



STOCKSBRIDGE & DISTRICT HISTORY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Number 5
Spring 1993

EDITORS REMARKS

Spring is always a time for changes, and there have been several changes to the Society since the last newsletter.

At the AGM in February, **Graham Norton**, after steering the Society through its birth and its early days, and after doing a 'grand job' for the past three years, resigned his Chairmanship. His place has been taken by **Basil Spooner** who has been Deputy Chairman & Publicity Officer for the last three years. The Deputy Chairman is now **Phillip Scott** who has served us for the last two years, and we welcome **Del Carr**, who has newly joined the committee.

The newsletter itself has changed. I am now using some new computer software which, hopefully, will give more professional-looking results. I would greatly value your opinions as to whether or not you like the new look.

At the AGM it was agreed to print more copies of the newsletter and to sell them to *non-members* of the Society. Members will still get 4 issues per year **FREE**.

If you know anyone, not a member of the Society, who would like copies of the newsletter - see any committee member, or, better still - persuade them to come along to a meeting or two, they might just enjoy themselves, or even better they might join.

It might be a good idea to show prospective members the programme of events planned for this year, **Brenda Duffield**, our secretary, has done a wonderful job in putting together a good variety of events and speakers, with something for everyone to enjoy.

May I take this opportunity to remind all members who haven't already done so, that subscription renewal time is here again - *rates for 1993-4 remain the same at £2.00 for ordinary members and £1.00 for retired, and junior members.*

And finally - I would like to finish with my usual plea for contributions and articles for the newsletter. At the AGM it was good to know that the members seem to value our little publication. I now have a small collection of articles for future editions, but need more material all the time - so keep those words coming in!!!!

Mike Spick.

LESSER KNOWN LOCAL CELEBRITIES

The Reverend H.C. Foster was a vicar of Stocksbridge. His book "At Antwerp and the Dardanelles", was written when he lived at the vicarage in Stocksbridge in 1918, and was dedicated to "My old shipmates of the upper and lower decks in the Second Royal Naval Brigade, whose courage, good humour and devotion to duty in dark days will always be an inspiration."

In the middle of 1914, Winston Churchill, the then First Lord of the Admiralty, found that a large number of men belonging to the Royal Naval Reserve and the Royal Fleet Reserve were not required for immediate service in the Grand Fleet. A decision was taken to use these men to form two Naval Brigades to be trained for land service.

A large naval camp was formed at Deal in August 1914 and the Rev. Foster served with this brigade as chaplain.

His book tells of his service with the brigade and makes sad reading at the tremendous loss of young lives. He ends it with these words:- "If in the future when fighting days are over, we feel ourselves drifting into the irreligious selfishness and lethargy which were so prevalent in this country before the war, let us think of the many thousand wooden crosses in and around Gallipoli and let them make their silent appeal to us."

Mary Hepworth.

EARLY TEENAGE MEMORIES

On a summers night in June 1951 I set off, on my bicycle, for the rehearsal of Stannington Musical Festival (formed for the celebration of the Festival of Britain in 1951).

The rehearsal, which was held in Stannington Church, had only just started when a terrible thunder storm occurred. We were rehearsing "The Heavens are telling the glory of God" and "Be not afraid". Very fitting! The electricity failed, and with no lights, we sang by candle light, with a gentleman manually pumping the organ.

Every time the tenors sang "Be not afraid" on the wrong notes, which they did frequently, the lightning flashed, illuminating the whole Church.

I was not allowed to cycle home, and a member took my bike to his house. The storm lasted until well after midnight.

Does anyone remember this storm?

Mary Payne.

Having attended the meeting in January and seen the slides of Fox Glen Park, (the Glen as it was always called) prompted me to recall my childhood days.

We spent a lot of time in summer, playing in the Glen. With swimming costumes under our dresses and paddling slippers on our feet, my sister and I would walk up Broomfield Road and onto Broomfield Lane, or as it was then known Glen Lane, past the tennis courts on our left and into the entrance to the Glen. Shrouded by large trees stood the first of many of many wooden seats - this one often used by courting couples.

We would sometimes take the top right hand side path, which was narrow and fell steeply to the left, where stood the large swimming pool - used by older children. Floating on top were often holly leaves and twigs. The path turned at the end over a rickety, old bridge - half of which was falling apart; we had to be agile to get safely across. This bridge was later replaced by a much sturdier one.

On our way round the pool we'd pick up what few raspberries grew near the edge. The pool itself was nice and large, or so it appeared to us then; with about four steps leading into the water - these stretched the length of the pool. There was also an adjacent changing hut. There were always plenty of local children splashing around and for many this was their introduction to swimming.

Walking along one of the middle paths, past the old, brick built toilets, (which left much to be desired, we'd pass the patch of celandines, often picking a handful to take home. Ahead lay the paddling pool - for the smaller children - long and narrow, divided into three sections by tiny, narrow walls about a foot high. This again had its share of holly leaves. We would spend ages here before going down to the swings, of which there were four, standing on the left hand side of the path - they were often twisted around their posts. The swings were backed up by what was called the band-stand - several steps leading up the bank side - these again were ideal for playing on. After swinging for a while it was onto the see-saw and sandpit.

This completed our entertainment for the day. The path from here led to Bacon Row, the steep bank sides in the Glen were ideal for sliding down and we had to be careful to avoid small tree stumps on the way down.

The top paths and far side paths had several seats, evenly distributed, with the usual name carving which would correspond to today's graffiti.

The Glen was an ideal place for letting off surplus energy and doing no harm. To walk through the Glen at night was eerie with only the bird calls and an occasional stone rolling down the bank - which made us hurry in our tracks. On reaching the opening on Broomfield Lane we'd give a great big sigh of relief as it was so easy to frighten ourselves.

E.M. McKinlay



[Via Friendly & Tyson]

As you may remember from issue 4 of the newsletter, I am in the process of compiling an index to the undertaker's books from the firm of Murrains [1911-1923] and the Co-op [1924-1973]. Hopefully by the time you read this the job will be finished, and the index printed out.

Why compile such an index at all?

The 13 volumes contain over 4500 entries, so as you can imagine to search them all for an individual would take quite some time. The volumes themselves are working account books for the firm, and as such were never designed for browsing, in addition the paper is starting to deteriorate, thus, handling of the originals should be kept to a minimum.

To make research easier there will be one sequence in alphabetical order, by surname then forename. Age at death is given (in most cases) as is the date of interment - NOT the DATE OF DEATH. The last part of each record is the reference number needed to find the complete entry in the appropriate volume, e.g. V4 38-24 means Volume 4; 1938; 24th. entry. In most years entries began in January with number 1, except for the years 1927-1940 when entries are in one long sequence. Notes on using the index are included with it.

In addition to the details given in the index the complete entry gives fuller information, the detail of which varies over the years. Most entries give the address/area of the deceased and some of the older entries occasionally give the cause of death. They all give details of the cost of the coffin, other funerary items, number of cars, costs of teas etc.

While doing the indexing, I noticed some interesting facts about mortality. There were many fewer child deaths after the Second World War, was this because of the N.H.S. or just better nutrition, housing etc?

It is amazing how often one person's death is followed at a very short interval by the death of their partner.

Some surnames seem to always live to a ripe old age, while others all seem to die relatively young. In all the youngest entry was for a child of 45 minutes old, the oldest for a person of 95 years.

Some entries were made in the books for still-births, but, as no names were given, these have not been indexed.

I hope this work will be of use to people interested in family & local history. Quite often finding details in the 20th Century is harder than finding out what happened over a hundred years ago, and so I feel that this index will fill a gap in local knowledge.

Janet Spick.



MAGLEMOSIAN HUNTERS

Following the announcement in **Issue 4** that the Stocksbridge Environmental Action Group would like to erect an interpretive board on the Deepcar mesolithic site, Fred Hepworth has put pen to paper to explain the sites' national significance.

The masters of their environment were the Maglemosians, named after one of their many settlements in Denmark, called Magle-Mose, meaning "The Big Bog", an area of lakes and wet marshland.

At around 12,000 B.C. the last ice age was coming to an end, the rising sea levels pushed people from the low areas around the lakes in Denmark. Many packed their leather hunting bags and flint tools and started to move out to find another place like home, crossing the land bridge now covered by the North Sea, sometime before 12,000 B.C. One individual was careless and lost his leather bag, hundreds of years later some flint tools were recovered by a dredger called "Collinda" which was working a few miles of the Norfolk coast.

The Maglemosians spent most of their lives in the forests, they fashioned stone axes to clear camping areas, and later "tool kits" contained "composite" tools having wooden hafts and microlithic blades, these were used as saws and knives to cut meat, and as engraving tools which were used to carve antlers.

Early man in the Deepcar, Stocksbridge & High Peak Moors.

After the last Ice Age it was still too cold to stop in this area. About 10,000 B.C. occasional hunters and fishermen were visiting Derbyshire, but few remains have been found in the Stocksbridge area. Sites found on the Midhope, Dunford and Woodhead moors have been dated to between 8 and 3 thousand years B.C. This area lay on an emigration trail towards Ireland.

These people lived in sod huts or tent-like structures. Sometimes the area around the shelter was paved with flat, smooth stones taken from river beds. Brushwood was used as bedding and fire hearths and flint tools have been commonly found.

Early man used to hunt animals out in the open but the warming of the climate enabled trees and shrubs to colonise the high moors. The remains of birch tree forests can still be found today in the peat groughs on the moors.

The best site to be found in the Pennines is at Deepcar, on a hillock overlooking the present river Don, which at the time was a lake stretching as far as Old Heywoods and round to the Tin Mill area.

The excavation at Deepcar involved the uncovering of 84 square metres of turf to reveal a campsite and an elaborate footing for a circular, hide tent, with an outer circle of smooth stones with an opening to the south. These stones were used as weights to hold the skins down on the shelter. It is possible that birch branches were used to support

the hides. There were no sharp flints around the shelter, but over 30,000 were recovered from the rest of the site and plotted onto a chart. There were three open hearths on the site, which was only occupied for four years during the summer. It was used as a base for hunting deer, rabbits, salmon, trout and birds. At the onset of winter, the site was vacated, the hide tent being removed, leaving behind the smooth stones and flint chippings.

Excavated skin scrapers suggest that these people were capable of making clothing to combat local winter conditions. Skins had to be soft and animal brains and livers were rubbed in to keep the skins supple.

To sum up this site, it has created national interest as the tent structure is the first of its kind to be recorded from the middle stone age in England, making it the oldest open air, as opposed to cave shelter in the country.

Another lake was formed at the meeting of the little Don and Ewden Beck rivers at More Hall. There were Mesolithic woodland and neolithic people living at the side of this lake. This site is now having a filter plant built on it, and recovered flint material is now at Weston Park Museum.

Fred Hepworth.

ARNOLD CROOKES

Arnold Crookes, who was under call-up age, volunteered for the Sheffield City Battalion, when his father refused permission for him to join up and fight in the 1914-18 war.

On July 6th 1916, during the battle of the Somme, he was injured. In a letter to his mother he wrote that it was a sunny July day with endless blue skies, when suddenly he was struck. At first he thought that he had lost his legs, but then he realised that he could move them a little, and in fact he was waist deep in mud.

He lay there on that endless summer day among the dead and dying, until at last at around 11 pm it went dark. He had thought that night would never come. He then managed to crawl through the bodies until he reached a hedge, where he was eventually picked up by medical orderlies. He was badly injured with head and chest wounds.

His father visited him in hospital in France, and eventually after a stay in a hospital in Wales, he returned to his regiment.

Shortly after his return to France, he was shot by a sniper and paralysed in the left hand.

He never spoke of his experiences and never married.

As a child he spent many holidays at Dwarreden, Ewden valley, and his father was a guest at the opening of the Ewden Valley reservoirs in 1929.

Arnold had three Knowles family cousins killed in the same battle.

He lived to the age of 81 and is buried in City Road cemetery. What a sad experience for a 17 year old boy!

C.M. Payne.

ENVIRONMENT WEEK 15th - 22nd MAY

Stocksbridge & District Environmental Action Group is encouraging and helping local Groups & Societies to participate in **Environment Week 1993**.

We would like members of the History Society to let us know anything at all about **Keeping Stocksbridge & District Green & Clean** our motto during the past 100 years!

Any anecdote, story, or information would be much appreciated.

Contact:- **Pauline Norton, Secretary, Stocksbridge & District Environmental Action Group.**

**733 Manchester Road, Stocksbridge.
Tel. 885512.**



...AND FAREWELL

I have a new job which is taking me away from Stocksbridge. I am replacing Doug Hindmarch as the Development Officer in the Local Studies and Archives Department of the Central Library in Sheffield. I will be keeping my links with local history - but on a city-wide basis.

I hope to keep my ties with the Society and will continue to edit and produce the newsletter, for as long as I am able.

I don't yet know who my successor will be at Stocksbridge library, but hope that whoever it is will continue to support you at least as much as I have been able to.

I'd just like to thank everyone in the Society for *their* support, both for local history projects, and for supporting their local library - keep up the good work - *and I hope to see you at the Sheffield History Fair in October, which I shall be helping to organise!*

Mike Spick.



PROGRAMME 1993

April 8th.
Malcolm Nunn
History of Bradfield

May 13th.
VISIT
Langsett Water Treatment Works

June 10th
Steel Valley Walk
A visit by Bradfield History Society

July 8th.
Stanley Shaw
Local knifsmith

August
NO MEETING

September 9th.
Joe Castle
Roads to Worrall

SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 12th
BRADFIELD HISTORY FAIR

October 14th.
Phyllis Crossland
Hunshelf Hall & Environs

SATURDAY OCTOBER 30th.
SHEFFIELD HISTORY FAIR

November 11th.
Rosemary Smith
The Work of a Magistrate.

Stocksbridge & District History Society
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Deputy Chairman & Publicity Officer

Phillip Scott. Tel.882370

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Mary Hepworth Tel.885295

Secretary

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Meetings are normally held on the Second Thursday of each month, at the Library Manchester Road, Stocksbridge at 7.00pm.

NEXT NEWSLETTER
JUNE 1993

Publication Deadline
Thursday 13th. May

All articles and letters for publication should be clearly marked 'History Newsletter' and sent to:-
Mike Spick, c/o The Library, Manchester Road, Stocksbridge,