

## MEMORIES OF BRAMALL LANE AND BRIAR COTTAGE (FORMERLY THE BARRACKS)

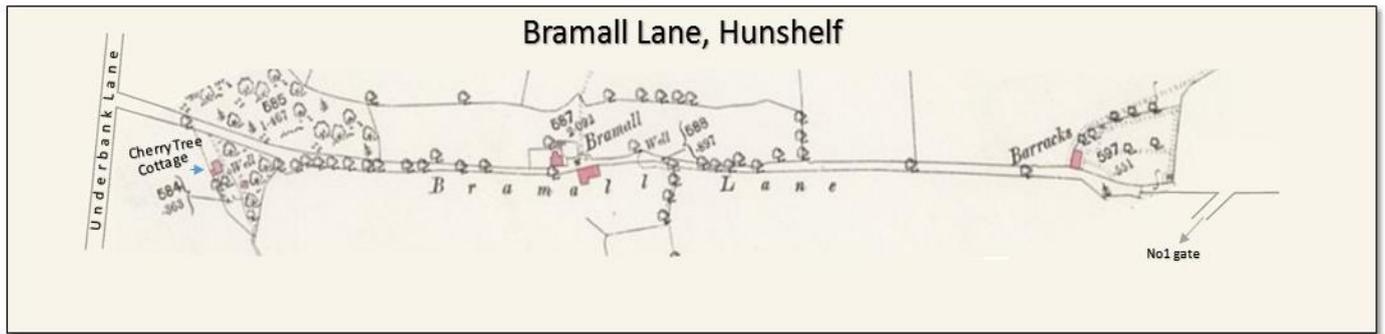
When I was a child my family consisted of my mum Enid (born Dorothy Enid Sanderson) my dad Norman Gregory and two brothers Peter and Roy.

I was the last baby to be born on Ford Lane before the greater part of it was demolished. Many generations of my family – grandparents, parents and many of my relatives lived on Ford lane and so it held a great deal of my family history. Before I was born my parents and my two brothers lived at Bath house - which was originally used by the employees of the Japanning shop (Jap shop) so they could get cleaned up after a hard shift. They then moved to number 1 Ford lane, the first house on the row. Shown in the photograph below you can see that at the time the little shop was attached to the side of the house and was owned by Alice and Mary Rusby. In about 1958 a lorry had been parked up the hill but unfortunately the handbrake came loose and the lorry rolled backwards smashing into the side of our house causing some structural damage. A trailer carrying a compressor separated from the back of the lorry and went across Ford Lane hitting a car near Banks house. We had to move out whilst the repairs were done so we moved down to number 11a Ford Lane (as there was no number 13). We moved back to number 1 for a few months and as you can see, the wall of the small garden to the front of the house now had black and white warning cheques painted on it. In early 1961 we moved up to The Barracks on Bramall Lane at Hunshelf Bank.

FORD LANE



## Bramall Lane



Bramall Lane itself was quite long and stretched in an almost straight line. In former times it had also been known as Old Lane and Mucky Lane. There were only ever three properties that had been built on it. Going from the Underbank Lane end first there was Cherry Tree Cottage, then Bramall House and finally The Barracks. The entire length of Bramall lane was sheltered by the high rising fields of the Hunshelf bank and small wooded areas. Even when it was cold and windy in the valley it was usually mild and still on the lane.

### Cherry Tree Cottage

This was the only property to have been built on the right hand side of the lane. It was only a small cottage consisting of 2 rooms up and 2 rooms down. There was also a garage to the property and a steep drive leading down to it. This driveway can still be seen today. At that time (the early 1960's) Vernon and Renee Rodgers lived with their corgi dogs, Max and Boy. Vernon was a slag mill labourer and worked in the slag reduction yard just behind the cottage and was renowned for his large handlebar moustache. I recall going along there one day in about 1963 with my brother Roy and asking Mrs Rogers if we could have the little Robertson's tokens from the backs of all of the jam jars she had thrown away. Luckily she agreed and we were able to build up almost a whole Golliwog orchestra. Sadly I have no pictures of the cottage itself.

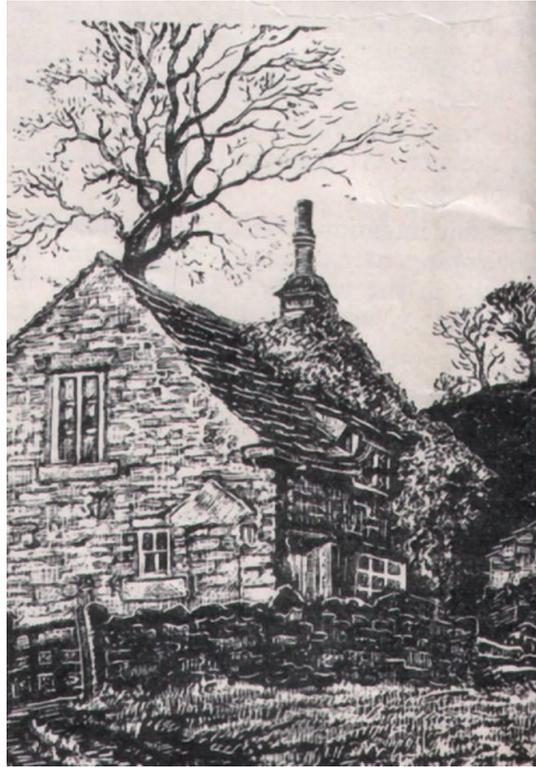


### Bramall House

Otherwise known in local history as 'Old Mother Workman's house'. This property was on the left of the lane and sat almost half way between Cherry Tree Cottage and The Barracks.



1.



2.



3.

The last inhabitant was Emma Workman who originally lived here with her husband Edward who died in 1926. Following his death Emma (Old Mother Workman) took to the bottle. She took in a lodger by the name of Tom Cattell (Old Tom). Emma was in the habit of going along to the Friendship pub and having a few drinks - inevitably leaving a little worse for wear before getting on the bus to go home. Old Tom would then collect her from the bus stop, put her into a wheelbarrow and take her home. On one of these occasions the wheelbarrow tipped over leaving Old Mother Workman in a ditch at the side of the road. She died in 1943. By 1947 Bramall house (3.) is known to have been in a state of ruin. There is now little more than a pile of bricks to show the existence of the house but this was a reasonable sized plot of land. Had you walked along Bramall Lane prior to 1943 you would first have seen the garden area, then the house and after that a brick built barn (1).

As a child I would pick strawberries from the wall of what would have been their garden then almost opposite that place was a pond, inevitably full of frog spawn which I would duly put into a jam jar and offer up to my mum.

#### The Barracks (later known as Briar Cottage)

Situated on the left at the end of Bramall lane.



1.

The Barracks (Briar Cottage) with brick built lean-to's



2.



3.

Showing part of the gardens with the old apple tree on the left and farmers fields behind (before the bypass was built)



4.

The Barracks had a very large garden area. This photo shows the lower third only. Chemistry lab in background.



5.

Old tin bath at front of the house.

The garden gate shown on the right of photograph 4 above can still be seen today.

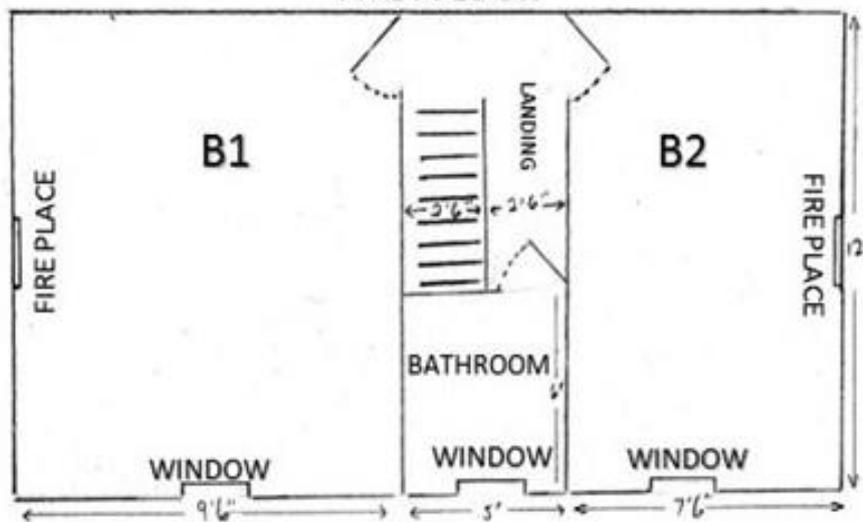
# *The Barracks*

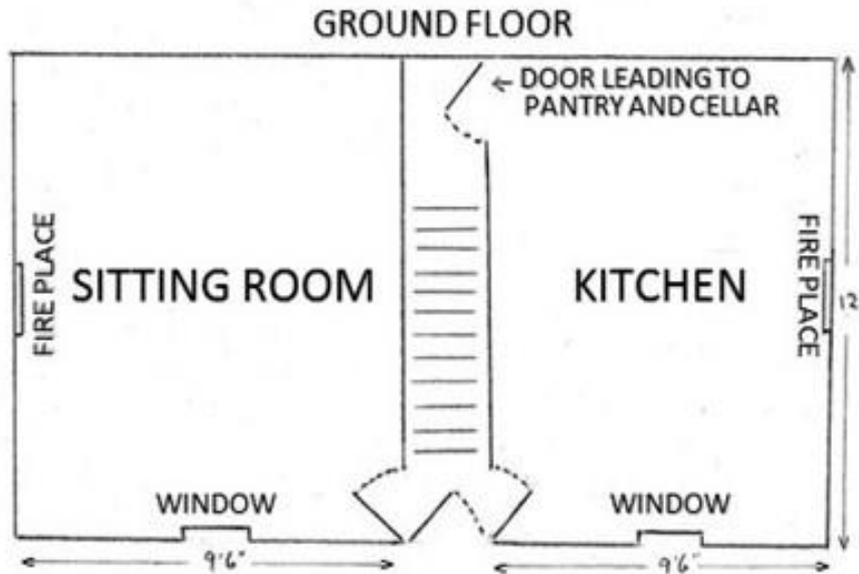


JAN SANDERSON 2.1.18

## THE BARRACKS (1966)

### FIRST FLOOR





JAN SANDERSON 15.12.17.

My mother really didn't want to live in a house called The Barracks so she renamed it Briar Cottage and Briar Cottage is the way I shall always remember it. I can't imagine a better place for any child to grow up.

The house was originally built in the late 1700's to house the poor of the village. It was only a short walk from Ford Lane, up Hunshelf Bank, past the bottom of Pearoyd Lane then about a half a mile walk along a well trodden hillside path.

It was an odd shaped but very large plot of land set amidst beautiful fields and with a terrific view over Stocksbridge. The original plot had been far larger and four times the size of the plot that I knew. It had been a large uphill rising field known as Harris Croft but the Barracks and gardens of my childhood were set only in the remaining top left hand corner. Built from Yorkshire sandstone it had over the years become blackened by the coal burning fires, industrial chimneys and acid rain.

As a young child I would play for endless hours on the lane with no fear of ever coming to any harm. I would often go home adorned with foxglove petals on every finger, two or three daisy chains and a handful of red rosehips to make a necklace with ! Trees and wild flowers were in abundance. Moon pennies, wild roses with large red rosehips, foxgloves, blackberries and a great variety of meadow buttercups, vetch, birds foot trefoil, wild carrot and cow parsley etc.

The Barracks was a large house which was originally built as one building divided into two cottages. Each cottage having one large room downstairs and an identical sized room upstairs. In 1861 the two cottages had been merged to make one large house. The front door was in the centre. As you opened the door the first thing you saw was the staircase leading to the upstairs rooms. There was a kitchen to the right and an identical size sitting room to the left. Both rooms were a good size. In the kitchen was a 7ft long overhead drying rack which was loaded with laundry then hoisted up to the ceiling whilst it all dried. The sink area was under the front facing window and on the right wall was the fire place which had an oven attached to the side of it. At the rear of the kitchen (beneath the stairs) was a walk in pantry where there were stone white edged steps leading down to the white washed cellar area and the coal storage. The sitting room had a fireplace on the left of the room. Once upstairs there was a large bedroom on the left. The bedroom on the right would originally have been the same size but now had been reduced in size to make way for a thin hallway leading to a small bathroom which was front facing with a lovely view of the garden. Both bedrooms had a small fireplace. Whoever took the photograph of the house chopped off both chimneys ! The chimneys were on the far right and far left of the roof - above the fireplaces. The length of the house was approx. 22 feet and had only 5 windows in total, all of which were front facing, ie, looking down the valley towards the direction of Deepcar. There was also a brick built lean-to attached to the right side of the house and on to that had been added another smaller lean to. (1) I suspect the house had so few windows due to the 'Window Tax' which was introduced in 1696 and not repealed until 1851.

In September of 1962 my elder brother Peter married and in December of that year my parents took in a lodger called Eric Bacon. (I believe he would have taken the above photographs and can be seen kneeling in photograph 4) I was two and a half years old and this 'lodger' became my second dad and a very dear friend throughout my life. He was at that time a gardener at the steel works. Hence, for the rest of our time at The Barracks we had the most beautiful and I'm sure the most extensive rose garden in Stocksbridge !

As a toddler I had a little stuffed dog toy. My mum would put me in the garden in a little tin bath - along with the toy, then hang him out on the washing line to dry. The old outside toilet was situated about 30 feet beyond the lean-to's at the top of the garden and had been turned into a little animal sanctuary where Roy kept his rabbits. Then right at the far end of the garden stood an old apple tree which had a piece of thick rope and an old tyre hanging from it. I recall one Christmas Roy having a being given a red sledge. We walked right up to the top of the field behind the house and I climbed on at the front of Roy. We came down the hillside far quicker than we expected and only just managed to jump off before hitting the stone wall at the bottom.

That field was owned by a farmer called Armitage. There was a stile at the side of the house which led into the field which had two very large cart horses in it. I never knew their real names but I called the grey one Silver and the brown one Bob. As a toddler I had apparently gone missing one day. My mum later told me that she had found me in the field stroking the fetlocks of one of these giants. Happy days !

In order to get to school we would have to walk down the hill and through the works at what was No1 gate. I remember a big red double decker bus being parked up there, presumably for bringing in the workers. It was of course very dangerous to have children wandering over the railway lines so we were always escorted by a security man called 'Woody'.

We had an Alsation dog called Rex. He was a lovely dog and very protective of me. Even though I was young I remember quite clearly him looking up at the kitchen ceiling and following ghostly footsteps as they crossed the floor of the bedroom above. My mum and I witness this on more than one occasion and when we knew for certain that there was nobody upstairs. My father asked several people about this and it seemed that at some point before we moved in there had been a steel worker living there who had a disabled daughter. We presumed from that (rightly or wrongly) that it could have been him carrying his daughter across the bedroom to put her into bed. Whatever the source was .... the house was most definitely haunted ! The 1911 census for The Barracks shows a child living there who was recorded to have had a spinal disease.

Sadly we had to leave the house because of acid rain from Foxes. The leaves on the old apple tree had all turned black and the beautiful rose leaves were black and pitted. We moved to Bournemouth on 8<sup>th</sup> June, 1966 - the day before my 7<sup>th</sup> Birthday. I remember to this day sitting in the back of our grey Morris Minor and looking through the back window as we drove down Manchester Road and out of Stocksbridge. I wondered then if I would ever return. I did, but seven years later, only to find that our much loved home had been demolished the year after we left.