

Cloughbottom Reservoir



The following is taken from the memoirs of Faron Robertshaw.

Enoch Tempest was the builder of Cloughbottom Reservoir, and he was a very good boss to work for. He was a man getting on in years and his son " Young Enoch " was very much in charge. To make the reservoir large a large bend in the road and part of the hill was cut away and Enoch had one of the first steam navvies in this country working on the job. The men used to call her " The American Devil" and those in charge of it called it that a hundred times a day or more. If that lump of old iron had been human it couldn't have been any awkwarder.

Sometimes she was a little angel and would light up and be a roaring fire in a few minutes but at other times she was more wilful than old Nicks granddaughter and as full of tricks as an egg is full of meat. Sometime later we got another steam navvies and she was called the Jubilee she was worked in the bottom of the reservoir. There were two of us as engine cleaners and there were five engines to look after, the largest being called Jumbo, and the smallest called Little Egret. Jumbo was used for all the heavy dirty work, whilst little Egret was a lady and only took the empty trucks up to the quarry and brought the full wagons of stone down to the lower embankment. In the bottom of the reservoir there was a farmhouse and the clerk of the works lived there until the reservoir was nearly finished.

The watchman had a hut on the new road and besides watching the road he had to keep a pump going on the embankment. On the lower side of the engine sheds were the navvies huts and one portion of these huts and married men and their wives and most of them took in lodgers. There was plenty of beer to be had in almost all of the huts, and plenty of rows amongst the men. The police kept a good eye on the camp and every now and then would mount a raid on the camp searching the huts for beer. On a Sunday some of the village Sunday schools sent up a choir, and so long as they didn't try to drive their religion down the men's throats they were listened to quite attentively. I used to enjoy going down amongst them on a Sunday afternoon, the stories these men could tell of different works both public and Government would have opened the eyes of a few people.



Copyright bacuptimes.co.uk