

Text of "The life of Snowden Dunhill, written by himself" published in 1834 (Taken from "Yorkshire Oddities" by S. Baring-Gould, MA. printed in 1877).

Foreword by S. Baring-Gould:

'The following life of a thief and housebreaker, written by himself, is curious and sad. The talent it exhibits, and the real feeling which

peeps out here and there, show that the man, had he been better brought up, and subjected in early youth to religious influences, might have made of him a man very superior to the ordinary agricultural labourer. The man cannot have been deficient in his secular education.

His style is singularly good for one in his class, but of moral education he had none. The only religion he knew of was that of his wife, Sally Dunhill, a fanatic, who combined hysterical piety with gross dishonesty' ..1877.

"The life of Snowden Dunhill, written by himself"

I was born at a small village on the Wolds in the East Riding of Yorkshire. The earliest circumstance of which I have any remembrance is that of following, bare-headed and on foot, a waggon containing furniture belonging to a farmer who was removing to the village of Spaldington, near Howden.

Of my parents I have but an indistinct remembrance, for I never returned to them, but continued to reside in the village of my adoption, and principally in the house of the family I had accompanied.

Spaldington is a secluded and purely agricultural village. My earliest recollections are connected with the old hall at that place, a fine building, erected in the time of Queen Elizabeth.

This house, with its peaked roof, ornamented with large round stones, its moats, its rookery, and the reputation of being haunted by a fairy, is yet strongly impressed upon my memory. But the old seat of the De la Hayes, the Vescis, and the Vavasours totters to its fall.

I well remember the tradition which prevailed in the village, that one of the De Vescis was a competitor for the crown of Scotland, he having married a daughter of the King of that country.

The burthen of an old song, which is supposed to relate to some eventful battle in which De Vesci bore a conspicuous part, still clings to my memory, and now, with a world between me and the spot, I often catch myself humming the chorus:

'And the drums they did beat, and the trumpets did sound,
And the cannons did roar fit to tear up the ground;
For its oh I brave, gallant, and brave,
for the honour of England's crown.'

During this time I practised a variety of petty thefts without being suspected. I took apples, eggs, or anything I could lay my hands on, and the corn which ought to have been given to the horses found its way to my game cocks, of which I had several.

These acts, which are generally practised by farmers' servants, were confirmed into a habit before I had begun to think them wrong.

The education of this class is so utterly neglected, and their morals so little attended to, that I have long been satisfied that the honesty of the rural districts is very much inferior to that of the towns.

My next step in life-the most important one to all-was marriage, and mine assuredly deepened the darkest shades of my character.

It was not a connexion of the heart, but one almost of fear, for the woman to whom I paid my addresses was the being who ruled me from the first moment of our acquaintance.

Had it been my fortune to have met with an honest and industrious woman, my destiny might have been different. But if, as the proverb says, 'Marriages are made in heaven,' it does not become me to complain.

We lived a short time in the village of Spaldington, but one farmer missed his corn, the wife of another her poultry, a third her apples, and a fourth her bees; when the bees were missed I fancy they thought nothing could escape us. They were easily moved and carried into our cottage, but the buzzing, the stinging, and the bother of the business, determined me never again to attempt a similar undertaking. The proverb of running your head into a Swarm of bees has ever since appeared to me the most forcible in the English language.

We were then put into a house in the lanes of Spaldington, in the road between Howden and Market-Weighton, apart from any other residence, and in the very best situation that could have been chosen if the farmers had wished us to continue our system of plunder. I had never been accustomed to work, and I had now very little wish to learn. The new connexions which I speedily formed put me in the way of obtaining a better though more precarious subsistence.

I continued to live in the cottage above alluded to, and my family increasing rapidly, rendered it necessary to extend my operations. The farmers in the neighbourhood were at first the greatest sufferers, and there was scarcely a barn or granary within several miles which I had not the means of entering when I chose. Either from discarded servants, or from labourers who were daily about the farmhouses, I got all the information I wanted.

At this time I was master of two good horses, and I had a numerous connexion among servants and labourers. But what I found most useful was a secret understanding with two or three millers, by whose means I got rid of all the corn which I stole. Millers are generally reputed to be greedy rogues but in their dealings with me I found them quite the contrary. The most dishonest persons with whom I had dealings were the attorneys, and they stripped me of the fruits of my toil with most surprising expedition and facility. This, however, will be seen in the sequel.

About this time I was concerned in a robbery at Bubwith, by which I obtained a considerable sum of money. After our arrangements were made, a comrade entered the house through a back window, by taking an iron bar out of the frame, the wood being quite rotten from age and damp. In scrambling in he kicked from the shelf a large earthen-ware vessel, and immediately after he himself tumbled head foremost into the pantry, a depth of six or seven feet.

The uproar occasioned by his fall caused us to take to our heels and make to our horses, which were at no great distance in a large field behind the house. We laid down and listened for a considerable time, and hearing nothing, we approached the house again by degrees, and eventually got up to the very window. A low whistle from me was instantly answered, which at once told us all went well. We found the back door open for us, and our comrade, no way alarmed, busy rummaging some drawers, and putting into a sack everything he took a fancy to.

As I had formerly lived in the service of a near relation of the old lady to whom the house belonged (I had forgotten to say it was a widow lady's house we took the liberty with), I found no difficulty in laying my hands upon the tinder-box, candles, and everything else. It was an exceedingly stormy night, or I think we must have been heard, for we carried a chest of drawers out of the house and actually beat them to pieces, not being able to open them.

I knew that she had a considerable sum of money, and I hoped we had found it, but it turned out to be a box of farthings; and I was afterwards exceedingly provoked on learning that we had missed three hundred guineas in gold which the old lady had in her lodging room.

I also learned that she had a presentiment that she would be robbed, and made an observation to that effect the day beforehand of those curious anticipating feelings for which I know not how to account, but which have in several instances happened to myself, when coming events, as it were, cast their shadows before.

But to return to our adventure..

After helping ourselves to such things as we thought of most value, and such as could be most easily conveyed away on our horses, and drinking the good old lady's health in some excellent home-made wine, we mounted our horses, with four sacks filled with many things of value.

We took a route so as to avoid the toll-bars and public roads, and reached my house just as the sun was beginning to chase away the darkness which had proved so propitious to us.

Having instantly buried all the things, my companions departed, and all was soon ready for the reception of any of those enemies of my profession, the constables, should they pay us a visit.

However, none came, and though I was generally supposed to be the person who did the deed, no steps were taken to make it out against me.

This is one of the very few exploits of the kind I was ever engaged in, and as to highway robberies, I never dreamed of committing one.

I had now accumulated a considerable sum of money, which I lent out on note to several farmers in the neighbourhood, most of whom, from fear or other considerations, were glad to be on good terms with me.

Such occurrences as the following frequently happened: "Well, Snowden, how do you do?" would Farmer -- say, meeting me in the street towards dusk on a market-day. "Are you going home to-night?" "Aye, my lad," was my general reply "I wanted to see you," retorted the farmer, "I have just received fifty pounds for some oats, I wish you would take care of it for me, and I will ask you for it again some day when I meet you". I took charge of the money, and was ever most punctual in returning it.

I could not help laugh however, at the odd mixture of feelings that must have dictated such a choice of a banker.

I dare say some of these very farmers have since met with bankers not quite so punctual in their payments as I was in mine.

I was once busily employed in coursing a hare when I was pounced upon by a Mr. --. He came suddenly upon me, with so many violent denunciations that I was for a time really in a fright.

However, I eventually recovered my recollection, and had the good sense to leave him without giving way to any abusive language in reply.

I secretly, however, resolved to have my revenge, and that in a way at once in accordance with my profession and my own interest, I ordered two or three of the persons I could place the most reliance in to be ready to accompany me with their horses to Foggathorpe, the village in which I think the gentleman resided. I had long had a key of his barn, in which I knew he had recently stored a quantity of wheat of the finest quality, and for which the soil of that village is much famed.

We had already been up to the granary once with our horses, having taken them loaded away, and secreted several sacks of wheat in a wood a little from the turnpike road, and about three miles from the house.

We had filled our sacks a second time, and got them upon the horses, having previously placed everything in the granary as we found it, or as nearly so as we could.

I had just thrown my legs over my horse, then standing near the steps of the granary, I being the last of the party, when I heard the gentleman's voice, which I at once knew, for neither his early habit of rising nor the tone of his voice were unknown to me.

It was quite dark, and I proceeded with great care on the way towards the high road till I reached a gate about seventy or eighty yards from his house.

By some mismanagement on my part, I had no sooner passed through the gate than it fell back into its place with considerable noise.

I again heard his voice, but I made the best of my way with my load, and I felt no little relief when I found myself in the Market-Weighton turnpike road. Though I had no very great opinion of the gentleman's courage, I felt quite sure he would have used every endeavour to make out the charge against me had his suspicions of what had taken place been once roused.

As to his following me alone at that moment I had not the most distant fear, for I knew well the care he always took of himself.

However, the whole affair passed over. I never heard that he missed what we took away, and the reason probably was, that he at that very time had a large stock of wheat on hand for the purpose of speculation, as I afterwards learned. I remember this wheat was of such singular good quality that I sold it for the great sum of one guinea and ninepence the bushel, a price I scarcely ever remember to have equalled.

The next thing that occurs to me worthy of remark, and which I had good cause to remember, nearly terminated fatally for myself.

I expected a good booty from the information I had previously received. This was an attack upon the property of two bachelors who resided in the same house in a village about a mile and a half from Howden.

The house was very near the river Ouse and we had prepared a boat to carry the gains of the night down the river as far as Swinefleet, this being considered, for many reasons, the readiest mode of moving it from the premises, and I had some friends in that place in whom I placed the greatest confidence.

Between one and two o'clock we arrived at the house, and were preparing all things in readiness for the business in hand.

I was crossing from the bank of the river over a garden, and so on to the back of the premises.

In my way I came to a piece of dead fence, over which I was passing, and which gave a cracking sound under my tread.

At that moment I heard a dog bark, and instantly after a shot was fired from the upper part of the eastern end of the house. I had my face at the time rather turned away from the place whence the shot proceeded, and I received the whole of the contents in my back and shoulders.

I instantly fell; and I well remember that I thought all was over with me, as I lay for some time with my head in the ditch and my feet upon the dead thorns over which I had just passed, and to which I attributed my mishap: for the night was so dark I could not be seen, and the shot must have been directed to the noise I made in getting over the fence.

As I lay there I could distinctly hear a whispering from a small door in the end of the house, and I greatly feared lest the inmates should sally forth and take me in my defenceless state.

With my head laid upon the ground, the sensation produced upon me by the striking of two o'clock by the church of Howden, I well remember.

All was now calm, quiet, and dark, and I actually felt the earth vibrate under my ear as the hollow bell threw over the land its sullen sound.

I have understood, since I came here, that the savages in America always resort to this mode of listening for the approach of a friend or an enemy.

But to return to myself again..

I at length contrived with great difficulty to get upon my feet, and, with still greater exertion and much loss of blood, I reached the boat where I found my men in great consternation and alarm. One of them pushed the boat adrift, and the tide soon carried it away with the waters.

They then supported me at a slow pace to Howden, where I arrived almost in a state of insensibility, from the

combined effects of pain and loss of blood.

By my desire they took me to the house of a medical man of my acquaintance, and knocked at his door.

He soon came down, and without asking a single question, stripped me, and during the night he extracted no fewer than thirtyeight large shot corns from my back and shoulders.

I cannot even now recall the agony I suffered without a shudder and my general health and strength never recovered from the shock I received.

I remained secluded for a considerable time, but thanks to the attentive care of my wife, and my own sober habits, for I never was an habitual drunkard, I speedily was able to get out again.

In all my night excursions after this adventure I employed the greatest circumspection.

My inward disposition was accurately betokened by my countenance and outward appearance. I was tall and large-limbed, but neither clumsily nor powerfully made. I speak now of forty years of age; for sufferings, mental and bodily, have entirely changed my face and figure.

My hair was light, my eyes a bluish grey, my countenance round and somewhat florid.

In my looks I always fancied that I resembled two men of no little celebrity - I mean Sir Walter Scott and William Cobbett, who certainly bear a considerable resemblance to each other.

But this may be my vanity, for the best of us are not free from it.

In my manners I was boisterous, and in tone familiar with all, and overbearing with most. However, my general appearance promised anything but cruelty and dishonesty; and, thank God, no one can charge me with the former, whatever may be said of the latter.

I must, however, plead guilty to one or two acts of apparent cruelty towards my horses, but which rather rose from the necessity of self-preservation than from any other cause. It has often happened to me, for the purpose of reaching a given place by a certain hour of the night, to be compelled to strain my horse to the full extent of his speed.

I knew so well the general opinion entertained towards me, that I felt I must find the greatest difficulty in clearing myself from anything like a reasonable suspicion of crime.

I distinctly remember once having upon me a considerable sum of money, and I was riding at full speed upon a narrow strip of green sward by the road side, which was nearly covered by the extended branches of the trees.

The moon was shining beautifully through them, and in contemplating her I felt a soothing calmness spread over my soul, which I cannot well account for or explain the cause of.

My musings were suddenly cut short by a deepdrawn sigh from my horse, then a slight shudder, and the next moment he was dead under me.

I cried like a child. I raised his head, but all in vain, no trace of life remained. By the moon's rays, which at that instant shot through an opening in a dark Scots fir immediately over his head, I saw the film of death rapidly spread over his eyes, and felt his limbs stiffen under my grasp.

I had to travel several miles on foot, pretty well loaded, and through a very lonely and suspicious-looking part of the country. However, I reached the house of one of my friends towards morning, to his no small astonishment, he thinking me fifty miles distant in a different direction.

My horse was soon recognised, and had any robbery been perpetrated within a reasonable distance of the place where he fell, of course it must have been done by me.

The common question of the whole neighbourhood was. 'What had I been doing?' However, this never transpired.

I ever afterwards tied a piece of raw beef round the bit of my bridle when about to make hard use of my horse, and I always thought that it afforded him considerable help.

I need not observe that this was done in imitation of poor Dick Turpin, whose history is infinitely better known than mine can ever pretend to be.

On the night of the 25th of October, 1812, I felt a presentiment that something sinister was about to happen to me. Few men have passed through life, particularly those of an excitable temperament, who have not felt some boding of this kind.

I was seated in my chair by the fire, taking my accustomed pipe- an indulgence I never omitted the last thing at night, - when this sudden impression came over me.

My wife observed that something was the matter, and questioned me on the subject. However, as I knew she would only laugh at me, I did not tell her the cause.

In the middle of the forenoon, whilst I was listening to my daughter Rose, who was my favourite, she suddenly looked up and said, in a hurried tone, 'Father, there are several men coming to the house!'

It instantly occurred to me that something had happened during the past night, and that my forebodings would not prove vain.

However, as my whole family knew that I had not stirred out during the night, I had little fear; and this circumstance even led me to suppose that it might be some mistake.

By this time the party had arrived at the door of the cottage, and one of them gave me to understand that he had a justice's search-warrant, and that I was their prisoner.

I submitted at once to be taken into custody, and I was immediately secured. Some of the party then began to rummage every drawer and corner of the house, amidst the very voluble abuse of my wife.

They, however, found nothing they came to search for, which, as I soon learned, was some wheat stolen during the last night from a neighbouring farmer.

On this information I felt considerable relief, conscious of my innocence; but my wife became perfectly outrageous when the constable refused to take her word that I had never stirred over my threshold since six o'clock of the preceding evening. She, poor woman, swore she would take the law of them; threatened writs, indictments, justices, and I know not what; and I verily believed she would have inflicted summary vengeance on the head of the constable with the poker, so furious had she become, from a consciousness that the accusation was without foundation.

However, in spite of all her threats and rage I was speedily conveyed before the justice who had the warrant, and on the oath of a person, who swore that he was going along a road near my house and towards the farm-house in question, about two o'clock in the morning, that he saw a horse and two men returning from it, and that he was quite sure I was one of them, my commitment was made out for the House of Correction at Beverley.

All this took so short a time that I scarcely attempted to defend myself and indeed I scarcely even know now how I could effectually have done so.

For I could only bring the members of my own family to prove that I had not been out of my cottage, and of course they would not have been believed against the positive evidence of the witness who swore to my person, though he was, according to his own statement, fifty yards distant from me- in addition to this, at two o'clock in the morning.

The prosecutor was Mr. Barnard Clarkson, of Holme, at that time a partner in the Howden Bank. The consciousness that her husband was ignorant of the robbery imputed to him caused Sally Dunhill to regard him as a martyr. Her ranting enthusiasm was excited, and she wrote a long letter to the prosecutor, denouncing him, in Biblical terms, as one who "compassed about" the righteous man "with words of hatred, and fought against him without a cause" and announced to him that she had given herself up to prayer against him (Clarkson), and invoked the malediction of heaven upon his head "Let his posterity be cut off and in the generations following let their name be blotted out." And she concluded this strange epistle with the words of the Psalmist: "Let them curse, but bless thou: when they arise, let them be ashamed but let thy servant rejoice. Let mine enemies be clothed with shame, and let them cover themselves with their own confusion as with a mantle. I will greatly praise the Lord with my mouth; yea I will praise him among the multitude, for he shall stand at the right hand of the poor, to save him from those that condemn his

soul."

I now, for the first time, became an inmate of a prison, an event I had always held in the greatest horror. As it was well known that I had plenty of money, I had very soon the proffered and apparently disinterested assistance of an attorney.

My situation was maturely considered, and it was soon determined that a writ of habeas corpus should be put in, for the purpose of taking my trial at the approaching Assizes at York, in preference to Beverley.

I was in consequence taken up to London in custody, after the writ was obtained, and my trial was appointed to take place at York, principally on this ground, as urged by counsel, that my character was so notorious in the East Riding of Yorkshire that no unprejudiced jury could there be impanelled.

The reader may be sure that all this was done at no slight expense; but perhaps he will not believe me when I assure him that by the time my counsel had received his fee for the approaching defence I had scarcely a shilling left in the world.

The March Assizes of 1813 at length arrived, when I gave myself up to the gaoler of the Castle, and I was soon placed in the dock.

My eyes were cast on the ground, and I for a time felt stupified. However, I at last raised them to the objects before me, and the first that caught them was the judge himself, then the counsel, and then the immense crowd of spectators who had assembled to hear my trial.

I soon was calm enough to discover in the gallery the faces of many persons I knew, and I endeavoured to put on a forced courage by nodding familiarly at them, and by appearing to be utterly careless of what was going forward.

The indictment was read over to me, and I was called upon to hold up my hand and plead guilty or not guilty; though I uttered the latter with a loud voice, it was with a full conviction that my doom was sealed.

I felt, and I suppose all persons similarly circumstanced feel the same, that not only the assembled people, but that the whole world had combined to destroy me.

The facts above narrated were stated shortly to the jury. The witness swore to my person, and accounted for his being there at that hour, naturally enough, by stating that he had been to visit his sweetheart.

The farmer swore to having missed the corn on the night in question.

Though my counsel tried to confound the first witness by fierce looks and bullying questions, and by dwelling upon the impossibility of his being able to swear to a person at the distance of fifty yards and at two in the morning, yet he stuck to his oath immovably.

I was asked what I wished to say, and all that I could state was that I was innocent; that I was in bed at the time, and that all the family knew this to be the fact.

My wife was anxious to speak for me, but my counsel insisted upon her holding her tongue, which she at last consented to do on his assuring her that she would do my case more harm than good.

The jury without the slightest hesitation found me guilty, and the judge at once sentenced me to seven years' transportation.

I was immediately conveyed back to my cell, and a few days afterwards I was forwarded to the hulks.

In this miserable banishment I passed six years, embittered by the most dreadful account of my family, every member of it, even in the remotest degree, having transgressed the laws of his country, and was then undergoing for his offences the punishment awarded to him.

Could hope under any form have presented herself to me, I felt that I might yet be a reclaimed man, but I could not catch the most distant glimpse of her.

My years passed on in the midst of misery the most distressing, till they at last came to an end. I obtained my discharge or pardon a short time before the expiration of my full term, for I had been guilty of no violence, or insolence, or excess, since my arrival.

I left this abode of vice and misery without a friend on the face of the earth, and unconscious where to find even a momentary place of refuge.

There are many unfortunate individuals who, had they a house or employment to fly to after having undergone their periods of punishment, would be glad to betake themselves to habits of honesty and industry. But, unluckily for them, they are turned out without a refuge to resort to, and necessity, and not inclination, drives them to the commission of fresh crimes.

As to myself, I returned to Spaldington, but the change which my worldly prospects and circumstances had undergone was in the extreme overwhelming.

Some of these misfortunes I well knew, but to others I was an entire stranger, and I cannot at this day lay blame to anyone but myself for them.

My evil example pointed out the way of lawless depredation to my children, in characters so legible that they could not fail to read and study them.

The farmers of the village had thought it right to clear my cottage of every one connected with me in name, relationship, or blood.

I felt at a great loss where to fix, or to what object to turn myself for a livelihood and bare subsistence.

As to my children and connections, they were scattered in every direction, and for the most part undergoing the punishment due to their crimes.

My daughter, my favourite daughter, Rose, had been committed, and sentenced to confinement in York Castle.

During her imprisonment she was delivered of a bastard child; what its fate may be, heaven alone can tell.

She was visited in the Castle by a gentleman from Howden, for the purpose of proffering her some assistance in her necessitous situation.

This I have understood she indignantly refused. Holding up her new-born babe to his gaze, she said, "See he has hands to help himself, and if ever there was a true-born rogue, here he is!"

Thus, like Hannibal towards Rome, was this poor child devoted from its earliest infancy to war against all the settled institutions of society.

After her release from York the reader will readily imagine from this anecdote of her, that she would speedily fall into another scrape.

This soon happened. She was committed to Wakefield House of Correction, again tried and found guilty, and I have never since heard of her.

She had cohabited with two different men, both of whom passed as her husband. Their names were Mc'Dowel and Conner, and they both have been transported!

My daughter, Sarah Dunhill, after having been confined in York Castle, was tried at the East Riding Sessions at Beverley, and imprisoned one year.

She was subsequently tried at the Borough Sessions at Beverley for picking the pocket of a gentleman named Scholfield, and stealing from him a considerable sum of money.

During her trial she made a moving appeal to the barristers present, stating that she had always found them her best friends; that their ingenuity had often assisted her in the hour of need, and she yet reposed faith in their kindness, and proudly left her honesty and honour in their keeping.

The Recorder, startled into momentary confusion at the nature of this appeal, speedily recovered his dignity, and inflicted on her the doom of the law.

She was at this time residing at Hull, and had come over to Beverley fair that morning for the purpose of depredation. For this offence she was transported for seven years.

She had three husbands, named James Stanhope, William Rhodes, and James Crossland, all of whom were severally transported, one after the other.

My son, William Dunhill, was transported at the York Assizes for the term of fourteen years. He, poor fellow, died immediately on his arrival in New South Wales.

He was the most promising of my family, and with different examples before him, and good advice, would probably have proved an ornament to society.

Robert Taylor, son of my wife by a former husband, and who lived under the same roof with us for several years, was also transported.

I think I omitted to state that my wife at the time I married her was a widow, and her name was Taylor. Her husband was shot in attempting to commit a robbery shortly before I married her, a circumstance which was not known to me, and which she never mentioned.

As to my wife, she was also transported, after having contrived innumerable depredations, and been the cause of those fatal events which befel herself, myself, and the rest of the family.

A robbery committed at Howden was readily traced home to the inmates of our house; suspicion fell at once upon them, and the furniture, watches, coins, and many other stolen articles were found on my premises.

But as this and many other things happened during my absence, and as I never again saw several members of my family, I am the less particular in narrating them, from my great anxiety that nothing should appear in this history of myself for which I cannot vouch the truth.

I had heard much of the easy lives led by the convicts in New South Wales, and, moreover, some members of my family were already there, and I felt impelled to make an endeavour to join them.

I had not long to wait for the gratification of this wish, for I was soon traced to the commission of a paltry crime. I was apprehended, tried, and convicted; my character did the rest, and readily procured for me that banishment from England on which I had set my heart.

My trial took place at a district Quarter Sessions in the north of Lincolnshire, in the gaol of which I was only detained a few days when, with several others, I was transmitted, pinioned and loaded with irons to London, there to await a ship to convey me to Botany Bay.

It was a cold, bleak morning when I was put upon the coach in the court-yard of the prison, before daylight, with the rain and sleet falling in abundance.

The coach remained half-an-hour or more in the yard of the prison till all was in readiness, when the gates were thrown open and we commenced our inauspicious journey.

I cannot at all describe the feelings of loneliness and of heartrending distress which came over me at this moment, in which I felt that I was rushing from certain misery to something that might be even still worse, and yet in my despair I felt a clinging to existence.

I have never met with-nay, I have never heard of-a bad man who could look death unflinchingly in the face.

On ascending the first rise of the ground in our journey towards London a breeze from the north suddenly sprung up, which scattered the loaded clouds, and the sun burst forth in all its glory.

There appeared before me, as if a veil had been taken off the earth by magic power, a wide-spread picture. The Humber, glorying in its Scythian name, rolling to the ocean its mass of waters; and in the distance the winding Trent and Ouse, stealing onward like two wily serpents; and I could just discover the broad expanse where they became united.

The beautiful Lincolnshire hills on my left, and the still more beautiful hills, dales, and woods of my own native Yorkshire to the north, lent their charms to form a landscape I never saw equalled, and in casting my last lingering gaze upon it I felt that the inanimate beauties of creation must now to me for ever be a blank.

I strained my eyes to catch as much of it as I could, feeling the prospect, as it were, a part of myself, and necessary to my very existence; for there it had commenced, and little at one time did I think at how a great a distance I was doomed to end it.

Arrived at Botany Bay, I was soon disposed of, and commenced in good earnest the life of a slave. Hard-worked, half-starved, ill-fed, and worse clothed, such is the fate of the hapless convict.

Snowden Dunhill

Snowden's text is not dated but it must have been written before 1827 as it does not mention George's execution.

There is a story that it was a sailor who had been an old childhood friend of Snowden's who had brought the document to England, where it was printed in 1834. Although it is not mentioned in his text, the story goes that when they were children Snowden had saved his friend's life after the boy had fallen into a deep moat. Whether or not it is true i have no idea.

The following are contemporary Tasmanian and Australian newspaper extracts relating to Snowden and his family, one of which is quite poignant:

Hobart Town Gazette, 15 Jul 1826

"Since our last report the following trials have taken place:

Joseph Hopwood, Richard Wilks, Snowden Dunhill, Thos Beresford, the two former for stealing in a dwelling place, and the two latter for receiving- NOT GUILTY"

Sydney Gazette, July 1827

"...he was followed by George Dunning, or Dunhill, aged 24 years, a handsome young man, about 6 feet 3 inches high, with a fine, regular countenance. He had lately become free, and was observed during the sessions of the Criminal Court to be present at many of the trials. His father, Snowden Dunhill, who is now in prisoners barrack's, a prisoner for life for returning from transportation, was lately tried for stealing in a dwelling house, and his unfortunate son was observed to pay the most marked attention during the whole trial. The old man visited his son on Monday night to take a last farewell. Both at first bore it with considerable composure, but when the moment of parting came, the son laid his head against the wall and sobbed bitterly."

Sydney Gazette, Aug 1827

"Dunning, or Dunhill, was no more than 24 years old. His father was some time since transported for life.. he is now an inmate of the prisoners barracks. Dunhill's family and connexions were very numerous, It is a most dreadful subject of remark, that the greater part of this numerous family have been either transported or executed, having long been the terror of Yorkshire, and were denominated "Snowden Dunhill's gang."

Hobart Town Courier, 28 Jun 1828

"Sarah Stanhope, another daughter of the notorious Snowden Dunhill, was sentenced to transportation at the last Hull sessions for stealing a pocket book with money. This, including George Dunhill who was lately executed in this town, makes the tenth member of the same family who has committed crimes punishable by transportation".

Colonial Times (Hobart) 11 Feb 1834

"John Dunn, Henry Cross and Snowden Dunhill were fully committed for trial, charged with receiving stolen property. The latter, an old man, is well known as a pieman about Hobart town, and one of the noted Dunhill family in Yorkshire, and had but lately become free"

Finally, a curiosity i found only by pure luck.. from a report in the Hobart Courier, 10 Mar 1858 regarding the death of a famous racehorse named 'Middleton' who:

"as a racer was an unconquered horse, having won all his engagements.. was sold by his breeder, the Earl of Jersey, to Lord George Bentinck in 1836 for 4.000 guineas.. he has left the following to keep his memory green: Cowl, Amphrodite, Flying Dutchman, Autocrat, Hermit, Andover, Planet, Orestes, Wild Dayrell, Alcoran, Saunterer and Snowden Dunhill."

He would never have known that a thoroughbred racehorse had been named after him, but evidently there had been.

