



# THE PARAGON

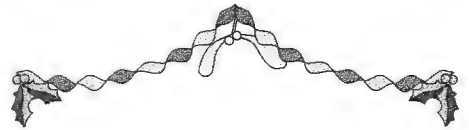
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50P [FREE TO MEMBERS]



## Merry Xmas



### COAL MINING AT STOCKSBRIDGE

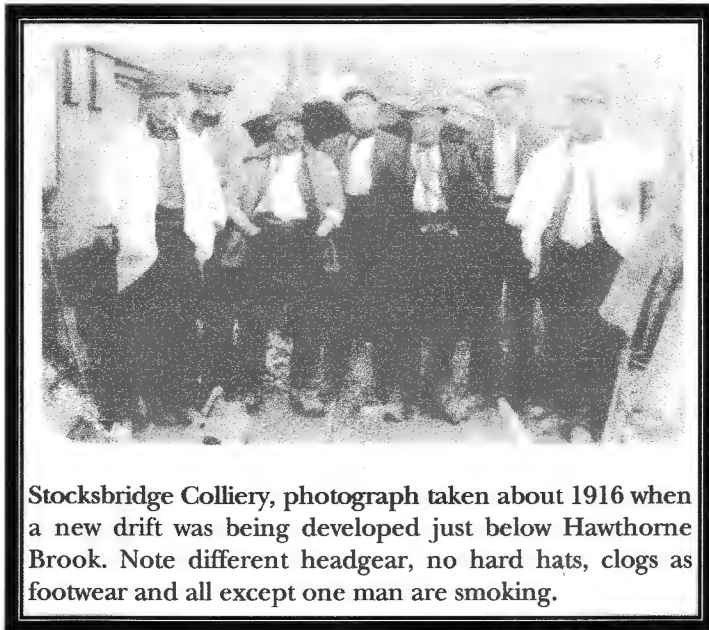
One hundred and fifty years ago there was no place called Stocksbridge. High on the hill on the east side of the river Porter or The Don was the church of St. Mary's, Bolsterstone. This parish encompassed those few scattered farmhouses lower down the valley. on the west side of the river was Hunshelf Bank where coal was being mined in 1842, as shown by evidence given to the Childrens' Employment Commission

Mr THOMAS PEACE, aged 53, of the firm of Webster and Peace, Hunshelf Bank Coal Works said: -"We employ seven colliers and seven regular hurriers, besides other children that come when they like just to learn. The children are worth nothing unless they come at eight or nine years old. We don't employ them before, and they are no good after they are 14,

the seam of coal being only 20 inches thick and the gate no more than 2 feet high." BENJAMIN HENSHAW, aged 7½, worked as a hurrier in Webster's pit but owing to an impediment in his speech his answers were unintelligible. HARRIET MORTON who was nearly 15 years old, began to

regular hurriers who were girls and said there were also six boys. Two of the children were employed at each corve both full and empty. When the corve was loaded one of the children was harnessed with a belt round the waist, a chain came from the front of the belt, passed between the legs and was then hooked to the corve. Harriet

said "I go along on all fours, on hands and feet with a little boy pushing behind. We girls wear trousers." WILLIAM JUBB owner of a coal pit on Hunshelf Bank and a publican said he though it would be impossible to heighten the gates in the pit so they could use ponies for hurrying. The expense would be too great and it would not pay. Children have to work because parents who apply to the Union for out relief are told to send their children to the pit. REV. WM. IRVING was the incumbent of Bolsterstone, the parish where



Stocksbridge Colliery, photograph taken about 1916 when a new drift was being developed just below Hawthorne Brook. Note different headgear, no hard hats, clogs as footwear and all except one man are smoking.

work in Webster's pit when she was going on 10. She was the oldest girl working there. She named the seven

Webster's pit was located. He said it was usual for girls to wear trousers which were the most convenient dress

since the chain passed through their legs and they were compelled to go on all fours. They all with few exceptions attend a Sunday School where they are taught by voluntary teachers and taken to a place of worship every Sunday.

So about 1850 there were a few farmhouses and a mill in the bottom of the valley when Samuel Fox came along. Samuel looked around no doubt noting that coal, ganister and fireclay were on hand and decided it was the best place for him to set up in business. He bought the mill and gradually extended his business along the valley.

Coal from Stocksbridge Colliery was used by Samuel Fox & Co. Ltd. to make steel. The most famous product made by the works was the 'Paragon' umbrella frame but they made steel of every description from crinoline frames to railway lines. Principal uses for Stocksbridge coal were: - Heating furnaces for softening and annealing wire: Manufacturing coke for crucible steel melting: Firing ingot soaking pits: Firing brick making kilns - used for making refractory furnace bricks and building bricks: Firing stationary boilers to generate steam for rolling mill engines and hammers: Manufacturing gas: Firing steam locomotives on the works' railway.

Fox leased land for mining from several notable people such as Lord Wharnccliffe and the Fenton and De Wend families but also bought land locally. Mines in the valley were mostly drifts or tunnels driven into the hillside although there were some vertical shafts for ventilation. At least three drifts were driven into Hunshelf Bank from mid the 19th century to the early 1900's, they were of course trying to locate the 20-inch thick Halifax Soft or Coking Coal Seam which was a top class coking and gas coal. Eventually in 1895 the works became self sufficient in coal. In 1907 electric haulage underground was first considered and the system implemented two years later along with electric pumps instead of steam pumps for underground drainage.

When Samuel Fox took over the mill in the valley his predecessor

already had a small coal mine. His mining activities in the valley were largely confined to drifts within the immediate works which struck north into the seams under Hunshelf Bank. He also went further afield for coal, buying the colliery at Woodhouse Junction near Sheffield and even considered buying Shirland Colliery in Debyshire. Temporarily until the works pits became self sufficient, coal was bought from Orgreave, Shireoaks and Treeton.

From 1870 a small area of the Halifax Hard Bed was worked and temporarily finished in 1916 when a new pit was started. The new pit was in full production by 1920 so the old workings were finally abandoned in 1928.

Price lists were agreed for working the Halifax Soft Coal Seam in 1909 and revised upwards by 50% in 1915 until the price paid for Getting and Filling Coal, setting and drawing timber was to be: - Coal under 20" thick 2s 10½d per ton and coal 24" thick and over 2s 6¾d per ton. Hand ripping main levels 9 feet wide and 4 feet 8 inch from roof to floor was 13s and 6d per yard. Datal work when employed at coal getting was 7/6d per day. The agreement was signed for the colliery owners by the manager M.W. Archer and by Harry Crossland, Ben Crossland, and Vincent Wragg on behalf of the workmen. Trammers at age 14 earned 2/3d per day and at 18, 3/9d. In 1919 an agreement was made concerning the supply of Home Coal to surface and underground workers and the conditions under which it would be supplied.

Recognised holidays at the colliery in 1920 were: one day at Easter: two days at Whitsuntide: two days at Christmas, a total of five days as compared with other south Yorkshire collieries, such as Barnsley Main or Wombwell, which usually had 10 days a year. This information was taken from a book compiled in 1926 for the South Yorkshire Coal Trade Association, found at the former British Coal Archive, near Mansfield.

The Colliery Year Book and Coal Trades Directory of 1923 shows data of colliery owners including Samuel Fox & Co., Ltd. with the telephone No. Stocksbridge 8. F.

Scott-Smith was General Manager and M. Wm. Archer was General manager of the collieries. Stocksbridge No.1 Colliery employed 243 men underground and 30 above ground whilst New Stocksbridge Colliery employed 120 underground and 40 above ground. Annual output was 150,000 tons of coking and manufacturing coal. Water was always a problem at Stocksbridge Colliery and was the reason which stopped a new drift being driven in 1937. Annual output fell steadily from 1927 onwards dropping from 178,684 tons to 44,452 in 1947 and consequently the number of men employed dropped from 448 to 268 in the same period.

By Vesting Day in 1947 when the National Coal Board took over, the mine was in poor condition although it was encouraging that there were large reserves of Halifax Hard and Soft Coal in the Don Valley and a considerable mining population. Reserves were estimated at 11,399,350 tons of which 6,000,000 were in the Halifax Hard Seam so it was decided to work a daily tonnage of 700 tons until new developments could be worked into the soft bed. As the scheme proceeded it was obvious that it would be unworkable as far as machine mining was concerned and therefore uneconomic. The discovery of large numbers of ironstone boulders embedded at various levels, some weighing as much as 20lb and 3ft in length meant it would be impossible to cut in the seam because of the danger of fire. A rapidly moving chain cutter striking one of these boulders could create a spark igniting gas or even the coal face, and it was possible that the machine might be thrown back into the gob taking the operative with it.

In the circumstances the Board had no alternative to closing the pit. None of the workforce most of whom lived in Stocksbridge or Deepcar would be made redundant but would be transferred to neighbouring pits. This information has been taken from a directive dated 22nd April 1948 and is also noted in The Coal & Iron Trades Review April 30th 1948.

Sources:

Parliamentary Papers 1842 Childrens  
Employment Commission  
The Stocksbridge Story by Trevor  
Lodge. Article from Stocksbridge  
Gazette. The Official Journal of  
Stocksbridge Engineering Steels  
British Coal Archive documents.  
Iron & Coal Trades Review 1948  
Colliery Year Book & Coal Trades  
Directory 1923  
Sections of Strata of the Coal  
Measures of Yorkshire.  
Photographs from an album inherited  
from my grandmother Mrs.  
E.A.Cooke of Hawthorne Brook.

If you have any artefacts, pictures, or  
information about Stocksbridge  
Colliery I would be pleased to hear  
from you.

Maureen Newton

House Yard where hustings had been  
erected. Morpeth and Strickland  
arrived mounted on chargers, habited  
as knights and were preceded by an  
orange flag inscribed "Justice for  
Ireland". Wortley arrived a little later  
accompanied by Geo. Lane Fox.  
During Morpeth's speech conflict  
broke out between the parties and  
heads were laid open and disfigured  
faces met the eye in every direction.  
The High Sheriff declared that a show  
of hands would be dispensed with,  
and that a poll being demanded by all  
parties, voting would take place on  
Thursday morning. Two persons had  
been killed in the conflict and at five  
o'clock an express train had been  
sent to Leeds to summon the military.  
When the four troops of the fifth  
Hussars arrived things had quietened  
and they returned to Leeds.

The voting went as follows: -  
In the Barnsley District J.S. Wortley  
had 509 votes including 16 splits and  
492 plumpers. Geo. Strickland had

who selected only one candidate  
when more than one could be voted  
for - ed]

Election fever started early in  
1841, on May 7th. Greville wrote in his  
diary

*"all the world thinks and talks of nothing  
but the division next week and its  
consequences. The Whig masses are  
clamorous for dissolution...Lord  
Melbourne however is exceedingly averse to  
it.*

*May 19th. They divided yesterday morning  
at 7 o'clock, division pretty much what was  
expected (a motion against the reduction of  
duty on foreign sugar, which was carried  
against the Government by a majority of  
36)*

*June Th. The division took place on Friday  
night and there was a majority of one  
against the Government. for the last day or  
two, it was a complete toss-up which side  
won and it depended on the few uncertain  
men who might chose or not chose to vote.*

*June 23rd. Parliament was prorogued  
yesterday with a very  
short speech."*

In May  
excitement  
prevailed in the  
West Riding when  
on the 21st. Sir  
Geo. Strickland  
declared "that it was  
not my intention  
again to ask for the  
suffrage of the  
electors". Next day  
approaches were  
made to Lord  
Milton on a  
requisition bearing  
the signatures of  
Lord Surrey and 11  
other Gentlemen.  
Lord Milton replied  
"I feel it is my duty to  
yield to your wishes  
and declare myself a  
candidate for the  
favour of the electors  
at the next general

election".

The three documents were issued  
throughout the Riding accompanied  
by a short appeal from F.H. Fawkes

619 votes including 5 splits and 2  
plumpers. Lord Morpeth had 637  
votes including 11 splits and 13  
plumpers. [A plumper was a voter

## HOW THEY VOTED

### Three Early West Riding Elections Part Two

Candidate No. 1	Lord Morpeth	12,576
Candidate No. 2	Sir Geo. Strickland	11,892
Candidate No. 3	Hon. J.S. Wortley	11,489

**W**ithin the  
next six  
years two more  
West Riding  
elections took  
place. In the  
contest of 1837  
three candidates  
offered themselves  
for election, Lord  
Morpeth, Sir Geo.  
Strickland and the  
Hon. J.S. Wortley.  
The contest caused  
excitement  
throughout the  
riding and most  
active exertions  
were used by the  
friends and  
partisans of each  
candidate to secure their return.

On Monday 31st. July the  
nominations of the candidates took  
place at Wakefield in the Court

FROM THE 1837 POLL BOOK		
VOTER	PLACE	VOTED FOR
Anthony A Barber	Baslow Derbys	No.3
Joseph Couldwell	Hunshelf Hall	No.3
Jonathan Crawshaw	Old Park	No.3
Benj. Garside	Hunshelf	No.3
Joseph Grayson	Helder Cliff	No.3
Thomas Green	Snowden Hill	No.3
Joseph Parkin Hague	Blackmore	No.3?
Jon'n Hawksworth	Snowden Hill	No.3
Joseph Hellowell	Unsliven Bridge	No.3
Thos. Mitchell	Dean Head	Nos. 1 & 2
William Newton	Hunshelf Bank	No.3
John Pearson	Snowden Hill	No.3

Esq., chairman of the Central Committee of the Whig Party.

Milton then issued his formal address "To the Gentry, Clergy, Freeholders and other electors of this West Riding of Yorkshire"

This move alerted the Tories and the Hon. J.S. Wortley addressed the voters with a long letter giving his opinion and "if that call should be made as on

of the Riding for the same purpose. The proclamation for the dissolution of Parliament was issued on 29th.

and/or how the tenants had voted, whether for their landlord or not. Samuel Fox did not get an opportunity to vote until the 1848 West Riding Election when he voted for Sir Culling Eardley bart.; the Whig candidate. He was defeated by Mr. Dennison by 14,743 votes to 11,795. *W.E. Spencer.*

Candidate	Votes
Hon. J.S. Wortley	13,165
E.B. Dennison	12,780
Lord Milton	12,080
Lord Morpeth	12,031

Voter	Place	Wortley	Dennison	Milton	Morpeth
Barker Anthony A	Baslow Derbs				
Coldwell Joseph	0 Hunshelf Hall	+	+		
Crawshaw Jonathan	0 Old Hall	+	+		
Fenton Wm.	Rutland Terrace Stafford	Vote Not recorded			
Garside Benj.	0 Hunshelf Corn Mill	+	+		
Grayson Joseph	0 Helder Cliff	+	+		
Hague Joseph Parkin	0 Blackmoor	+	+		
Hawksworth Jonathan	Snowden Hill				
Hellewell Joseph	0 Unsliven Bridge		+	+	
Mitchell Thos.	0 Dean Head		+	+	
Pearson John	Snowden Hill				
Roworth Robt.	0 Holly Hall	+	+		
Revell Saml.	Duckmanton				
Ramsden Isaac	Hunshelf Bank				
Sanderson Geo.	Green Moor				
Stead Wm.	0 Middop Mill Waldershelf	+	+		
Stead Wm jnr.	0 Waldershelf & Bentley	+	+		
Steel Robt.	Crimbles	+			
Tyas John	St. Mary's Gate Barnsley				
Wright Edw.	Brush House Ecclesfield				
Wroe Joseph	Hunshelf Bank				
0 = He is a yearly occupier at a rent of £50					

previous occasions I shall think it my duty to obey it". On 31st. May, a meeting of the Tory Central Committee was held at the Strafford Arms Hotel, Wakefield, under the presidency of Hon. E. Lascelles, and in addition to supporting Mr. Wortley it also requested Edward Beckett Dennison to be candidate in conjunction with Mr. Wortley. Mr. Dennison immediately complied and issued his address to the constituency forthwith. Lord Morpeth did not issue his address until 8th. June.

The candidates addressed the electors at Leeds Coloured Cloth Hall on 22nd. June, and then went to Huddersfield. Later they made a tour

June.

Monday 12th. July was nomination day in Wakefield, and hustings had been erected at the Cattle Market in the Ings. The four candidates presented themselves and made speeches. Lord Morpeth was proposed by Mr. Fawkes of Farnley, the Hon. J.S. Wortley by Godfrey Wentworth, Lord Milton by Chas. Wood M.P. and E.B. Dennison by Hon. E. Lascelles. Barnsley was a polling station and the poll was taken the following Thursday and Friday. the declaration was made on Monday 19th. July. Somebody had evidently checked whether the £50 voters were valid;

**CONGRATULATIONS**

We send best wishes to Mrs. E. Fieldsend on her 90th birthday - she feels unable to get to meetings but continues to support the Society

Also heading for his century is Ted Spencer who also has attained the ripe young age of 90.

Best Wishes and Happy Birthdays to you both!