

## Stories from the Archives. Hope in the 1850s

### 24. More on Townhead

*Following last month's piece about Townhead I received an e-mail from Moira Monteith, who lived at Bridge Cottage for over 40 years. Her memories of the house and other farms are so interesting that I have her permission to reproduce them here.*

"I was, of course, particularly interested in Townhead. It always did seem like a small community on its own, not quite Hope. Did Viv (*Vivienne Taylor*) have any ideas about the Green? Basically the field behind our house I think. I always wondered if it had been common grazing or something like that. I would imagine the old Ibbotsons' farm, where Leslie Edmonds lives now, must have been quite old. It was in the pattern of the old farmhouses in Scotland and Ireland and possibly England, a long line of single rooms, leading one from the other. Mr Ibbotson had built a large stone fireplace in each room so they all looked rather top-heavy. The kitchen was the first room. Mrs Ibbotson had bad arthritis and asked for a Feverfew plant from our garden and apparently ate leaves from it each day. She described her grandmother who had lived in Hathersage as 'a stone age woman in a stone age kitchen.' Very graphic.

There was a building above the farm, up Losehill, which Mr Ibbotson said had been lived in during former times. It was more of a dilapidated barn as I remember but I suppose people might have lived in it previously.

The interesting items about Bridge Cottage were the railway connection and the bankruptcy. It was built by one of the Longdens, perhaps Jonathan, who came from somewhere near Derwent. I don't know where he got his money from to buy the land. He built it of limestone which is different from all the other houses round about and I think left it to his daughter. It was handed down from one family member to another without any will, so when it finally was sold, in 1959 I think, they had to write an account of the owners and get this signed by some official in Sheffield. At some point however, they must have let it presumably to make money, to a Mr Moon. A Moon descendent came to the house once, and said her sister had been born there.

Joan Clough looked up the census (*1891*) and said the house had numerous occupants, far more than could have slept in the rooms, so they must have had sheds, and presumably were working on the railway. They weren't Irish, Joan said, but came from different parts of the UK.

At one stage the owner (*of Bridge Cottage*) went bankrupt and the Squire person who lived in the Old Hall, Balguy, did his best by whichever Longden it was and organised a public hearing in the Cheese (think of the excitement!) and I think he escaped the term 'bankrupt.' Maybe that was when they let the house.

*Moira Monteith*