



# THE PARAGON

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*The Journal of the Stocksbridge & District History Society*

## SOCIETY NEWS

It's July and for the first time for years the sun's hot and we are able to sit out in the garden. I hope the weather holds for our annual 'Grand Day Out', this year to Burton Constable Hall near Beverley.

Since our last edition we have had our AGM in May and were pleased to welcome on to the committee, two new members David Hampshire and Winston Kaye, both of whom have an extensive knowledge of the Valley and its people, they will be a great asset to the committee.

Brenda D and Mary Reed have been doing a fantastic job in surveying the first phase of gravestones in the Stocksbridge Cemetery and Brenda is transcribing all the information contained thereon. We have found the information we have on Bolsterstone so useful when we have genealogical queries on the website, I am sure the Stocksbridge survey will be equally as valuable for future enquiries.

I mentioned at the AGM about the cost of printing and inks and I am pleased to report, that after putting in an application to the Community Bridge Fund, we have been given a grant of £500. This is being used for inks and for the printing costs of 1000 SDHS 'Preserving Our Past' colour brochures, which are being done at Hot Metal Press at Elsecar.

We have our ongoing project, with the 'Dyson' collection, trying to check the provenance and possible places of manufacture of this fine lustre ware pottery.

Brenda D has also been rather busy at Sheffield Archives, searching through 10 years of the old Stocksbridge UDC minutes, trying to find key decision makers and dates around the Stocksbridge Baths construction; some really interesting and enlightening results, again thank you Brenda for the 'sleuthing'.

As ever we are getting queries from the website and I note that at the time of writing we have had 287000 pages viewed by 23000 visitors since the start just over two years ago. Still popular eh!

### THE STOCKSBRIDGE & DISTRICT HILL RESCUE TEAM

#### A HISTORY Part 3 - BY BARRY NEEDLE

##### EARLY 70s

In Jan 1971, the Stocksbridge team along with eleven other teams involving some 240 rescuers took part in the PDMRO "Exercise Crunch". This simulated an air crash on Bleaklow, with some 'live' casualties and the 'dead' simulated by plastic bags, observers and medical doctors toured the 'crash site' making notes and comments. At the later exercise debrief, many problems were highlighted including the organisation of so many teams and rescuers during the exercise, and the standard of team and personnel equipment.

To reduce the number and improve the quality of teams, the PDMRO asked that all should consider amalgamating where practicable and in September 1971 the Barugh MRT (Barnsley), agreed initially to join forces on call outs and social functions, a full amalgamation taking place in May 1972.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> March 1975, Stocksbridge and Huddersfield Scouts Rescue Team joined together to form the Woodhead MRT, this is now active, thriving and based at its headquarters Hepshaw Farm near the old Hepworth Pipe works.

##### MEDICAL TRAINING

Some members who held a current First Aid Certificate, attended the PDMRO Advanced First Aid Course taking place over three Sundays and run by Mountain Rescue Committee Doctors, well versed in accidents on the hills. This was followed up by a day's assessment in the Peak treating various "casualties" in sometimes trying conditions and terrain. Successful candidates being awarded the MRC First Aid Certificate, valid for three years.

Further experience was gained by some members when it was arranged with The Royal Hallamshire Hospital in Sheffield, for two to attend the Casualty Department at any one time, on Friday and Saturday nights. Here a lot of experience was gathered in a short period of time covering a wide range of traumas. Some enjoyed the experience so much they stayed all night. A few found the traumas not to their liking and not to be repeated. I personally remember under a Doctor's supervision, sewing up a knife wound in someone's shoulder after he had been involved in a Friday night fight, and have often wondered what the scar looked like afterwards. More experience was gained, by assisting the Ambulance men based at Middlewood and Bamsley on Friday and Saturday nights. It was amazing



how many malicious call outs all still had to be attended. All this experience gave us the confidence to treat any casualties on the hills calmly and efficiently, in any conditions of terrain, mud, rain, snow, wind and cold.

### WHARNCLIFFE CRAGS

When call outs were few, stretcher practices and lowers were still carried out on Wharncliffe Crags, and familiarisation walks and navigation exercises took place on the moors. To improve individuals stamina to endure up to 12 hrs on the hill in any conditions, some members completed the 40 mile Lyke Wake walk over the North Yorkshire Moors, the Marsden to Edale walk (21 miles) and the 3 Peaks in the Dales.

During an exercise on Wharncliffe Crags, one of the Team members, at well over 6ft and 14 stone, injured his big toe and on completion of the exercise asked to be carried off on the stretcher. The team had had enough physical exercise for the day and said walking off the Crags would do it good. He limped off complaining, and for the next few weeks, was always seen hobbling and thereafter he brought it up at every opportunity how the Team had refused to carry off an injured person.

With the publishing of new climbing guides, Wharncliffe became ever more popular as a climbing area. The problem for climbers was that the bottom of the crag was very rocky and had some very poor landings. I recall walking along the edge one day, checking what new routes had been added, when I was directed to an injured solo climber. On examination, he had a broken jaw sustained after falling off, resulting in his face coming down onto his knees as he hit the ground. Although not being able to communicate very well, he asked me not to call the rescue team out as he did not want any publicity. Fortunately he was not 6ft nor 14 stone, so I was able to carry him off on my back (with rests) down to my car on Station Road and hence to hospital for treatment. During this same period, the team evacuated a local woman with a suspected fracture of the lower leg from Wharncliffe Crags to a waiting ambulance. This went as smoothly and efficiently as could be expected, despite a delay in bringing up the stretcher. Later the casualty sent a letter of thanks and a contribution to team funds.

In this country mountain rescue teams still rely on unpaid volunteers, prepared to give up their own time to long uncomfortable hours of training using their own personal equipment, and ably supported by their employers. Communal team equipment is provided from funds raised annually from varying sources. RAF helicopters are always ready to help police with civilian incidents, provided they are available. All teams are now fully accepted as a valuable specialist resource for members of the public in need of help and assistance. They operate on low ground as well as the high moorland and hills, providing extra manpower whenever requested by the police in need of their expertise, i.e. for missing persons, assisting motorists trapped on the roads in winter and hang glider incidents amongst others. Current details of the Woodhead Team's activities can be found on the internet.

For a full account of the origins of Mountain Rescue in the Peak District and the Four Inn's tragedy, see Ian Hurst and Roger Bennett's book 'Mountain Rescue' published in 2007.

The above information has been collated from this publication and the Stocksbridge Team's minutes and notes, personnel diaries, newspaper cuttings and members own memories



### DEEPCAR CORN MILL

This was undoubtedly the oldest mill in the Little Don Valley. In fact Joseph Kenworthy regarded that the distinct traces of an old dam found by his brother Benjamin when he laid a sewer through the fields numbered 3234 and 3235 on the Ordnance Map of 1893 were of great age and were associated with a Mill referred to in 1293.

There was a mill in existence at Deepcar in 1575, and it is referred to in the Account Book of William Dickinson who was the Bailiff of Sheffield at that time. This old mill was a plain structure, built from large stone blocks, (as was a nearby cottage where the miller, Rychard lived).

The mill is also mentioned in the Waldershef Land Tax assessment of 1774.

In 1797, the mill was occupied by Thomas Grayson, the owner being Lord Melbourne.

Joseph Grayson rented it for some years, during which time large quantities of flour were delivered by wagon to Saltersbrook where carriers from Lancashire and Cheshire took it over along with supplies from Midhope, Thurstleton and Oxspring. The return cartage consisted of miscellaneous goods for the Sheffield district, taken as part payment.

Abraham Windle erected a new mill at some time between 1838 (when it was occupied by Benjamin Langton) and 1849, and this was located off Vaughton Hill at the entrance to Don Field, which is Mill Lane. This is recorded in a Sheffield Directory as "Surtees and Windle, corn millers, of Deepcar. The census of 1841 lists William Fieldsend of Deepcar as a Corn Miller.

In 1881, there were seven listed millers in the census, which indicates that a flourishing business was in operation in this locale. This labour force included the Townrow family who lived on Bridge Row, and it was their daughter Harriet who married into the Spooner family and would become my great grandmother.

From hereon, the census details show that the mill continued operating at least up to 1881, and evidently had closed by 1891 as by then, the references to corn milling had ceased. This seems to be in parallel with the demise of the Hunshelf Corn Mill.

According to the Historical Notes on Stocksbridge and District by Olive Hepworth, the following information is given:

Wortley Corn Mill taken down 1880 to 1882.

Deepcar Corn Mill built May 11<sup>th</sup> 1720 (?), and taken down in 1892.

Hunshelf Corn Mill taken down in 1892 by S.Fox & Co.

Midhope Corn Mill taken down in 1906.

### DEEPCAR WIRE MILL

The 1871 Trades Directory contains the following information:

William Beet built a small wire mill near the old corn mill at Deepcar. Beets wire mill was afterwards used for a short time by Messrs. Robert Grey & Co. of Sheffield for rolling sheet steel when crinolines were in fashion. The two cottages which stood below the house where the late Thomas Herbert lived, were erected by William Beet for the wire drawers who worked

at his little mill in the valley.

Our local Census returns show that many wire drawers were listed continually from 1841 onwards, the first references being John Beet aged 25, and George Senior, also 25, both of Deepcar as detailed in the Bolsterstone East section. I believe that the location of this mill and cottages was on the west side of Vaughton Hill after perusing a limited amount of photographic evidence and various maps.

#### THE WHARNCLIFFE FIRE CLAY WORKS.

These works were built sometime around 1870 by John Amitage as an expansion of his operations at the Henholmes, which were proving to be too small. The necessary raw materials were available in the vicinity, and early maps show two tramways running to the works from the slopes of the Wortley/Wharncliffe slopes.

There were two water wheels powered by water diverted from the river at Soughley, and in the 1890s, a water turbine replaced one of these wheels, and these together with a steam engine, supplied the necessary power for the works.

These works was taken over in 1903 together with the rest of the Amitage business.

#### THE MEMOIRS OF LILIAN BIRKHEAD

1896-1987

#### MORE IMPROVEMENTS AT GREEN MOOR

In about 1968 it was felt that the condition of the Sunday School in the Old Chapel was very unsatisfactory. The chief and long outstanding necessity was indoor toilets. A meeting was called and there was much discussion. Rev. David Hustler, after a careful tour of inspection, was quite scathing about our dingy, out-of-date building and suggested drastic alterations, of which we disapproved, although some criticism was justified. At a later meeting Douglas Walton came forward with even more extensive alterations, but more practical ones, for a toilet on the East side and the addition of another room. This idea would dispense with the terrible under-stage ante room - a source of danger for many years.

About this time a former scholar Ernest Davies, who was born at Little Dean Head and had become a very successful Director of a textile firm in Blackburn, sent us a parcel of reject curtain material, which we were able to sell cheaply and very quickly. Several more of these parcels arrived during the next few years, boosting our meagre funds considerably, so we began to feel less guilty about our expensive alterations.

The new room and toilets were added, the whole building was decorated, the main part by a professional, but the new part by our own members Leslie Walton, Eric Whittaker and Neville Roebuck. A new floor was put in the chapel "bottom", the windows were repaired and curtains were put up to windows and stage. A bright, but tasteful colour scheme had been selected. New chairs and tables were purchased.

We felt very proud of this transformation of our somewhat drab Sunday School and concert hall and especially proud of the way in which both our own members and non-members had helped to carry out this scheme. Once again a letter had been sent out, explaining our great plans and the need for further funding, and again there had been a most generous response.

Our Women's Effort, always held in the first week of April, would be the occasion for the opening of our new premises. Again a coach was hired to bring our friends up to an afternoon meeting in the church, which was full. Our church secretary, Leslie Walton, gave a full account of all that had transpired to bring about the fulfilment of our plans and hopes. Eileen, Mrs. Ernest Davies, made her formal opening speech, then we all trooped across to our newly renovated Sunday School, where Mrs. Davies unlocked the door. Tea and a film show followed.

Not long after this we were shocked to hear that Ernest had died suddenly after a heart attack. The evidence of his generosity will remain for many years in our Sunday School.

#### THE BELLS OF BOLSTERSTONE

The following account of the Bolsterstone Saint.Mary's Handbells was written by Brenda Milnes.

Hand bells have been rung throughout the world for many centuries. The British Isles have been described as the 'Ringing Isles', with the composer Handel [1685-1759] describing the handbell as the English national instrument.

From our records we know that there was a flourishing Handbell team at Bolsterstone before 1892 when a peal of eight Tower Bells was installed in the Church. David Brearley, the first Tower Captain, was also leader of a group of Handbell ringers, called 'Bolsterstone Handbell Society'. David kept a scrapbook [dated 1885] which included a list of tunes to be played. Copies of the music which were hand written in small manuscript books were included in the scrapbook, and some of the music is still played today.



The Handbells were cast by Shaw's at their foundry in Bradford [no longer in existence] at around 1880. Handbells are cast in bronze [an alloy consisting of four parts Copper and one part Tin] called bell metal.

For much of the 20th. century [probably during and after the two World Wars] the bells were packed away and stored in a loft at the Vicarage. They were re-discovered in 1979, and the Church Council decided that they should be sold if they were not to be played.

[The Church roof at that time suffered from dry-rot and repair funds were desperately needed]. Fortunately the bells were saved and in 1981, under the leadership of Mrs. Brenda Milnes, a group of enthusiastic ringers began practising and building up a repertoire of music to be played at local events. During the first few months of practice they received a lot of help from Hazel Bradley, leader of Ecclesfield Handbell Ringers. Since 1981 thousands of pounds have been raised for Charity.

In 2008 Mrs Dorothy Kirbyshaw took over the leadership and the ringers still practise each week at the Christian Centre in Stocksbridge. There are ten players in the team and they have over fifty bells covering four chromatic octaves. Duplicates of certain bells have been bought in recent years. The bells are set out on three tables and divided between four trebles, three tenors and three bass.

**When they need refurbishing or repairing they are taken to Taylor's Bell Foundry at Loughborough. The last visit to the Foundry was in 2011 when seven new bells were bought. The bells are locked between practices and are heavily insured, as a new set would cost over £20,000.**

It is hoped that Handbell ringing will long continue to give pleasure to both Ringers and Listeners.

The following extract was taken from the Bolsterstone Parish magazine of January 1898, indicating that *Silence is Golden* well sometimes.

***If on account of serious illness, any person wish to make a request that the bells may remain silent, such request should be made to the Vicar at least one whole day before the time for ringing.***

***It is hoped that no one will make such request unless it be absolutely necessary".***



A view of St. Andrew's in the history of the Holy Trinity and St. Andrew's, Bolsterstone on May 26, 1898.

## THE MIDHOPE POTTERY AND THE POTTER'S WELL

In 1720, William Gough established the Midhope Pottery at Pothouse Fold to take advantage of the red and black fire clays available there and at Langsett.

He eventually expanded the site to include seven dwellings, several potbanks (or kilns) and drying sheds.

Four cottages survive (just south of the bridge); the remainder of the site is now under the reservoir.

The Midhope Pottery produced earthenware vessels, bottle, porringers, basins, pancheons, cups, saucers, jars, plates and chimney pots glazed with a characteristic dark brown to black glaze that were sold all over South Yorkshire (Weston Park Museum has a representative collection of these vessels).

Gough also built Potter's Well, with two stone troughs set side-by-side to harness the waters of a naturally occurring spring on the hillside just south of Pothouse Fold.

The troughs were said to have come from the manorial hall, one was for drinking water and the other for use in the pottery. This was the only source of water for the hamlet until 1919, and fetching water meant carrying heavy buckets 100 yards up the steep hill.

The pottery struggled to survive because of competition from mass-produced porcelain and china in the 19th century and it closed in 1845, though a trade directory of 1861 records that a firebrick tile and chimney pot manufacturer was still operating in Midhopestones at that time.

## A COUPLE OF NEWSPAPER ARTICLES FROM THE PAST

### WOODHEAD TUNNEL

During its construction 1,500 men were employed at one time, 28 lives were lost and 200 severe accidents and 450 accidents of a minor character occurred.

157 tons of gunpowder was used for blasting and 8,000,000 tons of water was pumped out of the workings.

When the work was completed, Major-General Pasley the Government Inspector, examined the tunnel, and his report of 20th December 1845, declared that the work had been executed in a highly creditable manner.

The first train to pass through the tunnel consisted of 20 carriages, drawn by two engines, and it was 10 minutes in doing so.

The tunnel was opened for traffic on December 23rd 1845.

The second or up-line tunnel was opened in 1852 and each tunnel is separated from the other by a wall of rock 14ft thick, pierced at intervals.

***This extract was published in the Penistone & Stocksbridge Express of the 10th January 1931.***

### PROGRAMME OF EVENTS 2013

August	To be advised	
September 12 <sup>th</sup>	Local history from a Scandinavian perspective	Julie Powell
October 10 <sup>th</sup>	The Victorian House and Home	Susan deal
November 14 <sup>th</sup>	A view of the Society Material	
December 12 <sup>th</sup>	Christmas related event (Pre booking—members only)	

**Why not visit our Website at - [www.stocksbridgehs.co.uk](http://www.stocksbridgehs.co.uk)**

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