

## The Original Black Spider Letters

Pentrich January 1818

It's taken me a quite a few weeks to get round to me latest set of notes and, maybe, it might be me last effort. I'll tell thee wots 'appended.

I've bin in t'habit a 'iding me notes in various places around Pentrich since I started writing 'em in May three year ago, 1815. Well there's bin a goodly amount o'watter under t'bridge sin then, that's for sure. I've allus tried to put things down that I knew to be true or wot somebody told me were true. I knew it could get me inta trouble, 'specially when they started planned a revolution.

Anyroad, wots 'appended is that some of me notes have vanished and I dunna know whos 'ad 'em. I put a bantle in a hole at th'back o White Hoss where I built a wall to keep Nancy's pigs out of beer store. Some wot I 'id in th' back of a garden shed this end of Swanwick are still there but me latest lot up to last year have gone from a stone shelter at th'end of t'bottom field at Pentrich Lane End. It's made me real frit cos I dunna know who's had em and, wats woss about it, wat there goin' to do wi 'em.

Yo maybe know but there's a lot a trouble in Pentrich since th'trials. Th'whole village is a bit ofa tat-ar. Dukes men have shifted a few outa their 'omes, them as were connected to rising. They've pulled a few more down and gen a few more to

other families. Nubdy dare say boo to a goose at present. I'm not about to go round askin' folks if they've sin me papers, not on your nelly.

If some bugger in authority 'as me notes they'll be looking for them as wrote em, that's for sure. Mind thee I never put me name on any. To be 'onest, there's not too many as coulda write em so it might be easy to find out.

Only man I know for certain who knows that I wrote 'em is Old Tom Bacon. I'm not sure were he is at present, maybe in gaol or on a boat to t'other side of t'world - we've not heard owt. Mind thee, I'm pretty sure he wouldna drop me in it and that's a fact.

Anyhow, as I'm writin' I might as well tell thee any news. Yo know as three have been hung up and then ad their 'eads cut off in public. And they think we're wild animals, I tell thee. Some went to prison and I suspect a few might be out soon. Some young men were gen a bollickin' by t'judge and let go. It looks as tho them in power knew who they wanted and then were satisfied.

It seems that some as woked at Jessop's 'ad bin signed up as special constables and were guardin' works when our lot called on 'em. One or two still drink in t'villages about- acourse yo know tha t'White 'oss has bin closed. That's another reason why nubdy knows who can be trusted. To mek things was they put out big reward posters. Wey think a few took th'money and left t'village pretty quick, we've not sin 'em since. Yo're not surprised are you.

One rumour I 'eard from somebody who were at t'trial was that me mate Owd Tom Bacon plead guilty to High Treason and got transportation to Australia for his troubles. It turned owt that Tom were not on t'rising nor wor e at t'meeting a day afore they set off. It seems that Tom took his punishment when, be raights, he shoul'da bin let go. We all knew Tom were one who'd bin settin' up a rising for years. But, he didna go on t'rising nor did he go t'meeting at t'pub and that should count for summat. Nubdy knows why, wor he 'elpin' t'others, did he get confused - I canna 'ave that. It goes to show that if they want thee they'll 'ave thee one way t'other.

I started this note a couple o'days ago and I'm using me last candle to finish it. I'm not woking for t'Duke, I dunna trust 'im, and there's no other wok in my trade around 'ere. That leaves me we no other way than to bugger off and that wok I've decided to do. To be 'onest, I'm not sure who to trust anymore. Families 'ave turned on each other and there's nowt to keep me 'ere.

Wor th'whole job worth while. As I telled thee I didna go ont'match, but I knew plenty as did. It seems that mosta them as set off disappeared afore they were set on by troops. It were rainin' all naight and yo canna blame 'em. Even the so-called Nottingham Captain ducked owt afore t'soldiers turned up. Though he were picked up later. Maybe it were summat to do wi big rewards agin.

I've no family and me best pal, and I really mean this, were Owd Tom and he's gone so I'm off.

Did them as marched achieve owt? Yo've got to say that, other than to rattle a few cages, no they didna. As far as I can see, they mighta set a pattern for others to learn from their efforts to do things in a better way. One thing I'm sure abowt is that summat needs to be done and fast.

Thanks for reading, an dunna let the buggers get thee down!

