

# THE PARAGON

Journal of Stocksbridge & District History Society



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W. E. Spencer  
1907 - 2003

A MEMORY JOG

**W**illiam Edward Spencer, always known as "Ted", was a truly exceptional man. The biographical notes, which his daughter Gillian has provided, reveal the details of his early life.

He always loved reading, and although he left school at 14, went to night school and never stopped learning, studying in turn accountancy, philosophy, opera, local history, photography and finally, computing. He kept his interest in all these except the first, and was looking forward to getting a new computer on the day he had his stroke. He died on April 3rd. 2003 in Barnsley Hospital.

He worked for Bentley Bros. in the 1930s, and there he met Nellie. They celebrated their Diamond Wedding in May last year. The family came to live at Wortley in 1959, and then began his involvement in local affairs, as a Penistone District Councillor, then Hunshef Parish Councillor, eventually as Parish Clerk and Chairman.

Ted was also very physically active, playing golf, then fishing, cycling and walking. He had a keen interest in wildlife – his childhood days bird-nesting eventually had to give way to watching the birds in his garden – and he was a great rambler. His familiarity with the canal system and the by-ways of the Pennines, the Peak District, the Lake District, the Dukeries, Anglesey, Scotland and Iceland, came from walking or cycling weekends and holidays spent with his family or a few close friends.

He was friendly to everyone, although apparently he had no patience with forbidding notices like Private and Keep Out. He charmed everyone who met him. St. Leonard's Church at Wortley was packed for his funeral.

*We at Stocksbridge remember Ted for his phenomenal memory of dates and names, evident when he gave us one of his many talks and slide-shows on local history, and for his gentle humour and unfailing courtesy. I do not think that we shall ever see his like again.*

B.D.

**S**eeing the photo of the Beer-off on the Carol sheet at Christmas reminded me of the time in school when we could buy what we called Football Toffee. It was a thin strip, about four inches long and an inch wide, and inside the wrapper was a letter of the alphabet.

If we could get enough letters to make the names of certain Football Teams, we could trade them in for a slab of Everton Toffee.

I went to the Church School at the bottom of Nanny Hill and usually bought the toffee from Jackson's grocers across the road.

Some letters were very hard to come by. One day someone said that there were some good letters – Es and Rs – in the toffees that were being sold at the Beer-off. So next time I was able to buy one, I went up there, and sure enough, I was lucky, so was able to make my Football Team up and exchange it for a slab of toffee, which was very good.

Alice Staniforth

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## THE SANDERSON FAMILY

TAKEN FROM THE DIARIES OF MIRIAM SANDERSON

Chapter I June 19, 1916

*In a snug little four-roomed house in Stocksbridge, England, lived the Sanderson family.*

Mr. Sanderson, a good-sized man, fair, with curly hair, and quite a lively disposition, sat in a comfortable armchair by the grate fire.

The little child playing with her dolls at his feet was his daughter, Miriam, a fat and rosy-checked, happy little girl of



The Crossland Family

John Sanderson is second from the right on the back row, Ruth Sanderson is second from the right on the second back row and their daughter, Fanny is on the extreme right of the second row from the front. Miriam, the author of this diary is immediately in front of Fanny.

(photo by W Downing, 72 Haywoods Park, Stocksbridge)

four. Her sister Fanny, who was nine, thought she was quite a lady. She was sitting by her mother, who was teaching her to sew. The father, watching his daughters play, looked as if he was the happiest man in the world – and so he was then. Little did he know what fate had in store for him.

Later, Mrs. Sanderson saw Fanny nodding over her sewing, and little Miriam was already in Dreamland. Soon the snug little house was in darkness and all had retired.

Early next morning, Mr. Sanderson rose and got ready for work. He was always prompt and ready. His wife got a good breakfast ready for him, and later, for the

children. Little was done that day and they were patiently waiting for their father to get home from work. Soon the door opened and six eager arms were awaiting him.

After supper he played several hymns on the good old organ, and the children and their mother sang heartily. It was this evening that the happiness of this family came to an end. A knock came to the door. The visitor was well known to them as a business man, so Fanny and Miriam were packed off to bed.

In the morning, a mysterious look was on their mother's face, and at breakfast she said "How would you like to live at Cibler's store?" The girls were delighted with a vision of candy and fruit, and they eagerly asked if they were indeed to live there, and their mother said "Yes!"

All that week the talk was all about the store, and on the following Monday they moved into their new home.

(The story and the photograph were kindly lent by Jennifer Hudson)

## ANOTHER MISHAP

FROM WILLIS BURGIN'S DIARY

As the coalface moved further away, the bank got longer and steeper, the roof got lower and the old packing halfway down the bank was falling out, making the road narrow. But after three months of tramping, I was getting less nervous of the steep bank, and found that I could control the full wagon of coal better in front.

Then halfway down the bank one day with my fourth tub of coal, I heard a crack, like something breaking, and my wagon started to gather speed. I realised that the wooden locker on the back wheel had broken.

In a split second, my mind was made up! I rolled into the side of the bank and let the wagon go. I was lying on the trackside, my lamp out, when I heard the crash as the wagon hit the hard wall at the bottom of the gate.

In the pitch blackness, I had to feel my way along the track with my fingertips on the rails to where a miner was working. With the aid of his lamp, we went to look at the damage. All the wooden sides of the tub were off and the coal scattered about. Using another empty wagon, we managed to salvage it and clean up the mess. I was able to carry on tramping without getting into trouble.

The next day, one of the miners brought down an iron locker for me to use on my wagons.

Next: My Pleasures

# FROM WALDERSHELF TO STOCKSBRIDGE

## THE LIE OF THE LAND IN 1851

The Land Tax Assessment of 1851 shows a fragmented pattern of land ownership, with some individuals who appear in the Census of that year owning property occupied by tenants. These include John Bocking, Thomas Bocking, John Charlesworth, Benjamin Couldwell (6 properties), Thomas Ellison, John Grayson, Jonathan Grayson, Thomas Hattersley, Jonathan Hawke, John Helliwell, Matilda Irving (4), Mary Lowood (5), Benjamin Marsden, Samuel Newton (2), Elizabeth Vaughton, John Wainwright and Edward Wright.

The names George Grayson and John Helliwell appear in the Assessment several times, for there were three men with the former name and ten of the latter in the Census Returns.

Tenants of the Bradfield Curate, of the Bradfield Feoffees, of the Vicar of Ecclesfield and of the Curates of Midhope and Bolsterstone evidently contributed to the upkeep of their respective churches.

One acre School, in the neighbouring administrative district of Westnall, was also a landlord, together with Sproatley School in Hull. Mrs. Irving, herself a considerable landowner as heiress to part of Spink Hall estate through her sister, Mary Grayson, and to her late husband, Vicar of Bolsterstone, was a tenant of Sproatley School.

Many more properties were owned by people who do not appear in the Census at all, so must have been absentee landlords. Some of these had local family names, such as Ellis, Green, Morehouse and Ridal, but the Christian names given show that they must have been absent on the day of the Census. Some are names of families known to be resident in neighbouring areas, like the Jubbs of Hunshelf and Isaac Newton of Broomhead Mill.

There are 110 properties listed, 50 of them still belonging to Rimington's Executors.

The 1855 Ordnance Survey map shows the shape of

the area to be a trapezium, with its lowest point at the southeast extreme, rising gradually along the line of the Don and Little Don Rivers along its northern boundaries, but much more sharply in the south, with a high plateau on its southern and south-western edges.

These highest areas were naturally the least thickly populated, except for the hamlet of Bolsterstone itself, almost on the crest of the highest hill and facing north, while the farmsteads on the southern slopes of Ewden were much more sheltered. Its position would be dictated centuries ago by the need to command all approaches to a medieval stronghold.

The map was surveyed in 1850, so can be taken to show a fairly accurate picture of the topographical features at the time of the 1851 Census. The only obvious mistake made by the surveyor was in his identification of Spink House Farm as the Glass House. He had evidently confused it with the Pot House. A later edition of the map corrected this. Also, Wood Roy at Deepcar was marked as Hood Roy.

The industry of the area at that period was

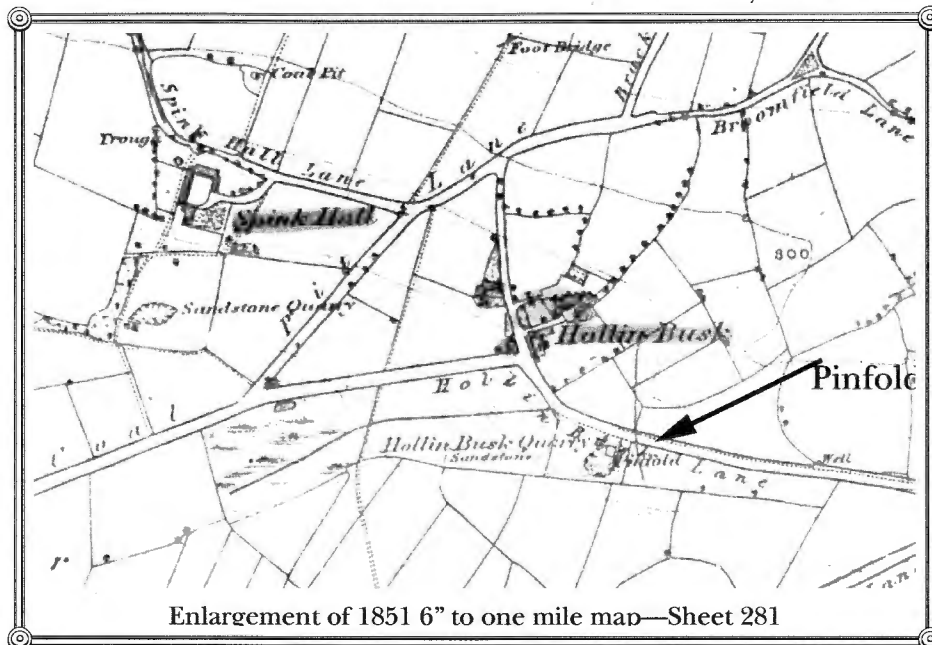
overwhelmingly agricultural, the number of farms far outnumbering any other type of establishment. But the Census does show other occupations in the farming households, where, as was common at the time and in such places, dual occupations were necessary to eke out a living from the land.

It is not likely that much more

foodstuff was produced than was needed by each household, and there is little evidence available of any marketing activity in this area. However, the Milnes family records show that butter, hay, hayseed, meal and potatoes were sold, and clover seed, mutton, veal and wheat were bought at various times between 1808 and 1834. The writer of that record, Joseph Milnes, was a tailor, but also a carter of coal and building materials.

The rocky outcrops of this ridge were found to make good building stone, and quarries marked sandstone can be seen on Townend Common, Allman Well Hill, above Sunny Bank, at Hollin Busk, Spink Hall, above Peasbloom, between Wood Royd and Lane Farm and at Haywoods.

Kenworthy recorded that firestone had been quarried on Townend Common from the 18th. century, and gave details of land bought for that purpose by



Enlargement of 1851 6" to one mile map—Sheet 281

STOCKSBRIDGE & DISTRICT  
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MEETINGS ARE NORMALLY HELD ON THE SECOND  
THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH, AT THE LIBRARY, MAN-  
CHESTER ROAD, STOCKSBRIDGE AT 7.00 PM.

THE PARAGON

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MEETINGS

❁ PROGRAMME 2003 ❁

JULY 10<sup>TH</sup>

RON CLAYTON:  
SHEFFIELD CASTLE

AUGUST

**NO MEETING**

SEPTEMBER 11<sup>TH</sup>

MARTIN OLIVE:  
SHEFFIELD: SETTLEMENT TO CITY

OCTOBER 9<sup>TH</sup>

STEPHEN GAY:  
THE WOODHEAD TRAIL

NOVEMBER 13<sup>TH</sup>

WENDY GOODHIND:  
"COMERS-IN" - WHERE FROM?

SATURDAY DECEMBER 13<sup>TH</sup>

CHRISTMAS CAROL SUPPER

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

Abraham Grayson from John Rimington in 1803. For half a century, firestone was supplied to the iron and steel industries of Sheffield and district. Kenworthy also maintained that firestone had been used at the Glasshouse.

The General Directory of Sheffield, 1856 lists John Grayson of Spink Hall as Firestone quarry and coal owner.

Coalpits are marked below the quarry at Wood Royd, probably in the banks of the stream there, as in Hole House Brook. But several are marked on the open hillside, four on Bracken Moor, three on Pot House Lane, two between Horner House and Half Hall and one at Knoll Top, as well as Haywoods Pit itself. Most of these would be outcrops and for domestic use. Kenworthy said, "The demand must have been steadily growing during the first quarter of the 19th. century, for during the second quarter quite a number of freeholders had either coalpits of their own or they were leasing coal to their neighbours." Some open-air coking was certainly carried on.

Apart from the activities at Pot House, all other industry was situated near the river, the earliest source of power. Kenworthy tells us that there had been an ancient clack-mill in the Clough at Whitwell - in fact Fred Hepworth once said that he had found remains of it. We are not sure what it was used for.

In 1851 Deepcar Corn mill was still in operation, there was a Blacking Mill at the bottom of Haywoods Lane and at Henholmes bricks and tiles were being manufactured.

Millraces are marked at both Deepcar and Stocks Bridge, where water had been diverted to the mill wheels. Many springs ran down the hillside and wells, troughs and pumps indicate the contemporary water supply.


Footbridges, fords and stepping-stones show where people found it most convenient to cross them. Honey Hole, on the Stocks Bridge millrace, and Sough Hole, higher up the river, were places enlarged for bathing.

There is a pinfold marked on Hollin Busk Lane. This was an enclosure for keeping stray animals. The only reference by a local historian to a pinfold is to one at Horner House by Jack Branston, No such occupation (a pinder) is entered in the Returns, but probably the job was just part of general farming duties.

[I used to think that the pinfold would be the open area at the west end of the lane, but have learned from a former owner of the farm that it is within the farm property. We live and learn!]

*Brenda Duffield*

## SOCIETY NEWS

 Our Bolsterstone Glass Collection has been brought home and is now in storage at Stocksbridge Library, awaiting arrangement in the Archive display cases. This will happen after the new carpet has been fitted. We are still hopeful that Dr. Denis Ashurst will come and write captions for each piece. Our thanks go to the Turner Museum at Sheffield University Department of Building Materials, and particularly to its Director, Jim Smedley, for keeping it on our behalf.

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