

East Rainton is a mining village of no special importance which lies in a north easterly direction on the main road between Sunderland and Durham, being 5 miles from Durham and 8 miles from Sunderland. It is one of five places which all have Rainton as part of their place names and which have all grown out of the little hamlet of Reinton. Travelling to Durham from Sunderland one passes through Houghton - le - Spring to Rainton bridge, and then climbs the steep hill of Rainton bank to East Rainton, and from East Rainton to Middle Rainton and then to West Rainton, and thence to Rainton Gate, and so on to Durham with the towers of Durham Cathedral continually in view "that temple shadowy with remembrances of the majestic past"

East Rainton is bounded by the stream Rainton burn on the Houghton-le-Spring side - the Nicholson's Pond towards Chilton Moor, the far end of Front Street, Middle Rainton on the West Rainton road, and the site of the former Grinders Cottage at the end of the Church Lane, where the road from Hetton-le-Hole meets the footpath through the fields to Moorsley.

Many years ago when Doctor's fees were heavy to a scanty purse, mothers used to bring their children when they had whooping cough, to where the East Rainton Village Hall now stands, so that they could breathe the air where four air currents meet, and so blow away the whooping cough germs.

Like many other villages in the vicinity of Durham, East Rainton claims to have some connection with the wanderings of the monks, who patiently carried the body of St. Guthbert from Lindisfarne to Chester-le-Street, and later decided that Chester-le-Street was not to be the final resting place for his coffin. Upon the threat of yet another invasion from the Danes, the body was taken to Ripon from Chester-le-Street, but when peace was restored, they returned again to the North, carrying their precious burden with them. Almost at their journey's end, they rested at Wardilaw but found, when they wished to go forward that they were unable to move the coffin, not knowing what to do

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They prayed that God would tell them the meaning of this strange thing. One of the monks then said he had been told in a vision that they were to go to Dunholm. This they decided to do, but none of them knew the way. However they set off, and as if in answer to their prayer, a woman enquiring about her cow, was told it was in Dunholm. The monks joyfully decided to follow this woman, and having descended from the hill of Wardilaw, followed her along the road which now is part of the main road from Houghton-le-Spring to Durham. One of the monks carrying this precious burden to its final resting place was said to be called Remington or Rennington. To acknowledge the services he had given so willingly one of the hamlets they passed through was named after him-Rennington, and which in turn became shortened and slightly changed until it became known as Rainton.

In Dunholm the body of St. Cuthbert rested peacefully in a temporary building known as the white church, while Bishop Aldhun and the monks worked hard to build a better church of stone. In this work all the people of Northumbria from the Tees to the Coquet helped- working willingly to build the large and beautiful church for St. Cuthbert, cutting down trees, clearing the land, and carrying timber and stone. Soon a settlement sprang up around it and a monastery was built. So after many years of wanderings St. Cuthbert chose his lordly seat at last where his Cathedral, huge and vast looks down upon the Wear. Not only was Durham then fortified against invaders, but also important approaches to the City were fortified to guard the Cathedral Church with its precious remains of the Patron Saint. In this way Houghton-le-Spring at the north-eastern approach was fortified as a bastion against marauders from the coast, and from Scotland. Houghton-le-Spring in turn was also fortified, and so also its approaches - guarding it from the north, south, east, and west by turn-pike gates. On the West was Houghton Gate, on the east Snippers Gate - on the north Stoney Gate and the south gate was at Rainton Gate, on the main road in the direction of Durham.

The Bishops of Durham grew to great power, because they were the owners and rulers of all the lands that had at different times been

given to St. Guthbert. when this land was given it was ^{generally} promised that no other person should have any right to exact either service from the people or money or taxes, save the church alone. In this way arose the great powers possessed by the Bishops, they ranked as Princes and Durham became a Palatinate. The Bishops held their own courts, appointed officers, raised troops, levied taxes and coined money in their own mint and pardoned criminals.

After the Norman Conquest, King William punished the people of the North of England for rising against him, by ravaging and destroying the whole of the district, scarcely a village was left standing and the land was laid waste. On his way south from a visit to Scotland King William ordered the Castle to be

built at Durham so that the Bishops might have a home that would be safe and strong. Bishops were chosen more because they were good soldiers than good priests. The Norman Bishops soon sought to have Bishop Aldhun's 'White Kirk' removed and on August 11th 1093, the second Norman Bishop, Bishop William laid the foundation stone of the present Cathedral. This building was to be built by the monks on the style of the French Churches which Bishop William had visited when banished to Normandy by King William Rufus. As the power of the Bishops grew services given by the people were not rewarded in money, and tenancies were largely held on a service basis. The rents were small in money, but the tenants were obliged to provide the Bishop with certain forms of produce and to labour on his lands. Twice a year the Bishop collected his tythes, and harsh fines were imposed where he had trouble in getting them, or when his service tenants refused to work for him. Gradually this method of tenure of land disappeared and the Prince Bishops came to accept money as rent rather than servile tenure. (at the close of the 13th and early 14th centuries)

Mention is made of a colliery at Ranton in 1531 and of outcrops

of coal and opencast mining at Rainton by the colliers Richard and Robert Wright in 1804. With the development of coal mining in what proved to be a rich area the population increased and their mode of living improved enormously. Several shafts were sunk in and around Rainton and small collieries sprang up, The Hazard, the Dunwell Pontop and the Meadows, the Hazard at East Rainton. The Hazard Colliery owned by North Hetton Coal Company worked the Five Quarter Seam at a depth of 53 fathoms the seam being 3feet 7inches thick, the Maudlin Seam at a depth of 73 fathoms being 3feet 8inches thick, and the Low Main Seam 84 fathoms in depth and 3feet 6inches in thickness. The output was 340 tons per day with the employment of 293 men and boys. Tram lines were laid from Rainton through Colliery Row, Junction Row, Shiny Row and to the river at Penshaw Staithes where the coal was placed in little flat bottomed keels, from which it was transferred to the holds of ships for export to continental countries, and much of it to London. Horses used on the railway were kept at Penshaw Station.

In East Rainton in 1824, there were living approximately 600 miners and their families. Miners were a race apart from their contemporaries and lived and thought apart from those employed elsewhere. Physically they were strong and healthy, They spent much of their time 'buried out of sight' away from the more civilised and genteel people, and so on Sundays they wore showy clothes, loved embroidered waistcoats and stockings and fluttered multi-coloured ribbons from the knees of their velveteen breeches and from their hats, and usually carried a switch. Thus attired they would flaunt about boasting of their physical powers.

There were four public houses in the village, The Fox and Hounds, The Village Tavern, The Rose and Crown, and The Blacksmiths Arms, and here after long hours of working under most primitive and dangerous conditions the miners spent much of their leisure time.

A story is told of a typical rough roystering Irish collier who lived in a small street of four houses in East Rainton known as Paddy's Row. the miner himself being known as Paddy. (Each Saturday night Paddy was drunk and as he returned home he trailed his coat behind him, This was a challenge to anyone who wished to live in the first house in

the street. If anyone answered the challenge by standing on his coat a fight ensued, and the winner claimed the house for the week. Most of the time Paddy lived in No. 1, Paddy's Row). As well as pugilistic contests, miners spent time between labour and sleep in such hobbies as dog and cock fighting, card playing, live rabbit coursing, quoits, pitch and toss, bowls, etc. with always a few desperate, dark, designing crew intent upon winning from them their hard earned but much improved wages. Miners were hired to a certain pit by a Yearly Bond, This they signed often by means of a cross, since most could neither read nor write, and sealed by their employers by giving to each employee a sum of money- often half a crown. For breach of agreement they could be imprisoned, so no matter what their grievances were, they could obtain no remedy, and were debarred from work at other pits. Later the bond was for a month and later for a week as now. So grew the need for miners to see that they got their rights, and to this end Durham Miners Gala Day was inaugurated, when men could air their grievances to their fellow workmen from a public platform. These grievances were then looked into and settled by the Miners Union. Mens leaders for this Union were chosen from their workmates - men who ^{WMP} anxious to seek out the good of their fellows and redress of their grievances. Religion went hand in hand with mining, for it was often 'local preachers' of Methodism that were chosen - men of strong faith, sound principle and good courage, who were called upon to promote goodwill towards men.

In April 1747, John Wesley came to preach at Rainton, where there were many collieries and an abundance of people. After his discourse proclaiming the Lord God, gracious and merciful, the people declared that Wesley had been too long in coming. They were carried away with his preaching - when he knelt down they knelt down, they sang when he sang and Methodism was established in the village. The Wesleyan Chapel was erected in 1823, but was rebuilt of stone and enlarged to hold 130 people in 1889 at a cost of £400. Religion became a dominating influence in the lives of the people, In the Church of England in 1825, Rainton along with Penshaw and

Hetton - le - Hole were made ecclesiastical districts and separated from the Parish Church of Houghton - le - Spring. The church dedicated to St. Cuthbert in East Rainton was erected in 1866. It is a stone building, built in the Early English style, and has a nave, chancel and south porch, and will seat 150 people. There is a burial ground attached. It was decided by order in council in the parish of West Rainton on the 10th November 1866, that the district be called 'The Perpetual Curacy of East Rainton'. The Bishop of Durham was invited to come to East Rainton to consecrate the Church on the 19th December 1866 and thereupon the new parish of East Rainton comprising the townships of Moorsley and East Rainton was formed. The living is a vicarage in the gift of the Dean and Chapter of Durham. The first Vicar was the Rev. J. Croisdale M.A. and his stipend was £300 per annum. After his death in 1909 the Rev. W.R. Egerton became Vicar and he was the parish priest until his death in 1937. He was followed by the Rev. R.S. Woodall B.A. who only stayed in the north until 1943 and then moved to a living further south. The Rev. R.W. Ellison then moved from the Lumley Parish to East Rainton and stayed until he resigned the living in 1951. In 1951 the Rev. G.L.C. Mitchell resigned as a chaplain at Durham Prison and took up the living at East Rainton, & 1954 he transferred to a living at Collierley and after being without a priest for 9 months the Rev. G. Hackett was inducted by the Bishop of Durham in 1955. So through all the years, with mining as the chief occupation of the villagers, they have worked well and religion became part of their everyday life.

Great difficulties had to be overcome to reach the various seams of coal beneath the 58 yards depth of magnesium limestone which covers this area. Problems of safe lighting had to be worked out to overcome the dangers arising from Fire Damp, Choke Damp, and After Damp. The Davy Safety Lamp invented by Sir Humphrey Davy was a great step forward from lighted fish skins and candles. Water was a constant menace and steam pumps gradually replaced horse drawn pumps, used to combat the pressure of water in wet strata. A cage to lower men to the coal surface replaced the hazardous 'loop' method of lowering oneself

by means of a loop of chain passed between the legs and hitched to an upper link. Tubs holding 6 or 9 cwt. of coal replaced the corves, and these could be brought to the surface in the 'cage' instead of being dragged along by women and children and later by pit ponies. With improved methods of mining ^{and} the need for better means of transport to take the coal to the customer and at a reasonable cost. With this in mind in 1819, the proprietors of the newly formed Hetton Coal Co. invited Mr. George Stephenson to undertake the building of the necessary locomotives and machinery and the laying of a railway from Hetton to Sunderland. This project included the building of a railway 8 miles long over the hill of Warden Law, so far locomotives had been incapable of climbing steep slopes, especially when hauling heavy loads. There were many difficulties to overcome but with his brother Robert's help

George Stephenson launched the project. Some 3 years later on November 18th crowds assembled all along the track and saw the first locomotive and 17 trucks filled with 64 tons of coal move along the line at an average speed of 4 miles per hour. Wagon - ways, connecting collieries with this railway track were then built, and are commonly known now as the 'old lines', such a line runs from the Meadows Pit over Rainton Bridge and another from the Hazard Pit to Moorsley. The original line running from the Meadows Pit was laid down at the same level as the road and gates controlled the traffic. These gates were operated by a 'crossing man' who had a cabin close beside the well on the Houghton side of Rainton Bridge. The bridge was built in 1917, by Mr Balfour of Houghton - le - Spring, when, because of the increase of traffic on the road, the gates had become a nuisance to the road users.

The success of George Stephenson's project not only heralded the beginning of the world's railways but also established the mining industry as one of prime importance in the North. Coal was needed by the various shipping companies at Sunderland and Newcastle, and now there was an ever growing demand for it.

With this industrial prosperity the miners way of life improved enormously. He began to improve his house and mode of dress: desired education for himself and his family: associated himself with some

religious body and altogether wanted to be a new sort of man, and to lead a new sort of life.

About this time, grew up the various Co-operative Societies which gave help to various families wishing to erect and own their own houses. The Pittington Amicable Industrial Society Ltd., started in 1874, allowed mortgages for building and improving property and so also did The Moorsley Co-operative Society started in Low Moorsley in 1868. The Co-operative Society enabled its members to become thrifty through the accumulation of dividend and interest. Although there was no branch of the Co-operative Society actually in East Rainton until Moorsley 'store' opened a branch in 1931 there was a branch of Pittington Co-op. at Rainton Gate, and Moorsley was only some two miles away.

In the year 1824 the principal residents of East Rainton as well as the mining families were

William Baines - Landlord of the Fox and Hounds
 John Thompson - Landlord of the Village Tavern
 John Broolinson - Landlord of the Rose and Crown
 Dixon Burn - Tailor, Draper and Grocer
 William Colling - Colliery Owner
 Robert Colman - Farmer
 William Coulson - Blacksmith
 Samuel Coxon - Sinkier at Meadows Pit
 Matthew Dawson - Joiner and Shopkeeper
 John Elliott - Farmer
 Joseph Gardner - Grocer
 Thomas Hall - Coal Viewer
 John Horn - Landlord of the Blacksmiths Arms
 William Hunter Sen. - Joiner and Cartwright
 William Hunter - Butcher
 Thomas Johnson - Farmer
 John Jobling - Stonemason
 Humphrey Lamb - Farmer
 Robert Lawson - Schoolmaster
 Mrs Sarah Outterson - Gentlewoman
 William Outterson - Gentleman
 William Pallister - Draper, Tailor and Grocer

Robert Rutherford - Grocer and Draper

Anthony and Joseph Surtees - Farmers

Thomas Trotter - Farmer

John Wood - Butcher

Mrs Mary Wood and Mr William Wood - Drapers and Grocers

In 1817 many men and boys had been killed in an explosion at The Plains Pit, a similar explosion occurred in 1825 and altogether the loss of life numbered 79

Rainton Mill was built by ^{No By the Scott family} Messrs. Legge and Co. and used for the grinding of grain for local farmers, later it was owned by Mr William Scott's family. Rainton Brewery was used by the ^{No By Legge P.} Robinson family for the bottling of beer and later by the Lamb family who brewed beer and stout there until the special spring water dried up and the brewery had to close.

In East Rainton Mr J. Bailey brewed beer and also Mr Tam Sutheran manufactured mineral waters in a business in his own rights as well as bottling beer and stout. The mineral waters were bottled in bottles with glass marbles in the necks of the bottles, the gas from the mineral waters made the marble fit tight and the marble had to be forced down with the thumb to open the bottle. This small business known as Sutheran's bottling factory was carried on in Sutheran's yard and employed 4 men inside and 2 cartmen with lorries who travelled in districts as far away as Gossett and Stanley. Travelling then was done mostly by carriers and stage coaches

Carriers operated

To Bishop Auckland via Durham

John Jobson and William Wilson every Thursday and Saturday

To Newcastle

John Walker, Christopher Adamson and Thomas Bell every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday

To Sunderland

John Jobson every Tuesday and Friday

Long Distance Travel

Passengers to London, Leeds, Edinburgh etc travelled by stage coach -

From Rainton to Spring via Red Lion and White Lion Inns

by the Prince of Orange Coach and Union Coach to Sunderland or Durham and hence by connections North and South. Both coaches left Houghton at 9.30 a.m. and 6 p.m., but the Union Coach did not run on Sundays. The picture shows the Union Coach running with grooved wheels on part of the Darlington Railway as advertised in the Durham Chronicle in 1826. This system was quicker than the passenger train at this period and at more frequent intervals to Stockton and Tarm. Other coaches running from Sunderland were

The Royal Mail to London

The Pilot Expedition to Leeds Harrogate etc

The Cullingwood to Newcastle

from Durham

The Royal Mail ran between London and Edinburgh

The True Briton to Newcastle

The Royal Telegraph Expedition between Leeds and Newcastle

The Wellington between London and Edinburgh

The High Flyer between Newcastle and London

After the opening of the Stockton and Darlington Railway in 1825, the railway system spread rapidly, its expansion soon killed the passenger coach and only the local services were retained, being used mostly to take passengers to the local railway stations.

The chief mine - owners at this time were Lord Durham, Lord Joicey, and the Marquis of Londonderry. In 1844, there was a great strike in the mines in Durham and Northumberland, which lasted nineteen weeks. At last the Marquis of Londonderry visited the collieries he owned and told the miners that if they refused to go back to work he would bring over men from Ireland to take their places. This he did, and men from Ulster came and settled in the district. At first, as one can imagine, this influx of Irishmen was not at all welcomed by the miners. Bad feeling ran high, and although it was an unwritten law that there were no quarrels fought out underground, the resentment and disputes found expression in action on a Saturday night, when each had visited his usual local public house. Men would strip to their waists to fight each other while their womenfolk and onlookers gathered round, all

shouting words of encouragement or otherwise as the fight progressed. The English miners were ever ready for a fight but so were the Irish and the Irish had much more to lose. They had sold up their houses in Ireland and had undertaken a long perilous journey to England on the promise of being given a job of work to do. They were not to be easily frightened back to Ireland. Some Irishmen did return to their native land, but many, in spite of all opposition settled in the district and were gradually accepted. Hence the story of Paddy told on page 4. This feeling of resentment has not, even now, entirely died down - common expressions such as 'he has Irish blood in his veins, he is as Irish as the pigs in Dublin, he has a rare paddy, and he is a forty four man' all refer to the bitter feelings of the past.

In 1892 when again a dispute arose between the colliery owners and the miners of the county another strike, lasting many weeks resulted. Severe suffering and distress was felt everywhere, and the soup kitchens were installed to provide meals for the needy. The Co-operative Societies then played a great part in helping to relieve the distress. They supplied goods free to the soup kitchens, and reduced their goods to be sold at wholesale prices, as well as giving generous donations to Relief Funds. Such acts of generosity endeared the Co-operative Societies to the miners, and we find their trade expanding. In Moorsley Co-operative Society, we read that land was purchased at Durham Road, East Rainton in 1926, but because of the coal strike in 1926, the building of premises was delayed until 1931, although trading operations were carried on from part of a rented house, owned by Mr Jopling, from 1927. In 1931 when the new branch was opened business was transferred to it and it is now the foremost business premises in this district and is capable of satisfying the whole of the requirements of the people of East Rainton. About this time Co-operative Dairies were started and modern and fully equipped dairies were built and milk was drawn from local farmers in the county districts, and pasteurised and bottled before being sold to the co-operative societies customers. ^{Ed Com} ~~This~~ ^{Kelly} was a step forward from the milk previously sold both by the Co-operative Societies

and local farmers, it being measured from a milk can according to the customers requirements. This milk had previously been strained and cooled but not pasteurised.

What of the women of this mining community, and what part have they played in this life full of hazards and dangers for their men folk; being left long hours with the children and having to provide food, clothes and home comforts for their loved ones-- often when money was scarce and work not too plentiful.

The women of this part of the country, have always been known for their cleanly habits, their hard working ways and their love and care for their husbands and children. The miner's cottage however small and mean in appearance, has always been his 'castle' where he has been virtually its lord and master, but where his wife has done most of the scheming and planning for the benefit of all who lived under its roof. The miner has always prided himself on his wife's devotion, and has rightly been able to boast. "She waits upon me hand and foot--- I want for nowt that she can give me".

In the early days of mining this was not so easy as it is today. Water for drinking was obtained from wells and springs, and had to be carried to people's homes in ^{pails} pails. Water in East Rainton was brought from the seven local wells to the village on a donkey-cart and sold to customers at a penny per pail. Later water was laid on in pipes by means of a pump or tap at the end of each street, and families could fetch their own water. Inside the house the water was kept in stone jars or buckets covered with wooden tops. The fireplaces were all built with round ovens and set-pots, the set-pots being used to boil the water for the baths, for the miner has always indulged in a daily bath when he returned from work.

The whole miner's house, was his wife's pride and joy: it was always clean and tidy, with shining brass everywhere from the 'tidy Betty' on the hearth, to the various sized candlesticks displayed about the room.

The Mother of a family was never idle. She had her special days

for baking, washing and cleaning and polishing the brasses--- her evenings were spent in knitting, sewing and mending. When her husband worked in Shifts, his meals and hot water had to be ready as he needed them. For a long time miners were paid fortnightly, the week when they were not paid, being known as 'baff' week. In 'baff' week, it was often difficult to make ends meet, but says the pitmen--- "however poor and plain wor' fare

The better bits come a' te me!

The last one in the family to do without, was always the husband, since he was the breadwinner.

The washing tubs and poss sticks were a common sight each Monday when the weekly wash was done. The elaborately frilled pinafores, underwear and nightclothes of the women and children, the starched table and bed linen, the 'pit-hoggers' and dress clothes of the husband. Ironing was also a long tedious task. Heaters had to be heated in the fire, removed by inserting a poker into the special hole in the heater, and placed in a 'box-iron'. The heat in the iron did not remain for very long, and spare heaters had to be kept in the fire, in readiness. Having finished with an ordinary iron, frills, cuffs and collars had to be crimped with goffering irons, and then all had to be hung up to air. At first women used to wash in a communal wash house, but when wages increased, they preferred to buy their own tubs, poss-sticks and mangles.

So, also with baking, the housewife had to bake her bread on certain days in the week, because it was her days to use the communal oven. The communal oven in East Rainton was in, what is now the boiler-house of Mr Bailey's farm. This oven, every day was filled with rows and rows of loaf tins, all containing bread. Each woman knew her own bread, by the special 'stamp' on the tops of the loaves. The 'stamp' was made by hammering nails into a piece of wood to form a pattern, and pricking the nails into the top of each loaf when ready for the oven.

The food of the families, years ago was much plainer than it is today. Almost every family had their own allotment, where home grown

vegetables, such as leeks, potatoes, carrots, cabbages, onions, peas and beans were grown with great pride and pleasure. Small shows of vegetables, such as 'leeks', were held in the village 'locals', and even today 'Leek Shows' are still held in 'The Tavern' and the 'The Traveller's Rest' at East Rainton.

Scraps of food, left from the table, were usually given to the hens or a pig, kept also in the allotment. Hens provided eggs, and the pig was usually killed about the time of Houghton Feast or Christmas, and provided any extra meat needed on such festive occasions. The bacon was salted and dipped in brine, and later used to keep out the cold winds of winter by the family, who had it for breakfast each morning.

The village then boasted of one butcher to supply the village meat. He killed three beasts each week and Mr Robson carried on this business for over sixty years. Today there is no resident butcher, but meat is brought to the village by vans belonging to the various Co-operative Societies and men having private businesses in Houghton-le-Spring and Hetton *see note*

A woman *also took pride* in keeping her family neat and tidy, even if she had to cut down Father's old suits to make 'every day' suits for her sons. It was the custom to have four sets of clothes in the 'careful' days --- a best suit, when one went to Church or Chapel, or for some other special occasion --- a second best into which one changed after attending Church on Sunday and to mark Saturday afternoon as different from the other afternoons --- an everyday suit into which the husband changed from his work-clothes, and which the children used for school, and an old suit used by the husband for gardening and jobbing about the house, and by the children after school, to save the 'wear' and 'tear' on their school clothes, and when they were playing. Any clothes that survived this descent in care and importance, were washed, pulled to pieces, and cut into strips and made into 'hooky' and 'prodded' rugs to add warmth and colour at the kitchen fireside. Today many of the rugs are made of wool, but in almost every home in this district, there still persists the

the joy of making home made rugs.

Pieces of lighter materials were used to make patchwork quilts and cushions etc.,. Cotton wadding was placed between bed coverings of sateen etc., and quilting was done round designs made with cardboard templates of feathers, shells, flowers, leaves etc., and many beautiful 'Durham' quilts were produced, which were light and warm enough to be used as eiderdowns on beds. Later feathers and down took the place of wadding, but much of the quilting connected specially with Durham County, is still done by hand.

Gypsies, who camped in Fleming Field--- a field on the Rainton side of Rainton Bridge--- about sixty four years ago, taught the women of the village how to knit and crochet for a few pennies per lesson. They also taught them how to make wooden clothes pegs and how to play the fiddle, and light farm corves. Gypsies still camp in the area in caravans, selling lace, and paper and wood shaving flowers from door to door. On special occasions such as Houghton Feast, the fair at Durham 'Sands' on Easter Monday and Durham Miner's Gala Day, the gypsies make their pile by selling their wares and by telling fortunes.

The first school built in East Rainton, was built in 1822. The School Master was Mr Robert Lawson, who was followed by Mr T. Sage. Children were taught how to read and write and do sums and how to sing and a special sewing mistress, Mrs Ramshaw was employed to teach the girls how to sew. After the Church was built in 1866, the school was taken over by the Church, and Mr Croisdale the Vicar, visited the school two or three mornings each week to teach Scripture, and to examine the pupils on their knowledge of 'The Bible' and 'Church Prayer Book'.

The school was built on the site of the old 'Pon Top' Colliery which had developed little more than the original shaft being sunk and being used as a ventillating shaft. The school was built in the original colliery 'yard' to accomodate 136 children, including infants, and in 1894, when Mr Seger was Headmaster, the

average attendance was 118.

In 1930, plans were passed for a new school to be built in ground adjoining the 'old school'. This was completed in 1933, but many cartloads of rubble were needed to fill in the original 'Pon Top' Shaft, before the toilets of the new school could be built upon the ground. Years before it was reputed that it was into this shaft that Mary Ann Cotton dropped two of her murdered husbands, and some of the unwanted babies, who were given to her to care for by mothers for a few coppers per week. Mary Ann Cotton was said to have given the babies soap pills and they died of Diarrhoea. The old rhyme. 'Mary Ann Cotton, she's dead and she's rotten' seemed to portray her true character. She ended her life in Durham Prison, where she was hanged.

Mr J. Tilley was Headmaster in the 'old' school for twenty six years, and in the 'new' school until 1948, when he retired. He was followed by Mr N. Suggett, who is the present Headmaster. There are ^{Six} ~~five~~ classes in the school, and as well as the usual curriculum Domestic Science is taught both to the senior girls of East Rainton and Moorsley. Woodwork is taught to the senior boys, and senior and junior children are taken by bus to the Lambton swimming baths. It seems a pity that this lovely new school has not enough pupils to fill it, now, ~~that~~ The girls and boys of the village who marry have to go elsewhere to find homes because there are no houses in which to accomodate them in the village. Six streets of 'Council Houses' were built in 1928 and were modernised in 1956, but only ^a few private houses have been built since 1933.

The land around East Rainton is good farming land, and the six farms connected with the village, have been farmed by the same families for generations. Rainton Bridge Farm, farmed by Mr J. Bailey, has ninety two acres of land, ^{Both this farm & the Hutchinsons farm are excellent} ~~and~~ Dairy Farms in the village. ~~There are twenty milking cows and twenty calves.~~ ^{Mr Baileys} This farm years ago had racing stables and has been in

the Bailey family for two hundred years.

The 'High' and 'Low' Farms in the village are very close together and were farmed by two brothers of the Hutchinson family. When Mr R. Hutchinson died the family ^{finally} agreed that the High Farm be taken over by Mr J.T. Hutchinson, who farmed the Low Farm, and since the second brother's death, the two farms have been kept on by Mrs J.T. Hutchinson.

The land towards Chilton Moor on the opposite side of the road to the village, is divided between Summer House Farm occupied by Mr Walker and his family, and North Pit Farm, farmed by Mr Weightman. This land again is chiefly arable land.

Rainton Grange Farm at Middle Rainton is occupied by Mrs Yeoman and her family, and partly used for dairy farming.

Except for Summer House Farm, which was owned by Lord Londonderry the farms were the property of the Dean and Chapter of Durham. The 'High' and 'Low' Farms had been leased by them to North Hetton Coal Company, but all are now owned by the National Coal Board.

Petrol engines were introduced on the land about thirty five years ago, and now most of the work is mechanised, and there are very few horses left on the farms. Years ago, especially at the 'High' Farm, when the last load of corn was brought from the fields some of the corn was made into a 'corn Betty', and was carried in the cart with great rejoicing to the stack yard. There, a barn supper with ~~great~~ free beer, followed by a dance, was held for all, who had helped with the harvest. Today when corn is cut, and threshed and the straw baled all in one process by a combined harvester, there is no need for the farmer to employ extra 'helpers', and no great rejoicing for a job that once depended on the weather for cutting and stooking and stacking, and later threshing the corn. How different from the days when Great Grandma Walker with Mary Ann Cotton cut corn round the edges of the field with a sickle for sixpence a day and then one day ^{Mrs Walker} came home and gave birth to twins after her

had 5 days work. This lady had fifteen children in her family, including three sets of twins, so would need all the extra money she could earn in this way.

It has been the custom for many many years for the Vicar of the parish and his congregation to go to the fields to bless the sown seed on Rogation Sunday, and both at the Church and Chapel to hold two Harvest Thanksgiving Services --- one during the week and one on the Sunday, when all the harvest has been safely gathered in. The service during the week has always been followed by a Harvest Supper, held in the 'Schoolroom' in the Chapel and in the Church Hall after the Church Service.

The Church Hall was built in 1882 by a Mr Jobling of Durham. The money was raised by sewing parties, and each member of the Church and Mother's Union, gave a chair for the hall.

The men of the village have always been interested in outdoor sports. A Cricket Club was formed in 1840 and is still kept up. They have played in four different fields, but the Football Club took over the original field used for cricket, and made it a football field. Both the games are still enjoyed and have quite a following of supporters in both men and women. In 1915, the football team reached the final for the Hetton Charity Cup.

The Miner's Welfare Hall was opened in 1926. It is a bigger hall than the Church Hall, and has a beautifully sprung dance floor. When the Hazard Colliery closed in 1934, this hall had to be closed as well, because of lack of support for its upkeep. However it

was felt in the village that a bigger hall was sometimes needed, so it was decided at a meeting, to which all the organisations of the village had been invited, that the hall be re-opened as a Village Hall. The organisations included the Cricket and Football Clubs, The Women's Institute and the British Legion.

The Women's Institute was started in East Rainton in 1948. Many of the women of the village were already members of Leamside and West Rainton Institute so it was decided to start one in East Rainton, bringing in the women of Rainton Bridge. The membership

quickly rose to about 130 members, so that after a few months the meetings were held in the School Hall instead of the Church Hall, because it was a bigger hall. When the Village Hall was re-opened the Women's Institute promised their support, and have held their meetings there since that time. The Institute is non-denominational and non-political, and is the biggest organisation in the village at present.

The British Legion was founded after the first World War. Each year the members attend the Church Armistice Service at East Rainton and their banner is carried into Church. After the service the 'Last Post' is sounded over the grave of the only soldier of East Rainton, who was brought home to be buried - a Mr William Kirtley of the Durham Light Infantry. This grave is looked after by the War Graves Commissioners.

'The Care of the Aged' organisation was started in 1950, and since we have so many old people is now the second biggest organisation in the village. It has brought new interest and zest to our 'over sixties. Until last year their meetings were held in the Village Hall, but now they have transferred to the Church Hall.

In conversational terms, the village is divided into two distinct areas - 1. 'The Village' covering the much older houses surrounding the village green and - 2. the newer houses of the Council Estate. Looking down into the village from the street known as 'The Folds', one can imagine how in early times when news spread that an 'invader' was likely to attack, the sheep and cattle were quickly brought in from the neighbouring fields, and collected on the village green. The first house in 'The Folds' tenanted by Misses J.E & F. Johnson, was originally a farm house and the rest of the houses in the street, were the attached farm buildings. Sometime, in the near future these houses are to be pulled down, and council houses for old people are to be built on the site.

'Rainton House' is a typical country house of the 19th century.

It was built and owned by Mr May, a colliery engineer. In 1856, it was bought and occupied by Mr Thomas Wood, a mining engineer. Mr T. Wood was the son of Mr Nicholas Wood, one of the original proprietors of the North Hetton Coal Co. In 1901, a new wing was added to Rainton House for servants quarters, and in 1908 a lounge and extra bedrooms were built on. When the mining firm of Hugh Wood & Co was established and expanded at Newcastle, Mr Wood as a director of the firm, wanted to be nearer his work, and so the family left East Rainton. Mr Ferrier then owned and occupied Rainton House for some years, and when he left East Rainton the house was left vacant until 1928, when it was bought by Mr E. H. Suggett. The house was then altered and made into four separate houses, and is still occupied by four tenants. Mr T.F. Hutchinson who occupies the main part of the house, is also a director of Hugh Wood & Co., and a number of men from the village are employed by the firm. 'HUWOOD' mining plant is now sent to all parts of the world, and the factory occupies one of the biggest sites on the Team Valley Trading Estate. The 'Wood' family have not entirely severed their connections with the families of the village. It is an annual event of considerable interest when a team from Hugh Wood & Co., play East Rainton at cricket. The firm also paid for recent repairs and decorations carried out at the Church.

Looking towards Chilton Moor from the Durham Road at East Rainton, we see rather an attractive enclosed expanse of water, known as the 'Nicholson's Pond'. Originally there were two ponds but the other which lay on the other side of the footpath, has been filled in. The smaller pond to which everyone had access, had a 'pit heap' by the side of it. Over the years, several people overcome by sorrow or tragedy, have ended their lives there, by running down the steep slope of the heap and into the pond. The culminating tragedy happened one Saturday afternoon in the winter of 1948, when three small boys from the village went to the pond to skate on the ice. The ice broke, and one boy fell in.

Each of the other two boys, in turn, went to the rescue of his friends and all three boys were drowned. The owners of the pond - Lambton, Hetton & Joicey Coal Co., - then decided to have the pond filled in. Wild swans nest every year on the edge of the enclosed pond, and several kinds of water fowl can be seen there.

In contrast to the 'pond of tragedies', a spring well by the roadside near the bottom of Rainton Bank, once saved the life of a former Houghton-le-Spring Rector. In 1558 Bernard Gilpin was appointed Rector of a much wider parish of Houghton than it is today. He determined then that his life's work was to care for the people of the North, whether the Church was under Protestantism or under Papal authority. The time came when he had to declare his religion, and since he preferred the Reformed Church, he was summoned to go to London for trial and almost certain execution. Accordingly he dressed himself in a suitable outfit for such a long journey, and set out. He decided to 'water' his horse at the well by the road-side, at East Rainton, and when dismounting fell and broke his leg. This was to him, a terrible tragedy, and he was forced to return to his own Rectory. Before his leg was re-set and healed, Queen Mary, who was a Roman Catholic had died, and Queen Elizabeth, who was a Protestant was acclaimed Queen of England, and his life was saved. So he continued to save souls, and to eliminate the evil from their souls. He was a man of wealth, which he gave for the cause of the people.

Some years later, Lord Burghley then Lord Treasurer, called personally upon Bernard Gilpin to offer to him the Bishopric of Carlisle. Lord Burghley and members of his personal Staff were entertained in a fitting manner by Bernard Gilpin, but he refused the Bishopric offered to him, because he had become too attached to his many friends in his parish of Houghton-le-Spring. After taking their leave of him, Lord Burghley and his Staff rode as far as the top of Rainton Bank, and then he looked back to Houghton,

and remarked. "There is the enjoyment of life indeed. Who can blame that man for not accepting a Bishopric. What more doth he want to make him greater or happier or more useful to mankind".

So we can stand on the same spot and view the landmarks that dominate our lives - the various mines in the district - the 'green and pleasant lands' of the farmers and the towers and spires of the various Churches, dotted among the vastly increasing and improved houses of today.

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