

# THE PARAGON

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*The Coach & Horses beer house and smithy servicing the bridle path from Bolsterstone to Hunshelf, then as coaching inn, the 1805 turnpike.*

*In 1901 the publican was John M. Helliwell. It was to survive another hundred years before losing its identity.*

## AN EVACUEE'S TALE

By S. Newnham

In 1910 three girls were born to three brothers in Stockton-on-Tees. The cousins were named Hilda, Edna and Ena Walker. In 1931 they all went down from the North East to work as Domestic in London.

At a local dance they met up with three soldiers all in the Welsh Guards. They all married at Reigate in 1933 and went to live in the Guards' Barracks at Caterham.

They all had babies in 1934-5: Shirley, Pamela and twins Tom and John. They all went to live in Croydon in 1938 in a Late Victorian villa and by then other children had been born; we numbered thirteen altogether. Shirley and Pam were inseparable.

On the outbreak of war in 1939 all the men went back into the Army. The house in Croydon was very near an aerodrome and became a target for enemy bombers.

One day in 1940 I was taken to the railway station and put on a train. There were a lot of other children on the platform, but none I knew. It was the second wave of the evacuation of children from London and other places considered to be too dangerous from enemy action.

I was told nothing at the time of where I was going, but was sent to a place called Abercynon in the County of Glamorgan, South Wales. It was a very long journey.

For the next five and a half years from the age of 4 ½ to 9 ½ - I was on my own, without any contact with any of my family. The family I was billeted with were relatives of my father's, but you would not have known that. The care I was shown was the same for all as little as possible! I had to go to Chapel three times on Sundays and in school we evacuees were made to sit in a separate part of the classroom; we had arrived dirty and smelly and they treated us like gypsies.

I only remember about six or seven other evacuee children, but they were always changing and did not seem to mix with the locals. It all seems to have gone from my memory; now I know this is common to other evacuees.

Then in 1944 I was taken to the station and put on a train in charge of the guard. Nobody said anything to me about where I was going. The journey was a long one and I had to change stations and platforms many times.

The guards gave me sandwiches and water. Some Canadian soldiers came into the guardsman. They seemed huge, but they gave me red apples and chocolate, which I had not seen for five years.

I had a sleep in a waiting room on one of the stations. After about thirty hours I arrived at Stockton-on-Tees at midnight. It was pitch black as the Blackout was still in force. A strange woman came up to me and said, "Don't you know your own mother then?" I did not, nor my own sister and two brothers.

Of the three sisters (my mother and aunts), one stayed with the Army in Aldershot and her family still live there. My other aunt came back to Stockton, where her husband went to work for I.C.I. My mother also stayed back home in Stockton and would not leave, but my father could not stand the North East and went back to London; they got divorced.

There were three million evacuees this is the story of only one.

In 1994 I read about the Evacuees Reunion Association and became Member 415. Membership is now over three thousand. We meet up and talk about our experiences. In 1999 the Reunion was held in Westminster Abbey and over two thousand of us turned up, 60 years after the start of Pied Piper the code name for the mass evacuation. In 2009 we met up again for the 70th anniversary, this time in St. Paul's Cathedral. We also march in the Remembrance Day Parade each year, for we also served.

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## MEMOIRS OF LILIAN BIRKHEAD



### FAMILY AFFAIRS

1929 was the beginning of several years of sadness in our family life. My eldest brother's son, Arthur Walton, aged 11, was taken ill and rushed to hospital for an operation on an inverted bowel. This was successful, but later peritonitis set in and he died a fortnight afterwards. Probably this would have been averted today with modern drugs like penicillin, but peritonitis was nearly always fatal in those days.

A death in a small, close-knit community like ours affects the whole village and certainly on this occasion the entire population of Green Moor was plunged into sadness. For a young life, full of promise, to be cut short so abruptly was a tragedy. Ironically, when the County Minor results came through a few weeks later, Arthur had passed the examination that he had taken only a week before his illness began.

That same spring my father, then aged 68, began to fail in health, more in mind than in body. He had worked at Fox's (now B.S.C.), having been made redundant from the New Biggin stone quarry with no wish to retire. Working hours were shorter than 8.30 to 5.30 and still he climbed the hill and over Windy Bank each evening. But a restlessness and depression came over him. He would waken in the early hours, worrying about his work, and get up long before he needed to. His Christian faith, which had sustained him all his life, seemed to desert him and that caused him further worry. It caused us worry and bewilderment too that someone who had worked all his life for the church and been unstinting in his labour, especially when the "new" chapel was being built and was happy and trustful in his worship, should in his latter days find no comfort in his Christian faith. It gave him a feeling of guilt and failure, causing further dejection amounting sometimes almost to a frenzy. The time came when it seemed as if we could no longer cope with him and had heartbreaking fears of a mental home. But then an uncle was made redundant and was able to come and take him out in a wheel chair every day, which was a great relief to my mother and all of us.

After about two years the violent moods passed and he became more placid, almost childlike, and quite helpless, but easier to manage. And this continued until he died in 1934.

Early in that same year my mother began to have some difficulty in breathing. There seemed to be a blockage in her nose and she would have to sit up in bed, trying to clear it. Our doctor seemed rather reluctant to give her a thorough examination. Did he suspect? But at last he agreed and I had to take her to Sheffield Royal Infirmary, where they arranged for her to go in and have the growth removed from her nose. That was about two months before my father's death, so that was a black week for us.

However, Mother was able to come home two days after the operation. The obstruction had been removed; she had no further breathing difficulty and the apprehension that had been building up for weeks all cleared away. Father was still needing a lot of care, but not causing us the mental strain of his earlier stages. But his physical condition worsened and at the end of June he caught a chill that developed into pneumonia, and at the end of that month he died, aged 72.

## THE DIARY OF WILLIS BURGIN

### Son of a Yorkshire Miner

A Copy of Orders August 31<sup>st</sup> 1918:

*The 47<sup>th</sup> Division will attack tomorrow September 1<sup>st</sup> 1918.  
Artillery barrage will move forward 100 yards per 5 minutes.*

*D Company 50<sup>th</sup> Battalion M.G.C. will cooperate as follows:*

*I No. 15 Section will take no part in the barrage. Its task will be to secure the left flank of the 47<sup>th</sup> Division; in case the attack on the left fails, it will move to position B60- 74 (on the Fighting Map) and be able to fire across the North of Rancourt and North of Combles. The Section will move forward after Priez Farm is taken.*

*II Nos. 14 and 16 Sections will perform the following tactic:  
Barrage Rancourt, move forward to new positions.*

*III Nos. 14 and 16 Sections will then prepare to fire S.O.S  
Barrage on S.O.S. signal. (Red over Red over Red)*

*Zero hour will be 5.30am. All watches will be synchronised with the Runner's correct time.*

On that morning of September 1<sup>st</sup> there started at 4.30am the rumbling and grumbling of heavy guns from the rear of the German lines, and shortly afterwards our own guns got going and the noise was as if the whole ground was going skywards with the loads of earth from the craters as heavy shells exploded.

At 5.30am the two Sections duly opened up their barrage of eight machine guns and enemy lights of red and green in the sky lit up the whole battlefield. Many boxes of ammunition were used before we had finished our barrage.

Then came our Infantry with rifles and bayonets fixed, a second and third wave close behind. Sections 14 and 16 followed, carrying their machine guns over our shoulders and also boxes of ammunition in our hands. We advanced two or three miles and set up our guns in the positions the enemy had just left, but with our guns pointing the other way.

By 9am my Section Officer was not sure of our position and said, "Come on, Sergeant, let us take a look around," and into the open country we went in advance of our entrenched position. The enemy artillery fire had by now quietened down except for a few light shells. We moved half a mile up the hillside and into a small stone quarry.

I will never forget that terrible sight of the dismembered bodies of six German soldiers and their horses and smashed wagons. It looked as if a transport party had been taking shelter in the quarry, when they were hit by a heavy shell.

The officer and I were on our way back to our gun position when two enemy shells burst above our heads one with a loud bang and one with a thud, We both started to cough and sneeze and hurriedly put on our gas masks. We were walking about two yards apart when he suddenly said, "I think I have stopped one, Sergeant I cannot lift my right arm I think it is in the shoulder" I could see the dark stain coming through his mackintosh; he sat on the grass while I helped him apply a dressing to the wound. He told me he had been due some leave and this shrapnel wound would put him in Military Hospital for three weeks, so he was not pleased.

I had not known Lieut. Greaves long, but the short time I had showed he was without fear and instilled courage into his men. I think he came from Sheffield. Before he left for the Dressing Station he charged me with command of the Section and the orders, which are still in my possession in 1966.

The trenches the enemy had left had been made very comfortable, timbered out and high and roomy. Jerry had left in a hurry and we found enough rations to keep us going for the eight days we were out of touch with my Company and the Battalion. We found tins of horsemeat (that tasted like our corned beef), tins of water biscuits, sweetened milk and bottles of wine.

On the eighth day the Company runner found us and brought orders to withdraw guns. At D Company Headquarters we had a good meal, and how we enjoyed a drink of tea after having nothing but wine for eight days!

# VICTORY CLUB RECORDS

From notes on Minute Books 1960 to 1962  
by Mike Kerrigan

A Ballot slip for the **Election of Committee** is of interest in that it gives us names of candidates and the departments of the Works where they were employed. Fifteen men from ten different departments were nominated for twelve places on the Committee:

W.L.Barrow (Billet Bank), E.Bramall (Steam Services) R.Bramall (Top Yard Fitters), G.Broomhead (Spring Mill), H.Crownshaw (Electric Steel), M.Firth (Wire), F.Fretwell (Billet Bank), W.Goulding (Spring Mill), H.Howard (Stockyard), P.Moxon (Top Yard Fitters), C.Shaw (Traffic), A.Worsley (Billet Mill), H.Moxon (Billet Bank), E.Throssell (Boilersmiths), L.Wood (Traffic).

Only members contributing to the S.W.S.S.C. membership scheme and employees of Samuel Fox & Co., Ltd. were eligible to vote.

We have no record of the result and only two of the successful members were later mentioned by name. H.Howard gave notice of a motion to reconsider the decision to ban **Tombola** and G.Broomhead was to appeal against the ban on Fruit Machines, but later withdrew his motion. They were not to be allowed even if proceeds were given to Charity.

Another concern of the Committee was "idle gossip" about their deliberations outside the Committee room and Members were again reminded that business discussed was strictly confidential.

By far the most numerous topics during this period were about bookings of entertainers and applications for lease of the Large Hall. The Spastics Society themselves booked Mike Mulligan's Band for their Dance. Les Walton's Orchestra was to be booked for the Boxing Night Ball at a cost of £38. 10s. 0d. The Football Section was permitted to engage Johnny Dankworth for a Friday night dance. A special appearance of Leslie Welch, the Memory Man, was arranged and he was to be paid £10 expenses.

The Works Brass Band proved to be popular and was given another booking; and Thurlstone Brass Band was chosen to replace an Accordion Band that could not fill its engagement. But other artistes were not considered to be up to the required standard. They certainly did not approve of "Rhythm Groups" and there would be no more "Rock & Roll" dances because of hooliganism and fighting that had occurred.

Permission was given for a Dog Show, but the ruling against bringing dogs into the Club on Concert nights was upheld.

A scheme to invite Joe Davis to appear was reconsidered. The Billiards Second team was questioned about their late return from a match at Dial House and later informed that they must bear the expense in future.

Regular pianist Mr. Bradshaw applied for an increase in fees and the Committee was pleased to grant him a 5/- to 42/- per night in view of his excellent service.

One artiste was questioned about leaving at 9.50pm. His excuse was that he had a long way to travel, but was told that he must give notice in future.

The Concert Secretary became involved in a mix-up when two artistes of the same name turned up and also in a long-running dispute with the same agency over non-payment of a fee for another unsatisfactory group, "The Skating Nelsons". The matter was even referred to solicitors and eventually the fee was paid.

G. Broomhead is again mentioned during this dispute as the contact with the theatrical agency concerned, and after an altercation with him on the telephone it was resolved that use of that agency should be reconsidered.

The Yorkshire Electricity Board applied for use of the Concert Hall for a display of its appliances. It was resolved that such use be limited to the Stocksbridge Co-operative Society and nationalised services such as the Y.E.B. and Gas Board.

The Committee actually invited a party of forty members of the Hallamshire Battalion of the Yorks, and Lancs. Regiment Territorial Army to visit the Club one Saturday evening. The Committee were pleased to accept once more the offer of a Children's Christmas Treat at the Palace Cinema.

**Security** was becoming a major concern. New keys were fitted and the Police supplied with keys. Then when youths found a way in through toilet windows, iron bars were fitted. Works Security Officers were engaged to patrol the premises and were paid 50/- for this on Boxing Night. But on New Years Eve several windows were broken and no one was apprehended. A much smaller disturbance in the Gents' toilets, resulting in another broken window, was successfully resolved.

The disappearance of a bottle of rum, intended for a Raffle prize during the visit by Greasborough Club seems not to have been too thoroughly investigated.

Mr. Lowther (caretaker?) was requested to stop his children from defacing the outside walls and damaging the entrance of the Club.

The same people seemed unable to keep out of trouble: J.T.C. was given a final warning that his membership would be suspended and J.G. was to remain suspended until he agreed to appear before the Committee to explain his conduct. The Secretary was to speak to L.E. about his behaviour, but a complaint about A.B's attitude towards Outing Club officials was deemed to be a matter best left to those concerned.

By far the most serious event was a burglary one Sunday afternoon in April 1962. Entry had been made through a small window in the Gents' toilets and the main entrance door to the Billiards Room had been forced. Stock and cash totalling about £350 had been taken. Despite a letter from the Eagle Star Insurance Co. that outlined all the security measures which should be taken, the Committee only agreed to reinforce the top bolt box of the cellar door.

The Club had to be registered with the County Fire Authority. The maximum number permitted in the Concert Hall was 485 and 108 in the Refreshment Rom. The Licensing Act of 1961 allowed 10 minutes "drinking up" time after the Bar closed and the Committee resolved that entertainment should be suspended at 10.30pm for drinks to be finished or removed.

An electrician sometimes had to be called to service the wiring and it was agreed that the Works should be asked to supply one, to be given a free drink by the Concert Secretary.

**Supplies** and facilities were a constant concern. They decided against installing a weighing machine but Mr. Burkinshaw was authorised to buy some new records, including the **Suki-Suki (?)** They would not allow the sale of mussels but did approve of cheese & onion biscuits and crisps.

A close eye was kept on beer supplies and their quality. The steward sold out of Draught Guinness, it was so popular, but Whitbread's was unsatisfactory and, despite a visit from their District Manager, it was resolved not to order their Tankard Beer. Although Hope & Anchor Breweries announced a reduction of wholesale cost of Carling Lager, the general trend was an increase in costs and retail prices of drink went up.

Perhaps the most significant development in the history of the Club during this period was the erection of a notice-board 6ft x 5ft requiring the permission of the Ministry of Transport

# 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 Christ Church Hall, Stocksbridge at 7.00pm

## PROGRAMME OF EVENTS 2010

Please note that meetings are now held in Christ Church  
Hall at 7.00pm on the second Thursday each month.

April 8th

**STEPHEN GAY**

**PICTURE POSTCARD RAILWAY RAMBLES**

May 13th

**SUZANNE BINGHAM**

**THE STORY OF THE SHEFFIELD BLITZ**

June 10th

**A VISIT TO LOTHERTON HALL**

July 8th

**ANDREW FIRTH**

**TRAMS AND BUSES TO SUPERTRAM**

August

**Summer Recess**

September 9th

**PETER WILD**

**CANALS**

October 14th

**MIKE SPICK**

**J.G. GRAVES, SHEFFIELD PHILANTHROPIST**

November 11th

**To be arranged**

Saturday December 18th

**CAROL SUPPER**

January 13th 2011

**BRENDA DUFFIELD**

**AN UPDATE ON OUR OLDEST BUILDINGS**