

THE PARAGON

Journal of Stocksbridge & District History Society



Issue Number 48

Summer 2007

MARY, QUEEN OF SCOTS

Submitted by Josephine Rhodes

On November 28th 1570 Mary, Queen of Scots arrived at Sheffield Castle to begin a period of imprisonment, which was to last for 14 years. Her guardian was George Talbot, sixth Earl of Shrewsbury. He was a prominent landowner, two of his properties being Sheffield Castle and the Manor Lodge.

Mary's entourage was large, made up mainly of French and Scots, and it included her personal attendants, officers of the pantry and kitchens, servants, grooms and a farrier.

Although seemingly cold, damp and draughty, an inventory of 1582 shows that both the Castle and Manor Lodge had many fine furnishings – wall hangings and tapestries, fine counterpanes, carpets and bed linen. But the lack of sanitation meant that, from time to time, the occupants had to move out en bloc while the buildings were cleaned and the cesspits were emptied. On these occasions Mary was moved to the Manor Lodge, where she was able to indulge in her favourite sport, deer hunting. But after a riding accident in 1580, this was curtailed.

Whilst in the comparative comfort of her apartments, Mary, when not hatching one plot or another, was an enthusiastic letter writer. Her other hobbies were embroidery and reading. She also set up a menagerie of small animals – pigeons, partridges and Barberry Hens, together with two small dogs, sent to her by her uncle.

Mary complained about her lack of exercise and her various ailments so much that she was allowed to go to Buxton to "take the waters". She returned saying that the treatment had worked wonders for her health and that she thought a longer visit might affect a complete cure. After that she was allowed to go every summer until 1584.

On several occasions Mary visited Chatsworth and Worksop Manor. The fact of her staying there put these places under virtual siege for the duration of her visits.

Despite her annual visits to Buxton to take the cure, Mary's health was fairly poor. By the 1580s, when she was only just 40, she was regarded as an old and sickly woman. By the time of her trial, she was almost a cripple.

In 1584 Mary was removed from Sheffield and taken to Fotheringay Castle, where she was tried and beheaded.



Upper—Mary with the infant James.

Lower—A later portrait, showing how she had aged

SHE WAS ALLOWED TO GO TO BUXTON TO "TAKE THE WATERS".



IN THIS ISSUE

MARY, QUEEN OF SCOTS	PAGE 1
FROM THE MEMOIRS OF LILIAN BIRKHEAD	PAGE 2
FROM WALDERSHELF TO STOCKSBRIDGE	PAGE 2
DIARY OF WILLIS BURGIN	PAGE 3

FROM THE MEMOIRS OF LILIAN BIRKHEAD

FAMILY

My father was a stone quarryman, a “dresser”, on the surface, working first at the California quarry, and then, when the Cali on Trunce closed down, at the Newbiggin quarry at the bottom of Well Hill.

About sixty men were employed then, but in the early days of stone-quarrying, up to the middle of the 1800s, about 200 were employed. There were also quarries at the Isle of Skye (at the top of the hill above the cricket field), the Delf, the Victoria (also at the bottom of Well Hill) and the Rocher (on past Ivy Cottages). A small, but deep quarry also existed near the school, where the swings are now. Newbiggin was the last to be worked and closed down about 1940. But in 1910, when there was less demand for stone, due to extensive use of the cheaper building material, concrete, half of the men were made redundant, and my father was one of them.

The outdoor life of quarrymen was tough, but one of the chief dreads was a long spell of wintry weather - one winter lasted for three months – for stone could not be worked below a certain temperature. In rainy weather they would work as long as possible, with sacks tied over their shoulders for protection. The wet clothes had to be dried around the fire ready for next morning. We youngsters did not like these smelly, wet clothes keeping the warmth of the fire from us.

Sometimes we would take our father’s dinner, which meant us having a hurried dinner at home, then running up Well Hill in time for afternoon school. Often we were held up a little distance from the quarry when a fuse was laid to blast the huge lumps of rock down in the quarry. The men would all come up the “monkey pole”, the fuse was lit, then we heard the explosion and then the “all clear” and at last we could go down with his dinner. You can get more information about the Green Moor Stone Quarries in Jack Branston’s articles for Fox’s Magazine.

My father went to work at Samuel Fox & Co. Ltd. at Stocksbridge Works as a blacksmith’s striker when he left his work as quarryman, and the change from outdoor work to the intense heat affected his health. He had skin trouble and his eyesight suffered. The lower wage of £1.1s.0d (one guinea) was regular, and with no time off for bad weather, we were no worse off. But how he must have longed, in the hot summer, for his previous outdoor life!

My two elder brothers, Wilfrid and Sidney, both left school at 13 to work at Fox’s Steelworks – the chief employer of labour in our district. They had to begin work at 6 in the morning and work until 6 in the evening (later they finished at half past 5) What long hours they must have seemed! And of course, they all worked Saturday mornings. Often they would sleep in the evening – no time or energy for

vandalism.

My father was up first and lit the fire to boil the kettle to make a hot drink and this was cocoa. Often breakfast consisted of bread and dripping, as long as the dripping from the Sunday joint lasted. Apart from its cheapness, we preferred it to butter.

The fire was our only means of heating and cooking, apart from a smelly paraffin stove. Later, perhaps in the 1920s, we had a Valor Perfection stove, which was fairly effective in the kitchen and bedrooms.

On Saturday afternoons Wilfrid cycled to Penistone for his organ lessons for quite a few years. Sidney played football with the village team, or cricket in summer. He would only have porridge for dinner before playing, but would come back ravenous for tea, elated or dejected according to results, but always hungry.

On Saturday evenings they always went to Stocksbridge for the “Green ‘Un”, the Sheffield paper that gave national as well as local sports results. Then, as now, there would be joy or misery, when Sheffield Wednesday or United won or lost, according to which team you supported. At that time this was the only way to get to know sports results. Now they come through at intervals on television and radio, with news and views on all the variety of sports going on all Saturday afternoon.

FROM WALDERSHELF TO STOCKSBRIDGE

SCHOOL AND CHURCH 1851 – 1881

Two new schools had been built to cater for the increasing number of school-age children – the National School at Bolsterstone in 1851 and in 1853 the British School at Stocksbridge, initially to house the overflow from the Ebenezer Sunday School. This soon proved to be inadequate and in 1868 Samuel Fox built the Works School for the older pupils. Two years later the schools all became subject to Government Inspection after the 1870 Education Act.

Churches also were increasing in number to cater for the changing needs and beliefs of the new inhabitants of the valley. St. Ann’s Catholic Church was built in 1859, close by the New Haywoods development above Black Rocher.

While the Rev. Robertshaw presided at the Ebenezer Chapel, a rival Non-conformist chapel was built only a quarter of a mile further west along the main road, called the Congregational, then another less than that distance further, at Horner House, by the Primitive Methodists. A third chapel was founded at Old Haywoods by Wesleyan Methodists. Strangely enough, only one extra Independent Minister is entered in the Census Returns – for the West End Primitive Methodists. The Wesleyans traditionally had lay preachers. There were two Elders of the Church of the Latter Day Saints living in Carr Lane, Deepcar, in 1851, but

there seems to be no record of their activities, or any subsequent trace of them.

William Dickinson Froggatt is a descendant of one of the original Primitive Methodist Mission to Stocksbridge, and has recorded that they were entertained in workmen's homes, poor as they were. He speaks of the violent opposition they met from "the rough section" of the community. In the early days of the chapel, they took rooms over the Co-op Stores, where they held services and school on Sundays. His account continues: "We had slates on which men wrote the alphabet and learned to make figures. At that time men were illiterate, especially miners."

Efforts to raise the money to build a chapel must have entailed a great deal of effort and sacrifice, but eventually, in 1866, land was bought from Samuel Fox, west of Horner House, for that purpose. A stipulation was made that no beer-house or public house should be erected or any use made of it "of a noisome or dangerous character", for Samuel Fox was a temperate man. Ironically, the building is now used by a licensed Rugby Club

Stocksbridge Temperance Society was founded in 1865, closely connected with the activities of the Band of Hope of the Co-operative Society, and active in electioneering for the Local Board in 1873.

Meanwhile at Bolsterstone the Rev. Bell was replaced in 1862 by the Rev. W. Rimington, who was in turn replaced in 1867 by his curate, the Rev. W.R. Wilson. In 1868 the first Marriage Service was performed at St. Mary's, Bolsterstone. The fortunate couple were presented with an inscribed Bible, two half-crowns and a pair of blankets, and were entertained with tea at the Vicarage.

It was Rev. Wilson who rebuilt Bolsterstone Church, using local craftsmen, between 1872 and 1879. From 1871 a Parish Magazine was published, a hearse was purchased and rates of charges fixed for its use. In 1874 gas lighting was introduced and in the following year stained glass windows were installed.

Deepcar Church, dedicated to St. John, was built in 1870 as daughter church to St. Mary's - now the Parish Church. Samuel Fox proved to be as much a benefactor to Bolsterstone and Deepcar as he was to Stocksbridge. It was at his expense that the site of Bolsterstone Castle was investigated in 1878 and he contributed to the building of Deepcar Church.

Adult Education was available at the Mutual Improvement Society, which the Rev. Robertshaw had instigated, where Sheffield and Leeds weekly newspapers could be read, as well as *The Christian World*. This information was to be found in the Sheffield Daily Telegraph Obituary notice of his death on June 4th 1907, entitled *Life in one Living*, which revealed that the minister had been "a militant Nonconformist ... a strong Liberal and a dreadful opponent of the Sheffield Telegraph."

Despite the early rivalry between the various places of worship, differences were resolved sufficiently to allow the formation of a Sunday School Union in 1872, and from that date, Whitsuntide was celebrated *en masse* with picnics, wagon trips to neighbouring villages and races.

In September 1915 the Battalion moved into winter quarters at Rugeley, in wooden huts on the moor near Cannock Chase. The first week it rained every day and it found the weak places in the sides and roofs of the huts. One night I had to move my bed and sleep under the table.

My duties as Provost Corporal were finished and I was back on parade and doing guard duties. I had only been in this camp a short time when I was promoted to Acting Sergeant in the 13th Platoon of D Company. One morning, while drilling the platoon, the Regimental Sergeant Major told me that my Company Commander wanted to see me.

"I understand that you come from Doncaster, Sergeant," said the officer. "Yes, sir!" was my reply (not mentioning that I was born in Deepcar) "How would you like to go to Doncaster to recruit for the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, Sergeant?" "I would like that, sir!" "I understand that your home is near Doncaster - you can be billeted there. There will be three in the party - one officer, one sergeant and a private soldier."

So on the Saturday morning of the same week, taking my kitbag and rifle, I caught the train to Doncaster. There I met the officer from the Regiment, Lieutenant C.V. Walker, and the private of the party. In our headdress we wore rosettes of red, white and blue on one side and on the other, the Regimental colours of green and white.

On our first day we only had two recruits, and the officer and I thought it was a poor start. So the next day I suggested to the officer that I should visit a housing estate and get in touch with the workers. It was on the roofs of two houses that I saw two likely recruits - joiners nailing on timber. All the workers on the site saw the colours in my hat and stopped work to listen to what I had to say.

I spotted a ladder beside the scaffolding at the side of the house. The foreman looked daggers at me as I mounted the ladder. I was a bit nervous of heights, but I made it. I had an interesting talk with the youths, but when I went back to where I had left the ladder, it had been taken away. I wasn't worried and putting my arms around a scaffolding pole, came to earth like a monkey. My uniform got a bit dusty, but I carried on around the site, looking for more recruits.

As I was leaving the office some days later on one of these scouting tours, I was stopped by a youth who said he wanted to join the army. I looked at the lad and thought that he was not suitable, but I asked him what kind of work he did and he said "I am a farmer." This enabled me to refuse him, as miners and farmers were exempt from military service. But the lad was intent on joining up, so I took him in the office, tested his eyes and signed him on.

When I was at home on leave, I always attended the Sunday night service at Bentley Wesleyan Chapel, and while at one of these during the recruiting drive two weeks later, a sidesman touched me on the arm, whispering that I was

STOCKSBRIDGE & DISTRICT
HISTORY SOCIETY

COMMITTEE
CHAIRMAN

ROY MALLINSON TEL. 288 8362

SECRETARY

BASIL SPOONER—TEL 288 4456

TREASURER

BETTY MCKAY—TEL 288 2269

ARCHIVE LIAISON

BRENDA DUFFIELD—TEL. 288 2349

MEETINGS ARE NORMALLY HELD ON THE SECOND
THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH, AT THE UNITED REFORM
CHURCH HALL, MANCHESTER ROAD, STOCKSBRIDGE AT
7.00 PM.

THE PARAGON

NEXT EDITION—SEPTEMBER 2007

PUBLICATION DEADLINE—9TH AUGUST

MEETINGS

❖ PROGRAMME 2007 ❖

JULY 12TH

THE MEDIEVAL LORDS OF SHEFFIELD
LLOYD POWELL

AUGUST

SUMMER RECESS
NO MEETING

SEPTEMBER 13TH

THE ANGLO SAXONS
BASIL SPOONER

OCTOBER 11TH

A LOOK AT OLD NORTH SHEFFIELD
MALCOLM NUNN

OCTOBER 21ST

BRADFIELD FAMILY & LOCAL HISTORY FAIR

NOVEMBER 8TH

CHURCHES IN THE SOUTH YORKS. LANDSCAPE
RAY BATTYE

SATURDAY DECEMBER 15TH

CHRISTMAS CAROL SUPPER

wanted at the chapel door. Awaiting me was my brother with
a telegram from my regiment for the officer. I had been
instructed to open all letters at the weekend and pass the
information on to my officer by telephone. This message
read:

All return to Regiment at once.

Our recruiting was over. We had added 48 soldiers to the
K.O.Y.L.I. and for each recruit we received a "bob".

