

THE PARAGON

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SALFORD REMEMBERED

Part 2

By A.A. McKay
(1927 - 2009)

We were very posh when it came to toilets we had one of our very own in the back yard, with its own flush and little squares of newspaper hung on a nail. There were no fancy rolls of quilted toilet paper in those days. Lots of houses around us had communal WCs, with not much privacy, and didn't they smell!

When it came to bedrooms, we only had two, and I was too young to remember much about the sleeping arrangements. I talked to my sister May about it recently, and she said that the most recent arrival would be with her in her bed, with Agnes and Lilian in another bed, all in the back room. The lads were all in the front room, and all I can tell you for the rest was that there was a sofa downstairs.

When talking of other matters with May, I asked her one day about Edward. He had a badly scarred upper arm and shoulder. She said he had hidden something on the mantelpiece above the fireplace, where there was a kettle boiling, and as he climbed down he knocked the kettle over and scalded himself. I don't know exactly when this happened.

I can remember just a few of the neighbours in the street: the Tudors, Parkers, O'Maras and Kershaws. In some respects they were like members of an extended family many of them did not have much money coming in, a few had no man about the house as so many had been killed in the first World War. Each area of a few houses had a Roll of Honour in a frame under glass on a wall bearing the names of the lads who never came back, always with a jam jar of flowers beneath. I wonder what happened to those memorials when the houses were demolished?

The closeness of the community came to the fore whenever there was a birth or sickness or death in any of the houses. There always seemed to be someone who could play the part of midwife I never heard of anyone using a maternity hospital. If anyone was sick and could not afford a doctor, a neighbour would go round to the Herb Beer shop on Brewery Street or the chemist on Stephen Street to bring patent medicines. These were in small, round bottles and secured on cards by elastic.

Many is the time that Mother dosed us with Olive Oil and Raspberry Vinegar, Indian Brandy or Castor oil. Adults would take Epsom Salts or Beecham's Pills, and for boils and pimples, the famous Jackson's Drawing Ointment. If you were unlucky enough to have a boil or a pimple, Jackson's Drawing Ointment would really make it throb. And what about the famous Boiled Bottle?

SOCIETY NEWS

For the first time in twenty years we had to cancel our Christmas Carol Supper, due to the severe weather conditions. We plan to hold instead a Spring event, with a presentation of our Website, towards which we have been working for months. Meanwhile, if any member would like a refund, please apply to our Treasurer, Betty McKay.

In This Issue

Salford Remembered	Page 1
Memoirs Of Lilian Birkhead	Page 2
Diary Of Willis Burgin	Page 2
Victory Club Records	Page 3
Memoirs of a Burrisher	Page 4

MEMOIRS OF LILIAN BIRKHEAD



THE BUNGALOW

After my father's death in 1934 we had to move out of the house we were occupying the owners wanted it for themselves. This set us a problem. The house was certainly too big for two, but although we wanted to stay at Greenmoor, there was no other house available. It was then that my eldest brother Wilfrid suggested that I should build a house or bungalow a rather breath-taking suggestion, for I had very little capital. Teachers' salaries were very low in the 1930s and I was never very businesslike, nor a methodical saver. But with my brother's advice and assistance, I felt I could tackle such an undertaking.

So in 1935 a plot of land was purchased from Ben Watts of Little Dean Head, 400 sq. yards, for £50. Plans were drawn up and passed, and the building of the bungalow began in September 1935. A severe winter followed; there were many setbacks, and we were not able to move in until May 1936. This was the winter my mother spent so much time in hospital, and after her fifth operation we got the builders to put a spurt on, so that she could be brought straight from hospital to the new bungalow. It was certainly a strenuous time, packing, removing, hospital visiting and teaching! But finally we were installed, and my mother found our new home quite delightful, after spending so long in a hospital ward. We enjoyed that summer in our pleasant bungalow, with her dreaded illness in abeyance for the time being.

The bungalow was at that time a very modern building, with electricity, a bathroom and indoor toilet. The water came up the hill from the Thurgoland supply, under an agreement by several landlords lower down the hill, but the pump could not force it any higher up. So the rest of the village were still using rainwater from the storage tanks and drinking water from the village pump.

Our boundary wall was built of stone by Mr. Frank Crossland and cost about £50 with stone from the local quarry. The bungalow was estimated to have cost a total of £700. I got a mortgage from the Halifax Building Society of £450, to be paid off in 20 years. This seems unbelievably small now, but so were wages. In the early 30s I drew less than £20 a month, out of which I was running a car. Petrol was 1s/6d a gallon.

I have always been sorry that the bungalow was not built of stone, but I was told that stone would cost half as much again as brick again a matter of finance.

The lack of piped water to properties above my bungalow continued until 1951, when after much pressure from the Parish Council, six new houses were built over a period of some years, with bathrooms and WCs, so piped water had to be provided. The water was brought from a tank at the top of the hill (1,000ft. above sea-level) that was originally built for the benefit of Fox's Works and was pumped up from the Sheffield Corporation supply. We were allowed so many gallons a day from that built-in reservoir at Hill Top. What a change it made to our village houses, church and school! In 1945 school toilet facilities had seemed appalling after my time at Stocksbridge School, but I endured them for over 6 years.

The village also received a sewerage system for the first time. A small sewerage tank was constructed in the field below Well Hill Top Cottages, just over the wall from New Mill Wood. Most of the properties on the main road were then connected to this system, but I already had my own septic tank.

Electricity had come in about 1935 good, but not as great a boon as the water supply. Previously we had single burner paraffin lamps, then the Aladdin double burner, with candles for bedroom and kitchen. Flashlights were a great asset before electricity was laid on.

THE DIARY OF WILLIS BURGIN

Son of a Yorkshire Miner

As we sighted the village of Bony on top of a hill it was being heavily shelled and clouds of dust and smoke were rising into the air as farm buildings and houses were being hit. Barrages of heavy shells were being fired over us towards the enemy lines. 16th Section and its guns took up positions in reserve trenches, half a mile to the rear of the attacking line, and near Brigade HQ.

That morning of the great attack on the Hindenburg line was dark and misty at 05.30am in September 1918. All the artillery, heavy and light, was brought into action on both sides. The noise was deafening and it was like Hell on Earth. Veery lights from both sides lit up the entire area.

I was standing by a high-ranking officer in the trench when a messenger arrived from the wireless post. "Well, Captain, how are things going?" asked the Major. "Fine, sir" he replied, "but a terrible loss of men!" "That is to be expected, but as long as we are going that way ---!" and the Major pointed his cane towards Germany, "that is all that matters!"

It was our tanks, ploughing gaps in the half-mile depth of barbed wire, that enabled our Infantry to penetrate and attack the enemy.

VICTORY CLUB RECORDS

From notes by Carol Dishman

The prolonged period of recession, having led to short-time in the Works naturally reflected on income. The Finance Committee were keeping a close eye on expenditure and income, particularly over the bar. Fruit machine receipts were low. It had to be admitted that the financial position of the Club was not healthy.

Members attending the A.G.M. were as usual given tokens worth 2s/6d to spend on "liquid refreshment."

Trade in general was depressed. In September 1968 the Stocksbridge Bottling Co. went into voluntary liquidation due to financial difficulties.

A special Committee meeting in May 1969 discussed the recommendation to close the Club during the afternoons to save money and resolved to call an E.G.M. to consider amending opening hours and permitted hours for sale of intoxicating liquors.

An increase in burglaries made matters worse, and a burglar alarm system had to be ordered.

A proposal that the barman's house should be fitted with inside bathroom and toilet was turned down by the Finance Committee.

A further consideration was the abolition of the halfpenny and imminent decimalisation of our currency. Prices had to be amended accordingly. A new cash register had to be looked at in 1968. In January 1971 new coinage was obtained in readiness for D-Day.

At Christmas 1971 a bottle of spirits was given to each Committee Member and two bottles to Officials. And a sign of the times: when the President was ill, they sent him 50 cigarettes.

The Committee did not fail to show recognition of the service given by doorman Mr. Patchett when he retired on his 80th birthday, by presenting him with 80/- and his wife with a Fox umbrella. And a Tombola machine was installed, with rules set down for its use. It was also admitted that a contraceptive vending machine would be of benefit to the Club.

The TV set needed replacing and a new set receiving BBC2 was proposed. And when BBC Television came and filmed the Works Brass Band at the Club, it was suggested that the new set should be in Colour, although it was noted that reception would be poor until the new TV mast came into operation in May 1971. The new set was installed in March 1972.

Further modernisation was suggested with the installation of a ramp for use by people in wheelchairs.

The existing grand piano had become an embarrassment and it was offered to Wilson Peck, but they would not pay what was expected and it was put up for sale and sold to Mr. E. Brooks for £225.

The Club was still holding out against the serving of ladies at the bar, but ladies should be allowed to play snooker as long as they were escorted. But by the end of 1968 a subscription rate for ladies as Associate Members was being considered.

Photographs of former Snooker teams had been on show in the Billiards Room, but when someone thought to replace them they were missing. When they were found in the stock room it was decided that they should be offered to the members featured.

[The formal photograph is not the one that appeared in *Around Stocksbridge* and we cannot identify the personnel. The only one we are sure of on the other is Bob Scholey 2nd right)

The Committee did not often comment on matters not directly affecting the Club, but did note that the new Clipper bus service was considered to be "very poor" in October 1971.

The entertainments at the Victory Club may have been reduced, but it was noted that Vixen Films recorded the Boxing Day Ball of 1967 and a Wrestling Contest was to be staged in February 1972.

This period closed with a note of Bolsterstone Male Voice Choir winning the Eisteddfod in July 1972.

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 2011

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

FEBRUARY 10th
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

MEMOIRS OF A BURRISHER

By Eric E. Godley

*Submitted by Janet Parkin, whose relative was a
native of Burwash, Sussex.*

I said I would tell you more about our spare time activities. About this time my family had moved out of the Victorian hovel into the house I still occupy today. It was 1938 and we were the first tenants on this estate.

In the school holidays I used to leave home about 7.00 to 7.30 and walk to Fontridge Lane through the fields, setting a few rabbit snares on the way (I never missed a trick), finally arriving at my cousin's house - Phoebe's Cottage. His name was Benny Grey. After a while we would roam the fields and woodlands, visiting the pond at the disused Brightling brickworks. After laying out a line or two, baited with a nice fat worm, we left it to its own fate. Our main occupation of the day was catching rabbits and moles, the skins of which provided us with a good income 9d for a dried moleskin and 6d for a rabbit skin. We knew a field where rabbits were plentiful and, so as not to disturb them, we set a few snares and nets out of sight behind a hedge. Then we made our presence known, and if we were lucky we would catch one or two. Feeling a bit hungry, rabbit was on the menu. We lit a fire in a stream bed with stones piled on to heat up. The rabbit was skinned and wrapped in garlic and large leaves, then covered in a layer of mud from the stream and put among the hot stones.

While that was cooking we would boil up some water in a paper bag (yes, it is possible try it), and cook a couple or more of moorhen's eggs to be going on with. When we thought the rabbit was ready, it was unwrapped from its casing of mud and leaves. A few parts were burnt, but most were edible. If you have never tried it, you don't know what you are missing! On our way home I would collect any fish caught on the lay lines. Leaving my cousin, I would collect my snares and any rabbit in them as I walked back through the fields, tired but having enjoyed an exciting day. This was just one of my pastimes.

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