

# Brigg Fair

A memoir of Joseph Taylor  
by his grand-daughter  
E Marion Hudson



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## Forward

*My grandmother, Marion Hudson, lived in Grimsby and was always proud of being the grand-daughter of Joseph Taylor of Saxby-all-Saints. She attempted to get this over to me, but it was some years after she died that I became interested in folk music and I suppose when I had most contact with her, in my early teens, I was more interested in 'I want to hold your hand' than 'Brigg Fair'.*

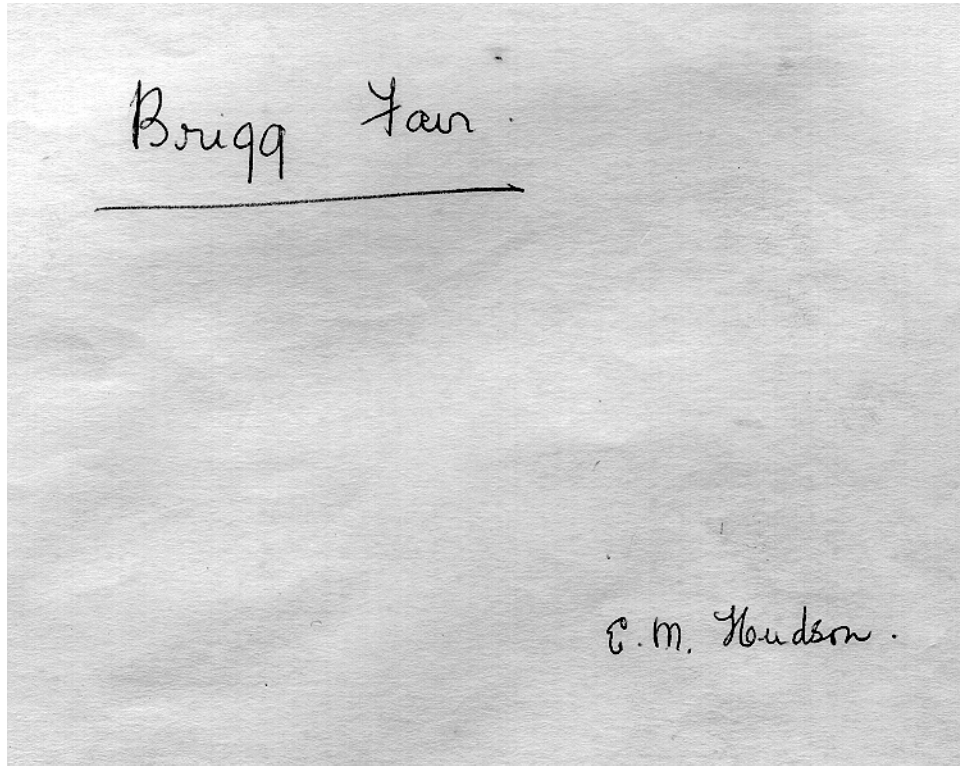
*Marion died in the early 1970's and left me all her 'Joseph Taylor' memorabilia. I inherited Joseph Taylor's Windsor chair and a small leather case containing a set of 78rpm records of Joseph Taylor. These were made in Grimsby and are apparently copies of the original recordings. Also in the case was a typescript manuscript, written by Marion, describing her recollections of her childhood and her grandfather.*

*I've now scanned the manuscript to generate a digital copy. I've executed the hand written edits that appeared on the text. There is also some evidence that she wanted to re-order the chapters, but new ordering is not clear, so I've left the order intact. I've made no changes to the text, apart from fixing a very few typos that remained and changing some of the spelling edits that she seemed to be engaged in; changing Granpa to Grandpa, for example. Thanks are due to my cousin Ruairidh Greig for checking on the document and correcting several of the typos due to scanning failure. The front page here is an image scan from the original manuscript.*

*The date of the manuscript is unclear. The date on the envelope in which it came is March 1969. It could be much earlier. I've a contract from the BBC from September 1950 for a talk that Marion gave to the 'Country Magazine' programme.*

*I think that the right place for the original is in some public folk archive. Up to the point I give it to them, I wish to retain copyright of this edited version.*

**Peter Collinson  
December 2003**



**BRIGG FAIR**  
**By**  
**E Marion Hudson**

## BRIGG FAIR - by E.M.Hudson

### CHAPTER 1

Joseph Taylor was born, at the then small village of Binbrook, hanging on the slope of the Lincolnshire Wolds, about half way between Grimsby and Brigg. Now it is well known for its large Aerodrome built on the High Road away from the village, so that it is not spoilt.

He had always loved music and wherever it was to be heard, he was there. From the age of sixteen he would travel miles on foot, since there was no public transport to places miles away. His mother told my mother that he would go as far as Grimsby and back, a matter of about twenty miles, to attend a good concert.

He was apprenticed as a carpenter and at nineteen moved to the Hall at Saxby-all-Saints to improve his craft and to study arboriculture. Much of the journey was along the route which the gipsies of 'Brigg Fair' would take. He soon became proficient in his new work, and later became bailiff of the large Estate.

He left behind his beautiful sweetheart, who lived at Huttoft, a wee village south of Mablethorpe. Some years later she became his wife.

Being a perfectionist, he 'got on' as we say in Lincolnshire, and eventually was in charge of Squire Barton's large estate which comprised two villages, several farms, large and small, and wonderful woods.

### CHAPTER 2

This must I fear, become personal since it is the story of Joseph Taylor as I knew him. Each year of my childhood I spent much time at Saxby but there is one very special holiday which is as clear to me as things which happened only yesterday. It, I think, will give the clearest picture of my Grandfather and Grandmother and of their happy home.

When I was three and a half years old, I went to spend a month at 'Pheasant



Cottage'. Had he been a Lord, my Grandpa's crest would certainly have been a pheasant. For in his stock, whether in his immaculate weekday grey freize or his Sunday black, he always wore a beautifully coloured enamel pin in the form of a pheasant. In the centre of his front garden was a bush which he had trained, also to the shape of a pheasant. There were few in North Lincolnshire which he had done for special friends but I have, through the years, seen them turn to shabby bushes. (*The image is a*

*postcard of Saxby-all-Saints showing the Pheasant cottage and the 'bush'. The copyright says SAS 15 – 1915?– Ed)*

I have not been to his village for several years - it is a ghost village to me - but I do hope someone is caring for his. (*Sadly, it's gone – Ed*)

My family lived in the small town of Barton-on-Humber, five miles north of Saxby. Usually my father drove us, but this was very special because I was going alone. I was taken before 7.a.m. on a bright, early June morning, to the Post Office, outside of which was standing the Postman's Cart.

I knew him well as he had a cobbler's shop in the Town; since he travelled every weekend excepting Saturday, he was only in 'our' shop on Saturday. Then people could take their worn shoes to be mended or gather up those which Mr. Robinson had finished.

How could he do that? Each day his itinerary was through the 'low' villages (not far from the River Humber and Ancholme), Ferriby, Horkstow, Saxby until he reached Bonby, where he also had a shop, working until 4 p.m. when he returned by the same route calling at each Post Office and farmer's box for the incoming mail, which was dealt with at the Barton Office.

Out of the Post Office came the Postman with his bag of mail. He threw it into the back of the cart and then helped me up two iron steps and on to a hard, wooden plank. He clambered up the other side, gathered his reins and we were off.

Slowly, laboriously, we climbed until we reached the highest point when he stopped and told me to look back. It was wonderland! Years later, I met the Parish Church organist at exactly the same point and he said 'that is what I call a Panorama', and so it was but I remembered that perfect summer morning when the world was fresh and dewy. The trees and fields in their new green, the huddle of the houses in the valley, and, over the River, the silhouette of the Dock buildings, with the ships on the Humber, between.

But he had another reason for stopping for there was a wee sort of cupboard on a gate post, which he opened with a key and into the box he popped some letters. Beyond the gate was a narrow road leading to the large farmhouse, of which, fields away, we could see the chimneys. The farmer would fetch his letters and replace them by some to be dispatched. We called at a few more boxes and three Post Offices and so reached Grannie's house, while he continued on to Bonby, his last port of call. That gives you a picture of the times in which Grandpa lived.

### CHAPTER 3

Grannie was waiting at the gate as she would know exactly what time to expect us. I thought then, and still think, that she was the loveliest lady in the land; tall, stately, and serene, immaculate in dress, now in a lavender dress with neat black cap on her head. After thirty, in those days, a woman was considered past the marriagable age and began to wear a cap. In the afternoon she changed into black silk with a white, real lace fischu and matching cap which was threaded with narrow lavender ribbon.

I never saw her ruffled and my mother (Bless her - she was the same) told me that though there were seven children, she was never cross. The front door was dead centre, the sitting room on the left and the living room on the right. Both were large rooms. My

interests in the sitting room were first, the harmonium, which I was not yet allowed to touch, a glass case containing stuffed Birds of Paradise and two ornaments on the mantelpiece which when touched nodded their heads.

But I loved the living room with, as almost all houses in Saxby had, pots of geraniums on the window sills and linen blinds. There were, of course, no lights in the village streets and at night the light showing through the blinds made a fairyland for me. In the corner the inevitable Grandfather clock, ever ticking away in its corner. All was cosy, warm and welcoming, and if Grandpa was home, his faithful little white dog, with one large, jet black spot on his right shoulder. (I once suggested that MINIM was the wrong name but the reply was "well he couldn't be a crotchet, he has no stick, and anyhow he must have a musical name." I agreed because later when I was able to play, Minim would follow and he sang with all his heart. Grannie's cat followed her around and in the evenings sat on her knee.

There was a door on the right hand side of the fireplace; behind it was the curly staircase with an L shaped corridor, the smaller end being very useful to Auntie Pollie, who lived with Grannie and Grandpa, - and me, as we were able through the window there, to steal the luscious, red plums. It is said that stolen fruit is sweetest and those certainly were the best I have ever tasted. Of course Grandpa knew but he loved a joke and would say such things as 'the birds seem to be enjoying the plums'. We were not depriving anyone; there were lots more in the garden.

The kitchens were interesting to me. As one came through the back door the "working" kitchen was on the right, and then the smaller one where Grannie made butter just for the home. I loved 'Butter day' because she allowed me to make a 'pat' for myself. That was grand but the exciting moment came when I rolled a wheel over it, and hey presto! There was a cow! That place smelt delicious since the spotless dairy was next to it.

Outside was a huge vegetable and fruit garden, though of course, flower borders on every side. Straight across were buildings holding the cow and two pigs. (No imported goods at that home!), and a few chickens.

A narrow, well-kept path stretched through the centre of the long garden ending in a unique stile for though it was easy on 'our' side, there was a long drop on the other and it was difficult to me as a child to find the steps. Not that I ever went over it alone as it was forbidden territory, being part of 'the Estate'. There was a large yard - the most wonderful docks grew there - surrounded by stables and workshops. Grandpa kept his horse and trap there having access to a wide road on his land, along the side of the house and garden. There was a door, to which Grandpa had a key, so that sometimes when he went to see the Squire, I enjoyed the beautiful flowers, trees and lawns of the Hall Gardens.

The front garden was Grandpa's pride and joy and he did it alone. We all knew that it was for Grannie's pleasure and contained her favourites - could it be the power of suggestion or the memory of happy days, which makes them mine too. I have a plant of each, which have had four different homes - dark red carnations, bright magenta phlox and the Christmas rose. All still flower in profusion.

## CHAPTER 4

Looking over the well-kept garden hedge could be seen almost the whole of the long village street, stretching in such a gentle curve as to seem almost straight. There was always something interesting to see. Perhaps the children coming from the School or Church, one of the small farmers bringing home his few cows. Some times a tenant farmer in his smart trap or in the Autumn 'the family' on their beautiful horses; sometimes a bicycle, fixed wheel, of course, indeed it caused quite a furore when the first free-wheel passed. Much later Auntie Pollie appeared on her fine new bicycle and wearing what was considered correct dress which consisted of straw boater, white blouse, with wide leg-of-mutton sleeves, long black skirt (she was too circumspect to entertain the idea of cycling bloomers) but, joy of joys, the wonderful contraption for holding down her skirt! It was of elastic placed under the instep and fastened under the hem of her skirt. That was true modesty!

Directly across the road was the Rectory - the village people were proud that he was a Rector and not just a Vicar, he was related to the "FAMILY" at the Hall. Here my darling Auntie, as a small child, played with his little boy, (they were the same age) Algernon Markham, who had been born at the Rectory. It was a huge garden, well wooded towards the street by chestnut trees with a profusion of blossom in the Springtime; lawns and flower garden stretching back to the hills, thick with woods.

All the houses belonged to the Estate and were kept in perfect condition. The importance of the occupants could be detected by the size and style of the houses and gardens. They were all beautiful but I liked the cottages best. They were like pictures in story books, or as we drew them when we were small. Five windows, three above one on either side and one in the centre over the front door; two below separated by the door. Each had its narrow flower bed lush with flowers on either side, and, separating it from the path, a fence made of short, pointed wooden stakes, painted a shiny black, as were the chimneys. The walls were white-washed every year. Truly Hansel and Gretel cottages. We liked the little gardens which grew fuchsias. For, being mischievous, in the dusk we used to 'pop' the buds. It was a wonderful sound and we used to salve our consciences by saying it helped the buds to open. Nature had certainly been prodigal with her beauty but I think the cottages enhanced that beauty and were instrumental in gaining for Saxby-all-Saints, the title of most beautiful village in England.

## CHAPTER 5

The other side of the road is as flat as possible and a contrast to the South side. Two lanes, one almost at the end of the village 'street' led for nearly a mile to the River Ancholme. They were interesting because of the variety and number of wild flowers and birds. The one at the Northern end was my favourite because at the end, spanning the Ancholme, was a Bridge. Oh no! not an ordinary bridge. It belonged to the Squire and had a locked gate at either end. There was a house near the Saxby end where the custodian kept the key. Other people than those belonging to the Estate were charged one penny to cross and the villagers had to wait until the gates were unlocked. I felt tremendously proud when my very own Grandfather took a key from his pocket and we walked across and back again, Grandpa locking the gate. I did not know until years afterwards how sad he must have felt, since his youngest child, named Joseph after him, had been drowned in the River, higher up where the other lane ended.

One hot summer day, at the age of seventeen, he and his friends decided to go swimming. They were resting on the bank when he said 'Here's for the other side.' He was never seen again. Apparently he was caught in the weeds. Many years afterwards a Scunthorpe youth after saying the identical words jumped in from the other bank with the same tragic end.

## CHAPTER 6

My most memorable walk with Grandpa was when, after the midday meal, he said to Grannie "Put Marion's bonnet on, I'm going to take her to see something she will most probably never see again" and turning to me added, "I want you to remember this always." Had he, not said that it may have passed from my mind. Through the years I have kept repeating it, lest it should be lost.

We went on our way along the village street, all the children greeting Grandpa as a friend, as indeed he was, with Minim alongside. When we got nearly to the end of the street, we climbed a tiny track and through a small gate into a field where, at the top, was a large flock of sheep with the shepherd. Obviously he was expecting us as he was leaning on his crook waiting to count his sheep.

Grandpa with his usual courtesy, introduced us. Then the mystery was solved! The shepherd hooked his crook over his left arm holding his stick in the same hand and a knife in the other, began to count:

"Yan, tan, tethera, pethera, pamp,  
"Sethera, lethera, hoverer, covera, dix" (being ten)  
"Yan-a-dix, tan-a-dix and so on up to  
"Bumfit" which is fifteen then "Yan-a-sethera" and so on  
until he came to twenty which is "Figgit".

At this point he made a notch on his stick. He repeated the programme until all the sheep were counted then adding the Figgits and extra numbers found the total. It was an unforgettable experience.

I have only met two people who know it, one being Canon Markham, Auntie Pollie's friend Algy, lately Vicar of Grimsby Parish Church. The other Jesse Baggaley whom I met when we were together on the wireless on a Lincolnshire programme, I, of course, talking about Joseph Taylor and Brigg Fair. He very kindly sent me a poem of his which had been published in Punch and in which the old shepherd counted in the ancient manner.

## CHAPTER 7

Another afternoon was to influence my whole life and I shall be everlastingly grateful.

I am told that unless I was kept busy, I should surely get into mischief. Grandpa and Auntie Pollie both had engagements that afternoon; he important business with the Squire, she to fulfil a long standing promise to sing at a Garden Party in the next village of Bonby. Charlotte, Grannie's trusted help, was out for the day. She was a permanent



member of the family and as long as the home continued she was there. She was helped at times by a woman, who seemed to have little use for children so, contrary to my behaviour with Charlotte, I reciprocated by keeping out of her way. Auntie once took me to her cottage with special dainties when the poor thing was ill. Believe it or not, her walls were literally covered with funeral cards. Ugh!

Back to the afternoon - to save Grannie having to look after me, Grandpa suggested that Auntie Pollie should show me how to play the harmonium. Joy of Joys! I had not been allowed to touch it before, though I must confess I, had found out how to use the pedals and had sometimes popped down a pedal until it made a tiny squeak, after making sure that everybody was out of the way.

Auntie drew five lines on a piece of paper, showed me that they matched the music and wrote the notes on the staff but not, on the Hymn Book. To this day I remember its name 'Jesus loves me' the simplest possible tune. In pencil, on the keys, she wrote the letters on the part of the keyboard which I should need. I had now to figure out which notes to play. Of course she had given me the mnemonic and I seem to remember that I learned the notes from my chart, before attempting the music which I did not then find very difficult. Then the complicated business of translating to the keys. By the time I had settled for the note all the wind would have escaped so that I had to press the pedal again.

For some time it must have been a cruel noise for Grannie, sitting in the next room, but bless her, she was the most patient of ladies. By the time the others returned I could play it. Every day now I was fascinated by this new plaything and spent lots of time with the old harmonium. If Minim was not out with Grandpa, he would sit beside me and sing his solo. It was a pretty hideous row but I feel sure he enjoyed it.

I have said how kind and friendly Grandpa was, but on Friday afternoons I saw that he could be strict if required. At five o'clock each week he paid the men who worked on the Estate.

I sat quietly beside the fire, Grandpa at the table with his books and money, which in the morning he had fetched from the Bank in Barton. How we loved those visits and we lived next door to the Bank - our gardens joined.

One by one the men filed in - woe betide the man who had been late some mornings or who had added up his working hours wrongly. Grandpa was always very fair and allowed the man to explain. If there were extenuating circumstances the man would receive a mild rebuke but if not he would be reprimanded and looking down would say 'Sorry Sir', to which he was given a warning, "don't let it occur again". It was not so bad for the other man, unless he had been careless, as Grandpa, knowing each man well, thought he was trying - in plain words - to cheat. Then, there really were ructions. Some of the labourers had not had 'much schooling' for which Grandpa allowed, and he would add up the total for him.

The wonderful month was drawing to a close and the next Friday when Grandpa was going to Barton, I went along with him in the trap. Guess what? I had a new baby brother and I was pleased to see the family again, but, as my parents were thanking Grandpa for taking care of me, he said "She can come any time, we love having her" -and I did, that day!

That night instead of singing one song to me, he sang two. My favourite at that time 'Creeping Jane' the story of a horse, who contrary to appearances and the taunts of the 'Gentlemen' won in grand style.

I remember that was the day when he had me very puzzled. He knew his Dickens well, frequently using phrases from his books, which I did not realise at the time, of course.

As we were having our evening meal Grannie said "Will you do something for me Joseph" explaining what she required. I could not understand his reply "Barkis is willing". It just made nonsense to me. I realised years later that my father's language, too, was sprinkled with quotations from Dickens, we were used to it. One night he said "Barkis is willing" and the answer to my problem was found.

He was popular with the young people of the village and those who left the village - very few - on their visits home always called on Mr. and Mrs. Taylor.

As my baby brother grew he took my place at Grannie's and I was transferred to Auntie Annie's house, Fountain Ville, where there were older cousins, many visitors and much music. Naturally we went every day to Pheasant Cottage and one evening Grandpa was reading his Classics, as he usually did, when there was a knock at the door. Charlotte brought in a dark handsome stranger who was unknown to me, though the rest welcomed him with obvious pleasure. His conversation was as interesting as his appearance, and his speech showed no evidence of his Lincolnshire birth. He told us of his rise to Detective and eventually to Private Body Guard to H.M. King Edward. I cannot be really sure, but I think he had also protected Queen Victoria in her later years. We were very impressed. He was a village boy.

## CHAPTER 8

Christmas Time was always wonderful since many of the family gathered at Grannie's house. One of my earliest recollections is of driving on Christmas Eve with my father and mother - Ruth and John had gone earlier. The snow lay deep and I can feel the 'wicked' cold as we got to the top of Ferriby Hill. I was so frozen actually cried. Having friends in the village of Ferriby my parents decided they would call on them to thaw me out. There my memory fails with the exception of playing with their little girl and having SARDINES. That was the first time I had ever seen them.

I cannot remember the Christmas Day particularly since they all followed a similar pattern ending with Grandpa singing to us and telling us stories.

All was set for Christmas 1907, when a message arrived asking mother to go as soon as possible as Grannie was very ill. For the first time in our lives we could not go. Despite short notice kind friends took in the four of us. Not realising the gravity of the position, we had a wonderful time.

A few days later dear Grannie passed peacefully away. Not until we arrived at Pheasant Cottage on the day of the funeral did I face the tragedy. If ever murder was in my heart, it was on that day when I saw the woman of the 'funeral cards' standing at my Grannie's door, ushering us in. But Grandpa made me forget my distress and anger at seeing someone take Grannie's place welcoming guests - no, family! for he was so courageous.

A service was held in the living room, at which only the family was present. Whether it was courage or true religious faith in the greatest tragedy which could befall him, I know not.

Perhaps the second gave him the first, but I know that the rest of us poor stricken people felt unable to produce a note of the hymn, which we knew was her favourite. He, however, with tears unheeded, led the singing, lifting up his voice with the same clear, melodious sound and we simply had to follow. I shall never, never forget that experience.

Showing the love of all kinds of people, we found the Church overflowing with folk from near and far. With no account of status or creed they all sorrowed with us.

It is a true saying that things must go on and Grandpa bravely lived as nearly as possible as he had done, though, as we knew well, lonely without his beloved partner.

Charlotte now kept house in the same way as Grannie had done. Actually she had done for quite a time, since Auntie Pollie was at School all day. This may be the moment to give another angle on Grandpa. He had almost a reverence for women folk and would not let a woman light a fire, and every morning he got up early to do so for Charlotte. Once I heard him go downstairs and crept after him. He used a tinder box and steel - oh! so old it was - preferring it to matches. Then I helped him to make the revolting strong tea which he took to each of us. We all hated it but drank it, for not one of us would risk hurting his feelings.

## CHAPTER 9

Grandpa's unconscious influence - for I am sure he would never have tried to persuade them - is evident in the fact that not only did all his sons choose woods, flowers or like things, but two of his daughters married men with similar inclinations and all loved music.

James, Uncle Jim to us, the oldest looked and behaved exactly like his father, the only difference being that his voice was bass. He was in charge of the woods and all that belonged to Lord Heneage's Estate in Hainton and the surrounding villages.

Every year, during the summer holidays, I stayed with him and he lavished on me the love he would have given to his own children. Unfortunately there were none. Every morning there was a gift for me on the breakfast table. I went out with him every day - three days to Lincoln, Louth and Market Rasen where at each place there was a special shop each having a special kind of sweet. At Market Rasen - the shop is still there - it was small cream walnuts. The other days I drove with him to see the men in the various woods. I remember one day hearing my first sound of 'timber' and the crash of a falling tree.

My mother - Betsy Ann - came next. She was a repetition of Grandma - we never saw her ruffled. She was a wonderful partner to my father and a beloved mother to us children: John, Ruth, Marion and Alfred. She was utterly unselfish and full of 'good works', always done in an unobtrusive way. Like Grannie she had a sweet soprano voice. She met my father in Barton. Eventually he farmed three farms, the first on the edge of the Town, the second far up on the hill called Barton Hill, where we lived and the third adjoining us, he

obtained for my brother John. Here lay the boundary of our farms and marked the beginning of Squire Barton's Saxby Estates so that after harvest time we could walk through the fields in a direct line to Saxby village.

Next came Uncle John who had inherited Grandpa's voice. He was invited to become a member of a Cathedral Choir but preferred his farm. He sang at many concerts and won every Festival for which he entered. He was asked to sing 'Brigg Fair' at one of the Anniversaries of the Festival and made a record for the B.B.C. Many people cannot distinguish between his and Grandpa's voice. He died as he lived - singing. I went to visit him (1946) when he was dying. Through the open window was a beautiful landscape, the one he loved so well, and the birds were singing goodnight. He talked of our music together. I mentioned one of my favourites 'Maid of Athens' and he began in his still beautiful voice, smooth and clear.

"Maid of Athens, ere we part  
Give, oh, give me back my heart  
Or, since that has left my breast  
Take it now, and leave the rest,  
Can I cease to love thee? No!  
Can I cease to love thee? No!  
My dearest heart, I love thee".....

and so on to the end of the song. Bless his dear heart, he died that night! He had one son, Henry, the only one of the Taylor family still in the village. He has an excellent bass voice and has been singing in the Church Choir ever since he was a boy.

Next, Auntie Annie, tall, dark, handsome and vivacious. There was always something happening at her house - crowds of visitors, lots of fun, lots of music. She married an expert wood carver and a screen, much of which I saw being made, can be seen in Saxby-all-Saints Church. It became a family joke that people talking to any of us all said 'he's such a nice, quiet man'. He had a good bass voice but was too retiring to sing solo but along with his only son Percy (who eventually became the conductor of the Choral Society) sang in the Choir. Lilla, Percy and Dora, the youngest grandchild, composed their family.

Auntie Annie, Soprano, Auntie Pollie, Contralto, Uncle John, Tenor and Cousin Percy, formed a quartet which invariably gained the first prize in Musical Festivals.

Auntie Pollie was a petite version of Auntie Annie, but though full of fun was much quieter. I often think of her as I saw her when she and Auntie Annie came to spend the night at our home when they had been invited to sing at a concert in Barton.

I had been ill and was in bed. She came straight up to my bedroom looking - to me - like an angel. She wore a white, sort of lacy dress and a large black hat with one beautiful pink rose on it.

Though she lived in the quiet village she was very modern. We probably knew her the best since she spent part of every holiday at our home and after my mother died at my home. I owe my Lincolnshire dialect to her, for since many of the children spoke it she knew it well. Whenever we had an opportunity we talked dialect. Through a misunderstanding - or I should say malicious gossip - her father would not allow her to

become engaged to the man she loved. He could not be blamed; all he wanted was her happiness and things must have looked very black. The only consolation is that the truth was eventually discovered and years later they met again, and she went each year to visit him and his family.

The youngest Fred - apart from the boy Joseph who had been drowned - whom we seldom saw, trained as a gardener on a large estate he eventually returned to Lincolnshire but further South, setting up his own garden, growing, in huge greenhouses, tomatoes, strawberries and flowers to send, early each morning, to Covent Garden Market.

## CHAPTER 10

You will have noticed that all the menfolk of the family, Grandfather to Grandsons sang in the Church Choir. The Church played a great part in the lives of the inhabitants not only for services but all activities were held in the School, which was a Church School. This was used for weddings, parties, dances, whist drives and the night school. These activities were not, of course, obligatory but it was expected that all the villagers should be present on Sunday, with the exception of people, such as shepherds, whose duties made it impossible. I think they enjoyed going since the Rector (the living being in the hands of the Squire) was always a 'Gentleman', the Choir well trained by the knowledgeable School Master who also played the tuneful organ. The bells were melodious and as the last bell tolled the Rector met the Family and they processed to the Choir Stalls.

I never think of the Church without recalling a terrifying incident which shows the faith which the people reposed in Grandpa and the esteem in which he was held.

There was a woman in the village who was perfectly normal excepting at full moon when she performed extraordinary things. She was once caught, in the nick of time, trying to drown my cousin Lilla in a soft water butt. She used to go up the School Lane and make horrible faces at the children busy at their lessons. At such times the door was locked. However, the climax came when a man - probably a keeper on the watch for poachers, called my Grandpa out of bed, and told him that she was on top of the Church Tower and had put her white petticoat there. She refused to come down and said she was going to fly. By the time Grandpa arrived, a clump of near neighbours had gathered, but everytime anyone attempted to go up the steps she threatened to jump. When Grandpa arrived, he told them all to stand well back, then walked to the bottom of the steps and shouted "Hello, so-and-so, it's only Mr. Taylor". She answered him and they chattered away for some time, he realizing that only by consummate patience could he fulfil his task. Meanwhile he was creeping, inch by inch up the stairs, knowing that any sudden movement might mean disaster. At long last he was standing on the top with her but still every time he attempted to move she stepped backwards. He kept perfectly still, always talking but he must have been thinking hard. Fortunately, the small crowd, admiring his bravery, had obeyed his request and was motionless. At last, as if inspiration had suddenly come, he said, "I'll race you down", and he turned around - it worked and tragedy had been averted. He was such a modest man I have never heard him mention it, but the villagers did and the poor woman too, when she had recovered. One of the saddest things was that when the attacks were over she could remember all the details. At normal times she was a sweet woman.

Grannie, too, was held in similar esteem all around the countryside. Anyone in trouble came, or sent a message to her and I remember her gathering together sweetmeats,

dainties and flowers and departing to visit sick people. However, the strangest of things to me was when a man cycled from Ferriby Sluice, some three miles away to say that his wife had died and nobody had any white stockings. It was explained to me later that Grannie always kept a stock in the house, ready for those people who still believed that it was the only right and proper way to prepare for decent burial.

## CHAPTER 11

Talking of Grannie's sweet flowers reminds me of the wild flowers which grew in such profusion in the district. Since the Wolds were so high and on the Eastern slope, the village was protected from the cold East winds so that not only did wild flowers flourish, but trees and plants blossomed several weeks earlier than ours at Barton On Humber, only five miles away. In my teens I became interested in Botany and found several unusual specimens in Saxby.

It was violets which made the village famous. Dark purple-ish blue in colour with a wonderful perfume (a Barton chemist used them to make scent to sell in this shop) or a clear white with a suggestion of yellow in the centre.

They blossomed in the hedge-rows, they crept into the gardens, they were everywhere scenting the air.

In the Springtime every family sallied forth to pluck them to send to their absent relations as Uncle Jim, at Whitsuntide, sent us fragrant lillies of the valley from Hainton Woods.

On Good Friday and Easter Monday, the village was full of people. They arrived in droves from Barton, Brigg and the villages in between. They haunted the hedge-rows filling their baskets they had brought for the purpose and then, after eating their picnic lunch, filled those baskets too.

But being Grandpa's children we were away in the solitude of the Woods where only we were allowed to roam. The keeper on guard spoke a few words to us and passed on, knowing that we had been taught how to behave in the "covers" so as not to disturb the wild life there, where at night foxes barked and owls hooted. Beyond the wood was a field where Grandpa had taken me in the early Spring to watch hares dancing and boxing. That really needed quietness.

Up the hill past Fountain Ville, Auntie Annie's house, we had climbed, passing the visitors on our way. The hill on which in Winter Time we had great fun on the sledge and toboggan, Uncle Tom had made for us. Down the twisty hill we would fly, right across the village street (there was seldom any traffic then, but as a precaution someone was left to keep "cave") to end on the wide grass verge. That is, the experts did, but the less accomplished of us landed either in the ditch or through the hedge. Today we had other ideas. Entering the wood with its purple carpet, we chose our places and sat down, each with a basket and reel of cotton. From experience we had discovered it was almost impossible to bunch them later, once the heads were leaning all ways and many were wasted, besides after a time, it became very boring. So we bunched and tied them as we sat, and we never had to change our positions as the violets were there in ample profusion.

## CHAPTER 12

Some people suppose that it must be uninteresting in a small village. Nothing could be more wrong. Every season had its own beauty and interests. We had always loved the variety in nature - who could help it with Grandpa and parents showing its stories to us. We watched the world wake up. The birds, the animals, the trees, the flowers. Each season we watched the habits of the birds and animals and knew their habitats. It was an everlasting interest and we never tired.

Each year, Grandpa, who often joined us in our games, gave us two special treats. He was more full of verve, high spirits and good ideas than our fathers and enjoyed every minute as much as we did.

## CHAPTER 13

Our first jaunt was on August Bank Holiday, when we visited Elsham Flower Show though it consisted of a variety of things besides flowers. All the grandchildren who were old enough, were packed into the trap, some on the front seat, some on the back and the rest on the floor. He sang to us on the journey and we joined in until we were nearing Elsham Hall (now occupied by a grandson of Gernase Elwes (*Gervase? Ed*) the renowned tenor vocalist, and Lady Winifred). The show started in the morning but we did not go until afternoon, since the earlier part of the day was for judging the various classes for flowers, fruit, vegetables and farm produce, including home made cakes, etc.

When we arrived the sports had begun and one year we were very thrilled when Auntie Pollie won the prize for the best kept bicycle and most suitable dress.

After that event Grandpa and I crept away from the rest, to the Band Stand beside the lake. There was always a 'crack' Military Band and we were enthralled. After tea, for which we had all gathered, we wandered again after arranging a meeting place for departure. Back to the Band Stand we went until by the arrival of biting, stinging insects we realised our day was ending, and back to Saxby, exhausted, dishevelled, but very happy, ready for the meal awaiting us at Pheasant Cottage. The other jaunt will come later since it has great significance.

## CHAPTER 14

So life progressed in its serene way, governed only by the change of season, broken only by the arrival of the Family, from their Yorkshire Estate, for shooting and hunting. There were lavish house parties at the Hall and many of the workmen were called upon to help. Some at the shoots became beaters, some loaders of guns and all arrangements were in the capable hands of Grandpa. Few villagers missed Church on those Sundays; they were anxious to view the 'Ladies and Gentlemen'.

At hunting time, all who could, would follow the hounds. All the ladies rode side-saddle and all the "Gentlemen" wore proper red hunting kit. It was a wonderful sight. I used to watch for hounds to recognise the people who had "walked" them. For the benefit of town people - the puppies are spread among the countryside, to live with a family until they are old enough for hunting. Before actual hunting began special mock hunts were arranged to train the puppies when they have reached the hunting age. It must be heartbreak to part with them.

## CHAPTER 15

Besides those two interruptions to routine, all went as usual until the day when Lady Winifred Elwes called to see Grandpa asking his permission to bring a visitor, a Mr. Percy Granger who was interested in music and particularly Folk Songs. "He would so much like to meet Mr. Taylor and hear him sing." Naturally he assented and a date was fixed.

He sang many songs and a rich friendship developed between the two, Mr. Granger becoming a frequent visitor. He stayed at Fountain Ville where there was much more accommodation and a piano-he was a gifted pianist and composer. When he married his beautiful Norwegian wife he brought her meet them all.

In the beginning, however, there was, what seemed to be, an insuperable snag. A Musical Festival was to be inaugurated at Brigg, would Mr. Taylor please sing "Brigg Fair" which Mr. Granger had immediately recognised as a Prince of songs, sung by a Prince of singers. He admired Grandpa's integrity, naturalness, love and appreciation of the best and his pleasant countenance. But no blandishment had any affect and Grandpa was adamant - he wasn't a public singer, he only sang because he wished to.

Lady Winifred and her brother cycled from Brigg many times and at last, to please her, much against his inclination, he at long last, consented.

Soon the day arrived and Grandpa totally unaware of the audience, sang as he did to us at home, in his simple natural manner and melodious voice. As all the world knows, he won and a new era had begun for him and his village, since the villagers regarded him as their property. Life was now very different. Saxby-all-Saints had become famous. He was the only person who did not believe that, saying 'I only sang.' He accepted all the glory in his usual modest way, though surprised the songs he had sung as a boy, should be considered valuable.

Famous musical people wrote for permission to visit him and all agreed that his singing was unusually beautiful as they fell beneath his spell. Records were made of his songs and then there was a greater surprise, which concerned the great composer Delius.

## CHAPTER 17

I have met many garbled stories of the way in which "Brigg Fair" was introduced to him but this is the true one.

Not far from Grimsby lies Brocklesby Hall, the home of the Earls of Yarborough, where, at a weekend party, both Delius and Percy Granger were guests and possibly the Elwes. Fresh from his find and full of enthusiasm, Percy Granger told of "Brigg Fair" He hummed the tune and Delius was so entranced he wrote down the notes. Later, back in France, he wrote his incredible "Brigg Rhapsody" Incredible? Yes! for to me it describes exactly Brigg Fair and its surroundings. I feel he must have visited the Elwes and been shown the situation since I hear every facet of the fair.

The fateful day of the first performance arrived and Grandpa was the Guest of Honour, sitting in the box with Lady Winifred Elwes and her brother (you may have wondered if Polly Elwes of television fame is related to Lady Winifred. Yes, she is her



grand-daughter). Delius, who was to conduct his own Rhapsody and Percy Granger's mother. Sir Thomas Beecham conducted the rest of the programme. When Delius went to take his place on the rostrum, Sir Thomas went up to the box. He shook hands with Joseph Taylor and supposing him to be a country yokel said "Mr. Taylor I think. I'm Beecham. Beecham pills, you know, pills." I have often wondered what Grandpa thought of that introduction. What a thrill it must have been to hear his simple song turned into the wondrous rhapsody. It is certainly written with great rectitude even to the complicated "twiddles."

When Grandpa brought the recording of the piece, for my family to hear, I was in an agony of fear lest the arrangement should not have done justice to the original tune. One hears such travesties! I need not have worried!

I still rejoice in its beauty and continue to find something fresh at every hearing. I have recently heard it played by the Halle Orchestra under the baton of Sir Adrian Boult and was particularly impressed by the meticulous care which had been taken by Delius, over the very intricate ornaments which were unique to Joseph Taylor. I am very jealous for authenticity. For that reason, when Frances Collinson and I published a version of the song, we decided to take out the ornaments. I have kept them myself, but that is the way I learned the song at my grandpa's knee.

## **CHAPTER 18**

Though the song is called 'BRIGG FAIR' it originated in Binbrook where Grandpa was born. I suppose the singer gave it that name, as he was going to meet his sweetheart at Brigg Fair. Brigg is a small town in Lincolnshire, which wakens up every Thursday, when there is a thriving Market for cattle, sheep etc. and in the Market Place, the usual stalls, to be found in such places.

It was in this Market Place and adjoining streets that, on the 5th August each year, the horses took over. I have seen the confusion which ensues and can well understand why - the Council is considering banning the sale of horses there, particularly since in the Summertime, when traffic is enormous, all vehicles wishing to go to the Coast, must pass through. That was the actual Brigg Fair and not the pleasure fair where there are roundabouts and "all the fun of the fair." This was in a field only a little way off the main road.

The road from Binbrook to Brigg, passing through Caistor, after a stiff climb, passes along the edge of the Wolds so high that given good visibility, the Towers of Lincoln Minster can be seen far across the wonderful landscape. It then drops suddenly near the village of Elsham and on the flat to Brigg. This is the actual road on which the gipsy of the song travelled.

## **CHAPTER 19**

The manner in which Grandpa learnt the song is a fascinating story.

One evening when he returned from work, his mother told him that the gipsies had arrived, as they did each year at that time. The same thing would be happening to other tribes around North Lincolnshire as Brigg was annual meeting point where they gathered to exchange news and have jollifications - they still do

He had been awaiting their arrival with impatience, since he loved their singing. So as soon as possible he dashed off to the "pit" where he knew they would make camp. Straight up the steep main road to his stand-point, a gate on the right-hand side. This led to a rough cart track on the edge of the field leading to the pit. The next night he went again, but being braver, this time he went along the track to the second gate which was the entrance to the pit. Now he could see the camp and its occupants. The following night he perched there again, little thinking what the consequences would be, not only to him but to all lovers of Folk Music. As soon as he was settled on top of the gate, he saw the leader of the group coming towards him.

At first he thought he was going to be sent away, but no! the man was smiling and obviously not hostile. When he reached the gate he said "Young man, you like our singing." It was a statement not a question. The gipsies had obviously been aware of him the previous evenings. He had been on trial and passed the test. Music is a wonderful leveller and in no condescending manner but with dignity, the lad was invited to join the revels.

He was led into the camp by the "King" and received as an honoured guest. He was seated beside the King, in the circle around the camp fire, on which the evening meal was cooking. Song followed song and in later years he sang them to his grandchildren.

The light was fading and it was time for the meal. Grandpa suggested that he leave but they persuaded him to share their supper. He had been intrigued by a lump of clay in the now dying embers of the fire. It was a hedgehog! It had been entirely enclosed in the ball of clay which now cracked open - skin and prickles came away with the burnt clay, leaving only the white meat. Young Joseph, with some trepidation, was persuaded to try some "It tasted like succulent young chicken" he said afterwards.

The song, Brigg Fair, was sung by one of the young gipsies and obviously came from the heart. Here are the words, though not in dialect, as they should be, for correct rhyming as at the end DIE becomes DEE to rhyme with ME. One verse I have eliminated since I consider it to be spurious, having found it in another song which either he had known once upon a time and become mixed up. It could be that the gipsy had borrowed it. Such things were done. In any case I prefer to err in removing it, rather than to leave it not being genuine. I think too, that its omission makes for a more suitable length.

### BRIGG FAIR

It was on the fifth of August  
The weather hot and fair,  
Unto Brigg Fair I did repair  
For love I was inclined.

I got up with the lark in the morning  
With my heart so full of glee,  
Expecting there to meet my dear,  
Long time I wished to see.

I looked over my left shoulder  
To see whom I could see,  
And there I spied my own true love

Come tripping up to me.

Oh! its meeting is a pleasure  
And parting is a grief,  
But an inconstant lover  
Is worse than any thief.

O! the green leaves they shall wither  
And the branches they shall die  
If ever I prove false to her  
To the girl that loves me.

One of the songs attractions is that it is in the Dorian form. The first printed edition, with only the first two verses, was in the Scottish Students Song Book in 1937.

### RHAPSODY on BRIGG FAIR

Being familiar with the air and knowing the district too I can follow the story in the music.

I doubt whether Delius knew about the Horse Fair or if he did, preferred to start with the Pleasure Fair, for it begins with the cacophony of the fairground, growing in intensity. Then follows the delightful, quiet interlude when the lovers stroll along the tow-path beside the nearby, lazy River Ancholme (The river which flows through Saxby), where it would be quiet and away from the glaring lights. They do not return to the fair but come back by the Bridge which spans the main street, and so return to the Market Place where, at a short distance, they still hear the blaring of the roundabout and the clamour of the fair. On the other side of the Market Place they hear the sound of the Angelus[???? Ed] followed by the last noisy effort of the Merry-go-Round. Their track is now towards the spot on the outskirts of the town where all the Romanies will gather, and make merry far into the night, for the music now becomes a merry dance obviously performed by the girls, followed by a boisterous dance for the men. The music ends with a furore of bells ending the hilarious Gipsy revels.

## **CHAPTER 20**

It would seem to some people that Grandpa's songs were limited. That is quite wrong since he had an inexhaustible supply, as we children found out every Christmas Day. When all the rest were weary of our noise and chatter he would take over. Grannie on the right with her cat, and Grandpa on the left with Minim his adoring dog beside him, all the children in an arc near the fire and the "grownups" further back, the concert began.

First came the question "What would you like?" He knew very well, for when we were all together it was always the same. I think it was a hymn and I often wonder, whether the grownups guessed why. I suppose they did, but I think Grannie and Grandpa were too dedicated.

Grannie sustained a high melodious note for a long, long time while Grandpa sang "I chased the flee, I chased the flee, I chased the flee (then he added) -ting hours. Then we lost interest through the verses but became alert again for each chorus.

The next choice was by the children from Fountain Ville, not because they particularly enjoyed the sad song but for one word only which amused them. Grandpa, as Percy Granger had requested, now sang many of his songs in dialect and this contained one special word. Why we picked this particular word I cannot imagine, but I still enjoy it. The song is called "Died for love".

I wish my baby it was born  
Lying smiling on its father's knee,  
And I were dead and in my grave  
And green grass growing all over me.

Dig me my grave, long, wide and deep  
Put a marble (*this was the word we waited for*  
*In dialect it was MARBIL*) stone at my head and feet  
But a turtle white dove put over above,  
For to let the world know that I died for love.

Later he remembered another verse which went:

I wish, I wish but it's all in vain  
I wish I were a maid again,  
But a maid again I never can be,  
Since that young farmer came courting me.

I think this was probably the second verse.

Many and varied were the songs he knew, but I rejected any which might not be genuine or which had been collected in other countries, though I am sorry that I have forgotten his special version of "Polly Oliver" Those which he recorded for Percy Granger and, after remembering more verses, the B.B.C. are as follows:

#### GEORGIE

Grandpa could not remember the words but Percy Granger considered the air worth recording. It is probably of Scottish origin. Later, after he recalled the words, it was recorded for H.M.V.

#### LORD BATEMAN.

This was certainly indigenous to Lincolnshire since Percy Granger found three men all living within a few miles of my home who sang it. The other two had considerable variations but Percy Granger much preferred Grandpa's because he said "his memory for tunes was infallible, and his singing more melodious."

The story is of a "noble lord" who "sailed East and he sailed West" until he was captured by the Turks. "The Turke he had but one only daughter." She stole the keys from under her father's pillow and freed the captive. She took him to her father's Palace, gave him wine and said "I wish Lord Bateman they heart was mine." Then they went down to her father's harbour "and gave to him a ship of fame, saying "adieu, adieu, my dear Lord Bateman, I 'm afraid I shall never see thy face again." She made a bargain with him that she would not marry for "seven long years" if he would vow the same.

“When seven long years and fourteen days,  
When seven long years, long known to me,  
She fetched up all her gay clothing  
And crossed the seas to Lord Bateman.”

#### THE WHITE HARE

This was and still is one of my favourites since the tune commences with a wonderful “slide” from A to C. Obviously he enjoyed it as he used many of his unique ornaments. When I learnt it he could only remember one verse, though later he recalled six and the Gramophone Co. recorded it.

I much regret that I never had an opportunity of learning the later verses. The only one I know is:-

“They went to the place where the white hare used to be.  
They uncoupled their beagles and beginning for to try,  
They uncoupled their beagles and they bate the bushes round.  
But there never was a white hare that ever could be found  
With me (my) rir tol the didel ol, the ri tol the day.

Perhaps since it was the tune I favoured and not the cruel sport, I did not care about the words.

#### RUFFORD POACHERS.

It is a tragedy that this song is, I fear, lost to posterity particularly as so many knowledgeable people have told me how much collectors admired it.

Grandpa could only sing three verses though he could remember that the fourth verse told of Roberts, the headkeeper being killed. The story was founded on fact.

#### BOLD WILLIAM TAYLOR.

This song must not be confused with the one called “William Taylor” collected by Cecil Sharp. It is entirely different both in time and words. I fear Taylor is a very common name. I enjoy singing this. The story is at first, similar to Polly Oliver, but the ending is much more thrilling. It could not be more improbable. It gives me great pleasure and I can almost hear the original singer chuckling to himself and thinking “that’s one for them” though I am sure the “villain” was not an ancestor of our Taylor family.

#### SPRIG OF THYME.

This is a well known “gentle” song. I break my rule over it. There are other variations, but I consider that Grandpa’s is superior to the others.

#### WORCESTER CITY.

I should enjoy this just for the sake of the climax but find the whole song full of intriguing situations. It is so very naive. When I am singing it, I always think, there is Grand Opera, here is Grand Folk Song.

### MARIA MARTIN.

This needs no explanation since the story was the same as the stage version. I never heard Grandpa sing it, so assume that he only did so under duress.

### CREEPING JANE.

My childhood favourite! The story concerned a much maligned horse which made good. Until quite lately, I had thought the line "the rider threw his whip around her bonny little neck" was very cruel and out of keeping with the kindly feeling which he must have had for his horse. Suddenly, in the silent watches of the night, the answer came to me unbidden. Not even a cruel rider would whip a horse on its neck, never mind a kindly one. No! In the same way as humans will comfort or sympathize by a pat on the shoulder, the perfect jockey would so encourage his favourite mount. The race was most likely point-to-point, being more indigenous and in keeping with country singers.

### RED HERRING.

This song has a special place for me, for though Auntie Pollie thinks Grandpa learnt it from his eldest son James, who had heard it at a 21st Birthday Party, I prefer to think that his version was connected with the days when he was sweethearting my Grannie. You may recall that she lived at Huttoft, joining Mablethorpe. They would certainly walk together on those sands. The first line is

"As I was a-walking down Mabelthorpe (Mablethorpe) Sands"  
A Jolly red 'errin I held in my hands  
There was big 'errins, and little 'errins  
And all 'errins thrown in  
What do you think that I made of my jolly 'errin.

Some verses are similar to the song as collected by Cecil Sharp - perhaps with the help of the little girl who is now Dr. Maud Karpeles, but there is no refrain which is a feature of the other version. The tune too is different, though because of the swing of the tune there is some reminiscence of the other tune. My favourite verse began,

"What do you think I made of my Red 'errings fans,  
The finest gurt cushion (great cushion) as ever carried pins"

This song is sang in the true North Lincs. venacular which seems to suggest that he knew it when living on the Wolds where in a few places it can still be heard. Personally, since each is suitable. to its own district, it is good to have the two.

### GIPSY WEDDING.

There is some controversy about this song. Nobody will question the authenticity of Percy Granger, and he was quite satisfied. Moreover in a tribute to Joseph Taylor he stated "He most intelligently realizes just what sort of songs collectors are after, distinguishes surprisingly between genuine traditional tunes and other ditties." That is good enough for me.

Supposing, it were a Broad sheet Ballad as some suggest, many of them are now recognised as Folk Songs. Certainly it was not in the same category as most of the other songs, but that was because he usually sang what he liked. If he chose a song in a lighter vein he agreed, knowing full well that gradually it would lead us to better things. It worked!

Some people remarked that it was not of great antiquity, but though we prefer them to be old, some creditable ones are being composed at the present time, though generally they do not possess the same spontaneity.

This song tells the story of a gipsy girl who was taught to tell fortunes and with "a feather in her hat" set off for London. "A handsome, young Squire I chanced for to meet" She told him his fortune and added "But all those pretty maidens you must put them on one side. For I'm the little gipsy girl that is to be your bride" - and so it came to pass.

## CHAPTER 21

When we were older, he would intersperse his songs with local stories. A favourite was about two gangs of poachers who met in a large field on the Elsham Estate. This field was beside the old Roman Road, and later, Coach Road, which ran from Lincoln to the ferry at Barton-On-Humber, from which people seeking sanctuary sail across the Humber to the Yorkshire side and on, by road, to Beverly Minster.

On the right side, in the Parish of Elsham there was a wood - it is still there - called Gallows Wood. Immediately opposite is the field where the rival poachers fought, some to the death. At the trial the Judge ordered that "for all time, a gallows shall stand at some point "near the place of the battle It is in the actual field directly opposite "Gallows Wood.

Another about poachers - all Lincolnshire Poachers be it noted - who scattered when they saw the keeper. One climbed a high tree. In the bustle he was forgotten but - honour among thieves-when they realised he was missing the party set out to seek for him. He was found, having slipped, entangled in the branches and was hanged. Afterwards, on moonlight nights, a white hare was seen chasing around the spot. It was supposed to be the wraith of the poacher.

Grandfather knew many tales of witches. At Goxhill, a large village near Barton, there was a witch. He told us that if anyone incurred her displeasure she would stick pins into the effigy which she had made of the person. Gradually the subject wasted away to death. He knew many tales of this particular village which had several witches.

Lincolnshire was a hot-bed of superstitions, some of which prevail at the present day. There were also many omens for good or bad luck. There are still people who believe thirteen at a table is unlucky, a howling dog foretells a death, toss salt over your left shoulder to ward off ill-luck. When one sees magpie. the custom is to quote the old rhyme "1 for sorrow, 2 for joy 3 for a girl, 4 for a boy, 5 for heaven, 6 for hell, 7 for the devil hiss." Many, many more, some very complicated he told us.

Sometimes he would tell us old-wives cures in which the peasant women put their trust. He had seen a mother, despite his protest, treat her little boy's sore throat by making him swallow a live frog. Some were quite innocuous if not efficacious. Once when I was small and playing with a child in her garden in the village I cut my hand and it was bleeding furiously. The old Grandma 'said "I'll soon stop it deary" She walked along the hedge until

she found a large cobweb which she placed on my hand • Well, it certainly did stop it.

He knew several old ladies in the village who were knowledgeable on herbs and concocted brews both pleasant and unpleasant. They could work miracles with internal upsets and rashes or as they called then “heated blood” not really surprising since many accepted medicants are made from these same herbs but given their later names.

## CHAPTER 22

I promised to tell you of Grandpa’s second treat. Each Barton Fair held at Corpus Christie (in its beginning starting with a service in the Church being a Festival and followed by bear baiting and sports) all the family from Saxby came to our house. This particular fair will live forever in the memory of us all. As we all assembled, he looked at the piano and then at me, asking “Can you play the Sailors Hornpipe?” Yes, Grandpa, I replied’ and to everyone’s surprise he began to dance. He danced through all the movements, with vigour and precision - and he was 77 years old! After lunch he took the whole “tribe” to the Horse Show and Sports, staying until the end for the fireworks. Late as it was he took us for our usual two rides on the roundabouts in the Market Place. Two things astonished me., first the prodigality, since prices were double on that night, twopence instead of the customary penny and the second, it was the only fair day on which we saw the wonderful lights.

Having been such an exciting, exhausting day all the children stayed at our house while Grandpa and the rest of the grownups returned to Saxby. Little did we dream that it was farewell, not goodbye.

A few days later the Squire wrote asking to be fetched from Elsham station, the nearest station to Saxby. For some reason, which we shall never know, Grandpa decided to go himself.

He arrived, as ever, in good time and saw the train enter the little station. The platform was so short that the engine had run over the crossing. Suddenly it let off a cloud of steam, making a great noise and frightening the horse, who in its terror, kicked in the front of the trap.

Grandpa did not seem hurt but Mr. Hope Barton insisted on sending to Barton for the doctor. He could find little amiss, but insisted that, at his age, it would be advisable to stay in bed for a day or two to get over the shock.

He died peacefully exactly twenty-four hours after the time of the accident.

Some of the older people in the village said that his blood “had got round to the same place” In those indescribably sad circumstances that was the only bit of relief. Bless their hearts! They too had lost a good friend.

Once more a doleful journey meaning, not only the loss of Grandpa, but the breaking up of the home we had all adored.

Poor Minim, his faithful friend (for the first time in his life) must be shut up until after the funeral. At night he could not be found and the menfolk set out to look for him. He was found on Grandpa’ a grave. This happened several days and however many times he



was brought back he escaped to keep his vigil. He did not eat throughout that period and died on his master's grave.

For a while I grudged, very much, his leaving the world in that way, but as time passed, I realised that it was for the best -he would have hated to be dependent on others and it is something to be thankful for that he spent almost his last day enjoying all the fun of the fair with his grandchildren - nothing could have pleased him more or could we have had happier memories.

We drove home quiet and sad but, to what I thought, was a magnificent climax. When we reached Barton we had a stiff climb to the house called "Barton Hill" high on the crown of the hill. As we drew nearer we saw it, silhouetted against the most awe-inspiring sunset I have ever seen. It seemed to cover the sky with molten brass and I thought that the good Lord in whom Grandpa had put his trust, had fashioned it in honour of him and in pity for our irreparable loss.

Others thought differently as next morning we discovered that King Edward had died the previous day. "The heavens themselves proclaim the death of Princes".

## **CHAPTER 23**

My tribute seems weak and inadequate but two great musicians have left their opinions of him and his songs.

Percy Granger spent much time in Norway and introduced "Brigg Fair" to Greig. His assessment of "Brigg Fair" was:- "It has always been said that England has no good folk songs but Mr. Taylor's "Brigg Fair" has put it on top of the world.

Percy Granger rated him as the greatest of folk singers as does Dr. Maud Karples, who told me, herself, and, I am sure, will be in agreement with Percy Granger's estimate. This was written by him for publication in 1908. Grandpa died in 1910.

Percy Grainger's Estimate of  
MR. JOSEPH TAYLOR OF SAXBY-ALL-SAINTS - LINCOLNSHIRE.

Is bailiff on a big estate, having formerly been estate woodman and carpenter.

Though his age is seventy-five his looks are those of middle age, while his flowing, ringing tenor voice is well nigh as fresh as that of his son, who has repeatedly won the first prize for tenor solo at the North Lincolnshire musical competitions. He has sung in the choir of Saxby-all-Saints Church for forty-five years. He is a courteous, genial, typical English countryman, and a perfect artist in the purest possible style of folk-song singing. Though his memory for words is not uncommonly good, his mind is a seemingly unlimited storehouse of melodies, which he swiftly recalls at the merest mention of their titles; and his versions are generally distinguished by the beauty of their melodic curves and symmetry of their construction.

He relies more on purely vocal effects than almost any folk singer I have come across. His dialect and treatment of narrative points are not so exceptional but his effortless high notes, sturdy rhythms, clean, unmistakable intervals, and his twiddles and "bleating" ornaments (invariably executed with unflinching grace and neatness) are irresistible.

He most intelligently realizes just what sort of songs collectors are after, distinguishes surprisingly between genuine traditional tunes and other ditties, and is, in every way, a marvel of helpfulness and kindness. Nothing could be more refreshing than his hale countrified looks and the happy lilt of his cheery voice.