



# THE PARAGON

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*The Journal of the Stocksbridge & District History Society*

## SOCIETY NEWS

I am pleased to announce that we have received grant funding from Stocksbridge Town Council to cover the rent of two offices in the Town Hall, ARC building. In these offices, with the full encouragement of the Council, we hope to develop a 'Valley Heritage Centre'.

We have a number of ideas regarding the development of a centre and we are putting together a project for design, costing and of course funding. We would welcome ideas from members and would hope to form a separate 'heritage sub committee' to help put this project together. If any members are interested in being on this group, please contact me, Dennis asap.

We had the 'Drop in Session' at the library the other Thursday and although we enjoyed the time we were able to spend on some of the Genealogy queries and local history questions, we would have liked a few more people to attend. We will perhaps do another session in the near future.

We are now in the last quarter of the year and it has been a turbulent year, not only in the Valley with 4SLC, but to family and close friends and I am expecting a full and exiting year next year with the Tour de France, 1914 Commemorations and of course our Heritage Centre.

'Keep the faith'

### BOLSTERSTONE MEMORIES

by Dennis Pindar

You will remember that a few weeks ago I mentioned that we had some communication with a person who had lived in Bolsterstone some 90 years ago and had set down some of his memories. I am pleased and honoured to print his memories and a section of his cover letter.

*'I am writing to you as the Chairman of Stocksbridge & District History Society. I saw the website of the Society for the first time a few days ago. I briefly read it in parts and saw that Bolsterstone was mentioned. As I lived there from 1920 to 1924 I thought that you and the Society might be interested in my experience and recollections of living there, so I have written a short piece about it and a copy is enclosed.'*

Over ninety years ago my widowed mother, my sister and I lived with my mother's sister Hilda Cooking, in the Old School House on More Hall Lane at Bolsterstone.

My aunt was the Headmistress (I believe there was one other teacher) at the school which was for infants. Another distant relative called Ganwood was the Headmaster at the village school. There was an inscription over the door into the house which stated the school had been founded by some charitable person in, I think, 1698.

The dam in Ewden Valley was being constructed then and the young children of the constructors attended school where my job was to ring the bell at the end of each lesson.

So my schooling started at the age of two.

The school lavatory consisted of a wooden building open to the four winds with a long wooden seat in which were cut five holes.

Aunt Hilda, always referred to as "Daisy" played the organ in the village church. I used to watch the men pumping the bellows which provided the air to make the organ work.

In 1923 another sister of my mother came from Sheffield with her husband to be married at the church. Next to the church was a farming family named Dawson.

Aunt Hilda eventually married a local man named Ward Booth. His family lived at Hollins Bush. His mother was the local postmistress; she delivered letters daily in the area, sometimes having to walk as far as Wigtwizzle.

In a back street across the road from the church was a shop which sold cigarettes. Uncle Ward (Booth) bought his cigarettes there. I collected cigarette cards so I would go with him. We would open each packet of "Gold Flake" until we came to one with a card I did not have, that was the pack he bought.

Both Ward Booth and his father were members of Bolsterstone Mail Voice Choir and well do I remember listening to them. Your website states: *'the Choir was founded in the 1930's'*, but it existed in the early 1920's. I can even remember the opening verse of one of their songs, the first line of which was *"Twas on Saturday night tra-la"*

It's all a long time ago but I remember the time quite vividly. It was all very rural; we churned cream in a small barrel to make our own butter; in the season we collected bilberries on the moors beyond Wigtwizzle.

Bryan Beaumont

Bryan also writes:-

Dennis,  
Thank you very much for you for your prompt reply to my letter. I have looked at the two web sites you

mentioned but I am sorry to have to say that I cannot see them enough to get much from them. I have A M D in each eye which makes me have poor vision. This device I am using (iPad) helps greatly; with its backlight and my ability to enlarge text I enjoy its use. However, I would appreciate the booklet by the Society about the school where I lived.

It's remarkable how much one can recall from long ago. Things I didn't mention because they are not historical are - seeing shooting stars, so many and so often I thought they occurred everywhere at all times; seeing a violent storm on the hill across the valley. There is one thing I do not recall and you may be able to tell me. I do not know what we used, or did, for lighting.

I should have said already that, of course you may publish the short article I sent to you. I hope others find it interesting. With kindest regards, Bryan.

I have sent Bryan 'Sandpits & Maypoles' and some other literature pertaining to Bolsterstone.

## STOCKSBRIDGE AND ITS MILLS REVISITED

Part 5 - by Basil Spooner

### GREGORY & REDDISH GANISTER AND BRICK WORKS.

This business was located just off Carr Road at the Deepcar end of Fox Glen, and was established in 1891. The activities included the mining of coal, (used for firing the kilns), and wet clay and ganister, (used as a mix in the manufacture of heat resistant firebricks).

These basic minerals were all mined locally, with direct connections to the mining points from these Works and were all found in relative close proximity to each other due to the nature of the geological strata on the hillsides of the valley. The stone quarry off Quarry Hill is relevant, as was the clay quarry (behind Carr Road flats), and the mine, which extended as far as Hollin Busk where an old airshaft can be seen.

John Armitage was also conducting some of his mining activities into the same seams further up the valley.

It is believed that the annual quantity of products amounted to thousands of tons, and was produced by approx 30 employees in the brickyard, 25 in the clay/coal mining and 20 in the stone quarry. It is worth noting that in 1908, the total output of ganister from all the collieries in the valley was 40,000 tons.

A rope hauled inclined tramway operated by a stationary winding engine was used to transfer finished products from the yard to a railway siding, which connected with the Stocksbridge Railway at the Henholmes, and the tramway crossed under Manchester Road near to the bottom of Back Lane.

The only photograph of these Works seen by me appears in an excellent article by Jacqueline Stafford in the Fox Magazine of Summer 1981, which focuses on the drying sheds for the finished product.

In 1895, the Company built for its employees the adjacent row of eleven stone terrace houses with gardens to front and rear, this being an early development and improvement in working class housing design. The Row is known as Park View as verified by a stone tablet, which to this day can still be readily seen on the front of the terrace. The 1901 census gives the occupation details of all the heads of the families who lived there, and are quite clearly associated with the Works.

In the 1881 census, John Gregory (who came from Wigan)

aged 50 is listed and is described as living in Deepcar Village, and was a Colliery Owner employing six men and four boys. In 1871, he was shown as a clay miner, and he died during 1890 and was buried at Bolsterstone.

It is evident that the Gregory family had been working a coal mine for a number of years prior to 1891 on the same site as that for their full scale operations

By 1961 the business had closed, having been overshadowed by the General Refractories organisation. Its landmark chimney remained for quite some time before it was eventually demolished. A variety of businesses now operate on the site with only minimal remains of the old buildings.

I regret having no information about the Reddish involvement with the Company.

## THE MEMOIRS OF LILIAN BIRKHEAD

1896-1987

### BEST KEPT VILLAGE

In 1967 our village received unexpected publicity. The Parish Council were notified that Greenmoor was in the area selected for the Best Kept Village Competition, which is held in different parts of Yorkshire each year. The Parish Council thought it would be worth trying out, not so much with hopes of success, but as a trial for when next the Competition came to our area. A leaflet had been received, explaining what points the judges would be looking for as they toured the village - gardens, grass verges, absence of litter and tidiness of the surroundings of public buildings, farmyards and churchyards.

The scheme caught the imagination of most village people. Roadside borders were tidied and new ones made, grass verges trimmed, lawns and gardens worked on, public seats were painted and war was waged on litter. The old Pump House, which had supplied the village with its drinking water supply up to 1951, was highlighted with flower borders along the approach, making it quite a historical feature.

Some years later the corrugated iron roof was replaced by stone slates and wooden timbers from an old Sheffield church. Beside the old pump wheel is a trap door with a ladder going down about 30 feet to a stone passage leading under the road to an underground pool. This village water supply had never been known to fail; in the great freeze of 1963 the people in Office Fold used it daily until the thaw set in. Alas, the Pump House has become a victim of the present-day menace - vandalism, and is no longer in working order.

New Houses (about 100 years old), Chapel Lane, Main Road, all gardens were worked on to a degree of perfection. Best of all, a very happy community spirit was engendered, with newcomers taking as much pride in the scheme as the rest of us.

One day strangers were noted walking around and we knew that judging had begun. The result was 1<sup>st</sup> Prize! On a lovely summer evening we were all congratulating each other; then came the Press reporters, interviews and sightseers. A few weeks later, the presentation: the trophy arrived and was draped in someone's green velvet curtain, which after much thought and manoeuvring was so arranged that, with a pull of the string, it would fall down to reveal the beautiful and well-earned trophy. This always looks so easy when we see the Queen do it on Television, but to us it was a problem. A lorry was supplied and suitably draped as a platform for the VIPs: Mr Ball, Chairman of the Parish Council, who made a most excellent Master of Ceremonies, and Colonel Haythornthwaite, Chairman of the Preservation of Rural England in our area. Also on the scene was the oak seat presented by the



THE ROW, STOCKSBRIDGE, 1901

Dalesman magazine. The trophy was only held for three years, but the seat remains for all time with its inscription "Presented by the Dalesman".

## LOCAL SURNAMERS

### By Brenda Duffield

**Joseph Kenworthy** did not find any name with the initial "I" in our area in the 1379 Poll Tax Returns.

The most common name here throughout the Census records period 1841-1901 is **Ibbotson**.

The 1672 Hearth Tax record shows an Abraham, a George and a John **Iberson** in Waldershelf and a William **Iberson** in Westnall.

The Oxford Dictionary of Surnames states that all the many variations of this name derive from a medieval pet name for **Isabel**. A study led by David Hey - *The Origin of One Hundred Sheffield Surnames in 1992* adds that **Hibbert** was also a Norman personal name, both giving rise to **Ibbotson** and **Iberson**, both common in Derbyshire and Yorkshire. Nearly 100 **Ibbotsons** were named in the registers of the Cutlers' Company. Sheffield had 284 people with that name in 1841.

Although there were already four burials at Bolsterstone before the Census of 1841, only one man and two women called **Ibbotson** were recorded then. This number grew until at its height in 1881 there were Ibbotsons at Lane Cottages, New Hall, Hollin Edge, Royd Farm and Green Farm in Bolsterstone and, with the inclusion of Hunshelf in the Stocksbridge Urban District, Holly Hall, Brierley Busk, Dean Head, Peace Row and Newton Cottages, Raven Cragg and Blackmoor Common.

Almost all the menfolk were farmers and agricultural labourers, the only exceptions being "delvers", i.e. quarrymen.

By 1901 the number had dwindled to six: a farmer at Bolsterstone, two quarrymen at Hoyle House and Waldershelf, a steelworker at Bailey's Cottages on Hunshelf and a retired surveyor at Sheephouse. The last named was the only one born outside Bradford Parish. The family with the longest continuity was that of Bessie Ibbotson, a widow living on Goat Terrace in Hunshelf Bottom, who had begun married life in the mid-1850s with her husband William, Delfer, as lodgers at Dean Head.

At the other end of the scale we find **Irving**, the only example being William Irving, clergyman, at Townend in 1841. His name would be Scottish, probably from Irvine in Ayrshire.

All we know about him is that he was Curate of Bolsterstone Chapel and owned the property at Townend, having married Matilda Grayson. They baptised four children at Bolsterstone, but by 1851 he had died, leaving his widow as a landed proprietor of 20 acres, employing two indoor servants and two outdoor labourers. When she died her son Benjamin Atkinson Irving inherited Townend, while son William had Crimbles on Hunshelf and daughter Mary got the property at the Cross, Bolsterstone.

It was Benjamin who leased Townend House to Samuel Fox in 1856.

## BRENDA BRAMALL'S STORY

### GROWING UP IN STOCKSBRIDGE IN THE 1930'S

#### Part 1

In 1934 Ramsey Mc Donald was prime minister. King George VI had been on the throne since 1910 with his wife Queen Mary of Teck. He was the grandson of Queen Victoria and Albert, his parents being Edward VII and Princess Alexandra of Denmark. His elder brother had been trained for the role but

had died earlier. In 1917 because of the troubles with Germany he had changed the family's Germanic name of Saxe Coburg Gotha to Windsor as it still is today.

In the wee small hours of a bleak, blustery day on 20<sup>th</sup> February, I, Brenda Elizabeth Bramall, was born; the first child of Lucy Hannah and Reggie Bramall. My mother was the fifth eldest of a family of twelve, which meant that I already had five aunts, six uncles, three cousins, a grandma and a granddad in the Fisher clan. My father on the other hand had only one older sister who was married to a local baker, John Firth, and had one daughter called Norma. Peter and Pat were born later. They had a shop across the road from us where they sold their produce.

Dad's mother had died at the age of 52 whilst kneading bread in front of the fire, but, of her other four sisters, Phyllis, Lucy, and Lily all lived on the same road as us, whilst Kath lived higher up the valley on Shay House Road. I called them all auntie and they all loved for me to call in to see them, right up to their deaths. They were the Adams family who were raised in the "water house" in Deepcar.

Great grandma Bramall also lived nearby until she died at the age of 93.

I had been born in granddad's house where we continued to live with him until I was five. It was a small stone terrace on Manchester Road which runs through Stocksbridge. The only door was at the front, opening straight into the living room, the floor of which, was covered by oilcloth and rugs which had been hand made by threading small pieces of old clothes through an oblong piece of sacking with a broddle.



A huge black fireplace, which had to be cleaned regularly with a stiff brush covered in black lead polish, dominated the room. Coal had to be burned continuously, not only to keep the place warm but to heat the water and cook the food. On the back wall stood a huge china cabinet full of books and china ornaments with a wind-up gramophone taking pride of place in the corner. The centre of the room was filled by a heavy wooden table with four chairs, under a gas light attached to the ceiling.

The door on the far side of this room led into a tiny kitchen with a shallow unglazed stone sink with only one tap for cold water located under the window. A door led down to a storage cellar beneath the house on the left of one wall, whilst a winding staircase on the right led up to a large landing across from which was the one bedroom.

What the sleeping arrangements were I do not know, because I was only five when we moved out and I then had a brother of two; it must have been very difficult to find any privacy. My brother Terence was born, having been delivered by our next door neighbour, before the doctor put in an appearance, on the 10<sup>th</sup> of December 1936 when I was almost three.

To get to the back of the house there was a ginnel between us and the house next door leading to a yard, then a flight of stone steps on top of which was a plot of common ground with a row of earth toilets. As there was no electricity in those days we had to take a candle on a saucer to light the way. Hanging on a large nail on the inside of the door would be squares of old newspaper on which to clean ourselves. There was a long piece of wood about two feet high from the floor up with another laid horizontally across the top with two holes cut out side by side, a small one for children and a larger one for the adults. Everything collected in a pile under the hole, with blow flies buzzing merrily amongst until some poor soul came along whose job it was to shovel the lot away to



goodness knows where. Can you imagine what it was like in the middle of winter, ploughing through the rain, sleet and snow to use this loo? No wonder we all had a Gerry Pot under our beds.

Hanging on the back wall of the house was the tin bath which was brought into the living room and placed in front of the fire every Friday; this was then filled with water in which we took turns at bathing. Our nightly entertainment was pegging more rugs or learning to knit while listening to Gracie Fields, George Formby and the like on the gramophone, or listening to the radio which was worked by an accumulator that dad had to take to the garage to be charged up. Toast was made for supper by holding a long handled fork, with the prongs threaded through a slice of bread, over the hot coals and being very careful not to let it fall off.

The joy of my life was my dog Floss, who I loved to dress up in my baby bonnets and jackets. I have no idea what breed she was, but I would guess she was a mongrel. As you can see from the photo, she was a beautiful bundle of fluff and I missed her terribly when she died of old age before I was five...



## MIDHOPE POTTERIES

by Dennis Pindar

I have been gathering information from a number of sources, Kenworthy, Dransfield, Sheffield Manor Publication, Internet etc; regarding some of the owners, timelines and goings on at the Potteries in the area.

I have restricted my searching to domestic ware, rather than going down the road of drainage, sanitary ware and chimney pots etc that were the products of Brookes, et al.

Four Potteries are mentioned :-

Midhope Pottery  
Hand Bank Pottery  
Bolsterstone (Bate Green)  
Unsliven Pottery

I am setting down the notes as I have made whilst browsing and I would be pleased for any member or member of the public, to add their knowledge or findings in order that we may get a comprehensive information update of this important part of our valley's history.

### Notes.

Richard Ellis of Midhope Hall (1717 – 1809) aged 91 yrs, Yeoman, who had bought Bolsterstone Glass House (Bate Green), in ???? and made glass there for a short period ? He turned it into a Pot House in 1778, producing domestic ware. (Ref JKHB page 25)

Clay Pits Lane – West Stocksbridge, was where Midhope Potteries mined some of their clay. (Ref JKHB page 46)

1734 - In the Waldershelf 'Poor Ley' there is no mention of a Pottery at Nether Midhope.

1720, - A lease for 99 yrs, was granted to George Walker of Hunsheaf & Robert Blackburn of Aldermans Head, for a plot of land 70yds x 40yds to build a Pot House and other conveniences at Midhope at an annual rent of 5 shillings.

1727 - Robert Blackburn dies. He already had the Glass House

at Bate Green. His widow Mary Blackburn assigned the lease and the site at Midhope to a William Gough (her servant ?) on Dec 14<sup>th</sup> 1728 at an annual rent of 6 pence.

1720 – 1728 - William Gough was a practical pot maker. He had built an oven and a workshop on the site. He was granted permission to build 3 dwelling houses which connected to the workshop on the river side. He prospered at the Pottery and was one of 4 gentlemen who contributed to a fund to build a school at Nether Midhope in 1732. This school lasted until 1826.

1727 - Thomas Dyson of 'Midhope Pot House' was living there with his younger son Thomas, he died in 1773

1750 - Anne Kaye, daughter of a John Kaye of Midhope Pot House, was living there.

1765 - John Taylor ?, who was living at 'Dyke Side Farm', assigned the lease of Midhope Potteries, to John Whitely of Woodseats. (Sheffield?)

1778 – Bolsterstone Glass House turned into a 'Pot House' by Richard Ellis of Midhope Hall

1788 - The Parish Overseers paid Joshua Lindley (see elsewhere in text), the sum of 2 guineas to indenture Widow Horsfield's son (??).

1793 – The widow of John Whitely sold the unexpired portion of the lease (26yrs?) to Edward Appleyard of Sheffield Park

1797 – John Lindley moved back from Bate Green to Midhope to take over Midhope Potteries. Waldershelf Valuation of 1797 shows Lindley renting fields at Clay Pits Lane, Smithy Moor and Potters Field at Sheephouse to mine clay.

1802 – John Lindley dies aged ??

1816 – Edward Appleyard bequeaths Midhope Potteries to his son William Appleyard.

1819 – The lease expires and renewal of lease is refused

1828 – Land & cottages sold to a John Haig ?

1828 – 1845 New cottages were built to increase number to 13.

1833 – Whites Directory shows Messrs Thickett & Co as producers of Brown Earthenware at Midhope.

1847 – Matthew Thickett, the last tenant potter, dies aged 86 yrs. He had come from Unsliven Pottery

1850 – John Barraclough came to Unsliven Pottery to restart the pottery. It had previous been leased by Henry Taylor who paid rent to Lord Melbourne. Joshua Lindley possibly took over as sub tenant to make pottery.

Pottery at 'Don Pottery', Rotherham, commenced in 1790 and was working until 1861 producing 'brown-ware' like Brampton Brierlow, finally superseded the 'red & black pottery made at Midhope.

## PROGRAMME OF EVENTS 2013

November 14<sup>th</sup> A view of the Society Material

December 12<sup>th</sup> Christmas related event  
(Pre booking—members only)

Why not visit our Website at - [www.stocksbridges.co.uk](http://www.stocksbridges.co.uk)

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