

## "Down Memory Lane"

Re Proposed Centenary History of The House of Hare 1865 - 1962

Harry Jenkin Written 1965

I am afraid I can't go back to 1865 as I was not born until 1880. I joined The House of Hare in 1898 as junior clerk and general factotum. There was at that time only three in the office - Joe Crowther, James Windsor and myself, and we were by then located in 72 Wellington Street on the ground floor front, and the first floor above it, also facing Wellington Street. The back part of the building was sealed off and used by a man who sold coffins, shrouds etc., to local undertakers (all very ghoulish)! Later he cleared out, and James Hare took over the back of the building, after it was opened out in 1898.

And now, something about our founder - James Hare. The first I heard about him was that he at one time worked for Hudson, Sykes & Bousfield (of Morley) at their Wellington Street Warehouse (opposite the West Riding Hotel) as warehouseman and packer. He used to buy damaged ends from pieces and sell them to the railway men at Copley Hill from his house at a street in New Wortley nearby Copley Hill Goods Yard. He then removed to Beeston Hill and took over a basement in W Street, later occupied by The Home Yeast Co. about 1894. He still bought piece ends, and his brother Sam joined him, but the partnership did not last long, as Sam thought James was getting too much of the profits. Then about 1895 James Hare moved house to North Park Road, Roundhay, from Beeston, and about the same time (1895) he took over the first portion of 72 W. Street. There was no transport up Roundhay Road except a horse drawn wagonette run by Spurdens, (the livery stable people) every hour to Oakwood, so what did the guvnor do but buy a secondhand open carriage, engaged an old chap called Walker as coachman, gardener, and general handyman, and every morning would drive to Leeds about 9 a.m. usually accompanied by Mrs Hare and two daughters, Florrie and Kate. After they had deposited him about 9.30 a.m. they would go into town and do some shopping at the Pygmalion (now C & A), Marshall & Snelgrove, etc., have a coffee, and return home at 11 a.m. After Mr Hare had asked what orders there were in the post I had to go to the Midland Bank at 9.50 a.m. for the Pass Book so that Mr Hare could see what his daily balance was. This went on for a long time. At 2 p.m. I had to take the Pass Book in again to the bank. One day he said at 2 p.m. to me " I shall be going home today at 4 p.m. We have some ladies (2) coming to tea at 4.30 p.m. so get me four Eccles cakes at 3d. each from Miss Watson's confectioners, Boar Lane, ( now Cooks Tourist Office) 1lb polony, and small jar of strawberry jam at the co-op in Albion St. and see you get the right change and checks there! Joe Crowther will give you the money from his petty cash account", (but he always forgot to pay it back to Joe). At 4.30 p.m. I wondered what sort of a "splash" they would be making on the foregoing comestibles.

Shakespeare said "Memory is a fickle jade" and I am finding it is so - I cannot always remember the particular year when certain events occurred, but if I put one or two things down they will, I think, be of interest, (if not historically so, for your compilation).

The dinner hour in the early days was 12 noon to 1.15 p.m. Mr Hare dined at the Conservative Club in South Parade and returned to the Warehouse 1.30 p.m. Arthur Hare dined at the Liberal Club in Quebec St. Very often about 1.45 p.m. Mr Hare would say to me "Has Arthur come in?" and if I said "No" I was sent to find him. Sure enough, he would be playing billiards or snooker, and when he did return about 2.30 p.m. the "Old man" would tell him he was a damned fool etc. etc. and it was no way to run a business.

In 1905 we had our first "Shop Trip" to Bakewell in Derbyshire. I arranged it through Cooks office. We had a saloon attached to the Derby Express, and taken off at Bakewell, lunch at the Bakewell Arms, then charabancs and open carriage (for Mr Hare and family) for a drive to Haddon Hall. Returned to Bakewell at 6 p.m. for dinner and left for Leeds at 7.30 p.m. I am enclosing two photographs which I took - one outside of Haddon

Hall showing a group - note the ladies costumes - and the other of four stalwarts, reading from left to right Joe Dixon, Dick Bulmer, Norman Reason, and Clifford Hare.

Next event, (about 1906 I believe) was Clifford's 21<sup>st</sup>. Birthday Party at the Conservative Club, given by his father. After the dinner and speeches I was one of the quartet to entertain them to glees, solos and singing of well known songs of the time. We broke up about 9.30 p.m. and three or four of the party had to be sent home by cab, having mixed the Champagne and beer too freely I'm afraid. I stuck to non-alcoholic liquors!

Contd.

I think I had better close now, with all my memories of the chaps (with their foibles and idiosyncracies) I have known whilst serving under the banner of James Hare, and James Hare Ltd., A grand lot! I know I have been very discursive in these reminiscences, but I hope you will forgive me (as I said earlier, "Memory is a fickle jade" after all these years).

My warmest regards to you and Co-Directors, and all at Queen Street.

Ever Yours,  
Harry Jenkin.

Alfred Taylor, Written 1965.

In the year 1910 King Edward VII died, and early on the Saturday morning the Leeds G.P.O. 'phoned to say that they had hundreds of telegrams for "Hare Leeds", would we send someone to collect. These wire orders were mostly for blacks and purples, and it was "All hands on deck". Everyone worked at full stretch, and we finished about 4 p.m. (usual time 12.30 noon).

A costume length in those days was 4 to 5 yards, skirts almost touched the ground, and brush braid was sewn all around the hem. We stocked brushed braid in all shades.

50 odd years ago we had no vans, only two handcarts pulled by errand boys. Local parcels were delivered by these boys to all parts of the city. Parcels by rail were handled by Marshalls Express Ltd., a horse drawn van which collected parcels from our warehouse several times daily, and delivered them to the Railway Parcels Offices. Parcels for outlying districts round Leeds were delivered by carriers who departed from Market Stables outside the Old Leeds Market twice a week; errand boys conveyed parcels from the warehouse to Market Stables.

We had a been very busy, working late every night until 9 and 10 o'clock, and on this particular night, about 9 p.m. the telephone in the old woollen room, 1st. floor overlooking Wellington Street rang. Charlie Abbott, a first class warehouseman, but hasty-tempered, said "who the h----'s phoning at this time of night, and dashing to the 'phone he picked up the receiver and called out rather peevishly "Hello". A voice at the other end said "Hullo! Is that the workhouse?" "No" snapped back Charlie, "but it's b----- well next door to it" and slammed down the receiver.

A.J.H. would not tolerate careless work or mistakes, and to impress this on his employees he got several large sheets of brown paper and, with a brush and ink, wrote in large block letters - "BE CAREFUL" on one; "BE PRECISE" on another; "CHECK YOUR WORK" etc. These were affixed to the wall in each department. One sheet bearing the words "BE CAREFUL" was placed in the Ladies Cloth Dept. at the foot of the staircase which led up to the Pattern Dept. One day, an old lady, wife of one of our customers, entered the Ladies Dept. and purchased a length of cloth. Upon leaving the department she paused at the foot of the staircase, read the slogan "BE CAREFUL", turned round, with a puzzled expression on her face, and walked to the nearest employee. "Young man" she said, "is that staircase dangerous?"

Before the First World War, public houses were open from 6 a.m. until 11 p.m. non-stop; home brewed ale, rather stronger than present mild beer was 2d. per pint, spirits 2d. per nip, and a large bottle of whisky 3/6d. In the Ladies Dept., was an employee named Compson (cutter and invoicer combined), a large well built man who liked his booze, but was a good workman who could sail through the orders. He was a good time-keeper, always punctual, until one morning he arrived late, took off his hat and coat, rolled up his shirt sleeves, picked up an order sheet from the file; he then carried a piece to the counter and proceeded to measure off the required length. He was staggering a little, also his yardstick, when Mr Arthur James Hare, (referred to by all his employees as A.J.H.) walked up to him. "Compson" he said, "you're drunk". Putting his hand in his pocket he pulled out half a crown, placed it on the counter in front of Compson. "now put on your coat, take this half a crown, get blind drunk then go home and have a good sleep, but you will be on the job tomorrow morning at 7.30 prompt, perfectly sober, and it must never happen again, if it does you will be finished". "Very good Sir" replied Compson as he reached for his jacket. He never came to work again intoxicated. I think his favourite pub was The Angel Inn, Wellington Lane.

