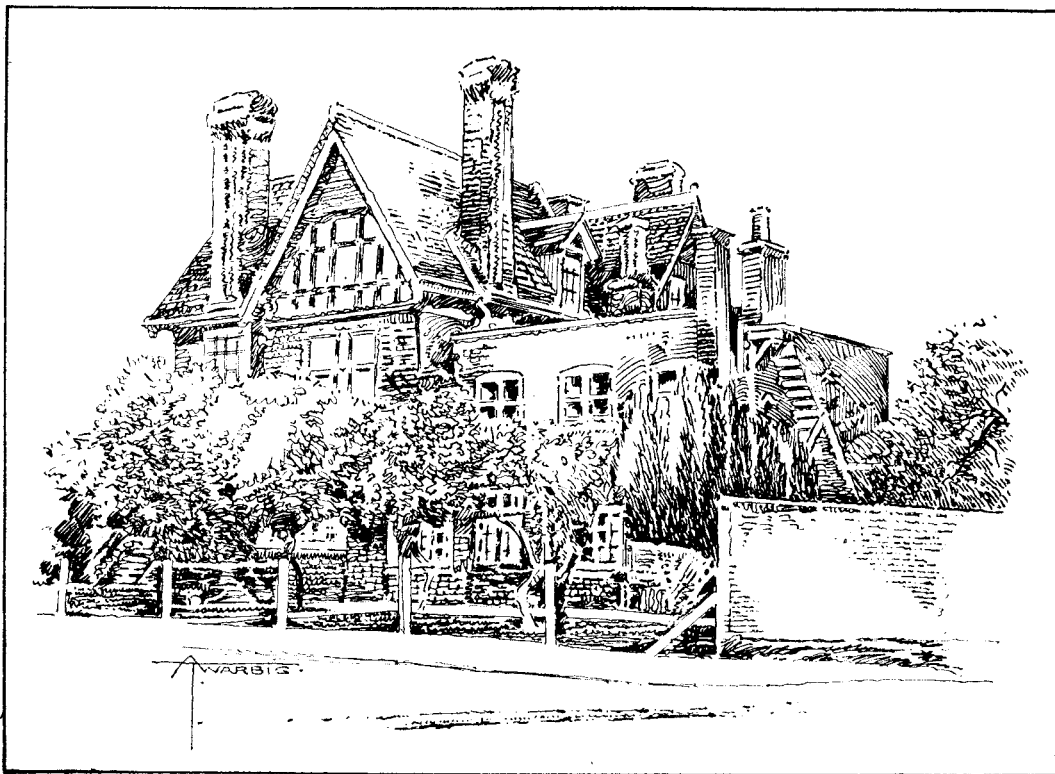


BYGONE SILEBY



[by courtesy of the "Loughborough Echo"]

A SERIES OF BOOKLETS CONTAINING
HISTORICAL FACTS ABOUT THE VILLAGE

No. 1 "Words and Sayings"

BYGONE SILEBY - OLD WORDS & SAYINGS

THE VICTORIAN BROGUE

Despite the arrival of the hosiery and footwear industries, the village in the Victorian era was still an out of the way place. In the close community of village life, there developed a peculiar style of speech and intonation.

An octogenarian has said:

"Way trayted the Inglish langwige summut cruil. Folks uster cum an ark at uz, then goo um an write tu the Mercri about it."

The various accents and idioms of other villages in the Soar Valley were immediately recognised, and a visitor from Syston or Barrow-on-Soar was identified as soon as he opened his mouth.

Although Sileby people were aware that they had a "brogue," as they called it, they were not concerned about it. However, strange accents of others offended their ears.

A visitor from Leeds was asked :

"Dew thi all tork as funny as yo dow, weer yo cum from ?"

"Aye, lad, they do that!"

"Well, oyd goo mad earin that twaddle aw dee long!"

Language is a living thing, and each passing decade brings its changes. Words and expressions which were once in daily use in Victorian Sileby are being forgotten, and the coming of higher education, mass communication and better opportunities for travel, means that the old "brogue" is now rapidly giving way to a standard 20th Century English.

This booklet attempts to collate some of these words and sayings of bygone Sileby, so that they might be preserved on paper. We feel that in another twenty years, much of what appears in these pages will have disappeared forever.

If any of these booklets survive, and the pages provide some future generation with an idea of the "sound" of Sileby as it was about 1900, then our labours will have been worthwhile.

Most of the savings and expressions used in this booklet were actually spoken by known Sileby-born persons, who long ago passed from this world.

R.J. Hunting.
Vicar.

PHONETICS AND PRONUNCIATION

It is not easy to represent the sound of the human voice in cold print, but the following is an attempt to catch the accents of bygone Sileby.

The Victorian Alphabet

A - Eye	B - Bay	C - Say	D - Day
E - Ave	F - Ef	G - Jay	H - Ayeh
I - Ov	J - Joy	K - Koy	L - El
M - Em	N - En	O - Ow	P - Pay
Q - Kew	R - Ar	S - Ess	T - Tay
U - Yo	V - Vay	W - Dubberyuh	
X - Eks	Y - Woy	Z - Zed	

The Vowels

Eye, Aye, Oy, Ow, Yo.

An inspector who visited the National School on Barrow Road, asked a boy to spell the word "Egypt." He was surprised to hear the lad say:

"AYE, JAY, WOY, PAY, TAY."

A Variation

There were some variations of intonation. For example, the pronoun "I" at the beginning of a sentence was usually pronounced "Ov" - "Ov aint bin wuk this wik."

Sometimes in the middle of a sentence, "I" was pronounced "Ah" - "Docnt ask may, ow do ah know?"

Observing men working on a high chimney, someone might say - "Its coud up theer ah know."

Contractions

Words were often shortened, as the "brogue" was a lazy form of speech. The days of the week became:

Sundi, Mundi, Toosdi, Wensdi, Thusdi, Froydi, Sotdi.

Two Club officials, after an interruption when checking a list of their subscribing members, said: "WEERWORWI, OOWORWIWEE?"

The question, "Will you share your apple with me?" was reduced to - "GIZZA BIRRONIT."

Contractions

Words were frequently tightly joined together, as shown in the questions :

"Is it not ?"	"Aintit ?"	"Initi ?"
"Do you not ?"	"Yo remember im dooncher ?"	
"Are you not ?"	"Yor gooin tubi late aincher ?"	
"Will you not ?"	"Yowl cum agen wooncher ?"	
"Could you not ?"	"Yer cud tek it wi yer cuncher ?"	

Omissions

A letter was sometimes omitted in the middle of a word. Someone guiding a cart, might say :

"Tek it bakkuds, then bring it forruds."

An inquiry about a visit to Loughborough, could be expressed:

"When ayer gooin, Thusdi artnoon ?" (or afnoon).

Substitutions

A letter, or letters in a word were sometimes changed for others. Here is an example of "r" changed for "t" in the word "got" :

The Vicar, arranging a marriage, asked the bridegroom, "Would you like the Organ for your wedding ?" received the reply, "Ef. way gorrit, way got noo weer tu kape it !"

An example of the substitution of "r" for "s" in the word "was"

Knitter No. 1.	"The best toym ah iver ed wor in the arms of another man's woym."
Knitter No.2.	"Ooar, ooworrit ?"
Knitter No. 1.	"Mi muther."
Knitter No.2.	(Trying to tell the story to his wife)
	"The best toym ah iver ad wor wi sum chap's woym."
Wife, angrily	"Oh, ooworrit then ?"
Knitter No.2.	"Ooyer rye, ah cant remember!"

The occasional use of "are" for "is" :

A forgotten place name, - "Its summut loyk Chisterfayld, or wotiver it are."

An overdue visitor, - "Shay aint cum yet, ah wonder weer shay are ?"

Curious use of the Past Tense

STORE	(stared)	"Shay jus stood theer an store at mi."
WELT	(wheeled)	"Ah welt the pram all round Slash."
THUNK	(thought)	"Wotiver must ay a thunk ayer ?"
WUN	(wound)	"Ayer wun up the clock yet ?"

Use of Negatives

Referring to an ignorant person :

"Ay doont know nowt about owt."

Speaking of a proud person :

"Oo duz ay think ay is, ay eent nobody !"

A man in High Street, trying to find an odd job for beer money, asked some one passing :

"Ah doont serpose yo doont know nobody wot wants nobody ter do nowt for nobody do yer ?"

As others heard us

A lady during a visit to the village, made some inquiries about some geese standing in a yard. "What do geese eat ?" she asked the owner. "Oh, chiefly grass," replied the Sibley man. When the lady returned to her husband, she asked in bewilderment, "What on earth is CHAYFLAYGRESS ?"

Although the "brogue" was slovenly, the vocabulary was surprisingly extensive, and there was a variety of words and phrases to express a single idea. It should be remembered however, that much of the humour, sharp wit and force of the bygone Sibley speech was vividly enlivened by blistering epithets, which will not appear in these pages.

SOME OLD SIBLEY WORDS (with their meaning, and examples of their use)

SWALE (to wither)

"Ay planted sun greens, but the sun made um swale."
Of compost - "It'll soon swale down."

WITTLLING (tearfully complaining)

Mother off to the Mothers' Meeting, to young child -
"Its no use yer wittlin, ah cant tek yer wi mi."

CLAYPERED (covered)

"Ey, luk weer yer gooin - yer boots are claypered wi mud." (or muck).

KITTLE (pregnancy in animals)

"Ar cat's in kikkle agen."

TROWTH (rubbish)

"Way cant do wi all that trowth about the yard, get shut on it!"

THAK (thatch)

"Ar roof cud do wi thakin afore winter sets in."

The word was also used to describe a fight - "They wor gooin at it thak an mortar."

FLIT (move residence)

To move at night, in order to avoid paying rent owing, was known as a "Midnight flit"

There was an old Sibley saying :

" A Fridi flit,
A short sit."

BEEKS (trousers)

" Yo moynd yo doont tear them new beeks "

CLEMMED (hungry)

" Weers mi dinner, oym clemmed."

WENCH (daughter)

" Am jus gooin oer the igh brig ter do the wenches weshin."

TRAPESING (long walk)

" Yer not gettin may trapesin all that way."

ABIDE (tolerate)

" Way cant abide kippers at ar ouse."

JUSNOWSIN (just-now-since, recently)

" Weers mi Dad ?"

" Ays not far, ay wor ere jusnowsins "

BOKO (nose)

" Ayer sane that wart on that bloke's boko ?"

MAKE-OUT (understand)

" Ah cant mek it out at all."

" Ah cudnt mek out wot ay wor torkin about."

CHUFF (pleased, proud)

" They eent arf chuff wi theer new mangle."

SEN (self)

" Ah thought to mi sen "

COP (caught and punished)

"Yo woont arf cop it when yer Dad gets um "

PAD (footpath)

" Kape on the pad, an moynd them osses."

PASSUN (parson)

Telephone call to the Vicarage in the 1960's :

" Ello, es that yo Passun ?"

HOLD WITH (agree)

" Ah doont owd wi wimmin votin."

SNIVED (multitude)

" Ar gardin's snived wi sparrers." "Theer barn's snived wi rots."

WOODEN (awkward, or useless with tools)

"Cum on, gi uz it ere, yor woodin !"

REEKIN (a long way round, circumlocution)

"Av bin all round the reekin lukin fer yo !"

"Shay guz all round the reekin tellin er tale."

SLAWM (lazy work, idle person)

"Shay jus slawmed it oer wi a floor-cloth."

"Yo slawmin fool !"

BAD (ill, sick)

Visitors: "Fancy yo bin in bed !"

Woman: "Its the fust toym av bin in bed bad f^oyears !"

Visitors: "Ar, an lets ope its yer last !"

MORNING (complaining)

Mother to child: "Stop yer mornjin, jus cos yer cant ev eppny !"

JOEY (a Victorian silver fourpenny piece)

Man and wife looking in a shop window in High Street:

Wife: "Oo, ah eud jus dc wi one o^r them."

Husband: "Av ony gorra Joey on mi."

Wife: "Yer moyt a knowed ad want t^o buy summut !"

Husband: "Ar, ah did !"

MOONT, MUN (must not, must)

"Yer moont fret yersel mi duck, yer mun tek care o^r yersen"

DINT (did not)

Vicar (1960's) giving a talk on old Sileby:

"One wonders how the poor framework-knitters ever survived"

Voice at the back of the hall, "Thi dint !"

SKIDDADLE (move away, quickly)

"Weer gooin t^o get wet, wayd better skiddadle !"

To importunate tramp, "Vowl get nowt ere, so skiddadle !"

ENOO (enough)

During a fight, when one of the contestants has fallen:

"Ayad enoo, then ?"

FOO (few)

Sometimes, the letters "u" and "w" were not pronounced properly.

Thus, "few," became "foo." A funeral became "foonerel," and "future,"

"footure." This manner of speech "amused" visitors.

Transposition of vowels in a sentence. In the following sentence, actually spoken in Sileby, the vowels in "nails," and "heels," are transposed:

Father to boy, "Yer mun ay sum neels in yer ails." Similarly, in the words "three" and "skeins" - a defaulter in a framework-knitter's house:

"Ar Tom's gone out, an ony wun thray skeens !"

WUNT (familiar with a place)

When training racing pigeons - "Am wuntin um ."

BLETHERHEADS (blackheads)

" Ays got bletchereds all oer ays dial. "

MARDY (marred, spoilt)

" Ef vo doont stop beyin mardy, yowl goo t' bed !"

" Shay eent cryin cos shays sick - shays jus mardy. "

TIZNTAINT (it is, and it is not; neither good nor bad)

Neighbour, " Is yer chest any better, Liza ?"

Liza " Tizntaint. "

BE SAID (say no more)

" Dad, ah cent eat this egg, its bad. "

" No it eent. Gerron wi it an be said. "

" Well, Dad, wot shouldah do wi the bayk an legs ?

LAP (wrap)

Woman in shop : " Goo on, lap it up, al tek it wi mi. "

STRYMING (walking quickly or striding)

" Ah wor strymin across the brook an ah strum in. "

KEKISH (squeamish)

" Ay wornt kekish, ayd eat owt. "

JINGLING, JANGLING (noise)

" Stop yer janglin noise, wot ar yer jinglin about ?"

CURE (amusing)

" Shay is a cure, shay meks yer die o' laffin. "

RARE (unusual)

" Now theers a rare thing !"

DOING (household chores)

" Shay's close on ninety, an still dooin fer ersen. "

ON TOP OF (in addition)

" Mi muther did cookin, weshin an claynin up after eight kids, an on top o' that, did wuk on a Griswald. "

BACK OF THE DOOR (prison)

" Ays bin back o' the door mony a toime. "

TROLL (mop)

Mother to untidy girl : "Well, yo dow luk a troll !"

SPLAW (splayed)

" Ay wor bad on ays fate, splaw footid, corns n'all. "

SET-OUT (group of doubtful characters)
" Theer a rale setout, yo kip away from um."

GRET (great, large)
Heard at Dudley's Bridge long ago, as a small girl rode a shire-horse to the blacksmith's shop : " Ey, luk at that little gel on that gret oss."

END-UP, LAND-UP, FINISH-UP (consequences of behaviour)
" Yowl end-up in trouble afore yer done !"
" Ef yo goo on loike that, yowl land-up in jail !"
" Ah wonder weer ayl finish-up in yeers t'cum ?"

AYERGORRA (have you got)
" Ayergorra cup o' sugar yo cun lend uz ?"

STARVLED (huddled by the fire)
" Doont sit theer on top o' the foyre, yo luk all starvled !"

UM (home)
" Woy did Jack's widder swear at yer ?"
" Ah ony tow'd er ayd gone to a better um !"

FIB (lie)
" My missus cudnt tell a fib if shay troyd."
" Moyn con - shay cud tell one as soon as ah sed it !"

STRET (straight, tight, direct)
" This frock is too stret fer mi."
A local preacher told the congregation, " Stroyve to enter in at the stret goite."

TOMMY OPPOSITE (argumentative)
" Yo cant deny that the brickyard chimney is a igh un."
" Ony the top on it !"
" Yo wud bay Tommy Opposite !"

AYEERD (have you heard ?)
" Ayeerd that they all downed tools at Swan n' Pressuns ?"
" Ows that then ?"
" Its Satdi afnoon !"

STOND (stand, tolerate, accept)
" Shay woont kape may stonidin theer ef shay's late !"
" Ah cant stond the sight on im !"
" Con that bloke stond much ale ?" "No, but ay con bi stood a few!"

HANTLE (great amount)
" Ays wuth an antle o' money ay is."

MEDDLE (interfere)
" Now yer got that clock gooin agen, doont meddle it."

SKIN (humour, disposition)

Of a baby : " Shay allus weks up in a good skin."

FRIT (frightened)

" When that cow cum up ar entry, oo ah wor frit."

UP-NECK (in deep)

" Theer allus up-neck in debt."

TINKER (interfere)

" Lave that aspidestra be, doont tinker it."

MORM (idle, to lounge)

" Gerrup an stop mormin about !"

LIGGER (liar)

" Ah eent sayin ays a ligger, am ony sayin ay wunt know the truth ef ay eerd it."

CHUCK (throw)

Playing with a ball: " Cum on, gi uz a chuck !"

" Ey, chuck it uver ere."

CHUCK (desist)

" Yer makin too much noise, so chuck it !"

MACKLE (construct, make)

" Ays allus macklin summut." " Ays good at macklin owt."

DAB-HAND (talented)

" Ay wor a proper daband at macklin."

KISSER (mouth)

" Ay dint say nowt, ay niver opund ays kisser."

UP (wrong)

" Theers nowt up wi it - wots up wi yer ?"

THRESHED (beaten, punished.)

" Ef yo brek that winder, yowl get threshed !"

PLONK (place, put down)

" Shat picked the taypot up, an plonked it on the table."

PLANT (place forceably)

" Ay stepped backudds and planted issen on mi corn."

BLETHER (weep)

" Stop yer bletherin, child."

AWHILE (find time)

" Ah cant awhile to do it yet."

SHACK (idle)

" Theers no wuk - weer shackin about this wik."

MEAGRUM (grimace)

" Straighten yer face, an stop pullin meagrum !"

JAW (reprimand)

" Ef ah tell yer, yer woont jaw mi - will yer ?"

COWLUS (coal-house)

" Way eent gorra nob o' coal in ar cowlus."

" It wor as dark as a black cat in a cowlus!"

A-TELLING (telling, explaining)

" Now, as ah wor atellin on yer ."

TALKING-TACKLE (ability to talk)

" Shay kep mi, shay eent arf got er torkintackle on !"

TAR BUCKET (black silk hat)

" Ays a toff, ay allus guz t' Chuch in ays tarbukit."

RAMMEL (rubbish)

" Theer fernichers nowt but a lot of owd rammul."

YOP" (yours)

" Eent that wench theer, one o' yorn ?"

MYERN (mine)

" Put that down - its myern, not yorn !"

OWERN (ours)

" All that weshin on the line is owern "

THEIRN (theirs)

" That dog is not owern, its theirn."

HISEN (his)

" Gi im back the ball, if its isen."

HERN (hers)

" Luk at er swankin in that new frock of ern."

COME-ACROSS (find, by searching)

" Ef yo luk in the cubud yowl cum across it sumweer."

DROP-ACROSS (find, accidentally)

" Ah niver thort ad drop across yo down ere !"

FANCY (surprise)

" Well, fancy that now !"

" Fancy im goin out wi er of all people !"

FANCY (Pride)

" Ay doont arf fancy issen wi them new boots on !"

SCUN (skinned, deprived)

" Ah played im at marlies (marbles) an ays sun mi !"

" Ah eent got no money, am scun out !"

BRACK (damage or wear)

" Yor coat is alright, theers not a brack the matter wi it."

CAUSEY (causeway, pavement)

In Sileby, a trombone was known as a "push mi off the causey."

CHELPING (child-like chatter, persistent)

" Ey, yo kids, shurrup, an stop yer chelpin !"

A noisy woman : "Cant shay chelp ?"

CHOPSING (conversing)

" Weer yo bin till this toym ?"

" Am ony bin chopsin !"

GLEG (stare)

" Shay kips gleggin across at mi in mi new coat !"

STUFFING (food for rabbits)

" One o' yo kids goo up the fayld fer sum stuffin."

POWER (many)

" Theer wor a power o' people at the market."

BLARTING (excessive talking, or grumbling)

" Ay wor allus drinkin an blartin ."

COTTED (tangled hair)

" Oo, child, yer airs so cottid, ah con do nowt wi it !"

GAFFER (overseer)

Husband, during a row - " Oos gaffer in this place ?"

Wife - "Yowl soon foynd out in a minit !"

CRANKY (wrong, or sick)

Of an eccentric person - "Ays cranky, ay is."

Knitter : "Theers summut up wi mi frame, its all cranky !"

(Compare the German - Kranke, Kranken; an invalid, to be ill.)

CHIP (brother)

During a street game : "Ar Mam sez mi chip's gorra play wi uz ."

FAGGIT (tiresome)

Of a baby : " Oo, shay is a little faggit !"

FOTI (photograph)

Wife : " Av bin an ad mi foti tuk, but it meks mi luk older un ah am."

Husband: " Nemind, yowl soon catch up wi it !"

HENFLESH (goose-pimples)

" Am that cowl, am enfleshed all oer !"

STEPS TO MATRIMONY IN BYGONE SILEBY

On reaching the years of maturity, a young man's attention turned towards the young ladies in the village. Soon, he would be KAYPIN STAG on the female of his choice. This interest would not go unrecognised by the young lady, who would convey this intelligence to her friends with the words, "OO, AH THINK AV CLICKED!" Then, by mutual consent, they were SPLOGIN, walking together to the Mill, or by the Delph Hole.

The first meeting between his parents and the girl of his dreams, could create an interesting situation. The young lady would be left in the street outside the house, with the instruction, "YO WAIT AT THE TOP OF AR ENTRY, AN OYL TELL MI MAM WEERERE."

Mother would be told abruptly, "MAM, AV CUM UM WI MI GEL." Mother, looking anxiously at the untidy state of the living-room, expressed the hope that the girl was not accompanying her son, "OO, YAINTEGORRERWIYERAYER ? THE OUSE IS A PIG OLE." Father, putting on his boots for the occasion, protested mildly, "SORL ROYT, WASSAMARRAWEEIT ?"

The girl was warmly welcomed as she arrived at the back-door, "CUM IN MI DUCK, DOONT STOND OUT THEER IN THE COWD, PLONK YERSEL DOWN SUMWEER."

In a village where people knew each other by pedigree and nickname, a face was soon recognised. Father, eyeing the girl, said, "ERE, EENT YO CHUCKABOUT SMITH'S WENCH ? ME AN YOR GRANDAD, OLD SWALLERABARREL USTER WUK TUGITHER."

Mother also stared at the visitor. "OO AR," she said, "AH OWNED YER AS SOON AS AH CLAPPED EYES ON YER. WORNT YOR MAM EMMY JONES AFORE SHAY WOR WED ?" Then blowing down the teapot spout, she added, "EV A CUPPA TAY MI DUCK. GOO ON, MEK YERSEL AT UM, AN POUR IT IN YER SORCER EF ITS OT."

When the couple were engaged, they went to the house again to display the ring, with its microscopic stone. The young man proudly commanded his parents, "TEK A DEKKO AT THE RING - ITS GORRA RUBY!" "GERROUT!" gasped mother, "TEENTISIT ?" and on closer scrutiny, cried, "OOYER RYE, IT IZUNALL!"

Later, the couple were SPLICED, and dwelt in a cottage in the village. Father, refreshing himself at the Duke, proudly announced, "AR JACK'S FLEGGED AN FLIGGED!"

Mother, for her part, viewed her in-laws with some suspicion. She spoke of her family as "AR LOT," and the others as "THEER LOT." But "THEER LOT" was rarely ever as good as "AR LOT."