

Underneath the Spreading Chestnut Tree.

Loosely based on a true incident

Most evenings in the late 40's a group of boys from the village could usually be found lounging against the railings in the shade of the old horse chestnut tree that grew in the grounds of the War Memorial,. This was where we usually met up to discuss the latest village gossip among ourselves.

This particular evening there must have been about ten or so lads gathered by the railings chatting. One of the girls who lived in the village at that time had joined us and was climbing on the low wall a few yards further down with her back to the railings when her feet slipped off the wall and she became suspended by her knickers from one of the metal spikes.

The boys were quick to spot this and all turned to watch as she struggled in silence to gain a foothold on the wall, but after a while it was fairly obvious to us watching that she wasn't having much luck. We carried on watching her for only a few minutes longer as she kicked and struggled, but then she too must have decided that it was a hopeless task and that she was going to need some assistance to tear herself free. She finally gave up altogether and for a while just hung there looking towards us. "Is someone going to help or not?" she asked in a somewhat agitated voice. "Can you hang on a minute?" someone replied, which made us all laugh. Who would be the first to step forward and attempt to unhitch the poor red-faced girl from the railings?

It must have taken less than five minutes of discussion among ourselves to decide what action we should take in what might possibly turn out to be a very awkward hands-on situation, but eventually a couple of the lads took it upon themselves to "swing into action" as they say. Stepping forward to a muted round of applause they managed to unhook her from the offending spike whilst trying their hardest (without too much success) not to cause her even more embarrassment.

You may have already gathered (and it's well worth mentioning here) that we were a conscientious and caring bunch of lads in the village back then, and it's to our credit that we later came to the conclusion that it was a job well done, and all agreed that it wouldn't have been fair to pretend not to have noticed her unfortunate predicament and to simply drift off leaving her hanging there.

Bill Baker

Editor's note: But who was she??