit uplands.' Though the words had a figurative meaning for him at the time, they literally describe for me the land I see around. Our uplands are not always sunny of course. In winter, when biting winds drive sleet and snow across from the Pennines, they present a different face.

My husband and I have lived in this area all our lives as did several generations of our forebears. It is interesting to reflect on the kind of lives they lived over the past two centuries and more, and how they were affected by the inevitable changes of time. At eighty-seven, my husband was a farmer all his life until crippling arthritis reluctantly compelled him to stop working about four years ago. He insists that times were never better than they are today. This of course is a debatable statement but, by delving into original records and listening to stories passed down by word of mouth from one generation to the next, one is in a good position to draw comparisons and perhaps form an opinion.

The parish of Hunshelf, where we lived until recently, is situated between the Greater and Lesser Don valleys and was originally one of several townships forming the larger parish of Penistone. During the eighteenth century most of its land was owned by the prestigious Wortley family of nearby Wortley Hall. Occupying the larger farms on the more productive land were a few freeholders who were classed as 'gentlemen' in the society of that day; the rest of the population were tenants of smaller farms and cottages. My great-great-great-grandfather Thomas Bramall was one of these, paying to the Wortleys a rent of thirteen pounds eleven shillings in 1804 for twenty-five acres at Trunce Farm.[1]

In common with all the land in the Penistone area, the type of farming was essentially mixed. Cattle were kept for milk and meat, sheep for meat and wool, pigs for ham and bacon, and poultry for eggs and the table. Oxen were used as draught animals until the early nineteenth century but by that time horses were much in evidence too. Cereal crops grown were predominantly oats and wheat, with barley and rye grown to a lesser extent, also some peas, beans and turnips. One of today's roads in Hunshelf is significantly named as Pea Royd Lane. Potatoes were not grown on a large scale until the beginning of the nineteenth century. In an age when modern fertilisers were lacking, manure was all-important. An account for 'Tillage for 1758' at Hunshelf Hall includes the item: `In 6 Acres - 63 Loads of Manure £4-17-0'[2]. One can imagine that, in the absence of mechanical spreaders, the loads would be somewhat smaller than by today's standards. Even so, the task of carting manure onto the land and spreading it was a physically demanding job when it had to be forked manually onto and off the cart and spread around with the same implement. No doubt my great-great-great-grandmother Ellen would be accustomed to husband Thomas's smell lingering awhile after he had been engaged in such work at Trunce. She would not have to be too fastidious about cleanliness when all her water had to be fetched and carried from a well. It is interesting to note the field names of my ancestors' farm as shown on an old map of 1801[3]. Scarr and Whinney Piece were, and still are, rough ground with steep inclines. Well Field was understandably near the house, Cow Streams and Holme were down by the river, while Clover Close and Milking Close were the most productive fields. Did Ellen milk her cows out there? I think perhaps she did.

[1] Sheffield Archives (SA) Wh M 648

[2] SA Smith Collection 517/17

[3] SA Map of Wortley Lands in Hunshelf

Until the early years of the nineteenth century much of Hunshelf land was common or waste, being on steep hillsides. As the name implies, commons were used by the whole community but the numbers of animals and geese that people were allowed to put on depended on the size of their holdings. Those with most acres could put most stock onto the commons. The open field system of agriculture prevailed in Hunshelf until the end of the eighteenth century when certain freeholders made an agreement to enclose the town fields and apportion them amongst themselves. This has been regarded as not strictly legal but it happened nevertheless.

In 1707 a lengthy dispute occurred between the Wortley lord and the freeholders of Hunshelf. It concerned a part of the common land which the freeholders had enclosed. They were cultivating crops on it when Wortley's men arrived on the scene and: 'did break and Enter and their grass and come there growing with their Cattle and otherwise Did Tread downe Eate up and consume and 20 Roods of plaintiffs' stone wall there lately erected did cast and throw downe…[4]

The freeholders brought an action against Edward Wortley, claiming the right to enclose the land under an old agreement drawn up by Edward's ancestor Richard more than a hundred years previously. The Wortley representative, however, declared the document to be invalid, saying it was likely to be a forgery. The dispute dragged on for four years and eventually went to arbitration. From various depositions made by the Wortley tenants during the dispute we can learn there was activity on the common land at that time. Ralph Parkin, tenant at Trunce Farm before my ancestor went there later in the century, said: 'whenever they had occasion century, said: 'whenever they had occasion gott Stone and Slate on <u>all</u> or any the Moores belonging to the said Mannor as They thought fit and did also burne Bracken and Gott Peates and Turfs on the said Moores from time to time.'[5]

Enclosure of the common pastures brought changes to our area as indeed it did throughout the country at large. Hunshelf's Inclosure Award was completed in 1813 and the Honourable James Stuart Wortley-Mackenzie gained the lion's share, being allotted more than 38% of the total area. This included the whole of Black Moor Common which amounted to ninety-two acres. He also received Green Moor and Trunce Commons, Wire Mill Common, and a considerable part of Hunshelf Bank. Altogether he was awarded nearly three hundred acres. The next main beneficiaries were the Walkers of Hunshelf Hall. They had already gained sixty acres from the enclosure of the town fields a few years earlier and now received another ninety-eight. At the western end of the township William Fenton Esq. of Underbank Hall received seventy-four acres, fifty of these being the Snoddenhill Common. So it was that most of the land was allotted to those who already had the most.[6] The poorer folk were the losers because they had little or no land of their own and had now lost their right to the commons. We can suppose there was some resentment and ill-feeling towards the landowners. Yet, we can think the Award did not perhaps have such drastic effects in Hunshelf as in some other places. While it was mainly a rural area, there were other forms of employment apart from agriculture. There was a wire-mill in the Greater Don Valley to the north of the township and a forge at the eastern end. In the Lesser Don Valley, Hunshelf's southern boundary, a textile mill was in operation for a short time; it later changed use to become a blacking mill.

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[4] SA Sp St32/1

[5] SA Sp St 32

[6] Barnsley Archives (BA) Hunshelf Inclosure Awards

Eventually Samuel Fox came into the area from Derbyshire and founded a steelworks on the site. Families on Hunshelf Bank and at Snoddenhill were engaged in the weaving of cloth in their cottage homes. In course of time the quarrying of stone would provide employment for many.

Following the Inclosure Award the Wortley landlords profited greatly from their newly gained acres. Most of the land was added to their small farms whose rents were increased accordingly. At Trunce Farm, for example, where my great-great-great-grandparents were still in occupation, their acreage was more than doubled by the addition of Trunce Common land. Much of this was rough, however, and quite unsuitable for cultivation. Even parts which could be made to yield needed time and effort before they could produce crops. Whereas, in 1804, Thomas was paying a rent of £13-11 s for twenty-five acres, in 1851 his son James paid £36 for fifty-two, much of it gorse and bracken[7].

To augment his farm income and so enable him to pay the greater rent, great-great-grandfather James embarked on a new venture: that of butchering. His old slaughter place can still be seen at Trunce Farm. A description of the buildings in 1851 includes a 'butcher's shop', implying that perhaps customers came to the farm for meat[8]. Some of it was also hawked on horseback uphill to Green Moor, which by the mid-nineteenth century was becoming more populated, and downhill to houses along the Don Valley whose occupants worked at the wire-mills. My great-grandfather Joseph, who was James's son, helped his father in this work. Many years ago I had his story told to me by Joseph's grandson, an elderly relative of mine. Being a typical old Yorkshire farmer himself, he spoke plainly; 'Aye, I remember mi gran’father tellin' me 'at when he wor a lad he took meat on horseback from t' Trunce up t' hill to t' delvers on Green Moor and down to t' wiredrawers on t' Owd Mill Lane. He said he could allus get shut o' t' rough stuff to t' delvers but t' wiredrawers were more finicky and wanted t' best cuts.' We wondered whether this was because the delvers were hungrier than the wiredrawers. Quarrying stone was certainly heavier work. Or was it because the wiredrawers were better paid and so could afford the better cuts? Whichever was the case, my great-great-grandfather James's venture succeeded, and his business continued to expand with each new generation of his family until today when it is run by the sixth generation, though not at Trunce.

Besides his butchering James did carting work at the new stone quarries. One of the farm buildings listed in 1850 was 'stable for four horses[9]'. This still exists and, judging by the height and depth of the feeding troughs. the horses would have been the big, heavy type suited to hauling heavy loads.

Though stone had been got from the wasteland for more than a hundred years, it was only after the Inclosure Award that it was quarried on a large scale. Having acquired the whole of Green Moor and Trunce commons, the Honourable James Archibald Stuart Wortley-Mackenzie was quick to realise their potential and leased part of the land for quarrying to Reuben Marsh of Penistone. Sometime later a family named Brown purchased part of the lease. The first two quarries, known as Isle o' Skye and the Delph, were on Green Moor. The next to come into operation was on land adjoining Trunce Farm. It was named the California or Cali, probably because of mining going on at that time in the American state of the same name. In a survey of 'Lands in Hunshelf 1875' the Quarry in Trunce Farm' is owned by Brown and Booth! Mr.

[7] SA Wh M 656
[8] SA Wh M 654
[9] SA Wh M Valuation of Farms

Benjamin Brodie Booth had come to Yorkshire from Suffolk and was the last owner of New Biggin Quarry. This was very deep, and men had to descend to the working levels by monkey pole', a type of ladder which consisted of one long pole with iron rods driven through until of equal length on each side. The men went up and down the poles, hands and feet on the iron rods. Some of the quarried stone was said to be of excellent quality and was transported far afield besides being used locally. Sets were sent to towns to be used on the streets as cobble stones, while some of the paving stones in the yard outside the Houses of Parliament were reputed to have been of Green Moor stone. Quarrying continued to flourish until the early twentieth century when concrete was introduced and the demand for stone lessened. It was physically hard and dangerous work, many fatalities being recorded. One of these was William Illingworth who was killed by a fall in the quarry when thirty-three[10]. His small son Samuel became a quarryman too when he grew up and he too lost his life when a horse and cart backed into him and knocked him over the edge. He was thirty-nine and, like his father, left behind a young family.

Due to the quarrying work, Hunshelf's population showed a rapid increase during the nineteenth century.[11] Whereas Green Moor had formerly been just what its name implied - merely a moor - it became the main centre of Hunshelf's population by 1900. More houses were built to accommodate workers from places further afield. Other incomers found lodging with local folk. Living at Trunce Farm in 1871 were two families who were not farmers but stone masons[12]. The group of houses in Well Hill known today as Office Fold were so named because they were originally offices connected with the quarrying. Lower down the hill, the present-day Pond Cottage was formerly The Travellers' Rest, a tavern where tired workers could pause awhile to quench their dusty throats on the long, uphill, homeward walk from New Biggin.

Some Hunshelf men were styled as clothiers throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. They farmed a few acres besides but income from this was insufficient for a living, particularly on Hunshelf Bank where the ground was steep and stony. Weaving was done in their homes, where all members of the family had to help with various processes connected with it. One clothier whose name frequently occurs in old records was Jonas Ramsden. He had a few acres on the Bank and a cottage called Gin House. This has since undergone alteration and is now renamed Well House. Jonas had a daughter Ann who married Charles Askham, a weaver, and their daughter Elizabeth who later became Mrs. Cuttil lived to be more than ninety years old. Before she died in 1916 she related how, as a child, she had often helped her father and his brother at Over House where they lived. One of her jobs was to help them tread pieces of cloth that had been treated with 'weetings'. She explained how a piece of cloth, when taken off the loom, was spread on the floor and sprinkled with old urine. As one piece was lecked another piece was laid over it and more 'weetings' sprinkled on top until several layers were formed, whereupon all members of the family would trample on it. The cloth was then taken to the fulling mill to be scoured. Describing the treading process, Elizabeth told her listener: 'and a nice stink ther wort i'th' oil aw con tell ye, but we noan bothered abaht that i'them days[13]. A little further along the Bank from Gin House was Birken-under-Edge, another homestead where cloth was made. The premises have been extensively altered in recent years and the house is now named Berton-under-Edge. In the nineteenth century the place was supposed to

[10] BA Penistone Parish Register and death certificate

[11] BA History of the County of York Vol III

[12] BA Census of Hunshelf population 1871

[13] Stocksbridge Library Joseph Kenworthy Papers

be haunted by Nancy, a relative of Jonas Ramsden. It was said she had fallen into a vat of boiling liquid used for dyeing wool and that sometimes later three loud raps could be heard at the back of the set-pot. When this happened folk would say, 'Listen, there's owd Nancy; she's at it again.' This tale was told by an old local lady, Martha Newton, who died in 1910 aged eighty-eight. The house was certainly a scene of tragedy in 1911 when an aunt of my husband was burnt to death there, aged twenty-six, along with her three-month old baby. Oddly enough, Berton-under-Edge has just acquired some new residents who claim to have heard strange noises coming from the place where Nancy's set-pot had been fixed. This was before they had heard anything about Nancy so were most astonished to hear the story.

Another area of Hunshelf where clothmaking flourished was Snoddenhill, or Snowdenhill to give it its present name, at the western end of the township. The farms of Tenter House and Cloth Hall are significantly named. For a short period at the end of the eighteenth century there was a mill at the bottom of Hunshelf Bank by the Little Don river. It is recorded as having been a cotton mill, but I think linen might have been manufactured there. One of its young employees was Hannah Birkenshaw, a girl of eight, who lived near Green Moor. As Hannah Pickford in later life, she told how she wore a leather apron when working because of the damp. The mill was sold in 1807 and then used as a blacking mill. Eventually Samuel Fox came into the area from Derbyshire and founded a steel works on the site. Many Hunshelf inhabitants were employed there, including girls as young as nine. They were classed in the records as ‘wireworkers' and were engaged in the making of crinoline frames to support the fashion of that day[14].

There is much evidence of child labour in the area. At the end of the eighteenth century, Mary Birkenshaw, aged eight, was employed at the Old Watch House in Thurgoland village with others of the same age. Their work involved putting wires into wool cards. The cards would be in great demand for combing out wool in preparation for spinning. Mary lived to be a very old woman and spoke of her work to William Laycock who lived near the Tilt Wire Mill. He passed on the information before he died in 1910. Charles Illingworth, a lad of nine, worked at the Old Mill by the River Don. As an old man he told of the work he and other boys performed in the 1830s. Their job was to scour the wire with a mixture of sand and oil placed on old stockings or cloths. Their rate of pay was twopence halfpenny or threepence a stone. Elizabeth Day who later became Mrs. William Bramall and lived at Bradfield was scouring wire when only eight years old for Mr. John Dyson at the Tilt Wire Mill[15].

Prior to 1834 when the Poor Law Act was amended the township had to support its own poor. Overseers were appointed to ensure this was done and a written account kept of expenditure. Hunshelf's township meetings were held at the old house now known as Peck Pond. This dwelling was originally an inn called The Brown Cow and continued to function as a public house until the nineteenth century. During the time when town meetings were held there the occupants were Thomas and Martha Pitt and the house was usually referred to as 'Pitts'. From the overseers' accounts it appears that ale consumed at the meetings was paid for by the township as entries such as these are common: 1784 Paid for Ale at the meeting at Christmas £0-13s-6d' and '1799 Paid for Ale at Widdow Pitts 2s 8d'[16].

[14] BA Census of Population 1861

[15] Stocksbridge Library , Kenworthy Papers on Wiredrawing

[16] BA Hunshelf Parish Council Records HPCR (Overseers Accounts)

Most of the township's expenditure, however, went on dole money, clothing, coals, and other requisites for the folk who were unable to support themselves. For example: '1802 Paid Thos. Brammal for Coal Leading £4-9-3' and '1803 Pd. T. Brammall for leading Martha Horsfield Coals 17s-8d'[17]. In 1816 several items of expenditure were recorded for the Pool family. These included: 'John Pools a pair of blankets 10s, a bed 7s 6d, a pair of stockings 2s, a pair of breeches 5s 6d, a Coat 7s 6d, 3 yards of cotton 3s, Going to buy them 5s, To Mary Pool for Looking to her Mother 9 weeks at 2s -18s[18].' Records for 1817 include: 'John Poole funeral £1-15-3, Coffin and Furniture £1-5-10, Hannah Pool new shifts 6s 6d, Exley Crossland new Shoes 11s Od, Geo. Tingle Shirt and Bedgown 7s lid, Ann Brammal Child Cloaths 16s Od Shoes and Sherts 7s 2d, Relieved her with 7s 6d, Thos. Earnshaw for new smock frock 8s Od.[19]'

Apart from receiving free fuel and clothing, poor folk were sometimes helped with medical treatment. For example: 'Sarah Micklethwaite Doctor Bill £2-19-6' and Doctor Booth Phisicking Paupers £8-17-5[20].' Sarah was the wife of Benjamin Micklethwaite, first schoolmaster in Hunshelf. It is not clear whether the money she received was for treatment of her own family or of the scholars. Perhaps it included both. The doctors' bills seem excessive but probably covered a lengthy period. Other items concerning the school about that time were:

‘Wm Newton School Coals and leading one year £3-10-8d' and ‘Paid School Rent £3-3-0d.' In 1819 there was `School mossing ards and lime 6s 0d' and 'School Master Wages 13s 0d[21].' At that time moss was generally used to block up cracks and draught holes in houses.

The accounts for 1828 show how a man named John Otter was provided for during his last days and at his funeral. From February 16th to 23rd the sum of 13s 6d was paid to Thomas Roebuck for attending to John, then on February 25th a list of items was recorded as being expenses towards his funeral. This included: 'Correns and eggs 1/3, Meat 121b at 7d a lb - 7s, Tobacco pipe and letters for Coffin 2/8, pound of shuger 9d, Coffin 20/-, Paid George Roebuck for finding meat for attenders and burying dress of John Otter £1-10s, Paid Mary Eyre for making Burying dress of John Otter is 2d, Paid at Pennistone for Dues and Licours l0s 6d., Earsh fetching and taking 3s 0d, Paid for Leeches Setting on 6s 0d[22].'We may wonder what kind of man John Otter was to warrant 121bs of meat being consumed at his funeral and paid for by the towship. The use of leeches for blood-letting was common for at least another ten years after they failed to cure poor John. In 1836 Joseph Poole was given 'Relief by Leeches' at a cost of 2/11. The following year two more recipients of the same treatment were Thomas Earnshaw at a cost of 2/6 and Edward Elliott for 2/11.

Edward was mentioned in an earlier account in connection with a physical injury in 1817: 'Paid Captain Wood for setting Edward Elliott shoulder 2s 6d' and later, in 1849, when he received £9-15s, being 'aged and infirm.[23]'This amount had accumulated by weekly payments of three shillings.

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[17] Ibid
[18] Ibid
[19] Ibid
[20] Ibid
[21] Ibid
[22] Ibid
[23] Ibid

Captain Wood was probably the recognised bone-setter for Hunshelf when he treated Edward Elliott's shoulder as he received another six shillings from the overseer in the same year for setting Martha Wordsworth's leg. Perhaps he was an ex-soldier who had gained experience in dealing with broken bones during his army service. In 1811 the overseer paid a larger sum of £5 for "George Beardshall thigh setting"[24] but we are not told who performed the operation. We can only imagine that, whoever administered to these unfortunate people, the treatment would be excruciatingly painful in the absence of anaesthetics.

Overseers of the poor were responsible for the welfare of bastard children and provided single mothers with money for their upkeep. Before this was allowed, journeys to Wortley were necessary for the cases to be assessed. In 1804 the overseer wrote, My gate to Wortley about Hannah Crossland Liing in ls 6d[25]. In 1809 four journeys were made on behalf of another single parent. The first, recorded on Feb.3rd stated, 'Going to Wortley with Ann Hammerton to Father her child 2s 6d.' The next two, on Feb.17th and May 12th were similar, each costing 2s 6d. On May 26th the entry was written as 'Journey to Wortley with Ann Hammerton to filiate 3s 6d and Book signing filiation Orders 4s Od.' While these amounts would be due to the overseer, Ann herself received payment of £l- 10s and a further 6d, the account stating 'To relieve Ann Hammerton.'[26] Was Ann a problem case to warrant all those journeys to Wortley? In any event she continued to receive money payments for the next few years.

In Hunshelf children of the poor were often put to work for farmers or clothiers of the township. The overseer of the poor helped to place them and signed the indentures confirming the agreements between them and their prospective employers. One such indenture of 1743 bound a poor boy named Ephraim Mitchell to work for Joseph Rhodes until he attained the age of twenty-four years: 'During which term the said Apprentice his said Master well and truly shall serve, his Secrets shall keep, his Commands (being lawful and honest) at all times willingly shall perform, and in all Things as a good and faithful Servant shall demean himself towards the said Master and all his Family.' The employer Joseph Rhodes had also certain obligations to fulfil. He had to promise and agree that he will educate and bring him up in some lawful and honest Calling, and in the Fear of God; and that he will find provide for, and allow unto the said Apprentice sufficient, wholesome and competent Meat, Drink, Washing, Lodging, Apparel, and all other Necessaries meet for such an Apprentice, during the said Term; and at the end of the said Term shall find, provide for, and deliver unto his said Apprentice double Apparel of all sorts; (that is to say) one good and new Suit for the Lord's-Days, and another for the Working Days, of Linnen, Woollen, Hose, Shoes, and all other Necessaries meet for such an Apprentice to have and wear.' Acting on the boy's behalf were William Roebuck and John Bedford, stated to be Churchwarden and Overseer of the Poor of the township of Hunshelf. Several other signatures included that of George Walker of Hunshelf Hall[27].

Some later indentures include, in 1786, Ann Pool being apprenticed to John Pearson, Ruth Pool to William Roebuck, and Thomas Pool to Jonathan Denton. In 1800 Benjamin Pool went to Gilbert Wainwright, farmer, and Joseph Pool to George and Thomas Roebuck, clothiers. In 1810 Joseph Earnshaw was apprenticed to John McNichol, weaver, and Benjamin Earnshaw to Robert Steel, farmer. In 1812 Thomas Campbell went to John Hague and Priscilla Pool to John Bedford, farmers. In 1819 William Crossland, aged ten, was apprenticed to George

[24] Ibid
[25] Ibid
[26] Ibid
[27] Ibid

Hawksworth, Elizabeth Tingle, twelve, to Joseph Grayson, farmer, Thomas Walton to Robert Steel, farmer, William Fawcett to Joseph Roebuck, miller, and William Speddings to Joseph Couldwell, farmer.[28]

In 1835, while working for Thomas Couldwell, Hannah Poole's clothing consisted of: 2 Pare Stays, 4 Petticoates, 3 Pare Stockings, 4 aprons, 3 shifts, 1 night cap, 1 shole, 1 bedgown, 2 frocks, 3 bonnits, 2 pare shoes (one new) at Rotherham 1 frock, 1 shole, 1 apron, 1 night cap.' The garments were examined by William Moore, Overseer in Hunshelf for that year[29].

The Poole family lived on Hunshelf Bank and are much in evidence in township records of that time. On March 15th, 1834, an agreement was made between Joseph Pool on the one part and the Township of Hunshelf on the other part that the said Joseph Poole shall catch the Moulds in the said Township for the sum of Six Guineas for one year.' Joseph made his mark to confirm the agreement[30]. It is likely that he was the same person who had been apprenticed, in 1800, to Roebucks the clothiers. Almost certainly he was the Joseph Poole who received the leech treatment in 1836. The place on Hunshelf Bank where the Pooles lived is still referred to as Poole Fowd by Hunshelf's oldest inhabitants. As with most other houses on that hillside, the old dwelling has been given a new look and the new name of Edge Cliff.

Also living on Hunshelf Bank about the same time as the Pooles was a family named Marsh. The father died early, leaving his widow to cope with several young children. One of them, a boy called George, told his life-story when an old man to a writer who recorded it in 1912[31]. George signed the account with a cross. The story tells how he and his family fared under conditions of appalling poverty and hardship during the 1830s and 1840s. His mother once took five of them to the Guardian Room at Wortley to apply for further relief as she was unable to keep them on her allowance. The chairman said he could keep them on that amount, whereupon she replied, 'Well, the children are here; keep them!' and went away, leaving them behind. George said, 'We were there about three hours and when the meeting was closed a man named Matthew Stanley who kept a shop in Wortley churchyard took us home again in a spring cart with eight loaves of bread, one and a half stone of flour and six pounds of treacle.'

From an early age George Marsh worked to support himself. He milked cows in return for a good breakfast, drove a mule for five pence a day and carted coals. He worked in various pits. In one of these he was only allowed one candle a day but as there were three people working together they burnt first one candle and then the others, but only one at once. In another pit he was hurrying in belt and chain' from daylight to dark. He went barefoot until he was eleven. Yet, despite the deprivations of his early life, George grew up into an independent adult. He was thrifty and industrious. Apart from his regular job as a miner he did other things such as pig-killing, gardening and selling his produce. He later became a coach driver and eventually owned his own wagonettes. With the help of his sons he built up a thriving transport business. By the time of the 1850s and 1860s destitute people in Hunshelf came under administration of Wortley and Penistone Unions. In 1852 two Hunshelf inhabitants were sent to Wakefield Asylum for reason of 'Lunacy', but after the Union Workhouse was built in Penistone in 1860 people 'of weak mind' were accommodated there. Most of the inmates were either physically or mentally sick, orphans, bastard children, or people too old to work whose families could not

[28] Ibid

[29] Ibid

[30] Ibid

[31] The life of a Yorkshire miner a century ago (typescript)

support them. During the 1860s many deaths occurred in the workhouse. Maybe the sufferers were sick and undernourished when admitted, though it is possible there was an epidemic of some kind. One forty-year-old Hunshelf woman did die there from dysentery in 1863[32] Penistone Workhouse accommodated whole families of poor local folk, also vagrants who wandered in from far-away places. When an outbreak of smallpox occurred in 1928 it was said the disease had been carried by vagrants from Barnsley, but this was not proved. It would appear that, while life in the Institution was spartan to begin with, things became better as time went on. In 1871 it accommodated ninety-five inmates whose ages ranged from two months to eighty-five years[33] The staff included a nurse and a schoolmistress, so the children would be receiving at least some of the education to which they were entitled by that date.

The earliest mention of education in Hunshelf is in the early nineteenth century when the overseers of the township opened a school in the cottage then known as Berton-under-Edge. It was owned and occupied by William Newton to whom a rent of three guineas was paid. The first schoolmaster was Benjamin Micklethwaite, aged eighteen, who was provided with free fuel. The school was fitted with a range, a table, and eleven forms. When the cottage needed repair in 1822 the school moved to Well House nearby. Amongst the scholars here were four poor children whose fee of threepence was paid by the township.

In 1836 Mr. Micklethwaite moved to the Town House at Green Moor onto which a school had been built by public subscription. He also opened a shop here for the sale of provisions. When he retired as master in 1844 his successor was Mr. Thomas Roebuck, an ex-soldier who supplemented his pay by breaking stone for road-mending. Following the formation of a School Board in 1877 a new school was opened in 1880 to accommodate 120 to 150 scholars. The first schoolmaster was Mr. Hardcastle who was helped by his wife and a pupil teacher, fifteen-year-old Ada Thompson. At that time copybooks were 1/6 a dozen, slates 3/6 a dozen, geography and grammar books id each. School fees were 4d weekly for children over seven years old and 3d for younger ones. After 1891 education was free but children had to pay for their books until 1896.[34]

During the nineteenth century it was common practice in rural areas for children to be kept away from school to help with haymaking and harvesting. The Penistone area was no exception. My great-grandfather Joseph, who had taken meat to delvers and wiredrawers as a boy, had moved to take a bigger farm at Oxspring. His son, my grandfather, said he and his brother were often kept at home during such times. Joseph would take a look outside in the early morning, then go back into the house and remark, 'It's goin' to keep fine today so we shall want you lads in yon hayfield.' Alternatively, he might predict, 'It's lookin' like rain today so you might as well get off to school.' Joseph's forecasts were invariably correct. As an old countryman he had learned from long experience, by the look of the sky and the feel of the wind, what the weather was going to be.

Grandfather Bramall was walking two miles to a little school at Thurgoland during that time of the late 1860s because the Oxspring school of today had not then been built. There was, however, a small 'dame' school in an old white-washed cottage on Oxspring's Bower Hill and here it was that grandfather received his earliest education. The 'dame' was an elderly lady named Rosamund Laycock who taught young children for threepence a week. When

[32] Death certificate of Ann Bramall

[33] BA Census of population for Penistone 1871

[34] Early History of Hunshelf Primary School (Mr W. E. Spencer)

reminiscing in later life about his earlier days, grandfather told his daughter, Owd Ros didn't teach us much. We only learnt us A B Cs an' us numbers, an' did a bit o' writin'. She allus 'ad a good fire goin' though if it were cowd and we'd be sat round it to say us lessons while Ros 'ud be sat in 'er rockin' chair doin’ er knittin'.' What a far cry from an infant school classroom of today! Grandfather's education must have been considerable upgraded after he graduated to the Thurgoland school as he ran his farm successfully in later life and continued the butchering business started by his grandfather in Hunshelf. My maternal grandfather, born in 1866, had to leave school at eleven to start work although his schoolmaster had reckoned him to be one of his best scholars.

The bigger farms continued to employ labourers besides their own family members until well into the twentieth century. Though new machinery was invented it was not always affordable in our area. Most of the farming methods in work such as muck-spreading, cultivating crops, and rearing stock remained the same as they had always been. One year in the 1890s there was sickness in the family at Hunshelf Hall so, because of the labour shortage, two men only were employed to cut the wheat crop in the farm's Town Field_ They cut it with scythes and as the area was twelve acres it took them a whole week, working continuously. One of the men engaged on this laborious task was my husband's uncle. Hunshelf people who occupied small holdings tended to stay in the locality though weaving in one's own home had ceased long before the end of the nineteenth century. Work was available instead in the quarries and at Samuel Fox's steelworks in the Little Don Valley.

At that time work was physically hard for men and women alike so Sunday was welcomed as a day of rest. A chapel was built in Green Moor in 1812, the first load of stone having been carted by my husband's great-great-grandfather Nathaniel Crossland. It would seem 'Natty' was a God-fearing man as he gave all his sons biblical names. They were Simeon, Ezra, Zephaniah, Solomon, and Eli who was my husband's great-grandfather. Natty was no abstainer, however, being reputed as having drunk the first pint of beer at Berton-under-Edge's new beer house in 1863. His home was the old small-holding of Dun Hill where he lived to the age of ninety-two. At Hunshelf Hall the Couldwell family were in occupation from 1816 to the end of the century. They provided hospitality on Saturday nights for the parson who came by train to Wortley station, then walked up Well Hill to Green Moor and on to the Hall. The purpose of his visit was to conduct Sunday morning service at the chapel but, because there was no train early enough on that day, it was necessary for him to arrive on the Saturday. After sleeping overnight at the Hall it was his custom, before going on to the chapel, to hold a family service in one of the large rooms. Mr. Couldwell would assemble his family, house-servants and farm staff to take part. After the service the farmer was wont to say to his men, 'Now lads, it's back to work for you all.' Though he respected the Sabbath he was also keen that essential work should be done.

One Sunday morning, following the house service, Mr. Couldwell went out to feed the sheep himself, accompanied by the parson who had a bit of time to spare before he was due at the chapel. Whilst bending down to put feed into the sheep troughs, the farmer received a vicious knock from behind; quite unexpected, it caused him to overbalance. The blow came from the granite-hard head of an enthusiastic ram eager to be fed, The physical hurt, coupled with some loss of dignity, brought out a mild oath from the farmer. When informing a neighbour of the incident he told him, 'Aye, an' I should have said summat a lot stronger if his Reverence hadn't been there,' which implies that a parson was regarded with some awe in those days.

The landowners, of course, were looked upon as 'betters' by the lower orders of society. The Wortleys, owners of most of Hunshelf property and land, were created Earls of Wharncliffe during the nineteenth century. Their life-style was typical of most aristocrats at that time. Hunting and shooting were country pursuits when they associated with neighbouring gentry but much of their time was spent in London, visiting the opera, attending balls, and often going down to Brighton. During the 1830s Lady Caroline was exchanging correspondence with Queen Adelaide who was evidently one of her friends[35]. Yet, while these landowners appeared to have an enviable life-style, some of them certainly knew deprivations during childhood. Sent away to school at an early age, they were often at the mercy of harsh masters. In 1812 several letters were written to Lady Caroline and her husband by their two young sons at Harrow.

Their eldest son, John Stuart Wortley, aged eleven, wrote requesting money: 'Dear Papa, we have to buy all our own candles for our study so I shall want two pounds as we shall want them very often, and then we must go into the tart shop sometimes and buy a tart or two, else we cannot live.' His younger brother Charles informed his parents: 'Today I have been floged for the first time for making a noise in the pupil roome but it was a great shame of Harry to send me up for one of the boys pushed me off the bench but I did not care for the floging for I did not cry.' In another letter John asked for tea, sugar and cocoa to be sent.[36]

Now that the twentieth century too is fast slipping into history, we can marvel at the phenomenal changes it has brought. During its first decades, however, the way of life was only slow to change in places like Hunshelf. In 1900 the pace of life was essentially a walking one and the means of transport a horse and cart or, in the case of the wealthy, a horse and carriage. There were very few cars in the area before the Second World War. People walked two or three miles to their work and children to school. Though public transport operated in and around Penistone from the 1920s there was none in Hunshelf.

The Great War of 1914 of course made an impact throughout the area when many farm lads, as well as those in other jobs, were eager to join the army. Some returned maimed and others did not return at all.

Soon after the war ended a change in land ownership took place in Hunshelf. Lord Wharncliffe, whose ancestors had been lords of the manor for centuries, sold off most of his farms, including Trunce which had earlier been tenanted by three generations of my own ancestors, Thomas, James and Joseph Bramall. The house had been enlarged in 1843 to accommodate two families but some of the old outbuildings are still intact. The wooden two-seater earth closet is there today, never used but retained as a relic of a bygone age. My husband Charles and I have spent the past nineteen years at Trunce until retiring to our present home just a few weeks ago. Like great-grandfather Joseph we have come to Oxspring too, though not to take a bigger farm!

Before going to Trunce Farm we were at Hunshelf Hall for more than thirty years. This large house was formerly a residence of the Walker family, freeholders and 'gentlemen' during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Four generations of them were named George, one of whom rebuilt the Hall in 1746 onto the remaining part of an earlier one that had been destroyed by fire. During his lifetime George took a leading part in parish affairs as can be seen by his signature on various documents. When he died, he was buried inside Penistone Church like his father before him.

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[35] SA Wh M 564
[36] SA Wh M 562

During our time at Hunshelf Hall Charles would never have claimed to be a gentleman in the Walkers' sense of the word. He was happy to be a successful working farmer. His early farming life was spent at his father's Hill Top Farm on Green Moor when farming literally was horse-work. All the various cultivations were done by horse and manpower, cows were milked by hand from a three-legged stool, in winter by the feeble light of a lantern. Corn was cut with a scythe; pigs lived in a sty and hens ranged freely on the grass. After moving to another farm for a short time in 1940 he took Hunshelf Hall in 1946. One of the first things he did in that house was to uncover one of the bedroom windows that had been blocked in 1818, presumably to avoid payment of window tax[37] The panes of glass were thicker than those of the other windows, while scratched on one pane were the words Dear Miss Walker' in old-fashioned writing. The window frame was also thicker than those of the others, so probably this was an original 1746 window whereas the others would have been renewed at some later stage.

During the 1920s and early 1930s there was much poverty in the whole of the Penistone area. The 1926 strike and the closure of Cammell Laird steelworks caused real hardship. When people fell ill they could not always afford to pay for a doctor. Tuberculosis claimed many young lives. Most children left school at fourteen, even though some were doing well and enjoying their studies. They considered themselves lucky to get a job in a mill or on a farm in that time of unemployment. Entrance to Penistone Grammar School was only by gaining a scholarship or by paying fees. Scholarships awarded were few and fees out of the question for the majority of local folk. Because so many children were undernourished and sickly, cod-liver oil was made freely available for them in school around 1930.

In those days children did not expect entertainment to be provided for them by adults. They invented their own games and improvised equipment where necessary. Boys playing cricket would set up a tin or slab of stone for a wicket, while a piece of wood served as a bat. Goalposts for football could be stones on the ground or lines marked on a wall. Similarly, when girls played rounders, stones, pieces of wood, or wall corners were the 'posts'. In the absence of a proper bat, fists were used for hitting the ball. Small girls played 'house', marking out the rooms with small stones and 'cooking' on pretend fires if they had an old pan or two. Their 'families' were dolls made from old stockings or rags by an industrious mother or older sister.

Skipping was always a popular pastime when a piece of old clothesline had often to serve as a rope. Whip and top, hop-scotch and ball games could be played on one's own if necessary. Indoor games were mainly ludo, snakes and ladders and draughts, when older children would play with the young ones. Cards could be played by several people, a favourite game being Newmarket. This involved betting on pretend horses, but buttons had to suffice for stakes instead of money. Older girls usually had knitting or sewing on hand during winter evenings.
The wireless, as radio was first called, made its appearance in some homes during the 1930s. It was a real boon to country people, especially the old and housebound Women could still carry on with their sewing, knitting and mending whilst enjoying their favourite programmes. Listening to the nine o'clock news on an evening seemed to bring far-away places like London nearer to home.

The cinema was growing in popularity by this time and a night out at the 'pictures' was considered the ultimate treat. Of course, it depended on a family's money situation as to how often one could go. For people living on outlying farms or other places away from the bus

[37] SA S.C.439

routes, an outing to the cinema could mean a walk to get there and another to return home. This was no deterrent, however, to a young person seeking escapism after a long day's work.

Before the Second World War very few married women in our rural area went to work outside the home, unless it was to help a local farmer at potato-picking time. They had plenty with which to occupy themselves at home when washing was done by hand and food prepared by their own efforts. They baked their own bread, pies and cakes, and cooked substantial meals for all the family. Carpets were swept by hand and stone floors scrubbed on hands and knees. There were fires to be lit and kept burning throughout the day, which meant the carrying of numerous buckets of coal. Ashes from those fires had to be disposed of, while black-leading the old fire-range was a time-consuming chore.

In those days it was vital that nothing should be wasted. Clothes were passed down in a family from one child to the next. When finally such things as coats, jackets, trousers and skirts were unfit for further wear, they were cut into small strips and pegged into rugs for the floor. Girls' dresses were mostly home-made from bought material and had to last for at least two years. They were made with tucks in the bodice which would be let out as the child grew broader and a deep hem at the bottom so that the dress could be lengthened as she grew taller. In summer blackberrying expeditions resulted in delicious jam or jelly to spread on the home-baked bread. The Second World War of course brought profound changes to the rural way of life. Farm labourers left the land to join the Armed Forces or to take jobs in the steelworks where there was now employment for all. Farmers engaged land-girls to supplement their own family labour. They were urged to plough up more land for growing food, an added incentive being the offer of ten pounds an acre for growing potatoes. Farmers had to notify the authorities as to the size of their acreage so that the appropriate amount of grant could be assessed. In case any of them was tempted to add on a half-acre or so, a man appointed for the purpose went round checking on the areas. The method of measuring was simple. In striding out the length and breadth of the potato piece a stride was recognised as equivalent measure to a yard. At least one local farmer erred to some degree when declaring his potato acreage; whether or not this was intentional is not known. The official who came to check his statement was a big, well-made fellow who strode easily round the field. After making quick calculations he insisted that the area of potatoes was actually smaller than the farmer had reckoned. The payment to be received would therefore be less than expected. Naturally the farmer felt a little aggrieved. Telling his neighbour about it he said defensively, ‘It were yon chap made it out to be less than wor it is 'cos he took such long strides.'

Our rural area seemed rather remote from the war to begin with in spite of rationing and news reports. Yet, the Blitz on Sheffield on 12th December 1940 brought home to everyone how real and how near it was. A bomb dropped on Fox's steelworks but luckily there were no fatalities. Quite early in the war the safe' rural areas of the country were accepting child evacuees from London and vulnerable parts of southern England Penistone and the surrounding district came into this safe category. In Hunshelf several families accepted children into their homes, three or four being accommodated at Hunshelf Hall where there was plenty of space. At Tunnel Top, Oxspring, twin brothers from Shoreham in Kent were given a good home on Walter Bramall's farm. This was actually the farm to which my great-grandfather Joseph had moved when he left Trunce almost a century earlier. The evacuees adapted well to life on the farm, so much so that, when the war was over, one of them elected to stay on in Yorkshire and be a regular worker for Walter. Lucy, his wife, was a cheerful, kindly woman whom the boy regarded as a second mother. He remained with them for several years, but contact was always maintained with his mother in Kent and visits were exchanged from time to time by the two families.

Though austerity continued for a long time after the war ended, life in our rural areas was changing more quickly and work becoming easier due to modern innovations. Being 'off the beaten track' though, Green Moor was one of the last places to receive them.

Our years at Hunshelf Hall from 1946 to 1979 were a time of tremendous change. First came the change from well water to mains water. The earth closets were then replaced by flush toilets and, instead of a tin bath, we revelled in the luxury of a modern bathroom. The biggest breakthrough came in 1956 when electricity was at last brought to us. No longer did we have to fill paraffin lamps to give us light. In due course we obtained the various modern conveniences such as electric cooker, vacuum cleaner and washing-machine - luxuries which townsfolk had long enjoyed. On the farm horses were replaced by tractors, while the acquisition of more machinery meant that Charles could eventually manage with only one worker. Hand milking soon gave way to machine-milking which was later updated onto the newer system of pipe-line and bulk tank. We kept dairy cows, beef cattle, sheep, pigs and poultry. The crops we grew included hay, cereals, potatoes, turnips and kale.

During the last twenty years Hunshelf Hall farm has updated its methods still further and become even more mechanised so that it can be managed with a minimum of labour. Since the 1950s labour had posed a problem because workers were attracted by bigger wages to the steelworks. The acquisition of cars by more people also meant they could take jobs further afield. Though our uplands are still designated as rural, the lives of people living here now are vastly different from what they were in 1900 or even in 1960. In some respects they are not dissimilar from the townsfolk's way of life. Most of us now have cars and have travelled in aeroplanes for holidays abroad. We have televisions, recorders and computers. And now my teenage grandson is urging me to continue my education still further. You've got to get onto the internet, Grandma: he insists, 'you must keep up with the times.' With regard to improving my vocabulary I have already learnt that a chip is not something you eat with fish, hardware is not something you buy from an ironmonger's shop, and that a mouse is not a furry little creature.

As we approach the Millennium we might think back to the days of leeches and bone-setters, to families like the Pooles and the Marshes and poor men such as John Otter. We might think of grandfather learning his A B Cs at the dame school and perhaps to more recent times of the 1930s, when housework was drudgery and people died because they could not afford to pay a doctor. While bearing in mind the ills of today, I still agree with my husband that life at the present time is preferable to that of bygone days. This applies particularly to us in this rural area of Yorkshire.

From my window here I look across the Don valley to the wide expanse of hilly pasture at the other side of the river. The only living creatures to be seen are a few sheep put there to graze two days ago. The whole length of skyline is clean and uncluttered; the only house within my view is the one in which I was born. Willow Lane Farm stands on the hill at the top of Holly Lane, down which my father walked to Oxspring school a hundred years ago. His walk from Tunnel Top took him past Willow Lane Farm, where he lived later, and down Holly Lane to the river. Crossing by the old, eighteenth century pack-horse bridge, he then carried on up Willow Lane and so along the road to school. The route he took then is often walked today by ramblers who appreciate this area of unspoilt countryside. My own walk to school was down Bower Hill where I passed the old white-washed cottage that had been Rosamund's school. It has since been replaced by a modern bungalow. While enjoying the benefits of modern life in this rural area of Yorkshire we can still look out onto landscapes which have maintained the

same appearance for generations. Our uplands still are broad and green, and tomorrow they may be sunlit.

SOURCES

Sheffield Archives (S A)
-Wharncliffe Muniments (Wh.M.)
-Spencer Stanhope Records (Sp.St.)
-Smith Collection (S.C.)

Barnsley Archives (B A)
- Hunshelf Parish Council Records (H.P.C.R.)
- Census of Population for Hunshelf 1861 and Penistone 1871

Stocksbridge Library; Joseph Kenworthy Papers

Typed copy of Life of a Yorkshire Miner' by 'Miner', given to me many years ago.
Oral information given to me direct over the years and recorded at the time in various notebooks, from:
- The late Mrs. Gladys Hill (my aunt)
- The late Mr. Walter Bramall (father's cousin)
- The late Mr. Ernest Bramall (my father)

More recently my husband, Mr. Charles Crossland, has supplied me with late 19th and early 20th Century farming history and, of course, my own memory takes me back quite a long time!