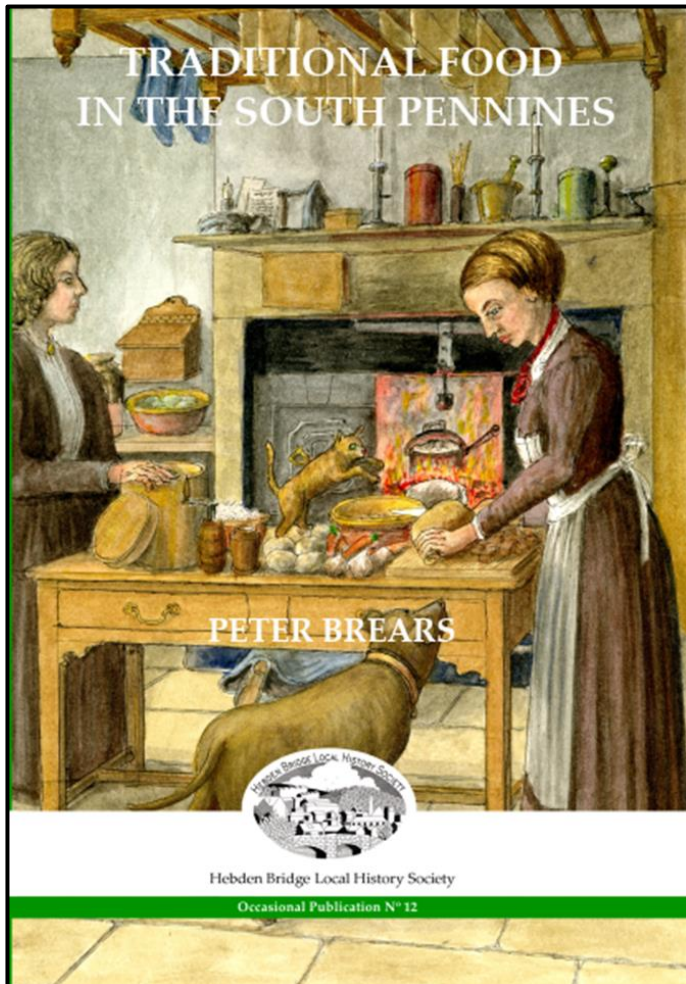


HEBDEN BRIDGE LOCAL HISTORY  
SOCIETY NEWSLETTER  
[www.hebdenbridgehistory.org.uk](http://www.hebdenbridgehistory.org.uk)

## Autumn 2022



**Published by the Hebden Bridge  
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Birchcliffe Road  
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[www.hebdenbridgehistory.org.uk](http://www.hebdenbridgehistory.org.uk)

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

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**Subscriptions due – see back cover**

Cover picture: Our latest publication - see page 6

**Welcome** to the Autumn Newsletter. Here you'll find details of the society activities for 2022-2023.

The editor is always pleased to receive contributions and the next newsletter will be in Spring 2023.

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## **Benefits of membership**

- **Talks, mostly illustrated, on a range of local history topics**
- **Access to an extensive local archive with readily available advice**
- **Twice-yearly newsletters and email updates on events**
- **Contact with other friendly, helpful, local historians**
- **Links to other local, regional and national organisations**

[www.hebdenbridgehistory.org.uk](http://www.hebdenbridgehistory.org.uk)

**Special Event Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> October 2022**



**Hebden Bridge Local History Society  
and Halifax Probate Group  
invite you to a**

## **Celebration Book Launch**

**at Halifax Minster on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> October  
at 6.30 for 7.00 pm. And it's free!**

**Guest speaker: Peter Brears**

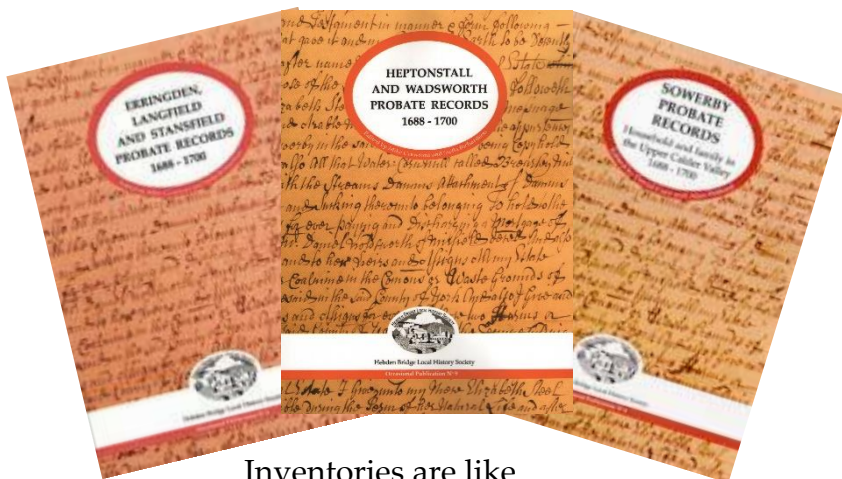
**Where there's a will, there's a way....**

**to uncover the world of Calder Valley in the 1690s.**

Peter Brears is a former curator of Shibden Hall and museums in York and Leeds and author of numerous books about the cookery, oak furniture and pottery of the period. He will be exploring what we learn from inventories about the practicalities of life in the Calder Valley at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

You can just turn up on the night, but it would help us if you can register an interest by emailing [halifaxprobate@gmail.com](mailto:halifaxprobate@gmail.com)

The Halifax Probate Group and Hebden Bridge Local History Society have reached the end of the ambitious project, launched by the late Alan Petford, to transcribe and publish all the wills, inventories and other probate documents for the whole of the ancient parish of Halifax from 1688 to 1700. The 23 townships stretch from Stansfield and Heptonstall in the west to Brighouse and Rastrick in the east.



Inventories are like an archaeological dig through ink and parchment, a trip through rooms no longer inhabited, furnished with longsettles, beds and footchests, arks and hourglasses, and all the paraphernalia of the kitchen. Even more fascinating are the tools of their trades, often textiles or agriculture, but also the smith's anvil, the apothecary's limbeck and the schoolmaster's books.

The volumes will be on sale at a discount at the event and also through the website [www.hebdenbridgehistory.org](http://www.hebdenbridgehistory.org) (upper valley townships) and by emailing [halifaxprobate@gmail.com](mailto:halifaxprobate@gmail.com) (lower valley townships).

See you there!

# **Literary and Scientific Society Programme**

All meetings at Hebden Bridge Town Hall at 7.30pm

Tickets: £5

A video recording is available for £4

On sale at Hebden Bridge Town Hall and online at  
[www.hblitandsci.org.uk](http://www.hblitandsci.org.uk)

**Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> October 2022      Sir Michael Marmot**

## **The Social Determinants of health and health equality**

Tackling the health gap is a matter of social justice. Evidence shows that economic circumstances are important but are not the only drivers of health inequalities. Action is needed, based on sound evidence, across the whole of society.

Professor Marmot is the Advisor to the WHO Director-General, on social determinants of health, in the new WHO Division of Healthier Populations.

**Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> November 2022      Louise Doughty**

## **“I preferred the book” - What it's like to see your novel adapted for film or television**

Novelist and now screen writer Louise Doughty saw her number one bestseller *Apple Tree Yard* adapted as a hit BBC One TV series starring Emily Watson.

As her most recent novel, *Platform Seven*, is in pre-production, she is uniquely placed to talk about the difference between writing for both genres and what it feels like to see the characters you created take on living form.

## Lit & Sci lectures (continued)

Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> December      Ian Brand

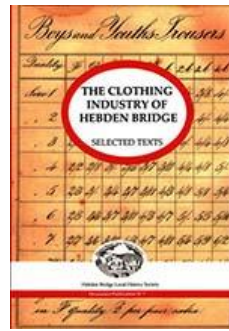
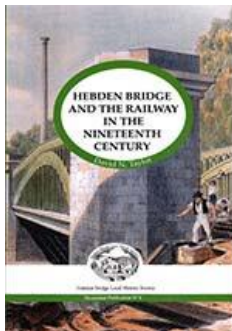
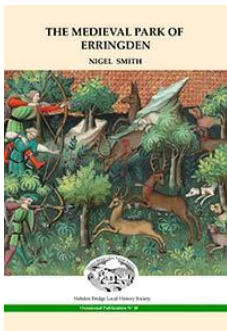
### The Twelve Plants of Christmas

We have many Christmas traditions, many of them plant or food based. Ian takes us on seasonal tour, encompassing everything from 'Holly and Ivy' to 'Brussel Sprouts and Cranberry sauce'. There is something for everyone, geography, history, popular science, botany, even cooking tips, but above all there are going to be some interesting stories.

Ian, a retired radiology consultant, has rekindled his interest in botany. This includes writing a nature notes column for three local newspapers, giving regular talks and leading botanical walks.

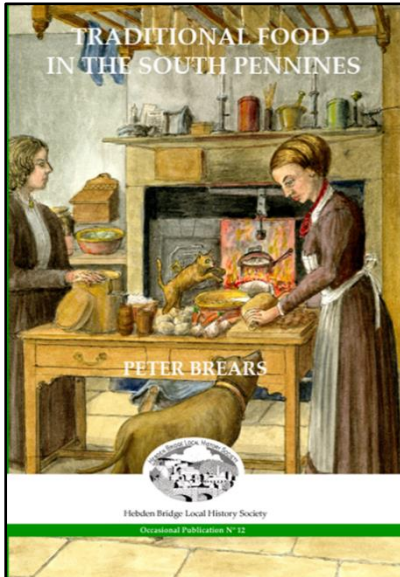
## Local History Society Publications

The society has an excellent record of researching and publishing on the local history of the upper Calder valley.



## New book! To be published Autumn 2022

**Traditional Food in the South Pennines. By Peter Brears. Published 2022. Hebden Bridge Local History Society Occasional Publications No.12. Paperback. 262 pages, 58 images. ISBN: 978-0-9933920-7-8. £11.99 (plus £2 towards shipping)**

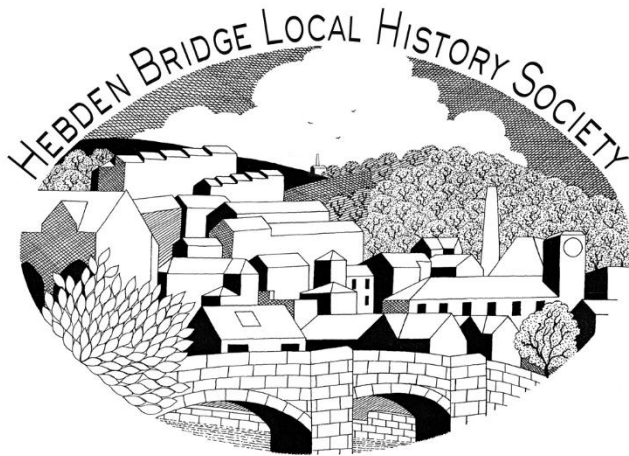


This book presents a revealing account of the everyday lives of South Pennine working people from 1800 to around 1918, as experienced through their food and drink. Details are included of both poverty and prosperity, social gatherings and local customs as recalled by past generations. In addition, there are over 170 recipes for local dishes for those who wish to recreate the authentic tastes of the South Pennines.

Peter Brears is a museum and historic house consultant, and one of this country's leading food historians. His continuing interest in Calderdale and Haworth began when he was curator of Shibden Hall in the late 1960s.



# Local History Society AGM 2022



The first AGM of the newly incorporated charity will be held on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> October 2022. In accordance with the constitution the purpose of the AGM is to receive the annual statement of accounts and the trustees' annual report, and to elect trustees.

As this is the first AGM of the CIO all trustees are required to retire but they may seek re-election if they wish. Any member who is interested in becoming a trustee may stand for election at the AGM.

For more information about what is involved in being a trustee and how to submit your nomination contact the secretary by email: [secretary@hebdenbridgehistory.org.uk](mailto:secretary@hebdenbridgehistory.org.uk).

There will be an opportunity at the AGM for members to ask questions concerning the documents tabled.

## **President's report for the year**

This year has been a very successful one for our society as we continued to present a full programme. All but one of our meetings this year were held in the Methodist Church, who have installed a new sound system which has enabled us to record the talks and these recordings have then been made available online. The number of visitors in the church have not been as great as before lockdown, but coupled with the online viewings, we have had very good audiences. We thank all our speakers for venturing out again to give the talks in person. Again, we thank Rachel and her team of helpers for all the administrative and technical support they have mastered to facilitate this programme.

The Hebden Bridge Local History Society is now a registered charity, and this has involved a few changes. The previous committee is now a Management Committee (the Committee) and we have a chair rather than a president. However, the society carries on much as before. The AGM will be receiving the report of the trustees and the statement of accounts as well as appointing trustees. This year trustees will all stand for re-election but in future years three trustees will stand down each year but will be eligible for re-election. Of course, we can elect new trustees each year and we are keen to recruit some new members to the Committee, if possible, this year. The officer positions on the Committee, chair, treasurer and secretary will be elected by the Committee and not at the AGM.

However, on that note I feel, that after 10 years as President, it is now time for me to stand down. I will still be a trustee, but I would like to hand the guiding reins elsewhere.

We have a programme of 12 talks arranged for the coming year and we thank Sheila Graham and Hilary Fellows for their work arranging and organising this programme. We also thank Sheila for her succinct reports of all our talks which you find in the newsletter. They are also available on hebweb and in the local paper.

Those of you who have visited us at the Birchcliffe Centre will know that our archives are extensive. Much behind the scenes work continues there and we hope that as we all become more confident about being out and about, our members will return to a more frequent use of them.

Diana Monahan and Mike Crawford have taken this opportunity to stand down from the committee and I must say a massive thank you to both of them for their invaluable input over the past years.

Diana has been a committee member for nearly 30 years and during that time taken on various roles including president, librarian and especially her sterling work as secretary for much of this time. She is also willing to tackle the many technical devices introduced to facilitate our talks. She has a massive knowledge of the history of this area which is augmented by her capacity for finding information in our archives. Diana always puts her heart and soul into any task she undertakes. She enjoys researching and has given many talks to local groups about various aspects of local history. She has contributed information for many of the society's exhibitions. She always has an 'ear to the ground' and has campaigned many times to preserve historic features in the locality.

Diana is happy to continue answering queries and organizing events but feels it is time to now step down from the committee.

Mike Crawford has been our exhibitions coordinator ever since we began mounting exhibitions at the Town Hall in 2014. These exhibitions have been well-received and have enhanced the local heritage and the work of the Society through being in the centre of the town. We have presented two exhibitions each year during this time, except during lockdown, and Mike has been involved in the production and setting up of all of them. I am glad to say that the team at the Town Hall are happy for us to continue having two heritage exhibitions each year and, although these will be produced by ourselves and other groups, Mike is still willing to help with advice and expertise. Not only do we have to thank Mike for this but also for his sterling work as our technician at our lectures over several years. He has also been a key member of the team transcribing the probate documents.

*Barbara Atack*

## **Archive**

### **Donations to the collection**

As usual the Society has received several donations of items for the Archive during the year and we are deeply grateful to all the donors. These include the following:

- Wild Rose Arts documentary archive donated by Pennine Heritage
- Hebden Bridge Literary & Scientific Society collections donated by HBLSS
- A collection of almanacs and books including two weaving books from the 1830s donated by Robert Cockcroft
- Todmorden & Hebden Bridge Master Printers Association minute book 1919-1942 donated by Deborah Barker
- Documents relating to John Bentley & Sons printers, Todmorden, donated by Deborah Barker

### **Collection maintenance**

- Work has continued on transferring the catalogue to the Endnote bibliographic database which now holds over 8,000 records. There are only 3 sections of the catalogue now waiting to be fully transferred.
- The Society and I are very grateful to Anne Mealia, John Crampton and Sarah Keates who regularly help with the cataloguing and recataloguing.

## **South Pennine Archives**

Hebden Bridge Local History Society and Pennine Heritage operate their archives as a single, jointly managed collection called South Pennine Archives. Regular meetings are held to further the aims and processes of the partnership.

## **Publications**

The Society has published *Midgley and Warley Probate Records 1688-1700* this year. This completes the series of probate volumes for this period for the Upper Calder Valley. *Enclosing the Moors* by Sheila Graham, first published in 2014, has also been reprinted.

## **Probate Group**

This group no longer meets in person although some work continues by individuals at home. The Halifax Probate Group have kindly offered to help with the final checking and indexing of the eighteenth-century probate documents for Stansfield.

## **Latin Group**

The group no longer meets on a regular basis but the project to produce a published translation from the Latin of the Heptonstall Court Rolls for 1597-1626 continues. The translation has now been completed and texts are being checked at Leeds Archives for sections that were not visible in the photographs of the rolls.

## **South Pennine History Group**

The Society is a member of the South Pennine History Group, together with Saddleworth and Marsden History Groups. The group continues to meet a couple of times a year in order

to exchange news and discuss matters of common interest. The group has now established a fund to encourage research and other activities in the history of the South Pennines, derived from the profits of *History in the South Pennines*. Grant applications continue to be invited.

## **Exhibitions**

### **Who built Hebden Bridge?**

Following on from Michael Peel's talk on this subject, his detailed research became the basis for an exhibition in Hebden Bridge Town Hall. The display was delayed until March 2022 but then the exhibition gave residents and visitors a chance to explore the history of the town and its buildings more fully.

It was good to see the exhibition about the **Hippies in Hebden Bridge** used again at the Town Hall in conjunction with a recent short film being shown about the hippies coming to Hebden Bridge.

## **Social Media**

If you have looked at our web site recently you will notice that it has been updated. We hope that you like the changes and will find it easy to use.

### **Family History Group**

We have not had many visitors to the archives this year but hope this will improve as people become more confident about being out and about. However, we continue to answer online queries and have helped several visitors to the area who are researching their local ancestors, several of whom have come from overseas.

## Lecture Programme 2022 – 2023

Meetings will be held at Hebden Bridge Methodist Church, at 7.30 pm.

Lectures will be recorded and made available to members on Vimeo for two weeks following the lecture.

If Covid restrictions are re-imposed, lectures will be delivered via Zoom.

**28 September 2022**

**A YORKSHIRE YEAR:**

**Catherine Warr**

**366 days of folklore, customs and traditions**



Catherine will be exploring the rich diversity of the customs of the county and asking what actually is 'a custom' and how does folklore develop in a community, including here in the Calder Valley.

Catherine Warr runs the YouTube channel 'Yorkshire's Hidden History' and has become a leading young local



historian. She has a passion for making history engaging and accessible to all, with videos that have been viewed by thousands of people all over the world. In 2021 she became the Engagement Fellow for the British Association for Local History and continues to work closely with others in the local history world.

**12 October 2022**

**FIELDEN BROTHERS AND RADICAL MP**

**June Turner**

**JOHN FIELDEN: how one cotton firm  
profited from slavery**

Fielden Brothers, like other cotton firms, used cotton grown by enslaved people. In addition it profited from slavery in ways only available to the most successful companies. John Fielden led the development of the business and was also a Radical M.P. who campaigned to improve the conditions for British workers, and is remembered for the Ten Hours Act, while at the same time building a fortune from slavery.



June Turner is a volunteer guide at Todmorden Town Hall, which was paid for by the Fielden family. She researched this subject during lockdown and her article has been published in North West History Journal 2022.

**26 October 2022**

**LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY AGM**

*Followed by*

**DOMESTIC BLISS:  
home and away in the 1900s**

**Michael Peel**

A cache of forgotten postcards from the dawn of the 1900s opened a picture of life upstairs and downstairs in the home of one of Hebden Bridge's most prominent tradesmen. The cards were discovered in the 1970s. They show how successful businessmen recruited helping hands from far afield to look after their expensive new properties which were built during the late Victorian period, an era of exceptional economic growth.



From washing windows to collecting eggs, cooking, and packing luggage, the postcards describe how a humble farm girl became an invaluable addition to her employers' household working as a domestic servant.

Holidays, garden parties and romances, hatches, matches

and dispatches feature in this rarely reported slice of local life which helped to shape the town we see today.

The search is still on to put names to some of the faces and to reunite some of those featured with their long-lost relatives.

A former reporter for the Hebden Bridge Times, Michael Peel is a long-standing member of the society with an avid interest in local history. He has spoken to the society about the development of Hebden Bridge and contributed to the fascinating exhibition 'Who built Hebden Bridge?'

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**9 November 2022**

**BENEFICIAL, INJURIOUS OR INNOCENT?  
Tea in eighteenth-century Britain**

**Emily Webb**



The British population consumes 36 billion cups of tea every year! That is 100 million cups per day. It has become entrenched in our way of life, from the humble tea break in your home to the luxurious and ostentatious event of

afternoon tea at the Ritz, it can be enjoyed in all situations. During the eighteenth century its popularity was uncertain and its 'oriental' beginnings mistrusted. So how and why did a humble leaf from the other side of the world become our national symbol and central to the British experience?

Dr Emily Webb is a lecturer at the University of Leeds, researching and teaching various aspects of British colonial history. This presentation is based on her previous research into the importance of the East India Company and Eastern trade to British society during the eighteenth century. Her current research explores *Bibis*, the Indian wives and mistresses of East India Company employees, and their role in the establishment of Empire.

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**23 November 2022**

**REVISITING THE YELLOW TRADE:  
the Yorkshire coiners in 2022**

**John Styles**

How should historians respond to the BBC's new 'gothic noir' serialization of Ben Myers' novel, *The Gallows Pole*? What do we know about the eighteenth-century Yorkshire coiners? How has historians' understanding of the coiners and their 'yellow trade' changed since the classic



publications by T.W. Hanson and H. Ling Roth, now over a century old. John Styles' chapter 'Our traitorous money makers', in his book *An Ungovernable People*, published in 1980, remains the most recent major academic study. In this talk, he asks what is important about the history of the coiners in 2022.

John is Professor Emeritus in History at the University of

Hertfordshire and Honorary Senior Research Fellow at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. He specializes in the history of early-modern Britain, especially the study of material life, manufacturing and design. His most recent books are *The Dress of the People: Everyday Fashion in Eighteenth-Century England* (Yale UP, 2007) and *Threads of Feeling: The London Foundling Hospital's Textile Tokens, 1740-1770* (Foundling Museum, 2010). He is currently writing a book on fashion, textiles and the origins of the industrial revolution.

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**14 December 2022**

**THE TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS  
OF THE CALDER VALLEY NATURALISTS**

**Richard Rainbow**



Calder Valley Naturalists never had it easy. They were continually at odds with local farmers who had other ideas for their land; with the general public who struggled to take an interest; and, more often than not, with each other, as each naturalist strove to be the best in their field. Richard will focus on five naturalists over three centuries whose love of nature caused them immense

difficulties and privations.

Richard Rainbow is Secretary of the Hebden Bridge Natural History Society and a committee member of the Halifax Scientific Society.

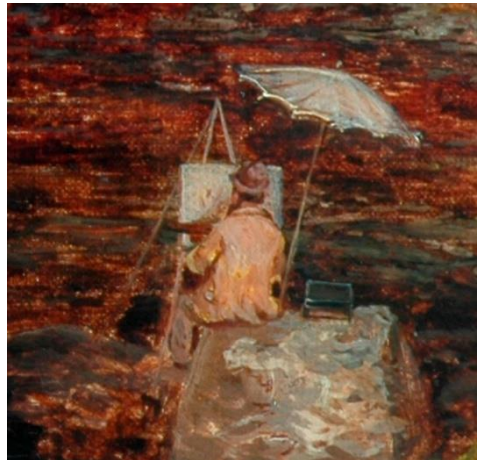
11 January 2023

**A VICTORIAN ARTIST PAINTS  
THE UPPER CALDER VALLEY:  
discovering the landscape  
paintings of John Holland**

**Diana Monahan  
& Justine Wyatt**

In 1869 at the White Horse in Hebden Bridge, there was an exhibition and sale of sixty-one paintings of the area, by established landscape artist John Holland.

This talk will give an overview of the life and work of John Holland who painted scenes in the Hebden Bridge, Mytholmroyd and Todmorden areas at a time of considerable change.



Both Diana Monahan and Justine Wyatt are long-standing and active members of HBLHS. Their interests include walking the local landscape, and this has fed their historical research. Diana began by researching the area around her own house, but has expertise in many areas; Justine has published her research into local water-powered industry and Fustianopolis.

25 January 2023

17<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY YEOMAN FARMHOUSES      Peter Thornborrow  
AND OAK FURNITURE OF THE  
UPPER CALDER VALLEY

Peter's initial interest was the oak furniture of the seventeenth century, and he wanted the right house to display it. He tells a personal story of buying an old semi-derelict farmhouse on the edge of the moors above Hebden Bridge and gradually 'doing it up' to the point where it won an award for best house restoration in the North West of England in 1975.



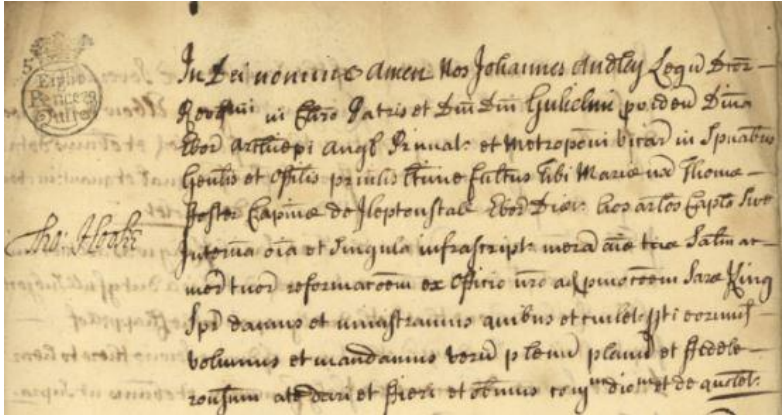
Well known as a speaker in the area, Peter Thornborrow worked as an architectural historian in Calderdale, undertaking a survey of listed buildings. Later as an inspector of Historic Buildings he advised on conservation and the listing of buildings. He is chair of the Yorkshire Vernacular Buildings Study Group and is currently working on a book *Halifax in 50 Buildings*.

8 February 2023

SCANDAL!

Anne Mealia

Local cases before the bawdy courts 1516 – 1848



Local people appeared before the ecclesiastical courts for a wide variety of misdemeanours including adultery, brawling in church and slander. The cases reveal some of the more scandalous aspects of life in our community in past centuries as well as details of people's lives, relationships and the things they argued about. We will find out about a long-running dispute over a pew, an attempt to frame someone for fathering an illegitimate child, a take-over bid by bogus churchwardens and much more.

Anne Mealia is a professional genealogist and historical researcher and runs her own research business, Evergreen Ancestry, carrying out research for individuals, academics and TV companies. She leads historical walks round Todmorden and the surrounding area and is on the committee of Hebden Bridge Local History Society. Her own research interests include the Fieldens and the Dobroyd area of Todmorden.



22 February 2023

**CALDERDALE INDUSTRIAL MUSEUM: Peter Robinson  
a guide to its history from a personal perspective**



Peter's talk will cover some of the early history of the building in Square Road, Halifax before it was converted for use as an industrial museum. He will briefly examine some of the issues faced by the museum, forcing its closure, and the decision

taken by a group of volunteers to attempt to re-open it for the public benefit. Finally, he will offer some insight into the areas within the museum that he has been most closely involved with and offer some glimpses of highlights yet to come.

Peter Robinson is a founder member of the Calderdale Industrial Museum Association, and has been actively involved in the process of breathing new life into what had become a closed and almost forgotten part of Calderdale's heritage. He is a Vice-President and long-time Treasurer of the Halifax Antiquarian Society who has written many articles on the industrial history of Calderdale.

8 March 2023

TRADITIONAL FOOD IN CALDERDALE

Peter Brears

A wide-ranging look at food, its preparation and its place in the lives of the people of the Calder Valley.



Peter Brears is a leading food historian, having published extensively on this subject and restored historical kitchens throughout the country. His interest in the traditional foods of Calderdale began in 1970 when he became curator of Shibden Hall. His book 'Traditional Food in the South Pennines' is due to be published by the Society in 2022. It draws together a wide range of sources and illustrations to tell the lives of the working people of nineteenth-century Calderdale through what and how they ate.

22 March 2023

**THE 1922 GENERAL ELECTION  
AND THE CALDER VALLEY:  
the Challenge of Labour**

**Alan Fowler**



The 1922 General Election transformed the Labour Party nationally, and this talk discusses events at a local level. Post war boom was followed by depression in the cotton industry, which was badly hit when a period of high profits led to speculation and gambling followed by wage cuts as employers blamed workers for the industry's problems.

The talk contrasts the failure of Labour to make a breakthrough in the Calder Valley with Oldham where W J Tout, Secretary of the Todmorden Weavers, was elected the town's first Labour MP. In 1929 he was to be the Calder Valley's first Labour MP.

Alan Fowler is a member of Hebden Bridge Local History Society and has contributed many memorable talks especially about Labour history. He taught economic and social history at Manchester Polytechnic and Manchester Metropolitan University for 40 years.

## Family History Group

### RALPH CHARLTON CROSS 1886-1978

Earlier this year a number of glass slides from the collection of the late Bob Hayhurst of Nelson found their way to the Birchcliffe Centre to be scanned and included in the Pennine Horizons Digital Archive. These slides were the work of Ralph Cross, an amateur photographer who was interested in recording vernacular buildings in East Lancashire and West Yorkshire. Although I didn't know Ralph Cross, I'd been aware of snippets of his work for a long time. I knew a little about the man from others who had counted Ralph as a friend.

I was first aware of Ralph as "RALPH CROSS 144 MANCHESTER ROAD, BURNLEY, LANCS" stamped on the reverse of a photograph he took in 1956 of the farmhouse where I lived. Did I meet him? If I did, it would have been unknowingly at the time he came to either take the photograph or to bring a copy of it for my parents; it's been in the family album ever since.

With the renewed interest in Ralph brought about by the emergence of the slides from Bob Hayhurst, I felt it was now time to put my family research skills to use and see what more I could find about his background and where he was from.

I should first explain why Ralph Cross's work was of such interest for me. As a youngster, in the late 1940's, I had started to explore the many derelict farmhouses in the upper Colden valley with my brothers and friends. At that time,

most were locked up but it was a great adventure to wheedle our way in and explore.

Over many years, I often wondered what the community would have been like at the time these farms had been occupied. To help me understand how this community had lived and how the farms had come to be abandoned, I joined the Local History section of the Hebden Bridge Literary & Scientific Society (HBLSS). My particular interest was to be the families that had lived in the upper Colden valley in the years before I was born.



*Salt Pie in the Colden valley. Photographed by Ralph Cross in 1955 courtesy of Pennine Horizons Digital Archive RAC1958.155*

I was keen to support my research with any photographs that might exist from the 1940's and 1950's as I believed these would show these buildings much as they probably were 100 years earlier. As I asked around, it wasn't long before the

name “Ralph Cross” came up. I learned that Towneley Hall had put on an exhibition of some of his photos and I wondered if they might be a source for my sought-after images. I contacted them and learned they had only borrowed the photos from a Mr Smith (of Middleton) who had possession of Ralph’s negatives and files following his death in 1978.

I also learned Ralph had been a member of the HBLSS and I was thrilled to find in the archive some of Ralph’s notebooks listing the photographs he had taken.



*Mr Ralph Cross (fourth from left) and Mr Walter Bennett (centre) with the Mayor (right), Mr J. O. B. Illingworth, Historical Society chairman and Miss Jean Syddall, Reference Librarian. (Burnley Express 7 October 1977)*

I began to find a few more of Ralph's photographs in the collections of friends from my teenage years. One friend, Madeline, whom I'd known from early childhood, told me that her husband, John Chadwick, had come to know Ralph very well over the years and was aware of Ralph's many negatives relating to local farms. John had offered to make "professional" prints from these many negatives.

John and Madeline converted a spare bathroom into a photographic dark room and set about making the prints. Each print was mounted on card and then inserted as a leaf in a sturdy binder. A number of binders resulted. I was able to peruse this collection on a few occasions and was thrilled to find so many images of the derelict farmhouses where I had spent a lot of my childhood.

After her husband died, Madeline passed the prints in their binders to the Pendle Heritage Centre in Barrowford where, it appears, many of the original negatives are also stored along with many records and negatives donated by the late W. John Smith of Middleton (see above).

By this time, I felt I was beginning to know Ralph Cross, albeit only through his photographs. I needed to know more; I understood he had never married and thus had no descendants. So, I needed to bring to bear my skills as an amateur family historian to see if I could find any family.

It's now a few years since I began researching Ralph's ancestry using various internet sources. I started with the 1939 Register which shows him, at that time, to be at 144 Manchester Road in Burnley (as stamped on the reverse of the photo of my home, Lower Strines Farm) and he was

living with the Hawkswell's. Ralph is shown as a civil servant and his date of birth is given as 26<sup>th</sup> October 1886.

The next step was to look in census records to find his parents and any siblings. At the time of the 1911 census he was boarding with the Rimmells on Bromyard Road, Worcester. He was already working for the Inland Revenue at the Worcester office; on the census return he was clear about his place of birth viz. Westow Hill, Upper Norwood S.E. (Croydon Parish), now the A212.

Working back through time, I found him, aged 14, as a pupil at Albert Memorial College, Framlingham, Plomesgate, Suffolk; he was there with Arthur Basil Cross, aged 15. Both were shown as born in Upper Norwood, Surrey, so I presumed the latter would be Ralph's brother.

In the 1891 census both Ralph C Cross and Arthur B Cross are listed as the grandsons of Valentine and Lucy L Cross and were living with them at 28 Regent Street, Great Yarmouth. The boys are shown as being born in Norwood, Croydon.

Arthur Basil Cross was already set on his career path at the time of the 1911 census: he was then a dental surgeon, single and boarding in Doncaster. In the 1939 Register he was still single but had returned to London, living in St Marylebone on Devonshire Place and later on Wimpole Street. He seems to have never married and his death is registered in Tonbridge, Kent in 1973.

I was making no progress in finding Ralph's parents. I now looked at the General Register Office Index web site and found the births of the two brothers: Arthur Basil Cross was registered in the September quarter of 1885 and Ralph



Charlton Cross was registered in the December quarter of 1886, both at Croydon and with mother's maiden name given as "Harding". I then found Ralph's possible parents in a marriage between Arthur George Cross and Jane Amelia Harding registered in the December quarter of 1883 at Bristol.

I had to go back to the 1861 census before finding that Arthur George Cross was indeed the son of Valentine and Lucy Cross. So I now had found Ralph's parents. Sadly, his mother died in 1896, just before his tenth birthday. It is likely the two young boys were placed with their grandparents (Valentine and Lucy Leman Cross) as their father was very involved in his drapery business. Arthur George Cross was obviously wealthy enough to send his boys to private boarding school.

I wondered about Ralph's middle name "Charlton"; a name like this often arises through remembering the maiden name of a wife somewhere back in the family tree. Ralph's mother was born Jane Amelia Harding to parents Richard Charlton Harding and Jane, a school teacher, nee Galindo, so, the middle name "Charlton" was already established in the Harding family. We have to go back to this Richard's father, William Harding, a schoolmaster from Wiltshire at the time the 1841 census was taken. I quickly found that William Harding had married Susanna Charlton in 1814 in Mere, Wiltshire – so there was my source. The Harding's were school teachers as was Jane Galindo, Richard's wife.

Richard Harding, the schoolmaster, took his family to Great Yarmouth and it is likely this led to them meeting the Cross family (although both families had members residing in

London for some time). Richard returned to Bristol and became a commercial clerk. He died in 1906.

Ralph's grandfather, Valentine Cross, a chemist, had lived in Westminster and Hackney and married Lucy Lemman Harvey in Bermondsey in 1846. After having several children born in London, they returned to their native East Anglia where, eventually, both died in Great Yarmouth: Valentine in 1901 and Lucy in 1925.

Summing up, as I'd expected, I'd found that Ralph Charlton Cross was indeed a somewhat solitary man, no doubt dedicated to his work but also deeply interested in his hobby of recording the vernacular buildings in the surrounding districts. I was also pleased to be able to uncover enough detail of Ralph's ancestry to put a bit of flesh on the bones of the man.

*Keith Stansfield*

## **Folklore Group**

Our local folklore has begun to bounce back this year as Covid anxiety recedes for most people – even though Covid is still with us and likely to affect a key area of folklore, the way we greet and leave people, for years to come. I already notice fewer people hugging nowadays, though not many have taken up the Japanese safe option of bowing!

The Pace-Eggers were back at Easter, both Midgley and Heptonstall teams. Sadly, however, after a long illness, Ray Riches, who for many years was *the* St George in the Heptonstall play as well as a stalwart of the Little Theatre and a fondly remembered teacher (that doesn't always

happen), passed away just two days before Good Friday, on April 13<sup>th</sup>. Tribute was paid to him before the performances.

The latest team is as spirited as ever, and as ever more spirited as the day wore on!



*Ray Riches (1946-2022) leading the team to Weavers Square in 2010*

The Midgley team did their usual peripatetic stint at venues between Luddenden and Todmorden. This year there was concern over whether a team could be raised, work having made some of the usual members unavailable – and St George is now taken by Millie, the first female member of the troupe, who was the Black Prince on her debut three years ago. The new team brings a real freshness, but there are likely to be

vacancies for next year, especially for younger applicants, so if you or your younglings fancy a go... Look for 'Support the Midgley Pace-Egg' on Facebook.



*The Midgley team in George Square this year*

The weather was kind on Good Friday (again, that doesn't always happen) and both teams attracted good crowds, in an atmosphere that suggested how delighted people were that with the resumption of our local Easter mumming play, the world had once again resumed its proper round.

The next day, on Easter Saturday, we went to Bacup to watch the Britannia Coconut Dancers dance through town. Once again, the atmosphere in town was of their world being somehow restored, and it is clear how the inhabitants, both white and Asian, enjoy the dancers in their red, white and blue costumes; however, it is also clear in this day and age that their blackened faces, black leggings and jerseys are contentious, and Rossendale Council and the local police have now declined to support the event. It is true that the

Nutters have now-unacceptable origins as a 'minstrel' troupe in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but after a hiatus, the relaunch of the team was as a town emblem and eschewed any racial connotations, and talking to the dancers and stewards it is clear they have the same attitude.



But it is equally obvious that in our evolving attitudes to appropriate behaviour, especially in regard to ethnic identities, they will come in for criticism from certain quarters, and even our Pace Eggers have been criticised for the Black Prince and other quasi-ethnic caricatures, and some of the traditional text. How the tradition will deal with these matters we must wait and see - but folklore and tradition are never static, and a function of tradition is to change according to the prevailing social climate.

But whatever happens, our local Easter events are worth seeing for yourself! I admit it puzzled me that several local people I spoke to said they hadn't been to see any of the Pace-

Eggs because 'they'd seen it before' (even former Pace Eggers). This suggests they were responding to the play as they might to a theatre production or film! Traditional events are always changing (if they don't they are ossified and don't last much longer), and in over 30 years of watching the Pace-Eggers I can honestly say I've never 'seen it before'; and moreover, the point of calendar customs like these is to 'keep up the day' as a key date in the community calendar, and to be popular entertainment organised in the community rather than polished performance produced by some remote agency! To say you've seen it before is to rather miss the point.

One further important point for this report is the opening, after three years of preparation by Holly Elsdon, of the Centre for Folklore, Myth and Magic, next to the Hippodrome in Todmorden. The Section will be working closely with the Centre in the future, I'm sure – I certainly am! The Grand Opening was over the weekend of May 20-22, and included an exhibition, 'Some Local Folklore' and a talk by myself on 'Charming Calderdale' (my latest book, on magical house protections in the borough). They have been gifted a collection of 5000 books by the now defunct Shropshire museum, Mythstories. We are hoping to extend the library further and to use the Centre as a venue for research as well as a rolling programme of talks and other events, mostly at weekends. Keep up with them on Facebook, Twitter or at [www.folkloremythmagic.com/](http://www.folkloremythmagic.com/). Downstairs is the new Saker Bakery premises, with a large and airy café offering at time of writing very reasonable prices in these days of inflation.

*John Billingsley*

## Archive Opening and Family History Meeting Times 2022-23

### Birchcliffe Centre, Hebden Bridge

As an experiment in response to changing demands, the archive will normally be open every Wednesday and Thursday afternoon from 2-5 pm until the end of December 2022. However, this is subject to volunteer availability.

Numbers at each session are limited and **pre-booking is required** by emailing: [librarian@hebdenbridgehistory.org.uk](mailto:librarian@hebdenbridgehistory.org.uk) for general research visits or

[info@evergreenancestry.com](mailto:info@evergreenancestry.com) for a family history visit.

When you book, please indicate which documents you would like to see, or give brief details of your enquiry. Our catalogue can be searched on our new website at [hebdenbridgehistory.org.uk](http://hebdenbridgehistory.org.uk)

	Wednesday 2 – 5 pm	Thursday 2 – 5 pm	Wednesday 2 – 5 pm	Thursday 2 – 5 pm
<b>September</b>	21	22	28	29
<b>October</b>	5	6	12	13
	19	20	26	27
<b>November</b>	2	3	9	10
	16	17	23	24
	30			
<b>December</b>		1	7	8
	14	15	21	22
<b>Re-open January 2023</b>				

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