



# THE PARAGON

Journal Of Stocksbridge & District History Society

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50P [FREE TO MEMBERS]

## ❁ A.G.M. REPORT INSIDE ❁

### WHARNCLIFFE CRAGS

When I was a lad I was told that there used to be an early British settlement near the crags, overlooking the river Porter or Little Don. This proved to be true when there was a 'dig' near the sub-station on Station Road and numerous flints were found. I was also told that the Romans made a road leading to the crags and also a wall. I have seen the remains of a road edge but it is now overgrown. The wall in question goes down below the crags at an angle.

The large cave about half way along the crags was always known to us as Dragon's Cave and we often went there, using the stepping stones leading down to it. We never found that it contained anything of interest but I'm sure that it would have been occupied in olden times. It was called the Dragon's Cave as the legend tells us that the Dragon of Wharncliffe lived there and flew across the valley to Dragon's Well which is situated on the top of Deepcar golf course and for some reason is now filled with stones.

After the Sheffield to Deepcar railway was built, regular excursions came from Sheffield to spend a day on the crags. One large rock, set at an angle, was known as the sliding stone. There is a stile over the station wall with a path leading up

to the crags, there is also (or was) a large mill stone lying by the path, perhaps this fell off a goods train at some time.

As schoolboys myself and pals went picnicking on the crags - often during school holidays, taking sandwiches and buying a 'Pop Alley' bottle of pop for twopence, with a penny back on the bottle. These bottles are now worth a few pounds each. Sometimes our parents and neighbours went with us, taking enough sandwiches and tea for a 'mash' at the lodge at the far end of the crags, where the lady occupier made us a brew of tea. There was, and still is, a stone-fenced yard where we had our repast and then we would all join in with a game of rounders.

Earl and Lady Wharncliffe when in residence at Wortley Hall held a yearly fête and how lovely they were. The lawns behind the hall were immaculate.

*Alec Herbert*

### HUNSHELF'S OTHER PUB

The Newtons of Berton under the Edge and the Rising Sun

The Newtons came to Berton under the Edge in 1714 when Joshua Newton of Cawthorne, a clothier, purchased the premises from William Kent. Berton is an unusual name in the district, I have seen it spelt Berton, Burton, and Birkin. This latter obviously refers to birch trees, but Berton is more of a puzzle. Does it come from Barton?, which was the term used for that part of an estate which the lord of the manor kept in his own hand - a farmyard. It could be, for Berton under the Edge was one of the chief rents in the Wortley's manor of Hunshelf. The holding was confirmed at "*The Court Baron of the Honourable Edward Wortley Esq. Lord of the Manor aforesaid held at Holly Hall in and for the Manor the 22nd May in the fourth year of George II King &c. Anno Dom. 1731. Before John Battie Gentleman, steward there. Fecit Fealtar We find that Joshua Newton hath purchased of W<sup>m</sup> Kent a messuage & certain lands thereto belonging held of Ye Lord of this Mannor as above and by a yearly chief rent of 8d.*"

When he died is uncertain, but at the next Court held on the 12th of July 1754, after paying fealty of 2s/4d, the jury "*found and presented*

that Joshua Newton since then had dyed seized of a messuage & certain land held as above and the by his death the same premises are now come unto Joshua Newton his son and heir."

By 1808 according to the Court of that year, the holding was in the possession of William Newton and that somehow the chief rent had become reduced to fourpence and that he had encroached a piece of land 1 rood 1 perch on Hunshelf Bank.

In 1811-12 William Newton let part of Berton under the Edge for use as a school with Benjamin Micklethwaite as master. From the Poor Book of the parish, William Newton was paid a rental of £3.3.0 per annum and Benjamin Micklethwaite 13/- a quarter. He had four pupils who paid 3 pence a week each. On 24/4/1812 11 forms were supplied to the school at a cost of £1.15.6d.

William Newton was still there in 1820 and still renting the room at 3 guineas a year. He also worked a day hole for coal which on occasions he supplied to the school - "Oct 11 1820. W<sup>m</sup> Newton school coals and leading 6 dozen. £1-6.3d"

From the Poor Book 1837 and 1838, under assessments not collected. "W<sup>m</sup> Newton Coal Pit empty, J Newton mill empty."

A granddaughter of Joshua I married John Green of Blakemoor, and a grandson, Joshua, bought the cotton mill at Stocksbridge, and whose son Thomas sold it to Samuel Fox.

The Newtons served as parish officers. Joshua Newton, 1747, Overseer of the Poor; Joshua Newton, 1778, Overseer of the Poor; William Newton, 1820, Constable.

In 1863 William and Martha Newton were at Berton when Martha licensed it as a public house. In 1864 William started to build the Rising Sun lower down the bank, near the bottom, overlooking the works, but he died, aged 42, before the building work was completed. Martha continued the building and when it was completed, transferred the licence from Berton under the Edge to the Rising Sun.

Martha died in 1910 aged 88 years and the Rising Sun continued in

the possession of the Newtons for three generations. First Martha's son Joe, then his son Harry and then Harry's widow who married J. Bisby, who later went on to the White Hart at Oughtibridge.

The Rising Sun closed its doors to the public in November 1967.

*W.E. Spencer.*

## PLAY AREAS

**B**orn and brought up at Watson House, Broomfield Road, our play areas were many.

My earliest recollections were of a home made swing which stretched between the garden gate posts. This being a clothes line and a cushion for comfort.

My brother, sister and myself had the use of our two neighbours' gardens as well as our own. Facing north they had very little sun and grew little or nothing, the odd iris and love in a mist were all I remember. On these gardens we could pitch our large, green tent which slept four adults and took up most of the garden area. Here we spent many happy hours and slept out occasionally. The ground sheet was a large tarpaulin which probably blew off a lorry or so the story went. We had several blow up pillows.

Opposite our house was the Works' field which was used for cricket, football and any special events such as the Whitsuntide Sing and sports. We would climb the wall and over the high wooden fence, our knees being constantly full of splinters. At the other side of the wall stood a lone ash tree. Apart from blocking out the light to the house we would have our swing made from a good bull rope which stood there for years. Away from the pitch there was plenty of room to play rounders. We would also have a good space to play on the grandstand. In the corner of the field stood a trough where we could dabble with the few frogs which collected there.

The field above this was known to us as the 'Rag Field'. Here

we'd play with our friends from the 'Rag'. Apart from the Miners' Arms nothing is left of our friends' houses.

We lived only yards from what we called the 'green'. A large triangular area of rough grassland surrounded by hawthorn hedging and having the remains of two old wooden and iron seats. Again we could spend hours on end picking wild flowers - buttercups, daisies and milkmaids to name but a few. We often chewed wild leaves we called 'gobbledee guts' (no idea of the proper name). Here we could also practice our cartwheels, crabs acrobats and roly poly down the bankside. We could also look for birds' nests in the hedge in fact it was almost like our private park. It also near enough to hear Mother when she whistled for us, which she always did.

We also played in Harry Bower's out-buildings which were once used for hens and cattle. We made this like a play house with old carpets on the floor and cardboard boxes for cupboards. Once while playing here older children, one being my brother, bricked over the back window opening. I was the one thin enough to get through the opening where the hens used to enter to fetch help to open the door.

Nearing the end of the war we had an air raid shelter on spare ground (used for a drying ground) near the house. The roof was ideal for hopscotch, sun bathing and whatever else we could do.

The Fox Glen was near enough for us to play in. In here was a swimming pool, paddling pool, swings, see-saw and sand pit. We could blackberry, pick wild flowers, picnic and stay for hours just generally enjoying ourselves.

The road outside our house was almost car free and there we were safe playing hopscotch and in the winter when the road was thick with snow and ice we would be given old roasting tins to use as sledges.

A very popular spot for all children coming home from the Church School was Bocking Wood. The bankside being handy for sliding and roly poly on the brook for

messing around in unless in flood.  
E.M. McKinlay

Other previous articles about pastimes and play include: -  
Gas Lamps, Joan Firth, Issue 1 - Autumn 1995  
Pastimes & Games, A Herbert, Issue 2 - Winter 1995  
Childhood Memories, Stan Fieldsend, Issue 14 - Winter 1998

## SANDTRAYS & MAYPOLES

### Bolsterstone Endowed School An Appreciation Part 2

Even at the time of the Civil War the demand for education was there, as some 60 years before the first school was built in 1686, education was given in the prayer House or Chapelry which was on the site of the present Church. Penistone Grammar School, founded in 1392, was for pupils who could pay for their education. For those who could not, there existed the 'petty' schools and the 'ragged' schools. These were mostly in towns. Year after year, a fresh crop of youngsters would grow up for whom 'no man seemed to care, teach, feed or clothe'.

Teaching was mostly family training. Life was precarious. A young boy would leave school lucky if he was placed with a local merchant or farmer, mainly for animal minding, bird scaring or other menial tasks. Girls would be placed as domestic servants or for family minding.

In 1621 Ralph Ellis of Spink Hall made provision in his will towards the maintenance of a schoolmaster at Bolsterstone. He gave £200 - a princely sum, but £50 was lost in the Civil War.

I understand that the clergy had a hand in the teaching, but I quote "The Rev. Christopher Dickenson in 1643, a man of scandalous living and conversation whose appointment was irregular as he was incapable. It was alleged he often preached other mens' sermons and if he tried to give one of his

own, was often found tiring. He was frequently in alehouses very often drunk and abusive."

The Rev. William Marsh was even worse. Again I quote, "He was a good preacher but had no conduct. He married several couples clandestinely and was sent to York jail where he lingered and was only released when the Archbishop of York intervened. He re clothed him and gave him a small parish with a stipend of £3.10.0 per year."

Probably a reward for showing some ingenuity. So they would not have been good examples to the children.

Further searching brought to light the name of a Mr Chappell and then Thomas Bramall as two of the early teachers, followed by Henry Hodgkinson in 1681 who was only 19 years old. It is he who is regarded as the true father of education in Bolsterstone.

Hodgkinson came from London where he had trained as a doctor and was the holder of a book of Apothecaries (medical recipes) which he put to good use on the sometimes sickly children. Illnesses were common - disease and death only round the corner. Children would die without parents knowing

the cause or reason.

The local doctor, Dr. Rousall who was a friend of Hodgkinson said of him "That his medical potions were on the sparse side, but his diagnosis was usually right and with few adjustments the desired treatment was affected." We must remember that all medicines and treatments were made from herbs and plants growing in profusion in the hedgerows and fields. No paracetamol



Bolsterstone - Doorway to the Porter's Lodge  
(Omitted from issue 14 due to lack of space)

or penicillin in those days. It was either kill or cure.

Hodgkinson found it so cold in the Chapelry in wintertime - no heating of any kind - that the children took to going into the nearest homes to warm themselves. He complained bitterly and said that unless a more suitable room was found or a proper schoolroom built he would give up

teaching - a threat that worked, for he was to continue to teach and take an interest in education for the rest of his life.

*J.C. Walton*

Sadly, as this edition of the Paragon went to press, we learned that John Walton had passed away on Sunday 14th February. The Society extends its sympathy to his family.

*A previous article about Bolsterstone Schools, by Norma Pears appeared in the Summer 1997 issue.*



**Bolsterstone Village from Folderings Lane**  
(held over from last issue)

Original postcard supplied by Maureen Newton

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EACH MONTH, AT THE LIBRARY,  
MANCHESTER ROAD,  
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☆ **PROGRAMME 1999** ☆

**APRIL 8TH**

**DOUGLAS LAMB**

**A PUB ON EVERY CORNER**

**MAY 13TH**

**GORDON BENNETT**

**LOCAL WATERWORKS**

**JUNE 10TH**

**DR I OATES**

**GENERAL PRACTICE IN THE  
TWENTIETH CENTURY**

**SUNDAY JULY 18TH**

**2.00PM**

**VISIT TO SHEFFIELD CATHEDRAL**

**AUGUST**

**NO MEETING**

**SEPTEMBER 9TH**

**KEN LOXLEY**

**ALL THE QUEEN'S MEN**

**OCTOBER 14TH**

**BASIL SPOONER**

**THE ROYAL MAIL**

**NOVEMBER 11TH**

**DR IAN RUSSELL**

**CHRISTMAS CAROLLING IN  
SOUTH YORKSHIRE & NORTH  
DERBYSHIRE**

**SATURDAY DECEMBER 11TH**

**TENTH BIRTHDAY PARTY**