

My Childhood in Chipping Village

When I was young folk were more formal, and children and grown-ups called their neighbours by their surnames Mr and Mrs So and So. We had no house numbers but everyone knew who lived where. Town End was the start of "my village." We would get large wicker baskets from Hoyle's shop that new potatoes came in, and collect sticks on the Moss, then wander back towards the village, passing by the semis, the village telephone box (where you needed four old pennies and pressed buttons A and B,) and Brabin's school. The only house on the opposite side of School Lane was the old Vicarage which was where the Fletchers lived. The last three houses in School Lane as we came closer to home were known as Weld Terrace, and the one nearest to the village was the Police House which still had a spiked wall in the yard at the back!

Opposite was St. Mary's Church and Presbytery where Fr.Higham and his housekeeper, Miss Grey, lived. In Summer Fr.Higham would wear his khaki shorts and tie a hanky round his head whilst gardening. Sometimes he would buy ice-creams for the children of St. Mary's School which was situated in the church grounds. Miss Murphy taught the Infants and Miss Price the Juniors and our playground was the churchyard, only up to the Presbytery gates mind and never in the graveyard! Mrs Whitaker lived in the old schoolteacher's house. Before reaching home I passed the old almshouses. Miss Rhodes lived in the third one, she was my neighbour.

WINDY STREET

I lived in Windy Street, at School House, which was part of Brabin's Old School. The other part of the old school was used as Parish Rooms and the children who went to Brabin's School across the way came with their teachers Miss Porter and Mr. Walsh for dinners, which Mr. Latham brought in metal boxes from Clitheroe. Brownies' and Guides' meetings were held there, each pack having an up-ended orange box with flowery curtains, to keep their things in. Above, in the reading room, was the Mens' Club, in which there were two billiard tables, one much bigger than the other, and lights over the tables with a lighting meter attached to the wall. Long metal cases containing the cues lined the wall, brushes and flat irons were left on the tables and there was fixed wooden seating all round the room. Our front door was used by the men to gain access to the top floor and also to the lower rooms. A flight of wooden stairs ran parallel to the stone steps leading to our kitchen. Three of my sisters and I were born in the parlour at School House.



Mum with my sister Patricia in the 1950s.

Across the road was Kirklee where Uncle Alf and Auntie Annie Leece lived together with Uncle Ted, who I once locked in the garden shed! Houses have now been built on the orchard of their house. Behind on the meadow, the new St. Mary's School has been built. Next door to Kirklee was the chip shop which Uncle Ren and Auntie Madge Kenyon kept. They would display raffle prizes for whist and domino drives and dances, which would take place in the Oddfellows' Hall or the Parish Rooms. On production of old newspapers for wrapping, Auntie Madge would always give us a bag of chips or a dab. She and Uncle Ren lived across in one of the cottages set at an angle to the street, and my Great Granny Bamber lived next door. At the bottom of the gardens, in a terrace of three, lived Frank and Dorothy Whitaker, Miss Lizzie Marsden and Mrs Sherliker. The coalhouses for the almshouses were under our window.

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