



STOCKSBRIDGE & DISTRICT HISTORY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Number 14 Summer 1995

THE SING

As a child the day I dreaded most was 'Sing Sunday' - it always ended unhappily.

The 'Sing' had become a local institution, and I'm sure many people thoroughly enjoyed it. It was held in the field where Stocksbridge and Deepcar meet, not far from the War Memorial.

On that day the Stocksbridge Works Silver Prize Band and all the local choirs were arraigned together on temporary stands draped with hessian. They had met for this dressed-up, grown-up occasion, where it seemed to me, children were to be seen but not heard. Everyone was on display in their Sunday Best and on their Sunday best behaviour.

Being part of the listening crowd and being on the same level as, and unable to see above, waists and bottoms gave one a shut in feeling.

At my first 'Sing' I wore white ankle-strap shoes and white socks, a frilly dress in white satin, and a small brimmed hat trimmed with little blue flowers on a ribboned band. I can't remember the time of year, but it must have been early summer, for these were my new clothes that had only been worn once at Whitsuntide.

Hot and bored, hating the smell of the hessian, I looked round and found a strange little girl looking at me. She had a strikingly ugly face and an absolute mass of frizzy brown hair. I edged carefully towards her.

"Hello", she whispered

We stayed for a while eyeing each other up. Then we looked round, but nobody appeared interested in us, so by a sort of mutual silent consent we slipped in between the listening rows until we came to the outer edges of the crowd. Here we began to show off our skills, she to indulge in her cartwheels and me in my less spectacular forward rolls. From this we developed a 'miming tig' using the grown ups to hide behind. This soon became a complicated game, hurtling in no time from

gentle tip-toeing in and out, to running at full belt in and out of the crowd. Naturally it involved falling down, bumping into people, laughing, shouting, getting dirty and losing one's hat.

Suddenly in the midst of all this excitement, I felt a hand grab mine in a vice-like grip. My mother's face looked into mine. It was incredibly angry - yet strangely controlled, all at the same time. I realised too late that that I'd done a dreadful thing, for not only had I spoiled my beautiful clothes, bought at great sacrifice, but even worse, I'd shown myself up and therefore her too. She gave me one hard, straight slap across the legs and marched me back to dad. The long walk home stays in my mind as one of utter misery.

This then was my first 'Sing' and they never improved, on the contrary they seemed to get much worse and much to my mother's annoyance I met my strange friend again - but never anywhere other than at the 'Sings'. Trying not to get involved never seemed to work.

I grew up and out of going to 'Sings', but years later when I heard they'd disbanded them and were turning the field into a small housing development, I experienced a little thrill of pleasure.

By some coincidence, I never saw the girl again, except fleetingly at a distance. She was holding her mother's arm. I never knew her name and if you ask, how did I know it was her mother from a fleeting distant glance? Well the face and hair were entirely distinctive and belonged to both!

Joan Firth



STOCKSBRIDGE ART SOCIETY

To the best of my knowledge Stocksbridge Art Society has been in existence for at least thirty-five years. I can find no written date of

its inauguration, but conversations with Alec Pearson, Gladys Kaye, Eric Franks and others suggest that the Art Appreciation Society, as it was then known, was well established by 1960. In that year Raynor Hewitt, the then principal of Stocksbridge College, and Noel Upfold, who taught art at the college, were instrumental in organising an art exhibition at the Victory Club.

Meetings of the Society were held three times a year at the college and were similar in format to our current meetings: an exhibition of work by local artists from which members may borrow; a talk, demonstration and/or slide show; sherry to begin with and tea or coffee afterwards. I believe that the inaugural meeting was addressed by Noel Upfield on the subject of modern art.

Major supporters of the Art Appreciation Society were Bill Dearnaley, Alec Pearson and other members of the group which met weekly at the High School. This group sometimes existed as an art club and sometimes as an evening class. Towards the end of Bill's life it was meeting at the Woodroyd Centre. Scores of successful, local artists have been encouraged to start painting either through this group or through the college art classes.

Sometimes when the initiator and driving force leaves an organisation, it collapses. This has never been the case with the Art Society. It has survived the loss of many of its key members over the years. The first time this happened was when Raynor Hewitt left the district. His clout as college principal had been important in getting the Society off the ground. When he went others provided the energy and inspiration to carry it forward.

The earliest minutes I can find date from 1972, when we were known as the Society for the Encouragement of Art. Past officers include Margaret Booth, Kath Bilsborough, Joan Brown, Susan Day, Ethel Firth, Eric Franks and Jean Goodlad. Throughout the 70's and into the 80's, a great deal of energy, drive and inspiration came from Bill Dearnaley, Douglas Kaye and Alec Pearson.

In the early seventies the venue changed from the College to the High School. By this time Alec Pearson was teaching art at the school and he was responsible for this move. In 1976 he organised an exhibition which included contributions from local school, adult groups and college classes. The range of work exhibited was impressive. Alec continued to work for the Society until he left the area in 1982. His return visit in 1989,

to speak about the development of his work since he left Stocksbridge was one of the best attended meetings that the Society has had.

In 1985, the Society suffered a sad loss in the death of Douglas Kaye, a big, generous man with a wide range of skills and interests. In his life time he had encouraged many local people to develop their talents, so it was decided that his work would continue in the form of a trust fund. The Douglas Kaye Award is made annually to help someone from the district to pursue an interest in art or craft - an appropriate way to honour Doug's memory.

Of the key, founder members only Bill Dearnaley remained active into the nineties. He became chairman after Doug's death and kept things going with the help of a committee - none of whom was an artist. Bill's unexpected death in January 1992 was a great shock. The last of the leading lights from the early years of the Society had gone. What would happen now? The answer was that a lot of hard work would be done so that Bill's memory would be suitably honoured. Another fund was set up and the Bill Dearnaley Memorial Trust was established. In July 1992 a 'Memories of Bill' evening was held in Bolsterstone church. With many of his paintings on view, friends gathered to recall their memories and to record their appreciation of a kind and encouraging man.

The Bill Dearnaley Trust is administered from the school and is for people under 21 years of age. £50 is awarded annually. The Art Society administers the Douglas Kaye Trust and in 1992 it was decided that henceforth this annual award should be for people over 21.

The Society continues and even flourishes. Meetings are now held in Cedar Road Christian Centre. In 1994 the first big exhibition since Alec's in 1976 was organised in the library as part of the Steel Valley Festival. The quality and quantity of work was impressive and close on 800 people came to view in the course of the week. With this amount of talent and interest available it should be possible for the Art Society to continue for another thirty-five years.

If any reader has information or recollections about the Society, especially in its early years, I should be pleased to hear from them.

Joan Banks

Harking back to *Issue 6* of the *Newsletter* and the article about the Millers Arms at Saltersbrook, it was with interest that I came across a couple of dusty old notebooks, hidden in the depths of one of the strong-rooms in the Local Studies Library. They were two of the rule books of the Shepherds Society dating from the 1890's and 1928.

The earlier one had an interesting provenance, having once belonged to S.O. Addy, the famous Sheffield historian. Both of them contain the rules of the Society and a list of the members in various liberties, along with the marks of their sheep.

Rules of the Shepherds Society

1. *That two meetings be held at the Miller's Arms Saltersbrook, annually; the first on the twentieth day of July, and the second on the fifth day of November.*

2. *That two meetings be held at the Pack Horse Inn, Hayfield, annually; the first on the twelfth day of July, and the second on the seventh day of November.*

3. *That a meeting be held on the tenth day of July, annually, at the Old New Inn, Marsden.*

4. *That a meeting be held at the Snake Inn, Woodlands, annually, on the fifteenth day of July.*

It can be seen from the above that July was a busy time for the society, with a total of 6 meetings being scheduled for the first half of the month. One assumes that July was chosen for the likelihood of better weather, the venues being in somewhat isolated locations. I assume that the November meetings were to ensure that stray sheep were returned to their rightful owners before the onset of the worst part of the winter and before lambing was due to take place.

The return of strays was one of the fundamental reasons for the existence of the Society.

9. *To any person bringing strayed sheep to the above meetings, the owner or owners of such sheep shall pay or cause to be paid, reasonable expenses for taking up, keeping and bringing them to any of the said meetings.*

The rules of the society also catered for any arbitration which might be needed to settle disputes.

11. *That no sheep be drawn, separated or taken away from any of the above meetings, except during the presence of or with the consent of the secretary of such meeting.*

13. *That if any member of this society shall cause any quarrel or disturbance to arise at any of the aforesaid meetings, every such member shall forfeit two shillings and sixpence or be expelled from the society.*

It is very desirable that all members of this society use their utmost endeavour to secure and bring to their respective places of meeting, any stray sheep in their possession, or known of, or supply any information or assistance to each other, in their efforts to restore to their owners any sheep which may have strayed, or such as may have been unlawfully driven away, so that the full benefit of this old and valuable association may be obtained.

Finally the social function of the society must not be overlooked. The object of the meetings was to return strays to their rightful owners, but nobody argued that it didn't have to be a good day out as well.

8. *That each member of this society is required to attend personally, or send a representative to each of their respective meetings, or forfeit one shilling each meeting; sixpence to be paid for providing the dinner, and sixpence to go towards defraying the expenses incurred at the said meeting. Also that two shillings and sixpence be collected from each member present - one shilling and sixpence of which is to be paid for each present member's dinner and the surplus money towards defraying the general expenses of the meeting. Dinner to be on the table at each meeting at one o'clock p.m.*

The wide reach of the society came as a bit of a surprise. There were shepherds from as far afield as Chapel-en-le-Frith liberty and Hope and Castleton who belonged to this organisation which in effect controlled shepherding throughout the southern Pennines.

In 1898 the handbook listed the distinguishing marks of 439 different owners of sheep - all of whom belonged to the society. In 1928 despite the agricultural recession that followed the Great War there were 454 members listed, and by this time the sphere of influence of the society had

spread as far north as Todmorden.

Incidentally, after the closure and demolition of the Miller's Arms at Saltersbrook, the society carried on its tradition in the highest parts of the Woodhead Moors by transferring its meeting to the Stanhope Arms at Dunford Bridge.

In 1928 inflation had made its presence felt, but only just! Rule 9 now stated:-

That each member of this society is required to attend personally, or send a representative to each of their respective meetings, or forfeit two shillings each meeting; sixpence to be paid for providing the dinner, and sixpence to go towards defraying the expenses incurred at the said meeting, and one shilling towards the reserve fund. Also that three shillings be collected from each member present - two shillings and sixpence of which is to be paid for each present member's dinner and sixpence towards defraying the general expenses of the meeting. Dinner to be on the table at each meeting at one o'clock p.m.

Mike Spick



STOCKSBRIDGE SURNAMES

BREARLEY

Originated in Yorkshire and the West Midlands as place names derived from the Old English words for **CLEARING IN THE BRIARS**.

Variations are **BRIARLEY & BRIERLEY**, the latter more common in Lancashire, **BREARLEY** in Yorkshire.

David Brearley was born in 1855 at Townend House, Deepcar. He attended Bolsterstone National School, working part-time for his father, John Brearley, the builder, from the age of 10 to 13, and eventually set up in that business on his own account.

He became a Stocksbridge Urban District Councillor in 1899, serving for a total of 21 years, and as chairman in 1908 and 1909.

He and his sons, John and Archie were bellringers at St. Mary's, Bolsterstone.

The name is commemorated in that of **BREARLEY AVENUE**, Deepcar.

Brenda Duffield

PROGRAMME

JULY 13TH
JACK BURLING
PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

AUGUST
NO MEETING

SEPTEMBER 14TH
HOWARD TURNER
SHEFFIELD TRAMS, A NOSTALGIC LOOK
BACK

OCTOBER 12TH
A. BRACKENBURY
WILDLIFE FROM THE SIGNAL BOX

NOVEMBER 9TH
R. YOUNG
WENTWORTH & THE FITZWILLIAMS

DECEMBER 14TH
CHRISTMAS SOCIAL GATHERING

STOCKSBRIDGE & DISTRICT HISTORY SOCIETY

- CHAIRMAN -

BASIL SPOONER. TEL.288 4456

- DEPUTY CHAIRMAN -

PHILLIP SCOTT. TEL.288 2370

- SECRETARY -

BRENDA DUFFIELD TEL.288 2349

- TREASURER -

MARY HEPWORTH TEL.288 5295

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

NEXT NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 1995

PUBLICATION DEADLINE

THURSDAY 13TH JULY

ALL ARTICLES AND LETTERS FOR PUBLICATION SHOULD BE CLEARLY MARKED 'HISTORY NEWSLETTER' AND SENT TO:- MIKE SPICK, % THE LIBRARY, MANCHESTER ROAD, STOCKSBRIDGE.