

Bransdale Mill, Bransdale

Every year as a child I was brought to the Mill by my grandparents. My grandmother spent the happiest days of her life at the Mill.

Ethel Smith DOB - 24.08. 1922 was the eldest daughter of Frances Smith (nee Peckitt) and Jim Smith. Her father was also son of Jimmy Smith a local farm labourer. Ethel had a brother James Smith who was a few years her junior. They moved to the mill when she was about 8. She told us about walking the long road to school. No mention of secondary school as I think she went into service which was common.

They were tenant Millers. They hosted the monthly blacksmith in the shed/ house on the lane behind the Mill. She recalled using the hut beyond the bridge as a toilet. Depositing waste straight into the beck! They had cows she had to milk, chickens and pigs.

A pig escaped and got its head stuck in a wall. It was slaughter in this position as they could not get it out.

The post man came on a horse once a week. He went missing one winter. He was found frozen to death behind a stone wall in a snow drift.

Her father had to go to war. He was in the cavalry as he was able to ride a horse. He loved shire horses and showed them at local shows. He was gassed and returned home and died. Grandma was about 11 years old.

While at war his wife, my great grandmother ran the Mill. She also was the cleaner for the church. She was helped by her older brother at the Mill. When Jim Smith senior died she lost her tenancy as a women could not hold this. Apparently still common today as women are not sole farmers! Frances Smith - young mum with 2 children was to be homeless. Her brother took the tenancy briefly but made her leave. She got married again and had another 4 children in South Milford, North Yorkshire where I remain today.

Frances Dale (nee Smith) would visit this place regularly. She was once allowed inside the Mill and was upset as they had placed the kitchen in the wrong room.

We would love to visit or stay there.

As children we often visited and listened to the stories. We walked in the stream and went to the sun dial.

Here are some photos too. My great grandma planted the pear tree that still stands up against the wall.





