



STOCKSBRIDGE & DISTRICT HISTORY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Number 6
Summer 1993

EDITORS REMARKS

I'm enjoying my new job in Local Studies, the work is fascinating and very varied, and no two days are the same. I've come across a lot of the publications that history societies, both local, regional and national produce, and I'm glad to say that our modest sheet is among the best of the ones that I've seen, produced by local 'general interest' societies. Since we started this venture 18 months ago there have been six issues - all of which have come out on time and we have published some 45 articles on many varied topics.

I think we can pat ourselves on the back! All these articles have been shedding light on little known aspects of the history of this area. I've had a great deal of fun producing the newsletter and from what you tell me you seem to enjoy reading it, but all the thanks are down to you - if you hadn't written all the material I couldn't have published it. Which in a very round about way gets me to the crux of this article. Now we have come this far I think it is vitally important that we carry on with the newsletter, and to do this *I need articles - on a regular basis!* Thank you to everyone who has written anything - indeed it will not have escaped your attention that the same names keep occurring in the credits and in a way this is fine, except that I don't want people saying to me that this is becoming 'so and so's' publication. If **everyone who is a member of the Society wrote a 250 word article** then I could carry on publication **for at least the next two years.** (To give you an idea of size, this article is 536 words long.)

What I want is short to medium length articles, ideally not more than 1000 words, although shorter articles are very useful, especially as fillers, and the new system can cope with small maps and possibly drawings - see page 4. They should be in your own words, although the use of quotes from other sources is perfectly acceptable. If you care to type them, then fine, but handwritten articles are more than welcome. (I have to type them into the pagemaker anyway!) **What I don't really want is wholesale copying and lifting of other people's previously published material - it's far easier to give everybody a photocopy of the original, and it would probably get us into trouble with the copyright people.** I'm not asking for people to do massive amounts of research, simple reminiscences will suffice, amusing anecdotes from

old local publications - that sort of thing. Of course, if anyone wants me to publish a piece of their scholarly research - then I'll be more than happy to do so - but nothing too long so that it has to be run as a serial!

This is the last time that I shall ask for articles - I hope that by now you've all got the message! Just bring them to Stocksbridge Library - tell the staff that they are for me and they will do the rest!!
Mike Spick.



THE CEMETERY THAT NEVER WAS

Penistone Burial Board

A vestry meeting was held on the 15th. June 1871, when the necessary formalities having been gone through, a new board was elected. The first meeting was held on the 27th. July, meanwhile the Government Inspector had visited Penistone to hear the objections raised in Hunshelf, to that township being included in the Burial Board District. After considerable discussion and delay the following schemes were brought before the Vestry Meeting on the 22nd. July 1875.

1. To add additional land to the Church Yard, also the burial ground at Netherfield Chapel and to provide a small burial ground in Hunshelf with a lych gate, but without a chapel.

2. To provide a cemetery for the whole ecclesiastical parish and a small burial ground in Hunshelf with a lych gate, but without a chapel.

At the meeting on the 5th. August following; sanction of a Vestry was given to the Burial Board to raise a further sum of £800 and to charge a future poor rate with the same, in addition to the sum of £3000 previously granted to enable the Board to provide as proposed, a general cemetery with Chapels at Stottercliffe and a smaller burial ground with lych gate only at Hunshelf.

The result was the burial ground with its Chapels, and a conveniently situated cemetery for Hunshelf, the ground for which had already been purchased. It is thought that Samuel Fox & Co. sold the land at Birkin under the Edge to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners on the 1st. May 1876.

The original Burial Committee was not formed until the 22nd. July 1869. The first Burial Board was

formed following the Local Government Act of 1894 and Parish Councils Act 1895.

Stottercliffe was made a cemetery but Hunshelf never got its plot with lych gate.
W.E. Spencer.



ALONG THE VILLAGE BOUNDS

All villages around our land have one thing in common, each has a boundary separating it from its neighbouring village. The bound or boundary is the limit to a territory which is marked out by natural or man made features, such as stones, trees, streams, rivers etc. The practice of marking territories in such a way is likely to be extremely ancient, its roots probably going back to prehistoric times when man felt a need to protect his food supplies and to tell intruders 'this land is mine'. These early people were often warlike and held their territories with the utmost vigour against neighbouring tribes. The need to know the extent of tribal lands was possibly more for safety as those who wandered too far could put their lives in danger. It is not difficult to imagine small groups of warriors, at certain times of the year, doing a circuit of their territory and stopping at certain landmarks to shout and perhaps to strike their weapons against their shields or on the ground. This would have had two uses, one as a way of showing the tribal limits to young members and two as a verbal and visual display to others of their claim to the land.

By the Celtic period, tribal boundaries had grown and covered vast tracts of land, and a single tribe of a Celtic people would be scattered over a large area. The outer villages would protect the boundary, and in times of greater threat all those in the territory would join together to repel the threat to land or people.

The Romans, who followed the Celts, did not have tribal boundaries as such, their boundary was the Antonine wall and later Hadrians wall. These were both the northern boundaries of an Empire. The Romans did have markers to show the limits of their villa estates. These markers were in the form of a pillar which represented Terminus, the god of boundaries and landmarks. As these representations of the god encompassed the estate, it also seems likely that he was thought to protect all within, from disease and evil, be they man, beast or crop.

The later Christian traditions of beating the bounds with willow wands may have stemmed from Roman times. The willow is the plant of Saturn the Roman god of agriculture. The ritual of carrying his symbol around the estate boundary would probably be performed to ensure a good harvest. To strike the boundary stones would invoke the power of Terminus to protect the land and people.

There is a possibility that beating the bounds, an essentially pagan ceremony, was absorbed into

Christian tradition as a way of weaning the people from their old beliefs. Bound beating is usually held during Rogationtide, on one of the first three days preceding Ascension day, the Christian reasoning being that it celebrated the ascension of Christ, although the ceremony itself had nothing to do with the biblical event.

Sometimes one boundary marker would be a large oak tree, often known as a gospel oak, from the fact that quite often the gospel was preached there. The oak tree may, at first, seem a curious place for prayer meetings, as it is a tree with strong pagan associations, but by preaching under such a symbol the Church was showing that its new religion had vanquished the old. Not surprisingly the oak tree suffered a harder thrashing than its fellow markers, no doubt with encouragement from the priest. When the term gospel oak was coined many had probably forgotten the oak's pagan past, which was what the Church wanted, they had turned a tree of pagan worship into one of Christian. The sites of these trees can still be found on old maps, and other clues can be found in field names and old road names.

Fred Hepworth.



5346 YARDS

Built at a cost of £3 million and opened in 1954, the 3 mile, 66 yard Woodhead Tunnel was the major civil engineering project of the first main-line railway electrification scheme in this country.

The new tunnel had to be built because the 2 original, single line tunnels built in the 1840's and 50's were in bad physical condition and were too small to allow the clearance necessary for electrical safety.

The full electric train service between Sheffield, Manchester and Wath was inaugurated in September 1954. The new service was the fastest ever on the line, expresses taking under the hour. More freight trains than ever used the route, continuing to carry Yorkshire coal to Lancashire, as they had done for over a century.

Yet almost as soon as the scheme was finished, the writing was on the wall for Woodhead. What went wrong?

In a way the Woodhead scheme came too late, it had been conceived in the 1930's, but had been halted by financial troubles and the war. Even as it was introduced the decision was taken that its 1500 volt D.C. system would not be used in future, and that all new railway electrification projects would use the newer, cheaper 25,000 volt A.C. power source. This decision left the Woodhead line out on a limb, in that its locomotives could not be used on any other electrified lines. In the early 1960's the 'Beeching' era of cuts and closures meant that Woodhead was closed as a through route to London [Marylebone] via Sheffield, and became a local

backwater, the electric trains shuttling back and forth between Manchester and Sheffield - but no further. The final blow to passenger services came in the early 1970's when it was announced that because the hourly passenger trains got in the way of freights, all passenger services between Sheffield and Manchester would be routed via the Hope Valley. This decision meant the closure of Sheffield Victoria station and only the local service to Huddersfield used the Woodhead route between Sheffield and Penistone.

In 1981 the final closure of the line was announced, and by July it was all over, the final freight had trundled into history. The official reasons for closure were that the electrical equipment was life-expired and that there was over-capacity on the trans-pennine railway routes, so 'rationalisation' took place. The track was kept intact until 1986 as part of an agreement with the rail unions, in case British Rail had a change of heart and could find a place for Woodhead in its scheme of things.

What remains, apart from the memories and the ghosts?

The track-bed from Woodhead is currently being made into part of a long-distance trackway stretching from York to Liverpool. The 'old' tunnels carry national grid high power cables, to avoid spoiling the National Park with pylons. The 'new' tunnel is rumoured to have been sold.

If anyone had told me that two coach loads of people would pay £1 per person for the privilege of walking through the tunnel, I wouldn't have believed it, however, on the evening of 20th, January this year I was on one of those buses, and joined the trek from Woodhead to Dunford Bridge. The light from dozens of torches illuminating our progress.

The tunnel is in very good condition, considering that no maintenance work has been carried out for over 10 years. All the electrical equipment has now been removed. Here and there were the reminders of better days, the odd length of spare rail, stored for emergency use to repair broken track, hundreds of track fixing pins - left when the rails were lifted, and yards and yards of telephone wire that escaped the scrap men. In one place a foot diameter jet of water from a failed sealing ring, was squirting horizontally for about 10 feet, showing the incredible pressures behind the tunnel walls. The original tunnellers were plagued with water flooding the workings.

One final question, why in this day and age, with the coming of the Channel Tunnel, and our closer ties with Europe, have we allowed the only trans-pennine railway tunnel, built to be capable of taking continental sized trains, to close? Where is the sense in that? Sir Edward Watkin, Chairman of the Great Central Railway, who dreamed that one day trains would travel from Manchester to Paris via his railway, must be spinning in his grave!

Mike Spick.



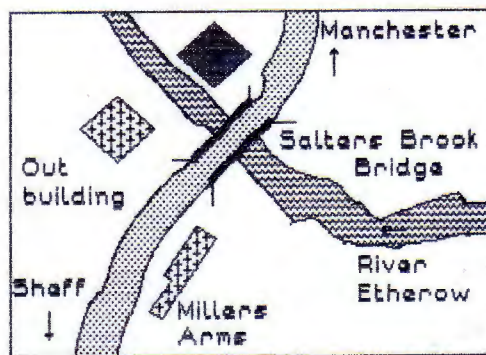
The Millers Arms, situated on the border of Cheshire and Yorkshire stood at an altitude of 1366 feet above sea level. It was originally named Salters Brook House and was sited near to the Lady Cross and the Salters Brook where the rivers Don and Mersey rise, and the three counties of Cheshire, Derbyshire and Yorkshire converge. In days gone by it was a place for cock fighting and bare-knuckle prize fights, on account of being able to evade the police of one county by slipping across the border into another.

The Shepherds Society was formed in 1807 at the Millers Arms, which was kept and owned for many years by the Taylor family. The pub was also used for the payment of wages to the navvies who worked on the Woodhead railway tunnels.

For about 30 years before the opening of the present main road, and before the opening of the railway, many stage waggons called at either Salters Brook or the Dog and Partridge at Board Hill to change horses. Such was the volume of traffic that in one year the receipts at Board Hill toll bar exceeded £1,800.

The Millers Arms was eventually purchased by the City of Manchester water works, who allowed the licence to lapse in 1916, the house being ultimately demolished in 1920.

Fred Hepworth.



WHITSUNTIDE IN THE 1920's

The people from Bolsterstone Church would walk down to meet those at Deepcar Church. On the way down the leader would choose which hymns they would sing. A favourite was 'Hail Smiling Morn'.

They would meet up with the people from Deepcar and all gather at the top of Vaughton Hill, where the toll bar was; here they would sing some more hymns before proceeding along the main road to Stocksbridge, picking up the people from the Wesleyan Chapel along the way. Eventually all the Churches would combine together and join the

procession, each Church having its own banner.

There were usually 3 bands to accompany the singing, Stocksbridge band, the Salvation Army and the Scouts. They would spread themselves out in the procession, front, middle and back, so everyone could hear them.

There were hundreds in the procession and there were many more standing in doorways or at the side of the road, watching.

Before the procession, the youngsters from Deepcar Church would take their mugs to school, so that they would be there, ready for the Whitsuntide tea.

Whitsuntide meant new clothes for a lot of children, often it was the *only* time they got them.

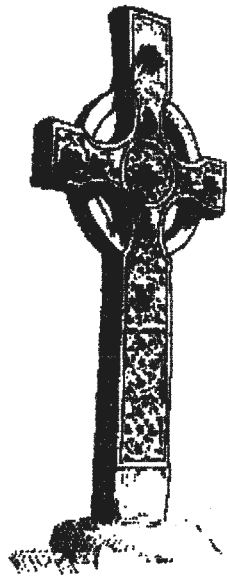
The procession went up Hole House Lane and along Victoria Street to the Church Fields at Bracken Moor, known as 'Whitsuntide Field'. Everyone would assemble in the field to join in with the hymn singing. There were hymn sheets and for those who could afford that little extra, sheets with music as well as the words. A horse and dray would be led into the field, to provide a platform for the conductor, (the horse didn't stay for the singing!).

After the singing was over, everyone returned to their own Church Hall for the Whitsuntide tea, of buns, sandwiches and of course, mugs of tea. After tea the children would run home with their mugs and get changed into old clothes for the fun, games and races back at the Whitsuntide Field.

It was a very happy day. There were stalls round the field selling small items, sweets, toys and oddments and *canes*. When I asked about the canes I was told that the boys often liked to buy a cane to play about with - they would take it home at the end of the day and forget about it *until the next time they were naughty!*

The people I spoke to were all remembering Whitsuntide in the 1920's, and each one remembered hot, sunny days; each one, independently, recalling the same incident; the hot sun melting the tar and how they all enjoyed bursting the bubbles. They were often in trouble when they got home because of the tar on shoes and socks!

Beryl Walker.



PROGRAMME 1993

July 8th.
Stanley Shaw
Local Knifemith

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
Chairman

Basil Spooner. Tel.884456

Deputy Chairman & Publicity Officer

Phillip Scott. Tel.882370

Treasurer

Mary Hepworth Tel.885295

Secretary

Brenda Duffield Tel.882349

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

NEXT NEWSLETTER
SEPTEMBER 1993
Publication Deadline
Friday 20th. August

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

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