

Burton in the Thirties

If you had travelled by road to Burton in the nineteen thirties you would have been much more aware of the division between town and country than you would today.

There was no Ermine Estate, no Burton Road underpass and no street lighting such as we take for granted today. Beyond Yarborough Road there was very little human habitation at all. Somewhere by the side of the grey stone wall that guarded Burton Hall Estate there was a stone marking the county boundary and showing the number of miles to Lincoln. It could equally have been five or fifty. The trees forming what was known as 'The Cocked Hat', because it was similar in shape to the well known tricorn associated with highwaymen. The well wooded Old Coach Road cutting across from Burton Road to Riseholme Road underlined the division.

Beyond the Coach Road, the Lincolnshire dialect was more in evidence than what would have been King's English in those days. Potatoes became tates, turnips became turnups and grass was pronounced gress. The word reckon was often used instead of think. Sometimes if I was persistent about something I was told sharply to stop 'werritin' or 'chafing',

When my Grandmother, Mrs Elizabeth Baldock, was the Postmistress at Burton, my mother and I sometimes stayed with her during the school holidays. We travelled from Lincoln by a coach owned by the Enterprise and Silver Dawn Company. With a name like that you would expect something better than ordinary and I've never forgotten the deep upholstery of the seats with their polished wooden frames. There was never any litter or dirty corners. I had to struggle to get up the shiny steel steps, but it was all part of the adventure.

The coaches used to depart from the side of the Brayford pool where the university is now situated, which was more commercial than it is today. Stepping down from the coach at the post office in Burton, and looking at the row of stone buildings it could have been assumed that they were one single dwelling with the post office set in the middle. In fact there were three dwelling houses. The first one housed two sisters named Elkington. The ladies valued their privacy and always grew the hedge surrounding the property very high. I believe there was an iron gate part way down the hill that gave access to the back of the house.

Several times, usually during the summer, they hosted open days, or fetes when local people could buy home made produce such as cakes or preserves, pretty much like the car boot sales of today.

I remember the entrance to the old Burton post office as three or four large stone slabs leading up from the asphalt path. The door at the top gave access to the post office, general shop and my Grandmother's living quarters. There was a sunken path of concrete slabs that ran under her living room windows and past the third dwelling house. A Mr and Mrs Fairchild lived there and they had a daughter named Hilda. I believe she married a teacher and had a baby and about this time they lived with their parents. I think there was a communal path down the side of their house giving access to their back door and my grandmother's back door.

Written by Mrs K. J. Lucas