

Today's Journey

TANSLEY

"When are we going," said she who must be obeyed, "in another hour it will be dark!"

"Not only dark but freezing," I said hoping my reply would buy me some more time to see the football.

"Here's your gloves, the ones brought from Chesterfield on the last "Journey."

There is madness in her methods I thought. You have to be mad to go out in permafrost weather.

Suitably wrapped up against the cold, feeling relatively warm and hoping to stay that way our hopes are dashed within a hundred yards when the jingling bells of the ice cream van pass us. For your ancestral information his name is Smith and he has a sign to say 'Look out for children, signed John'. So there he is, you thought he was working on the Ironbridge Gorge project and he's in Matlock selling ice cream!

In spite of the cold it's a beautiful day. We make our way down to the now redundant mill once owned by **DRABBLES**, bleachers and dyers, who dyed the 1966 England World Cup shirts. That was way before my time but I did have helping hand in producing the shirts for Bradford. At one time footpaths crossed the fields all leading to **DRABBLES** and the Lumsdale Mills. Many Matlock and Tansley folk will have ancestors who worked in those mills.

On the hillside above lies Hill Top farm, hidden by trees, it looks eerie, no lights, no sign of life, the field names surrounding it support the idea. Fantom Hagg and Nether Fantom Hagg. Cameron suggests it's because the place looks scary. I'm not going to argue with him on a cold and getting darker night. I wonder how many lost travellers would ask for lodgings there?

At the bottom of Smuse Lane a house belonging to **Edward GARTON** but occupied by **William DUNN** in 1847 stands empty, now used as a summer retreat. William's neighbours lived at the top of the lane, a steep hill, where a group of houses had sprung up, one on the corner became a

"Corner" shop and it's bright orange Brooke Bond Tea sign could be seen for miles.

Across the road a house has the name "Hurst View" but someone on the opposite side built a bigger house and instead of seeing "The Hurst" they may wish to change it's name to "Welsh Tile View!"

We carry on up Lumsdale, Tansley Wood house hidden by shrubbery and trees. We pass the old Patons Mill, if you have done knitting Mildred, it's them who probably made the wool, well one of their factories anyway. It's now a place where they make ceramic mugs and it must be hot because they are working today with the door open. I want to go and buy a mug, I don't really but it's warmer in there than outside where even the whistles of birds freeze before it's left their beaks.

Everything is quiet and still. We pass an old blacksmiths shop and the ruins of what must have been in it's heyday a busy bustling environment. Possibly three thousand people worked at the various mills in Upper Lumsdale. Now totally silent except for the beautiful cascading waterfall.

You can still find evidence of industrial remains. Some you do not have to search hard to find. A giant chimney stuck in the middle of a field was once entered into by Patricia, "It was dark!", she said. It's a pity there wasn't a fireplace for now it's getting colder and writing notes for Derbysgen without gloves is beginning to take its toll. I count my fingers, twelve, we are now at 700 feet and the rarified atmosphere makes my head spin.

We rush to get down to ten finger level passing on the way Pond Cottages, once the offices of a **Mr. George NORMAN**, a lead mining man.

Opposite is another converted cottage, once a smithy belonging to **Mr. NORMAN** also. A **Mr. WHITFIELD** at the same time, 1761, worked alongside him. The plan shows Bentley brook passing by the offices as it still does today but no pond in existence.

As we make our way pass the pond a flotilla of ducks glide towards us, we ignore them but they aim for the pond seat where people sit and feed them. We decide not to do so because it is freezing and if we sit down we may just become frozen solid to the seat until the morning. Anyway we haven't any bread.

We take the lane towards Tansley and stop to admire the view. To our left the trees of Pine Woods hide the quarries where so many people worked, Quarry Lane being the only reminder of the activities in the woods. To our right the panoramic view is wonderful. A glorious sun sets behind Masson casting a huge orange hue over the area. The vapour trails of five or six

aircraft look like tetras in a sky blue aquarium. Five of the planes are heading south, one north. When I look again six are heading south. If we are freezing at 700 feet, what's the plane feeling?

In the distance we can see the outline of Middleton Top, Riber and, of course, it's castle. The Fantom Hagg is looking more scarier and on the far horizon Crich Stand, a memorial to the Sherwood Foresters.

We eventually go down the hill. Tansley, lying in the distance, is an old village that has gone modern without too many amenities. Patricia, as she looks just over the edge of a corrugated roof, says the sky with its orange tint looks just like Chesterfield. Being taller I think it looks nothing like Chesterfield but I have to give her ten out of ten for imagination.

We pass Oak Edge lodge, once Oak Stage House and further down Oak Stage Cottage and Woodbine Cottage as we enter Tansley the sneaky way. The sign says 30, I think it must be referring to the number of people living here. Twenty eight are indoors, the other two are taking their dogs out, they are Villa supporters and have just heard the draw for the cup. This is a happier option. Apart from the ducks, these are the only animals seen. Probably too cold for them to come out.

On the way down we are suddenly confronted by the most glorious silvery moon, Pine Woods wasn't hiding just the quarries. It shines over Foxholes and North and South Carolina, it's a big moon, plenty for all of us.

We climb the hill of Tansley Knoll and go down the jitty between Knoll House, the horse is long gone but the trough is there, now turned into a mini garden. At the end of the jitty we spy The Gate. Alas it is shut. We pass Geen Lane and head into the nerve centre but the shop is also shut. Still the letter box says the mail will be collected at 5:00 p.m. Monday to Friday and 11.00 a.m. Saturday. One up for Tansley; our times are later. We are thinking of investing in a pigeon.

There are nine buses a day, seven to Matlock and two to Alfreton. There bus shelters are clean and lit up even when there are no buses on Sunday. Unlike the "rustic villages" Tansley has modern phone boxes, no bright red boxes here.

We pass Tansley House, now a residential home, and Oak Tree Gardens, with not an oak tree in sight. Glebe Farm, now converted into a nice home, sits on the main road. Not far from Glebe Farm is an old oak tree, the gardens are up the road. We pass Tansley Methodist Chapel and a gravestone records the death on 7th February of a **James BUNTING**.

The light is fading fast, the torch batteries go dim, it does not look good shining torch light on gravestones. **BURKE** and **HARE** spring to mind. Patricia says she is Hare! **Thomas EATON** is also buried here, he died 10

Nov 1870, along with his wife, Hannah, who died 1881. Although I couldn't read much more, on the same gravestone is the name, **James SMITH**, and the year 1915. You may know the connection.

We pass a lady in riding breeches carrying a saddle, it is just as I suspect, the horse does not want to come out to play because it's too cold.

We pass "The Grove" a very old imposing building. Just past this lies Holly Lane, my favourite part of Tansley. It's only a small back way but it's pavement has been worn so much it looks like a half moon on it's back.

Whose ancestors feet walked that way? Maybe, in 1829, the farmers of Tansley **Wm BOWN, John EATON, Joseph FRITCHLEY, Ralph LOMAS, Job SPENCER, Thomas TWIGGE** and **Daniel WATTS** did on their way to **William SLATER** who was a victualler. **John HACKETT** was a smallware manufacturer at the same time.

We pass the Royal Oak and the Old Forge these, although in "Tansley", were actually in Matlock according to the tithe of 1847. Later they were part of Tansley. We made our way back to Matlock, passing the Fantom Hagg, looking to put the frightener on us but we made it. The trees of Tearsall on Bonsall Moor stood out on the skyline.

As we approached Matlock the sign said 30, I think it was referring to how cold it was! Yes it was late but the twilight gave it a beauty all of it's own and to put the icing on the cake Patricia never got to go inside a shop!