

## Recollections of the Green Path area

My earliest memories are of walking with my dad, and whichever dog we had at the time, round there and I do remember, and it's got to be one of my very earliest memories because I was so tiny, I remember watching lambs playing in the, I can't remember the name of the field, it's got the oak trees that the Dawson's planted I think [Admiralty Oaks field]. And that's one of my really earliest memories and I remember thinking then 'it's beautiful', because I've always been really connected to nature and I always wanted to go down there. I used to call it fairy land, because up towards Aldcliffe Hall, you go up what's called Aldcliffe Hall Drive now, the old trees I always imagined that the fairies lived in there.

And walking down the Pads, just about daily, was just something that I absolutely loved, and Aldcliffe, it's always been really, really special to me; I don't know, because I do believe in past lives, so I don't know if I've been there before because since I was so tiny I've been like 'that's home'.

And I remember Loxam's working Carr House farm because I started riding this pony, Molly, when I was about 5, she was kept on Haverbreaks at the time but when I was about 6 or 7 the girl who owned her moved her to Edenbreck. At the time it was Jean and Fred Wilkinson who actually lived there; I think Robin [Loxam] was their nephew. And I'm not sure if they sub-let off, it would have been Robin's dad I think at the time, 'cause this is the late 1960's. They were a really lovely couple; Jean was a Loxam. I can remember Robin and David that's because they mainly dealt mainly the renting the stable for Molly. I think when Molly went to Edenbreck I was about 8 or 9; I know I was there for quite a long time, until I was about 14, in about 1975.

So Molly started off in this really lovely stable, as you looked down the yard it was on the same side as the house, at Edenbreck. You had the house and then the wash house; I don't know if that's still there with the slidy door that went straight through into the shippon and it was a big massive shippon and I can still remember the smell of it and we used to keep all the hay and straw and the bran and everything in there. I remember you had to put big bricks on top of the dolly tubs that we kept the bran and the pony nuts in because you'd go in and you could feel all these eyes looking at you, you knew it was little rats and if you didn't put these bricks on you'd open the dolly tub lid and you'd get these little eyes jumping out and looking at you (laughs) but they always got out of the way; you'd hear them as soon as you opened the heavy door, you'd hear them scuttling away and watching, 'I know you're there' (laughs). So I always used to leave a couple of pony nuts out for them. It was a massive big shippon that went right through from the wash house; the wash house used to have like a big old Belfast sink in it; it was lovely it was like stepping back in time. And then next door to the shippon there was, were there one or two stables? There was definitely one and I remember when Molly first moved there we had the job of cleaning it all out. When it had

been used in previous years there was a passage way going from the shippon into the stable so that you could lean over and do things without having to go in from the yard side. I remember whitewashing it all and making it really, really nice. We actually found some old milk bottle tops, cardboard milk bottle tops, in this bit at the back; it was fascinating; I am smelling it now actually, that musty, hay smell.

So we spent a lot of time on that and it was perfect for Molly, the pony, absolutely perfect and then Robin decided, about 12 months down the line, that he was moving his pigs in. So that didn't go down to well because that meant Molly had to vacate her lovely stone stable because he brought this big, massive sow called Sally. She was vicious, she was absolutely ginormous, and she was really grumpy. We had to move Molly out of this lovely stone stable and he let us have this, it was like a wooden thing at the other side of the yard that she was quite happy in but we were a bit disgruntled because we had spent all that time doing it up. And we were terrified of Sally the sow, absolutely terrified. She used to, there was like a window in the stable and she used to look out and it was fine we used to go and talk to her. But she used to get out and I remember once I was mucking out Molly's stable and I heard Molly sort of whinnying away and I thought 'what's up with her?' and Sally was stood there in the yard. So I grabbed Molly and we both went in her stable; we were stuck there for ages. I was thinking how would I get home?! The pig had got out and barricaded us in. I'll never forget Sally.

To get to Edenbreck farm from home in Coverdale Rd I would walk to the top of Coverdale, turn right, up on to Bishopdale Road, over the orchard, which isn't an orchard anymore; I think it's an extension of Bishopdale Road. So over the orchard, the path behind those nice Victorian houses [Laurel Bank] and then down Piggy Lane which was where Gifford's were. Oh and it was so beautiful there, it was absolutely lovely, I walked past, I think it was the milking parlour for Abraham Heights farm because I remember our dog always used to put his paws on and look through the windows in a morning, if the cows were in there he used to have a really good nosy. And then down Piggy Lane it twisted round and you could see right over Aldcliffe, it was absolutely beautiful.

We couldn't work out, there were these two, I'm not sure if they were mile stones\* or horses graves\*, but Adrian would know about them, one said 'Shuttleworth' on it and the other said 'Satterthwaite'. We always imagined that they'd been two farm horses, but, 'cause they just seemed, just plonked in the middle of this field, actually in the field but you could read the inscription from the footpath.

[\*Adrian Gifford, farmer at Abraham Heights replied: 'The stones puzzled me for a while until I was told that they were originally boundary markers before hedges. They would be placed at each corner of a field. 'Shuttleworth' probably Lord Shuttleworth from Leck. 'Satterthwaite' was a solicitor in Lancaster and was a trustee of EB Dawson's estate .Both were also trustees of the field which was a charity for the poor of Lancaster; I think it was something to do with the alms houses.]

I remember Adrian telling my friend a ghost story and she believed him and then we worked out that he was probably telling her it so that she wouldn't ride across his land when it was vulnerable; he said 'you've got to watch out up here because there's a headless horseman', and she believed him but I think it was just a deterrent to stop her riding rough shod over his fields.

And then continuing Piggy Lane, there was a stile, an old style stile, and a gate; I think it was a five bar iron gate, and then just straight down to Edenbreck. It was a really lovely walk.

I rode Molly up and down the Pads, to Aldcliffe, down on to Dawson's Bank, along Mile Lane, through Freeman's Woods, all around there really. Down towards the golf course sometimes on the old railway track going that way but I preferred going down Mile Lane towards Freemans woods when it was still, it was more of a cart track then.

To get in and out of Edenbreck it was a big, black iron gate and I used to really have to pull it to open and close it, a nice one. Then you go behind Edenbreck and it's quite wide and all of a sudden it just narrows and the Council decided to put up a stoop in the middle, like a post, and I couldn't get the horse past it, so mum wrote to the Council and said she couldn't get her push chair past it so they moved it, but obviously it wasn't for a push chair, it was so I could get past with Molly.

Where the orchard is now was meadow, it was just like a triangle, it tapered; it was beautiful, it was really lovely. My dad used to call it 'the Lea' or 'Lea meadow', it was just what we called it as kids but it's probably just our family. I probably played in it when I was out with my dad and the dogs and when I got older I was able to take the dog out with my friend and her dog; I probably chased Molly round it. It had very long grass and wild flowers; it was beautiful, really nice. It was accessible; you could get into it, there was a gate as you are coming from Edenbreck, the gate would be facing you, almost parallel to where the stoop was. There was a hedge and the wire fence at the side, so it was mainly wire fencing, very old fencing, and sort of intermittent hedges, along this side as well to look over towards the castle and Carr House farm. I do remember going in and I'm sure I've found Molly in there before. I think I might have ridden her in there at some point. But the main thing that stands out I remember once my dog getting stuck up a tree in there. He was a lovely mongrel, he chased a cat, the cat had gone up the tree and Ricky thought he could go up after it, because he wasn't thinking about what he was doing, he'd gone straight up the tree and then realised 'oh I'm a dog! I don't do trees!' and I had to run all the way home to go and get somebody to rescue him because he just couldn't get down. He'd found his own way down by the time we got back. And just before I had my first daughter, or just afterwards, going for a picnic with a friend in there. But it was just something that was always there; I'm sure it was still there in

the early '80's. I'm wondering if it's because it wasn't used for much, with it not being very big, that flowers were allowed to grow. I just remember the wild flower meadow being there.

I also remember spending nearly half a day in those fields [The Paddock, Big Meadow, Hay Meadow] when Molly had jumped the gate at the end of the yard. She wasn't supposed to be out, it was either late spring or early summer, and she used to be prone to laminitis so she had to be kept in because she wasn't to eat the rich grass and so that probably made her even more determined 'I'm getting out there' and jumped the gate. I don't know if the fields are still the same but they used to be partially divided by hedges; they were very old hedges, all the hedges were broken, only short stretches then a massive gap then a tiny bit; lots of bits of hedges, so there was a way through which made them absolutely one massive big field really, to catch one pony that's not going to be caught. She could basically get all the way through to Carr House farm. So I probably pushed my way past a few cows trying to get to her. I just remember going with this bucket and calling.

We used to stand the pony in Lucy Brook because she used to get Laminitis. To cool her legs down we used to get her to stand in it. I was told that somebody had found clay pipes in Lucy Brook.

I used to ride her down the Pads and I remember once, I don't know if I had to get off for some reason, but I had to get off and I always used to ride bare back because she didn't like a saddle and I wasn't that fussed, the only time I used to use a saddle was if we were going to a show or something. And so to get back on her, there used to be steep banks at one point, I thought that's all right there I'll just get up this banking and jump on and as I put my leg out to jump on she walked off and I was left straddling, I remember that. Molly was just sauntering off down the Pads back towards Edenbreck.

I loved riding down the Pads when it was just going to dusk and the mists used to lie really low right across the fields; it was absolutely beautiful. I could imagine myself, I was always a bit weird as a kid, but I used to imagine myself transported back to medieval times and I used to look up to the castle and I used to think 'I remember riding along here when I had a hooded thing on' I used to think like that when I was like 9 or 10. I had no idea that monks did ride along this path but I got this feeling of going back in time. It wasn't until really recently when I was doing some research on Aldcliffe Hall that I realised that. It was absolutely beautiful; I used to love it when it was like that.

I also used to do little jumping courses all the way down the Pads for my dog; I used to try to turn him into a horse! I can actually see it now. I used to find as big a branch as I could and just hold it across the footpath, the Pads, so he couldn't get round it he had to go over it.

I can remember the concrete wall and I think that there was a little gate somewhere at an angle. Why would there be just a 6 foot stretch of concrete that just looks so out of keeping? It looked more like it would have been the people that were farming Home Farm that belonged to Aldcliffe Hall would have done that because that was part of their land really.

I always used to call Pony Wood 'Plantation' when I was little; it probably had never ever been called Plantation apart from me, just 'cause it reminded me of a little plantation of trees. I used to build little jumps for the horse in there and it used to be our own little personal cross country course. It probably wasn't very safe because there were lots of brambles and rabbit holes and all sorts. And I always remember wherever we were Williamson's chimney sticking up from behind everything.

Just one more memory the more I've thought about it over the years the more I've thought it wasn't possible; that man can't have been sat there. I was coming up Piggy Lane one morning, a Sunday morning I think, really nice sunny morning and I'd just come through, I don't even know if the gate is there any more, where the path gets quite narrow before it bends round, walking towards the top of Cannon Hill, and there was an old man sat there in a lovely red quilted smoking jacket or dressing gown, reading the paper, I think he had a mug of something next to him, in an armchair, and I said good morning and he said good morning and I carried on walking and I got home and I thought I must have been seeing things. But that has stuck out, when I think of Piggy Lane now. Unless it was a really old fashioned wheelchair that looked like an arm chair and they must have pushed him a long, long way though over really rough ground. Possibly from the nursing home but to get up, it's quite steep, they might have done but I just remember it being really surreal but he could have been from Langland's quite easily but they'd done really well to get him up there, there was no body with him and it's such a narrow bit of, its only afterwards that I thought how did they do that?

They were building the houses [Abraham Heights] by the late 1970's. They started right up by Denmark Street and that used to be a beautiful field. I remember crying myself to sleep and just wishing that I could do something and I'd wake up and the bulldozers would be gone because where Brookholme farm was, it was just absolutely perfect, it was really beautiful; it was like a little gravel farm track that started at the end of Willow Lane, just went up to the top of Cannon Hill; it was just fields, you could see right through to Aldcliffe. People living in Denmark Street if they lived on that side they would be able to see straight through to Aldcliffe from their bedroom windows. It was just so pretty, really lovely.

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