

# Running away home ...

Sam Hesselden, school life in Wilsill

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*The following is an extract of conversation with Sam in the front room at his family home in Wilsill, between Pateley Bridge and Summerbridge in North Yorkshire.*

...and so I started at this school 'ere. This was a school - here, where we are with our depot - Raikes Endowed School. Now it were a church school - it belonged with St Michael and All Angels. Every All Saints' Day in Anglicans, the vicar comes and there's a service there in St Michael and All Angels church. All school children had t' parade, file up in twos, and we'd t' go to the service. Mind you we were glad, have a bit of a walk up t' church and that, it were lovely! And then when service were over, not a long service, the children came back down and carried on with our lessons.

And this is a rather nice little bit of the story - we lived here, and we'd only t' go up that little hill and we were at school! Well, me brother were two year older than me. Ben, they called him. There were Ben and Sam. I'm Sam. And one afternoon after we'd finished school, and it finished at half past three them days, me brother says t' me, he says "Sam, I don't like it here, Wilsill. I want t' go back home. Will you come with me?" So I said "Yes," and instead of walking across 'ere we walked down on t' the road, and I were only a very thin little boy, very, very thin, just like matchsticks me legs, and we didn't come in home. Me mother were 'ere, but she can't have seen us.

And we walked down the village and on to Smelthouses, and up those hills - there's a road you see goes straight t' Burnt Yates on that top - and every hill, there's three hills, fairly steep, well, they aren't steep really, but they're hills, and he had t' carry me did Ben. He said "Get hold of me shoulders," and he carried me up. I were only weak, only five, a little lad. Well, he carried me up all them hills, did Ben. And then when you get to the top y' start going down. You can see, oh, lovely view and all that. Instead of turning t' Brimham Rocks we went straight forward to Burnt Yates.

Well, we got to the place where we were born. We knocked on door and a woman came to the door, and said "Eeeh, now what do you want?" Ben said "We've come home. We've left Wilsill. We don't like Wilsill. And we've come t' stop at home." Well we weren't old enough, aye, especially me, to know what it were all about.

So she says "Come on in." So we went int' house where we were born and she made us some tea. And, this were six o'clock b' then. Me Mother and Father - this is a puzzle, I don't know how they got to know where we'd gone, but somebody must have told 'em, and there weren't these mobiles, weren't no telephone like that. But I don't know how they knew and it has allus been a mystery. Anyway, during about nine o'clock at night me Dad

came, and all 'e had were a push bike. So, he came t' there. They must've put two and two together. Oh, she mayb' rung 'em and told 'em or something, the lady, you know, "I's two boys here." Me Dad came and do you know 'e never scolded us; 'e never were cross; 'e never said anything wrong to us; 'e said "Well, Ben," he says "Sam..." He 'ad a push bike did me Dad, and me Dad sat me over the cross bar onto the bicycle, then 'e walked to the side, walking, pushing it. I were on the bicycle. See, I were just five year old. He said to Ben, "You'll 'ave t' walk home." So Ben walked to the side of me Dad and we came in home. We never ran away from home again. We didn't get scolded because of we'd been naughty for going, and we never went away no more.

To view the full conversation, contact Anna Greenwood