

# THE PARAGON

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## ON FOOT - PANIC STATIONS AND POLICE

*Ted's last contribution to The Paragon, shortly before his death in 2003, recalls one of his earliest memories, of late 1939.*

The War was but a few weeks old, and although the A.R.P. and Blackout were rigorously imposed, there was still an air of relaxation about things. Petrol rationing, coupons and Pool Petrol had been introduced, and the Manchester bus had been taken out of service because of petrol economy, yet it was still fairly easy to acquire extra petrol, so it was no surprise when Scotty said he would take his car.

We met, and that lovely Sunday morning in October 1939 saw the three of us, Bill ("Scotty"), Charles and me, merrily motoring towards Victoria, on to Snittlegate and Hade Edge, where we managed to park the car among the heather and the rubble of what once was the site of the Moss Inn at the entrance of the Magnum Bonum quarry.

The view then had changed little when Eileen Williams wrote in her 1975 book *HOLMFIRTH from Forest to Township*:  
: *Today I walked along Ellen-tree Brow, above Hade Edge toward Cartworth Moor. I passed Magnum, where a community had worked the quarries, built their homes and a chapel, where now only a few scattered stones remain. I rounded the foot of a lofty hill where once a dreamer built a stone tower as an observatory. As Cook's Study it dominated the landscape for many years; now the tower has gone but the hill remains .It was from this site that History began, where sometime about 4000 BC some ancient tribe trod the same ground, leaving their traces in the shape of sharp, cutting flints.*

*From this hill I looked around, moorland sheep grazing as they have done for a thousand years. Before me were the upper farmsteads, below them the stretch of the Holme Valley.*

The men of Hade Edge were also notorious as a gang of poachers, whose activities culminated in the Battle of the Westend, when they fought the 'keepers in Derwent Valley in the 1870s. (see Clarion Handbook 1925-6)

Ellen-Tree Head, now demolished, stood just over the Brow and faced downhill, overlooking Hades, Copthurst and Holme Styes, and was once the home of Godfrey Matthewman, whose daughter Susanah married Adam Eyre of Diary fame 1647-9.

We left the car and followed the route described, then at Cook's Study turned down to Raddle Clough, and followed the gully up over Lightens, which brought us out onto the Holme road at Upper Hayden. There we crossed the road and trudged over the peaty desert to the summit of Black Hill, sometimes called Soldier's Lump from an occasion on one of the Ordnance Surveys, when the soldiers had to live for a fortnight in this wilderness before the weather cleared and they could complete their work.

As so often happened with us, we then bit off more than we could chew and strode out towards Ravenstones, Ashway Gap and Chew Head. We had promised to be home before dark and had not come prepared for night walking and we began to sweat a bit when the light began to fail and a mist settled. It was paramount that we got off the moor before dark. We struck along the top of Laddow, crossed the two Crowdens, and with an extra spurt managed to reach the Holme Road before it was finally dark.

Without torches, we "neshed" returning over Lightens Moor, which was our "gainest" way to the car, but turned down the rough road to Yateholme. At the first cottage we came to, we begged to go

*William Edward  
Spencer*



1907 - 2003

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in so that we might read the map in the light, and after memorising the route, set off three abreast down the narrow road.

Between the walls by the reservoirs in the bottom, it was so dark that twice we walked into the roadside wall, and then for a while, to avoid repeating our error, we walked still three abreast with our arms outstretched, touching the walls either side of the road. It was like entering a tunnel and we were completely disorientated. We passed through Yateholme without knowing it. Everywhere was blacked out. Suddenly we heard the strumming of a piano. We located the cottage and once again begged for light to find our whereabouts. The people were kindness itself, and seeing our plight, offered us a taper. This was welcome, but my mind's picture of a taper was a thin, waxed thing we used to light a gas mantle, and I wondered how much help that would be. But to our surprise and joy, the lady came out of the kitchen, not with a taper, but a jam jar, string tied round the rim, and a lighted candle inside. We looked all the world like a troupe of Christmas Waits.

This was grand, and with many thanks we bade them goodbye and began to climb the hill toward Snittlegate. The ground-mist and drizzle was miserable but the candlelight cheered us immensely, and finally in good spirits we reached the car. Bill unlocked the door and we piled in, but to our dismay the engine would not respond to the starter. He tried several times but to no avail, then with the starter handle, but with the same result. An inspection revealed that the starter plugs had been removed! Panic!

In desperation I suggested that we went to the 'keeper at Cook's Study to see if he could help. We relit the candle and set off back to the gamekeeper's cottage. The knock on the door roused the dogs and set them barking. Next, we heard nailed boots clanking on the stone flags and the door opened. Panic again, but not for us; we stood bemused, for there stood the keeper, arms upraised in surrender, calling out "Kamerade!" We couldn't help laughing, but then composed ourselves and explained our errand. "Oh yes," he said, "I have the plugs. I am required by the head keeper that if you turn up, to telephone him and then the police at Holmfirth, and only give the plugs back to you on their authority." He went on to explain that, while doing their morning round, he and the head 'keeper had seen the car and, thinking it might be enemy agents come to harm the reservoirs, removed the plugs to disable it. He then left us to do his telephoning and returned to tell us that we must wait here for the police to come and question us.

Rather than keep us out in the cold, the 'keeper and his wife invited us into the house. They made us a meal and after a while we became quite friendly. What poor pay the gamekeeper received for his work – 37/6 a week, with the house free of rent, coal and perhaps turbarry – the right to cut peat for fuel, which was still in force on Cartworth Moor. But out of that he had to find and keep three dogs, provide his own cartridges and pay for his own firearms licence.

About 11.30 pm we returned to the car and awaited the police. Before us from the Brow, the Holme Valley was a scene of Stygian darkness, then, piercing it, two bright

headlight beams began to climb the valley, lighting the whole countryside as the car twisted and turned. I don't know what they expected to find, but when it finally arrived, three strapping constables followed by a burly sergeant stepped out of the car. They looked us over, took our names and addresses, the car number, examined Bill's driving licence, and left us to it.

The keeper then gave us the plugs, Bill and Charles fitted them, the engine fired first time and we were ready for off. With a Cheerio to the keeper, we left him. It was a mad drive home, for belts of fog kept drifting across the road, but fortunately there was little traffic about, and we arrived safely home in one piece.

Bill, the good Samaritan that he was, drove me home, and Henry had come to our house to collect his brother Charles. Bill had used the 'keeper's telephone to ring home and explain our predicament, and Henry had come to my mother's to give her the message. What she had imagined I do not know, but waiting for me was hot milk, warm blankets and all that motherly love can provide. We often chuckled over the incident – to us it was a great joke – but no doubt the worst experience was for those at home who waited and wondered what had happened to us.

There is a mystery about the episode which from time to time has puzzled me and which I have never resolved. Where did the matches come from with which we relit the candle, when we walked to the keeper's cottage? All three of us were non-smokers and did not carry matches with us. Were they in the car, or had they been given to us along with the candle? I don't know. They say the Devil looks after his own. I prefer to trust in Psalm 121.

I am now the last of we three, and I dedicate the telling of our escapade to the memory of Bill and Charles, my friends and walking companions from 1936 to 1986.

*W.E. Spencer*

## THE SANDERSON FAMILY

### CHAPTER 5 THE STRIKE

**T**he trade did not get better, but worse and worse. One day they saw colliers coming by with picks and shovels over their shoulders. They had come out on strike for more wage. Mr. Sanderson heard that the mine manager said he would close the pit before he would give them more wage. It seemed as if they would have to stay out for a long time, and they did. They stayed out for ten months.

During that time, the trade was shocking in Stocksbridge. Everything was high and the poor people could hardly live, so of course, Mr. and Mrs. Sanderson had to suffer too. People could not pay them for their goods, and the poor colliers' wives were coming into the shop day after day, asking for credit, which of course was not refused.

At last the colliers found a way of scraping a living, and a poor way it was. Every day a number of them would

come round the streets with a barrel organ, begging from door to door. They shared what money they collected at the end of the week, and that was all their poor wives had to keep their families from starvation.

After ten months of struggle, they gave in and went back to work. They did not get a penny more than when they came out. But things began to brighten up a little in the store again and all went well for a short time.

Then one evening, as Mr. Sanderson was reading the newspaper in the kitchen, his family around him, he saw in one corner of the paper an item: "All miners are contemplating striking for more money!" A couple of nights later, in big headlines in *The Star*: "ALL MINERS OF ENGLAND STRIKING!", and

Stocksbridge miners had to come out on strike again

Sheffield colliers began rioting, and did much damage. After three weeks of this, they went back to work on higher wages; after another three weeks Stocksbridge miners also were able to return to work on higher wages.

Trade immediately began to improve and became quite good. It had been hard for the Sandersons to live through that strike and keep up their payments. But now Mrs. Sanderson was determined that she would not stay in that place for another two years. She said that, if she could not go to her newly-built home, she would stay anywhere but above the shop.



conversation between them. The miner's wife was ill, and he said "The doctor came yesterday and said she has got 'flumonia'. But I think, myself, that it is one of her hearts that's affected, because what she gets up is as yellow as green grass!". The deputy made no comment, and I moved away with my full wagon, wondering what kind of illness that could be. I knew that the miner's wife had one heart too many, but that was the way these old miners talked.

One of our deputies had a big face with an extra large nose, and one of the trammers made up a rhyme that went:

Grayson's nose is long,  
Grayson's nose is strong,  
It would be no disgrace to  
Grayson's face if half his  
nose was gone!

## FROM WALDERSHELF TO STOCKSBRIDGE

### FAMILIES IN 1851

*The Census of 1851 was the first to show family relationships, so we can look at what constituted a family 150 years ago. Sometimes the situations which are revealed would be considered quite sensitive, and we can understand why these personal details are kept under an embargo for 100 years.*

## FROM THE DIARY OF WILLIS BURGIN

### 36 THE DEPUTIES

In the mine we trammers took some keeping in order, but the deputies managed very well. These officials crawled miles each day from stall to stall, in seams perhaps 2 feet 4 inches wide, wearing leather knee-caps. The only time they were able to stand on their feet was in the *benk\** and gate, where the dirt had been ripped. I often watched the miner or the deputy testing for gas at the ripping edge in the gate. His Davey lamp was turned down and held up to the roof while he measured, by eye, the tip of a small cap of blue light, which indicated the level of gas in the stall. [Throughout the Diary I have interpreted this word as "bank", but have come to realise that it really is "benk".]

If the deputy gave an order to the miner for the safety of a stall, it was given in a friendly way. He called the miners by their Christian names, but not the trammers. One inquired about the miner's family, and while waiting as my wagon was being filled with coal, I listened to the

In this Parish there were two widows classed as annuitants, whose husbands had been able to make provision for them, but there were also seven paupers, two of them widows, whose husbands had not. Even Matilda Irving of Townend, who was an heiress in her own right, had to relinquish her holdings on marriage, and only got them back on her husband's death.

One of the pauper widows had two grandchildren living with her, who were also classed as paupers, although there were also three sons – coalminers aged 10, 12 and 21. The other at one time lived in the building now known as the Porter's Lodge, supposed remnant of Bolsterstone "Castle", for Wallace Charlesworth recorded in his Notes on Bolsterstone that it was known as Hannah Parkin's Cottage in his day.

Another unfortunate lady was Elizibeth Drabble, whose husband was in an asylum. She had three of her four children working, but still qualified for Parish Relief. One man, a former farmer, and his wife, were also paupers.

The total population of the area was 985. As each of the 190 schedules seems to consist of a separate household, the average number in each was just under 5. There were

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

THE PARAGON

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MEETINGS

❖ PROGRAMME 2004 ❖

JULY 8<sup>TH</sup>

DAYTIME VISIT TO KELHAM ISLAND MUSEUM

AUGUST

SUMMER RECESS — NO MEETING

SEPTEMBER 9<sup>TH</sup>

MARTIN OLIVE:

A HISTORY OF SHEFFIELD THEATRES

OCTOBER 14<sup>TH</sup>

OPEN FORUM — MEMBERS' EVENING

NOVEMBER 11<sup>TH</sup>

DAVID HEY:

THE HISTORY OF THE MOORS

SATURDAY DECEMBER 11<sup>TH</sup>

CHRISTMAS CAROL SUPPER

very much larger families – 8 to 10 is typical – but some single people, four young and six elderly, lived alone but some adjoining their family. Some households included grandchildren, even when the parents of the children did not appear to be occupying the same house. In some cases, families may have overflowed into the grandparents' home, and in others the parent could be working, and staying, outside the area on the day of the Census.

Quite often, older children do not appear in the Returns because they were working in another Parish, but reappear in a later Census. So families could have been larger than they seem.

Households were increased in some cases by servants, who "lived in" in an era when working hours were dictated more by hours of daylight.

Some children had different surnames from the parents and were entered as "in-laws", a term which seems to be used for fostered children. Isaac and Alice Helliwell of Royd had three children of their own, aged 9, 7 and under 1 year, and four children named Smith, aged from 3 to 13.

The term "lodger" was sometimes used to describe a child from a former relationship of the wife, as in the case of James Woodhead, who lived with Thomas and Ann Firth at Horner House in 1851. Thirty years later Ann Firth, widow, was living there with her grandchildren, named Woodhead. We would have to consult church registers to establish whether there could have been a second marriage.

But in another case it became clear that there had been no marriage. A child in the household of Mary Ramsden at Bolsterstone was described as a "visitor" in 1851, its surname that of Maria Sanderson, house-servant. There was also a farm-servant named Thomas Staniforth. In 1881 Maria was described as Thomas Staniforth's "housekeeper"; they were both unmarried, but three sons of hers were living with them. The 1871 Census had put the situation beyond doubt, for it describes her as "concubine", and there are two sons and two daughters, making seven illegitimate children in total. Sometimes only by comparing data from other sources can we establish the true situation.

*Brenda Duffield*