

# Today's Journey

## HOLMESFIELD to NEWBOLD via BARLOW

Started off this morning on a late, once again, bus to Chesterfield. The weather was not too kind, drizzle and mist. It could only improve.

On arrival Patricia made for the shops, where else? I made out that I needed a film for my camera so for a few minutes I joined the crowd outside the television shop as J. Wilkinson applied the golden boot and hundreds of Derbyshire voices were raised in wild approval as if trying to get through to Sydney. I suppose way back the bare knuckle fighters would draw the crowds? Although they hadn't got a film for my box camera things had got better and even more so when Patricia emerged holding aloft a pair of gloves, just a pair of gloves!

We set off for Holmesfield and I asked the driver how far it was from Holmesfield to Milthorpe, she said she didn't know she was from Leeds! The fact that she rode the route daily didn't seem to register. So if you have lost an ancestor maybe he caught the Chesterfield to Dronfield stagecoach but unfortunately the driver came from Leeds. I began to get worried when we passed the North Sea Fish Bar and a boat yard and spied a small aircraft in a builders yard. In spite of everything we stuck to the bus and passed rows of red bricked terraced houses and places offering dancing lessons and fitness clubs. No wonder Terry, the Taxman, is so agile.

Having left the built up areas of Newbold and Whittington Moor we were driven along to the "village" of Apperknowle. The route there giving really good views over the surrounding hills. The man next to us said Holmesfield was in that direction, pointing into the fog, and added it usually has its own weather system. We were hoping it would be a heat wave.

In between stopping at villages the route took us into estates frequently, here was a landscape that is punctuated every so often with greenery then concrete as if the place cannot make up it's mind what to be. Having gone through the quaintly named Quoit Green we arrived at Dronfield where more folks took their arrival in their hands and joined the bus. If only I had my passport I would have felt happier.

As it was nearing dinner we hoped to find somewhere to get a snack and Holmesfield would not be that place. "Six pubs and a church," said the man on the bus, "that's Holmesfield." Now I know why he was laden with more than the usual amount of shopping. **John SHIRT** was onto a good thing in 1829, he was a grocer, a man called **SINGLETON** was a butcher.

It's like nothing's changed, in fact, the population for Holmesfield was 499 in both 1821 and 1831. **John BARTON**, in 1829, must have made a few shillings, he was a shoemaker. As there were no shops in the parish everybody had to walk to them elsewhere, worn shoes galore, John a rich man.

We only saw the outside of the pubs in Holmesfield, the "Angel", in 1835, hosted by **James PEARSON**, still stands next to appropriately the parish church. The

"Travellers Rest" was offering Thai cuisine, opposite "The Horns" hoping to pick up bus passengers at that is the stop.

In 1835, Pigots Directory, noted that Holmesfield "could not be marked as a place of trade" but that it was pleasantly situated, I would have to agree. The place is situated surrounded by hills in the distant, a patchwork of multi-coloured green with hardly a building in sight. Acres of openness and I suppose the unrestricted views are what attracts new people to the place.

We took a short journey down an old packhorse route known as Grimsell Lane, so old it has been eroded back to bedrock; you can imagine hundreds of mules and horses using this route. We hoped to get to Millthorpe using this route but the bottom end was like walking through a stream. We returned and before getting back onto the main road saw in a sorry state the Wesleyan Chapel, all alone in a field.

So now we decided to get to Millthorpe down Cartledge and Millthorpe Lane. On the way down the Cartledge Lane Cur let it's presence be known by snarling at us, standing as it was against a fence that he could stride over. I don't mind dogs but when you get one snarling within inches of you and you see in the yard the remains of what must have been an elephants thigh bone you worry just a little bit.

We finally made it to the bottom of the hill and the "Royal Oak", where a swift drink was needed to steady the nerves. Barking dogs have a useful purpose! The old pub was just that, an old pub, a fire burning brightly, the locals and a room big enough to turn a cribbage board round but cosy all the same. Outside, on guard, stood the compulsory red telephone box, nothing changes.

We then took the road to Barlow, "About one and a half miles," said the landlord. Again this was an agricultural area, no built up areas here at all, we passed signs to oddly named places like Rumbling Street, Highlightley and Jonnygate, I thought a good name in view of the fact that he of the golden boot had done the trick.

It seemed ages walking on this level road and I felt like giving the landlord a call when into site came civilization. A place known locally as Crowhole. Still it was a start, there was life, geese, sheep, hens. **William GOSLING** was a farmer there in 1829, is he related...we moved further to the Common Side and behold a Post Office, shut but the potential was there. I had a letter to post but the collection was something like next month, when the moon turns blue, or so it seemed. Some Victorian era villages had mail collected from main towns more frequently than today's villages.

Onto Rutland Terrace, which is just what it says it is, and with fantastic views, if you look on the map you will note the absence of any built up area, Dronfield and Unstone hidden behind the distant hills.

We finally arrive in Barlow and the "Trout Inn" looks a good place to eat but it's getting late and darker by the minute. Our excitement holds no bounds when Patricia discovers a shop and it's open. Things begin to hot up, two policemen begin to make house to house enquiries. Is it because the shop is open! Two men look suspiciously our way, strangers in their town but they turn their attention to the back of the Trout. Something fishy going on.

Barlow has some nice stone built houses. A school, dated from 1872, has its lights on and over the tall windows I can make out the title of some project "Life in England after 1948." Some budding genealogists no doubt getting started. From Barlow we cross the Sud Brook and we enter into the big city or at least the boundary of Chesterfield Borough. We climb out of the hollow and on to Four Lane Ends at Upper Newbold, where Patricia discovers a teddy. He can't be left

to die it will freeze overnight, or as one lady said, it will be frozen. So "Newbold Bear" suitably wash and dried sits proudly with about six million others, now warm and safe.

Finally we make it into Newbold itself. It's surprising how far you can walk when there are no buses. In all the time walking from Holmesfield to Newbold we saw one bus going the other way being driven by a neighbour! He couldn't believe we were where we were. I'll just tell him a woman from Leeds took us there. Here in Newbold buses are every ten minutes.

Had the sun been shining it would no doubt have been a nicer journey but that still can't take away the peacefulness and pleasantness of this area. When we got home Patricia had one surprise left, or two, a pair of gloves for me and a cardigan for herself. Johnny Wilkinson cost me a few bob more than I thought!