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50P [FREE TO MEMBERS]

❁ FAMILY HISTORY ❁

Me - My Family Tree and a visit to the Family Record Centre

Most of my family seem at some time, to have gravitated towards that part of the country south of Watford Gap. Even the Birmingham connection jumped land onto a barge and floated southeast. I had reached a stage where a visit to the Family Record Centre on Myddleton Street, London, EC1, was essential for further progress to be made!

Duly armed with my leaflet containing directions and a map on the back, I set off from St. Pancras. It was a good walk, and on a pleasant day there are lots of things to see on the way, but if you are anxious to get there and get on, then it will undoubtedly be quicker to catch the bus or tube to Angel.

The building is quite well signposted when you get there - its big and new, and I guess a bit imposing. Through the door into the reception area, a bag search and then decisions - where to go? The first time I went - I must admit it was a bit daunting - although it needn't be. I just went with the flow and found myself in a massive open plan space containing the great bound volumes of the Births, Marriages and Deaths indexes. There were no tables and chairs to work at, just the sloping tables

designed to hold the indexes - Births to the right, Marriages in the middle and Deaths to the left.

This is what I needed and on that first visit that was where I stayed. I had done some preparation beforehand, and this I would strongly recommend, but even on that first visit when I really wanted to get confirmation of births and marriages, there were a few puzzles. Why was my Grandmother registered as Mary Elizabeth, and then christened as Elizabeth Frances? Was one of the three Robert Chaplins who got married in the Ipswich District in 1844 my man? I was lucky on that day and even some hopeful guesses paid off. With more preparation I could have gathered together more information - not that I could have afforded any more certificates which at £6.50 each are cheaper than applying by post, but nevertheless costs soon mount up. I discovered that there was a distinct advantage in having fairly uncommon names in the family. One fellow searcher announced that he had completely washed his hands of one line of the family when he discovered that a Great-Great...had married a Smith (with apologies to all Smiths).

Since that first visit I have explored and used other parts of the building. Downstairs in the basement there is a locker space for coats and bags. The building is very warm but I find it useful to wear a light jacket with pockets for specs and pencils etc

whilst dumping all other coats and bags. You do need a pound coin to operate the locker. In this area there is also a cloakroom, vending machines for snacks and drinks and tables and chairs for eating a packed lunch and catching up on progress. There are several eating places in the vicinity of the Centre, but I never seem to have time to spare.

So far on the first floor I have discovered and used the census return indexes and microfilms for 1841 through to 1891. No queuing for microfilm readers here - the only problem is if someone else has relatives living in the same area and is searching too! As yet I haven't worked out the machinations of the photocopier but the staff on the desk would help if needs be. Easy access to the returns for Essex has been really helpful but also frustrating. After all why did my Great Great Grandmother always insist on being away from home on Census night - did she really have to go visiting that day, leaving the old man at home? and Great Grandmother *must* have been somewhere in 1881 - after all she was only part way through producing the family of sixteen! The nice thing about working in the Family Record Centre is that others are facing the same problems and no one seems to find it strange to hear utterances such as: -

"She doesn't seem to have been born, so I'll go and see if she died!" - *"That's where the old *** was living"* - *"Are you sure that is*

the right family?" - "YES - I've found them!"

There are other useful records at the Family Record Centre - some Estate Duty Office death records, some Wills and non-parochial records - but as yet I haven't found them. If I need them there will be somebody to ask and the staff really are very knowledgeable and helpful. They won't do the searching for you but they will guide you in the right direction if they can.

If you have been thinking of going, its well worth the effort of getting the early morning train so that you can stay through from opening time until you are 'persuaded' to leave at the end of the day!

Wendy Goodhind

FROM WALDERSHELF TO STOCKSBRIDGE

A Local Study by Brenda Duffield

Waldershelf is the name anciently given to the ridge north-west of Sheffield which marks the western borders of the coal-measure sandstone of West Yorkshire. Joseph Hunter described the byerlaw of Waldershelf as "that part of Bradfield...which consisted of the part north of the Ewden, in which are the vills of Midhope and Bolsterstone."

The origin of the name is believed to be that of a Scandinavian chieftain who built a stronghold on the crest of the hill, and it is probably from this source that the more modern name of Bolsterstone derives, rather than from the boulder which now lies within the churchyard there. There is no evidence to enable us to place this event in a particular century, but the 1961 edition of *The Place-names of the West Riding of Yorkshire* gives the earliest spelling WALDERCHELF, dated 1190. The name only survived into the 20th. Century in that of a farmstead on the south side of the ridge and perished with the submersion of the property in the

Broomhead Reservoir in 1916, and now the name is almost forgotten. Fortunately, the work of a few Local Historians has preserved this, and much more, knowledge which is invaluable to those interested in our heritage.

Chapter I :THE HISTORIANS

1. JOHN WILSON, "The Antiquary" (1719-1783)

John Wilson was the grandson of the Rev. Charles Wilson, Vicar of Sheffield, upon whom the estate of Broomhead in the Chapelry of Bradfield was settled in 1659. A letter written in his own hand in 1781 names an ancestor as "*Adam Wilson of Broomhead, being shield-bearer or Esquire to Thomas, Lord Furnival, (Lord of the Manor of Sheffield) in the Scotch Wars, in the time of King Edward the 1st., who gave him some lands which I yet possess, for his good services in those wars.*"

He was one of those country gentlemen who virtually founded the tradition of Local History by devoting much of their time to the collection of material pertaining to their own estates. John Wilson traced his own pedigree and the descent of the Broomhead estate, collecting grants, quitclaims, wills, inventories and deeds of all kinds dating back to the 12th. And 13th. Centuries. Some of these show that his land spread into Waldershelf, the Manors of Bolsterstone and Midhope, and that dealings with other landowners on neighbouring estates were not infrequent.

One of the earliest records of the name Waldershelf in these documents is a grant and quitclaim (deeds of sale) to John, son of William, son of John of Walderschelf.

But John Wilson also concerned himself with documents which did not directly relate to Broomhead. He recorded the quitclaim in 1387 of John, son of John Dyson of Hunschelff in Penistone Parish, to William, son of John de Walderschelff and Agnes his wife.

In this invaluable collection we can find the earliest spellings of local

names, personal and topographical, and trace their development. There is a 1454 Grant to Thomas del Greff of Hunshelff of "land abutting on le Lyttil Wetter of Done on the south" witnessed by John Greffe of Walderschelff, which is an early mention of our northern boundary as well as the name Greaves. The names Hattursley of Langsyde and Waldershelfe, Waynewright of Bolstarston and Greaves of Wyndhyll appear. John Wilson was an avid collector of Pedigrees. The Ronsley Collection of Wilson Mss includes the pedigrees of many local families; copies of Bolsterstone, Midhope and Bradfield Parish Registers; an index of the inscriptions on tombstones in Bolsterstone Churchyard; a copy of Harrison's 1673 Survey of the Bradfield Soke of Hallamshire; indices of Bolsterstone people, places and field-names; the Waldershelf Assessment for the Relief of the Poor, the Waldershelf Land Tax Assessment of 1719 and the Westnall and Waldershelf Window Bill of 1732. All these reveal the stability of certain families and local names.

Documents added to the Wilson Collection after the death of The Antiquary have been equally valuable in demonstrating how property in Waldershelf was affected by the acquisition of the Manor of Bolsterstone by another branch of the Wilson family. This manor had been part of the ancient Manor of Hallamshire and therefore in the hands of the Earls of Shrewsbury and their heirs. In 1762 it had been conveyed to Sir Matthew Lambe. He may never have lived here, nor did his son. The Hon. Penistone Lambe. In 1792 the Right Hon. Penistone, Lord Melbourne, leased to John Wilson of London all mines and veins of lead ore in two farms called Wood in Bolsterstone or Waldershelf. But that particular property was still part of the Manor which was offered for sale in 1802.

There is also evidence that parcels of land were in the possession of other landowners. A document dated 1779 records the recovery of land in the Hamlet of Green by Joseph Allen, gent., of Chapeltown. The draft agreement of the sale by the Right

Hon. Penistone, Lord Melbourne, and the Hon. Penistone Lambe, his eldest son, to John Rimington of Hillsborough, Esq., describes it as "*the Manor, freehold and tithe-free estate of Bolsterstone*" to be purchased for the sum of £35,000. A consequence of the sale was that many tenants were given notice to quit, and the Wilson documents include agreements concerning the ejection of Thomas Roper of Windhill and of John Grayson of Hunger Hill, both in 1804. Evidently the new owner raised the money to buy the Manor partly by offering the freehold to his tenants. A conveyance in the same year to Ann Roberts, widow, secured her cottage and appurtenances in Bolsterstone for £28, and in 1806 Closes named in Bolsterstone were conveyed to John Charlesworth of Over Hag for £1,500. Property was also sold to neighbouring landowners, such as Joseph Tyas of Wortley, farmer, who bought three closes called Brackin Common near Watson House for £185 in 1803. Then in 1805 the sale of a tenement and closes named in a place called Stocks Bridge to Thomas Armitage of Hoyland Swaine, for £45, is perhaps the first intimation of a shift of the industrial base of the area from Ewden to the Little Don valley. Thirty years later Mrs. Mary Rimington, widow of John, leased a plot of land and bed of clay to John Barraclough, potter, of Middop Pottery. The deeds relating to all these transactions were preserved and recorded by John Wilson and his heirs and have been referred to and appreciated by each of his successors.

NEXT ISSUE: JOSEPH HUNTER

SANDTRAYS & MAYPOLES

Bolsterstone Endowed School An Appreciation Part 4

What form did teaching take?
Hymns were sung - prayers recited - sermons and stories listened to - simple sums - frequent thrashings

were meted out. Children were reminded of their lowly state and of the duty and respect owed to their betters.

Orders given to parents on admittance of their children to charity schools, Parents take care to send children to school at school hours and to keep them at home on no pretence whatsoever except in the case of illness.

That they should send children clean, washed and combed.

That they correct the children for such faults they commit at home and inform the master whereby the whole behaviour of the children may be better ordered.

William Ronksley, schoolmaster of Sheffield wrote in 1650 regarding the following as essential to good order. "*At no time talk or quarrel in school, but be quiet seated and silent much lest mayest thou deceive thyself by trifling thy time away in play. Bawl not aloud in making complaints, a boys tongue should never be heard in school but answering a question and repeating his lesson. Divulge not to any person whatsoever elsewhere anything that thou hath passed in school either spoken or done.*"

How different was John Locke, an Attorney of Somerset who, in 1684 wrote giving advice on what children should learn. "*Reading - writing - arithmetic - simple accounts for boys - needlework for girls. It should be pleasurable based on activities and curiosity rather than iron rule or rote.*" So many different ideas even in those days. Three hundred years on and still no agreement on the curriculum.

Then suddenly, supporting Endowed and Charity schools became fashionable among the more benevolent well-to-do educationalists. The poor were very much what the rich made them.

Back to Bolsterstone. In 1711 Mark Stanley took over from Henry Hodgkinson as schoolmaster and also became the official Parish Clerk which raised his salary to £10 per year. He must have thought he was on to a good thing as he taught for almost 60 years and was rising eighty when he retired.

On to 1780, when the school,

in a poor state of repair and totally inadequate for the rising influx of children, was pulled down and rebuilt. This from a bequest of £1,366.13.4d in the will of John Hodgkinson of London, who was the son of Henry Hodgkinson, late schoolmaster and doctor. It was a substantial sum of money and in today's terms would amount to £900,000.

It was added to the endowment of Ralph Ellis, and Hodgkinson directed that Trustees should be appointed to manage the fund and administer it and the school, and appoint a schoolmaster - or remove him - as the case may be. All children were to be instructed and educated in reading - joined writing - accounts and other useful learning and good manners. The catchment area was as before.

In Wigtwizzle there was also what was referred to as a 'Dame' school where George and Henry Ronksley of the Dwarriden were taught. The school was held in a cottage known as Hollings House which no longer exists, except for a single upright stone set in the ground under trees at Broomhead Park, across the road from Wigtwizzle and above the lower entrance to the park. The old dame who was probably self taught called it 'her little palace', and well she might, for it is said that its cleanliness and charming rusticity was considered a gem in the homesteads in the locality.

I would also like to mention two more small Endowed Schools in the area. Thomas Bland who was both curate and then vicar at Bolsterstone 1772-1818 built Blands Chapel and left £153 in his will for an Endowed School at Midhope, for eight poor children to be taught reading, writing and arithmetic. Maybe these children were from the other side of Langley Brook and just missed qualifying to be educated at Bolsterstone.

Bland was the son of a shoemaker and was following in his father's trade when the knife he was using slipped clumsily in his hand and he was badly cut. The accident so upset his mother that she pleaded for him to be put to some other vocation. So began his work in the church.

The other small Endowed School was t Snowden Hill or 'Snodill' as we know it. An Irish gentleman known as Black Dick taught a number of 'big boys and girls' in an old cottage in Hawksworth's fields near the Mission Hall which is in connection with Penistone church.

J.C. Walton

FROM MY COMMONPLACE BOOK

Wednesday 18th February 1998

Had an unusual chain of incidental thought today. The College is closed for half term, so the history class decided on a walk-about at Midhope Stones. John Harvey called for me as usual and I joined the group on foot; but by about halfway my hip told me that I had had enough, and I went back and sat in the car..

What sparked the thought off I can't remember but I was linking the Midhope Pottery with Hodsock Priory. In this morning's *Yorkshire Post* there was a

picture of Hodsock and its snowdrops for which it is famous.

In 1720 George Walker III of Hunshelf Hall went into partnership with his brother-in-law Robert Blackburn of Aldermanshead; to build a pottery at Midhope. Robert Blackburn must have been leasing Aldermanshead, for the family came from Papist Hill, Upper Denby. Robert Blackburn died in 1727 and left his estate to this brother Benjamin Blackburn; (brother to Ann Blackburn, George Walker's wife) Benjamin died in 1736. Robert Blackburn's estate was mortgaged to George Walker and he must have foreclosed sometime for Papist Hill came into the Hunshelf estate. (See tablet let in the wall at Papist Hill which reads "rebuilt by W. Smith. 1845")

The main line of the Walkers died out with the death of Margaret d.s.p. and who after many bequests left the estate to two maiden aunts. The legal affairs of these two ladies were looked after by Wm. Smith, then of Cowley, and Kenworthy writes, "*when Mr & Mrs Smith of Cowley Manor brought their infant son, their fourth child, born 23 August 1799 to the notice of the maiden ladies, Betty and Mary Walker who were the last of their race, they*

asked him if the child had been baptised and being answered in the negative, promised to be God-Mothers to the boy if the parents would have their boy christened George Walker. The parents as may be imagined readily consented and when both ladies were dead George Walker Smith who married a daughter of John Ridsdale of Springfield near Wakefield found himself sole heir and owner of some of the most valuable land in Hunshelf."

But blood is thicker than water and the two ladies may have had long memories; for Ann, daughter of George Walker II, had married Gerald Kirk in 1715, and their daughter had married Thomas Smith, father of William Smith, so Ann Walker would be great-grandmother to George Walker Smith.

Later George Walker Smith made the Hunshelf estate over to his father in love and affection for his upbringing.

William Smith went to live at Barnes Hall and George Walker Smith went to Hodsock - hence the coincidence of the photograph in this morning's paper and the link with Midhope pots!

W.E. Spencer.

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