

The Original Black Spider Letters

Pentrich October 1817

It's well past middle of October as I write and wey know mosta what's 'appened. All them as were held at Nottingham goal were dragged across to Derby and t'trial started on 15th October, it wor a Wednesday.

I decided to keyp out'a way. Nobody seemed to want to lock me up and that suited me fine. I kept me 'ead down. As I telled thee I nipped off from t'march as soon as I could. I could see it were goin' to end in trouble. My opinion wor, for what it matters, that there were nobody to lead us, nobody to organise t'job. Nubdy knew Brandreth only by what some sed about 'im. Wey knew he were a luddite and that he were a hothead. I canna understand why Tom agreed to 'im coming to lead t'march. In fact, more I think about it maybe he didna bring 'im. Perhaps them at Nottingham wanted to get rida Jeremiah Brandreth.

To be onest, folks in t'village aren't saying a great deal. T'whole job didna go down well wi'Duke and them as were involved were expectin' to be kicked out their houses, even if it were only women and kids that were left.

When yo went in t'White Orse it were quiet and Nancy were quick to quieten anyone who started saying wrong thing. Yo canna blame her, plenty o'Bacons and Weightman's were in serious trouble.

To bey 'onest, most folks expected lots more to be hanged, they really did. When they dished out hangin' jobs it were only Brandreth, Isaac Walton, William Turner and George Weightman. Mind yo, that were bad enough for men as wor only wanting a fair deal.

Yo'da thought there mighta bin some parading or demonstratin' but no, it weren't like that.

Bits'a news came ack wi them as went to Derby but many stayed away, like mey. It turned owt that the'd got them as they wanted and that wor it. Wey were told as judge stopped newspapers from reportin' details through trial so didna know t'detail.

One thing I did find owt were that Owd Tom Bacon had hid away just before t'march started and didna go on it. I'm really surprised as he'd bin t'one who'd gone on about a rising for donkeys. Wey got to know that he'd bin locked up and were one'a them as were on trial. Everybody expected that he'd be hung up an dried. But afore end of October we got to know that he were to be transported down under wi a dozen or more others.

Wey found out that t'hangin's were to be early November. Nobody I knew wanted to go. Who wants to watch some bugger you know being strung up and craved to bits - all for tryin' to feed their families. I dunna know what more to write down, it must be 'orrible sat in a gaol waiting to die.

One or twi bitsa news found its wey to Pentrich or Wingfield during October it were like whole area were under a big dark

cloud. Soldiers had stopped their searches some time ago, it seems, as I sed afore, that they'd got all they wanted and that likes'a mey were little fish.

Some lads as had been in gaol were released and came back into villages. They'd bin released with a bollickin' from t'judge. He told 'em to not listen to man as would take them astray. That they should live sober and religious lives and be a credit to society - whatever that means. He finished by tellin' to go home and sin no more. To bey 'onest, most didna think that tryin' to get a reasonable livin' were ever a sin. Mind yo nobody were keen to shout this around and abowt.

Some young men as come back were sacked by Jessops and several left Derbyshire, especially them as hadna got wives and kids.

Local vicar came in White 'Orse one night, and that were a shock on its own, he told us that t'Prince Regent had decided to move hangin' sentence from George Weightman and he were to be transported for life wi Tom Bacon and o't'others. He told us that th'sentences for Brandreth, Isaac Ludlam and William Turner had been changed. Them as were listenin', bowt doxen or fifeteen cocked up their ears at this.

He sed that they were sentenced by t'judge to be hanged, beheaded, drawn and quartered. Wey all knew what that meant. Anyroad, he told us that t'Prince had decided that they wouldna be drawn and quarted but just hanged and beheaded.

Well, yo can imagine that this caused a bit o'a shock.

"Say that agin," somebody piped up, "does tha mean they're not goin' to be executed?"

"Well, no, "sed t'vicar, "it means they will be hanged and beheaded but their bodies will not be cut up."

One relative, I'm not goin' to write 'is name, sed, "What a loada crap that is. They'll be dead just t'bloddy same. What's t'point in that."

"It might be more of a comfort for their family," the vicar offered an explanation.

Yo can imagine that there were lotta sed after that and it's no good ramblin' on any further.

The whole business seems to get wos, it really does. I've no more to sey now, no more than meks any sense in this strange world.