



The Beverley Barge Preservation Society

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BILL'S BLOG 4

ROUNDAGAIN, A RAG & BONE MAN

On Potter Hill there was a large house with some six to eight rooms, lovingly known as Tommy Clark's Lodging House where men of all ages, usually down on their luck or out of house and home, would live for a small rent, paid to Tommy in cash each and every week without fail.

Tommy Clark was a general dealer who never trusted banks; all deals were done by a shake of the hand, in pound notes and into the back pocket no questions asked. The lodging house was a home for men usually with drink problems, who fought with bare fists after a night on the booze. They could be seen on a Sunday morning sporting black eyes, bumps and bruises from a good Saturday night out.

One character who lodged with Tommy Clark between 1930 and 1940 was a man named Sandy. No one knew his other names but he was a Rag & Bone man and became known as Roundagain as he came round and round Becksides shouting "Any Rag Bones?" to which locals would give him any rags, metal, bottles, rabbit skins and alike.

He used an old beaten pram to carry his wares to the merchants who gave him cash for what he had collected. He then made for the nearest pub where every penny would be spent on ale, then he would climb into his pram and off to sleep he would go. If he ever made it back to the lodging house he would become disruptive and be thrown out by Tommy Clark so he would sleep rough in his pram.

There was a story told to me about a rival to Roundagain who suddenly appeared, during the war years, with a pram collecting the same as Roundagain. He sported a large ginger beard and slept rough in his pram. He became a real threat to Roundagain and his finances. Confrontation between the two was inevitable with threats being made by both sides. Then one day, without warning, the ginger bearded Rag & Bone man disappeared never to be seen again,

Had Roundagain run him out of town? Had Roundagain done for him? Was Roundagain a murderer?

The plot thickened until Tommy Clark revealed that the ginger bearded Rag & Bone man was in fact a German Spy!! A German Spy in Becksides Beverley. It got worse when Tommy Clark informed all who would listen that the pram the ginger bearded Rag & Bone Man had concealed a radio transmitter under the bottom pram panels, and he transmitted to Germany all matters relevant about Becksides and the people who lived there.

Fear of a German attack made the folk of Becksides have sleepless nights, but not our Roundagain. He was just glad to be back on his patch shouting "Any Rag Bones", getting his cash from the merchants, going to the pub, getting drunk and sleeping peacefully in his pram.