



**Published by the Hebden Bridge  
Local History Society**

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The society has sections for those with a particular interest in local prehistory, family history and folklore.

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Cover: Wartime poster - very relevant today!

**Welcome** to the Spring Newsletter. Thank you to everyone who has contributed. There are reports of the lectures for 2019-2020, news from the Family History, Folklore and Prehistory sections, queries, activities and forthcoming events. If you'd like to share your research or pose a query on something historic for the Summer 2020 issue, please send it to the Secretary by 1 August 2020.

We hope you are coping with the challenges we all face and look forward to resuming normal activities as soon as possible.

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### Society Publications

For information on all the Society's publications, see  
[www.hebdenbridgehistory.org.uk](http://www.hebdenbridgehistory.org.uk)

# Who built Hebden Bridge?



Planning has begun for the next exhibition (March 2021) and the topic is “**Who built Hebden Bridge?**” Planning is still in the early stages, but the intention is to focus on the architects, builders and tradesmen who built the town. It will be important to add some detail about the growth of the town, but the quarrymen, builders, plumbers and painters etc.... are the main focus.

We are always grateful for any help with materials and presentation. This time we would be pleased to have any information about people and firms connected with the building of the town. Perhaps you know of details - accounts, bills, and costings of a building; you may have photos of tradesmen and workers. Perhaps you could photograph datestones on buildings near you. In fact any information about the firms and people who built the town - mill, chapel, home, shop - whatever it is - would be valued. All materials will be added to our archive provided you are happy with that.

The work is in its early stages but if you have material, or would like to help with research or be part of the production team, please contact:

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# Family History Group

## The Tractor Becomes the Workhorse for Local Farms

On seeing this photo, I felt compelled to share my recollections of the demise of the carthorse.



### Haymaking in Colden

*The photo, loaned to me by Mrs Madeline Chadwick, was taken at Higher Pilling Farm around the end of the 1950's and shows a Fordson Standard. On the cart is the farmer, Rennie Speak, Madeline's uncle. Standing by the cart is Jack, Rennie's brother, who was a butcher in Midgley Road, Mytholmroyd; most farmers had the assistance of family members during hay time. Madeline has many happy memories of visiting the farm and meeting up with her cousins, Pauline and Kathryn, Jack's daughters. The photo stirred many memories for me, as I grew up just across the valley at Lower Strines Farm.*

In the Colden valley, most of the farms were milk producers and this meant the land had to be better managed than it is today,

when much of it is given over to sheep-grazing with no distinction between pasture and meadowland. In the harsh conditions of these hills, cows were kept indoors between October and April each year to maintain milk production. This meant the farm had to produce fodder to feed the cows during these winter months. The staple was hay which was harvested from the meadows during summer.

Prior to World War II, the sight of a tractor in the upland area of the Pennines around Hebden Bridge and Todmorden would have been a rare thing since few farmers would have been able to afford one. Therefore, the machinery used in hay production was dependent on the cart-horse for power. Generally, each farm had one horse (unless the farmer was also in business as a carter, when he might have as many as six horses). The horse generally lived in a stable along with the various harnesses used to yoke up the horse to the machinery. This machinery might include a mowing machine, a swathe turner, a shaking machine and a hay-cart. Often, haymaking was also done by hand, especially when the crop was too heavy for a machine to work effectively.

After hay-time, which could extend from June until October depending on the weather, the horse would be used in leading out the manure to the fields from the middens using a muck-cart. Rows of "muck-owks" criss-crossed the field; the manure would then be spread later by hand.

Also, during harsh winters, the horse would be needed to draw a sled to get the milk kits from the farm to the collection point on the main road. Another use might be collecting ashes from the local mill for use in repairing the farm track or carting stones for repairing the many stone walls.

At this time there were few horses used for riding.

With impending hostilities in 1939, War Agricultural Executive Committees (War Ags) were formed on a county basis. Among the most important of the measures contemplated by these committees was the ploughing-up of a considerable area of grassland and its conversion to tillage. War Ags supplied the tractors, which were mainly British-made Fordson Standards, and also the drivers. Sometimes the Women's Land Army also supplied workers known as Land Girls.

My own memories include the time of the War Ag coming to the farm and ploughing up part of the meadow. I remember the "tractor-men" catching trout in the stream that ran past the farmhouse. They were very successful at "tickling" trout. I also remember my father being annoyed that the heavy tractors were damaging land-drains which were generally not far beneath the surface of the ground. For many years after the war my father would be working on re-laying drains in the meadows. In fact, stacks of clay drainage pipes could be seen in the corners of fields on many farms at that time.

Whether it was a result of seeing the War Ag tractors or just a desire to become more efficient I don't know, but several farmers began acquiring tractors which were generally second-hand Fordson Standards, possibly War Ag surplus equipment no longer required after the war ended.

Of course, having acquired a tractor there was no money to buy the machinery specifically designed for use with the tractor, so conversions were necessary. The shafts used to yoke the horse were removed and a cast-iron drawbar was put in place to attach to the back of the tractor. This worked well with the simple muck-cart but was less successful with other implements. The mowing machine, for example, still required someone sitting on the machine to operate the levers for lowering the cutting bar and to engage the gears to drive the blade. A problem arose here that,

whereas if the cutting bar dug into the earth, a horse would bring itself to a halt, but with a tractor pulling the driver had to notice the problem and stop the tractor. Sometimes, if this were a little late, the machine would pivot and in the worst case, unseat the man on the machine.

Horse-drawn hay-carts were four-wheeled affairs with the wheels below the cart like undercarriage. The front wheels were pivoted on two large iron rings which enabled the cart to be manoeuvred around corners. Again, with a horse, the cart could be easily reversed as the horse could be made to move sideways thus turning the cart. Reversing this type of four-wheeled cart was almost impossible with a tractor. My father, having good joinery skills, built his own hay cart/trailer for the tractor. It's not clear from the above photo whether the hay cart is a conversion or has been specially designed for the tractor.

Another problem with tractor-drawn machinery was that, because of the hilly nature of much of the land, the tractor would have trouble dragging uphill. On many occasions, to stop the front axle lifting off the ground, we boys would be asked to stand on the axle to prevent it lifting up. Unfortunately, accidents were reported where the tractor rotated upwards and turned over trapping the driver underneath.

Things improved when farmers started to use the "Little Grey Fergie" (Ferguson T20) which had Power Take Off (PTO) and a hydraulic three-point hitch system for attaching implements directly onto the back of the tractor. This system was taken up by other manufacturers, David Brown for example, whose Model 990 was very popular in the 1960's.

*Keith Stansfield*



## Folklore Section

The Calder Valley has had a hard time of 2020 so far – of that we need no reminding, from floods to pestilence here, against a backdrop of environmental challenges around the world that have sometimes sounded like the echo of four sets of hooves! And as if the floods – living up to February’s nickname of ‘Fill-Dyke’ - were not enough, the Corona Virus pandemic has been affecting communities everywhere. Anything that affects communities inevitably affects folklore, and so it has proved to be in our area, and is likely to continue to prove for some time.

Holidays are times for communities to come together in celebration as well as reverence and reflection – Easter perhaps more than any other save Christmas. Flood and virus may not affect the modern custom of consuming too much chocolate, but they certainly affect truer aspects of community folklore, where people get together and acknowledge the calendar. As I write this report, both the Pace-Egg Play teams have decided to take a break in 2020 – not, of course, because they want to, but to avoid being potential agents in the spread of Covid-19. The Calder Valley Pace Egg Play has proved in recent years to be one of the most popular calendar customs in the country, attracting over the course of Good Friday hundreds, even thousands of spectators, either at the Midgley team’s performances in various towns and villages from Luddenden to Todmorden, or at Heptonstall, where the village troupe make progressively less disciplined but more humorous performances in Weaver’s Square. In mid-afternoon, both teams perform there consecutively – a circumstance that in previous centuries would certainly have led to ritualised kerfuffles, but today is all part of the Easter celebration.

The hiatus of tradition this year leaves, to those of us who see a community value in ‘keeping up the day’ (as maintaining

calendar tradition is known) - and to the businesses who are buoyed by the events - a sense of loss. Easter in Hebden Bridge will be a much quieter, lonelier affair; pubs and cafes, traditionally venues for the transmission of folklore and culture, will by order stay shut, and those people out and about in the streets will find it easy to maintain 'social distance' – a concept that is itself surely destined to become part of folk memory, a key motif for future anecdotes and memorates.

Before the pandemic furore is over, alas, other public folk customs and celebrations in our valley and all across Britain and Europe will also be curtailed – and not only traditional folkloric events, but also conferences and meetings are being kyboshed by the tenor of the times.

Hebden Bridge's 'Dreaming Valleys' conference at the Birchcliffe Centre on March 14 was just able to squeeze in with a successful interdisciplinary day of words, film and music addressing a wide range of historical, folkloric and topographical themes, but the week after saw things close in. The two-day event organised by the Todmorden Centre for Folklore, Myth and Magic at the end of May, 'The Dark Side of the Fae', which would have brought academic speakers from all over Britain to Todmorden Town Hall, has also fallen under the 'indefinite postponement' banner, along with numerous other events outside the borough, and there will certainly be other traditions and events of interest to Society members that will fail to happen this year.

So the Folklore Section is not feeling at our most ebullient! Community tradition is on hold – but we have been here before, and folklore bounces back, perhaps even sometimes adding something new. Will it 'all be over by Christmas'? Or will we need to find a way to 'live with it'? Take care and *Wæs þu hæl!* (Anglo-Saxon for 'Be hale!'). One positive piece of news is that in April a new book by Folklore Section convenor John Billingsley

will be published by Northern Earth Books – ‘*Charming Calderdale*’, a guide to the various expressions of protection and luck found in Calderdale homes, from horseshoes to skulls. Watch out for it at The Bookcase!

*John Billingsley*

## **Prehistory Section**

Dr Tom Booth, of the Crick Institute, outlined progress in the genetics of the British Neolithic, at Leeds City Museum. There is a continual flow of startling findings and a brief summary isn't really possible - you need to search online. (see [www.nhm.ac.uk/discover/news/2019/april/neolithic-britain-where-did-the-first-farmers-come-from.html](http://www.nhm.ac.uk/discover/news/2019/april/neolithic-britain-where-did-the-first-farmers-come-from.html))

Dr Rupert Till (Huddersfield Uni) presented a synopsis of outcomes from the European Music Archaeology Project, in Bradford. Archaeoacoustics is hard to spell and pronounce but includes a wealth of illuminating detail about the activities of prehistoric people. Again, you really need to search online. The important point is how defensibly nuanced our understanding is becoming.

The Barrowford Prehistory Day saw us over the border, partly in support of our adopted PhD student's talk, and also to hear details of work on the other side of the modern divide.

The YAS Christmas meeting had speakers on the Neolithic of the Tees Valley and Swandro (Orkney). These talks help to place the South Pennines and Calderdale in a wider context. Of note was light shed on the inundation of Mesolithic forests following the Doggerland Event, and subsequent population movements.

At Wigan, Don Henson (Liverpool Museum Service) discussed flint use in general terms but his geological analysis of N

Yorkshire flint sources and their relationship to actual found artefacts was most illuminating. Flint used for less utilitarian purposes was derived from the glacial till, with sources under the North Sea, rather than from direct extraction at and around Flamborough, much being picked up on the Holderness beach. More prosaic tools were from extracted material. An apparently obvious point, not made before, is that flint-gathering would have been a summertime activity when there is more daylight and people could come from further away.

One of us had a week of fieldwork on Harris/Lewis, leading to the recording of several more propped stones. Details will appear shortly on Megalithic Portal ([www.megalithic.co.uk](http://www.megalithic.co.uk)), complementing similar work done in Cornwall, the Dales and Calderdale.

And, along with everyone else, we await the return of more sensible weather!

*David Shepherd*

# Lecture Reports 2019 - 2020

**25 September 2019**

**MAPPING ELMET**

**Ruth Crossley**

**The childhood and family  
roots of Ted Hughes**

Fishing under the 'navvie brig' near his home in Aspinall Street, Mytholmroyd, was just one of the memories of Mytholmroyd that found its way into the poetry of Ted Hughes. Ruth Crossley drew on the powerful images of the landscape of the Upper Calder Valley for her lecture. Ruth is the daughter of Donald Crossley, a childhood friend of Ted Hughes. She is Head of Geography at Stoneyhurst College and is currently engaged on a PhD thesis, digitally mapping Ted Hughes' poems on the landscape of the Upper Calder Valley.

Donald Crossley died in 2014, leaving an archive of letters from Ted and his brother Gerald in which they reminisced about 'Elmet'. Elmet is the name given to an ancient Celtic kingdom thought to have been located in West Yorkshire, but Ted regarded his Elmet as a more specific area centred on Heptonstall, characterised by a harsh climate and landscape populated with 'untamed people hewn out of stone'. The poems in 'Remains of Elmet' and the later 'Elmet' explore this idea. It was Gerald, ten years older than Ted, who introduced Ted to this outdoor world taking him on adventures, camping, fishing and hunting, often using Ted as a 'retriever'.

Ruth showed digital maps with three layers of locations for the poems, those specific to family locations, those dealing with boyhood memories, largely around Mytholmroyd, and those featuring more adult memories. She talked about some of the poems which featured specific locations, including 'Six Young

Men', 'Two' and 'The Ancient Briton Lay under his Rock' amongst others. The latter is located in Redacre Wood and relates how Ted and his companions tried without success to raise the stone which was supposed to mark the grave of the Ancient Briton. Memories of fishing with homemade nets in the canal in Mytholmroyd gave rise to 'The Long Tunnel Ceiling' which was the bridge under Pismire Hill; and 'Drowning Black' which was the old 'navvy-brig' near Aspinall Street. The young lads would catch fish and take them home in jam jars. The fish would be dead by the next day and the boys would throw them over the wall into the canal which ran beside Mount Zion Methodist Chapel. The poem 'Mount Zion' refers to this chapel; it faced Ted's bedroom window and seemed to him to possess a menacing power.

All this came to a sudden end when the Hughes family moved to Mexborough in South Yorkshire and soon after Gerald left to go to war. Ted was only seven when he left Mytholmroyd but always maintained that those years of his early boyhood left a lasting mark on him and his memories of the landscape of the Calder Valley remained crystal clear for the rest of his life.

Ted Hughes' connection to the landscape of the Upper Calder Valley has been preserved and enhanced by the Elmet Trust. Donald was a founder member of the Trust, formed in 2006 to celebrate the life and work of Ted Hughes and to ensure that his literary legacy will last. The trust has a biennial Ted Hughes festival, a birthday dinner and runs a poetry competition. It works with local schools, Huddersfield University and a variety of other bodies. Number 1 Aspinall Street, where Ted lived for the first seven years of his life, has become a writers' retreat visited by various well-known poets.

**9 October 2019**

**A MONASTIC FLOCK IN  
MEDIEVAL MALHAM?**

**Mike Spence**

A chance discovery in the Lancashire Records Office in Preston set local historian Mike Spence on a quest to uncover its meaning and what it reveals about Malham, in North Yorkshire, around the time of the Black Death. The document, written in medieval Latin, was catalogued as a copy, made in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, of an account relating to Malham, originally written in the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

The investigation of the contents began with translating the Latin, which itself used many abbreviated forms which had to be decoded. It was clearly set out as an account, with quantities and costs recorded, and it became clear that it was a record of the costs of keeping a flock of sheep in Malham. The product of these sheep was not wool or meat, but dairy, and specifically large quantities of cheese. Cheese, also known as 'white meat' was an important part of the religious diet, which excluded meat, so Mike was set on the trail of finding out which religious order had farmed these sheep in Malham.

A process of elimination and careful cross-referencing of other documents led him to conclude that these sheep belonged to Bolton Priory (Bolton Abbey). Fountains was the most powerful and wide-ranging order, but they kept cattle for their dairy needs. Bolton Priory records showed they had sheep and also that they used sheep's cheese. Further clues in the document pointed to Bolton Priory as the owners of these dairy sheep, so Mike wanted to discover where in Malhamdale the sheep has been pastured.

Work done previously by archaeologists had identified possible settlements in an area known as Prior Raikes, not far from Malham Tarn. These had been linked to the keeping of sheep, and were in the middle of pasture land known to have been used

by Bolton Priory. Records from the Priory added weight to the theory that this is where the flock of sheep, which were the subject of the Lancashire document, had been kept.

A further puzzle was why these accounts had been copied out two hundred years later. The answer proved to be a missing link which pulled together many of the threads of Mike's research. After the dissolution of the monasteries in 1540, the land belonging to Bolton Priory had been awarded to a John Lambert and since then he had been amassing land in the area. In 1569 he was involved in a land dispute over the rights to Prior Raikes pasture on Malham Moor. He had to establish that the rights had been granted to Bolton Priory, and the copy of the accounts from two centuries earlier helped him to prove this. But the John Lambert link goes back much further than this. Somewhat confusingly, each eldest son of the Lamberts was called John, and more records showed various generations of John Lamberts closely involved with the Priory. In 1538 they were leasing land from Bolton Priory; in 1536 acting as steward to the priory; and in the early 14th century one John Le Lambhyrd was appointed as 'Master of Sheep' to re-organise the flocks of the priory. It is possible that this was the man who set up the dairy flock which was the subject of the account that started this trail through a host of medieval records. Mike communicated the thrill of research and discovery alongside fascinating information about medieval life.



**23 October 2019**

**70 YEARS OLD AND STILL GOING STRONG      Barbara Attack**  
**A celebration of HBLHS**

The annual general meeting of the Hebden Bridge Local History Society gave President Barbara Attack and members of the society the opportunity to celebrate its seventieth birthday by looking back over the years at some of the people and events that have marked its long life. And there was cake!

There was a curious coincidence about the very first meeting of the society in August 1949 – it took place in the front room of the Crown Street home of Barbara’s future father-in-law, Cedric Attack, one of its founder members. The Local History Society was one of the offspring of the Literary and Scientific Society, which since 1905 had been meeting the ‘thirst for knowledge’ of the people of Hebden Bridge.

The History Society soon began its lecture series, with Hebden Bridge Grammar School (Riverside) as its base. Head teacher Colin Spencer served as President for over three decades, and is remembered for his book *The History of Hebden Bridge*. Other stalwarts of the committee included Winnie Greenwood, who was the longest serving treasurer and Frank Woolrych, who was Barbara’s predecessor as president for twelve years. From the beginning the society had an active membership who undertook research, conducted walks, made recordings and gave talks.

One of the jewels of the society is its archive of documents and artefacts of local interest. The archive has had many homes from Hope Sunday School to an attic room in the old Tourist Information Centre, but thanks to Pennine Heritage it now has a safe place in the Birchcliffe Centre. It contains some significant collections valuable to anyone with an interest in the detail of how people lived in the past. Volunteers work to catalogue new donations and to make the archive accessible.

Barbara's talk reminded the audience of the range of activities that the society has undertaken in recent years. The annual programme of talks continues to attract new members; study days bring in people from across Yorkshire to explore topics such as farming and house histories. The society has organised some longer-term courses, notably those run by the late Alan Petford. These in turn have encouraged members to conduct their own research and to give talks to the society. Over recent years the society has published books covering a range of topics, from the First World War to Dawson City and the meticulously transcribed seventeenth-century probate documents and most recently the story of the railway in Hebden Bridge. There are opportunities for specialised interests in the Prehistory, Folklore and Family History sections of the society.

It was good to be reminded of the work the society does locally – volunteers successfully completing churchyard inscriptions from Heptonstall and making them available online and the support given to saving the Pace-Egg Play stand out. Recently there have been popular exhibitions in the Town Hall, with the story of 'How the hippies changed Hebden Bridge' being especially memorable. All these successes have relied on volunteers and enthusiasts, and seventy years on it seems that there are still people keen to contribute to the life of our town.

**13 November 2019**

**MEMORIES OF FOSTER MILL**

**Allan Stuttard**

A large audience welcomed Allan Stuttard to talk about his memories of his forty-eight years working in the clothing industry. From the first day he began to learn the unspoken rules, such as where he could sit on the early morning bus from Todmorden, or how to distinguish between the bewildering number of 'Greenwoods' by their nicknames, as well as the skills of his trade as a pattern cutter. Like many young apprentices, Allan started life as a 'gofer', running errands, and making a profit on a side-line of buying in the lunches at nearby Harry Suthers' pie shop!

At that time, in the 1950s, the clothing industry in Hebden Bridge was booming, with more than 40 different manufacturing units. Redman Brothers, Allan's employer, had moved into Foster Mill, which was situated close to Victoria Road, and was one of the biggest employers. They specialised in 'heavy' cloth such as corduroys, denims, strong tweeds and heavy-duty uniforms, including railway uniforms and duffel coats for the navy.

One of the most skilled jobs was pattern cutting, which involved laying out the pattern in the most economic way and then cutting through several layers of cloth using a 'band-knife'. These were a variation of a bandsaw, produced locally. An atmospheric extract from a film held in the Hebden Bridge History Society archive showed the dangerous operation being carried out with absolute smoothness and confidence. Allan obviously admired the elegant bravery of the band-knife operators, who rejected the safety gloves and guards in order to work more efficiently. Despite the danger and disregard of anything approaching modern health and safety regulations, he didn't recall any bad accidents at work.

The audience also got the chance to see some of the equipment used in the process, examples of the innovations which enabled the company to be a success, such as the perforated patterns and wooden chalk-dispenser which allowed intricate patterns to be transferred to the cloth as often as needed.

This spirit of innovation led to changes in the company in the 1960s, moving from 'making through' the entire garment to the more efficient (though perhaps less interesting) 'section work'. Each machinist repeated one of the 40 operations required to make a pair of trousers, and was paid per unit. Redman Brothers continued to fight against the competition from foreign manufacturers, being quick to cash in on fashion trends such as 'Birmingham bags' and 'Beatle jackets'. Allan also recalled that they solved the problem of sewing the rubberised material which gave us the 'Gannex macs'. though he pointed out that the resulting coats didn't stop people becoming wet from perspiration inside their waterproof shell.

Allan spoke of his lifetime's work at Foster Mill with affection and humour. He himself was marked out as 'a promising boy' and sent on day release to study for City and Guilds qualifications. Eventually he was promoted to a staff position, 'crossing the bridge' as it was known, and he was now allowed to enter the mill through the main door! He evoked a picture of a strong community, with a hierarchical structure and an almost paternalistic management style. They employed their own maintenance staff, on call at any time, who were provided with cottages nearby. Houses on Windsor Rd and Windsor Place were rented to employees. When newly married, Allan moved into a house owned by the company, one of the 'under dwellings' which he joked to his new wife would have 'running water... down the walls!'

When the company closed down in 1978 Allan was the last person out, and though he continued to work in the industry, seeing the advent of computerised pattern-making, that was a day he remembered with some sadness. He brought to life this time of booming industry and community in Hebden Bridge which clearly fascinated the audience, and left them smiling at the warmth of his many memories.

**27 November 2019**

**THE SAVING OF HARDCASTLE CRAGS**

**Grant Lowe**

When Grant Lowe came to work for the National Trust at Hardcastle Crag his curiosity was aroused by a memorial recording three attempts to flood the valley, and the instruction: 'May future generations guard it well.' In his role as Visitor Experience Officer he was involved with a project to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the last attempt to dam the valley to meet the needs for water, focusing on the theme of 'the people's landscape'. The Hardcastle Crag Preservation Committee, which continued the fight to save the valley, drew on a deep affection for the landscape felt by ordinary people. Part of the commemoration and celebration was a long poem visualising the loss of the landscape, described as 'a place locked in the heart.'

Grant was able to get a sense of the work involved in the protest from a box of correspondence and other artefacts held in our archive. Some of the old protest leaflets were re-printed as banners and displayed in the visitor centre, attracting some interest and even a willingness to join a new protest if it was happening all over again. An evening walk through the valley to the point where the dam wall would have been erected was filmed, and people were asked to imagine that where they were

standing would be 100 feet underwater. There were even some yodellers reflecting the nickname of Little Switzerland given to the steep valley sides.

Members of the audience were able to add to the story and point to the wealth of material in the archives in Halifax and Wakefield which could show the extent of the plans and their rationale. The strong affection felt for the place grew from its position as a playground and day-trip destination especially for textile workers in the early twentieth century who made their way by train from surrounding towns. The story of the key role played by Douglas Houghton, the MP for Sowerby, was also explained by some in the audience. There are plans for further work exploring the events, with Alan Dix of 509 Arts in Shipley seeking more information.

**11 December 2019**

**HOUSE HISTORIES**

**How to begin**

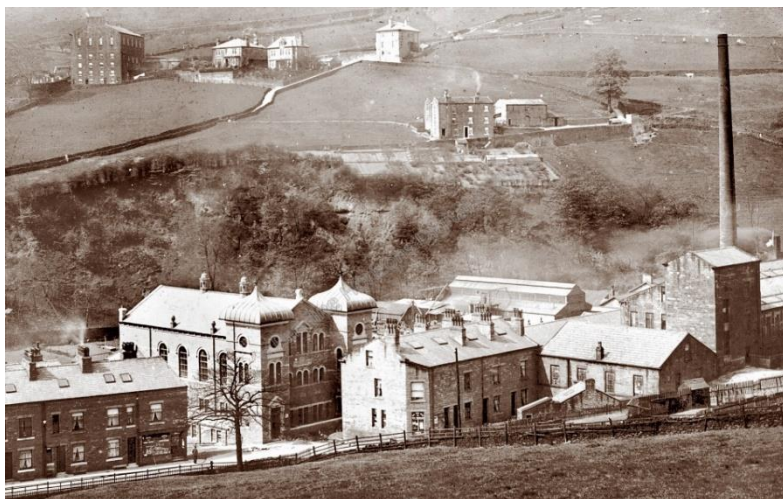
**Barbara Attack**

**Hilary Fellows**

**Barbara Pearcey and Robert Stevens**

Following on from a successful Study Day organised by our Society which focused on house histories, members came together to share their own experiences. Barbara Attack, our President, outlined the array of sources available for those wanting to find out more of the history of a house. She began with a word of warning: don't accidentally research the wrong house – names of hamlets, street names, house names and numbers can change over time, so she advised some careful checks. Starting with the building itself you can establish a picture of what its history might have been and how it relates to nearby buildings. Photographs are also a valuable resource, and the Pennine Horizons Digital Archive is accessible on-line. If you have access to the deeds of your house you can see how it has

changed hands, and what sort of activities went on there. Looking at historical maps is often revealing, as are any planning applications which might be held in the archives. Census information collected every decade lists the members of the household and family relationships, while local archives are also a rich source of information. The National Archives at Kew hold the Lloyd George Survey of 1910, and the field books give detailed information about the size and condition of the building at that time. Our own archive held at Birchcliffe, and the West Yorkshire Archive offices are good places to get advice about your research. Many indexes are available on-line.



*Slater Bank, just right of centre on the hillside above Foster Lane.  
Pennine Horizons Digital Archive ALC218*

These archives certainly helped Hilary Fellows in her research into her house, Slater Bank, at the top of Moss Lane in Hebden Bridge. Like many buildings, it had been altered over time, and Hilary's research revealed that for a stretch of its life in the 19<sup>th</sup> century it housed a school run by a Mr Moss. A list of expenses found in the archive supported the theory that the building was probably altered to accommodate school boarders. A disputed

will shed light on another occupant described as ‘a lady of independent means’ and after the death of Sarah Cousins, the said lady, an auction of her goods was held. A poster advertising the sale not only paints a picture of daily life with her ‘genteel and valuable household effects’, but also lists rooms in the house which are markedly different from the layout today. As well as the genteel Sarah Cousins, Hilary made the acquaintance of Thomas Foster, who as a member of the Heptonstall Vestry committee, was seeking in the 18<sup>th</sup> century to close down the excessive number of pubs in Heptonstall. There was also a less salubrious Captain John Sutcliffe who was challenged because he was allowing the contents of his midden to run onto the road.

Robert Stevens and Barbara Pearcey live in a public building – 6 Garnett Street, or Ebenezer Chapel, which had some different secrets to reveal. The building itself is curious – the front aspect is a rather grand and formal two-storey building, while the rear is a single storey which looks more like a row of cottages.

Documents record that the chapel was built by Reverend John Fawcett, a notable preacher, in 1776, and a manse added in 1785. It continued as a chapel and a Sunday school until well into the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the congregation moved into the larger premises on Hope Street. Later it was known as Hebden Hall and used for entertainments, before providing a home for a printing firm and for the Hebden Bridge Times, and latterly an antiques centre and now the Heart Gallery.

The first question about the discrepancy between the front and back of the building started to be solved when a map from 1850 showed that the chapel was at first standing four square and quite isolated; while a map of 1886 showed the street layout much as it is now. In fact, the level of Garnett Street had been raised, and the rear of the ground floor disappeared behind it. The necessity of some renovation work on their first-floor home



provided Robert with the opportunity to explore beneath the surface. There was a considerable amount of detective work involved, but the structure of the house started to reveal its secrets. It seems likely now that the manse and chapel were built as one building – there is no internal stone wall and the timbers in the roofs are identical enormous spans of Baltic timber. When preaching in the chapel was in full swing, worshippers had access to a gallery facing the pulpit, and the timbers that supported it are still visible. The floor above was raised in the 1980s, and drawn with his head torch into the void, Robert was able to find the bases of the seating still there. What’s more, a decorative minstrel’s gallery in the dining room proved to be hiding a lift shaft installed in the manse during the time when the rest of the building was used by the Hebden Bridge Times.

Whether the journey of discovery is a paper chase through the archives, or an exploration of the secrets hidden behind walls and under floors, the passion seems to take hold and drive you to find out more. It was exciting to share how the past can be conjured up through historical records and sometimes actually touched in the stones and timbers that remain.

**8 January 2020**

**A VICTORIAN ARTIST PAINTS**

**HEBDEN BRIDGE**

**Diana Monahan**

**Justine Wyatt**

When Diana Monahan and Justine Wyatt, both active Society members and experienced researchers, decided to find out more about the Victorian artist John Holland’s paintings of the Calder Valley, they couldn’t know how the quest would absorb them.

John Holland was not a well-known painter, but one of many artists enabled to get out into the landscape and paint from nature - by the invention of paint tubes. This coincided with a

fashion for the romantic, and a large new clientele of people who could afford to be patrons of the arts – including the wealthy textile manufacturers of Hebden Bridge and Todmorden.

John Holland was born in 1829 as the son of a Nottingham sign-painter. It seems he developed his talents by copying works while assisting his father. He became part of a group of artists in Nottingham and in the 1850s exhibited his paintings of 'everyday life'. There are records of paintings made by him of landscapes throughout Britain. In 1867 he came to the Calder Valley drawn 'to study nature' by the romantic crags and precipices; perhaps also by the new rich who might be persuaded to purchase his landscapes. In two years, Holland produced over sixty paintings which were exhibited, and sold, at the White Horse in Hebden Bridge.

Though not an eminent artist, John Holland seems to have been quite successful. He moved to London in the 1870s and made his fortune. Later he bought a grand house near Tintagel in Cornwall, where he died in 1886. His paintings were praised for their fidelity, and a supporter, writing in the Todmorden papers to defend him against the slur that his paintings were 'mere daubs' because he completed them so quickly, asserted that 'no gentleman should be ashamed' to have one of his pictures hanging in his home.

Some of Holland's paintings are at Bankfield Museum, though many have disappeared, probably in private hands. In the Calder Valley he searched out 'the choicest bits of scenery' and if the scene included a new mill or the home of a wealthy potential patron, so much the better.

The exhibition at the White Horse was advertised in the local press and the names of the pictures and their purchasers were listed. These included paintings of Cragg Valley, Todmorden

Valley from Charlestown, Lumb Bridge and Falls at Crimsworth, Colden Valley and Nutclough.



*Reproduced courtesy of Calderdale MBC by Artuk.org*

Diana's painstaking analysis of Holland's painting of Hebden Bridge from Fairfield (above) certainly confirmed the reputation for fidelity. Particular buildings can be identified and their use revealed by consulting the archives. The use of a magnifier revealed some fascinating details – such as the reddish smoke emitting from a chimney which research revealed was probably an iron foundry in Crown Street; the contents of the barge being pulled by horse along the canal; piles of wood at the wharf near Croft House; and the awnings over windows on Market Street. Holland's painting is also full of people going about their work, and records Hebden Bridge at a time of change.

Holland's accuracy has been confirmed by comparing photographs of Hebden Bridge held by Pennine Horizons Digital Archive with his work. It was very satisfying to see the results of the detective work and our town and countryside 150 years ago depicted with such charm. You can see digital copies of this and other works on [www.artuk.org](http://www.artuk.org)

**22 January 2020**

**GLEE UNIONS**

**David Baker**

**Singing and Socialism in nineteenth- and twentieth- century Yorkshire**

It was an unusual experience for members to be clearing their voices and learning how to sing some historic glee tunes. But practical demonstration was a crucial part of Professor David Baker's talk about the golden age of Glee clubs in Yorkshire and luckily there were some talented singers in the audience who took the part of 'professionals' to lead the way.

Glee unions were found across the country, but the people of Yorkshire took this form of music-making to their hearts, and almost every town in the West Riding had a glee club in the early twentieth century. Glee refers to music rather than to the jollity of the occasion – though there was probably plenty of that, as these social groups, largely male, often met in pubs. Typically Glee songs were composed to be sung unaccompanied and in close harmony. Harmony was also what the Glee unions sought in their meetings. Rank and social class was irrelevant; all were singers. The distinction between professionals, who could read music, and those who could not was utilised in the way songs were structured and learned. Repetition was key; short themes would be sung first by the professionals and then repeated by the rest. The tunes were simple and catchy enough soon to have been committed to memory.

Glee tunes written in the nineteenth century were established as favourites, and the words reflect the ethos of the Glee unions – 'music inspiring unity and joy'. The popularity of such groups in the industrial towns of Yorkshire was part of a nineteenth-century drive to self-improvement and their growth came alongside a growth in leisure time. More families were able to

afford a piano or a harmonium, sheet-music sellers proliferated and there was more music education. It is claimed that by 1901 every child leaving school in Bradford could read music.

In Halifax, music societies had existed in the eighteenth century and an all-male singing club met in the Old Cock Inn, while the Messiah Club rehearsed in the Ring o' Bells. The Halifax Glee and Madrigal Society was established 1857 and performed to great acclaim in Manchester the following year. There were glee clubs in Todmorden, Rastrick, Brighouse, Ovenden and Greetland; workers at Dean Clough had their Glee and Madrigal Society, and Halifax Tramways had a male voice choir.

The Glee Unions appealed to the skilled working class, and chimed with principles of self-sufficiency, co-operation and egalitarianism of the Socialist movement. The socialist newspaper The Clarion promoted many social groups, including the Clarion Vocal Union. Clarion members visited Hardcastle Crag in the late 1890s listening to massed choirs and to speeches by Keir Hardie and Christian Socialist Caroline Martyn.

The decline of Glee unions was hastened by competition from other kinds of entertainment and access to music through radio and gramophones. But musical societies such as those which had grown up in Halifax survived in other forms and making music and singing together is perhaps seeing a further revival with community choirs, singing for pure pleasure. The spirit of such singers is captured by J B Priestley in his *English Journey*, "*they were singing glees over their beer because they liked to sing glees over their beer; it was their own idea of the way to spend an evening and they did not care tuppence whether it was anybody else's idea or not*". Just for a short time, the audience had a sense of what that meant.

## **The Alan Petford Annual Memorial Lecture**

**12 February 2020**

**CAUSES AND CAUSEYS**

**Murray Seccombe**

### **Manorial regulation of roads**

Courts leet, courts baron, pains, amercement and presenters were just some of the technical terms introduced, washed down with a dash of legal French, Latin and old dialect words. Murray Seccombe, the Society's secretary, shared his experience of using records from the Manor of Wakefield to see how the area's highways were managed in the seventeenth century.

This huge medieval manor stretched from Wakefield to the Lancashire border and included most of the parish of Halifax. While many issues of land tenure and management were dealt with in the courts baron of the sub-manors, it was the court leet, meeting twice a year in Halifax, Brighouse, Wakefield and Kirkburton that took on petty crime and infrastructure – which, in the seventeenth century, largely meant its roads and bridges. Petty constables brought repair and nuisance problems to the court to set penalties and deadlines. Murray illustrated the remarkable story of how 6,000 of these orders ('pains') had survived intact on paper sheets rolled in parchment wrappers.

There were clear differences in the patterns of activity across the parish. Tudor laws for appointing 'highway surveyors' and days for unpaid work by folk on the highways never found much of a footing in western parts of the parish, as communities kept to traditional obligations for highways that adjoined or ran through lands they occupied. In Halifax town, there was strict attention to the streets of the central markets area; this was the only township where fines were regularly given for failure to repair. In the townships to the east, coalmining and quarrying could disrupt farming, drainage and roads; these townships built up

schedules of repairs to be done every Easter and bylaws to prevent trespass over land by colliers and quarrymen.

In the upper valley the emphasis was on constables making sure people met their agreed obligations – but also doing the same with neighbouring townships. Sowerby, Wadsworth, Heptonstall and Stansfield sanctioned each other to make sure that routes linking the area with the Lancashire wool towns via Widdop, Stiperden, and Todmorden were kept in order – albeit mainly for travel on foot, by horse or packhorse. Mapping showed communities surprisingly well-connected with other parts of the north, quite different from the accepted picture of remoteness.

If this was a system that worked so well, why the signs of decline at the end of the century? Murray's view was that county and township administration was steadily strengthening from the period of the Commonwealth. Townships responded to a new Act in 1692 by accepting the re-introduction of surveyors with powers to fund repairs through local taxes. This gave the 'middling sort' of clothiers and farmers a platform to manage roads for their own commercial interests and less incentive to use the court leet.

### **Two corrections – Causes & causeys**

During my talk in February I mentioned there was no significant use of wheeled vehicles to the west of Halifax. However, the probate books for the period 1688-1700, published by our own Society, make it clear that carts *were* operating across the whole parish and not just for the collection of peat, as I had suggested. I have since analysed the probate material to get a full picture.

Area	Inventories	Carts and wains		Sleds and sledges	
See key below		No.	<i>per inventory</i>	No.	<i>per inventory</i>
<b>UCw</b>	59	30	0.51	26	0.44
<b>UCe</b>	65	24	0.37	14	0.22
<b>MC</b>	57	30	0.53	12	0.21
All	181	84	0.46	52	0.29

Upper Calder West: Erringden, Heptonstall, Langfield, Stansfield and Wadsworth townships;

Upper Calder East: Midgley, Sowerby, Soyland, Warley;

Middle Calder: Fixby, Hipperholme, Northowram, Shelf.

The results suggest a broadly similar distribution of wains and carts to the west and east of Halifax – rather fewer in Upper Calder east, especially for some reason in Warley. Sleds and sledges were most common in our own area, sometimes specifying stone and peat loads, twice as many per inventory as elsewhere. The purposes for the various kinds of cart also varied – for manure, hay, stone and peat, but none specified use for cloth manufacture. My impression is still that carts were overwhelmingly agricultural, enabling access to hay meadows, harvest, wood, and fuel.

I then revisited my two main data sources. References to carts and sleds in the manorial rolls are only slightly more common in the Middle Calder townships – usually in bylaws against trespass by ‘cart or carriage’. Carts in this area were probably used to carry coal, just as happened at this time in the Tyneside coalfield. The Sowerby constable accounts also lend support to the possibility that money was spent from the 1670s onwards on ‘setting’ roads to the west of Sowerby town specifically to extend access by cart for agriculture and for transporting building, walling and road-making stone. This opens up a fresh line of



enquiry about the extent to which road improvement was meshed into the expanding economy of the later seventeenth century.

My second correction follows an enquiry from John Billingsley. I went back to the source manuscript for my reading of 'Halpny fardinge Stone Cross' as a picturesque description of Mount Cross near Shore. At which point I realised I was misreading a text setting a penalty of setting the penalty of 10 'shellings 4 pens halpny fardinge' (10s 4<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>d) for the repair of Stone Cross to Whore Law (Whirlaw). Desperately disappointing but another historical myth averted!

**26 February 2020**

**SKIPTON'S FIRST WORLD WAR  
PRISONER OF WAR CAMP**

**Anne Buckley**

Anne Buckley's day job is as Lecturer in German and Translation Studies at the University of Leeds, but when she was handed a book written in German, which had been lying forgotten in the storeroom of Skipton Library since the 1950s, she had no idea of the world of historical research that was about to absorb her. She explained that the book was a record of the experiences of German prisoners of war held in a camp at Raikeswood, Skipton, from January 1918 until October 1919. Some of the content of the book, published in Germany in 1920, had been written on cloth and smuggled out to families back in Germany. It is a remarkable record of the activities of the officers held in Skipton camp, including poems, illustrations, cartoons, sketches of the landscape, details of daily life and reactions to major events: all from the unique perspective of German prisoners.

Raikeswood Camp was originally built for the military training of the Bradford Pals, and was considered ideal to house an influx

of prisoners of war. There were 550 officers, and 120 men who acted as their servants. Their identities, traced through Red Cross Records, show them to be mainly reservists, from all over Germany, from a range of professions and with a range of political views, especially about war. Because officers were not required to work, they organised many activities to stem the boredom. These included theatre, choirs, orchestras, sports, education and business associations. There were keen hikers who made the most of the Craven countryside, being trusted on their honour to go out rambling, with groups of up to 150 in the care of one guard. Others offered classes to those who may not have completed their education, managing to get external certification for German qualifications. Planning escapes was another activity, though less successful. One is recorded as ending in the Black Bull Inn in Clitheroe, where the German officers politely bought a round of beer before being handed over to the police.

Other records show that life in the camp was far from light-hearted. Over a quarter had been wounded and the conditions were cold and damp. More pervasive was the mental state of men who had to fight the stigma of being captured, and perhaps perceived as traitors or deserters by those back in Germany. They suffered particularly in the Spanish flu epidemic of February 1919, when a third of the prisoners were infected, and 47 died. They were originally buried in Keighley, but later their graves were moved to a centralised plot at Cannock Chase. A memorial stone from the time has not been traced, but in 1936 the Hindenburg airship dropped a cross and flowers to be placed on their graves.

Feelings of anxiety grew after the Armistice, as the prisoners were not sent home as they expected, but found themselves in limbo and unable to support their families. There was a poignant record of one man who begged to be shot as he was

overwhelmed by a sense of his uselessness. The mental illness which grew from these conditions was given the name 'barbed-wire disease', and in order to fight depression the prisoners organised a propaganda department to campaign for their release. They constructed a hot-air balloon carrying leaflets bearing slogans about their predicament and complaining about their inhuman treatment.

Anne's work on translating the book has stretched to uncover the stories of the prisoners' lives. One was a goalie for Bayern Munich; another, the captain of a U-boat, became mayor of his local town but refused to fly the Swastika when the Nazis came to power, and was found dead in 1937, possibly killed for his stance. Another, having joined the Nazi party, then rejected its racist ideology and saved the lives of 250 Jews by insisting that they had unique skills. He was celebrated in a film, 'The Good Nazi' and rewarded with recognition as one of the 'Righteous among the Nations' by the Israeli state.

One of the leading organisers of the prisoners and editor of the book, naval commander Fritz Sachsse, had a life worthy of a Boys' Own adventure, taking in an escape across China to Afghanistan, then travelling via America and being caught and finally ending up in Skipton. Anne was obviously delighted to have made contact with some descendants, including meeting the son of one man in Argentina, and also tracing the grandson of Sachsse, an actor based in London, who has written the foreword to her translation.

*'German Prisoners of the Great War: life in a Yorkshire Camp'*, published by Pen and Sword Books, will be available soon.

**11 March 2020**

**CELEBRATING OUR WOODLAND HERITAGE    Chris Atkinson**

To mark the end of a successful Pennine Prospects Project to explore the history of the woodlands of the South Pennines (jointly funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, Yorkshire Water, Newground Together and the Green Bank Trust), Chris Atkinson, who led the project, spoke with enthusiasm about some of the highlights of the last three years.

Back in 2017, very little was known about how our woodlands were used over the centuries, with only 82 sites of archaeological interest being recorded for the entire woodlands of the South Pennines. At the end of the project, 38 woods had been surveyed and a thousand sites of interest recorded. Local community groups were actively involved in the surveys and the excavations, and Bradford University's Department of Archaeology provided support and expertise.

Local woodlands at Hardcastle Crag and Knotts Wood in Todmorden gave up many of their secrets to the volunteers, who identified features such as old route-ways, ruined cottages, wells and quarries as well as veteran trees and evidence of industry such as old mill sites and round platforms used for charcoal burning. These were recorded and reported to the landowners who could then protect them.

The techniques of surveying were largely based on groundwork, but also drew on advanced technology such as LiDAR, which involves lasers and digital 3D models. Old documents such as Manor Court rolls and notices in old newspapers added to the evidence of the importance of our woodlands, with wood being used in local industries as pit-props, bobbins and as charcoal for iron smelting and wool combing. Oak bark was used in tanneries, and bark was also used in the weaving of baskets.



An exciting part of the project were the five community excavations, and it was fascinating to see how the digs added to our knowledge of the woodlands. In Hardcastle Crag, Hirst Wood near Shipley and North Dean woods the excavated sites showed clearly that there was a thick layer of charcoal-rich soil, including complete pieces of round wood, below that was a baked surface, on top of the yellow clay that had been levelled for the purpose. Samples of charcoal at Hardcastle Crag were dated from 1386 until 1891 and in Hirst Wood from 1324 till 1736 – a very long tradition of charcoal-burning on these sites.

At woods near Ogden reservoir it was decided to cut a trench to re-discover and further investigate part of the Roman road between Manchester and Ilkley which had been photographed in the 1960s. Excavations revealed that the paved surface was not sitting on the usual gravel drainage material, but on sands that over the years had been washed from the hillside. It was disappointing not to be able to examine the construction techniques, however charcoal that was found on this site was dated to 682 and 409 BC.

A very different excavation took place at Long Wood in Copley, where the survey had revealed some World War One practice trenches. Aerial photographs confirmed the finding, and excavations uncovered the parapet and firing step. It seems it was not used for long, probably by recruits who had to be quickly trained in the basics of digging trenches and operating as a team. Metal detectorists hoped to find personal items, but the remains of barbed wire that they did uncover were a sombre reminder of what these young soldiers would face when shipped out from Halifax to France.

The success of the project lies not just in these discoveries, but in the growing appreciation of community groups, and the information given to landowners who have been encouraged to further protect and enhance the history of the South Pennine woodlands. Woodland heritage and sculpture trails are planned and at the end of March a book about the project will be launched at an event in Hardcastle Crag.

**25 March 2020**

**Angus Winchester**

**COMMON PROBLEMS**

**The history of common land 1851 - 1901**

We hope to rearrange this lecture, which was postponed due to the corona virus restrictions. In the meantime, here is a note about the speaker. Angus Winchester is Emeritus Professor of History at Lancaster University. He has longstanding research interests in the history of upland landscapes and of common land in particular. His publications include *The Harvest of the Hills: rural life in northern England and the Scottish Borders, 1400-1700* (Edinburgh University Press, 2000). He is currently working on a book on the history of common land in Britain.

## Frank Woolrych 1944 - 2020

Frank was a Lancashire lad who had a great affinity for Hebden Bridge, formed through his love of photography and his association with a local photographer, Alice Longstaff. When Alice died in 1992, she bequeathed her photo collection to Frank who donated it to a local charity, Pennine Heritage.



This led to Frank being involved with our Society and in 2000 he became President. His love of technology led to the digitising of these and many other local images, and his association with Pennine Heritage, based at the Birchcliffe centre. There are now over 40,000 images and, with our archive, it has become a significant heritage resource.

Frank was instrumental in inaugurating many aspects of the Society during his time as President. He found a home for the archives at Birchcliffe, he initiated the website; he encouraged members to publish their research, giving much time and expertise to the photographic aspect of these. He entertained many groups with presentations and experience in establishing an archive. He had an enormous capacity to engage with an audience and made many friends along the way. He was a real people person, and his enthusiasm was infectious.

Frank was keen that the Lit and Sci should not falter. It is a historic institution in the town, founded in 1905, and together with a small group, began a revival with a series of events with eminent speakers, which have proved very popular.

Frank will be sadly missed but his legacy will perpetuate for many years to come.

*Barbara Attack*

## Meetings and Archive Opening

At the moment all group activities are suspended due to the Covid-19 virus. When we are able to re-open this will be announced on our webpage, by email to members and in the press.

The normal pattern when we resume:

### **Family History Meeting Times**

The first Thursday and third Saturday of each month

2 – 5 pm at the Birchcliffe Centre

### **Archive Opening Times**

The Archive at Birchcliffe will be open on the afternoon of the second Wednesday of the month; and on the morning of the fourth Saturday of the month.

Hebden Bridge Local History Society

The Birchcliffe Centre

Birchcliffe Road

Hebden Bridge

HX7 8DG