

Roll: **20230930-20301**

Camera: **Canon EOS 5D Mark III: E53**

Film: **Full frame digital**

Subject:

Gilderoy.

Notes:

I remember my Dad driving through Matlock Bath when I was a child and my Dad pointing out a house high on the side of the ravine where he used to stay as a boy. I was unsure which house he meant. "Not the white one the one next to it". It seemed to me that there were several white houses high up on the cliffs. I really wanted to know which one but I didn't want to repeat the question. My Dad could become quite irascible and I knew he had a pretty low opinion of me anyway. The conversation shifted to that of a hotel which Mum and Dad knew to have a naturally fed swimming pool, "that's it there" said my Mum. My Dad was unsure, it was called the "New Bath Hotel" but surely the one they were looking out for was "The Bath Hotel". It didn't really matter though as "it's closed anyway". I think at the time he just meant the swimming pool, which was a huge blow to me as our favourite family activity was spending the day at outdoor lidos. I think the hotel itself closed later on and it remained so for many years.

I'm not sure if it was the same trip or if we went to Matlock Bath several times but I do remember one time climbing the Heights of Abraham and seeing the entrance to what I assume are now described as caves or caverns. I remember the entrance as being very narrow ravine. I was very scared and refused to go in. My Dad and my sister decided to walk through, there were no charges then, no tickets and no guides, while I walked with my Mum to the other end to meet them. Do the "caves" go through to the other side or have I conflated two memories? I don't know, perhaps we simply waited until they came back out.

I also remember High Tor, on the other side of the Derwent Valley, and being terrified and staying close to my Mum while Dad and Mary went to the very edge and stood hand in hand looking out, while I clung on to my Mother, desperate for her to make them come back. I went to High Tor again 2008 when I was 56 and my boy was 6. This time it was Joseph and his Mum that walked near the edge, they weren't hand in hand and maybe that made it worse but once again I was beside myself with fear and screamed at them hysterically to come away from the edge.

I remember being fascinated by the petrifying spring as a child and being much disappointed with the poultry, tawdry, exhibition that I took Rahel and Joseph to that year.

One of my strongest childhood memories was of lights and fireworks forming exciting tableau in the trees and bushes, causing Robin Hood and Friar tuck to fire arrows at the evil Sheriff's men and galleons engaging in firework battles upon the water. My memory told me for fifty years, that this was at Victoria Memorial Gardens in Nottingham, although it could never explain where the streams and rivulets had gone. When we walked in the Derwent River Gardens in 2008 I recognised it immediately as the setting for for tableaux that I remembered.

As my brother Royston was not around on this trip it must have been in October 1955 when I was just three years old, which seems far too young. This would make my sister Mary five years old at the time but she looks more like seven or eight in my memories.

On this day, 30th September 2023 that is, not 1955, when we took an evening walk through Matlock Bath I discovered that this was the time of the Matlock Bath Lights. I have promised myself for the last 15 years that we would go and see the lights. My sister took her daughter and grandchildren to see the lights every year and I was green with envy but with one thing and another we never made it. Nor did we this year. The lights are only on at weekends, which was another surprise, we would be gone the following Saturday and this Sunday proved to be sold out.

But I digress, massively I digress. I discovered six years ago, in 2017, while processing my Grandad Fulford's photographs, that the house my Dad stayed in was Gilderoy. He went there on his bike to stay with his Uncle "Blake", Auntie Annie and three of his cousins, Vi, Vera and Sibyl. My brother knew of Gilderoy and had walked up there with Dad in the past. I was utterly fascinated, for some reason the place took on a magical aura for me. When browsing the world wide web, looking for holiday cottages earlier in the year, I saw "The Carriage House, Gilderoy West". Setting aside my sense of astonishment I moved to book a week there as fast as I possibly could. The house was divided into two not so very long after it was built. It was Gilderoy East that was acquired by Great Uncle Blake. Officially we were renting the Carriage House, Gilderoy West, but the building was clearly built to service the whole house. "Carriage house" was a bit of a

misnomer it actually consisted of a small stable and hay loft above which had been converted into a holiday let. Access was via stone steps to the hay loft. The door opened into a tiny kitchen diner. A staircase had been put in which took one down to the bedroom with the bed squeezed in under the stairs and a bath room with a phenomenal shower. The old entrance to the stable had been bricked up. Attached was the carriage house proper (now used as a garage) with the servants quarters above. The servants quarters had access directly from Upperwood Road. It looked as if they servants quarters were now used as an office.

I was so overjoyed to be there and when I talked to the couple that owned Gilderoy West and showed them some of the photographs of my family in the garden they knew immediately that it was Gilderoy East and a couple of days later Shane took to the front of the house to show me the work he was doing to reclaim the garden and to look across at Gilderoy East and the fence that remained as it was in my photographs. He told me that in order to build the house, what is now Upperwood Road, had had to be rerouted. The old road used to service a mine that was now under the house. I have subsequently (November 2023 found a painting looking over Matlock Bath and the Derwent Valley from Gilderoy Mine, which I take to be the site of the house.

Beside the house Shane showed me the Victorian hard standing where the carriages used to turn. The chap next door, Bob, he said, knew much more about the history of the house and had a library of materials. I hope I have the gumption to get in touch with Bob and return in time to learn more.

The first evening we were there was wet and misty but nothing could dampen my mood. I sat in the rain on the tiny terrace outside our kitchen door and looked and looked at Gilderoy and the Derwent Valley beyond.

Dates:

Dates and times are verified from original exif data.

Frames:

F47B7378 20230930 15:36:57 Gilderoy West.
F47B7379 20230930 15:37:45 Gilderoy West.
F47B7380 20230930 15:37:52 Gilderoy West.
F47B7381 20230930 15:38:01 Gilderoy West.



F47B7378 - Gilderoy West.