

My School Days.

By Phyllis Borrill.

b. 26th September 1907 at Stickney.

School days were happy ones. The first memorable occasion was the scholars marching down to the station, waving their flags, to see the first train going through on the new railway line, unfortunately I was at home poorly that day so had to be content to watch my school pals go by. There were only a few cars on the road and we could play ball, whip and top, skip, hoopla, etc., as we went along to school, we could play hopscotch, marbles and various games in the school yard. The girls played one side of the school and boys the other side. 9 a.m. was the time we had to be there. The bell would sound and in we marched. The lady teacher in the infants room was very nice, we had pipes to heat the room but when it was freezing cold we had a coal fire too. Teacher would try and dry our clothes on the guard when we arrived wet, some children had to walk two or three miles, I was lucky had not far to go. The register was called and we answered 'present Miss'. It was prayers and scripture lesson followed by various lessons until 10-30 a.m., out to play for a quarter of an hour, then lessons again until 12 a.m. with a dinner break until 1-30 p.m. Scholars who came a long way brought and ate their dinner at school. Lessons again until 2-15 p.m., a quarter of an hours play then time for home 3-30 p.m. That was the weeks routine Monday to Friday. There was no homework, so when we had had our tea we could play outside on summer evenings, in winter we played dominoes, ludo or various table games, with oil lamp on the table. Mum and Dad joining in when Dad had finished milking the cows. Bedtime about 7-30 p.m., later as we grew older.

We went up out of the infants room when we were about 7 years old, that teacher was not so well liked, she'd a temper and would shout at you, set her teeth and scratch her head if you were not doing as she wanted you to do, one of the punishments was stand with your face in the corner. Standard 3 and 4 were

in room 3, the teachers in that room did not stay long, sometimes a female and then a male. We had a concert in the school, a lady came to stay in the village and she trained us for it. I was one who had a tambourine on the stage. Partitions were removed each end of the school master's room, making one long room for parents and friends to come to it. There were usually about 100 or 110 scholars. I liked going to school and cried when I had to stay away. The headmaster was easy going but turned out some good scholars, when we were in his room the girls had to go to one of the lady teachers for sewing while he took the boys out for gardening two or three afternoons a week. He used to go out and leave us a few minutes sometimes, we would start talking and we never knew which way he would come back. The big boys on the back row could reach and would tap the sneak on the girl's porch door make believe he was coming then there was silence. Perhaps his head would appear through an open window and someone was told to stand out until he came in. I was the culprit once and I got one stroke across my hand with the cane, not very hard, didn't hurt much, but only had it once. Sometimes we had to stay in at play time or after school and write 'I must not talk' a hundred or more times. Good Friday, Easter Monday and Whit Monday were holidays, two weeks for harvest, later four weeks for potato picking and a week at Christmas. My sister, my two brothers and I often spent our holidays at Grandads, he had a baking business and we liked being there when the bread was drawn out of the oven and we could have a piece of new bread with some treacle on it. I was staying there during the 1914 to 1918 war. There was a bad air raid on the Sunday eve, the next morning at 4 a.m. two Aunties and I got up and went with an Uncle with a wagon and two horses to fetch a new mill sail, Auntie and I got off at some cross roads, Uncle went further, and we walked 3 miles to see Great Grannie (the only time I saw her). She was in bed with a white lace mob cap on, looked after by her daughter. A man took us up to a station with a pony to catch a train back to Grandads.

Grandad and his second wife, (Grandma died when I was seven years

old), would take us with his pony and tub trap to Skegness in the summer, it was about 10 miles, there used to be a man and a woman riding about on the sand in a pony and trap selling ice cream and we could get a cornet for a half penny (old money) or wafer 1 penny. We never had any pocket money but were given a few pennies to spend sometimes and we would look in two little shop windows on the way to school wondering what to buy. There were jelly babies, liquorice allsorts, aniseed balls etc., and we got quite a lot for a half penny or penny in a little bag shaped like an ice cream cornet. My school friend was a girl who lived a little further from school, about three months younger than myself.

I used to go to the Wesleyan Sunday school, on the third Sunday in June the anniversary was held, we sat on a platform dressed in new dresses and hats and sang and recited to our parents and friends. The next day we had a free tea, then a bran tub, races, games etc., in a field. At New Year we had another free tea followed by a Magic Lantern show and were presented with books for the previous years attendance. Another historic event was after the first world war ended, which began on 4th August 1914, declaring that Britain and Germany were at war. When it was thought to be ending, word was put round the village that the church bells would ring and in about an hours time there would be a short service of thanksgiving for peace, and everyone that possibly could were to go dressed just as they were in their working clothes. All the documents etc., were signed, Peace was declared at 11 a.m. on 11th November 1918, that day has been known as Armistice day ever since. The following year (can't remember the date), when most of the soldiers who were spared to come back, were home and life was getting back to normal, great peace celebrations were held. Horses, drays and floats were decorated up representing the various trades of the village, on one dray some of the older scholars were dressed up, one in white holding a dove as peace, another Britannia and others as various countries, my sister represented Romania, that dray represented the National Allies, it headed the procession which was taken round the village. I and some of

my classmates sat in desks with books etc., and the school master on a dray drawn by one of Dad's horses, representing the rising generation. Afterwards tea was provided for all the village people, followed by a dance.

The infant teacher and school master were still teaching when I left school but retired and moved from the village soon after. I left when I was 13 years old and had to work as my sister and two brothers were upstairs with scarlet fever, not seriously ill but isolated, only Mother could go up to them. I had had measles, chicken pox, mumps etc., most of the children's illnesses but escaped the scarlet fever. These are a few of my happy school year memories but before I end I will tell you what my school master once said, "I was a good scholar but a big talker," and thank God he has spared me to live and talk a long time since then. So now you know my character.