

#### MEMORIES OF MY LIFE - ITS TRAGEDIES AND HUMOUR

I was born 16<sup>th</sup>. February, 1894, a son to Helen Burgin, formerly Hoole, and Thomas Knott Burgin, a coal miner, at Haywood Park, Deepcar.

In the year 1906, at the age of 12, I was moved to Standard 6, and this year a New Brother was born. Harold we called him, making six in the family.

It was while the family was having tea that Father remarked that it was time we had another worker in the house. This meant me.

Mother asked Father what kind of work he had in mind for our Willis. "I had to work down the pit", said he, "so shall he!" was the answer. In those days a boy could work, half a day at work and half at school.

On the Monday morning, Mother went to see the Headmaster at the school about this half-time arrangement. But the Head was against this system, as it interfered with a boy's education.

Father got his way. Next day he saw the Manager of the mine at Lowoods, and it was arranged for me to start work on the following Monday morning on the pit-top. Hours were 6 am. to 12 noon and 2 pm. to 5 pm. and wages 5 shillings a week, less 3d. Miners' Union.

Mother got up the first Monday morning at 5 am., packed my snap tin and filled a bottle of tea and I was on my way to Lowood & Co. It was a cold February morning, but the mile walk warmed me up. The clerk in the office at the yard's gate asked me my name and gave me

a check with a number on it and told me to report to the Mine Manager's office near the pit bank. The Manager had a friendly chat, saying he hoped I would like my work, then called a workman from the pit-top and told him to show me around.

The mine was a drift pit with a haulage road and a travelling way which the miners - boys and ponies - had to walk down. The mine was for coal and ganister.

The first one I met was the pit-top foreman, Fred Mate. He was small, with a fat and smiling face. He was responsible that the runs of full wagons from the mine were weighed and moved quickly, emptied and sent back down the mine as a train, with the steel rope attached to the last wagons.

Our next call was the winding-engine house with its powerful, steam-driven engine. Here I met Mr. Steel, who was in charge. He was a tall, well-built man. He wiped his hands with a piece of cotton waste and shook my hand warmly.

I noticed the miles of steel wire rope coiled neatly around the winding-engine drum.

The driver of this engine had to know in his mind the main haulage of the mine, its steep gradients and the level parts. The trains of empty wagons travelled at speeds of 30 to 40 miles per hour.

One of the noisiest engine houses in the yard was our next call. It was the fan house used for ventilating the mine. We had to shout to make ourselves heard. The noise was caused by the rattle and noise made by six large 4-inch thick hemp ropes connecting the large fly-wheel of the engine to the small wheel of the fan in the travelling road of the mine. I

was glad to get outside, where we were both still shouting to each other. When we realised this, we had to laugh!

We peeped into the lamp cabin, with its shelves filled with Davey lamps and bulls eye lamps, all oil-burning.

My most interesting tour was at an end - it was 12 o'clock and time to go home. I arrived home at 12.30, washed and changed and had lunch, then went back to school in the afternoon.

From the very start of this half-time, the Headmaster, who was my teacher, never liked it. On one occasion the Headmaster was reading from a book of poetry when he stopped suddenly, and said "You carry on from there, Burgin!" "Yes, sir!" I continued,

"I found it in his cabin - it was his will" "Stop, stop, stop!" cried the Headmaster, "Burgin Half-timer and Half-brainer! I found it in his CLOSET, not his CABIN" yelled the Head, "you must still think you are working on the pit-top, Burgin, instead of at school." A class-mate whispered "And he ought to be in that closet too!" I still had a few pals in class.

WILLIS BURGIN, 1965

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I was born on October 21<sup>st</sup>. 1916 at No. 6, Hope St. Stocksbridge and stayed there until Christmas 1918, after my Dad passed away in the October. Then I went to live with my Grandma and Grandad, Henry Wood at 161, Manchester Road, Deepcar – then called Blacking Mill Row. It was near the water trough where the horses on their way from Sheffield used to have a drink. The trough is now full of tin cans and rubbish. It would look better full of nice flowers.

I stayed with my grandparents till I was 6 years old. I learned to sew dolls' clothes. A lot of folk in olden days used to dress-make and sew. Then I went to live at No. 1, Grove Road when my mother remarried, and I stayed there until 1972.

I used to mix with a lot of Deepcar folk. We used to visit Bitholmes House Farm, Glen Howe, Tin Mill near Wortley Station, and went gathering bilberries on Townend Common and blackberries in Autumn school holidays.

We did not have the money to go to the sea-side till I reached the age of 21 years.

Then I travelled to various parts of England, Scotland and Wales. In 1977 or 1978 I went to Lourdes with St. Ann's Church. It was a very interesting holiday. I shall always have happy memories of it, I still see folk that I met on the pilgrimage.

I have also visited the famous Wortley Hall, which is now a holiday place. I have been there 14 times, won Fancy Dress competitions, and enjoyed meeting some friendly people who still send me Christmas cards.

*Eileen.M.Lindley*

### *Sandtrays & Maypoles*

Given that the whole piece has now appeared as a booklet, part 6 of the article, due for publication in this issue, will NOT now be published in the *Paragon*. We apologise for any inconvenience.

## THE HISTORIANS:

JOSEPH HUNTER 1783 –1861

PUBLISHED 1819 THE HISTORY OF HALLAMSHIRE  
1829 THE HISTORY OF THE DEANERY OF  
DONCASTER

Born in the year John Wilson died, this son of a cutlery manufacturer had a different background, but was no less dedicated to historical research. He achieved a Classical education through sheer hard graft and determination, at the same time as his craft apprenticeship, so was able to read the original documents now in the Bosville Collection as well as the Wilson manuscripts. But, since his scope was wider, there is perhaps less in his work to interest the Local Historian.

In his *History of Hallamshire*, Hunter classifies the Parish of Ecclesfield and the Chapelry of Bradfield as “outparts of Hallamshire” and only refers to this area in the most general terms. He quotes the description of our hills by early 17<sup>th</sup>. Century Historian Dodsworth as “the English Appennines” and writes of “the best part of the River Don before it enters Sheffield Parish through Wharncliffe Chase”. He mentions Bradfield Moors and the minerals to be found there He expresses an unflattering, but perhaps not inaccurate opinion of its inhabitants: “The inhabitants are as rugged as their soil — men little if at all removed above the rank of operative husbandmen”.

Hunter then wrote that “A new road from Sheffield to Manchester, which follows the course of the Don for many miles in this Chapelry, is singularly picturesque and romantic”, referring to the new Wadsley, Langsett and Sheffield Trust Turnpike, which had opened in 1805.

He also wrote of the dual occupations followed in this part of the shire, where it was common to combine a craft and farming to eke out a livelihood from the shallow clay soil, and of the hunting tradition of farmers, who would keep a dog or two for the purpose.

Again we can find references, in records of events which do not specifically concern this area, to personal names which have at some stage spread to, and from, Waldershef. For example, a William Fox, William and Robert Greaves and Robert Waynwright took part in the 1574 Perambulation of the Bounds of Hallamshire. This was a tradition of walking the boundaries of the shire to maintain boundary markers

In his *History of the Deanery of Doncaster*, now known as *South Yorkshire*, he makes more specific allusions to this area. Again under the heading of Hallamshire, he describes the Chapelry of Bradfield as consisting of four Byerlaws, “each of which no doubt had its own Court of husband men, to determine the petty questions which arose in a district where boundaries were not easily defined and rights of pasturage therefore afforded frequent occasions of dispute”. So boundaries within the county were not so clearly marked – probably change of ownership of parcels of land from time to time caused confusion. This assessment of the nature of boundaries in the early 19<sup>th</sup>. Century explains the difficulties we encounter in our attempts to correlate records from different periods.

Hunter described Waldershef as consisting of that part of Bradfield Chapelry “north of the Ewden, in which are the vills of Midhope and Bolsterstone”. But it is in the section of his work on the Byerlaw of Westnall,

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south of the River Ewden, that we can find references to Waldershelf men. One of the 10 feoffees (trustees) who managed the revenues from public lands in the 13<sup>th</sup>. Year of James I (1616) is named as John Coldwell of Waldershelf, yeoman, and in the year 33 of the reign of Charles II (1683) two of the feoffees were Jonathan Shaw of Hall-Broom and Edward Greaves of Yew-Trees.

Waldershelf is also mentioned several times in documents which Hunter copied in full from the Dodsworth Collection to show the Descent of the Lordship of Midhope from 1066. Wyndehill was on the border of the two Manors but Wytewell was well within Bolsterstone. In the chapter on Bolsterstone Manor itself Hunter repeats Wilson's account of the descent of the Lordship up to the time of its purchase by John Rimington, Esq. of Hillsborough in 1802.

Hunter describes the meaning of the name Waldershelf as "*the shelving side of Walder*", so giving credence to the traditional belief in its Nordic origin.

### ALFRED GATTY, VICAR OF ST. MARY, ECCLESFIELD PUBLISHED A LIFE AT ONE LIVING 1884

The Vicar of Ecclesfield's personal account of life in his far-flung parish in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century includes a description of Bolsterstone Vicarage. He records the appointment of the Rev. W.R. Wilson in 1867 and says: "*He occupies a vicarage house built by his predecessor, the Rev. J. Bell, which is situated like an eagle's nest on the brow of a steep hill; and so fiercely do winds attack this position, that a gale carried off bodily the solid roof of the coach-house, and the vicarage has double windows to withstand storms.*" This must have been the first building in the area to be double-glazed.

Gatty goes on to praise the Rev. Wilson's achievements in rebuilding Bolsterstone Parish Church and building a new church at Deepcar, so giving the contemporary reaction to these developments.

NEXT: Joseph Sheldon

*Brenda Duffield*

## BOLSTERSTONE GLASS

We celebrated our 10<sup>th</sup>. Anniversary as Stocksbridge History Society at the end of 1999 with our acquisition of a collection of glassware which is believed to have been made at Bolsterstone Glasshouse roughly 300 years ago.

Thanks to the generosity of the Hepworth family, we were able to purchase our choice of items from those put up for auction in December.

Nineteen pieces are now in the care of Sheffield University's Turner Museum until such time as we have somewhere to display them at Stocksbridge. They consist of decorative and utilitarian articles – jugs, wine glasses, flasks, vases, basins and bowls, a rolling-pin, funnel and a hunting-horn.

The hunting-horn, 10 inches long, has been authenticated as the one illustrated by Joseph Kenworthy in his 1914 Handbook 6 Bolsterstone Glasshouse and described as part of his personal collection. Most of the pieces are coloured – green, one so dark as to appear almost black, with splashes of white; dark brown, cobalt blue, pale blue, blue-

rimmed and pink-rimmed. The vase photographed is 4 inches high, decorated with wrythen moulding and of pale blue colour.

*Brenda Duffield*



## DESIGN A LOGO

One thing you may have noticed which is missing from this issue of the *Paragon* is the 'clock tower' logo.

This has been part of the *Paragon* since its first edition in 1995 and perhaps it's time for a change.

Here's the challenge—If you think you can design a new logo for the front cover of the magazine then get on with it!

Artwork can be drawn or computer designed—but remember—KEEP IT SIMPLE! No colour, and it doesn't need to be photographic quality—it needs to be bold and have impact!

Your design can be given to any member of the committee but needs to be handed in before the next publication deadline on 10th May.

GOOD LUCK

THERE MIGHT EVEN BE A PRIZE!

## WHAT'S GOING ON?

I'm sorry for taking up valuable space in *your* journal, but a few words of explanation are in order.

- The new year has brought a number of changes to the way in which I can produce publications.
  - I am using new software which will enable the end product to look much more professional. (hopefully you've noticed this already)
  - Photos and drawings can now be reproduced at a much higher resolution and quality
  - I am using a new digital print process so the quality of the final product should be better than ever before.
- This is a whole new learning experience and I may not get it right first time—be patient I'm trying to build on the past success of the *Paragon* and its predecessor.

Comments, constructive criticism and most importantly, material for publication to the committee please.

*Mike Spick*



Photograph of Pot House Farm buildings taken in 1990. The two archways in the left-hand building are all that can be seen externally of the 17th century Bolsterstone Glasshouse, with huge, burnt stones from the original dry-stone construction exposed.

*Photograph by  
Brenda Duffield*

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MEETINGS ARE NORMALLY HELD  
ON THE SECOND THURSDAY OF  
EACH MONTH, AT THE LIBRARY,  
MANCHESTER ROAD, STOCKS-  
BRIDGE AT 7.00 PM.

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MAY

### ❖ PROGRAMME 2000 ❖

APRIL 13TH  
THE BOTANICAL GARDENS, PAST,  
PRESENT & FUTURE - AVRIL  
CRITCHLEY

MAY 11TH  
HISTORY OF SHEFFIELD CINEMAS ❖  
CLIFFORD SHAW

JUNE 8TH  
THE WORTLEYS: AN ANCIENT  
YORKSHIRE FAMILY - PHYLLIS  
CROSSLAND

JULY 9TH  
SUNDAY AFTERNOON VISIT TO  
THE BOTANICAL GARDENS

AUGUST  
NO MEETING

SEPTEMBER 14TH  
FOR VALOUR: THE STORY OF THE  
VICTORIA CROSS - KEN LOXLEY

OCTOBER 12TH  
ROYAL MAIL PART II - BASIL  
SPOONER

NOVEMBER 9TH  
AFTERNOON VISIT TO THE TURNER  
GLASS MUSEUM

DECEMBER 9TH  
SATURDAY  
CAROL SUPPER—TO BE ARRANGED

ALL MATERIAL FOR FUTURE EDITIONS OF THE PARAGON SHOULD BE  
SENT TO BRENDA DUFFIELD, OR ANY MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE.