



# THE PARAGON

Journal Of Stocksbridge &  
District History Society

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50P [FREE TO MEMBERS]



## Merry Christmas

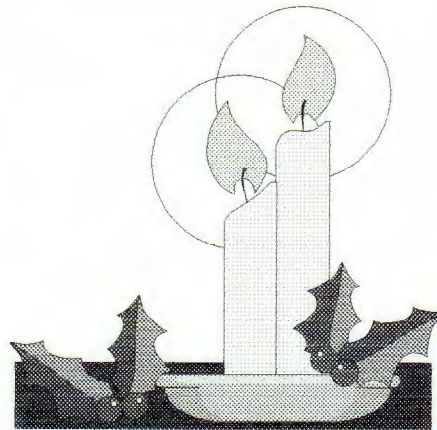
### OUR FAMILY CHRISTMAS

Since our family was a large one there was little money to spare for luxuries such as toys but nevertheless we looked forward to Christmas. Probably I would say it was a season of warmth and neighbourliness, of cooking smells and carols, but mostly of families.

Our John used to be in Midhope Choir which went round the pubs on Christmas Eve and around all the outlying farms singing carols. They would be given mince pies and other refreshments to keep them going and if the weather was bad they would be asked to sing inside. The choir from Bolsterstone was doing a similar thing but in a larger area and had a bus to take them round. Mr. Bacon, next door but one, was a cornet player and bandmaster of the Stocksbridge Prize Brass Band. The band went round the pubs at Christmas to make money for band funds, but their special place for playing carols was the Victory Club.

On Christmas morning our stockings were filled with an apple, orange, nuts and a new penny from our parents and one or two small presents such as a book or a comic from our aunts.

One time aunt Harriet bought me a ball and our Jim kicked it up into Mrs Bacon's chimney. Later on in the morning we would walk down from Hawthorn Brook to grandma Hoyle's on Ford Lane who would give us a silver threepenny-bit each. 'Fatty' Knowles had a general shop at the back of Horner House, opposite the Primitive Methodist Chapel, which



was open all hours of daylight, including Christmas Day and we put together to buy mother a box of chocolates on the way home. Mother grumbled at us for spending our Christmas money on her.

Christmas breakfast was nothing special, maybe bread and jam, but

dinner was pork and apple sauce with mashed potatoes and greens, possibly Brussels from the garden. The garden was up the new road at the bottom of Underbank where there were thirty or forty allotments. Ours was a big one so all of us children had to help with the garden work. Mother seldom bought any veg.

The Christmas pudding was made a few weeks in advance, being fitted in between other jobs because it was hard work feeding all of us - mother had to bake bread about three times a week.

Father had permission to shoot on farmers' fields at the top of Sheephouse (Sheppus) wood, so tea at Christmas was always a bird or a rabbit in a pie. He used to send one of us on the bus to a shop in Snig Hill in Sheffield for a dozen cartridges so he could go shooting. The price of twelve cartridges was all he could afford at a time. After tea we would have to sit quietly reading and were not allowed to play one of our favourite games because father wouldn't let us play cards on Sundays or Christmas Day.

There were no Christmas trees bought that I remember. A holly tree in the wood was noted earlier in the year

and we had the top of the tree in a bucket of soil, covered with home made decorations. Garlands and balloons were pinned up around the room and then across the middle but had to be kept away from the gas lights. Our classroom at the British School was also decked up with paper chains and pictures.

*Maureen Newton, from an interview with Albert Cooke, August 1996.*

## MARY HEPWORTH A TRIBUTE

When Mary died so suddenly in July, she left a gap in our Society which is impossible to fill. We may have taken over her duties but can only strive to carry them out in the same spirit.

Members who have spoken and written to me to pay tribute have put into words what many of us must feel and I can do no better than quote:

“Mary was a nice, quiet, kind and lovely lady who was always willing to stop and chat”.

“I only met Mary three or four times, but each time I was impressed with her caring attitude and kindness. I am proud to have known such a super person who knew so much about the people and area around



Mary - Tidying up with Environment Group

Stocksbridge”.

It was indeed remarkable that she was so knowledgeable because she was an

“incomer”, as she would readily admit, but not so remarkable, considering whom she came here to marry. She certainly threw herself into Fred’s hobby with enthusiasm and absorbed more of our local culture during her fifty years as a Stocksbridger than we natives. I know that she had misgivings when one of the first sights she saw was a little girl playing out, wearing only her knickers, and wondered what sort of place she had come to.

Mary was always willing to help Fred give us a presentation of one of his illustrated talks, sometimes at very short notice, and it was here that she showed a rare talent for speaking to an intimate group. I once had Fred and Mary to speak to a year-group of eight year olds, and while Fred showed the artefacts, Mary talked and held them absolutely spellbound.

It was a privilege to know her and she will be sorely missed. - BD

My memories of Mary don’t really go back very far at all, having come to work at Stocksbridge Library in 1989, and having no previous connections with the town. I came to know her via her involvement with the History Society, and indeed she was very supportive, at a personal level, of the efforts of the Library to establish the Stocksbridge Archive, and the efforts of the staff of the library to promote and keep the service to the people of the valley. Her support for the local community of Stocksbridge will be sorely missed as will her commitment to the Society. Her work, often in the background, has kept us ticking over and on an even keel, yet she could instantly give figures on the state of our finances and we will miss her management of them.

Her support for the *Newsletter* and the *Paragon* has always been appreciated by me, as was her knack of

writing quirky little articles that focussed on some little-known fact or reminiscence that she felt should have a wider audience. - MS

A gentle smile and a gentle but strong and reliable personality: This is Mary as I knew her. My last encounter with her was when she went to visit Fred in the hospital, wearing a pretty lavender cardigan, which she had knitted herself “ages ago” and a matching lavender blouse and trousers. That was a week before she died and she was obviously unwell, but her concern was all for Fred.

Not long before that she had turned out one Sunday morning with a small band of workers from the Environment Group to tidy up the area around the Stocksbridge sign on Manchester Road. At seventy-seven she had done more than enough for Stocksbridge, but Mary did not see that, or her weak heart, as a reason for stopping. If she could make a contribution to projects which she considered to be worthwhile, she did not allow trivial matters like age or ill-health to get in her way. That Sunday morning she pulled up weeds, grappled with brambles and swept litter with the enthusiasm of someone half her age. Enthusiasm combined with common sense: that was Mary. It is a cliché to say she will be missed, but in her case it is more true than is usually the case when these words are spoken. Like so many others I am grateful to have known her. - JB

We were sorry to hear of Mary’s death. We had only known her for a short time, but her happy disposition and willingness to help and also, of course, her great fund of local knowledge will always be remembered with great affection. - JP

## THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST?

A Reflection on Last Yuletide

This century has seen a bewildering amount of changes to our social patterns. Gone are the days of extended families where all your relations lived around the corner, and bigger families meant bigger Christmas celebrations.

Gone too is the accepted ideal of the ‘family Christmas’ (if it ever existed outside the minds of film and TV



script writers), where everyone gathered round the piano and sang popular songs, played charades or did a 'party piece'.



'Traditions' come and go, and I wonder how long particular actions have to be accepted as the norm for them to become a 'tradition'?

In my youth the idea of 'trick or treat' was totally alien, this was something that you had vaguely heard of via American films, but nobody around here actually went 'trick or treating'. In our teens, one thing we all did, however, was carol singing. A group of us going from house to house and singing carols, not just your 'one quick verse, get the money and run' either, but we sang whole carols and wassailing tunes as well. We didn't do it for the money but for the sheer pleasure of upholding an ancient (as we thought) custom, much like the mummers of old must have done.

Nowadays, aged F\*\*\*y something, I realise that another major change has taken place. For the past few years the number of children 'trick or treating' has increased dramatically, whilst the number of carol singers has dwindled, indeed this last Christmas, in common with the last three or four, has seen our house visited by no carol singers at all.

Why is this? No doubt psychologists can explain it away, and in these days of 'the global village' we all absorb the strongest messages from the strongest cultures, namely the USA. I also think that there is another reason, and one which I find to be slightly sinister. Caroling actually takes some effort, you have to earn a reward, but 'trick or treating' relies solely on the reaction from a particular householder, there being a thinly disguised threat, that if the caller isn't 'treated' then something nasty will happen to property or person. This is what I find alien and unacceptable, and I think that it panders to the concept of intimidation under any circumstances being acceptable, I have a right to a reward for no effort and woe betide you if you don't give it to me!

Bring back the 'old days' - whether good, bad or indifferent.

*Justus of Urgel*

## V DAY AT STOCKSBRIDGE

Veterans Day, The first trip arranged by Len Wood, A Reporter with the Local Express.

*(This is a tale in dialect, I have typed it as written when given to me, no complaints about incorrect spelling, grammar or syntax please! - ed)*

By gum, but tha knows this wor a bright do! Tha should a' seen t' buses lined up at Deepcar! Fifteen bus loads on us. Thirty thousand years of experience o' life, back bone o' t' district. Most on us browt up in pound a week families! But things were cheaper in them days - any road! That

doesn't matter now.

It's this trip a'm tellin' thee abaht. They wor a crowd o' folk to see us off on t' causeway. One on 'em were in a bit of a fuss! - "I don't know how we's goin to get on in Stocksbridge, wi all you lot goin' away." I said what tha wants to worry abaht, thissen, is how are yer all goin' to go on if we don't come back!

'Chairman o' t' council wer' thinkin' it at least, for he popped into every bus to wish everybody a good journey, and he hoped that we'd all come back safe.

Well we gor off at last! T'owd sun 'ad slept in an ther' wor a bit of fog, but rattle o' fifteen buses woke him up. We hadn't gone far on t' road before he peeped o'er t' top o' t' fog. Hello he said what's this up to. It weren't long an' he peeped o'er t' top o' t' fog a bit higher an' cleared t' fog away.

After that he kept his eye on us all t' way to Scarboro. He worked hard, round to t' side on us, to get a better view, an' all t' time we were there he blazed away and kept it fine for us.

Well, when we got there they were waitin' for us with the cameras. They grouped us up, an' said "Smile and watch for the dicky bird" Then we all went in to us dinner - by gum! I never see'd so many sorts on one plate in all my born days! But tha knows it were good. And we were ready for it. Mind you we'd had a cup o' tea and a bun on t' road but that does put a lot o' young 'un like us off us dinner. And yer wouldn't guess in a hundred years what we had fer dessert - a hafe crown a piece put on us plates!

Well, after dinner we set off ta' let Scarboro know we'd come! Some on us had a toddle, and some a paddle in t' sea and them as couldn't toddle or paddle got perched on seats on t' front. It didn't matter where tha went, tha'd see one or two o' t' party havin' a plate o' wheelks or else walkin' rahnd a bit. When it got round about four o' clock we made us way back to t' spa for us tea - meat, tomatoes, lettuce and pickled onions. A regular slap up do! And all t' time Len Wood were

nipping about like a scopril. A bet he were tired when he got home.

Well we got loaded up for home. Just then, t' owd sun, who'd been keepin' his eye us reight up to now when we started off, popped in a bit. We had a thunderstorm! When it passed he come out agen and watched us till tha could see he wor gettin' tired - like us - he dropped lower and lower and then popped off home. I'll bet he wor a bit before us. We had a very nice journey back, we passed a pub on t' way called the Wild Man and when ahr bus called at t' next pub and found out they'd sold out of ale tha'd a thowt there would have been some more wild men but never fear that's where us old uns come in. Tha sees, we aren't goin' ta miss what we can't get! We got home - a bit tired, but full of life and ready for owt else as pops up.

But this is what I've been wanting to

say to express - whist drives dances concerts do's of all sorts and to everybody as helped and last but not least to Len Wood! Thanks a million and on to that tha can put another nought at t' end if tha likes.

*Jas Helliwell.*

## COMMON CARRIERS

**I**n the Sheffield Red Book for 1905 there is a list of carriers from Sheffield city centre to various parts of the vicinity. Mr Herbert (any relation to Christine?), left the Anvil Inn Waingate and called at the New Inn, Shalesmoor at three-thirty pm, and then called at Oughtibridge and Deepcar on his way to Stocksbridge.

Mr Bodsworth left on the first Monday of each month, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from the Bull and Mouth, Waingate at three in the afternoon. He didn't appear to stop anywhere

else en-route. Perhaps this was the express service!

By 1924 the carrier was till coming to Stocksbridge, but only just. The only operator was a Mr Revill who departed the Yellow Lion, Haymarket at three pm on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. By this time the Yellow Lion was the only inn from which carriers started their services, there being routes to fourteen places in and around Sheffield, including Bakewell and Woodhouse.

One question: - Were there local carriers in Stocksbridge and Deepcar, and did they operate a service to Sheffield or were they for local traffic only?

*Janet Parkin*

### Stocksbridge & District History Society

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#### TREASURER

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

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#### PROGRAMME 1997

JANUARY 9TH  
JULIA HATFIELD  
DENBY DALE PIE

FEBRUARY 13TH  
A G M  
WITH DISCUSSION AFTERWARDS

MARCH 13TH  
MARTIN OLIVE  
OLD SHEFFIELD PUBS

APRIL 10TH  
GRAHAM FRITH  
ATKINSONS - THE HISTORY OF A FAMILY FIRM

MAY 8TH  
IAN ENTERS  
HISTORY OF CHILDRENS'  
RHYMES AND STORIES

JUNE 12TH  
JULES DUGGLEBY  
HISTORY OF SHEFFIELD GENERAL  
CEMETERY

#### NEXT ISSUE

TWO PIECES POSTPONED FROM THIS ISSUE

STARTING WORK IN  
STOCKSBRIDGE  
TEENS DOWN THE PIT

WORKING OVERTIME  
THE TRUTH ABOUT GAS MASKS

LETTER FROM INDIA  
A SOLDIERS THOUGHTS FROM  
ABROAD