

## Mum By Julia Tomson.

I can't believe you've been alive  
Since nineteen hundred and twenty-five.  
Shire horses clopped around Coates Lane  
Carting homewards sheaves of grain.  
Families lead simple lives,  
Men stayed a lifetime with their wives.  
And children were content and glad  
For little pleasures that they had.  
But you were lucky to be born,  
Not to grow old and worn.  
As grandma doing daily chores,  
On hands and knees on white scrubbed floors.  
You'd have the very best to eat;  
Home made bread and potted meat.  
Fresh butter, milk and cream and ham,  
Pickles, eggs, delicious jam.  
Grandma's food, you'd see her bake it,  
It wasn't you that had to make it!  
You'd get up on a chilly morning,  
The fires going bright and warming,  
Breakfast cooking on the hob.  
You didn't have the mucky job  
Of riddling out the dust and ashes  
Before you cooked the bacon rashers  
Or wait to get the fire hot  
To pour the water in the pot.  
Or elbow-greasing get agate  
With black lead, polishing the grate!  
Those pleasant days would not have been  
But for Grace, the human work machine.  
You must have been so very glad,  
When you, grown up, then married Dad,  
Had more mod cons, first gas to cook;  
Electricity, a stroke of luck!  
A Hoover, no more on all fours  
With brush and pan sweeping the floors.  
No more you'd have to scrub and rub  
On washdays around the Peggy tub!  
The old mangle and the posher  
Forget it! Just turn on the washer!  
Throw away the tub, the mangles,

Dirty oil lamps, wicks and candles,  
The old black leaded range, by Jove!  
Get a new electric stove.  
For you it must have been a dream  
To keep the house all neat and clean,  
Your hands soft and still have time  
For pleasure while you're in your prime.  
You'd read and sing and talk to us,  
(We know not every mother does).  
You'd take us dancing, make our clothes,  
Be there throughout our joys and woes.  
Our young minds you would inspire  
With you're bright, creative, fire.  
But most of all we would come home  
To a house secure and safe and warm.  
Whatever happened, good or bad  
You'd be there for us, Mum and Dad.  
And looking back, now he's <sup>to be</sup> dead,  
Aren't you so glad the man you wed  
Was so gentle, quiet, kind,  
With only ~~eye~~ farming on his mind?  
And whose only mortal sin  
Was loitering late in the Rock Inn.  
Sometimes he'd also go astray  
At Penistone on market day.  
"Ahem, aye, another one",  
With Bill and Sam and brother John.  
But overall a person would  
Say your marriage has been good.  
Fifty years without a doubt,  
You weathered good and bad times out.  
What super-human strength you had  
In caring for our aging Dad.  
Your vigilant and loving care  
Made him happy you were there,  
So that now he's dead and gone  
You've happy times to think upon.  
Memories of young romances  
Waltzing around drill hall dances.  
Using all his farmers charms  
He'd hold you in his muscley arms  
And lift you lightly off the ground  
To waltz you closely, round and round.  
Your married life at Hunshelf Hall

May not have always been a ball  
When dirty boots went through your door  
And farmyard muck would cake the floor.  
When cows got out and pigs got in  
Through broken gates tied up with string.  
And you never could abide  
Our lovely cats who'd rush inside  
And sprawl out on your rocking chair.  
"Bloody cats!" we'd hear you swear.  
Grabbing the cushion you'd roughly pour  
Poor Prudence Pussy to the floor.  
Mum, it really wasn't fair  
The cushioned cats whizzed through the air!  
So angrily you'd storm and shout  
The frightened felines all shot out!  
Birthday parties? No more luck.  
Dad would still be in his muck  
Lambing on a cold barn floor  
Littered up with blood and gore.  
The guests just had to hang about  
For Dad, to blow his candles out.  
They had their tea and sat and sighed  
And waited till the sheep had died!  
What a lot of laughs and strife  
There was then with the farming life.  
So it is with joy and pain  
When wandering down life's memory lane!  
Your full life's been so exciting  
With local history, books, your writing.  
As your seventy ninth year passes  
Language and computer classes  
You nearly had a fatal fall  
For that certificate on the wall!  
We saw how well you look on life  
The day you took the surgeon's knife.  
You make the best of every day.  
To Charles, to Rose, to Will and Faye  
You're the best of Grandmas they all say.  
The best example, the best display  
Of positivity they know.  
So Mum, here's love and cheers.  
For six and eighty well loved years!