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Rainow Women's Institute

A

VILLAGE HISTORY

1952



FOREWORD

In 1936 a movement was made to form a Women's Institute in the Village, which had a beneficial influence for women in outlying areas.

Miss Russell, of Hough Hole House, was largely instrumental in its formation and was the first secretary.

Mrs. Godwin, of Higher Hurdsfield, was the first president, followed by Miss Russell who served for three years.

Quite a number of Higher Hurdsfield women joined, so the committee decided to change the name to Rainow and Higher Hurdsfield W.I.

The meetings were well attended and in 1951 the membership reached the figure of 109.

During the war many parcels of food were received from corresponding organisations in Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

Our " Link " in New Zealand also sent regular consignments of dripping for which the members were very grateful.

Under the leadership of Mrs. Knox, over 2,000 garments were knitted for the Forces during the war.

During the period 1940—1945, the Village had an enthusiastic " Home Guard " coupled with a " fire service " and " first aid post " and other services including W.V.S., and many evacuees were received into homes in the Village.

RAINOW

The village of Rainow, in Cheshire, is situated three miles North-East by East of Macclesfield. Macclesfield lies at the foot of the most southerly spurs of the Pennines and from it the road to Whaley Bridge climbs towards Derbyshire along the valley between the hill Kerridge, 1,028 feet, and the slopes which climb towards the Cat and Fiddle. In the bottom of the valley runs the Dean. Along the first part of this lovely valley straggles the old village of Rainow which shares the characteristics of Cheshire and Derbyshire. The road rises with varying undulations from 797 feet at Kerridge End to 1,109 feet at the further end. It is to the Ice Ages that Rainow owes its contours and the weathering of centuries has rounded them into their present unsurpassed beauty. Views from the hills up and across the valley are renowned as some of the finest in the country. Boulders found here and there are relics of the Ice Age. The valley has both its summer and its winter dress and in each it is beautiful; but it has occasional storms which are also partly due to its contours and shape. These have given it, to the plainmen below, the reputation of being wild and bleak.

In 1940 Rainow was visited by a South-East blizzard with snow drifts up to the eaves of some of the houses. The snow blowing down off the fields filled the roadway to the level of the wall and it was possible to walk off the road straight on to the fields. Again, in 1947, the village had another blizzard. This time a North-East wind blew the snow up to a great height, 21 feet in places; the only way to get out of some of the houses was through the bedroom windows. Telegraph-wires were repaired by the men standing on the piled-up snow. Snow-ploughs were of little avail to clear the roads and a bulldozer was brought into use but that too became snowed up. A squad of German prisoners reinforced the local labour. There were several funerals at the Methodist Chapel and the coffins had to be taken by sledge across the fields.

On the evening of June 25th, 1934, a storm broke over the hills and rain flooded the higher part of the village. The rush of water tore up the county council road in some places to a depth of six feet; the water running right through the lower rooms of the Robin Hood Inn and piling debris almost to the top of the door. It followed the valley down to Bollington where it caused considerable damage.

Notes from the "History of Rainow," made by Mr. Joseph Mottram, of Kerridge End, record the population as about 1,000

in 1936, and the elevation above sea-level at Kerridge as 797 feet, rising to 1,109 feet at the other end of the village.

He speaks of the "Old Rainow Sunday School" which met in what is now the Village Institute. He truly says that it is known almost the world over; for some scholars have gone to New Zealand, some to Australia, some to America, and others to South Africa.

White Nancy, on Kerridge Hill, was built by the Gaskell family of Tower Hill, Rainow, and later of Ingersley Hall, about the year 1815 to commemorate the Battle of Waterloo. It took eight horses to drag up the slab for the stone table inside; it is 920 feet above sea-level.

EARLY HISTORY

There are no definite evidences of the habitation of the valley in pre-historic and very early times; but along the upper shoulders on the Derbyshire side ran an old Roman road from Buxton, and Pym's Chair, 1,500 feet, looks down on it. The road has always been known as "The Street" and has good warrant for its ancient claims; but this road would not run directly through the valley.

The earliest records show that during the mediaeval period several farms were established and the name of the village is spelled Ravenhoh in 1288, Ravenouh in 1290. These are given by Ekwall, the place-name authority. Later, in the fourteenth century, it is Ravenowe; afterwards Raneowe and now Rainow. A house on Tower Hill still bears the name Ravenhow. Ekwall suggests the derivation: O.E. Hraefn, a raven, and O.E. Hoh, a word of varying meanings but, in general, a hill, a cliff, a tongue of rising land; but he also suggests the possibility that Hraefn may be a person's name.

Perhaps the best evidence of the activities of those earlier times is the unusual number of footpaths and bridle-paths that link up the farms in the village and those around it.

There used to be a bridle-way from Bollington to Kerridge End, Rainow, with gates from field to field. It began at Adshead's Barn, Bollington, or Redway Lane, Kerridge, and went by North End Farm and Kerridge Side Farm on to Kerridge End.

Evidences of old Roman roads and bridle-paths exist to-day, suggesting great activity in earlier times.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

In the country as a whole in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, small industrial units were established wherever wind or water-power was available, and especially where there were supplies of wood and coal. The Rainow valley had these assets and shared in these changes from agrarian to industrial employments.

Cotton Spinning, Calico Printing, Silk Throwing, and other trades gave employment to a great number of hands. At one time there were 24 mills in the village. All these mills have disappeared except for a few ruins. Twenty-two cottages have been demolished since 1874. A foundry and iron-smelting works, a millwrights' and mechanics' shop made the village a self-sustained manufacturing unit and they supplied the surrounding districts. Power to run the machinery was obtained by water wheels when supply was adequate. Later, steam engines were brought into use. When canals were cut and railways were made, they missed the Rainow valley and went through Bollington and Macclesfield. These towns prospered and Rainow declined rapidly. Rainow was a prosperous township when Bollington consisted of only a few scattered cottages and farms. The great grandfather of a Rainow resident built the first row of houses in Bollington. These were in Water Street.

There was a village smithy at Kerridge End, a timber-yard, too, and a wheelwright's shop. Over the wheelwright's shop was a large room used as a silk mill, the proprietor being Mr. James Swindells, a bank manager at Leek. The old silk mill still standing at Kerridge End was built by Jesse Ainsworth, who also sank two pit-shafts in his garden to obtain coal and water for his mill. The old Forge at Brookhouse was a busy industry. At night the glow from the furnace would light up the whole district. The owner, Joseph Baily, was not a Rainow native; he came from the iron forges of Low Moor, Yorkshire.

Another busy industry was at Brookhouse Clough, where stood two large mills. One was used as a dye-works by Joseph Broster, a rather eccentric character, who employed a good number of people. He used to carry his bread from Macclesfield under his arm without any wrapping. The boys used to laugh at him; all he said was, "Boys, it is I who should laugh, I have the bread." The other large mill and house was bought by the late Mr. Neave and fitted up with machinery for hat-making; he also employed many hands. Eventually this was removed to Bollington. It was a great loss to Rainow. The mill was taken down and practically a new house was built with gardens laid out artistically.

An old mill in Cow Lane, now in ruins, was worked as a silk mill by Edward Thorpe. The manager some 110 years ago was George Dudley. About 80 years ago it was closed as a silk mill and fitted up as a bleach-works; but this was given up owing to heavy cartage costs.

The cotton mill at Mill Brook was burned down about the year 1868. There stood a cottage in the mill-yard where lived an old woman named Mary Howbrook. While the fire was raging it was thought she would be burned to death, but happily the old lady was rescued. The owner of this mill was Stephen Sheldon whose son used to take the cotton to and from Manchester with a waggon and team of horses. After the fire a portion was rebuilt and used for a time as a fustian-cutting room by another firm. There was a very high chimney to this factory and the boys used to try to throw stones to the top. Near this mill were the almshouses which have now been made into cottages. On the site of this old mill is now a pumping-station for Bollington Water Works. When digging for the foundation the men came across a gas-pipe which pointed to the mill having used gas for lighting and probably to light Pedley House as well. This would be before Macclesfield had gas.

Another mill recently demolished stood at Hough Hole and was known as "White Shop." It was formerly used as an engineers' shop by John Mellor (nephew of James Mellor). Here important inventions were made affecting mainly the Iron Foundry trade. One was a steam-hammer that could be brought down with sufficient force to crush the hardest substance, but could be so controlled that it could be stopped within a hair's breadth of anything beneath it. The demand for this steam-hammer was very great. This mill was famous all over the British Isles and abroad too. Matthew Collier, a Rainow boy, served his apprenticeship as an engineer at these works, and rose by diligence to become the head of the engineering firm of Harlows in King Street, Macclesfield. He finally took over the whole business.

An old silk mill at Gin Clough was worked by James Sharpley and the silk carried to and from Macclesfield by means of a donkey with panniers on each side and when the late Mrs. Mottram was a girl she was selected as the driver. Her employer had more confidence in her than in the boys. She used to tell how on a hot summer day if the donkey saw some sand in the road neither force nor persuasion would prevent it from lying down and trying to roll over, thus upsetting the load. He would then get up and bray loudly.

There are a number of old pit shafts round the hills of Kerridge, Rainow Low and Cliffe, for it was a busy coal-mining area. In those days the men worked by candle light. Before the North Stafford railway was opened, the Rainow pits supplied a big portion of Macclesfield, both for the mills and also for private houses. Some of the coal was of good quality and much valued in those days. The means of transport was mostly by carrying in bags on donkeys. A number of people in the village kept donkeys for this purpose. The opening of the North Stafford Railway brought Staffordshire coal of better quality at reasonable price and caused the closing of many of the local pits.

SURROUNDING COUNTRY. NEIGHBOURING FARMS.

All the interesting valleys in Rainow and district are called "Cloughs"—Kirby Clough, King's Clough, Bower Clough, Ingersley Clough, Gin Clough, and others. Gin Clough is supposed to get its name from the time when all this area was called the forest of Macclesfield. It is supposed that at that time wild animals were driven into this narrow valley where they could be easily trapped. Clewes Head Farm and Cuttler's Farm situated at the head of the Clough shared in this. These are very old properties and have similar features of construction. The openings to the bedrooms, before being altered recently, used to be only four feet high with arched heads formed with a crooked bough of an oak tree. Cuttler's Farm gets its name from the fact that one of the old forest rangers named Cuttler lived there. Much deer roamed in the forest, also badgers and pole cats. There were ravens too and wolves, boars and foxes.

Two isolated farms are Lamaload and Buxterstoops. The former comes from Lama, meaning loam or mud, and lode, the stone or star showing the way, hence Lamaload or muddy way. Buxterstoops is derived from buckstall, the net once used for catching deer, and stoops or the posts on which the nets were suspended. The name evidently points back to the days when animals were driven from the Forest.

Brook House Farm, an Elizabethan building, has, built on to the outside of one of the chimneys, a piece of black oak said to be taken from a ship of the Armada. It was a custom at that period to do this to commemorate the victory. This can be seen at the present day.

The One House, an old stone mansion, for centuries the seat of the Hulley family, has been demolished in recent years.

Tower Hill House is substantially built in a delightful situation. It is a very old residence; the first mention of it is in 1611 when it was sold. But it must be much older for some of the walls have wattle and daub. It came into the Gaskell family by marriage; their descendants occupied it for three or four generations.

There is an old cottage at Tower Hill which had a deep cut in one of the rafters. It was made at the time when press gangs used to go round the country pressing men into the Navy. The gang was about to call when the proposed victim picked up a large axe and threatened to strike down the first man to enter; he raised the axe with such force that it caught and stuck fast in the rafter of the low ceiling. The impression remained for many years.

New Barn Farm was built by Matthew Oakes and his sons about 1880, the first tenant being Matthew Beresford, of Sutton, Macclesfield.

Rainow Old Hall Farm. The date 1690 is inscribed on a stone over the door. It had much old oak panelling and mullioned windows. These, however, have been modernised very recently. There are a number of places where windows were built up when windows were taxed.

Still further down Sugar Lane is Hough Hole House. This and the garden used to be one of the most interesting places in Rainow. It belonged to the Mellor family for many generations. Old James Mellor died about 1881, aged 90, and was buried in ground that had been portioned off his garden and consecrated for that purpose. He was a bachelor, but said he should have a wife in the next life! He was considered eccentric, but was most ingenious and inventive. He possessed a printing press on which he printed books written by himself. In his bedroom was an organ, played by a small water wheel, the stream running through the garden, and this would be turned on or off as he lay in bed. At one time he took much interest in the village. When a road from Rainow to Bollington was discussed at various public meetings, James Mellor, being a land owner along the route the road was intended to take, offered to give the land owned by him, which was an extensive length, and also to provide all the stone required along his boundary free of cost. But his offer was not accepted. It was this gentleman who placed a stone on the spot where John Turner died in the snow in 1735.

RELIGION—CHURCHES AND CHAPELS

Saltersford or Jenkin Chapel takes its name from its situation near Jenkin's Cross and was built about 1733 but not consecrated till July 18th, 1739. It was built by subscription; but over the doorway is a stone bearing this much-worn inscription:—

" St. John Bapts. Free Chapel was built June 24th, 1733, erected at John Slack's expense: in 1739 it was made sacred for the worship of Almighty God."

It is recorded that Slack being treasurer of the fund overstepped the mark by having his name and the misleading reference to his " expense " placed above the doorway. The subscribers were so annoyed when they saw the reading that one night a determined effort was made to chisel it out. There is sound foundation for this story. The first incumbent was Charles Hadfield in 1734 followed by Hugh Lowndes in 1748 who also held the living with Rainow. The register begins in 1770.

A marriage was solemnised at Jenkin in 1736. As the Chapel was not consecrated it was necessary to get a licence and as there were no Registers the marriage was entered in the Taxal Registers; John Clayton and Elizabeth Ashton, both of Salford in the parish of Manchester were married by licence at the Saltersford Chapel, February 18th, 1736-7. There must have been some sentiment behind this to bring people from Salford to Saltersford to be married.

Rainow Church, which is dedicated to the " Holy Trinity," was erected in 1846. It was built at a cost of £1,800, of which £800 was obtained in grants from various Church building societies. The rest came by voluntary subscription. The living is in the gift of the Vicar of Prestbury. There is also a parochial school, built in 1842. The register begins in 1770. Rainow used to be in the Prestbury parish and all marriages and burials were taken there. When a couple wished to marry they would walk over the hill of Kerridge by the path that is still known as the " Wedding Steps."

Some 200 yards higher up the hill stands the ex-Wesleyan Methodist Chapel; a substantial building erected in the year 1878 on the site of the old chapel which in its turn was built as a branch of the old preaching place at Billings Side, Rainow. The old chapel was built by James Mellor's father in the year 1780. James Mellor, of Hough Hole, used to preach there before he built his own little Chapel at Hough Hole. There is a burial ground of considerable size around the present Chapel. Previous to this

and to the parochial school being built, all the children were taught in the National School, which is now termed the Institute and is used as a billiard room, etc. This was known as Old Rainow Sunday School. It was known all the world over. Its old scholars were found in all parts of the Empire and in America. Turning off the main road passing the Methodist School in Chapel Lane, which was very narrow before the authorities took it over; two vehicles were unable to pass. It probably gets its name because there was an old Episcopal Chapel at the corner. This was pulled down in 1844 and the ground used for burial. Its bell which had on it the date 1724 was given to Saltersford Chapel. Just below is a small field called Christian Croft. When the present owner bought it there was a very old house on it with stone mullioned windows but it had to be demolished as it had become dangerous. There was no date-stone but it had the appearance of being much older than Rainow Old Hall in Sugar Lane. The Methodist New Connexion also held services every Sunday afternoon in the village in a room adjoining a weaving garret. A short distance down the hill is the Methodist day school, built 1896. Here, too, the Sunday School is held.

Saltersford Hall, Rainow, was built in the year 1595. At Saltersford there used to be a service every Sunday afternoon at the house of Old Ozias Dale, Eaves Farm. Preachers from Macclesfield used to come to conduct the services which were well attended, the house being over-filled sometimes. Jenkin Chapel was built in the year 1733.

Saltersford derives its name from the teams of pack horses having to ford the stream there; now a bridge marks the site of the old ford on the Salter's way from Northwich to Chesterfield. A pack horse team consists of six teams of six horses and these went through the village of Rainow carrying salt one way and lime on the return journey. They made a practice of halting at Salter Hall to rest and feed the horses. It was at Salter's Hall Farm that John Turner lived, who died in a tragic manner in Urian Lane. Returning from market, with two large baskets strapped over his shoulders, during a severe snowstorm, he became exhausted and collapsed and died in the snow in 1735. Coupled with this is always the story of the print of a woman's foot on the snow. This seems very much a myth, still the story is always

told. A stone erected on the spot has this inscription:—

Here John Turner
was cast
away in a heavy
snow storm in
the night in or
about the year
1735.

The footprint of a
woman's shoe was
found by his side
in the snow where
he lay dead.

The romance of Charleshead Farm lies in the Charleshead Bible. It is a great black-lettered, leather-bound first edition of the 1611 Authorised Version. An inscription at the end of the book reads thus: "This Bible was gain by John Ward, at Blew Bore, to Edmond Pott at Charleshead and not only to him but to Charleshead for ever. It was his desire that great care should be takein of it and hopeed ye would made to leave it soe." In spite of the grammar and spelling the meaning is clear. The date when the Bible was "gain" (pronounced "gen") is not stated. It contains all the books of the Apocrypha. It is probable that the Bible was a hundred years old when it was given to Edmond Pott and to Charleshead by John Ward, of Blew Bore. Edmond Pott was living at Charleshead in 1734 but it is thought that he was an old man then. The Wards were at Blew Bore in 1749 and probably earlier. Beneath the dedicatory inscription in the Bible is one entry only: "Betty Trueman was born April 4th, 1798, at 8 o'clock in the morning." Another inscription, again unfortunately without a date, is on the first page of the book and probably this is the name of the original owner: "Steven Greenwell, his book," then follow the lines:—

"And when the bell for him doth tole
Then Lord Jesus saue his soule."

When Edmond Pott left Charleshead he left the Bible behind and for 200 years it has been the treasured possession of the Brocklehurst family.

EDUCATION

Education available to the youth of Rainow and district was confined to the old Township School erected by subscriptions and grants in 1843. It is now the Institute. Combined with the religious teaching the three R's were taught. The school would be open from nine o'clock to twelve. Later, the late Mr. Fred Joule (grandfather to the present generation) held day school classes. School pence had to be paid by the scholars' parents. The hand-writing and skill in other subjects were remarkable. The school, now demolished, at Jenkin Chapel, Saltersford, was attended by Mr. Joule during the evenings. When he commenced to hold classes, on the first evening there were 16 pupils, but soon the school was filled to capacity. At this period there was an Orchestra connected with Saltersford, and Orchestral Music led the service in Jenkin Chapel. In this orchestra the late Mr. James Etchells played the cello and his son played the violin. These instruments are still in the possession of their descendants. There were several charities left to educate the poor children of the village. One is dated as far back at 1613. These are still collected by the Vicar and divided between the existing schools.

INNS

The Plough Inn, now Plouden House, at Brookhouse, kept by John Johnson and afterwards by his widow, has been the scene of much revelry and drinking when the licensing laws were not so strict. A good glass of whiskey offered to the constable settled much that might have been a serious law court episode.

At Wakes' time there used to be climbing greasy poles for a leg of mutton tied on the top; amazing attempts were made, generally ending in failure. The biggest prize went into the pocket of the licensee.

The Rising Sun Inn, Hawkins Lane, was formerly called "The Three Loggerheads" Inn. Painted on the sign were two ragamuffin-looking men, and underneath the words "We three loggerheads be," and he who stopped to read felt somewhat small. Hawkins Lane was originally called Oakens Lane.

The Robin Hood stands a little higher up the hill. The following doggerel is associated with this Inn:—

My ale is fine, my spirits good,
So stop and drink with Robin Hood;
If Robin Hood is not at home
Stop and drink with Little John.

Mellors, of Kerridge End, Joiners, Builders and Contractors, built the Cat and Fiddle Inn on the Buxton road in 1841.

CLUBS, WALKS AND WAKES

There were various "Club Walks." The "New Club" walked always on the first Wednesday in June, the members coming from far and near; each was dressed in his best suit, mostly green with age, and hats that only saw daylight once a year. They made a motley procession carrying club-sticks six feet long painted blue with red knobs. They attended a service in the Chapel with the minister conducting. Re-forming, the procession walked from the old School to Kerridge End and back, led by the Rainow Brass Band. Then the revelry began. First there was a substantial meal of roast beef followed by plum pudding deluged by a copious supply of brandy. The remainder of the day was spent in drinking and dancing to music by the half-begone bandsmen till a late hour at night. The public houses were granted extra hours for the occasion.

The "Old Club" walked on the first Wednesday in July. A few of the "nobs" called it "The Church and King Club," though the church and king had nothing to do with it.

Rainow Wakes, about the second week in October, was a great time. The Mayor for the coming year was elected with much pomp and excitement. All these festivities meant visiting the licensed houses, which reaped a rich harvest. When the Mayor was chosen he was dressed in a red robe and chain of immense proportions, with hat of various colours of ribbons attached. He was placed on the back of a donkey with his face towards the tail, then, headed by the Rainow Brass Band, they made a weird looking procession by torch light from one end of the village to the other, stopping to provide refreshment for

His Lordship and retinue of faithful attendants at every inn. A bill announcing the election of the mayor read as follows:—

Rainow Wakes

"Celebration of the old and ancient Rainow custom. The election of the Mayor of Rainow for the ensuing year, will take place on Friday, October 18th, 1877. Proposed candidate:—

James Duffield, Esq., Hawkins Lane, former Mayor for this famous old Township. Grand Torchlight procession accompanied by the Rainow Band, will start from the Township School to Kerridge End and back, at half-past seven o'clock. Mayor's feast at eight o'clock prompt. Admission by ticket only, which can be obtained from the Blacksmith's Arms, The Robin Hood, The Horse and Jockey, The Rising Sun, and The Plough. Persons desirous of joining the procession can do so by applying to any of the Committee. To conclude with a grand display of fireworks."

The Bandsmen on these occasions wore distinctive dress. Each man had a red jacket, trimmed with golden braid; they looked very well—at a distance! For hats, each wore a kind of Scotch cap. The "band-dress" did not seem to include trousers, so these were varied in shade and shape.

The Leader was a fat man who wore a very flowery waistcoat, usually minus one or two buttons. His trousers were very wide at the top, then narrowed at the knees, gradually widening to the bottom, making what used to be called bell-bottoms. When every one was ready he would say, "Now, lads brast off."

The Cornet Player wore a patten on one foot, and went by the name of "Patten." Few people knew his proper name.

They once entered for a band contest near Manchester. While going along the village they discovered that several of the instruments had a slight crack, allowing the wind to escape. They called at Billy Willotts, of Church House, to borrow some putty with which to patch the cracks.

After playing several pieces and being treated by several admirers, it was too late to go to the contest; they stopped at Church House all day and all night, going home in groups of twos and threes.

OLD CHARACTER STORIES, CUSTOMS AND INCIDENTS

The burning of an effigy of a local resident was an exciting incident. A woman had incurred the disgust of the neighbourhood by her obnoxious manners during the absence of her husband whose work was a long distance from home; they placed the effigy, said to be a perfect likeness, on a long pole and paraded the village followed by a large crowd to the beating of drums and shrieking of tin whistles. It was taken to Kerridge End, saturated with paraffin and burned in the presence of a cheering crowd.

One morning many years ago, the village was disturbed by the invasion of a herd of elephants, camels and one dromedary that had escaped from a menagerie. The animals roamed about for some time doing damage to gardens and trees; the keepers, dashing up on horseback with dogs, drove them off saying it was wonderful that the animals had not done more damage or hurt someone, because they were hungry. They made a terrific noise.

In the year 1866, Rainow was visited by the rinderpest. It was a terrible scourge among cattle, some farmers losing the whole of their stock.

One Saturday, about the year 1877, a large company of artillery men with their officers and heavy guns, that were being moved across England, passed through Rainow, and halted by arrangement with the licensed houses to provide refreshment for all the men, and their horses with corn and hay.

Their behaviour was such that the villagers were thankful when they marched on.

In a village like this amusing characters could always be found. For instance, Miss Walker, living at Mill Brook, used to announce that she was going abroad for a month. She would let down her blinds and retire behind them, living in solitude. At the end of the month she drew up the blinds and would tell wonderful stories of the places she had visited, mentioning places that did not exist. Another was Cradle Jimmy. He said his wife was expecting twins, so he set about making a cradle to hold two babies, but expectations were vain and the cradle was never needed; the nickname stuck with him.

Then there was Jimmy Duffield who used to ring the Church Bell. Once when the vicar, the Reverend Stolterforth, suggested how it should be done, Jimmy said, "If I donno' do it right, thee

mun do it thee sel'," and the following Sunday the vicar had to ring the bell. When asked who was the elder, his mother or himself, he replied, "I dunno rightly but think it must be me." He worked in one of the quarries on Kerridge; his wage never varied from ten shillings a week and as he could neither read, write nor count money he insisted on having a golden half-sovereign, which he called a "Yallar mellar." The Master's sons to tease him would pay his wage in silver and copper; but Jimmy would not take it, saying that it was not right. Every night he took two buckets to the water-spout, about a quarter of a mile from his home. These he would hide in a certain corner while he went to the vicarage close by. Often boys would hide the buckets in another place, so that when Jimmy could not find them he would make a row, vowing vengeance on whoever had taken them.

He went every night, except Saturday and Sunday, to the Vicarage to chop sticks, clean knives and do odd jobs for the servants, who had much fun at his expense. He was a very useful messenger from the outside world to the kitchen and arranged meetings for the maids with their boy-friends. On one occasion the maid, as an excuse to go out, took a rice pudding with her to cool it in the brook; unfortunately it slipped too far into the water and her young man got his shoes and stockings wet while getting it out. Jimmy had many a laugh as he told the story from house to house.

He had a capacity for getting hold of news if there was a death or wedding, or any scandal in the village, or a row at any of the public houses (there were six in the village then). Jimmy would be the first to know and spread the news.

He smoked a clay pipe which was black with age. Matches were dear, so Jimmy often pushed the pipe head in the fire between the bars, and as he talked so much his pipe was often out, and being put so frequently in the fire it became black as ebony.

One of his duties was to carry the big flag at the field-treat processions. He had a great struggle to keep it upright.

One night the village youths tried to frighten him. One youth covered himself with a white sheet and slowly raised himself from behind a wall, but frightened as he was, Jimmy's wits served

him well; he ran to a heap of stones on the road-side and pelted the "ghost," who ran, with Jimmy following throwing stones.

If he had too much to drink, his mother, "Owd Matty," would chide him when he went home, and sometimes thrashed him off to bed.

Owd Matty was a real old-fashioned villager. She had some pieces of old furniture which the Squire tried to buy. Once when chatting with her he flipped small stones, etc., from a flower-pot at her while she went about her work. Presently, looking at him sternly, she said, "Awd the' han', behave the' sel' in other folks' hauses."

"Old Trunks" was the entertainer of the village. He lived alone in one room and no one seemed to know his correct name. he could sing and recite and tell good stories as well as play the violin for dancing. Clog dancing was popular in those days and he was in great request.

There is the story of Margaret Broadhurst, an old resident, said to have lived to the great age of 140 years. She went by the name of the "Cricket of the Hedge." In her old age she was much visited by people of all ranks from curiosity. On a Mrs. Brideoak visiting her and asking her age, she answered, "I was fourscore years old when I bare that snicket and she is now three score years old." She is said to have been buried at Prestbury about the year 1650 but the entry of her burial is not found in the register. This is thought to be an incredible story but in Thomas Hearne's edition of Leland's Itinerary, Vol. VI, a letter addressed to Hearne by the Rev. Francis Brokesley, dated 23rd August, 1709, gave this story as he heard it from a friend of his.

Charles Bradley, better known as "Rainow Charlie," was born of respectable parents who had a large family. His whole ambition was to wander. Early in life he was a great walker, and when he got old, would tell how he walked to Sheffield and back with messages and of the time he took for the journey. He was a big man, wore a very long overcoat and clogs, and in these he would come to a Sunday service. He was an attentive listener and said he liked to hear the organ. It was impossible to imagine so unkempt-looking an individual could appreciate music. How he lived was his own mystery. He would neither beg nor steal;

everyone testified to his honesty and he was as harmless as a child. He was kindly treated by all the police in the county for he never gave them trouble. The poor old man's end was tragic. Whenever in the Pott Shrigley district he was allowed to sleep at night near the hot kilns at the Brickworks. Unfortunately, one night his clothing caught fire and he was severely burned. He was taken to the Macclesfield Infirmary and passed away at the age of eighty years on February 5th, 1947. He was buried in Rainow Churchyard on February 10th, 1947.

At Chester, St. Mary's-on-the-Hill register for the year 1656 has a curious entry, reading: "1656. Three witches hanged at Michaelmas Assizes, buried in the corner by the Castle Ditch in Churchyard, 8th of October." The three witches were Anne Thornton, of Eaton, near Chester; Ellen, the wife of John Beech, of Rainow, near Macclesfield, and Anne, the wife of James Osbaston, of the same village. At the trial it was said of the two latter unfortunate women that they practised "certain artes" from which "wicked and devillish acts certain Rainow people fell ill and died."—"Cheshire Churches," by Raymond Richards.

A few of the apprentices from the White Shop at Hough Hole started a business in Macclesfield and embarked on the idea of making a Tricycle. Their difficulty was to make it safe going down hill. After much thought they evolved a brake as follows: a round cast-iron ball with spikes on it and fastened to a chain. This was attached to the machine and when not in use it hung under the seats, for at least two people could ride the tricycle. For a time all went well, but, going down a steep hill the riders felt the machine was getting out of control. One man was fully employed steering, and called to the other "cast the anchor" for so the brake was named. It ploughed up the earth and stones, as was intended, but it bounced from one side to the other and finally became entangled with the wheels. They came to a full stop against a hedge and men, anchor and tricycle lay in a heap at the roadside. No one was seriously hurt, but the machine was wrecked and was carried into a nearby garden where it lay for years.

During one choir practice for the Anniversary at the old Methodist Chapel, an old man, a flautist, was asked to stop playing to see how the music sounded without him. The leader de-

cided the flute was out of tune. William (the flautist) was deeply hurt and saying, "If my flute is flat I winna play another note," he packed up the instrument and left the choir to get on as best they could without him. Scarcely was he gone when one of the bass singers was asked to stop singing. He did not wait for further remarks but, stamping noisily down the aisle, left the chapel and hurrying down the road overtook Old William. They consoled each other with the thought—"He'll want us again after the sermons."

A great sporting event was the Race Up Kerridge. This and other sports were held annually in connection with the Horticultural Shows organised in the early years of this century, under the patronage of the Earl of Derby.

At one time there used to be a speaking trumpet kept in Rainow. It was a very powerful instrument and used to be taken to the top of Kerridge Hill and any news or announcement spoken through it could be distinctly heard all round the district. Its use became abused and objectionable comments and slander about individuals were spread by this means. Some one thought to put it out of the way forever and threw it down an old coal pit on Kerridge. There it remained for generations. James Mellor heard about this trumpet and where it was hidden; he got a man to go down the shaft and recover it. It was in a wonderful state of preservation. It was taken to Hough Hole House and kept there as a relic of the past belonging to Ancient Rainow. No one seems to know what has become of it.

PUBLIC SERVICES

Stocks—nearby the Robin Hood Inn—is a reminder that delinquents did not go unpunished. These stocks are still in a very good state of preservation and could tell some interesting stories if they could speak. A gallon of beer was offered one day to anyone who would allow himself to be fastened in the stocks for half-an-hour. Old Trunks gladly accepted the offer. The beer was brought and placed before him, but he had to watch a small crowd of his admirers drink the ale. Not a drop did he get.

The Toll Bar in Hawkins Lane, near the Rising Sun Inn, was an unwelcome land mark to vehicular traffic. All had to stop and

pay the toll before passing on whether by day or by night. The keeper was Thomas Burgess who also was the village constable.

Registration. The first official records of Births and Deaths were instituted in 1837 on July 1st, Rainow being a sub-office of the Macclesfield Registration District. On March 24th, 1928, Mr. Joseph Mottram resigned the post of Registrar which he had held for 35 years. Now, this area is amalgamated with Bollington. Mr. Mottram had some weird journeys, walking every week to Kettleshulme and Whaley Bridge in wild and stormy winters.

An interesting deduction from the population figures is the change in the nature of employment from agrarian to industrial back to agrarian. The industrial workers now travel to Macclesfield and Bollington.

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| In 1801, | the population was | 1,390 |
| „ 1831, | „ „ | 1,807 |
| „ 1841, | „ „ | 1,759 in 366 houses |
| „ 1936, | „ „ | 1,000 |

For this population the village has an acreage of 5,880.

Towards the end of the last century it was desired to open a Post Office in the village and a site was bought from Mr. James Swindells, of Leek, by Mr. Joseph Wetton. The premises were formerly a grocer's shop and after the purchase it was intended to try to get a post-office attached to the shop. Three men, Mr. Wetton, Mr. Stephen Sheldon and Mr. Samuel Mottram, took up the scheme. It was difficult to get a sub-office in a village in those days. There was much correspondence with headquarters and also with the Macclesfield Office before sanction could be obtained and these three gentlemen had to act as guarantors for the amount of business that would be done. The venture was a success from the start. Prior to the opening of the post office, letters were left at a cottage near the stocks where Old Harriet and Big Bailey, as they were called, lived. They were known by most people; their house was a general news office for the whole district.

A two-wheeled hearse was kept in a building opposite the Methodist Chapel and John Yarwood, the undertaker, who had his workshop in the yard of the Robin Hood Inn, used to hire a black horse from any farmer who had one. It was the custom to carry

a sprig of rosemary and drop it on to the coffin as it was being lowered into the vault.

About the year 1893 steps were taken to supply the village with tap water. This was supplied from a reservoir constructed at the top of Bull Hill. This was made possible by the owner of the land, Mr. John Mellor, of Kerridge End House. Before this, water had to be carried long distances, summer and winter. This new supply extended from Kerridge End to Tower Hill. Some years later Bollington District Council purchased the site of the Old Mill at Mill Brook and bored for water to supply Bollington and by means of pumping forced the water to supply the higher part of Rainow, but still the water did not reach the houses above the Methodist Chapel, and in times of drought and severe frost these inhabitants had to carry water some distance. Now in 1950 another reservoir has been built to supply houses in the Gin Clough area.

Electricity was first installed in Rainow for house lighting in 1933.

All the centuries of history of the long line of inhabitants and the social and economic changes they have experienced have not in any way harmed their lovely scenic setting; as evidence of this is the decision to include a large part of the village in the Peak District National Park.

H.A.D.

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