

A Swaledale Woman

Memoirs of Maggie Joe Chapman

I'm really what you'd call a Swaledale woman, from Muker - but I've got a lot of connections here in Askrigg. I married an Askrigg man of course, and a lot of my mother's family used to live over here. My mother's auntie – that was Sarah Banks – started the firm of Banks's (now a large animal feed concern) here in Askrigg. I remember her very, very well. She was left a widow with three children, and there was not Social Security then, nothing of that as we have today, and she was left without very much money. Well, they were building the railway up Wensleydale at the time (1869 -78), so she started to bake bread for the navvies, because there were no bakeries around in them days; then she started to cook a bit of meat for them. And then, at Easter time, she used to boil up a lot of eggs and dye them for the children – that sort of thing. She struggled and struggled, and she opened this shop and when her son left school, she sent him away to be taught the business proper. And that son was the great-grandfather to young Billy Banks that's here today. So that's how the Banks's business started, from nothing at all until it's a big business today.

Now this old Sarah Bank's sister was my grandmother. She came from Muker; and her name, before she married, was Hunter. That was a very familiar name in Swaledale, and there's quite a lot of Hunters left there yet. Well, my mother was born before Grandmother was married – which was a *terrible* thing in them days you know, although it's nothing thought of today. The boy responsible didn't suffer, it was only the girl who was shunned. She was never thought of any more, you might say. My granny was a wonderful woman, a real goer-ahead sort of woman; but wi' her having Mother no other man would look at her – they'd never think of such a thing. So, she went home, back into Swaledale. And eventually she married an oldish man, who we called Grandad, though he wasn't really, as he was an old man on two sticks when we knew him.



Granny Scott c. 1905

But she did have four children to him – he managed that all right! His name was Scott, but my mother's name was Hunter because she kept her mother's name. Being illegitimate went through life with her; people didn't look down her, don't think that because she was a well-liked woman – but she always felt it. There was always that little bit of a chip on the child, which was all wrong. And when what we called wir (our) grandad died, Mother didn't get any of the bit of money he had.

My *real* grandfather, my mother's *real* father, became the biggest horse dealer in the north of England. And when it came to Askrigg Hill Fair, he always used to come to Hill Top and have his lunch with us. But me mother never liked him coming, because she never got over being illegitimate, you know. So, she was always in a bad temper when he came, and one time she snapped at him about something. I'll always remember how he walked up to her and put his hand on her shoulder, and he said '*Belle, I always owned you were mine, and*

you are mine; and I've never run off it'. But me mother she didn't want to know and she'd never be friends with him. Us kiddies thought he was grandest fella living, because he always gave us a shilling each!

He never had run off it mind, he would have married me granny, but she wouldn't have him, no. In them days lads like him had no money, you know; they worked at home and they didn't get a wage, they never got a penny. So, he had no money to marry with, and *daren't* tell what he had done, at first. Because Grandmother was a servant girl in the house, you see and he was the son of the family; and it was a big let-down for the son to marry the servant girl in them days. But when it did come up, his two old aunties that lived there with him said, *'You'll get her married!'* and he says *'I can't marry her, I've nae money'*. So, they gave him a hundred pounds (which was a lot of money in them days) and set him off walking over to Muker to marry me granny. But *she* wouldn't have him, because by then she'd got stout with me mother and she says *'I'm not going into no church a disgrace!'* She never did have him, and afterwards he went over to Reeth and started taking horses to fairs, and he became the biggest horse dealer in the north of England. Woodward was his name. And it's so funny, none o' my sons is really horse-minded, but me youngest daughter knows horses from A to Z, and one of her daughters has gone into horses, and wins all sorts o' prizes.

So, me granny married an old man, which she would never have done normally; because she was a very smart woman, my granny. She did very well for herself, because the man she married had a farm of his own, he was a landowner; but all the same, they never looked like man and wife. She was a very smart, a thrifty woman and he was on two sticks.

I remember me 'grandfather' and grandmother very well, because us children often used to stay there, until they died. Grandfather died first, and then she died a few years later when I was ten; so that would be in about 1909. She died in her fifties, but she was an old woman to us. She was a real goer-ahead, I had curly hair and she used to get a comb and go straight through it, until tears were rolling down me face. And t'old grandfather, that was on two sticks, used to get hold of me and say *'Cum here, me lass, she hasn't a bit of sense!'*; and he used to brush away at me hair so quietly. You know, them's lovely things to think about when you get old.

But Grandmother was a clever woman this way, she was a good nurse. Which they didn't train nurses then; but Granny went when every baby was born in Muker, and when anybody died, she'd go and lay them out. It was usually the same person who brought people into the world in a village, and who laid them away, and Muker was her place. And when the children weren't well, people used to send 'em to Granny's; *'Mam's sent me to see what you think this spot is, or t'other spot'*. She was very clever with herbal remedies too, but I don't really remember what they were.

I know we used to have treacle and brimstone – ugh! We had to have that every morning in springtime, when we had been through winter, they started in March giving us this brimstone and treacle, to clear all the badness out on us that's got into us in winter. It was horrible! Then there was Epsom salts, mother used to mix 'em up and put 'em in a three-gill bottle, and come up with a wine glass for each of us to have in bed. We used to have a fern plant halfway down t'stairs, and it was wonderful it didn't die 'cause it used to get half o'mine.

Yes, Granny was a very clever woman, and very clean; but she was as hard as iron, nothing affected her. I remember me grandad say, when she had been called out to a confinement, 'What have you got Margaret, this time?' And she just stood and said 'I've got a bouncin' lad but it's deed'. Just as if a cat had lost kittens! 'It's deed' she said, 'and thoo nivver saw sike a set (such a fuss) as she's makkin' in thee life – Lord, it's a repairable loss!'. I should only be a little girl, and I didn't know what it meant but it stuck in my mind.

Mind she was a very *charitable* woman. As I say, she married financially well; they had their own farm and considered fairly comfortable, wealthy even. And on a Sunday morning – I can see them yet – she used to put a great big pan onto t'fire, wi' a big hunk o'beef and a great square o'bacon in, and boil that. And then the soup of that (we called it broth) she put into basins, and us children took it out to all the poor people of Muker – and that was their Sunday dinner! They were ready wi' their basins, and some were coming nearly to meet us. Old David always met us and took it back hisself; he was ready for it.

Because there was no pension then, you know, there was nothing and there were quite a lot of poor people in Muker. I think they were old lead miners, mostly, because a lot o'lead mining was taking place over there. One couple I remember, the father was an invalid and he couldn't work, so we used to take quite a lot of stuff to them. Grandfather and Grandmother were comfortable, and they didn't gather a lot of money together and bank it, like we do today, they did that sort o' thing with their money – it was much better. They didn't crave for money, same as we do. As long as they could carry on, they were just as rich as we are, that has two or three farms and all sorts.

Us children used to stop wi' Granny to be near school, because we lived right up at top, two and half or three miles away; so, we used to stop with Granny during the week and go home Friday night. But after they died, we walked to Muker every day, wi' a sandwich in wir pockets, a drink o'water to wash it down with; and walked three mile back, wi' a good dinner to come back to. There were four of us; two boys and two girls; well, there's three of us still living and the youngest is eighty, so it didn't kill us did it? And you know, we knew every flower and bird's nest on the way to that school!

We used to walk from our farm, Hill Top; it was right on the top and it was the first house you came to after you left Askrigg on the road to Muker. My grandfather, my father's father – had been tenant there before my father. His name was Guy, and in them days Muker was full of Guys, same as Askrigg was full of Chapmans. Now my grandfather Guy was killed with a bull, one he'd brought up himself. It was a Sunday morning and me grandfather used to play the bass fiddle in Muker church. There was an orchestra in the church, them days; me grandfather played the bass and there was a fiddle, and I wouldn't know whether they had drums or not, but they had four or five in the orchestra. Well, me grandfather had put his best Sunday clothes on to go, and he passed this pasture where the bull was and there was some heifers there, and he heard one of them in service and he wanted to see which one it was. That is why he climbed over the wall they think. And they always think that the bull didn't know him in his Sunday clothes and that is why it gored him. My father said he



hadn't a rag left on him when they found him; it had gored him to death. He was a really good man, my grandfather, one of the best living men there was; everybody said he wouldn't play a dirty trick on anybody. But the bull didn't know him in his Sunday best.

We never kept a bull after that. We used to bring bulls up and keep 'em one year to service for calves, and then off, it was sold. We never kept an old bull after that – me father never would.

So, after that me father, Robert John Guy, took over the farm. And he bought all his stock in before he married me mother. He was born about 1865, so he was seven years older than her, but he was a wonderful man and they were very happy together.



5. The Guys' wedding group. From left to right: John Peacock, Robert John Guy, Isabella Hunter, John Scott, Robert Brown. Seated: Elizabeth Raw, Elizabeth Guy, Elizabeth Whitfield (1895).

Robert John Guy & Isabella Hunter's wedding

My mother would have married before, she was a Muker woman and engaged to be married, but her young man died of consumption a few days before they should have married. A lot died with T.B. then you know, they died like mice. And they said she went into a deep mourning and never went out for a long time; it was a big shock for her. But two years after she lost Jim, she was introduced to me father, and he was badly wanting a housekeeper so they married, and they were very happy together.

Now Hill Top farm was on an estate that belonged to two old ladies, the two Miss Clarkson's that lived at Satron; there were four or five farms belonged to them, which was considered quite a lot in them days. They were born at Hill Top, was Miss Barbara and Miss Mary, and they used to often get their manager to fetch 'em up in a cart. He had a terrible set because she was twenty stone, was old Barbara! He used to have get his shoulder to her, to push her

onto cart! So, they used to come up and they'd never knock – we'd just be messing about in t'house; they'd open the front door theirselves, and open gate at bottom o'stairs, and go up to bedroom where they were born, to have a look. They always did that – as though it was going to do them any good!

They'd never *ask* to go, and of course you couldn't say anything. Landladies and landlords were strict in them days; you had to knuckle under them because they could push you off any minute, there wasn't a law to stop them. You had to curtsey to 'em, if you saw 'em, and lads would take off their caps. I remember the Mayor coming up from Richmond, in first car there was in Muker, and we had to curtesy to him.

Well, me father, evidently, had lived with these Miss Clarkson's as servant boy; he had been their man, their manager. So, he knew all their whims and fancies, and they thought a lot about him; he was their pet. And when me mother married him, when she was a blushing bride, he said that old Barbara and Mary would be coming to see her, to look her over. So of course, she primmed herself up a bit, and put a cloth on and laid out a very nice table. She buttered the bread, and had cheese and jam and the rest, and a nice cake. But when they got sat to it, old Barbara says *'Tha knows Bob, thoo can't do with baith bread, butter and cheese; thoo'll nivver pay thee way if tha's gotten a wife that does that'*. And me mother sat there and she didn't what to do, and old Barbara said *'Tha wants nowt wi' all these cakes and stuff. I'll tell thee what, me lad Bob, there's some butter put into that cake. Thoo'll nivver get t'rent paid, if tha's gotten an extravagant wife. Dry bread's what tha should be having'*. Well, Mother was furious and she never forgave them. But she cured 'em because when they came up ever after, she just gave them dry bread. She really did.



Barbara & Mary Clarkson

It must have annoyed her all the more, because she really was a marvellous housekeeper, and very frugal. We hadn't to waste one crumb of bread, not one crumb was wasted. We were brought up very carefully, but there was always plenty to eat; we had a big dinner *every* day and not just on Sundays. It was there for us when we came back from school. We always had roast beef on the Sunday, and we used a lot of rabbits – we had plenty of our own rabbits – and we reared our own chickens.

Yes, Hill Top was a good farm. It was the best farm the Miss Clarkson's had, and it was a lovely house; very well built in 1852 so it was really quite new. And it was considered a big farm then, although it wouldn't be now. We had about 180 lambing ewes, which was quite a lot; and then we used to milk 14 cows, and we'd generally have about 80 cows altogether, counting calves. They were Shorthorns, because there were no black and white cows about then; in fact, if there was a *bit* of black on a cow, it was a disgrace to a farmer! We bought our own cows up, we didn't go to market and buy them, as they do today. We'd bring them up from calves, and keep them until they had their first calves at the three year old; then

they might have two calves with us, but then we'd sell 'em off. You see, we didn't go in for milking selling like some; we had no old cows with great big bags (udders), tottery old cows that could hardly stand. No, we had lovely young cattle.

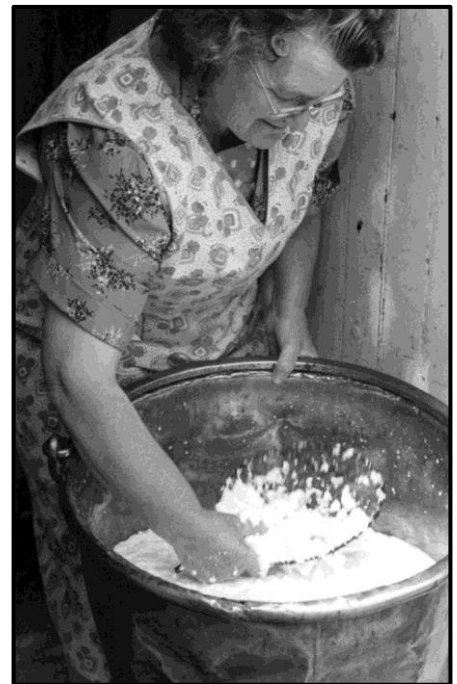
We didn't sell milk, but of course we made a lot of butter and cheese – that was a good part of our income. We'd make butter in t'old fashioned tumbler churn; which Father churned, because Mother always said that if she churned the butter, she couldn't make it – her hands would be too hot from churning and you *must* have a cool hand to make butter. We used to make a hundred and some pound of butter a week. That was done *before* the cattle went out to grass, which was the last week in May – they wouldn't go out before that. Because the cows didn't calve in't autumn time you know, same as now; they start calving in January and went on until April, and then finished; so, there'd be plenty of milk for the summer, for the cheese.

Then, when they got turned out, Mother would start to make cheese; she'd start at end o' May and she'd go on maybe 'til end of October – because after that they wouldn't have much milk. They were lovely cheeses, *real* cheeses – I can taste them yet; they were a crumbly cheese like a Wensleydale but a bit different.

To make cheese you need to start by getting the milk to blood heat; it's got to be warm but not hot, *not* hot. Mother used to stand it in buckets in hot water, in the side boiler. Sometimes people had cheese kettles, but we never had one – ours was a sort of tin. It had to be at blood heat, then you put your rennet in; we always bought Fullwood's and Bland's, and I suppose they'll be making rennet yet. And then you put the lid on, and you draped rugs or something on to keep it warm – because your house could be like an iceberg sometimes, you know. It stood for an hour, and you took and opened it and then you had to what we called 'break it down'. You didn't stir it hard, you just stirred it very gently with a kind of round wire grill on a wooden handle – I think they called it a breaker -and it just helped to separate the curds from the whey.

So, the cheese curd went to the bottom and the whey came to the top. You'd let it stand like that for perhaps three-quarters of an hour, until she'd settle right down, and then would take the whey off and that went to the pigs. When the whey came off, we had a big wood to put on top of the curds; that was a weight, to weigh as much more of the liquid out as you could.

Next, she used to cut the curd into slices and carry it to a lead bowl (you couldn't do without a *lead* bowl), and she'd spread out slices there to drain as much liquid away as could. Then at night, she crumbled it into the cheese vat with her hands, very gently; she didn't squeeze it, just crumbled it with her finger ends. And then it went into the cheese press.



Mary (Isabella's daughter)

We had them old-fashioned presses, built onto the house – they're still yonder at Hill Top – where you had a great big stone to press the cheese. Well, you put it in there at night and pressed it all night, then next morning you went and shook it out, put a clean cloth in the vat, turned cheese over, tipped it back into vat, and pressed it again, and next night it was ready to come out and go into pickle. We always pickled our cheese; we didn't salt it. You made this pickle of salt and boiling water, and it had to cool for two days before it could be used. Cheeses would swim in this pickle a day, then you turned 'em over and left 'em another day, and then they were ready. They were different altogether from these modern cheeses, and when they were pickled, they kept right 'til back-end (autumn) if you wanted.



Louisa Guy at Hill Top

Some people let their cheeses go to Gill, the grocer that used to come once a month, in exchange for flour, or ground rice for making puddings, and such. But we didn't do that. Once a fortnight, in summer, my father used to get up at four o'clock in t'morning, pack his cheeses in his trap, and go to Barnard Castle market with them, which was twenty mile. He went down to Low Row, then up Peatgate and over into Arkengarthdale, and then over the Stang to Barney Castle. I've gone with him often, when I was a little girl. He'd put cheeses out on flags in marketplace, and that's where we used to stand, and pit people from up north came down to buy 'em. There was one old lady came, from up Durham, and she was buying for the Co-op and she used to take as many as Father would let her have, because he had his other customers to think of.

Well, after that had gone on for twenty years, this lady arranged to buy all the lot and we never went to Barnard Castle again. We just used to pack two big boxes of cheese and put 'em on train at Askrigg on a Tuesday morning, and they went to Durham and a cheque came by post. That's where all wir cheeses went, for the mining people. So that was ready money, and it was important to us; because you'd sell a cow when it was new-calved and you didn't need it, and you only sell your sheep once a year.

Of course, sheep were the main thing. We generally had about 180 -200 breeding ewes, apart from the lambs and the hogs – that's a one-year-old ewe, not breeding yet. They were all Swaledales, nothing else. Breeding ewes went to the tup end of November, and we kept tup going 'til Christmas. We let him go a week clear, unmarked, and then we would mark him – you know, with dye on his chest so we know which ewes had been with him, and roughly the order they would lamb in; we put ruddle (red) on for second week and then blue on for third. Then they used to call ewes 'ruddy-arsed 'uns' and 'blue-arsed 'uns'!

So we'd start lambing about 6th April, never before that; we wouldn't be like these down-country farms, weather isn't fit for early lambing. I always helped, and I always helped after I was married, because I was more a sheep farmer than me husband. He was brought up here in Askrigg, and he was very good with cows but they'd only have a few better-bred sheep. He could go and shepherd 'em on moor, but when lambing time came, he stood back for Maggie!

Hogs wouldn't go to tup. We used to send wir hogs away in November, for winter. They went to the same place for forty years, and that was down to Hurst, below Reeth – that was quite a bit down dale for us and not so hard; the farmer there took 'em in, gave 'em hay and looked after 'em for us and we paid him. That helped hogs a lot, they grew a lot better down there and they did better for the change. We used to bring 'em back at end of May, and then they'd get onto wir moor here. Older sheep would be on moor most of year. We never kept 'em on older than four-shear (four years old), and then we sold 'em at Hawes here; down-country fellows would take 'em, that was rearing half-breed lambs, and they'd put 'em with a down-country tup for a year or two.

It wasn't just ours – the moor, it was what they call common. So much was ours, and so much was the next fella's, and the sheep knew their own part. Wir moor went to that tarn up there, and then came Summer Lodge moor. They call it Summer Lodge Tarn now, but we called it Hill Top Tarn., because it was ours; it was right on the boundary. Of course, the boundary wasn't fenced – it didn't need to be, because the sheep all knew their own part and they would stick to it. They were 'heughed' to it, we said. You see, when your sheep are heughed, and you turn them out onto moor with their lambs, they heugh their own lambs there. The sheep stay there, so the lambs learn to stay there and only odd ones go astray. They're not as silly as people think, aren't sheep.

And I'll tell you another thing, a remarkable thing. When you saw your sheep draw down off the moor, it was going to come snow. *They* knew when it was coming snow, and they were always right – they knew better than you did. They'd hang down to the moor gate, and Father would let 'em onto inland fields round the farm. Mind you, me father would go right round moor, to make sure they'd all come down; and if there was any overblown with snow, you'd maybe have to stick a pole into drift to see if you could feel for them. But nearly all older sheep would come down, because they felt the snow coming. And just as well. Because shepherding on moor tops in snow, it wasn't fit. Better to lose your sheep than lose your man!

Oh, it could be bitter cold in winter time, even inside your house; you see, we'd just have a coal or peat fire, there was no central heating and not many stoves. I'll tell you how cold it could get. We had no inside lavatory of course, so we had a 'jerry' each, all on us. Well, in cold snowy weather, I've seen those jerries frozen over – so she's been a bit cold i' that bedroom hasn't she! But we always had plenty of blankets on, and we cuddled up, and we always had good beds. Now me mother was *most* particular on a *good bed*, a very good bed; never nothing raggy on wir beds, but good blankets, good sheets and a feather mattress, what we call a feather bed. They were home-made you know, from our own goose feathers, because we used to do a lot o' geese for Christmas. After you'd plucked your geese, Mother used to roast all feathers in the oven, and then we had to clean' em all. That was a job, them blooming feathers! We used to do it in the outhouse, and the small feathers just had their ends cut off; but the big ones, you had to pull 'em off pens (quills) this way, and then that way, just to get the feathery parts off. They were lovely beds, but oh they took ages to stuff.

But then you see, that's all you had to do in that day. I mean, we went to a dance once a year, and a concert maybe once a year; Muker Fair and Gunnerside Fair and that was it. And me mother was very strict about *them*. We had three miles to walk back from a dance and she used to time us! She knew how long we should be, so we couldn't stop off on wir way for half-an-hour! So, you had to amuse yourself in the evening.

When we were children, we used to love Saturday bath night, because we didn't have to go to bed so early. We were only bathed on the Saturday; you weren't splashing in water all t'time as you are today. Of course, there was no bathroom. Water was boiled in the side-boiler and we had a big settle; us four children used to sit on there in a row, and Mother used to fetch this tin bath and bath us all in the same water. She started with the youngest first, and it was pretty clear then, but it was getting a bit thick when it got to me!

Because, of course, there was not running water; you hadn't a tap to turn on. All that water was to cart from our pasture. We had a spring of lovely water there, it sparkled when it came out o' limestone and it was clear as a bell. But it was hard water, you had to put an awful lot o' soap on to get a lather with it, it was that hard. It was all to carry into the house in buckets, or sometimes me father would take his back-can what he fetched his milk in, and carry that filled up so's we hadn't to go for more. That was why Mother would always wash herself in the afternoon, she couldn't wash in the morning because there was not hot water in a morning. You got up and got dressed and downstairs, and then you lit your fire and that had to heat the boiler before there was any hot water.



L-R Mary, Dick, Maggie Jo and Robert John

Very few coals we burnt then, except for a bit of coal to get fire lit. We burnt peat; it's lovely to burn, is peat; because there's no cinders with it, just ash. We always went peating in June. We went up to what they called the 'peat pots' by Satron Moor, and the men dug the peat out in little square blocks, barrowed it out, and then cut it into slices; and us kiddies spread 'em out to dry on a flat piece of moor. We used to take the little Shetland pony, and we'd put a little peat-sledge to it, and that would sledge the peat for us. After they has dried for a week, you turned 'em over to dry t'other side for a week, and then they would be ready for leading to the farm. We used to get forty-four to forty-five cartloads of peat in every year, for the winter, we'd fill all the loft with peat.

So, you didn't waste hot water, no! And on bath night, when we'd all wir baths, all wir underwear went in to the bath water to steep; and then t'was carted away and left in that water steeping 'til Monday. You never washed anything on a Sunday, you know. Sundays *was* Sundays, and we couldn't even bring wir games out on a Sunday.

Winter evenings, of course, we'd mostly be knitting. We used to knit with four needles and what we called a sheath – there's some hanging up there. You put a belt round you, and then you put your sheath in your belt, and you put three needles in the hole at top of

sheath, and used the fourth one to knit with. I always used straight steel needles, and so did Mother, and she rattled away and rattled away, right round the three needles in your stocking. There was crooked needles too, but Mother never used 'em, because she was rather a stoutish person, and she couldn't reach crooked needles when she'd got her sheath in her belt.

You only used to knit stockings and gloves wi' a sheath – you didn't knit jumpers and that. And we didn't knit to sell, just for wirselves; that was enough, because there were four of us, and Mother and Father, and we always had a servant girl and a servant boy, and Mother would always knit for them too. She had one o' them old-fashioned tin boxes, and she'd keep two pairs of stockings for each of us in there. That was so nothing could get to them, because in a wood drawer what they called worms (moths?) could get into them, but in tin nothing could. And if we wanted a pair out to wear, then she *must* knit another pair to go in the tin box in its place; she always kept two pairs each of new stockings in that box. They *were* stockings you know, not socks; they came right above the knee and then we wore garters on them, and then wir bloomers came down and over wir knees, them days. You didn't have little short pants! Wir bloomers had a strap at knee and a button on, to fasten. You'd look at people now, if they went about wi' *them* on! And stocking was always black, there were never no coloureds; they were made o' 'blackings', thick black wool, four-ply.

There was another thing we used to knit. You've seen these, what d'you call 'em – 'leg warmers' about now, well we had something like that. The men wore them when snow was on, *over* their trousers. They were made o' thick white wool, very thick, and not washed so it had all the oil on; and they came right up over the thigh, like a wader, and they were held up wi' straps over the shoulder. They used to call them 'lofrums' - I don't know what *that* means. And they wore these lofrums over their trousers and they went out into snow with them, because there weren't any waterproofs then. There wasn't such a thing as a waterproof, and I remember the first waterproofs coming onto the market. But snow wouldn't soak through these lofrums, and they were very warm.

And all the women wore white aprons, you know; clean white aprons. When me mother got washed in afternoon, she didn't change her dress but she always put a clean white apron on. Then me granny and all the old ladies, they always had a bonnet on their head, made of black cotton; they was always black cotton, never coloured. I had an old dresser, it belonged to my great-grandmother, and it's always been handed down to the Margaret's in the family. There's always been a Margaret in our family, and my daughter, Margaret, has it now. Well, in the top cupboard of that dresser is a hook my great-grandmother kept her bonnet on, and on the top shelf is a burnt hole; because she'd always put her old clay pipe on that dresser, and heat from that pipe had burnt a hole right through. Oh yes, they all smoked clay pipes, the old woman of Muker – but me mother never did, it'd gone out of fashion by her time.



And then, a lot of people in the village used to wear clogs, there as a proper clogger in every village. We used to get ours from Gunnerside from old Battys, they called him, and he'd repair wir clogs as well. If they wanted new woods (soles) on Mother used to send us off to

Gunnerside with wir clogs on, and he did 'em while we were there. He'd keep us all day, but he was a wonderful fella, because he'd talk away to us, and of course he always got all t'news of Hill Top of us – and he always gave us a meal. Oh aye, *he* used to give us a meal, but when horses were to shoe, we had to take them to the Gunnerside smith – he was a Calvert. Now he used to keep us all day too, but he nivver gave us anything; he'd shut up shop for *his* dinner, but he never gave us anything at all.

So all our clogs came from old Batty, and our knickers and that we had to get from Gill, the grocer that used to come once a month from Askrigg. He used to go round all the farms. He came at Monday, with his bag on his back full of vests and knickers and underwear, and he took his orders then for his groceries – a stone of sugar and all that sort o'thing; and then his cart came on Wednesday wi' t'stuff on. He used to come for orders with a blooming old pushbike that wasn't hardly fit to ride. And I always remember, we had one cow that was short o'minerals of some sort, *now* they would give her something for it, but of course we didn't know what trouble was. Well, she would eat anything. If she saw wir clothes line out wi' clothes on, she'd come galloping down t'pasture brawling, and if you weren't quick she'd eat the bottoms off the shirts – you had to watch her. And this day Gill came wi' his old bike, and he left it outside the gate; and when he got back t'old cow had eaten his front tyre!

But she was a good cow. Our cows were all good healthy cows, because we replaced wi' our own and we never kept old ones. Some people milked old 'uns as long as they had a bit of milk in their bags, old rubbishy cows. A lot of them had T.B. too, because there was no T. T, (tuberculin tested) milk then, they knew nothing about that. So, of course a lot of young people died with T.B. Me mother's first young man did, and me eldest brother Dick, *he* contracted T.B. Well, me mother made such a set – they nearly all died with it, you see. They'd just built a sanitorium over at Aysgarth, but Mother wouldn't have Dick go there. So she cleared everything out of a bedroom, *everything* out; she stripped the walls of paper and whitewashed them with lime, as a disinfectant. And she took out carpet and she scrubbed the floor with disinfectant every day. Then she took the window right out, frame and all, and bed was put in t'middle of room, so's the air could circulate round.

Me father and us other three lived at this end of house, and she went and lived wi' Dick at that end, She lived *with* him and she lived *for* him, and she got him better and he lived to be an old man; but ever after that he was like, the odd man out, because I suppose Mother spoilt him a bit.

Yes, they died like white mice of T.B., and a lot died with pneumonia too, because there wasn't a cure for it then. If you got pneumonia, you died. I remember us burying a school pal that died wi' it at thirteen years old; all our class had to be bearers, and we had to wear white dresses. We had to carry her a good mile before we came to the road, before we could get her on the hearse. They gave us a drink before we set off, and we carried her to the hearse in relays; because she lived at Moor Close, about a mile from Thwaite, and there was only a very rough track from there to the road.

Of course, they used to always make a big thing of funerals then – much more than they did weddings. They always had a big meal, and they always had wine or whisky, or something like that. But you didn't go to a funeral unless you were all in mourning, and you didn't go unless you were what they called 'bid'. When anybody died, there'd be a young man come round to bid you to the funeral – it was always a lad of maybe fourteen or fifteen that

belonged to the joiner that made the coffin. It wasn't a woman that would bid you, and it wasn't one of the family; it was always the joiner's lad. But Mother didn't go to a lot of funerals, Father went. Because men went to funerals far more often than women, them days.

Haytime

Haytime hiring's was always second week in July. There used to be five or six hundred Irish come to Hawes, first Tuesday in July. It was a marvellous sight to see them all standing round by the Black Bull – we often went, as kiddies, just to see them. They used to stand around the market place, and t'farmers from Wensleydale and Swaledale used to go there and hire 'em for the haymaking. Because there was no machinery then, and all hay was to get in by hand; there was lots hadn't even a horse-drawn mowing machine. And they stopped coming as soon as machinery came in, tractors and all that sort of thing, because after that people could haytime on their own. There was maybe one or two came after Second War, but only for a few years.

These Irishmen would come over and they'd start off doing a month's haytime over in Lancashire. Then they were with us for a month, and after they left us they went down Northallerton and York way and did a month's corn harvesting; and then they went into Lincolnshire to the potatoes, and then they went back home at about the end of September. They all had their places to go in England you know, and they made as much money in the four months they were here as would keep them all winter – they couldn't manage without it. They was nearly all farmers themselves, in Ireland, but their woman could manage while they were away, because they only had small farms.

Now we had same man came to us for twenty years – Hoystin, they called him. He came to market but he didn't put himself up for hire, because he knew he was coming to Hill Top. We had two Irishmen every year, but we always had Hoystin as one of them. We looked forward to him coming and he had the run of the place when he came. Mother wouldn't have him put in the loft, like some did with their Irishmen; no, he had a room in the house and he was part of our family. But we had to have beer, the Irish wouldn't come without that, oh no! So, we had three barrels of beer in the cellar, just for haytime, because Father wasn't really a beer drinker. I well remember us kiddies tossing them half-gallon bottles of beer to our Irishmen.

They were a wonderful bunch, the Irish, very decent people. They always went to Catholic church, down at Leyburn; they always made a point of that. But of course, they talked differently from us you know, so it was a job to tell what some of them said, and there were some people that couldn't get on with them. Now we used to have a deaf and dumb lad at Hill Top; he was born at Muker and his mother didn't have a father for him – you know what I mean. Folks couldn't make a lot of him, but we used to have 'deaf and dumb Tommy' at haytime. His mother used to ask if he could come, and we'd pay him four pounds ten shillings a month and his food.

And I remember, when I was in my teenses I fancied some silk stockings, and you couldn't get 'em because Fourteen War was on. Now Hoystin said that they could get 'em in Ireland, but the law wouldn't let 'em bring 'em in to England. We didn't know what he was at, but

one day here comes a newspaper for him from Ireland and when he opened it out, there were my silk stockings! He was a marvellous fella, was Hoystin.

We used to pay him ten pounds for the month; and if he finished before month was up, we'd let him go on down country if he wanted. But he came to us next year, every year for twenty years and last time he was over, he brought his eldest son with him. They were a grand lot, the Irishmen.

Religion

Of course, the church or chapel was everything to people then, you know. They always had a Sunday school treat, and over in Swaledale we always had buns and milk. They were buns with currants in, and a farmer came with a back-can full of milk, and we all had to take our own mugs. We went and had a little bit of a do by the river and ran races; we thought it was as good as going to London, was a do like that.

I always went to the church Sunday school; but it was rather funny in our family, because me mother was a big Wesleyan, but me father was a big church man. So, we all used to drive down to Muker on a Sunday morning in a horse and trap, and then I went to church wi' Dad while our Dick went to chapel wi' his mother. They never fell out about their religion, but neither of them would ever give over going to their own place. Father never set foot in the chapel.

There was quite a bit of rivalry between church and chapel in them days though. Church people were church people, and Wesleyans was Wesleyans, and there were the 'Prims', the Primitive Methodists, and they didn't mix. Church folks was 'lardy-dardies' and Wesleyans was 'good old Wesleyans' and the rest were just clingers-on. Of course, there'd never be no cards in a 'good old Wesleyan' house, no cards and no drink. Church people didn't mind so much.

There were more Wesleyans than Church in Muker, but everyone was something, there weren't any heathens. Well, there was one or two, and I'll tell you a tale about them. Now there's something in Muker churchyard that's in no other churchyard in England, and that's a lot to say! There's some tombstones there, and the verses on them tombstones was being written down wi' visitors when I was a girl going to school. Because them that put those tombstones there were heathens, that didn't believe in God – and they said so in them verses. These stones were put down by the Brodericks, that lived at Spring End by Gunnerside. They were monied people and they had a lot of property; but they were no believers, they were heathens. And some of them were buried in churchyard; I don't know why they buried 'em there, being non-believers. Mind you, they'd buried one or two about the farm as well, they weren't supposed to but they did. So, some of 'em were buried in churchyard, but the vicar wouldn't allow 'em to put any stones up; in them days the vicar had to be there when they put up stones, to see that they were fit.

Well, old Broderick had got these stones ready carved, but he couldn't put them down openly. So, he had his men all ready wi' 'em, turned wrong way up so nobody could see what was written on 'em. Then he got the vicar interested in the east window and he said 'Well what does it look like from inside?' He got the vicar of the church to take him inside to look, and he kept vicar talking inside the church until his masons had got the stones dug in outside. And once they're laid, nobody can take 'em up, unless them that put them there

gave 'em permission – that was the law. So, vicar had to leave 'em, else they would have been thrown out long ago, because them stones really used to vex the church people when we were girls. It was the talk of Muker for years!

The tombstone, which remains in Muker to this day, reads:

*I want the world to know
That I know
That there is no fame
That all life is co-equal
That deficiency in intellect is the why
Of deficiency in action*

*That every thing is right
That ever atom vibrates
At its proper time, according
To the true results of the forces
That went before*

By the son, Luther



L-R Lizzie Guy, Hannah Milner, Louisa Guy (sister-in-law), Maggie Joe Chapman, Mary Scott (sister)