

### **More tales from the Wailes family**

Since the book about the family was published recently, Martha Wailes has found a large hoard of letters, photos etc in the attic of her parents house. A sequel may eventually be needed! One exciting find was an addendum to William Taylor's reminiscences from 1921 written by Rex Wailes, who became a well known authority on windmills and industrial archaeology. The family has given kind permission for it to be reproduced here and in [www.husthwaitehistory.co.uk](http://www.husthwaitehistory.co.uk).

### **Addendum to William Taylor's Reminiscences, note by Rex Wailes**

In this same year, 1921, Mr. Taylor told me about the harvest custom that survived to his time. The last sheaf of grain in the last field to be reaped was cut with a sickle by the farmer. He would hold it above his head and called "Long live the mell\* of Mr. William Taylor". All the harvesters shouted "Hurrah" three times and it was taken with the last load and suspended from the roof of the barn to ensure a good harvest for the following year. I also remember that when I was staying at Beacon Banks, Sam Taylor did his first day's ploughing when he was 14. After supper he went to bed and slept for 2 nights and a day. I also well remember in about 1905 being confronted by a large turkey cock as big as myself and Mrs. Taylor coming out and rescuing me. In that year too I was taken out to a field that was being reaped and put in charge of Old Dale, a poacher. He had a catapult with him and when the reaper and binder got towards the centre of the field the rabbits started to run out. Dale hit one on the head and it fell and he told me to go and get it. Just as I approached it he said "It's wick, it's wick". As he said it the rabbit jumped up and ran away, it had only been stunned. Of course I at that time did not know the dialect that "wick" meant "alive" (i.e. quick).

At that time and for some years after one of the field gates of the farm giving on to the back road to Coxwold, had two posts that were the jawbones of a whale.

I can also remember the huge new stables at the back of Beacon Banks being built, with Fred Kendrew doing much of the woodwork and Laurie Batty laying bricks. There was also a cow house built at the same time but finished much sooner, with a few jersey cows, and a small tabby cat that used to sit beside whoever was milking and have its mouth open for an occasional squirt of milk.

At that time there were two carriages and a pair of bays called Tommy and Bob, and a good many times I went into Easingwold with the carriage and also to Coxwold and Byland, and on most occasions was allowed to sit up beside the coachman called Carter. When they drove to Easingwold they went to Bannister the grocer and Mr. Bannister used to come out with an order book to take the orders, giving a little bow as he did so.

On the left-hand side as one went to Easingwold, the last big farm before the road turned at a right angle, was called "Flower of May". I was told that when George Wailes was an apprentice in Leeds he sometimes spent his holidays at Beacon Banks. Frank Wailes who owned the house then had a dog cart and a dalmatian dog that had been taught to run partly underneath the cart as was the fashion in those days and they were known as carriage dogs. When they passed "Flower of May" a sheepdog used to come out and go for the dalmatian, bow it over in the dust, and generally give it a bad time. Young George Wailes thought of a way to stop this. He borrowed the butcher's white dog, tied a piece of meat on to the axle of the dog cart and taught the dog to follow the cart. He then put black spots on it, probably with burnt cork, and off they drove to Easingwold. The sheepdog came out as usual but got the most terrific punishment because the butcher's dog was a white bull terrier. It never went for the dalmatian again.

A donkey and governess cart was kept. The donkey was called Primrose and on the Coxwold back road at the side of Beacon Banks before you reached Lodge Farm, the road was slightly sunken and between trees on the bank above a hammock was slung in which Norman Wailes, then in his teens, liked to lie. One day the donkey was harnessed to the governess cart and Phil and I who must have been about 3 or 4 and 5 or 6 respectively, with

Miss Margeson, our nursery governess were in the cart which she was driving to Coxwold along this road. Primrose the donkey just would not do anything more than a walk, but as we approached the hammock Norman said "Look out" and he dropped from an overhanging branch of a tree into the centre of the governess cart, took the whip and whipped the donkey unmercifully until she started a gallop. When she was well and truly galloping he opened the back door of the governess cart and dropped out, as is quite easy of course because the door is in the centre of the back. The donkey trotted all the way to Coxwold and I should think it was about the only time it ever did. Primrose distinguished herself on another occasion during the winter, I was told, when again harnessed up to the governess cart she was led out of the stable yard but there had been a silver thaw during the night. She slipped, sat on her haunches and slid all the way down the back drive which is on a fairly steep slope, to the lane at the bottom which ran at right angles.

When Mater (Emma Wailes - Granny to us) got old, she began to lose her memory and once said rather querulously to her husband George Wailes (Grandpa to us) "George, I should like to see Primrose again" for she had not been out for some time. "So you shall, Emma, so you shall" and he brought the donkey out of the stable into the drawing room so she saw it.

I well remember going over to Carlton Husthwaite to see Miss Nora Peckett. She was a great friend of Aunt Bee Wailes and always very kind to me, and I remember that she showed me a yellow feather which had come from the feather cloak that Captain Cook had been given on one of his voyages. It will be remembered that Captain Cook was born on the east coast of Yorkshire. Many years later, when I was Chairman of the Spanners Committee of the British Standards Institution, I had to go to Garringtons at Bromsgrove regarding socket spanners and was taken around by a Mr. Cook who was a descendant in the direct male line of Captain Cook. And I was very disappointed when invited to represent the Institution of Mechanical Engineers at the Royal Society when Professor Blackett gave a memorial lecture commemorating the 200th anniversary (I think) of the voyage of Captain Cook taking scientists to the Pacific to observe the Transit of Venus that the Society had made no effort to see if any of Cook's descendants were alive and no representative of the family was there.

I well remember Mrs. Batty, whose daughter married Fred Kendrew, the village handyman and a life-long friend. Mrs. Batty was a superb cook and used to come up to Beacon Banks and later to Tenter Close and cook for Aunt Bee. Her bread was only equalled by F.W.'s [possibly Rex's mother Florence]. Laurie Batty, Mrs. Batty's son, was the Husthwaite poacher and it was said he could see a rabbit on a hillside half a mile away. He thoroughly enjoyed his first-world-war service on the Western Front since he was picked out to be a sniper and was a most successful one.

\* In the North Riding the last sheaf to be gathered in was called the "mell sheaf". According to "Yorkshire's Farm Life" compiled by David Joy, published by the Dalesman 1994, the word Mell means to mix and the traditional Mell Cake was made up of all kinds of rich spices. At some farms the last sheaf was decorated with ribbons and called the Mell Doll - placed in the middle of the big kitchen table or on the barn floor during the meal before the dancing began at the Mell-supper. Does anyone have a record of this happening in Husthwaite?