

THE PARAGON

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Merry Christmas

RAILS IN THE DON VALLEY

The Sheffield to Manchester railroad ran through Deepcar in the Don Valley from the completion and opening of the Woodhead Tunnel in December 1845. The line was named the Sheffield, Ashton-under-Lyne & Manchester Railway and became an integral part of the Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway, which later changed its name to Great Central before becoming a component of L.N.E.R.

This line ran through the area for some 136 years, until the last train through Woodhead Tunnel in July 1981, although local traffic did use the line occasionally until 1983. From this time the only traffic was from Sheffield's Nunnery depot to Deepcar, to deliver materials to, and collect products from, the steelworks at Stocksbridge. The railway cutting just north of Deepcar was then filled in to carry the new Stocksbridge Bypass.

Other lines had also been used within the Don Valley. To my knowledge there had been, from the 1940s onward, industrial steam locomotives at Lowood's Refractories at Deepcar, Stocksbridge Railway Company running from Deepcar to Stocksbridge and some fourteen locomotives within the busy steelworks.

Earlier the Sheffield Corporation had been building reservoirs to supply the city and surrounding area with better drinking water. The Corporation and Fox's came to an agreement in 1896 that an extension of Fox's railroad be produced for use by the Corporation. This passed under Underbank Lane and along beside the Stocksbridge to Flouch road, crossing over two bridges near Midhopestones and finally under a bridge into the quarry by Langsett Village. Work went on apace on two reservoirs in the area - Langsett, which was completed in October 1904, and Underbank, where the water level reached its maximum in May 1907.

The only standard gauge locomotive on site was a six-wheeler saddle tank named *Langsett*, built by Manning,

Wardle & Co. Ltd. of Leeds for the Corporation, and later acquired by Fox's Traffic Department for shunting duties within the steelworks. In addition to the standard gauge system at Langsett, there was a narrow gauge track to the face workings, and to use this a 3-foot engine called *Little Don*, an 040 Peckett, was purchased.

Sheffield Corporation then looked at the neighbouring valley, where Ewden Beck flowed into the River Don. Work began in 1913 to dam this river at two points, the upper to form the Broomhead Reservoir, while the lower would be Morehall dam, the former for drinking water and the latter compensation water for other users such as the Morehall Sawmill.

The Corporation built a village on site, consisting of some forty buildings: residential, recreation hall and canteen, a church and shops. A number of these were still standing after the second World War, but the 1914-18 war brought work to a standstill, and the men were taken over the G.C.R. lines to Deepcar, where they transferred onto the "paddy" to travel to Fox's yard.

The run into Ewden sidings began close by Wharncliffe Wood signal box, where the long curve ran down a 1-in-26 slope over the River Don by a girder bridge and forward over the Sheffield to Manchester road by another girder bridge. The climb went right up to Ewden with the stream on its left side into Ewden sidings. There was a platform within the sidings and this enabled a coach to

THE CORPORATION BUILT
A VILLAGE ON SITE,
CONSISTING OF SOME
FORTY BUILDINGS

IN THIS ISSUE

RAILS IN THE DON VALLEY	PAGE 1
SHEFFIELD FOOTBALLING HISTORY	PAGE 2
A CHRISTMAS MEMORY	PAGE 2
THE MEMOIRS OF LILLIAN BIRKHEAD	PAGE 3
WILLIS BURGIN'S DIARY	PAGE 3

take children and shoppers to catch the bus to Stocksbridge or Sheffield.

In the early 1920s a special train of four M.S.& L. coaches loaded up at the platform for a day trip to Cleethorpes. I believe that another trip was made the following year to Southport. The work at Ewden was completed in 1929, and that was the end of the railway in that lovely valley.

C. R. Mallinson

SHEFFIELD FOOTBALLING HISTORY

We have a copy of a Fixture List for the season October 1874 to March 1875, which was amongst Ted Spencer's papers, and on it he has written *Sheffield Wednesday, founded Sept. 4th 1867*. This date is certainly correct, but I wondered whether the list refers to Wednesday or to Sheffield F.C., which was founded 10 years earlier.

Fortunately I was able to get in touch with Keith Farnsworth, the journalist and author of several football books, who confirmed that this would indeed be the team which eventually became known as Sheffield Wednesday. I must admit that I have yet to find that Ted ever made a mistake.

However, I was unable to find any report of the club matches in either the Sheffield Telegraph or the Independent newspapers, only of the inter-city matches with London and the Royal Engineers, which are included in the programme. Keith Farnsworth says this is because it was such an insignificant team at the time that it did not merit more than a line or two in the press, if that.

The Sports pages were more concerned with horse-racing, hare-coursing and hunting with hounds, although I noticed a full account of a Rugby Football match between North and South and even a bicycle race between two individuals for £100 (one of them Frederick Cooper of Sheffield).

Football had only been allowed at Bramall Lane in the first place, and presumably on other cricket grounds, to bring in revenue during the six-month closed season. We know that many cricket lovers were bitterly opposed to the idea that the hallowed turf might well be damaged by such a rough game as football!

The City teams would be representative of all the Sheffield Association of Football – before formation of the Football League - and may have been composed of the best players from local clubs.

Notice that the teams did not play as Elevens, but Twelves or Fourteens! And the fact that they could field a 3rd XIV shows how popular the game must have been, despite the fact that cricket was still the most important game.

The Sheffield team which lost to the Royal Engineers on December 19th. 1874 was listed as J. Marsh (captain), J.R.B. Owen, J.C. Clegg, W.E. Clegg, W. Wilkinson, R. Gregory, W. H. Stacey, W.H. Carr, W. Orton, T.C. Willey, J.G. Wylie and J. Hunter. Unfortunately, there is no mention of the clubs they represent.

The report of the first of these inter-city matches is worth reproducing in part, as it recounts the previous history of the fixtures and also paints a hilarious picture of the kit the Sheffield team were rigged out in on this occasion – if only we had a photograph!

LIST OF MATCHES FOR THE SEASON 1874-5

DAY	DATE	AGAINST	CLASS	PLAYED AT
Saturday	Oct. 3rd	Attercliffe	1st XII	Attercliffe
Saturday	Oct 10th	Practice Match		Myrtle Road
Saturday	Oct 17th	Fir Vale	1st XII	Fir Vale
Saturday	Oct 24th	Crystal Palace	mixed XIV	Thurlstone
Saturday	Oct 24th	Broomhall	3rd XIV	Myrtle Road
Saturday	Oct 31st	Heeley	1st XII	Heeley
Saturday	Nov 7th	LONDON v SHEFFIELD		Bramall Lane
Saturday	Nov 14th	Exchange Brewery	1st XIV	Myrtle Road
Saturday	Nov 21st	Norfolk	2nd XII	Norfolk Park
Saturday	Nov 28th	Norfolk	3rd XIV	Myrtle Road
Saturday	Dec 5th	Practice Match		Myrtle Road
Saturday	Dec 12th	Heeley	2nd XIV	Heeley
Saturday	Dec 19th	ROYAL ENGINEERS SHEFFIELD		Bramall Lane
Saturday	Dec 26th	Broomhall	1st XII	Ecclesall Road
Monday	Dec 28th	Broomhall	2nd XIV	Ecclesall Road
Saturday	Jan 2nd	SHEFFIELD v LONDON		Oval London
Saturday	Jan 9th	Heeley	2nd XIV	Myrtle Road
Saturday	Jan 16th	Attercliffe	1st XII	Myrtle Road
Saturday	Jan 23rd	Derwent	1st XII	Sheffield
Saturday	Jan 30th	Crystal Palace	mixed XIV	Thurlstone
Saturday	Jan 30th	Broomhall	3rd XIV	Myrtle Road
Saturday	Feb 6th	Broomhall	1st XII	Myrtle Road
Saturday	Feb 13th	Exchange Brewery	1st XIV	Rock Street
Saturday	Feb 20th	Norfolk	3rd XIV	Norfolk Park
Saturday	Feb 27th	Heeley	1st XII	Myrtle Road
Saturday	Mar 6th	Broomhall	2nd XIV	Myrtle Road
Saturday	Mar 13th	Derwent	1st XII	Derby
Saturday	Mar 20th	Fir Vale	1st XII	Myrtle Road

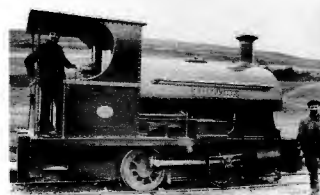
B.Duffield

A CHRISTMAS MEMORY

On moving from the Miner's Arms Cottages, where he was born, to Edward Street, Alf writes this in his memoirs:

"After living in isolation for 4 years, to come amongst civilisation was a wonderful experience. I even thought I was in the realms of fantasy, when on Christmas Day there was a covering of snow, two or three inches deep, with two wheel tracks and hoof prints in the street outside. My parents told me it could be Father Christmas and his reindeer and sleigh, but I realised next day that it was one of the farmers from Bolsterstone who delivered milk daily by horse and dray."

Alf Bonner



Little Don,
courtesy
B. Spooner

THE MEMOIRS OF LILLIAN BIRKHEAD

PLAY

The Delf was our favourite playground – a rugged, open space where formerly the stone quarries had been. There were still remains of these, not very deep, which had been worked in the early 1800's, then abandoned when the best quality seam had been worked out. Many years later, some of this ground was opened up again and the poorer quality stone taken for road making. A well built wall was then revealed, probably part of the foundation for the crane used in those earlier days. Jack Branston described this in his articles *Green Moor Stone Quarries* in *Fox Magazine*.

One of these worked-out quarries still had a spring of very clear, cold water and 60 steps had been cut, leading down to this well, which never went dry, and was the source of our drinking water when the New Houses draw well dried up. Local people made a point of visiting the Sixty Steps when walking around our village. Alas, in later years this small quarry has been filled in, and the famous well is no more.

On this Delf were many flag-stones, relics of quarrying days, a delight to play amongst. Three of these table-like stones, in our imagination, formed different rooms for our playhouse. We collected tin cans in which we fetched water from a pool nearby. After tea we loved to play "on t' stooans", as we called them, and hurried over the washing-up at home, hoping our mothers would not find us more jobs to do before we could go out to play.

The Delf was a glorious wilderness of heather, blackberry bushes, bracken and those blackened flagstones. Often in Autumn we had to get up early to pick blackberries before going to school, for the weekly fruit pies made on Baking Day. The Delf is gradually being made into a more formal recreation ground, but we remember with nostalgia the old Delf of our childhood.

We didn't have very expensive toys – I had dolls and enjoyed making clothes for them. A shoe-box made a good doll's bed.

Then the seasonal toys – shuttle-cocks around Shrove Tuesday, a ball and cane for Whit Monday, skipping ropes, and of course, buckets and spades if we were lucky enough to have a day at the sea-side.

THE DIARY OF WILLIS BURGIN

We had nicely settled down to camp life when it started to rain and rain and rain. The wind blew like a tornado all one week, causing much damage to the large marquees. Our bell-tents stood in pools of water and even our underclothing in our kit-bags was wet. We were all sent home for a week to dry out.

When we returned to camp, we found everything in ship-shape order. But then our training began in earnest – day and night manoeuvres in open country – and even the Police staff were in it.

Once a month our Provost Police staff were called to do duties in Harrogate. One of our many tasks was, when the public houses closed, to deal with the drunks and fights.

We always did these duties in twos – it was safer that way.

One night two of us were walking by the Valley Garden gates at 10 pm when we saw a soldier asleep on the pathway. We could tell by his hat badge that he was not from our regiment, but just the same, he had to be dealt with. We hauled the soldier to his feet and could tell he had had one too many by the smell of his breath.

We were about to set him on his way back to his camp, when I noticed a bulge under his tunic and asked him what it was. "It's something bloody hard," said the soldier, "for that bloody sergeant if he comes this way!" He then produced from

beneath his tunic a rounded, wooden chair-leg. We eventually did set him on his way back to camp, without taking his name, but minus his chair-leg!

At the camp the Police staff had two bell-tents – one for our sleeping quarters and the other for the sergeant's, which was also used as our office.

Every evening at 6 pm all the defaulters of the Battalion had to report to the Provost Corporal. I was given two lists of names – one of those on C.B. (confined to barracks), whom I had to put to work peeling spuds and doing other such duties within the camp. My other list was of those for the punishment squad – they had to drill at double time with full packs on their backs. This parade was taken by an old-time sergeant and a tough N.C.O. It was certainly punishment and the soldiers would come off the parade ground with their shirts wet through with sweat. One particular day, I noticed a soldier who had completed his punishment duty, unbuttoning his tunic as he passed us, saying: "Thou



Thickwood Bridge—now under Langsett Reservoir
W Kaye

STOCKSBRIDGE & DISTRICT
HISTORY SOCIETY

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CHAIRMAN

ROY MALLINSON—TEL. 288 8362

SECRETARY

BASIL SPOONER—TEL 288 4456

TREASURER

BETTY MCKAY—TEL 288 2269

ARCHIVE LIAISON

BRENDA DUFFIELD—TEL. 288 2349

MEETINGS ARE NORMALLY HELD ON THE SECOND
THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH, AT THE UNITED
REFORMED CHURCH, MANCHESTER ROAD,
STOCKSBRIDGE AT 7.00 PM.

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PROGRAMME 2007

REFRESHMENTS ARE SERVED AFTER EVERY
MEETING

THURSDAY JANUARY 11TH

BETTY MCKAY

MORE POPPY PEOPLE

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 8TH

A.G.M.

THURSDAY MARCH 8TH

TO BE CONFIRMED

thought thee were going to give me another wet shirt, didn't thee, Sergeant?" and he opened his tunic to show that he had no shirt on! Both the sergeant and I enjoyed the joke..

