

Today's Journey

TANSLEY to HIGH OREDISH

"It's not far. It's not as cold as you think and it might not rain" she said. The fact it was raining already seemed to have been overlooked. So we set out for the district of High Oredish.

This journey took us through familiar territory. Past Tansley Wood Mills and turn right, through the fields, on our right stands Tansley Wood House and across the opposite side, high up on the hillside, Hill Top farm seen at its best from this angle. You can actually see the tall, narrow, almost windowless farm from this vantage point. Below us runs the stream which will run into Bentley brook and on into the Derwent. We carry on until we reach the Old Coach road and turn left past Speedwell Mill and on into Tansley village.

Once more a look at the Methodist burial ground opposite Holly Lane reveals that one **Ashton GERRAM** is buried here. He died November 1st, 1845 aged 90. Also buried here are **Thomas and Dianah THATCHER**. He died in 1834 aged 80 and his wife, a year later, aged 65.

Going through the village we come across Thatchers Lane and its now defunct corner shop. Further up the hill, on the Nottingham Road, is "Thatch Cottage" with its well in the corner of the garden. You have to look carefully for this house many a speeding motorist will have missed it. They will also have missed Heathy Lea House and Rotherwood but mainly because these are hidden behind beech hedges.

Over the road the cockerel, on the weather vane on Heathy Lea Farm, points south to the Cunnery, I wonder if it is as cold as me? The garden centre also has a cockerel on its weather vane, it also points south. Could they be identical twins, they do everything together, when one moves the other one does as well. They must be yoked together.

We take the left turn here, it's safer than risking your life on the Nottingham road grass verge. Up this road is the old "Yew Tree Farm", a sign shows a picture of a big dog as living there and in the yard making sure everyone knows it struts the cat! The fields either side of the house have little sheds here and there. Seven chickens safely patrol the grounds knowing the cat is full of turkey. The seven quickly become eight, then nine, all facing different directions, they have no point to prove.

The clouds get darker. The rain, although light, seems to be holding off for later. We pass Knab Hall lane and walk up the twisty road known as Red Hill; our altitude is now 786 feet. The cold doesn't stop growth here, we see a cold frame with a tree growing out of it. Then we pass the last few fields of Tansley before entering the killing fields of Dethick. On a gate on this one field that juts out from Dethick parish hang seven moles. Many an ancestor was paid by the parish a small sum of pennies for each body. A sign in the road looks like a memorial to them, MO7S it says, mole sevens.

We walk on, the next field is in Ashover parish and a beautiful chestnut horse trots towards us. He is sporting a new blue coat, obviously not every brown horses favourite colour, but who cares as long as he gets food from passersby? He cares because we have no food, I left the bale of hay at home. I apologize and he gallops off in a fit of pique. Looking back toward the killing fields the memorial sign has turned round to read SLOW. Obviously asking passing motorists to pay their respects.

We move along past Scotland Farm and nurseries when some poor unsuspecting motorists stops to ask for directions. They are looking for Lant Lane.

Unfortunately, Patricia decides she is the one to direct. They are given a choice of three roads, its either the first one or the second or the third she says. It goes that way then it turns right, she says but I don't know which one it is that turns right but its either the first one the second one or the third one. The woman passenger seems to understand the value of this advice, she doesn't know there are only two roads to choose from, the third hasn't been built yet! The man driver is obviously wanting to get away, the wheels spin when Patricia offers the best bit of advice yet, go on there and when you see someone else ask them. Luckily for the driver a group of people are just coming of the road only ten yards away.

We climb the hill up to the top of Butterley Hill, now at 922 feet another 78 feet and it would technically be a mountain. I feel for my oxygen mask but we descend quickly but carefully not wanting to get the bends. On the horizon Hardwick Hall can be seen, which is amazing because when you are within a hundred yards of it, you can't find it at all!

Down the bottom of Butterley Hill is Butterley Cottage an ivy clad, red roofed cottage and extensions now. Turning right now onto Cold Harbour Lane. I don't know where the harbour is but the cold is still there. All along the lane the sign points to a picnic site, High Oredish. The teddy bears have left long ago they are probably at home watching the Wizard of Oz, like most sensible people.

However the views here are brilliant, even on this, an overcast day, it makes it all worthwhile. High Oredish is an unusual name and it may be connected with lead and the ore dish in which it was weighed but in the Enclosure the place is described as High O'er Dish. High over dish. When you stand out and survey the scene below it is like looking into a dish. I like that idea. Tiny farms dotted around the landscape, sheep grazing oblivious to the cold and Ogston reservoir in the distance.

Patricia says " I know that lake, I've seen it before".

We have walked past the reservoir on numerous occasions so I am pleased that finally something is sinking in. Then she adds:

"Thats the one where Derwent village is underneath isn't it?"

I decide there and then to have her postcode tattooed on the back of her ear in case she gets lost!

Below is Berridge Lane Farm where, in 1829, **Thomas WRAGG** farmed and Rough Close belonging **Geo. WILCOCKSON, William and Ben TOWNDROW** were at High Oredish.

The walls along these lanes are moss covered and many held together by willpower. Bracken, dead now, lays at the foot of the walls while the bright yellow of the gorse bushes along the road side adds a welcome addition to the grey of the sky.

We move down the road from High Oredish where, in the far distance, the cooling towers right down in the south can be seen and nearer to home Crich stand. We pass another old farm, High Oredish Farm, it says in modern letters.

It's not the one on the map but it's very old. Three tractors that make Boudicea's chariot look modern stand in the yard, two grey ones and a red one trying hard to brighten up the day.

We take a little muddy path off the road and down behind the hill and stand and look at the view. Ogston water seems to be within one big stride distance, a pony grazes and apart from the sheep nothing seems to move, not even the trees. The fields look as if they are separate beds and everyone tucked in nicely. It is almost silent. It looks as if the world hasn't got a problem. Gently the wind whispers through the trees behind us if you close your eyes you will feel as if you are on the seashore. A bird seems to imitate a seagull and add to the illusion. A feeling of total peace descends upon us, we stand and look, that's all, stand and look, it is beautiful, tranquil not a blade of grass it seems is out of place.

What must this place have been like all those years ago? How much quieter? The stillness and the silence puts you at ease, you feel untroubled. It has an aura of serenity. The calmness of this moment will not be forgotten.