



# THE PARAGON

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*The Journal of the Stocksbridge & District History Society*

## ***SOCIETY NEWS***

### **UPDATE ON THE STOCKSBRIDGE CEMETERY PROJECT.**

This is now underway. Brenda has managed to get plans from Sheffield Archive. She and Basil have first surveyed the section they thought would be the oldest.

Unfortunately our idea for David Hampshire to photograph the inscriptions gives us no advantage, as the only one to come out was the one that could be clearly seen anyway.

Thanks to who have volunteered their help; Mary and Janet have done at least one spell; and the others will be called upon in due course.

Don't forget we intend to carry on this data gathering at Bolsterstone to continue the great survey that Mary and Eric Moxon undertook in the Nineties.

### **BRADFIELD FAMILY HISTORY FAYRE**

**SUNDAY OCT 21ST**

We have decided again to take a couple of tables at this great annual event, meet some old friends from other local societies and hopefully meet new people who have questions or info about our area. Our theme this year is our Census records / BMD records/ Photos and hopefully sell a few DVDs & CDs.

### **STOCKSBRIDGE AND ITS MILLS REVISITED**

**O**ccasionally, certain aspects of our local history continue to promote debate, which is mainly due to a lack of reliable information, which has become clouded by the mists of time or distorted by (unreliable) opinions, past and present.

I have no claims as to being an expert in these matters, and I have simply reviewed a number of documents by various authors, (and to whom I am indebted), and have attempted to bring the available information together. It has become evident that there is still plenty of scope for further study in this particular subject and related topics.

Contributions of additional relevant material together with any corrections or omissions would be welcomed by the Society.

### **THE STOCKSBRIDGE NAME AND STOCKS'S BRIDGE**

**F**or reference and orientation, Hunshelf Bank, Bolsterstone, Deepcar and Midhope are North, South, East and West respectively.

The name Stocksbridge has evolved from John Stocks who was known to have owned land, a collection of small buildings and a Fulling Mill in Hunshelf and generally known as Four Holmes and which was situated on the North side of the Little Don river close to the bottom of the road which runs up Hunshelf Bank to Green Moor.

This property was in the occupation of John Stocks when it was

bought by Thomas Pearson, yeoman, of Wortley in 1716 as recorded at Wakefield on May 10<sup>th</sup> 1717.

At this time, the course of the river at this point ran across the bottom of the valley from South to North and swept round near to Four Holmes and ran for a short distance directly eastwards. A small wooden bridge had been constructed over the river by John Stocks, but the carters would have had to ford it. (The latter giving rise to Ford Lane being so named).



A substantial stone bridge was constructed in 1812 and remains in use to this day. It is located at the same point as previously described. The bridge at the bottom of Smithy Hill was built sometime later when the river was re-routed to the south side of the valley bottom at this location to suit the development of the Steelworks, particularly in the area where the main offices stand.

The earliest known reference on a map is that of Yorkshire by Thomas Jeffrey in 1772 upon which Stocks Bridge is shown. Even as late as 1931, the identification of Stocks Bridge is stated on the Ordnance Survey Map at the bridge in addition to the overlaid title of Stocksbridge for the general area.

### THE FULLING MILL

The earliest reference to this mill is in 1716 as stated above, when John Stocks was described as the occupier and who may have continued to be so for some time afterwards.

The process of Fulling is loosely described as converting a relatively loosely woven fabric into a close knit one by the preparation and treatment by scouring, washing, degreasing, bleaching, pounding, stretching and surface trimming of cloths, (which presumably had been woven by others as a cottage industry in the local hamlets), so that the cloth could then be made up into serviceable items.

When degreasing the wool, the fullers (as the workers were called) used an effective type of clay, which is a naturally mined clay, used for its absorbent properties, and which eventually gave rise to Fullers Earth creams being used as a treatment for skin conditions.

The stretching frames were called tenters, and the pieces of cloth were suspended on these by using tenter hooks and we now have the saying about being on tenterhooks when we are in suspense.

The outlet for this commodity would probably have been at the Sheffield markets, noting that a cloth market at Penistone was not established until 1743, and eventually the Cloth Hall was built there in 1763 to cater for increasing demands.

Since Stocksbridge was on the extreme fringe of the textile industry of West Yorkshire, (Halifax Piece Hall built 1799), this may have ultimately led to the demise of local activities which were coming to an end in the early part of the nineteenth century. (Penistone Cloth Hall had been altered to accommodate various businesses by 1825).

The mill was subsequently converted into a cottage, (prior to the sale of the Cotton Mill in 1807) which with other buildings including the Cotton Mill came into the tenure of Samuel Fox in 1842, (1841 according to Trevor Lodge), and it was eventually demolished in 1860 as part of a Fox development.

### THE COTTON MILL

In 1794, a business partnership was arranged between Messrs Dentons, Graysons, and Connop as Cotton Spinners and work commenced on building this new mill on land adjacent to the Fulling mill. The mill was powered by a water wheel, which was operated via a mill race which was taken from the river upstream.

In 1795 before the building was completed, the partnership collapsed due to financial difficulties, but some cotton spinning did eventually take place, and it is also known that parts of the building were let on lease.

In 1807, the mill was sold by auction at the Black Swan in Sheffield and it was described as follows:

"A substantial and well built cotton mill at Stocksbridge, in Hunshef, with machinery, stoves and utensils for the cotton twist spinning business, and a convenient dwelling house near the mill with barn, stable and cow house with eight acres of rich land.

The mill is eighteen yards long, nine yards wide and five storeys high"

Another sale document states that the mill was driven by a water wheel twenty-four feet in diameter from a twenty-one foot fall.

This mill would have been seen as a substantial building at that time, the likes of which had not been seen before in the valley.

Jonathan Denton did commence the cotton spinning business on his own and in 1798 leased one half of the mill for four years to a Mr. Naylor who was a wire drawer.

William, Joseph, and Robert Turner (brothers), came next who drove a drift from a point near to the mill into Hunshef Bank and extracted coal and clay and carried the clay into the lower storey of the mill and made fire-bricks which attracted carriers from Holmfirth and other places for supplies.

Jonathan died on June 30<sup>th</sup> 1826 and the mill was then bought by John Willey and he used part of the mill for grinding blacking. He married a sister of the Turner brothers and as a result of a dispute, the brothers left the mill and moved to the Henholmes and founded the Henholmes Brick and Tile Works, which they later sold to John Armitage.

The mill was sold on to Joshua Newton (with a family connection to Miry Bottom Farm in Hunshef), and he carried on the business of grinding clay and producing blacking of which large quantities were supplied to the furnaces at Newbigin and Holmes near Rotherham.

At this time, his foreman and business manager was Robert Hemingway who was living near Old Haywoods Quarry, and kept a grocers shop and also had Lane Farm at Deepcar. He left the mill shortly after Samuel Fox moved in and started his own business (i.e. the Blacking Mill), in Deepcar.

It is known that Joshua Newton rented out the upper storey of the mill to a Mr. Wilson which was used as a wood turners shop for making broom handles etc. Another tenant was George Patrick who ran a similar business in the years leading up to 1840, so it can be seen that the mill came to operate as a mixed workshop, as opposed to being a Cotton Mill as was originally intended.

It was this mill, which Samuel Fox took over in 1841 for the production of wire, which was used mainly for the hoops for ladies crinoline dresses as was the fashion in Victorian times. He eventually came into full ownership of the property in 1852.

The Steelworks would eventually blossom from these humble beginnings, and by 1870, major developments had taken place and the Cotton Mill had gone.

It is curious to note that in our 1841 local census, James and Ann Martin living in Stocksbridge are described as cotton spinners, and Martha Ramsden with two daughters, residing at Hunshelf Bank are listed as cotton carders. I regret being unable to elaborate on this.

Part 2 will be published in the next Issue

Basil Spooner

## THE MEMOIRS OF LILIAN BIRKHEAD

1896-1987

**B**iographical note: Douglas Walton always said that Lilian was his aunt twice over – as his father's sister and then because she married his mother's brother.

To continue her story:

For one and a half years all went well. But then my husband tried to learn to drive. At 66 one does not take in all the complications of motor driving. There were some nerve-racking experiences while out practising.



We had quite a full and happy life together, with reasonably good health. Then all changed within a few minutes; my husband had a stroke which took all the feeling from his left side, never regained. For two months life was very difficult indeed. I was on duty night and day, with a helpless, depressed and sometimes querulous husband. Then a specialist got him into Whamcliffe Hospital for treatment and rehabilitation. He was there for seven months, all through that lovely, hot summer of 1959. This meant daily visits, and also meant that different treatments were being tried – none of them, alas, successful. He came home for Christmas; a nurse came each day and fixed on a calliper – an instrument of torture which did no good. In February he went to Rivelin for water treatment – again, no good.

### *“ I was very fortunate indeed to have such a helpful family and good neighbours ”*

So he either had to come home or go into a nursing home, which meant a geriatric ward. If he came home we would have to get a patient lifter, which I found while waiting for his arrival, nursing him was getting almost impossible. When it did arrive, the crane-like contraption took some getting used to, but certainly saved much lifting. It also enabled us to get him into the car, but that needed two people, also an Austin A 40 with a wider door than the Standard.

So from July 1960 to July 1961 we managed. The nurse came each morning to get him dressed and into a chair. In the evenings we had a rota system with two of my brothers and a good neighbour, John Brown, taking turns to help get him into bed. There were few undisturbed nights.

Each Sunday we managed to get him to chapel – highlight of the week – my eldest brother taking the place of the nurse on Sunday. I was very fortunate indeed to have such a helpful family and good neighbours.

He could be left for a short time – for shopping in Stocksbridge, sometimes even a quick run into Barnsley. A transistor set, the telephone and T.V. were most valuable in keeping him in touch with the outside world. But it was a poor life for someone who had enjoyed so much activity, especially when failing eyesight made reading impossible for him. But at least he was in his own home, often visited by friends and his own son Maurice Birkhead, who lived at Bramhall, and it was infinitely better than the months spent in hospital.

But he gradually deteriorated and in July 1961 he died. I have always been thankful that I was given the strength to cope, although only because of the support from family and friends and the Health Service.

Brenda Duffield

## SALFORD REMEMBERED Part 8

By A. A. McKay (1927-2009)

**I** used to do a bit of shopping for the Strettons at Number 11 at lunchtimes and what I earned helped Mom with the housekeeping. The Quinn family lived at Number 13 – their three sons were the same age as Edward, Arthur and myself – so for a few years we played together. Number 15 was subdivided into rooms for letting, so there was a quick turnover of people and you hardly ever got to know their names. People in this kind of accommodation tended to have all their worldly goods in a suitcase, and sometimes when they got well behind with the rent they would pack up and leave during the night – hence the well known saying “doing a moonlight flit”. An entry between 15 and 17 led to a play area known as “the Brewery” as there had once been a brewery there. Number 17 was a slightly bigger house and the rent must have been higher – that too had a lot of people coming and going.



Rosamund Street came next and on the corner was Joe Allen's shop. This was our local Off-licence beer shop and grocer's. He sold lovely cream cakes and, as shops were closed on Sundays, we could go round at 6 O'clock on Saturdays when he reduced his prices and buy his four penny apple charlottes for two pence. (I well remember how delicious they were.) There was one other little shop on the corner of Wellington Street and Mount Street. Our Bill, when he came home for his dinner, used to send me there for his favourite Craven A cigarettes.

The opposite side of Wellington Street was mostly taken up by John Shaw's Works, with just a few houses at the bottom opposite the chapel. On fine summer evenings these doorsteps were mostly occupied by women having a good old gossip while keeping an eye on the children. I remember there were two old Irish ladies who used to go for a jug of beer from Joe Allen's, and as the beer disappeared, they would give a lively recital of Irish songs, much to the amusement of the neighbours.

With entertainment in mind, perhaps I should mention here that in the early thirties, with all the unemployment, people would go round the streets making music and collecting door to door. Barrel organs (a type of piano on wheels) could be hired; they had a winding handle on the side and by turning this, the tunes flowed and quite nice it was. Also there were ex-service men who perhaps learned to play an instrument in the Army – they would march up and down in the street, and on finishing their performance, out would come the collecting tin. On reflection, I feel that

they got a lot of sympathy, particularly from those ex-servicemen who had been fortunate enough to secure jobs. I remember especially a group of singers, two men and a woman, who came round on Sundays singing hymns. They would ask one of the children how many Catholics or Protestants lived in that street, and depending on the majority, out would come the appropriate hymnbook.

Another way of raising money was to go down to Pat Divine's on Bury Street and hire a push cart to take round the streets collecting rags. In exchange the collector would give a piece of "donkey stone" – a kind of coloured pumice stone – for housewives who liked to clean and mark their front steps. Also, when available, they would give little goldfish (for which you had to bring your own jam jar) or day-old chicks, in exchange for rags. Neither fish nor chicks lasted very long, as we did not have the proper feed for them. One trick the rag collectors would try was to sprinkle what they had collected with water to make it weigh heavier, as they were paid by weight, but I doubt whether many would get away with that, knowing Pat. I can see him now, sitting outside the Bird in Hand, his pint of beer on the window ledge, keeping a sharp eye on his business.

Brenda Duffield

### THE DIARY OF WILLIS BURGIN

Son of a Yorkshire Miner

**W**e were now approaching enemy front lines and although the fog was thick, we could hear the crackling of rifle fire. As we entered a large orchard we received a terrible battering from a German machine gun nest. I had never experienced anything like it – bullets seemed to be coming from all directions. Three of the Battery were badly wounded, one officer losing the muscles of his upper arm. We emerged onto a canal towpath and had to wade across, guns and boxes of ammo held above our heads. It was the last week in September and very cold.



While the officer scouted ahead, I thought it a good time to dish out the remainder of the rum ration, as the men were beat. When the officer returned it was the first thing he asked for and was quite annoyed and threatened me with a court martial, but soon calmed down when I explained.

Fog was lifting and enemy fire subsided as we moved onto the next hill. We saw an enemy tank entangled in telegraph wires. Some German prisoners ran like hell when they saw it. By now large numbers of prisoners were coming in, so the infantry attack had been successful.

*“While the officer scouted ahead, I thought it a good time to dish out the remainder of the rum ration”*

We set up a new position, better placed to meet any counter attack from their front 800 yards down the main road. I was sent to scout around an old stone quarry with plenty of funk holes, and in one I found a badly wounded Jerry. He was afraid I would

shoot him, but I sent back for a stretcher party to collect him.

Further down I met a running infantryman, going like hell. "It's murder up there!" he yelled, "Half my Company have been killed!" Back at HQ the officer had opened out a fighting map. "This leaves us with two miles of front to hold with 8 machine guns, Sergeant!"

At 3pm a German raiding party tried to creep up on us through the long grass and we let them get within 200 yards before two of our guns opened fire and that was enough to make them retire. Except for a few enemy shells, the night was quiet. About 2pm next day I was surprised to meet an Infantry officer coming out of the quarry, seeking machine gun support for a raiding party. He was without fear and his courage was noticeable. The Germans started to attack from the road before the infantry had even reached our gun position so the officer grounded his 20 men behind us.

I knew Lance Corporal Turner's trigger finger was itching on his firing button. When the Battery officer ordered all 8 guns to open fire the Germans took cover. Then the Infantry officer fired an SOS signal of coloured lights into the sky for artillery support. But what a surprise to see, coming out of the clouds three airplanes of the Flying Corps. Our guns were ordered to cease fire and we had a wonderful view of the whole display of aircraft swooping on the enemy with their machine guns. It was the first time we ever received air support and they did a good job.

*Next Issue: The End of the War for Willis.*

Brenda Duffield

### PROGRAMME OF EVENTS 2012

October 21 <sup>st</sup> (Sunday)	BRADFIELD FAMILY/LOCAL HISTORY FAIR HELD AT BRADFIELD VILLAGE HALL)	
November 8 <sup>th</sup>	STOCKSBRIDGE & DISTRICT PHOTO SHOW	History Society
December 13 <sup>th</sup> (Thursday)	CHRISTMAS RELATED EVENT (Pre booking - Members only)	History Society

### COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chairman	Dennis Pindar Tel 01142882301
Secretary	Basil Spooner Tel 01142884456
Treasurer	Val Dodgson
Archivist	Brenda Duffield
Member	Janet Parkin
Member	Mary Reed

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