

Days When Carts Where King Of The Roads

Milkmen (farmers) came around the streets with their horses and milk floats, selling milk to householders -the practice being to carry at least 2 x 12 gallon cans on the float and the farmer filled from these a gallon tin which he then carried to his customer and poured into their jugs a gill or pint, whichever they required; or you could go to the float and he would dip into the large container a gill or pint measure, whichever you required. Perhaps three or four farmers visited Underbank. Names which spring to mind are Handford Howorth of Far Old Meadows Farm, H. Pilling - Broadclough Farm, Butlers - Hay Slacks Farm, Dicky Ashworth (Dicky Thorn - Dick O'Thorn) Holmes Barn Farm, and Jack Holt with his son Ben "always drunk) from Old Meadows Farm. Coalmen also brought coal around the area on their carts, two types being available -- coal from local pits, Deerplay and Thowlers (Old Meadows) and coal brought into the town by rail and this always called Railway. Local coal 1/3d a cwt., railway 1/6d cwt. Coalmen I remember are Wright Walker and his brother Joney. Wright lived at Brow Top Farm and used to swear prolifically. Caleb Lord from Weir also brought coal, as did the Co-op.

TWO-HORSE CARTS

It was a common sight to see a coal cart with shaft horse and another in front called a chain horse pulling a loaded cart full of 1 cwt sacks, (about 40) up the steep inclines in the town. The factories used to have their own carts, two wheel high carts which probably held about a ton and carted Deerplay or Thowlers coal for the large Lancashire boilers.

One of the well-known carters was Bill Tom Buckley who sometimes went so far as the Copy Pit at Holme in Cliviger for a load a days job). Also Fred Chestney who worked for Shepherds Holmes Mill. This was as good as any railway coal Georgie Scott used to bring fish round on a cart. He was besieged with cats whilst serving customers. Clarry Walton had a posh enclosed horse drawn cart from which he served meat. He later moved to the Isle of Man. He was the son of old Nurse Walton who brought many hundreds of babies into this world, including myself. Old Slattery was a chimney sweep who tramped round the streets with his brushes on his shoulder dressed in you can guess black clothes with funny blackcap, shouting "Do you want Me-e-e-e-e" (1/a chimney) Another chimney sweep was Micky Corless

RAG AND BONES

There were numerous persons with donkeys and cart who collected rags and bones and gave a scrubbing stone or a block of salt, dependent upon the quantity of rags you gave him. By the way, the scrubbing stone or donkey stone, colour cream or white, was used to colour floors or doorsteps by wetting and rubbing on the surface. Floors of lots of houses had no floor-covering so sand was scattered on the stone floor and after it had been walked on for a period it was brushed off and left the stone clean.

BLACKING THE FIRE

It was the fashion in some or most houses to do as we did at 12, Underbank. During the week until Saturday dinner the following decorated the fireplace: Poker and tongues a fender with black fire irons, a tidy betty to cover the ash pit under the fire, and a top bar (all of which needed cleaning by a method called black leading). This method consisted of a solid ball of black powder and two hand-brushes with handles, the idea being to spit on one brush, rub it on the black ball, then in turn brush it all over the fire irons, after drying polish with another brush. Saturday dinner all these were taken up and replaced with ones whose surface

was brass and looked much posher. The round table legs covered by woollen stockings, the feet of which had worn out were uncovered. A chenille table cloth was used as a table cover when meals were over instead of a patterned America cloth one and the carpet square was laid on the floor for the weekend. The process was reversed before going to bed on Sunday night. Also, all the best shoes were cleaned before being put away for another week.

Sunday observance was more strictly adhered to, only the back street lads roaming around and playing games; others attended Sunday-school twice a day. In my early years I attended the Salvation Army who had a room over Ogden's Sewing shop in Market Street higher up on the same side as the V.W.M. Club. My father was in the brass band playing the euphonium, Uncle Dick the cornet, Grandfather Read the drum, Archie Howarth cornet, Willie Kershaw, A Bussie, Albert Law, George Arthur. Willie and Elijah Bell, Eddie Bowers, Sydney Simcock, Young Ormy Haigh, whose names spring to mind, and the officers at that time were the Misses Diamond and Barwise. They used to hold open air meetings each week at the bottom of Bankside by the bank, across the road by the Spread Eagle pub (about 10 yards down Tower Street), Blackthorn Gardens and Under bank. During dark weather a lamp worked by carbide was carried on a pole to help illuminate the little gathering and the bandsmen's music. Ormy Haigh and Johnny Jenks were two of the stalwarts.

QUARRY CRICKET

At about 9 or ten years of age I commenced attending Zion Sunday-school in Market Street. In my class were John Crabtree (later to be Mayor), Harry Ashworth, Harold and Fred Welden, Sidney Platt, Arthur Aspinall, Arthur Dodgen, Albert Howorth (later to become Mayor). The school had a cricket team that played at Bonks, the land between Bankside Lane and Plantation Street beside the quarry now filled in. This quarry bottom made an ideal football and cricket pitch for the lads from Plantation Street.