



STOCKSBRIDGE & DISTRICT HISTORY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Number 10
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BOLSTERSTONE

When we came to live in Bolsterstone in 1949 it was a remote moorland village. There was Mr. Frank Webster's well stocked shop, if they hadn't what you wanted they would soon get it for you. When they first took over the shop around the time of the First World War, Mrs. Webster baked the bread and tea-cakes. They also made the funeral teas, this would be sandwiches or a meat tea depending on the financial circumstances, but always they would be served with Mrs Webster's 'spice loaf'.

A wooden hut owned by Stocksbridge Cooperative was situated at the top of the fields as you entered the village, here orders were collected and delivered, the groceries packed in strong brown paper, tied with string - I never heard of one collapsing!

There were three or four butchers who delivered twice a week. Mr Parsons and the Coop called on Wednesdays and Fridays using vans or lorries, but Mr Morgan from Oughtibridge, flatly refused to move with the times and stuck with his horse and dray. He sold greengroceries and though he covered a large area, he was always on time.

Mrs Poppleton was the village postmistress, the mail was carried up from Deepcar and sorted in the post office, the post box was emptied by Mrs Poppleton and the local mail was kept back in the afternoons, residents could call for it themselves.

Mrs Retaillic and Mrs Sampson delivered the local mail but after the postman had left his mail, he carried on walking and delivered the post to the outlying farms in Ewden etc. You could put your clock right by him. This system seemed much more reliable than the present streamlined methods, it had a more personal touch.

Over the years, Mrs Poppleton became an expert in sorting problems and not only with the post office. There were very few private telephones in the village and in an emergency she would take messages, which on occasions meant her having to pass on some very sad news.

Life revolved around school and Church activities. The Reverend Surtees and his wife carried out their duties with an old-world charm. Mrs Lindley was Head Mistress of the school, ably assisted by Mrs Hollingworth. there was an intake of about 30 pupils and one year 5 pupils gained scholarships, enabling them to go to Penistone Grammar School.

Whitsuntide was a very busy time, it was a tradition that all the children had new clothes. On Whit Monday morning the local band would march up the village, playing 'Hail Smiling Morn'. When the banner had been adjusted, children and parents would line-up behind it and off they would go in procession through the village and down Cockshutts Lane to join up with the other Churches at Deepcar for a sing and then on to Stocksbridge for a combined sing. On their return, the children were given refreshments in the school and each was given a three-penny bit. It was then down to the sports field for an afternoon of races and games.

The annual garden party was held in the vicarage grounds.

As not many people owned cars the garden party was an ideal meeting place for friends.

The Harvest Festival celebrations commenced with the Church service on Thursday evening, it was a tradition that the Reverend Stebbings preached the Sunday service. You had to arrive very early to get a seat to hear such a renowned character preach a notable sermon. There was always a meat and potato pie supper baked by the local ladies. On the Monday evening a concert was held in the school, usually a play was presented by members of the Mothers' Union and local artists also gave their services.

Christmas celebrations started with a 'fur and feather' whist drive, so called because the prizes given were rabbits and poultry donated by local farmers. The highlight of Christmas was the Christmas Ball, which went on to about four am. A drugget was laid over the school floor and a very tricky task this was too. Gentlemen had to wear white gloves and dancing shoes and the ladies dressed up for this important event. Tickets were very limited for this event as it was so special.

When I look round the village square, now packed with cars, I realise that Bolsterstone is no longer a remote moorland village. I remember how we all met at the delivery vans and chatted, how children could play in the village square and wonder if progress is all it's cracked up to be, then I look at our kitchen electrical equipment and realise that you can't have it both ways. Electricity came two years after we came to Bolsterstone and after being stuck with a two-hole earth closet for eight years, an Acme wringer, peggy legs and wash tubs, I decide I'm better off with my memories...But?

Nell Rawlin

THE LIFE OF A YORKSHIRE MINER

A CENTURY AGO

[This is an abridged version of a manuscript first given to me by Roy Mallinson. The original was a faded, duplicated typescript, probably dating from the 1930's. The work was anonymous, but after a bit of diligent research and with some extra information supplied by Mr. W.E. Spencer, I was able to discover the true identity of this unknown author - he was George Marsh, onetime miner and later carriage proprietor of Pilley Green. - Ed.]

Part Four [Conclusion].

He [Lord Wharnclyffe] introduced me to Squire Wentworth of Stainborough as a very reliable and trustworthy driver, and through this I got the conveyance work for their shooting parties for several years.

At this time I took to delivering parcels sent to Birdwell

station, Great Central Railway, and when I went to Manchester to sign on, Mr. Smith offered me half-a-crown to get some whisky with.

I threw the half-crown down and told him that I could do without it and the whisky too, because I had never tasted it in my life. Eventually, the half-crown was sent to Birdwell station for me.

I began to pull down my hothouses to make room for stables and carriage room because I was increasing my stock. I bought a horse and some kind of vehicle each year for six years until I was the owner of six wagonettes, one charabanc, four cabs, one mourning coach and one hearse, and these I carried on with for ten years.

Then, unfortunately, I lost my wife, whose loss was very keenly felt, but I could comfort myself with the thought that everything was done for her during her illness.

Two of my sons, after suffering for five years, went off with consumption, so I had to look round for a respectable woman for a housekeeper and to look after the lads. Fortunately I found one who was a second mother to them, doing everything possible for them, and everything was got for them, regardless of expense, which during the five years was very heavy indeed.

During my younger days I had not the opportunity of going to school to learn to read and write, so I came to the conclusion that my nine children should not be brought up so illiterate as I am.

Therefore, I sent them all to the Slosh School at Tankersley, and each one of them got a good sound education. This I found was a very expensive item because I had to pay school pence for every one of them. There was no free education then.

In course of time my brother James died in the workhouse at Barnsley, and about two years later my brother Matthew also died in the workhouse asylum; he had drunk to the extent that they had to put him under restraint.

Both my brothers had a better chance when young that I had, but they would have the drink, and that is where it landed them.

Well, I had to bury them both in due course in Barnsley, having all the expense to bear, for coffins and everything else without help from the Parish or anyone, so that the readers of my career will see that I have not had a bed of roses to sleep on all the way through my life, but by being steady and careful, I have been able to put up with it which I hope is for the best.

After losing my two youngest sons, and the Compensation Act coming into force, I began to think about giving up the business because I could not get reliable and suitable men to do the driving, and another thing I had no one to keep the accounts for me and to tell me how I was going on, so I thought I had better give up while the business stood well, because if through some unforeseen accident to a wagonette full of people, the compensation would have been heavier than I could bear, and all my thriftiness and steadiness would have been swamped at one blow. So I decided to give up and I had a public sale on the 26th day of November 1906.

I did not sell up because I had a lot of money, but because I thought I could manage, and I am very thankful to say I have done so up to now.

I was 77 years of age on the fourth day of August 1911. I must needs say I have lived longer than I thought I should do, but at the same time I am thankful to say I am in the very best of health, and blessed with all my faculties, and that I can ride a horse today with my boots on, better than I could ride the mule when I was bare-foot at seven years of age.

Yours Truly
George Marsh, Miner, Pilley Green.

His Mark X.
8th day of February 1912.

[George Marsh in fact lived for another 9 years until 1921, having reached the ripe old age of 87.]

BREWING

In the 17th & 18th Century

[Part Two]

Brewing in the home was not taxed until the late seventeenth century, and I imagine that those who wished to brew their own beer bought the malt from the local miller, if he had a kiln, as at Gunthwaite Mill, or from Sheffield. The parish registers of Sheffield during the years 1698-1703 record ten maltsters, indicating that the trade was well established.

The purpose of malting is to convert the insoluble starch into soluble carbohydrates. Malting is a messy business, but the farmer who grew his own barley might want to undertake the task.

*"Three days for the brook
Three days for the sack
Three days for sprouting
Three days for drying"*

was one old recipe. After threshing the grain was riddled and cleaned, then put into a vessel to steep from Monday morning to Thursday afternoon, after which it was spread out to dry for three days or so, depending on the amount of sunshine. The grain then lay 'chitting' i.e. it produced roots and a shoot spike; after which it was taken to the kiln to be heated to kill the chitting. If no kiln was available, the grain was spread on a hair bed and a fire put under it, taking care with the fuel used, coal being unsuitable because of the noxious fumes.

The total brew at any one time is largely governed by the size of vessels used. Inventories might list the brewing vessels but not their volumes. In 1688 a barrel was fixed at 34 gallons after being 32 gallons for many years, in 1803 it was increased to 36 gallons, the gallon to be the imperial gallon of 1824.

From the inventory of Zac. Arthur, innkeeper, Lady's Bridge Sheffield April 1719.

"... In the brewhouse - Four kitts, a funnell, two liquor sives, a pair of briggs 5s 6d (27⁴p). A stone trough 12s 0d (60p) Nine yards of lead pipe and a brass cock 12s 0d (60p) A mash tub 15s 0d (75p) A waterspout a plank dresser 2s 4d (12p) Five brass bars, a cowl rake, a coal hammer 4s 0d (20p) A brewing lead thirty six stone 1L 16s 0d (180p) A liquor trough with lead in it 10s 0d (50p) A square cisterna 18s 0d (90p) Along cisterna fourteen stone 14s 0d (70p)... Five quarter and six netts of malt 6L 11s 0d (655p) A malt mill 1L 7s 6d (137⁴p)"

Soft water is the best for beer and to make a kilderkin (18 gallons) the mash should start off with about 30 gallons, for the grains retain about 10 gallons besides what is lost in boiling in the copper.

A brewer intending to produce four kilderkins of ale or beer for home use would need a mash tun to hold sixty

gallons of malt and water, a copper or set-pot of at least 40 gallons, a shallow tub to go under the mash tun, a fermenting vessel that would hold at least thirty gallons and a settling back, as well as casks in which to rack the beer.

Usually two beers were brewed from one lot of malt, a strong beer for the house, and small beer for refreshment in the fields. Three bushels of malt to the barrel was a rough recipe, but for beer to keep, up to six bushels to the barrel might be used.

The mash tun had a hole in the bottom in which a pole plug was placed so that the wort could be drawn off. Round the base of the plug was placed a bundle of twigs or straw to hold back the grains when the wort was drawn off. The copper was filled with water and raised to boiling point; the malt was crushed or ground, and the grist put into the mash tun, and hot (not boiling) water was poured upon it.

Thermometers were not used in brewing until about 1750; and the rough and ready ration of seven buckets of boiling to three of cold water was used. After three hours during which the mash was frequently stirred, the wort was drawn off into the underback and then ladled into the copper. If the beer was to be hopped then 2lbs of hops together with any other herbs such as coriander, juniper, etc. would be added, for like the housewife and her baking, brewers had their own recipes.

The wort was boiled for two hours or more and then emptied into a sieve to rid it of the spent hops and the liquid drained into the settling back to cool before being put into the fermenting vessel.

Yeast was introduced, either by being put on the floor of the vessel before the wort was ladled in, or 'pitched' onto the wort when the vessel was full. The fermentation process required three days, but if the vessel was needed for small beer to follow, than after seven hours or so the brew was put into casks and fermentation left to work through the bung.

Yeast is a plant and after a brew will not live much longer than a week. Brewers yeast also served the housewife to leaven her baking, and history is very reticent in the seventeenth century and earlier as to how home brewers and bakers managed to keep a continuity of live yeast.

An extract from the London and County Brewer 1750 edition.

"...Or when the drink is working, put into the vat a whisk, hasle rod, broom or branch of juniper or furze, and let it be in all the time it is fermenting, then take it out hang it up in a dry place and though it be six or eight months before it is used, it will be very sweet and serviceable for the next brewing."

W.E. Spencer

[To be continued in the next Newsletter]

CHURCHES IN OUR VALLEY

It is well known that major expansion to the size and population of Stocksbridge and district occurred in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The churches too were increasing in number to cater for the changing requirements and beliefs of the new inhabitants of the valley.

St. Anne's Catholic Church was built in 1859, close by New Haywoods above Black Rocher.

While the Reverend Robertshaw presided at the

Ebenezer Chapel, a rival chapel, called the Congregational, was built a quarter of a mile up the main road, then another less than that distance further west, at Horner house, by Primitive Methodists. A third chapel, for Wesleyan Methodists, was built at Haywoods, but only one extra Independent Minister is entered in the Census Returns - for the West End Methodists - and the Wesleyans had lay preachers.

Two elders of the Church of the Latter-day Saints were living in Carr Lane, Deepcar, in 1851, but there is no record of their activities, nor any subsequent trace of them.

William Dickinson Froggatt recorded that the first Primitive Methodist Missionaries were entertained in workmen's homes, poor as they were. He also spoke 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 Sunday. Efforts to raise the money to build a chapel must have entailed a great deal of sacrifice, but eventually, in 1866, land was bought from S. Fox, west of Horner House, for that purpose. A stipulation was made that no beer-house or public house should be erected nor any use made of it "...of a noisome or dangerous character...", for Samuel Fox was a temperate man. (Ironically the building is now used as a licensed rugby club!)

In 1868 the first marriage service was held at Bolsterstone St. Mary's, the fortunate couple were presented with an inscribed bible, two half-crowns, a pair of blankets and were entertained to tea at the vicarage.

It was the Reverend 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 provided and the following year stained glass windows installed.

Deepcar Church, dedicated to St. John, was built in 1870, daughter church to St. Mary's, now a parish church. Samuel Fox was not in any way opposed to the Established Church - in fact he was as much a benefactor to Bolsterstone school and to the village as he was to Stocksbridge. It was at his expense that the site of Bolsterstone castle was excavated in 1878, and he contributed to the building of Deepcar Church.

Adult education was available at the Mutual Improvement Society which was instigated by the Reverend Robertshaw, here Sheffield and Leeds weekly newspapers could be read as well as The Christian World.

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 1881 the Congregationalists and the Primitive Methodists were amalgamated.

Brenda Duffield.

(Extract 'From Waldershef to Stocksbridge - A Local Study' Thesis Presented for the Degree of M.A. 1989)



Do you remember the works' hooter or buzzer as we used to call it? If so you will be getting on a bit, because it last sounded in 1939, just before the war, 54 years ago, almost a lifetime and yet it played a large part in our lives.

In 1939 the dreaded wartime siren took over, but only to warn us of enemy action. The old buzzer had a friendly sound and performed a useful function.

At 5.30am we heard it and again at 5.50 - the second burst a sort of reminder to get your skates on or you would be late for work! We had two more calls at 12.30 and 1.20, marking the start and finish of lunch time, and a final call at 5.30pm - finishing time for those employed from 8am to 5.30pm.

The buzzer was also used to alert the works' fire crews.

We didn't think that the buzzer was an intrusion, but a very good time keeper for all the town.

Fred Harrison.



Notes from the 'Express', 1900 & 1901

Wesleyan Reform Chapel Oughtibridge

Their first meetings, in a room over a blacksmiths shop, were not exempt from annoyances, for in the smith they had an active opponent, and to disturb them when they met to worship, his custom was to bang the anvil with his hammer. That was done to make the meetings impossible, but the smith defeated his own ends, as his methods only attracted more people to the meetings.

A youthful essayist at the national school, Oughtibridge described in his paper on visiting a Church: "When you go into a Church you feel a funny, mysterious feeling come over you, and when you begin to sing one of their solemn hymns you wish you were out again!"

Arsenic in the beer, a case from Penistone

J.B. innkeeper, Penistone, was summoned for having sold beer containing arsenic on Jan. 30th and divers other dates. Defendant did not appear but was represented by Mr. H. who asked for an adjournment for a fortnight as the defence was not quite completed.

It appears to us that the sanitary system of our town would bear a little improvement. It is not very nice when passing to and from meals to come across scavengers hard at work emptying ashpits etc and perhaps leaving the contents in the main street for an hour or two in the middle of the day.

J.M. Brown

STAFFORDSHIRE CORDIAL, AND ROYAL ENGLISH MEDICINE FOR HORSES

WHICH has been given with unprecedented success in the most dangerous stages of the Sleeping or Raging Staggers, Gripes, Colds, Coughs, Fevers, and all disorders originating in Colds, or from grazing in marshy, wet meadows, or after severe exercise in racing, hunting, working in coaches, post chaises, or waggons, hard riding, &c and is universally acknowledged to be the greatest restorative to exhausted nature, and the most valuable Horse Medicine ever known.

Sold at the Original Warehouse, No.10, Bow Church Yard, London; and by all the principal Country Stationers and Druggists.-Price 2s6d the Bottle.

[Sheffield Mercury August 21st. 1844.]

PROGRAMME 1994

July 21st.
Steel Valley Walk
with Andy Warren

AUGUST
NO MEETING

September 8th.
W.E. Spencer
Hunshelf and the Poor Law

October 13th.
To be Arranged

November 10th.
To be Arranged

December 8th.
To be Arranged

Stocksbridge & District History Society

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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

SEPTEMBER 1994

Publication Deadline

Thursday 21st July

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