

HEBDEN BRIDGE LOCAL HISTORY
SOCIETY NEWSLETTER
www.hebdenbridgehistory.org.uk

Spring 2023



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

The Birchcliffe Centre

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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: **Celebrating the Coronation** (above) at an unidentified sewing shop in 1953 (any ideas?) and at Redmans in 1911 (PHDA)

Welcome to the Spring Newsletter. Thank you to everyone who has contributed. There are reports of the lectures for 2022-2023, activities and forthcoming events. If you'd like to share your research or pose a query on something historic for the Autumn 2023 issue, please send it to the Secretary by 1 August 2023.

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Society Publications

For brief details of the Society's publications, see pages 4 – 6.

For further details and to order visit

<https://www.hebdenbridgehistory.org.uk/pages/publications>

Change and continuity

A year ago, our then-President, Barbara Attack, wrote a short piece about the Society's change of status to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). That process is now complete and you now have a Management Committee of trustees, headed by a Chair and bound under law to send reports to the Charity Commission. We've also flown the nest of our parent body, the Literary and Scientific Society, to whom we wish a long and stimulating future.

In everyday terms, I hope your Society feels much the same. In this newsletter, you'll see the reports on another varied and successful season of lectures; we've kept the video facility and the feedback is that people appreciate the chance to hear our speakers, when they can't get along in person. Our archive at the Birchcliffe now works in partnership with Pennine Horizons Digital Archive as part of South Pennines Archives, and a process of making our catalogue available nationally via the National Archives is under way. Please do make use of them; this is a very special resource for a local Society. You'll also have seen new books on sale – a highlight this year being Peter Brears' *Traditional Food in the South Pennines* (no less than three dock pudding recipes!).

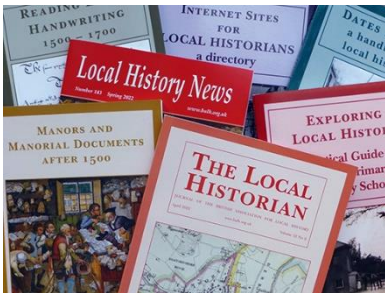
We are always open to new ideas and new people to work with. If you have some spare time and, especially, if you (or someone you know) can offer experience or skills in marketing, computer-based activities, or historical books and documents, please drop us a line in the first instance via secretary@hebdenbridgehistory.org.uk

Murray Seccombe, Chair

Membership Benefits

- Free entry to lectures including access to recordings of those lectures for a short time afterwards (where the lecturer gives consent)
- Free access to the archive when open (see back cover)
- Borrowing rights for the archive (published items only)
- Reduced fees for research enquiries
- Free membership of Family History and other special interest groups
- Two newsletters a year with news, lecture information and short articles
- Regular email news on society and local history matters

British Association for Local History



Our Society is a member of this national organisation. They have a wide range of materials to support local historians and run seminars, webinars and produce books and regular publications – Local Historian and Local History News (both available at Birchcliffe).

As a member of an affiliated society you can:

Get discounts on their books

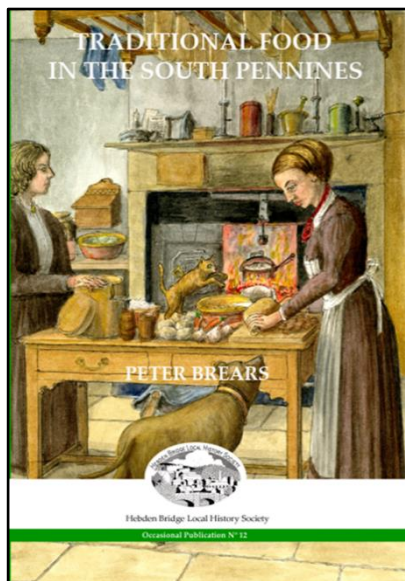
Attend events online and in person at a discount

Access electronic resources

Their website is a mine of information www.balh.org.uk

. New book!

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 £2.80 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.

See the report on his lecture to the society on page 27.

Publications

Society publications can be ordered via our website
<https://www.hebdenbridgehistory.org.uk/pages/publications>

History in the South Pennines: the legacy of Alan Petford. Edited by Nigel Smith. Published Spring 2017. Hardback. 442 pages, 143 illustrations £25 (plus £3.50 shipping)

Pennine Valley: a History of Upper Calderdale. Edited by Bernard Jennings. Originally published 1992. Reprinted with corrections 2011. Paperback. 224 pages. Was £14.99, now only £12 (plus £3.50 shipping)

Pennine Perspectives: Aspects of the History of Midgley. Edited by Ian Bailey, David Cant, Alan Petford and Nigel Smith. Published by Midgley Books, 2007. Hardback. 346 pages. Now only £8.00 (plus £3.50 shipping)

The Diaries of Cornelius Ashworth 1782-1816. Edited by Richard Davies, Alan Petford and Janet Senior. Published 2011. Hardback. 368 pages. Was £19.00 now only £8 (plus £3.50 shipping)

Hebden Bridge Town Centre Trail. 2008. 27 pages. £2 (plus £1 shipping)

Occasional Publications series

These titles are short print runs and some are close to going out of print so act now if you want to collect the complete series!

Midgley and Warley Probate Records. Edited by Mike Crawford and Stella Richardson. Published 2022. Paperback. 220 pages. £9.99 (plus £2.80 towards postage)

Midgley Probate Records: Household and Family in the Upper Calder Valley 1531-1731. Edited by Ian Bailey and Alan Petford. Reprint of 2007 edition by Midgley Books. Published 2012. 116 pages. £9.99 (plus £2.80 shipping)

City in the Hills: Dawson City and the Building of the Walshaw Dean Reservoirs. By Corinne McDonald and Ann Kilbey. Published 2012. 52 pages. £11.99 (plus £2.80 shipping)

Going to War: People of the Calder Valley and the First Weeks of the Great War. By M. Crawford. Published 2013. 145 pages. £9.99 (plus £2.80 shipping)

Sowerby Probate Records: Household and family in the Upper Calder Valley 1688 – 1700. Edited by David Cant and Alan Petford. Published 2013. 215 pages. £9.99 (plus £2.80 shipping)

The Medieval Park of Erringden. By Nigel Smith. Published 2021. 150 pages, 49 images. £11.99 (plus £2.80 shipping)

Erringden, Langfield and Stansfield Probate Records 1688 – 1700. Edited by Mike Crawford and Stella Richardson. Published 2016. 209 pages. £9.99 (plus £2.80 shipping)

Heptonstall and Wadsworth Probate Records 1688 – 1700. Edited by Mike Crawford and Stella Richardson. Published 2020. 195 pages. £9.99 (plus £2.80 shipping)

Hebden Bridge and the Railway in the Nineteenth Century. By David N. Taylor. Published 2019. £9.99 (plus £2.80 shipping)

The Clothing Industry of Hebden Bridge: selected texts. Edited by Nigel Smith and Diana Monahan. Published 2018. £9.99 (plus £2.80 shipping)

Lecture Reports 2022 - 2023

Sheila Graham

28 September 2022

A YORKSHIRE YEAR

Catherine Warr

365 days of folklore, customs and traditions

Catherine Warr, a young historian who runs the successful You Tube channel 'Yorkshire's Hidden History' ventured into the live world of the members of Hebden Bridge Local History Society to challenge ideas about customs and traditions.

Perhaps we all have a built-in bias towards seeing folklore and its associated rituals as something quaint or archaic – what Catherine dismissed as 'tweeism'. A wider definition which sees customs as a meaningful activity carried out on a regular basis allows us to see more modern rituals, such as the informal actions which a rugby team might use to prepare for a match, as just as much customs as the Easter gathering of the Pace Egg Plays. Our sense that customs have to have a long pedigree is likely to lead us to see the dancing of the Longsword or Morris men as more of a tradition than the Leeds Carnival. The Oxenhope Straw Race, for which participants don extravagant fancy dress while running with the heavy bales, is just as meaningful and traditional to participants and spectators.

Another challenge Catherine made was to our interpretation of folklore, especially of fairy legends. Changelings left by the fairies who stole your baby might bring a chilling sense of danger, but the fancy could also be used to stigmatise people with disabilities at a time of far less understanding. The Fairy Hole near Grassington was reputed to be the home of a deformed woman who took refuge to live in a cave. Her true story of course goes untold.

Stories of strange events could spread with a kind of community hysteria, for instance in Sheffield when tales of the appearance of a ghostly figure in white led to gatherings of ‘rough’ young men. The mix of rumour and the reality of an unruly gathering together were the ingredients of long held beliefs that something odd had happened. Fakes themselves become folklore.

Finally Catherine questioned our condescension towards people of the past who we perhaps think were simple or stupid for believing such tales. Stories might be widespread, but there was not necessarily widespread belief in the supernatural explanations – sometimes stories are just good stories.

Catherine will soon have a book published entitled *A Yorkshire Year: 366 days of folklore, customs and traditions*.

12 October 2022

**FIELDEN BROTHERS AND THE RADICAL
MP JOHN FIELDEN**

June Turner

Like other cotton firms, Fielden Brothers of Todmorden used cotton grown by enslaved people, and as June Turner explained, that fact seemed to jar with what she had always known and believed about the humane attitudes of the brothers, and especially the political sympathies of John Fielden the Radical MP. It was a coincidence of events and opportunities that led June to investigate further: her longstanding interest in the family firm; the enforced free time of Covid lockdowns; the toppling of the statue of slave-owning Edward Colston by Black Lives Matter protesters in Bristol and the availability of on-line resources from all over the world that opened up other perspectives.

There was a very specific model of slavery, based entirely on race, which was first tried in Portuguese held islands. The British adopted and codified this system in 1661 in a document that set out to justify the status of black slaves as permanent chattels. By the early 19th century the dominant source of cotton used in the mills of north-west England were the slave plantations of the southern states of America. At a time when Fielden Brothers was one of the most successful cotton manufacturers, the 20,800 bales of cotton they imported relied on the annual labour of 14,000 enslaved people. So slavery was fundamental to their success.

Fielden Brothers' success went beyond manufacture as they owned a fleet of ships and built up a lucrative trade supplying cotton-brokers. At one time they were the largest importers of cotton into the port of Liverpool. Their successes enabled them to invest capital in new ventures in America and in Brazil, underpinning the slave economies of these regions. In the years and months before the American Civil War, which brought an end to slavery in the United States, Fieldens were buying up cotton for stock, perhaps in anticipation of the 'cotton famine' which caused tremendous hardship in Lancashire towns. Many mills closed, and in Todmorden, Fielden mills closed for several months, paying the laid-off workers half their normal wage. This was a benevolent gesture by the owners, though one which was probably mitigated by the value of the stock they had built up.

As well as establishing the extent of the involvement of Fielden Brothers in the slave economy, June looked at the record of John Fielden MP. She found no evidence of involvement in the 1833 Act to abolish slavery. News of the brutal suppression of slave rebellions in Jamaica had amplified the voices of opposition in England. John Fielden was certainly involved in the movement for parliamentary reform, addressing a massive crowd at St Peter's Field and plotting to topple the Prime Minister, the Duke of Wellington, by organising a run on gold. Fielden was in favour

of abolition without compensation for slave owners, a view which was not consistent among all Radicals.

Looking at John Fielden's record as a parliamentarian, June felt that his reputation as a humane man, aware of his humble origins, was justified. He was a proponent of a minimum wage for handloom weavers as well as proposals for a 10-hour limit on the working day. He opposed the harsh Poor Law Act and was a signatory to the Peoples' Charter demanding universal male suffrage. Engels himself saw Fielden as an exception to the grasping capitalist class. But there is a need for acceptance that the company profited hugely from a system based on the exploitation of enslaved people.

Questions to the speaker reflected the unease people felt about how to respond to the opening up of facts about the slave economy, when there was at the time no obvious alternative moral choice. The point though is to make the facts and the work of enslaved people visible, to see a fuller picture.

26 October 2022

**DOMESTIC BLISS: HOME AND AWAY
IN THE 1900S**

Michael Peel

In his talk Michael Peel told a story of life upstairs and downstairs which was uncovered from a collection of more than 200 old postcards. The saleroom find, back in the 1970s, had aroused his curiosity, but he had never quite turned the fragments of memories into a story. More recently, with access to archives such as those held by Hebden Bridge Local History Society and Pennine Horizons Digital Archive, as well as the ability to search online census records, births, marriages and deaths as well as old newspapers, some of the story was ready to be told.

The collection had been made by Mary Hepworth and covered the optimistic period from 1900 up to the start of the First World War. Mary Hepworth, like many working-class young women, had come to Hebden Bridge from a pit village near Barnsley to work as a domestic servant for one of the up and coming business families. At a time when postal services could be relied on to deliver next day, postcards were a valued way of communicating. Fortunately for posterity, Mary's friend Ada was also a domestic servant in Hebden Bridge, and the two corresponded frequently by postcard. These make up the bulk of the collection. Mary probably kept the cards because of the pictures of seaside places and beauty spots, but a century later it is the written messages that fascinate us.

This was a period of economic growth in Hebden Bridge, with shopkeepers becoming wealthier. Mary's story centres on two prominent families. Photos of the period show two adjacent businesses at the centre of town: the Greaves family had a draper's shop, and nearby was the ironmongers of the Chambers family. Joining together the family dynasties through marriage added to their business success, and the inevitable move up the hillside to so-called 'snob row' on Birchcliffe, where they were responsible for building a number of prestigious villas, such as Beechmount and Woodside. In these mansions on the hill, a middle class 'upstairs' life was established, depending on the invaluable maid servants 'downstairs.' These were often girls of 15 or 16, and often from places at some distance from Hebden Bridge.

In 1901 Mary Hepworth was working as maid servant for Thomas Barker Chambers and his wife Alice in a house called Woodside, built for the family. Next door lived Grace Greaves, his mother-in-law. Her servant Ada King, from the same village of Monk Bretton, was Mary's friend and correspondent. The second major source of interest is the batch of cards sent to Ada

from her employers, when they went to visit seaside towns. What is written is a fascinating mixture of the delights of Southport, Blackpool or Douglas and practical instructions such as the need to light fires, prepare a goose or forward socks and gloves. The tone of the cards suggest a rather affectionate relationship between maid and mistress. Photographs preserved in the collection also seem to show a relative social ease between the classes. One shows a mix of employers and servants in a large garden, clearly enjoying a celebration together.

Mary Hepworth's postcard collection also traces the progress of her romance with James Greenwood, the man she eventually married. A not too subtle hint from Mary was a postcard with the name MARY, and a message 'hoping this will be the name of your bride'. Again a degree of social ease is evident in her employer's knowing comments about their romance, and the assumption that Mary will be able to pass on instructions to James such as to collect them from the station when they returned from the seaside.

The collection captures Hebden Bridge at a time of civic and commercial growth, with leisure time for the middle classes whose work life continued down in town while they lived in style in the villas and mansions of Birchcliffe or visited the newly expanding tourist spots by the coast.

Michael's talk demonstrated to perfection the joy of discovery from archives, records and lovingly hoarded postcards.

9 November 2022

BENEFICIAL, INJURIOUS OR INNOCENT?

Emily Webb

Tea in 18th Century Britain

The statistics are astonishing: the British people consume 36 billion cups of tea every year. It is beyond doubt Britain's favourite drink, and yet its origins lie in a plant that was only grown in southern China. Emily Webb is a lecturer at the University of Leeds who has been researching the role of commodities such as tea in shaping the history of colonial Britain, and she traced the fascinating history of tea in the culture of Britain.

The origins of tea drinking are part of Chinese legend, but it is known that the plant grew in southern China and was probably first used as a herbal drink 4,000 years ago. Its use in Europe is noted at the end of 16th century, and one of the first adverts for tea in England boasted of the health benefits of this novel drink. For Samuel Pepys it was special enough to be recorded in his diaries, and indeed at that time it was a rare and expensive luxury. Just as now the influencers of the time, the royal court, made it fashionable.

While wars raged in Europe, Britain's trade routes through the Levant (the way coffee was imported) were often blockaded, while tea arrived by a route that could be kept open – one explanation for the singular identification of Britain as a tea drinking nation while the rest of Europe stuck with coffee. The most aggressively ambitious trading organisation was the East India Company, which had a monopoly of trade with China, India and South East Asia, and seeing the profit to be made from tea they began to promote it. The British Treasury was quick to see the potential too, and collected a massive tax on the product, which raised 6% of the total government revenue.

The association of tea with luxurious life-styles made it a target for some of the radical ideas of the 18th century, and the political pamphlets of the time reflect this hostility. There was also a keen debate about its potential health benefits or threats, including a rumour that it had been designed by the Chinese as a slow poison. With the dominant medical model of health being the theory of the four humours which needed to be kept in balance, tea could easily be identified as either the bringer of calm or the disrupter of well-being. States of mind such as melancholy or hysteria were also of concern, and tea was promoted as a corrective for 'nerves'.

The fashion for tea grew as people turned tea drinking into a social occasion – in public gardens such as those at Vauxhall and Chelsea, and also in the rituals of tea drinking at home, with the lady of the house presiding over the silver or china tea pot. The idea of women gathering in groups to talk was alarming to some: could they be plotting insurrection or wasting time in scandalous gossip? The attack on women daring to have political ideas was often through cartoons – where tea drinking was seen as a way to emasculate men, allowing powerful women to exercise undue influence on their political lap dogs. And once the fashion spread to the working classes, it was seen as corrupting, wasting their time, leading to neglect of their work and contributing to their poverty.

The poor, of course, were not drinking the best tea, but smuggled tea of lower quality and cheaper price. The government used the taxation on the import of tea as revenue to fund expensive and increasingly unpopular wars. Inevitably entrepreneurs found ways of by-passing the massive taxes, first on a small scale but eventually through well-organised professional smuggling. The perceived unfairness of such high taxes meant that the general

population were largely co-conspirators. A political battle began as the Treasury sought to make smuggling less profitable by reducing the tax, and replaced that revenue with the window tax. Despite the debates and battles, tea was irreplaceably established as part of British society for all classes, and keeps its triumphant place even now.

23 November 2022

**REVISITING THE YELLOW TRADE
The Yorkshire coiners in 2022**

John Styles

During 2021 Heptonstall and the surrounding areas were excited by the filming of Benjamin Myers' novel *The Gallows Pole*, briefed as a gothic noir version of the story of the Yorkshire coiners. One of the historical advisors to the film makers was John Styles, Professor Emeritus at the University of Hertfordshire, who wrote about the coiners – *Our traitorous money makers* – about 30 years ago. His talk considered how time has changed the ways in which we look at the 'yellow trade' of counterfeit money making.

Some historians have characterised the coiners as fighting a revolutionary battle against capitalism, while others have been drawn to a rather romantic view of the outlaw men up in the hills creating gold coins. For John Styles the yellow trade was essentially a well-organised business, with entrepreneurs seizing on the opportunities offered by an already debased coinage and a consequent shortage of cash. The use of 'yellow trade' to describe the traitorous occupation mirrored names such as kersey trade and worsted trade, suggesting a degree of legitimacy.

John was clear that there was a very specific type of coining in the 1760s that was distinctively Yorkshire, and confined to the valleys around Halifax, encompassing Rochdale and Keighley.

This was a totally different model to the earlier coiners who used base metals to mint coins which were then passed off as gold. The Yorkshire coiners used clippings from genuine gold coins, so that the counterfeits gradually became accepted as valid. Genuine gold guineas could sometimes lose 5% of their value through wear, and an influx of Portuguese gold coins, whose face value exceeded the value of the gold, provided a source for gold to be clipped. The new coins had enough intrinsic value to be acceptable, and importantly, they met a need.

There were considerable risks to the trade, which was a treasonable offence, but there was a very low chance of prosecution, with very few magistrates, and the specialist 'mint solicitor,' whose job was to search out such activities, not paid enough in expenses to do the work. It seems also that the local population tacitly lent their support, so that the coiners' trade was legitimised. Eventually there was a highly-organised business, drawing on the business acumen of wool merchants, and their networks who would provide the gold clippings, and distribute the new coins. Many of those accused of coining had textile-related occupations, and it seems the yellow trade drew on the existing structures of the early textile industry, with access to capital through local credit.

Central to the coiners local to the Cragg Vale area – known then as the Turviners or the Upper Hand – was David Hartley, whose activities were based at Bell House. In local legend he was seen as 'King' David, who saved people from poverty. Fiction prefers the romantic, albeit violent, version of the story. For John Styles the coiners trade was a version of opportunistic capitalism, rather than a Robin Hood story. In the end the trade of the coiners was not defeated by prosecution and deterrent punishments, but by a wholesale re-coinage in 1773 which rendered clipped coins unacceptable

14 December 2022

**THE CALDER VALLEY NATURALISTS Richard Rainbow
TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS**

The Calder Valley has for centuries been a rich landscape for the study of nature. A 17th century list of British flora records two rare plants in the valley: Wintergreen growing ‘plentifully’ at Northbridge in Halifax, and in a single location, on a great stone near Widdop, a very rare bearberry with its bright red berries. Richard Rainbow was keen to share the stories of local naturalists who made an impact on the scientific study of plants.

After Carl Linnaeus developed his classification system of plant species in the eighteenth century, a sense that there was order and purpose in nature led to a surge in interest and a desire to explore and discover new species. James Bolton (1735 – 1799), from Warley, was one such man, whose catalogue of plants growing locally forms an appendix to Watson’s *The History and Antiquities of the Parish of Halifax*. He was a self-taught naturalist and painter who recorded his observations in exquisite watercolours which caught the attention of lavish patron of science, the Duchess of Portland. His first book about ferns, which grew prolifically in the Calder valley, including the rare Killarney fern, was a huge success, feeding into a mania for collecting ferns which threatened to strip the countryside, and leading to the condemnation of the ‘reckless uprooters of rareties’. His second book, sponsored by the Earl of Gainsborough, drew on the diversity of fungi in the valley, which provided a natural botanic garden. Bolton’s observations led to 73 new species being named after him. Given the longevity of fungi, the same ‘woolly foot’ he discovered near Northowram is still growing in Shibden Park today.

For his final book he returned to his first love, birds, and we can see something of his methods in a letter to a friend in Illingworth,

listing the specimens he needed (shot) and offering to pay local boys to collect eggs and nests. He died in Warley, but there is no memorial to the once famous man anywhere in Calderdale.

Another local naturalist, Samuel Gibson (1790 – 1849), lived at the Royal Oak in Mytholmroyd and decided to follow his passion for nature by setting up a natural history museum there. He contributed to Baines' *Flora of Yorkshire* and to leading journals such as *The Phytologist*. Convinced he had discovered a new genus of hawkweed, and of a species of carex grass, he fought a fierce battle in print with other experts, until suggestions of scurrilous behaviour led the journal to silence him. Soon after this he closed his museum and took his own life. His belief in his own observations was posthumously justified when in 2018 his hawkweed was confirmed as a new distinct species and named *S Gibson* in recognition.

The story of John Nowell (1802 – 1867) is a happier one. He was a Todmorden textile worker, who was fascinated by the diversity of mosses in the Calder valley – 250 different species. He had microscopic vision which enabled him to pick out details and identify species without the aid of a magnifier. He stayed in Todmorden and was something of a local hero with his expertise on mosses.

Fungi was a subject which fascinated James Needham (1849 – 1913) and his studies put Hebden Bridge on the map in the world of mycology, when he submitted his findings to *The Naturalist*. One of his discoveries was a liverwort special to the Calder valley.

Some of the collections of James Bolton are held at Kew, and 5000 of James Needham's meticulous recording cards are in the Birchcliffe archive. Samuel Gibson's collection was thought to have been lost when an over enthusiastic clear-out was undertaken at Todmorden Library, but recently local researcher

Heather Morris discovered that thousands of his collected species and notes are held by the Manchester Museum.

When it comes to the legacies of these local naturalists, there is clearly a need for more widespread knowledge and recognition of their achievements. Richard Rainbow is determined to rectify this and has resurrected the Hebden Bridge Natural History Society for 21st century enthusiasts. There is already an impressive website and details of activities, search www.hebnat.org.uk.

11 January 2023

**A VICTORIAN ARTIST PAINTS THE CALDER VALLEY
Discovering the paintings of John Holland**

Diana Monahan and Justine Wyatt

John Holland was not a prominent artist and very little has been written about him, but he was prolific and successful, not least during the time he spent painting the landscapes of the Calder valley in the 1860s. Justine Wyatt and her fellow researcher Diana Monahan have been drawn to discover more about the artist and his career since they first looked closely at his painting of Hebden Bridge from the viewpoint of Palace House Road, which captured the town at a time of rapid expansion. Following a trail of local newspaper reports, sale catalogues and searching out some of the paintings held in regional collections, they have begun to fill in the gaps in his story.

John Holland was born in Nottingham, into a family of painters and picture framers, and he learnt his craft by copying pictures in his father's workshop. From the beginning he felt the need to 'go to nature' – to paint in the open air – something made easier by the invention of metal paint tubes. The need to establish

himself as an artist meant he gravitated to London, and exhibited paintings in the Royal Academy and the British Institution. In 1867 he was 'induced' to travel to the Calder valley – perhaps by contacts such as the Fieldens, and the possibility of local patrons; certainly by the romantic landscapes which also carried the marks of an increasingly prosperous area.

Holland worked quickly (his paintings were dismissed as 'mere daubs' by one critic) and often depicted himself at his easel as a small figure in the landscape. His local patrons must have been delighted to see their town represented in such colour and magnificence, and proud of the signs of progress Holland captured – from the newly installed telegraph poles near Brearley to the gleaming new Dobroyd Castle and Unitarian Church in Todmorden. Holland was not alone in being attracted to the Calder valley's scenery – the archives reveal tourist brochures praising the beauty of the place. He was able to tap into this popularity, holding exhibitions and sales of his paintings. Despite a charge of 6d to enter the sale at the White Horse Hotel in Hebden Bridge, on one day 500 visitors were recorded. His paintings were purchased in bulk by eminent local families – the Fieldens, Greenwoods, Sutcliffes and Shackletons, for example.

A report in the Hebden Bridge press – claiming Holland as 'our painter ... now a household name' – shows he was also getting commissions. A view of Ewood Hall was probably commissioned by the owner. Almost certainly a view of Cragg Valley from Ewood Hall was such a commission. Inspection with a magnifying glass revealed that a pair of sheep in the foreground bore the brand TR – an acknowledgment of his patron Thomas Riley, owner of the property.

Holland's paintings are not confined to the Calder valley – a search of websites such as www.artuk.org reveals paintings of

various places in Yorkshire and further afield. He returned to London, then moved on to Cornwall adding romantic castles and sea scenes to his work. He also travelled to Italy, and probably to Norway. The Nottingham Gazette recorded that he was so popular that he struggled to complete his commissioned work, and stopped exhibiting in public, reducing his chances of being elected to the Royal Academy.

Holland's paintings of the Calder valley are full of colour and detail, often peopled and with animals in the fields. The stone of the newly-built halls and factories glows, and the smoke from the chimneys does not cast a pall over the scene. The waterfalls sparkle in the dramatic cloughs and people fish in the streams. The research shows that there was little artistic licence – the scenes are topographically accurate, and the tiny details fill them with life. Through the power of the computer, we were able to take two delightful virtual journeys – the first by train to long-closed stations which Holland would have used to access his viewpoints in the valley. The second follows the path in Holland's scene of Brearley from Lower Ewood. The landscape is lovely, but it is the detail that makes it such a treasure for anyone trying to imagine life in the valley at the end of the nineteenth century. We can follow paths that still exist, passing through a gap in the wall, and sharing the space with picnickers and locals. The road is lined with new telegraph poles, the cottages, halls, farms, inns, mills and chapels are recognisable in the detail of the painting. On the canal there is a horse-drawn boat, and the tents are visible in a field.

Holland's obituary in the Hebden Bridge newspaper referenced how he led his life with many friends 'entwined around him' who 'enjoyed pleasant and agreeable hours'. The signs of humanity in his paintings seem to confirm this.

25 January 2023

**SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY YEOMAN FARMHOUSES AND OAK
FURNITURE OF THE UPPER CALDER VALLEY**

Peter Thornborrow

Peter Thornborrow, with a lifetime of experience in vernacular buildings and collecting antique furniture, explained how his love for the West Yorkshire buildings of the 17th century shaped his life and career. The interest in oak furniture came first, but he soon had the dream of getting a house where it could be at home. Akroyd House, a semi-derelict building on the edge of the moors above Hebden Bridge, filled that purpose. Peter set about its restoration and he recounted how features of the building's earlier history were revealed as the work progressed. Opening up windows, removing plaster and unblocking doorways led to the conclusion that this had at one time been a single-storey timber-framed house. The work was all consuming, and Peter recalled the trials and tribulations of restoration, including a few falls and some uncomfortable work in a saw pit. By 1975 the work had progressed to the point where it won an award for the best house restoration in the north-west of England.

The initial spark of interest also led Peter in new directions. As he became more immersed in local history and the vernacular buildings of West Yorkshire he was appointed as an architectural historian in Calderdale, undertaking a survey of listed buildings and eventually becoming an inspector of historic buildings.

Peter's slides illustrated not just the work in progress, but also features typical of 17th century yeoman houses such as the mullioned windows, ornate drip moulds and the practical layout of the rooms branching off from a cross-passage. He was also fortunate to find probate records from 1701 which included an inventory for the property. This provided a model for the

refurnishing of each room as it would have been at the end of the 17th century. Furniture has a story to tell about how lives were lived and homes organised. Four-poster beds were commonly found on the ground floor in the best parlour, and often accompanied by a 'truckle' bed, which wheeled underneath the big bed and could be pulled out for a servant to sleep on. A slope topped desk was a more or less portable piece of furniture, as were the bible boxes and some of the chests. Arks held the families supply of oatmeal. There was almost always a long-settle near the fire, and a long table where the whole household could gather to eat, seated on forms and stools. Peter was always keen to buy furniture of local provenance, and the auction sale papers he has kept showed his hopeful notes – some successes, but also ones that got away when the price went too high.

8 February 2023

**SCANDAL! LOCAL CASES BEFORE THE
BAWDY COURTS 1516 -1848**

Anne Mealia

It's not often that a talk to Hebden Bridge Local History Society starts (tongue in cheek) with a warning about scenes of a sexual nature, but Anne Mealia, genealogist and researcher, was about to open up some of the cases brought before the York ecclesiastical courts. These records, kept at the Borthwick Institute at the University of York, have been digitised and can be searched online. (Look for York Cause Papers.) The so-called 'bawdy' courts dealt with offences against canon law, separate from the civil law system. This included offences against the Church and spiritual and moral misbehaviour.

Complaints to the court could have dire consequences, the most extreme being excommunication, which cut off the offender from many roles and rights. The disapprobation of the community

was probably the strongest deterrent. Offenders could be humiliated by being made to stand in church for three Sundays, barefooted and dressed in a white shift, confessing to their misdeeds.

Drinking often featured in the complaints about unsuitable behaviour: George Bannister was a parish clerk (a cleric) accused of 'loose life and conversation' as he also ran an alehouse, and was suspected of using the communion cup and church flagons to serve his customers. Bannister won this case, but later he was accused again, with the added charge of having fathered 'bastard children'. The motivations of the accuser were a little suspect as the two men were involved in a property dispute.

A large number of the cases involved pews. Getting and defending a prominent pew in Heptonstall Chapel was clearly an important show of your place in the community. Families built or extended their pews, with incursions into what was claimed as someone else's space. Pew disputes could also lead to violence, as in the case of one woman aiming punches at another who was kneeling piously to pray.

Accusations of sexual misconduct were most damaging and could be the hardest to contest. Unless there was a child born, witnesses' statements were often just gossip. Sometimes a very sad story emerges, such as the case of Ann Beane who left her marriage to Henry Clayton to live a life of 'loose and scandalous behaviour' at an alehouse. Her defence was that she was thrown out by her husband, but witnesses testified to having seen her in bed with men or heard gossip about her. Divorce wasn't a possibility, but 'separation from bed and board' was imposed, ruling out any re-marriage.

The cause papers provide a window into the daily lives of people who lived in this valley more than 300 years ago and whose

concerns are often unrecorded. Anne showed us that this is a very rich resource.

22 February 2023

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

Peter Robinson is a founder member of the Calderdale Industrial Museum Association, there right from the start in the fight to safeguard the industrial heritage of Halifax. He told his personal story of the museum, covering some of the early history of the building and the area of Square Road where it stands, as well as the ups and downs of the Industrial Museum itself through the mid and late twentieth century.

Drawing on a variety of documents including plans and maps, Peter described the growth of this up-and-coming area of Halifax in the 18th and 19th centuries. From a terrace of houses in the centre of town, set in a square and using fashionable red brick, the development of the area soon included Square Chapel, the Piece Hall and in 1857 the fine Gothic-style Square Church. Two stylish wool warehouses which now house the museum were built, and by the end of the 19th century this was something of an industrial hub, with a telegraph company and manufacturers of machine tools, underclothes and boots.

During the period from the 1950s to 1980s, John Magson, a far-sighted leader of the Calderdale museum service was already saving the machinery of an industrial past. In 1981 Calderdale Council, purchased the Albion Works to house the collection. There must have been a sense of excitement when the museum had its grand opening in 1985, and even won an award as the best Industrial Museum. However, as with many council services, by the end of the century cutbacks in funding meant

that the museum closed its doors to the public, most of its collection was in storage and the building deteriorated.

In 2011 a search for people interested in rescuing the museum and opening up the window into the industrial heritage of Halifax led to the formation of the Calderdale Industrial Museum Association (CIMA). Keen volunteers set about searching for grants, offering hard graft, preserving technical skills and gaining the expertise to restore the museum. Gradually displays began to take shape again, and from 2012 occasional Open Days attracted many visitors, as well as raising funds. At times it seemed as if the building could not be secured – safety concerns about the long north wall required an infeasible £2.5 million to rectify. Finally, different advice meant that the work could be completed for £200,000, less than the cost of demolition.

Gradually the museum, with its team of expert and undaunted volunteers, made the place ready for visitors and the grand opening took place in September 2017. With a new reception area, shop and popular café, the museum is now an inviting place. Each Saturday, and Thursdays in school holidays, machines large and small hum again, and the specialisms of Halifax, from early textiles to complex weaving and a vast range of engineering processes are demonstrated to eager visitors. No wonder that they won the prestigious Queen's Award for Voluntary Service in 2021.

8 March 2023

TRADITIONAL FOOD IN CALDERDALE

Peter Brears

It was a night for seeking comfort, as we gathered to hear Peter Brears talk about the traditional food of Calderdale. He is a leading food historian, with a lifetime's experience of methods of food preparation, and the social context of food. The landscape of the Calder valley was part of the story: the upland farms with their supply of fresh spring water and access to peat as fuel were the original settlements. Cows were pastured on the hillsides providing skimmed milk for the family and butter to be sold commercially. Families might keep a pig to be fed on scraps, often with neighbours contributing to the swill and rewarded with a share in the meat.

But the staple food was oats – a crop that could be successfully grown on upland farms. If you are eating oats twice a day, six days a week, you might be keen to find different ways of consuming them. Porridge for breakfast, made more palatable with skimmed milk; for dinner the oatmeal might be combined with a bit of bacon; for tea there would be oatcakes and dripping and for supper more porridge. Treacle was another ingredient that must have been a welcome addition.

One of the great pleasures of Peter's talk was to see his drawings of the traditional utensils for preparing and cooking food. So we could see the large meal arks where oatmeal would be stored, trodden down to keep out the air. Porridge had its own equipment with unfamiliar names – the 'posnet' with its long handle, placed on the peats burning on the hearth and in which the oatmeal and water were stirred. 'Spittles' flicked the batter onto the hot 'bakestone' and the oatcakes were hung to dry on 'flakes' suspended from the ceiling.

Industrialisation meant a move to towns in the valleys and as many women and girls went to work in the mills some of the time-consuming cooking techniques disappeared. Coal replaced peat, and ranges allowed new ways of cooking, with roast meat, pies and stews part of the working family's diet. White bread was now an everyday staple, and specialist bakers sold gingerbread and cakes. Other time-saving innovations were the fish and chip shops, and the hot peas sold from carts. The harsh days of near famine in the 1860s were left behind and new memories formed, of Sunday roasts and Yorkshire puddings, left-over meat recycled through the week, and tables loaded for tea with hams, pastries, cakes and jelly.

Peter may not have traditional equipment to hand, but he had brought a variety of homemade oatcakes to sample at the tea break – including some delicious parkin. They were good – but maybe not 6 days a week!

22 March 2023

THE 1922 GENERAL ELECTION

Alan Fowler

AND THE CALDER VALLEY

The challenge of Labour

Alan Fowler's comprehensive knowledge of the Labour movement in the Calder Valley make him a great teller of history. The years following the First World War were times of great social change, and the General Election of 1922 took place amid national and international turmoil.

By 1922 the post-war boom had turned to depression, and dreams of 'homes fit for heroes' had faded with lack of funding. For the cotton industry of Lancashire and the Calder valley, times were particularly hard. The restoration of the gold standard left the pound over-valued, making exports more

expensive, and the main market, India, had imposed a high tariff on imported cotton cloth.

Both Liberals and Conservatives were split as the General Election campaign started. This seemed to offer opportunities for the Labour party. In the Sowerby constituency, which covered the upper Calder valley (Todmorden, Hebden Bridge and Sowerby), 1918 had seen the surprise defeat of the Liberal MP J.S. Higham, by the Independent Soldiers' Candidate Major Robert Hewitt Barker. In 1922 both Barker and Higham stood down, and the Labour candidate, J.W. Ogden seemed to have a chance of taking the seat.

Ogden was a self-taught man, a weaver who had started work at the age of 8 and was president of the Amalgamated Weavers Association. His rivals were Arnold Williams, a classic Liberal, supporting Free Trade, and with a good understanding of the international economic situation. There was a second 'Lloyd George' Liberal candidate, Frank Roebuck. Finally, Algernon Simpson-Hinchliffe, the Conservative who had been forced to withdraw in 1918. He lived in Cragg Hall, and was popular in the constituency, an active member of local societies and a local character, with the 'finest pigeon lofts in the country'.

Labour's chief economic policy was to impose a levy on capital to pay off the catastrophic war debt. They were also committed to Free Trade, which would benefit the cotton industry. Williams took an international view, seeing that the problems of the world economy could not be solved at home. Hinchliffe played on his local links, with little reference to the cotton industry which dominated the area. Ogden had to fight the idea that Labour equalled Bolshevism, and that Labour were not fit to govern. Meanwhile, when his renowned pigeon loft was invaded and the prize pigeons killed, Hinchliffe claimed that the villain was a

Socialist cat ... playing on the idea that Labour presented a lawless threat.

When Ogden waited for the results on the day after the election, in neighbouring Oldham, Rochdale and Elland, the Labour party had already succeeded. But the Calder valley was a different place. The local element trumped economic policies, with Hinchliffe winning the seat with just 39% and Labour and Liberals splitting the rest of the vote. It was not until 1929 that a Labour MP was elected in the constituency.



Algernon Simpson-Hinchliffe - MP for a year

Family History Group

DON'T THROW THOSE ARCHIVES AWAY!

In 2000 my husband and I had to clear out the house of an elderly relative, an unmarried spinster, and came across quite a lot of paperwork; in-fact I don't think she had thrown anything away ... ever! Mary was born and brought up in Hebden Bridge and had been a nurse all her working life, culminating in a period as deputy matron in a large London hospital before taking on the task of being in charge of an old people's home. She then retired to the West Country and drove her Mini at breakneck speeds to and from her various bridge games. She was renowned in HB as being the first woman in the 30s to own her own sports car!

All the photographs and paperwork came home with us and, after a cursory glance through, much was put on one side to be sorted at a later date. That moment came during lockdown when I felt the time had come to see what I could discover. The paperwork could be divided into different categories: household accounts and legal documents, letters, work-related documents, and an intriguing envelope which contained notes about family history.

The household accounts and legal documents had been dealt with straight away as part of probate. It was quite a complicated will! Now was the time to wade through the rest of the items. The letters proved interesting and fell into two categories, family and friends, and quite a few from men friends. Mary had obviously been popular and enjoyed her single status to the full. There were many wartime telegrams and letters from 'Will', also a Hebden Bridge lad but, despite those wartime assignations, it seems that they never got together. However, these did highlight their war time service and where they were both based. There were also several papers relating to Mary's early nursing experience with the St John's Ambulance Brigade in Hebden

Bridge, before going on to nursing training in Sheffield. I thought these might be of interest for our own archive. Little did I realise how useful they would be.

Last September, Pennine Heritage and Huddersfield University were able to offer a fellowship for a student to work with our archives. It just so happened that our fellow, Kelly Swaby, was interested in basing her line of study on nursing. When she discovered that Mary's archive was available, she felt she could use it as a foundation for her project and concentrate her research on nursing during the Second World War. The outcome of this fellowship was the production of study boxes to be used by primary schools to encourage the use of local archives. The boxes contained cards which guided the line of study together with artefacts and photographs. We are really pleased that Kelly's project is to be presented this spring at a Royal Historical Society event about collaborations between archives and academic historians, and they're particularly interested in how smaller archives are using these collaborations for public engagement. Kelly is booked to talk to the History Society about the project next season.

Now to the intriguing envelope which was of much more interest to me as a family historian. This was a series of papers which had been collected by Mary's mother, Ethel, in 1933, in fact just one year before she died. It became obvious that Ethel had been to visit a relation, John Denison, who had supplied her with family information. The file also contained two newspaper articles from 1907 and 1910 which also concerned this family. She had copied out several letters and documents that related to a branch of her family and their move to Yorkshire as well as making notes from her conversation with John.

She had been born Ethel Saltonstall, this name being prevalent in the Sowerby area and deriving from an area on the Luddenden

hillside. (Sir Richard Saltonstall, born in Halifax was an English politician, merchant, and Lord Mayor of London in 1597). The articles showed the relationship between the Saltonstall family and a family called Garnet, the three brothers of which had come from Westmorland at the beginning of the 18th century. This was a family of some standing in Westmorland but with branches in other areas of the country and with tenable links to a family with manorial standing.

One of the letters Ethel had copied was from a W.G. Taunton whose grandfather had been Rev. William Garnett, rector of St. Michael's Church in Barbados at the end of the 18th century. (This was interesting in itself and took me on quite a deviation as he was of course there at the height of slavery). However, this is what he wrote.

"The Rev. Wm. Garnett, Rector of Barbados, was my maternal grandfather. He bore arms - azure, three griffin's heads, erased, or - quartering, grey. My father was the Vicar of Kingswood. The name of Garnett was originally De Hesham. They were Lords of Heysham in Lancashire and from this they derived their name. They also possessed Catton in the same county. They however held one of their principal estates by the serjeantry of cornage; that is to say they held their fief on condition that they met the King whenever he visited Lancashire on the borders of the county and blew a horn (Cornet). Hence, they took the name of Cornet which subsequently became corrupted into Garnet. This latter has been variously spelt; Garnet, Garnett, Gurnett, Gurnut, Grenet, all having the same arms."

As a family historian we often ignore the importance of oral history and family tales so I was intrigued to find this reference. This passage was to lead to several different avenues of research. The first was what was 'serjeantry of cornage'? This term arrived with the Normans and, under feudalism in France and England during the Middle Ages, tenure by **serjeanty** was a form of land

tenure in return for a specified duty other than standard knight-service and, as the letter states above, this family was responsible for blowing the cornet. There were many other tasks undertaken under these terms several of which seem fairly trivial, the serjeanty of holding the king's head when he made a rough passage across the Channel, of pulling a rope when his vessel landed, of counting his chessmen on Christmas Day and many others might be the ceremonial or menial services due in return for having tenure of lands. Such tenures could be either freehold, signifying that they were hereditary or perpetual, or non-free where the tenancy terminated on the tenant's death or at an earlier specified period.

This family had obviously been very important within their own neighbourhood and I did find several references and websites online, but my next question was why did these three brothers move away from Westmorland to a fairly wild area of Yorkshire. The late 1600s were a time of unrest and divided loyalties.

One of the sons, Daniel, became the landlord of the King's Head Inn in Sowerby. It was just opposite the Church and Sowerby Old Hall. His son, John, went to Carlisle, was married there and kept an inn and livery stables. The building was demolished, probably in the 1930s.

From the notes we read '*John Denison remembered that on Monday 28th June 1875, Miss Sutcliffe of the King's Head showed me the arms of the family which was behind the bar. She had been brought up by the family who had told her that a copy of the arms had been brought from Westmorland between two beds, John Garnet losing his property and having to leave the district. He probably had to leave after 1745 for siding with the Pretender ['Bonnie Prince Charlie'] and fearing the consequences. The gaols were full of the Pretender's adherents at that time and many were executed. The sign for the inn being intended for the head of the de facto George 2nd.*'

I then tackled the actual family history of the three brothers, much of it from the notes, and followed it through to the time of Ethel. The families and their antecedents often had quite prominent roles within the Calder Valley. One of the newspaper articles recounts the lives of two of the granddaughters of Daniel Garnet of the King's Head Inn, Suzy and Sally. Sally married William Saltonstall, hence the connection, but Suzy became renowned as being a character and the oldest resident in Sowerby when she died in 1855 aged 95 years.



The message of this report is to celebrate the importance of our own records. In our archive at Birchcliffe we have many different

types of materials from old wills and deeds to transactions of groups and societies, business records and local letters and correspondence and much else. All may have a use to researchers; all help to provide an overview of the local community at any given time in history. Current records are the history of the future. *So please don't throw your archives away ... someone might need them some day.*

If you have anything that you think might be of interest, including records of any local societies or groups, please contact the archivist at archivist@hebdenbridgehistory.org.uk.

Barbara Atack

Folklore Section

The Centre for Folklore Myth and Magic in Todmorden (next to the Hippodrome) is going from strength to strength. It has now taken over the front of the building and continues to host speakers and events every Saturday, as well as exhibitions, a shop selling books and gifts of folkloric flavour and a cafe serving light refreshments. The proprietor, Holly Elsdon, finds presenters and topics addressing folkloric themes of wider social and geographical relevance, while some, like Garry Stringfellow on rush-bearing and John Billingsley on local and protective customs, demonstrate the important role folklore, tradition and custom play in local history. A recent project has been 'Lucky Tod', working with educational visits from schools to how children acquire and hold luck customs. Over the summer we are hoping to expand the brief into film showings, a Folklore Cafe discussion group, and music events.

Folklore is a vital strand in local history and tells us much about the lifeways and attitudes of our predecessors, providing an insight into their real-life situations and the way they changed through shifts in politics, religion and culture. The Folklore

Section has been working closely with the Centre and recommends anyone with an interest in local history to look into an area often previously dismissed by some historians as minutiae; but the small beer of life is a tasty brew!

The Centre and its library is the largest folklore study venue in the North of England. The reading room recently received a valuable bequest of several hundred books from the executors of Kai Roberts (a one-time speaker at our society), who sadly passed away last year at the all too young age of 40. Membership of the Centre is just £5 p.a. and along with sales, donations and tickets goes to support this valuable local community resource. Keep up with their events schedule on Facebook or Twitter if you do such things, watch out for posters if not, or see the website www.folkloremythmagic.com

John Billingsley

Prehistory Section

There hasn't been much outside activity recently, although some field-walking has taken place. Although the Environment Agency vowed to improve the minimal Lidar coverage of Calderdale and the flights have taken place, the results have not been made public yet. This would really improve our understanding of areas like Midgley Moor and Norland Moor amongst others.

David Shepherd

Archive and Family History

Opening Times 2023

Birchcliffe Centre, Hebden Bridge

The archive will normally be open every Wednesday and Thursday afternoon from 2-5 pm. However, this is subject to volunteer availability; you should check our website for any changes:

www.hebdenbridgehistory.org.uk/pages/visit-the-archive

Numbers at each session are limited and **pre-booking is required** by emailing:

archivist@hebdenbridgehistory.org.uk

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 website at:

www.hebdenbridgehistory.org.uk/catalogues/hblhs-archive-catalogue

We try to answer research enquiries from people who are unable to visit. Enquiries can be submitted via our website for a small fee:

www.hebdenbridgehistory.org.uk/pages/research-service

Family History

Meetings are usually held on Thursday afternoons between 2pm and 5pm at the Birchcliffe centre. Numbers at each session are limited and **pre-booking is essential** to ensure that there is a volunteer available to help with your enquiry. If you are not able to visit on a Thursday please let us know and we may be able to arrange a visit on another day.

Book by email to: familyhistory@hebdenbridgehistory.org.uk