

# THE PARAGON

Journal of Stocksbridge & District History Society



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## HERBERT THICKETT

CONCLUDED FROM ISSUE 27

**P**ENISTONE ALMANAC 1919: Private Herbert Thickett, only son of Mr. & Mrs. G. Thickett of Manchester Road, Stocksbridge, reported missing March 27<sup>th</sup>. 1918.

We received the extract from the War Diary giving an account of the battle that day, also a map of the Sunken Road near Rossignal Wood, Hebuterne. They had 6 tanks, but were being attacked with 77 mm. guns, trench mortars, and bombs. They asked for air support, but none was available. 5 officers and 160 other ranks were killed that day.

We visited the battle site, now all peaceful fields, a lone farmer ploughing in the distance. We stood in a small cemetery which contained the graves of about 6 who

were killed on the same day as Herbert. One of them was an Unknown Soldier - could this have been Herbert?

We also went to the Arras Memorial, which is in a garden flanked on one side by vast sandstone columns covered with the 35,000 names of the soldiers with no known grave. We found his name, as directed, on Bay 7. We wished to take a photograph of his name, but it was very difficult to see as it was very high up and the names did not stand out on the stone-work. A young French gardener was working there and saw our difficulty, came over with a ladder, climbed up and filled in the name with pencil. As he came down he laughed and said "Vandals!" We took our photograph.

It is sad to think that we might be the only people to stand there and remember his background. His father Geho, died in 1931, aged 77, and is buried at Bolsterstone, His mother, Diana, died in Grenoside Buildings, (the Workhouse?) on Armistice Day, November 11<sup>th</sup>. 1941, her address Spink House Cottage, Stocksbridge. Present at her death was a niece from Norfolk, who did not even know his Christian name. She is not buried with William - I have not yet found her final resting place.

In the late 1930s Diana visited her distant cousins Hugh, Ethel and Avis Broadhead, who lived opposite the

Congregational Chapel at the bottom of Hole House Lane. They remember her as an old lady, all dressed in black, who spoke differently. Flora Tune's mother was a friend of hers, and she had a recipe for a Christmas cake from Sandringham House, Norfolk, where someone from Diana's family had worked. Geho is remembered as a small man who in his fish shop would shake every drop of fat from his chips and sold a "penn'orth o' mixed".

The late George Broadhead of Spink Hall said in 1995 that he remembered his brother coming home from College in 1931, and being told by their father to put on his best suit to be a bearer at Geho Thickett's funeral.

Would this family story have had a different ending if Herbert Thickett had not been killed in the Great War?

Betty McKay

SHE IS NOT BURIED WITH  
WILLIAM - I HAVE NOT YET  
FOUND HER FINAL RESTING  
PLACE.

## FROM WALDERSHELF TO STOCKSBRIDGE THE HISTORIANS

JACK BRANSTON 1907 - 1991  
*HISTORY OF STOCKSBRIDGE* 1983  
*HISTORY OF LANGSETT* 1985  
*PENNINE PEOPLE AND PLACES* 1988

**F**rom infancy Jack spent his life in Stocksbridge. He worked for the Co-op for over thirty years, only interrupting that career to serve in the R.A.F. as an

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ambulance orderly from 1941 until demobbed. His last twenty years were spent in the Wages Department of the steelworks.

He was Secretary of the Joseph Kenworthy Fellowship - predecessor to our present Society - and remained our President until his death.

Jack was a keen local historian with a particular interest in areas as disparate as the Works Railway and St. James' Chapel, Midhope. A booklet on the latter topic appeared some years before his first major work.

Through the years he collected a massive amount of material and tried to incorporate all of it in his first History of Stocksbridge. Unfortunately, Jack was rather autocratic and would not allow anyone to edit his work, resulting in a rather badly organised volume. Some passages of text are repeated and there are inappropriate sequences of chapters. Inaccuracies of fact are sometimes noticeable and even grammatical errors.

The photograph of John Hunter which he used in PENNINE PEOPLE & PLACES is certainly not of the author of the HISTORY OF HALLAMSHIRE - that was Joseph Hunter.

Worst of all is the use he made of other people's work. While he made general acknowledgement of his debt to all his predecessors, he proceeded, not just to quote them, but reproduce whole passages and present them as his own - to the extent that the S.U.D.C., who published his first book, issued a disclaimer of responsibility. Even parts of his work about the Co-operative Society proved to have been copied directly from Kenworthy's HISTORY OF THE BAND OF HOPE INDUSTRIAL CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY LTD. 1860 - 1960.

Some of his material would be invaluable to us - if only we knew his sources and could confirm his research. Perhaps someone will one day undertake to sort this work out and republish it. Meanwhile we remember Jack Branston with affection mingled with exasperation.

*Brenda  
Duffield*



## WHEN THE GYPSIES CAME

I recall as a youngster in the 1930s-40s the annual visit of the gypsies to Broomfield Road and district.

Apart from clothes-pegs, which were made from two curved pieces of wood banded together by a thin metal strip, they also offered us bunches of "lucky" white heather. If we didn't buy we were cursed by them!

One year I remember my mother buying a bunch of flowers. I can still picture now how they were made. This was done by removing the lid from an ordinary tin can and cutting strips diagonally to the base, then twisting them to form stems. On the ends of these were fastened lovely crepe paper flowers. They certainly looked very nice to us then, but I am afraid that today they would be classed as hazardous, as careless handling could be dangerous.

I seem to recall that they had their camp on a narrow lane past the iron bridge in Ewden. When they had gone we could see an area where the tree branches had been cut and there was other evidence of the peg making.

*Mary McKinlay*

## THE TUESDAY MAN

As a young child I was fascinated by the contents of the Tuesday man's case. If I remember correctly, his name was Mr. Holland.

Every Tuesday morning a knock came at the door and I ran to open it, calling "Mam, it's the Tuesday Man!" Invariably she found something to purchase from him.

This gentleman was a one-armed peddler and he travelled all the way from Sheffield to Stocksbridge every Tuesday in all weathers, carrying his brown leather suitcase. To a small child this case was like Aladdin's Cave, and for a busy mum it held everything she needed for day-to-day running repairs.

Fastened inside the lid, by strips of elastic, were to be found packets of pins, sewing and darning needles, press-studs, hooks & eyes, safety pins, cards of darning wools in various colours, shoe-laces, hair-grips and hair-pins. In the body of the case one found cards of bias binding, tape, elastic and hair ribbon, which he sold by the yard. Also in the base of the case were pinafores, dusters, dishcloths hankies, bobbins of cotton, etc., etc.

Has this brought back memories for many readers?

*Mary Cooper*

## THE WILL OF JOHN COULDWELL 1871

I John Couldwell of Deepcar in the Township of Bradfield in the Parish of Ecclesfield in the West Riding of the County of York Farmer and shoemaker do hereby declare this my last will and Testament as follows that is to say After payment of all debts and expenses

I GIVE AND BEQUEATH to my wife the whole of my real and personal property whatsoever and wheresoever for life or until her marriage and at her death or marriage to be divided amongst my children in manner following that is to say to my daughter Mary Shaw three houses situated at Deepcar occupied one by Ann Ridal one by William Spooner one by David Marsh to receive all rents and profits for her natural life and outbuildings thereto with a right to fetch water from with a free right out of the trough or yard occupied by me at present for ever then be divided amongst her child or children equal at her death

I GIVE unto my daughter Hannah Couldwell three houses situated at Deepcar occupied one by George Walker one by William Firth one by John Bacon for her natural life at her death to her child or children if she has no child then to be divided amongst her sisters equally

I GIVE unto my daughter Sarah Couldwell two houses occupied by John Maxfield one by Edward Hemsworth for her natural life at her death to her child or children if she has no children to be divided equally amongst her sisters and outbuildings thereto with a right to fetch water from out of the trough or yard also Hannah Couldwell and outbuildings thereto with a free right to fetch water out of the trough or yard occupied by me

I GIVE to my daughter Ann Couldwell three houses at Carhead occupied by George Fieldsend and Charles Walton and Joseph Savage for her natural life if she has no child or children then to be divided equally amongst her sisters

I GIVE unto my daughter Sarah Couldwell one house at Carhead occupied by William Fieldsend one house for her natural life at her death to her child or children if she has no child then to be divided amongst her sisters equally with the outbuildings and garden

I GIVE and BEQUEATH to my son Benjamin Couldwell for his life only the farm with the farm buildings and homestead and two houses and garden occupied by Jane Day and Joseph Spooner garden nineteen acres be the same more or less the farm yards house with a right of road through the back of the cottages into the Stubn (Stubbin?) and outbuildings and all other buildings or premises I now occupy to be kept in tennantable repair at his death if he dies without child or children then to be divided equally amongst his sisters or their living children

And I hereby appoint my wife Sarah Couldwell my executors and John Shaw of Thurlstone with power and authority to make such arrangements as may be necessary for carrying the same into effect the costs and charges for the same out of the estate and I hereby revoke all or any former Will or Wills made by me and I do solemnly declare this only to be

my last Will and Testament

WITNESS my hand this twentieth day of May One thousand eight hundred and seventy one

John Couldwell died 10<sup>th</sup>. June 1871 (aged 70)  
Sarah Couldwell died shortly after (aged 56)

27<sup>th</sup>. Nov. 1909 Part of this land, known as the Stubbins was sold by Benjamin Couldwell to W.H.Fox, J.G.Jeffery and C.B. Hobbs.

*contributed by Arnold Palmer*



## FROM THE DIARY OF WILLIS BURGIN

After the accident with the pit-pony my next job was assisting the rope runner, at the far end of the level, on an endless rope down a very steep drift. Twenty more miners were sent up this new drift, my father and his mate among them. After only working one month, they were very unhappy with the small wage they got each week. While having tea one day, Father asked "What do you think we found in our stall this morning, Willis?" "A fall of muck!" was my answer, having heard of the frequent roof falls troubling the miners. "Quite right, son," said Father, "but with this muck was a large Wharncliffe Crag that blocked our gate way." And looking upwards, Father said, he could see blue sky and bracken hanging over the edge of the hole where the crag had been.

This was abnormal work, with no extra payment, and Father had words with the manager, who told him that if he could not do better work, he could leave the firm and take his son with him! The next week, Father put in our seven days notice to leave Lowoods and Co.

My new job was arranged between Father and two miners over a pint of beer in a public house at Deepcar. I had the choice of two jobs - one in a small mine, as a trammer pulling wagons of coal from the front over the hard ground (no rails), on hands and knees, with a strong leather belt and chain. I chose the other - to tram for the two coal miners, working at Samuel Fox & Co. at Stocksbridge. My wage 14/6d a week.

STOCKSBRIDGE & DISTRICT  
HISTORY SOCIETY

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MEETINGS ARE NORMALLY HELD ON THE SECOND  
THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH, AT THE LIBRARY,  
MANCHESTER ROAD, STOCKSBRIDGE AT 7.00 PM.

THE PARAGON

NEXT EDITION ..... SEPTEMBER 2002

PUBLICATION DEADLINE ..... 8TH AUGUST

MEETINGS

❖ PROGRAMME 2002 ❖

JULY 11<sup>TH</sup>

MRS. MARJORIE DUNN:

WHY "THE T'ALLI STONE?" - A HISTORICAL  
LOOK AT SHEFFIELD

AUGUST NO MEETING

SEPTEMBER 12<sup>TH</sup>

MR R. BROWN:

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF WINSTON CHUR-  
CHILL

OCTOBER 10<sup>TH</sup>

JOHN HARVEY:

STOCKSBRIDGE, AN ACCIDENT OF HISTORY?

NOVEMBER 14<sup>TH</sup>

PROF. DAVID HEY:

THE HISTORY OF PENISTONE

SATURDAY DEC. 14<sup>TH</sup>

CAROL SUPPER

Designed & printed by Mike's DTP 0114 246 4200 mike@spich.co.uk

AN ANNIVERSARY TO BE PROUD OF

How many of you, I wonder, were aware that the last edition of the *Paragon* was a landmark in the history of the Society?

The first edition of the *Society Newsletter* was published in the Spring of 1992 and with edition 27 of the *Paragon* we celebrated ten years of continuous publication by the Society. That's 40 editions of one publication or another with material recording the history of the district. All of these have come out on time, although there have been times in the past when it was a close-run thing! As the person who puts it all together, I'd like to say how much I've enjoyed doing the 'donkey work' for the last ten years and to thank everyone who has ever contributed to either the *Newsletter* or the *Paragon* during the last decade.

I'd like to think that the *Paragon* has come a long way too in those ten years. From very humble beginnings to a level of presentation that was unavailable to anyone but a commercial printer a decade ago. The technology though is only a tool, it's still the writing that makes the *Paragon* and thanks to the careful stewardship of Brenda Duffield—long may it flourish!

By the way—for the Anoraks amongst you, the ten years has seen the publishing of more than 80,000 words—that's a fair amount of historical recording.

Mike Spick

STOCKSBRIDGE & DISTRICT  
HISTORY SOCIETY  
NEWSLETTER SPRING 1992 No. 1

EDITORS' REMARKS

Welcome to this the first (but hopefully not the last) Stocksbridge & District History Society Newsletter.

This publication is YOURS. It's success will only appear if YOU are prepared to write them. I am looking for any short articles that will be of interest to the membership. Personal reminiscences, historical snippets, in short, anything that YOU want to share with others.

Don't worry about style and presentation, I am willing to discuss those with you. You definitely won't have to type anything!

Articles and ideas can be delivered to me care of the library. If you want to discuss anything with me, telephone the library on 882876 and leave a message.

If the newsletter takes off publication will be quarterly, which means that I will need a steady stream of ideas for publication - OVER TO YOU !!!  
Mike Spick.

CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

Dear Members,  
Our second anniversary has passed and we have much to be pleased about. Of course the old Kenworthy Fellowship was much older and for many years was prosperous, with Jack Branton as secretary. The prosperous days passed but Jack kept the Fellowship going, always willing and able to stand in when a speaker wasn't available. The active membership fell slowly and when Jack's health failed the Fellowship was in a critical state. The remaining funds were insufficient to pay room rents for future meetings - enter Mike Spick. Mike offered free use of the library, a new committee was formed, a new name adopted and the old Fellowship laid to rest.

The new Society has good membership numbers, healthy funds, good attendances at meetings and a full programme for the next year. However we must not become complacent.

The present committee is primarily the same one as 2 years ago. We've managed quite well but we don't have a monopoly on ideas. If you have suggestions regarding the society - then voice them! I can't promise that all your ideas will be taken up, but they will certainly be considered.

The committee should not be taken for granted. By the next A.G.M. we will all have been in office for 3 years. It is unhealthy for the society that the same committee should go on and on. We need an active committee - the Fellowship's committee wasn't active.

Now, at the next meeting look around you - we're not getting any younger! Don't get me wrong - older people have a wealth of information, but if it's not passed on to younger people, it's lost. We should all be encouraging new members, especially young ones. Hopefully the Jack Branton Prize will attract some young people - he would have liked that. We need members of all ages the Fellowship didn't have this.

If we learn only one thing from history, it should be to learn from history. The Fellowship was a good society but it failed - I've highlighted just the facts that contributed to that. If we don't become complacent, we can become as good as the Fellowship was in its heyday. I think we could make Jack proud of OUR Society.

There you have it, you may agree or disagree - perhaps I won't be asked to contribute again, but hopefully YOU won't need to be asked, if you've got an inkling to be in print have a word with Mike.

Graham Norton.

50 YEARS AGO  
PENISTONE ALMANAC 1942  
Stocksbridge War Weapons week raised £100,000.  
The old mill at Deepcar was demolished, an old corn mill dating back to 1570.  
Stocksbridge WDC rate was set at 5/- in the pound.  
Do these bring back memories?

FIRST EDITION OF THE NEWSLETTER  
COMPARE IT WITH THE PARAGON!