

Today's Journey

HARTINGTON

So it was Hartington we decided to visit after much deliberation. Kedleston and the Southwell Workhouse would have to wait till later and Hartington is an ancestral stamping ground. What's more, unlike Chesterfield, there wouldn't be the kind of shops to entice the little lady to spend and spend, only postcards and tea for sale. I was wrong, we came back with enough linen to keep a laundry going for three months!

We set out from Matlock on one of those buses which you have for yourself. It travelled thirteen miles and not another soul got on it. Did they know we were on it?

Through Matlock Bath, a mecca for the leather clad bikers on Sunday afternoons and now a tourist attraction themselves. Onward through Cromford past the Greyhound pub where Mine Host in 1829 was **Mary HIGGOTT**, would she believe it was still going?

On towards the old Pig of Lead, no longer a public house but a private house lying at the foot of Clatterway, the steep hill into Bonsall where all this week the village is in carnival atmosphere which culminates in the Hen Race next Saturday at 2 o'clock. We don't need Clatterway this week but travel on the Via Gellia, named after the GELL family, past the ruins of Ible Mill past the Lillie's pub towards Grange Mill and the Holly Bush. It sounds like a pub crawl but apart from one or two houses these are the only places on this busy road.

Still moving towards our destination past limestone walls, past the grey built Mouldridge Grange which is neither mouldy or on a ridge but sits soundly and solidly in a depression. We then hit downtown Pike Hall a series of farms with a phone box to boot. Uppermoor Farm shuns the bright light of Pike Hall by hiding in a hollow, almost the shyest of farms. The hay making is under way and a field is lined with the stuff ready to be baled, neat and like a green pin striped suit. A piece is left in the centre, uncut and rough, no doubt the remains of a mine shaft.

The views up here on the top are extensive and on the horizon four little boxes of golden fields gleam from miles away. There are more fields up here than cows and some cows have the luxury of a field apiece, others stand face to face over a dividing wall discussing the days events, looking at how green the grass is on the other side and wondering when Buttercup and Daisy will return from market. Now into Hartington Dale with its steep sides, out crops of limestone rocks and sheep that have found there way from the biblical flock of Jacob, living side by side with the old faithful. Hartington seems to appear suddenly from nowhere, people, cars, shops and houses the things you have missed for all of twelve miles now confirm you have left the Empty Quarter and entered Hartington Town Quarter.

With Ashbourne lying thirteen miles away Hartington must seem like an oasis to our distant ancestors. Even the telephone is painted grey to blend in with the walls making its own attempt at a mirage, nobody goes in it, maybe it is

working. Hartington is a mixture of small and large, ordinary and imposing buildings some of which belong in a city centre and a pond which only belongs in a village.

My great great etc grandfather was miller here in 1831, he moved there when his brother-in-law **Hugh GOODWIN** died and he went to help his sister Esther. The mill is as far as you can get from Derbyshire before you become a Staffordshire person. This far and no further was his motto. He breathed Derbyshire air all his life even though the mill at Snelston, where he was born, could have tempted him over the border. Later he moved to Grange Mill and Ible Mill smack bang in the middle of the county. So for a few years of his life he would have known some of the places we saw today.

No doubt he attended the funeral of **Hugh GOODWIN** at St Giles. Sat on a small hill, its grave stones pointing inwards towards the church, only the pinnacled tomb of Mary Ann the wife of **Edmund GOODWIN** being readable from the road.

He may have had a drink in the "Red Lion". In 1829 the landlord was **Anthony GOULD** by 1851 **George BOWER**, born Ashover and, Anne, his Chesterfield born wife were running it. Or he could have gone into **Henry CLARKE**'s "Bulls Head" still run by his widow in 1851.

At the corner of Church Street stands Harbour Head, a cottage trying to hide under a mass of ivy. Further up the road, the one to Custard Field Farm you can look back over the village, over the roof tops and beyond to the hills of Staffordshire. The little cottage up here seems weighed down by the large stone slabs that make up the roof but it is made of stern stuff and carries its load without flinching although it has had a bit of help in holding up it's walls.

Down Church Lane lies the Old School house, with a stone "R E 1758." It has tiny square leaded windows, a window cleaners nightmare, **John HARRISON** was Head Teacher here in 1851; his daughter Henrietta helping him. Richard, his eleven-year-old son, was a scholar and on his day off or if he played truant probably was made to clean the windows.

Isaac SPENCER had probably left by the time the threepenny bit shaped Post Box was erected. Post that was carried by Henry CRICHLOW. It stands outside Beresford's Tea Room, another local name still going strong. One house states in big carved letters it was erected in 1828 by **George** and **Elizabeth BANKS**, Isaac would certainly know of this, in fact, he may have been a relation. The Old Vicarage dated 1789 is another house he knew about with its mounting steps outside.

Above the Vicarage a farm bears the legend "J F1870". Like all places we visit we notice a dog, a huge beast. Patricia calls it the Hartington Hound, as big and bigger than a mans leg. Near by two boxers are waiting for round one, waiting to see which unsuspecting tourist will fall victim to their yapping.

In 1851, **William NEEDHAM**, supplied the bones, he was the butcher and the man probably responsible for the Hartington Hound being what it is today.

The Enclosure of 1807 gives us a few ideas of who lived in the centre of Hartington. Those mentioned as having a house there in that area include **Henrietta EDENSOR**, **John SUTTON**, one of **NETTLETOR**, and another described as "Jockey". Is this an occupation or a pub?

This house is leading out into Hartington Dale. **Thomas MOTTERSHAW**, **Joseph MELLOR**, old and young and **Thomas MELLOR** all live here as do **John HARRISON** and **Joseph and Thomas FOGG**. **Benjamin HOPE**, the Vicar, and **Edward THORNEYCROFT** were also here in 1807. Up the road at Crowdecote,

Samuel GILBERT, resided. What became of their offspring, did the enroll on Derbysgen?

Hartington is a lovely village, true touristy but it seems our ancestors wanted us to find them, so many places have date stones and initials and its surrounded by beautiful hills. As one last gesture to my great great etc grandfather we walked across the fields to a hollow. In that hollow was a stream about nine inches deep and five to six foot wide, we crossed the footbridge and stepped into Staffordshire but for a moment, as no doubt grandfather did. Then we stepped back into Derbyshire having just crossed the mighty River Dove, yes, all nine inch deep of it and all six foot wide of it.

Our stay wasn't long, about two and a bit hours but it felt like home.