



THE PARAGON

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The Journal of the Stocksbridge & District History Society

A Happy New Year

Chairman's Notes

We are finishing off another year with the Society and I hope looking forward to a good 2012, Olympic Year. This last year seemed like an Olympic Year for me with my 200 mile Coast to Coast walk, an achievement that enabled David and me to raise £1520 for our charities, my thanks again to Society and members for their sponsorship.

The weather kept fine for our Carol Supper this year and an excellent buffet and good singing and cheer made for a very good evening for all.

Please don't forget about my project for 2012, Stocksbridge at War. I need those memories and reminiscences of the war years of how Stocksbridge folk were affected.

All the very best for the New Year to everybody, and I hope you enjoy our new format Paragon. - Dennis

Welcome to the new look Newsletter. Remember it's your Society, your Newsletter and your Website.

The Committee welcomes any comments you may have on the way the Society is run, or any ideas for doing things differently.

In particular, if you have any suggestions for topics for the Paragon, the Website, or speakers for our monthly meetings, any Member of the Committee would be most pleased to hear from you.

Advance notice of the Society A.G.M. which is scheduled for Thursday the 9th of February at the starting time of 7.00 pm.

Question Time

In what month of what year did this event occur?

Answer on Page 4



A SHORT HISTORY OF UNDERBANK HALL.

Underbank Hall occupies a commanding position on the north side of the valley overlooking the ridge which forms the northern boundary of the Peak National Park.

According to a British Steel brochure, Underbank Hall had been in the West family since 1480.

The Hearth Tax Returns for 1672 shows there were no fewer than five hearths at the Hall.



Underbank changed hands in the 17th century when Frances West and her husband, William Fenton of Leeds came to live there. According to records, in the early 18th Century Mister Fenton paid a "peppercorn" rent of one red rose for the privilege of Turbary i.e. the right to cut turf or peat in Langsett.

The Hall was occupied in the name of Fenton until in 1839, William's great-great-grand daughter, Jessey married Major James Douglas de Wend. Little is known about the occupations of the earliest Wests but they may have had interests in rearing sheep for local wool, weaving activities and the provision of timber

The Fentons were probably the first local family to ex-

plot the mineral resources such as Coal, Fireclay and Ganimer on a large scale. The provision of such minerals helped in the develop of the Steel making industries throughout South Yorkshire.

The farm was tenanted in the mid 17th century by the Thompson family who had been evicted from Wigtwizzle when their property was sold.

British Steel Engineering Steels acquired the Hall from Michael West de Fenton in 1959 and it was used as a Conference Centre and guest house for visiting VIP's, the cost of purchase was £4,300.

Although the Hall looks relatively small from the outside, it is easy to lose a sense of direction once inside.

It would be unusual for a house with such a heritage not to have any claims to the presence of ghosts. There have been tales of the existence of a Monk whose spirit inhabits the Hall.

From the 13th century two Religious Orders of Monks, the Cistercians and the Cluniacs owned land around Langsett, which was famed by the brothers of the orders.

One version of the ghost tale is that an itinerant monk passed the Hall and was given accommodation for the night. Pleased with the surroundings he stayed on at the Hall until his death. He was buried in unhallowed ground and the ghost is his restless spirit.

REMEMBERING GEORGE ARTHUR BUCKMASTER.

1895 - 1985

By Peter Dewsnap

George Buckmaster was my father-in-law and the most honest man I ever knew. He was born on the 5th November 1895 in Wadsley and died in the Hallamshire Hospital on the 26th August, 1985. His grave is in the Clock Tower Graveyard in Stocksbridge.

His father was a soldier who died in service and his name is displayed on the memorial in Weston Park.

George was raised by his mother in very poor circumstances. As there were no Widow's Pensions or any other help in those days, even so, he was top boy in the schools in Sheffield.

There were neither grants or Government loans in those days so he was unable to go to University. He worked as a butcher's boy for some time but what other jobs he may have had, I do not know.

In 1914 along came WW1 as he was 18 at the time he joined the Army and was sent to France to fight in the trenches, where he was wounded. Later he volunteered to join the newly formed Tank Regiment and was awarded a Military Medal for gallantry.

After the war he was out of work for two years, he met a young woman, called Mabel Hutton, courted her and they married in 1923, they subsequently had a son, Eric and a daughter, Joan.

One day he saw an advert for a job at Fox's and applied for the vacancy, he got the job but as he was living at Wadsley and the bus service was intermittent to say the least, he travelled to and from work on his bike, winter and summer through all kinds of weather.

Eventually, he became affluent enough to buy a house in Stocksbridge and the family moved to Harvey Street in Hayward Park and then later to Unsliven Road.

He worked at Fox's in the Spring Mill until one day, he was offered a job in Management but at lower level of pay. He saw this as an opportunity and took the job, and eventually he become Assistant Manager. He was told he could never become Manager because he didn't have a degree, even though he trained a number of Manager's. I always thought that this was a disgraceful situation.

He did well but never had a telephone in his house because he said, if he did, they would always be calling him, and he was right as they always found a way!

George was an avid gardener and a good one too, he was Chairman of the local Horticultural Society for 21 years. He won a lot of prizes too, especially for tomatoes, his front garden had over 100 roses in it and his back garden had all kinds of vegetable beds, plus he grew excellent Sweet Peas.

He had a greenhouse which he built himself where he grew his tomatoes, and also a grape vine, I don't remember the variety but they were black grapes.

Each year, he would give me around 10 pounds of grapes and I would squeeze the juice out of them to make white wine and then use the pulp to make red wine. I won several prizes at the annual Show with my wines.

George would not touch alcohol because when he was growing up, he saw too many kids without shoes and their britches behinds hanging out as a result of their fathers going to the pub and getting drunk. Aren't we lucky we never had anything like that?

One final thing, he and his friend Charlie Harrop planted a row of flowering trees along Unsliven Road; Plaques displaying the names of local children were fixed on the trees.

So, that's about it. I was in the army when I met his daughter Joan, which would be in late 1948 or early 1949. We used to go to the dances at the City Hall in Sheffield and we were married in 1952 and lived with her parents for a while.

I learned to admire and respect George Buckmaster, he was an exceptional man and I wish there were many more like him.

FROM WALDERSHELF TO STOCKSBRIDGE

By Brenda Duffield

Farmers would have become highly respected members of the community, especially those who had acquired their Freeholds, though many of their employees would be among the poorest. When W.D.Froggatt described the first Primitive Methodists he said "Mr. Bethel was as poor as Job, having come out of a cotton famine district, and was a low wage man with four children. My father came from the plough, being a farm labourer. The others were very little removed from poverty."

In the election for the Local Board in 1873, 9 of the 15 nominees were farmers and 6 of them were among the 11 elected. Of the others, 2 were Publicans – Benjamin Couldwell of the Royal Oak at Deepcar and Elijah Askew of the Coach and Horses in Stocksbridge; 2 were Manufacturers – Samuel Fox and John Armitage – and the last was Jonathan Milnes, Grocer in the present-day Lunch Box.

We can examine the Milnes family in detail, as a considerable number of family documents have been made available, thanks to the generosity of Frank and Brenda Milnes. These records give us an insight into what farming life was really like in the early 19th century.

In 1851 Joseph Milnes was living at Whitwell, his occupation tailoring, while his brother George farmed at Greave House. But the notebook, used by two or three generations of the family, reveals that a variety of activities took place while they and three other brothers were still living at the farm. As well as dates when they "bulled" heifers, harrowed, mowed, reaped, sheared, spread turnips, threshed and tilled, there are records of "leading" ashes, balkstones, coals, lime, muck, sand, stone and wood; sending wool to an Engine, buying hayseed, mutton, veal and wheat, selling butter, hay and potatoes. One entry reads: "Myself, Jonathan and Henry getting stone" and another "Stone leading for William."

Several people are named, with whom they had dealings, places where they did business: Marshalls at Horner House, Sheephouse Wood colliery, Spink Hall and Worsborough.

Cost and prices were nearly always included and this seems to have been an account book of sorts, although a rather haphazard one. Recipes for cow cures are mixed with instructions for making glue, ink and sealing wax, and receipts for goods alongside expenditure on stockings and patters. Joseph, the tailor, included notes on sales of coats and instructions on making waistcoats alongside the farming activities and entered purchases of buttons and lining along with groceries.

There are many references to articles provided for servants, wages paid, loans made and payments received, so they were evidently people of substance. There is also a record of a partnership entered into, although the nature of it is not clear.

The family's religious convictions are evident in the occasional copy of a devout text and a Shakespeare quotation reveals a cultured and romantic streak.

SALFORD REMEMBERED - Part 6 - (1927-2009)

By A. A. McKay

Cleminson Street, where my school was located, was rather unique. It was designated a "play street" where there was no entry for vehicles during daylight hours, unless they needed access to houses or shops in the street. It became a real playground, especially at lunchtime when we were going from or coming back to school. The surface was rather smooth and it was ideal for those children who had roller skates and those of us who could afford marbles ("nengies" or "alleys"). On this surface also you could try to play football, although we could only make do, most of the time, with the empty leather football case, stuffed with newspaper – the weight of it could nearly break your foot or knock you out if you tried to head it. There were other play streets in Salford – the brainchild of Chief Constable Major Godfrey. Those were happy days, playing games and making new friends.



When I grew older it was time for me to move across to the Boys' School in Methville Street. Also about this time I remember Mother telling me one day not to come home to Shepherd Street, but to go to our other house at 7, Wellington Street. I came out of school that day in a bit of a daze, wondering whether I had got that right. But I followed the instructions I had been given and found

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Programme of Events 2012

Thursday the 12th of January	To be advised
Thursday the 9th of February.	A.G.M.

Meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month at the Christ Church Hall Stocksbridge at 7.00 pm.

Answer to Question Time - The Tyre dump fire at Deepcar occurred in March 1993. Up to a million tyres were on fire and smoke was visible for up to 15 miles away. More than 40 fire-fighters were at the blaze. Residents had been opposed to the tyre depot prior to it opening.

Why not visit our Website at - www.stocksbridgehs.co.uk

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my way to Wellington Street. This was the home where I really started to grow up.

It was a palace compared to Shepherd Street. In our new address boasted three bedrooms – the front room for the lads, the middle room for Mom and Dad and the back room for May, Agnes and Lillian. In the front bedroom we had two beds, Tom and Bill in one and Bob, Edward, Arthur and myself in the other. We slept in the shirts we had worn during the day, and maybe the day before that. We were short on clothing and we had no underwear either. In our bed we slept two at each end, just like a tin of sardines.

Downstairs we had a front room (or "parlour" if you wanted to be posh), a living room and a kitchen. The ground floor rooms were served by a lobby that ran from the front door to the foot of the staircase, which led to a landing for the bedrooms. We also had a cellar, where Mom did all the washing, and part of the cellar was used for storing coal and coke. Every delivery of coal was checked by Mom, who would stand there and count every bag as it was dropped down the coal chute. It was not unknown for a coal man to drop an empty bag at the top and charge you for an extra one.

The only heating we had was from the open fireplaces in the living room and parlour (Saturday and Sunday only) and the boiler in the cellar, where Mom used to boil water for the family wash on Mondays. To try to improve our living standards, Dad and one of his mates brought home an old iron bath (the type with claw feet) from a building site they were working on, and they put it in the cellar.

Friday night became bath night. Water was heated in the boiler and Lillian had the job of seeing that the younger end scrubbed themselves clean with carbolic soap. Bath night did not finish with us children – all the time we were bathing, Spot would be doing his best to join us and we had a job trying to keep him from jumping in with us. As soon as we had finished he would dive in, and when he got out, as dogs do, he would give a vigorous shake, wetting us all over again.

