



THE PARAGON

Journal Of Stocksbridge &
District History Society

NUMBER 5 AUTUMN 1996

50P [FREE TO MEMBERS]

❁ CLOSING THE VALVES ❁

Nearly 300 guests responded to the invitation of the Sheffield Water Department to visit the Langsett reservoir and works on

Sheffield would be proud.

Alderman Gainsford, in company with Alderman Wheatley, proceeded to the

said that he had been struck by the fact that the history of Sheffield's water supply was one of repeated

Little Don Valley Works

Table Of Drainage Areas And Capacities Of Storage Reservoirs &c.

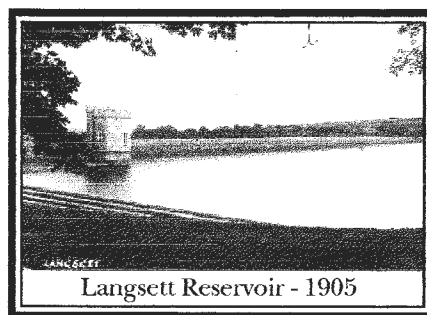
Reservoir	Drainage Area	Capacity	Area Of Water Surface When Reservoir Full	Depth Of Reservoir	Embankment Length	Embankment Width At Base	Embankment Width At Top	Top Water Level Above Ordnance Datum
	Acres	Gallons	Acres	Feet	Feet	Feet	Feet	Feet
Langsett	5,203	1,400 Mill	120	100	1156	720	36	810
Underbank	2,336	650 Mill	100	52	1530	369	30	600

Monday October 17th, 1904, on the occasion of the formal closing of the valves of the Langsett reservoir. The reservoir was practically completed, but it will not be used for supplying water to Sheffield...until the autumn of this year.

The weather was fine throughout the day, but the wind, which was so rough during the night as to wreck the tent which had been erected for the convenience of guests, had not subsided, and the ceremony was conducted under rather boisterous conditions.

Mr William Watts said that the works in the Little Don valley had been constructed in the hope that they would not only dispense the blessings of a pure water supply, but remain lasting monuments of a well designed scheme of which the future citizens of

valve tower and closed the valves, and it was soon evident, as the indicators showed, that the water was slowly rising in the reservoir. The ceremony



over an adjournment was made to the Mission Hall, where Alderman Wheatley entertained the guests to tea.

After tea, Mr. W. Terrey, in a speech,

struggles. They could not visit Langsett without being reminded that they stood upon an old battle ground. In 1867 the Sheffield Water Company promoted a Bill to construct two reservoirs in the Little Don valley, but owing to the opposition of Mr. Samuel Fox and the mill-owners, that part of the Bill relating to the Little Don valley was withdrawn. That fight cost Messrs. S. Fox & Co. about £10,000.

In 1896 the three Corporations of Sheffield, Rotherham and Doncaster united, not only to secure their rights, but to obtain all the advantages of a comprehensive partnership scheme. There should be one scheme for dealing with the whole of the watershed and one line of pipes of a slightly increased diameter, which would not only prevent waste of water resources and capital expenditure,

but secure water for each town at the cheapest possible rate.

A good deal might be said as to the quality of the Sheffield water. Frequent analyses showed it was equal in purity to the Elan valley water supplying Birmingham, and softer than the Vyrnwy water supplied to Liverpool. It was neither too soft nor too hard, not so soft as to produce pitting in boilers, nor so hard as to produce thick scale. Sheffield water was unrivalled in the Kingdom."

Information supplied from the Sheffield Red Book for 1905 - after an original idea by Janet Parkin

WARTIME MEMORIES

My dad, Albert Cooke, left the British School, Stocksbridge in 1930 and was due to start work at the Co-op until the mine manager saw him and said he had to join the workforce at Stocksbridge Pit, as had his brothers before him. At first he was set to work on the surface but eventually went underground tramming. As a trammer he pushed tubs back and forth often through tunnels no higher than the tram, with

both empty and full of coal to come out of the pit on an endless rope.

"We'd got to finish by a certain time you know for the ropes to start going because we hadn't to hinder the ropes in no way and wi' it being a footrill pit we got a lot of water running down and the water was mixed with oil and everything else to do wi' t' pit. We used to go out ov' t' pit during the night at snap time into t' lamp cabin, well there was one particular night the sirens had gone and we were sat having snap and these 'ere bombs dropped. We shouldn't really have been in t' lamp cabin we should have been down t' pit but we'd gone out for a warm because they used to have big fires in the lamp cabin. And they dropped 7 or 8 bombs one within about 50 yards from the pit. This bomb, I didn't know if it were a buzzbomb or whatever it made a whirring noise, whirring and I mean we were crouched down under the benches in t' lamp cabin cause we'd no idea where it were dropping this one, anyhow it dropped just that bit away from t' pit and to tell the truth it frightened us to death, all of us. They dropped in a row across. Dropped one Siemens chimney, one in t' furnaces and 2 at bottom of t' Park where we lived. Some cottages there at the bottom, it lifted the roof off two

"At the time this happened we'd got orders from Stocksbridge Council to make an underground shelter for them to put all their papers and things from the Council Offices down the pit to keep them there. It was within 3 or 400 yards walking to go out of t' pit. We had to make all the arrangements for it and then the bricklayers had got to come and brick it all up. I don't think they ever used it for the Council documents and things."

As dad walked home to Sitwell Avenue the morning after the bombs were dropped, he didn't know if mum or I had survived. He made the decision to ask my uncle Howard, mum's brother, if there was any work in the pit at Hucknall, hoping he could get a transfer and take me to live in a safer place.

Incidentally dad says on going to work at 'Top Pit' (Hucknall No.1) he felt he had gone back to the dark ages of mining because he was back to using oil lamps where at Stocksbridge he had electric battery type. He retired from Hucknall pit aged 62 having served 48 years for the coal industry.

A transcription of a taped interview with Mr Albert Cooke June 1992
Maureen Newton

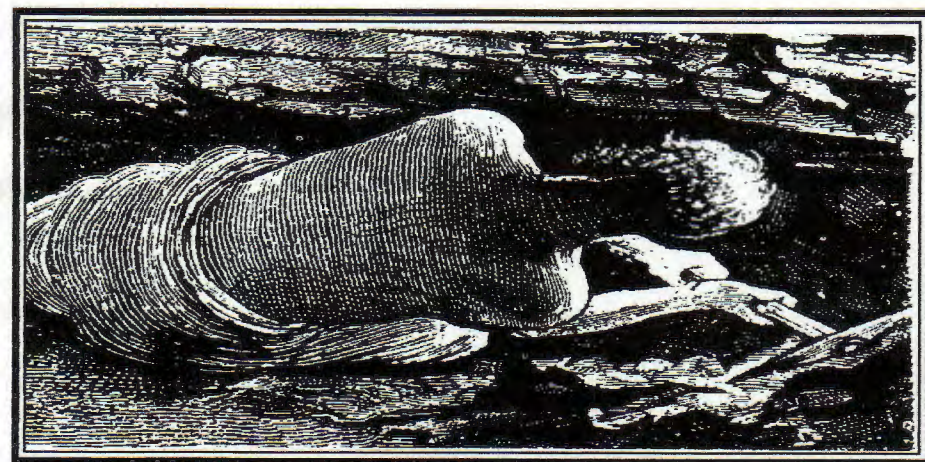
Does anyone else have any memories of the night 'they' bombed Stocksbridge, or whether or not the safe shelter for the Council was ever used - I'm waiting to hear from you - ed

STOCKSBRIDGE SURNAMES

An Occasional Series No. 6

ELLIS

From the personal name **Ellis** or **Elias**, it has been widespread since the Middle Ages, but although it is accepted as an old West Riding name, there was only one in this area in the 1672 Hearth Tax Returns, **Thomas Ellis** of Midhope Hall.



his lamp hanging from a leather belt round his neck. Later he went to work with his uncle, also called Albert Cooke. During the early part of the war they were working on regular nights on 'back work' on the main roads keeping the way clear for tubs,

cottages and dropped it in the fields at the back of them.

Another was a wood furniture shop well it got blown down you know, blown to bits."

His daughter married **Henry Hodgkinson**, who was made master of Bolsterstone school, and they lived at Spink Hall, which had been built by **Ralph Ellis**, commemorated in the name of the lane at the entrance to the property, **Ralph Ellis Drive**.

By 1851 there was still only one locally-born man of that name, another **Thomas Ellis**, who was a butcher at Deepcar.

Brenda Duffield.

WATER POWERED RAILWAY

To the subscribers of the Sheffield and Manchester Railway.

Gentlemen— We have often been told that the country between Sheffield and Manchester is particularly unfavourable for the construction of a railway, and Mr. Stephenson said that he considered it to be more unfavourable than any he knew. The line proposed by Mr. Stephenson I do not consider to be any better than the one proposed by Mr. Vignoles: indeed I think that we shall find Mr. Vignoles line will be a more favourable one than any other railway yet constructed in England. So if we find, as it appears we have done, that this line of railway is unfavourable for the adoption of locomotive engines, we should devise some other mode more suitable to the peculiarities of the case.

A level railway must be in a level country and the power to be used on it must be either locomotive or stationary engines and there is still much doubt which of the two is the more economic. If, where the rise is 50 feet per mile, there can be no doubt that stationary engines are by far the most economical. No less a person than Mr. Walker, who is President of the Society of Engineers, gave it as his opinion that on the Liverpool and Manchester, a comparatively level railway, they would be more so.

But if we find on the ground a better and a cheaper power than even stationary steam-engines, if, in fact, we

can get this power for nothing, we may then say we have a better line of railway than any yet constructed in the kingdom. I mean water; and we can obtain it for nothing, for this reason, if a reservoir or reservoirs of 100 acres or upwards were constructed at an expense of from thirty to forty thousand pounds to dam up the flood water, so far from injuring the mill-owners, it would greatly benefit them. And even on the summit water may be obtained. When the late Thomas Telford projected his canal on nearly the same ground, he had six reservoirs on the summit containing altogether about one hundred and twenty acres.

We found a thirty-horse locomotive engine only conveyed seven tons after deducting the engine and tender carriage and we had to find it with fuel. We found in the case of a thirty-horse water engine, seventeen tons conveyed with merely the deduction of the weight and friction of the rope used in drawing them, and we have no fuel to find nor any other expense, and wear and tear of the water engines which would not be one half of what it would in the case of locomotives.

In consequence of rejecting locomotives over the summit, we need not go into such deep cutting, nor have such high embankments, because it is immaterial what the rise is, so long as it is uniform between one station and another, and instead of having to provide these engines with coke, oil, tallow &c at a very great annual expense, we shall not have to supply them with anything.

If you deem these remarks worthy of attention and are inclined to profit by them, I shall be sufficiently paid for the trouble I have been at in writing them.

I am gentlemen

Yours &c.

JNO TERTIUS FAIRBANK

Sheffield Jan 29th 1836.



Stocksbridge Works
Social Services Band

BAND OF COMRADES

The above picture is posing a little difficulty for the society. It's a picture of the Works Brass Band, taken outside the offices. The date of the picture is currently unknown, but no doubt you readers will have some ideas about this.

Now comes the intriguing part - A Mr & Mrs Collins and a Mr & Mrs Marsden became friends through attending brass band contests. The Marsden family lived in Stocksbridge at 41 Glebelands Road. They sent the picture to the Collins', asking for it to be returned - which it never was!

A Relative of the Collins' has now asked if we can help in finding any living relatives of the Marsdens, in order for the photo to be returned; later rather than sooner! The address 41 Glebelands Road has got us nowhere.

To help in the quest the following information came with the photo - "The chap with the cornet in the centre of the photo is my brother the bandmaster & that is his son with the euphonium at the end."

Any information should be passed to the Editor Tel 246 4200

FACT OR FICTION

The Idle Water of Midhope

Originally Midhope had a pottery with all that goes with it. But now all that is left is the "Potters Yard", the "Potters Cottages" and, most important of all the "Potters Well". This well has two large, stone troughs for the water to flow into, presumably one for industrial use and one for domestic use.

Around nineteen hundred, Sheffield Corporation Waterworks decide to build three reservoirs at Midhope and Langsett. When the gangs of workmen arrived to build the dams, they brought with them all the tackle and paraphernalia that usually accompany the workmen on such jobs, and at the time the only form of transport was the steam engine or horse. Several huts were erected in the Potters Yard, and the steam traction engines, having made the journey from Sheffield, had to be filled up with water before resuming

their duties.

Now, water from the Potters Well was used to fill up the boilers and at the same time the navvies who were erecting the huts, decided to have a quick brew of tea. Some poor soul had the task of making a fire and after filling the kettle with water from the well, placed it on the fire alongside a saucepan containing two eggs, which belonged to the foreman.

It was only a matter of time before someone enquired about the tea, and to everyone's amazement the kettle had not boiled; the eggs were making no progress at all; and the traction engines, although being fully stoked up, were unable to raise steam.

Panic stricken, the foreman looked upon the scene, never before had he come across water that would not boil. He at once declared that it must be "IDLE WATER" and promptly sent to Sheffield for a scientist to investigate.

The 'boffin' duly arrived and when he

had questioned all and sundry involved in the matter, decided to take a sample of this "IDLE WATER", filling a large glass bottle with water from the well. Having obtained his sample, he proceeded to cross the road to get to his vintage Rolls Royce, but unfortunately slipped in some horse manure, and alas, lost his grip on the bottle.

The inevitable happened of course, the bottle hit the road with an almighty CRASH! And burst into dozens of pieces, but ... the water was too "idle" to run out of the broken bottle!

Alec Herbert.



DON'T FORGET

CHRISTMAS SOCIAL
SATURDAY 14TH DECEMBER
FOR MORE DETAILS
AND BOOKINGS
SEE
BRENDA DUFFIELD

Stocksbridge & District History Society

CHAIRMAN

BASIL SPOONER. ☎288 4456

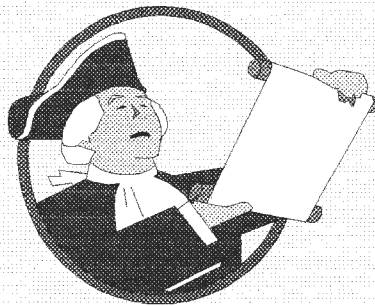
DEPUTY CHAIRMAN

PHILLIP SCOTT ☎288 2370

SECRETARY

BRENDA DUFFIELD ☎288 2349

TREASURER



MEETINGS ARE NORMALLY HELD ON THE SECOND THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH, AT THE LIBRARY, MANCHESTER ROAD, STOCKSBRIDGE, AT 7.00PM

NEXT EDITION

DECEMBER 1996

PUBLICATION DEADLINE

THURSDAY 14TH NOVEMBER

ALL ARTICLES FOR PUBLICATION SHOULD BE CLEARLY MARKED 'PARAGON'

AND SENT TO: - MIKE SPICK, c/o THE LIBRARY, MANCHESTER ROAD, STOCKSBRIDGE.

☆ PROGRAMME 1996 ☆

October 10th

W.E. Spencer

More About Hunshelf

November 14th

Marjorie Dunn

Queen Mary's Dolls Houses

December 12th/14th

Christmas Social

☆ NEXT ISSUE ☆

SEASONAL TALES FOR CHRISTMAS

STARTING WORK IN STOCKSBRIDGE
TEENS DOWN THE PIT

WORKING OVERTIME

THE TRUTH ABOUT GAS-MASKS

MARY HEPWORTH

AS MANY OF YOU WILL ALREADY BE AWARE, MARY PASSED AWAY QUITE SUDDENLY AT THE END OF JULY. THE SOCIETY WOULD LIKE TO EXTEND ITS SYMPATHY AND CONDOLENCES TO FRED AND THE REST OF THE FAMILY.

MARY HAD BEEN TREASURER SINCE THE FOUNDING OF THE SOCIETY, AND HER UNTIRING HARD WORK ON OUR BEHALF WILL BE SORELY MISSED.
