

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

Autumn 2024



Mystery Message

**Published by the Hebden Bridge
Local History Society
The Birchcliffe Centre
Birchcliffe Road
Hebden Bridge HX7 8DG**

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Cover: They contained fragments of a mysterious message – page 23

Welcome to the Autumn Newsletter. Thank you to everyone who has contributed. Here you'll find details of the Society's activities for 2024 - 2025. If you'd like to share your research or pose a query on something historic for the Spring 2025 issue, please send it to the Secretary.

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You can receive the Autumn newsletter by email or post. If you wish to change the way you receive it, or if any of your contact details have changed, please let us know at hblhs.membership@gmail.com

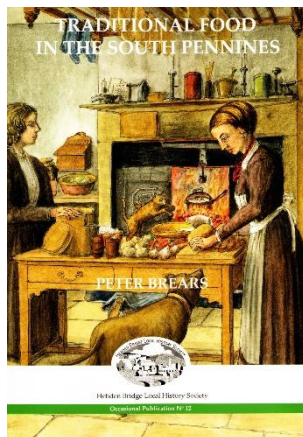
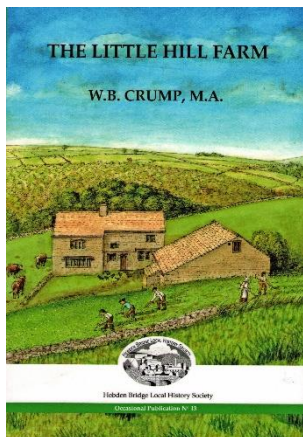
Membership Renewal Reminder

See back page for details

Local History Society Publications

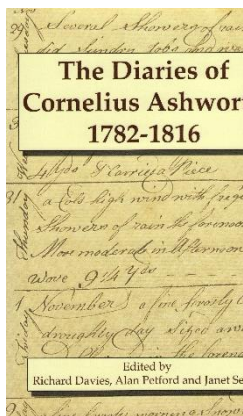
The society has an excellent record of researching and publishing on the local history of the upper Calder valley.

Recent titles

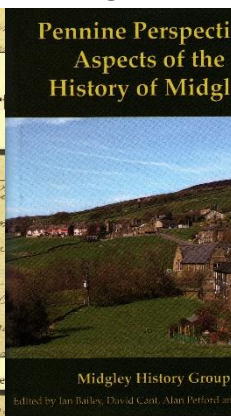


£11.99

Bargain basement



£5



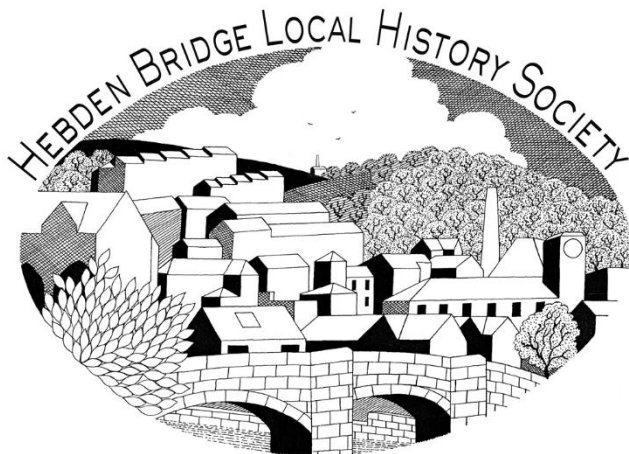
£5



£10

Order on www.hebdenbridgehistory.org.uk

Annual General Meeting 2024



The next AGM of the charity will be held on

Wednesday 13th November 2024

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 appoint trustees.

Three trustees are due to retire this year (but are entitled to seek re-election), and a further two places are vacant. Any member who is interested in becoming a trustee may stand for election at the AGM. We're happy to talk to you about this informally. For more information about what is involved in being a trustee, in the first instance please contact the Secretary (Barbara Hall) by email:

secretary@hebdonbridgehistory.org.uk

The AGM is a good opportunity to ask questions about the charity's activities and share ideas for the future. We'll look forward to seeing you there.

Trustees' report of the year's achievements

We currently have 188 members which is slightly down on last year but still considerably higher than before Covid.

The Society held only eleven talks this year as one speaker was unable to give their talk following an accident. The dates of two talks had to be changed because of building work at the Methodist Church. As usual the talks covered a wide range of historical topics. Eight of the talks were given by members of the Society which is testament to the breadth of knowledge amongst the membership. The talks were again recorded and made available to members after the event and a report of each talk was published in The Hebden Bridge Times, in the Society newsletter and on the website. Despite the problems with heating at the church the lectures were well-attended with an average of 45 members and visitors on the night and 35 members who watched the recordings.

The Society's archive at the Birchcliffe Centre continued to be open to members and visitors on two afternoons each week. Archive staff were on hand to help with general research as well as family history. In addition, archive staff answered queries by email from both members and non-members.

South Pennine Archives, a partnership between the Society and Pennine Heritage (who own the Pennine Horizons Digital Archive), is applying to the National Lottery Heritage Fund for a grant for a new website of images and documents together with an enhanced reception and display area at the Birchcliffe Centre. The new website will

be modern and easier to manage and search. It will also allow the Society to digitise and make available documents from the collection. The improved reception and display area will be more welcoming to visitors and give us the opportunity to showcase documents and artefacts. We hope this will develop into the first museum in Hebden Bridge.

We were delighted to publish a revised edition of *The Little Hill Farm* by W.B. Crump, first published in 1951. The book was greatly enhanced by the new illustrations drawn by Peter Brears. The review in the *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal* said it all “Hebden Bridge Local History Society has produced another excellent publication, a collaborative and imaginative tribute to the efforts of an important regional historian. Crump rescued much for posterity; the Hebden Bridge group has returned the compliment.”

We now have 18 books still in print. Most of our sales (268 so far this year) are through book shops; in Hebden Bridge at The Book Case, Innovation and the Public Library (Town Trail only) and in Halifax at The Book Corner and the Industrial Museum. We sold 79 books through our website and 83 at meetings and events.

The trustees have worked together successfully this year following the decision to “rotate” the chair at meetings. Trustees have responsibility for different areas but come together to support each other as required. We have been assisted by several members who have helped in the archive (Jim Botten, John Crampton, Diana Monahan) and with answering queries (Diana Monahan, Keith Stansfield).

Secretary: Barbara Hall; Treasurer/Membership: Rachel Smith

Archive Report

The Society's archive works in partnership with Pennine Horizons Digital Archive (PHDA) under the name of South Pennine Archives. One of the key aims of the partnership is to create a joint website that includes documents as well as images. The PHDA website is now rather outdated in both its look and feel as well as its functionality. There are also issues around the processes for uploading content. Pennine Heritage is now committed to developing a new website and it has been agreed that this will be under the name of South Pennine Archives. The Society is contributing to the cost of this development but funding is also being applied for to the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

If this grant application is successful it will also fund the acquisition of a book scanner to allow us to digitise documents quickly and without damage to the item being scanned. While the Society's archive does hold some documents in digital form, there are many older documents that it would be useful to make available digitally. However, copyright and data protection legislation means that documents need to be at least 100 years old to be able to be placed on a website.

The grant would also allow the entrance areas of the Birchcliffe Centre to be refurbished with display cases to showcase the images, documents and artefacts held by both archives. We expect to know the result of the grant application by October.

Nigel Smith
Archivist

Skills still needed!

Have you got an interest in the local history of the area, an eye for detail or technical skills that could further the reach of the Society?

If you (or someone you know) can offer some time, we are looking for people to help with tasks such as keeping our website up to date, handling the technical side of our lectures, helping in the archive, or managing marketing and sales for our prestigious series of publications.

Whether by way of a regular time slot or a particular task, this is an opportunity to make a real difference in the way we celebrate our heritage.

Send a few lines about yourself and your background to secretary@hebdenbridgehistory.org.uk and we can have an informal chat about the options.

South Pennine History Group

The Society is a member of the South Pennine History Group, together with Saddleworth and Marsden History Groups. The group meets to exchange news and discuss matters of common interest. The group established a fund to encourage research and other activities in the history of the South Pennines. Grant applications continue to be invited.

Lecture Programme 2024 – 2025

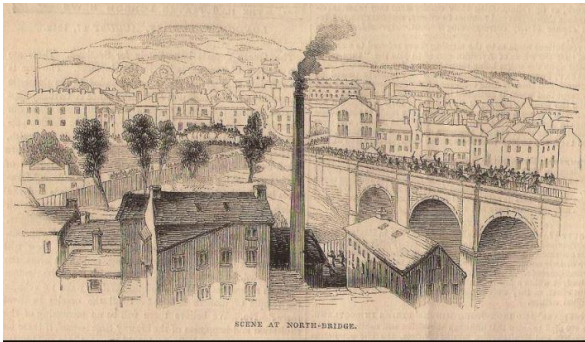
Meetings will be held on Wednesdays at Hebden Bridge Methodist Church, at 7.30 pm.

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

25 September 2024

David Glover

AUGUST 1842 – THE PEOPLE VERSUS THE ESTABLISHMENT



In August 1842, people power brought the mills of Halifax to a total standstill - this was 'The Great Strike.'

How and why did this extraordinary situation arise? What did the plug-drawing involve, and what was the input of local Chartists? Soldiers were attacked at Salterhebble, innocent citizens were assaulted by troopers, some being killed. David attempts to explain the confusion...

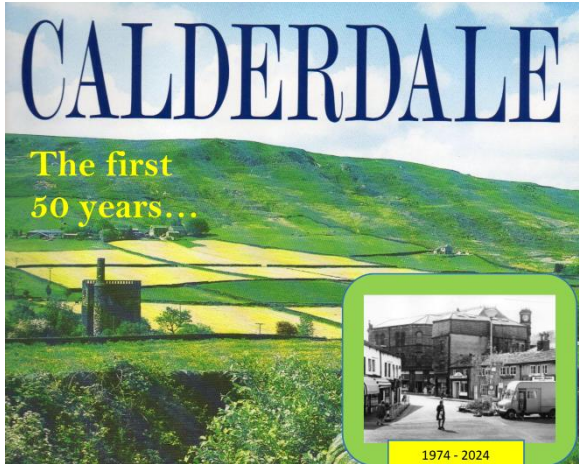
David Glover is a well-established interpreter of Halifax's past, with articles published in the *Halifax Courier* and his popular illustrated lectures. David currently holds the presidency of Halifax Antiquarian Society; he is also vice-chair of Halifax Civic Trust, and chair of The Friends of Lister Lane Cemetery. He is a guide for Calderdale Heritage Walks, as well as at Dean Clough Mills and Halifax Minster.

9 October 2024

Michael Peel

FIFTY YEARS OF LOCAL DEMOCRACY IN CALDERDALE

**An awkward birth, a tough upbringing and
a place well-worth celebrating**



These days, Calderdale is a household word - part of the fabric of local life - but when the borough was created 50 years ago no one knew exactly what it meant.

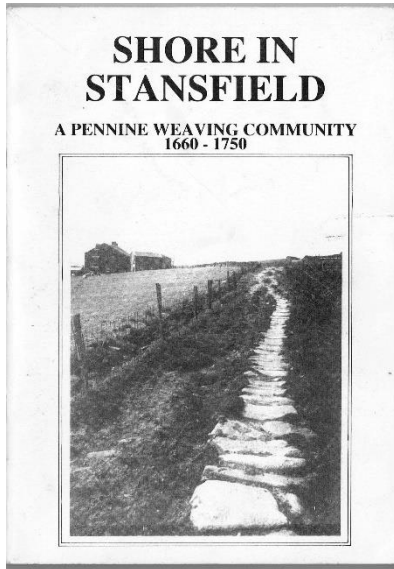
Boundaries were redrawn, traditional attitudes, alliances and democratic certainties were overturned, and the old way of doing things was swept aside by new realities.

Journalist Michael Peel has monitored the people, the council, its characters and Calderdale's colourful past ever since the day the borough was formed. He will highlight some of the many challenges, major events and changes for better or worse which have come to pass since its inception, when the principal watchwords were scepticism and confusion.

An exhibition is planned to celebrate 50 years of Calderdale as part of the Hebden Bridge Town Hall exhibition programme later in 2024 or Spring 2025.

THE DUAL ECONOMY OF TEXTILES AND AGRICULTURE

A case study of the 'yeoman clothier' of the upper Calder valley in the late 17th century.



Hartley Royd is a fine seventeenth-century stone house, the home of John Fielden, a devout Quaker. He died in 1697 and his probate inventory can tell us much about how he lived and the use of the rooms. His eldest son John enlarged the house, but the financial pressures of providing for his brothers and sisters, as per his father's will, sharing his inheritance equally, led ultimately to his financial ruin and his creditors took him to court in 1750. We unravel the complicated architectural development of the building aided by the documentary evidence.

Well known for his detailed talks about significant buildings in West Yorkshire. Peter draws on his experience as Calderdale's Architectural Historian, and Inspector of Historic Buildings, surveying most of West Yorkshire for listed buildings. He spent many years as Historic Buildings officer in West Yorkshire.



Uncovering the story of a terrace of weavers' cottages at Edge Hey Green, Colden

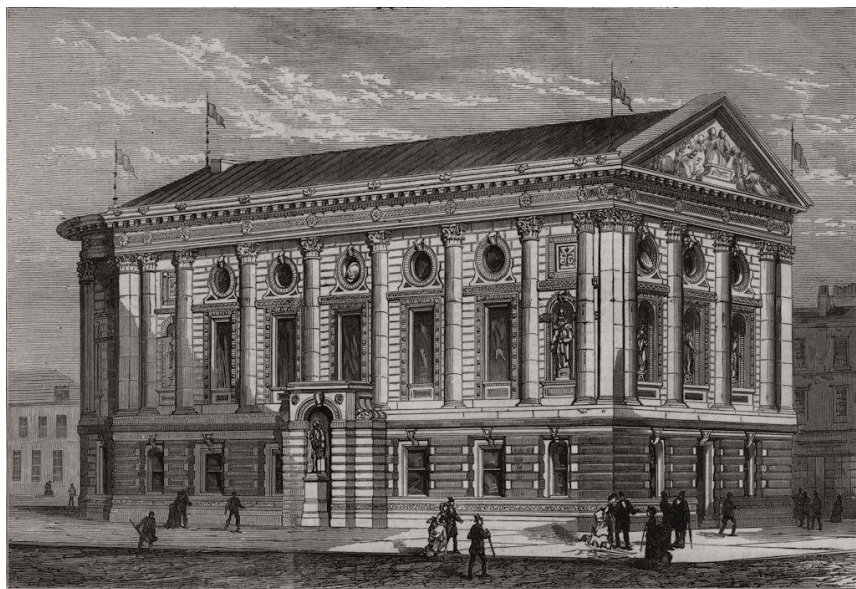
New and old residents at Edge Hey Green had questions about the history of their terrace and so they formed a group to look at deeds, censuses, newspapers and more.

Sheila's path to an interest in local history is very similar to Barbara's: it was largely sparked by Alan Petford. He was a tutor on a WEA and Leeds University diploma course, and one of the assignments was to explore census information – the resulting analysis of Edge Hey Green in Colden was at the heart of this project many years later.

27 November 2024

Margareta Holmstedt

TODMORDEN TOWN HALL - 150 YEARS OLD



From market hall, ball room and magistrates court to town hall, this talk tells the story of Todmorden Town Hall. We look at the brothers and uncle who paid for it, and where their money came from, as well as touching on life in nineteenth-century Todmorden. The building itself is the star with its beautiful architecture and Victorian engineering.

Margareta moved to Todmorden in 1970 and was elected to the new Todmorden town council in 1976, serving on and off over the following 35 years. As a member of the Town Hall Friends and a volunteer guide, she is well-placed to take us on a virtual tour of the building and its history.

11 December 2024

**A TALE OF TWO CARNIVALS:
Films from the Yorkshire Film Archive**

Diana Monahan

How did these two films from a hundred years ago survive? Why were the carnivals organised and filmed? Where did the events in Hebden Bridge take place? Diana Monahan presents her analysis and some answers to these questions. These films are available to view on the Yorkshire Film Archive website, but some extracts will be shown, by permission of YFA, during the talk.



Diana has been involved with Hebden Bridge Local History Society since about 1993 and, although no longer a committee member, still volunteers at our archive at Birchcliffe and deals with queries which are sent to the society. This has given her a broad overview of many aspects of our local history and, in some cases, an in-depth knowledge.

**SCOTLAND YARD, THE TITANIC, ROCHDALE TOWN HALL
and the stained glass of St James Church, Hebden Bridge**



Victorian stained glass has had, until recently, a very bad press. Yet in the late 1870s the congregation and clergy of St James church, at great cost, embarked on a programme of restoration that resulted in a complete glazing by the firm Heaton, Butler and Bayne. Complete schemes are unusual but this one, through the parish magazine, is particularly well documented, a rarity in the world of Victorian stained glass. This lecture looks at the background to the restoration and the social insights that have emerged as the parish magazine has been studied.

David claims to have had a childlike fascination with light and glass since lecturing on gemstone identification in the 1970s and 80s. He has, over the last eight years, been studying stained glass through the Continuing Education Department at the University of York with a personal focus on Victorian glass.

22 January 2025

Kevin Illingworth

**THEN AND NOW – PHOTOGRAPHS OF VERNACULAR BUILDINGS
BY RALPH CROSS (1893-1978) AND KEVIN ILLINGWORTH**



The presentation will be a visual celebration of photographs of buildings taken by Ralph Cross before 1978, compared with photos taken by Kevin, of the same building, in modern times. The buildings are mainly in the Lancashire and Yorkshire Pennines.

Kevin was born in Galgate, near Lancaster, and has had a varied career, from operating excavators and bulldozers in motorway construction, to working with pigs in Lincolnshire. In between he studied at art college and Bath Academy of Art. He has worked as a self-employed 'landscape builder', especially in gardens of historic farmhouses. His detailed knowledge and photographs of vernacular buildings of Yorkshire and Lancashire are widely respected.

12 February 2025

David Cant

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE TOWNSHIPS?

The part they played in our local history

The ancient parish of Halifax was subdivided into 23 townships. David will answer some questions about their history: Where were they? How did they function? Why is it important for local historians to know?



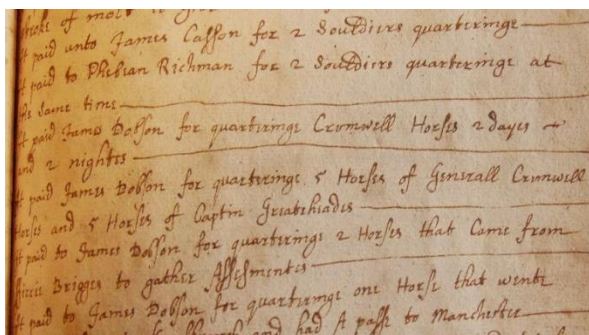
Township lock-ups in Luddenden – under the old school!

David has lived in this area for more than 35 years and is still fascinated by the landscape, buildings and history. He is a regular speaker at Hebden Bridge Local History Society and across Calderdale, sharing his knowledge and enthusiasm.

There will be more about the history of 'local government' in an exhibition in Hebden Bridge Town Hall later this year or in early 2025.

THE EXPERIENCE OF CIVIL CONFLICT: SOWERBY, 1638-1660

The men and women of Sowerby felt the crisis years of the mid-seventeenth century deeply, not just as a series of events in far away Westminster, dramatic as those were. They argued, they fought, they paid exorbitant taxes, they took up new forms of religious worship. This was a formative time for ideas of governance and accountability, and the township's leaders responded energetically. Drawing on the unrivalled source material of Sowerby's constables' accounts, this talk will ask questions about how deeply republican ideas penetrated and what was the legacy of those heady years.



Murray lived in Hebden Bridge for 38 years, and was President of HBLHS, before his recent move to York. He completed a PhD at Lancaster University in 2022, researching manorial and township governance of highways in the parish of Halifax, c.1550-1700. Before retirement, he worked in the community-based transport sector. When not reading or walking, he is currently editing the Sowerby constables' accounts (1628-1714) for publication by the Surtees Society.

12 March 2025

Derek Kettlewell

THE GROWTH, DEVELOPMENT AND DECLINE OF FOOTBALL IN THE UPPER CALDER VALLEY



Portsmouth Rovers c1910 - Pennine Horizons Digital Archive

How did the new sport of “Socker” become established within the Upper Calder Valley, and why has the area no football teams of note currently? The talk will explore the challenges faced in developing the game, as well as the footballing highlights provided by such teams as Hebden Bridge, Portsmouth Rovers and Luddendenfoot. It will feature the notable players from and visitors to the area.

Derek Kettlewell is an enthusiastic researcher into the histories of both football and rugby league, with a particular focus on sport at a grassroots level. He lives in Hebden Bridge and is a member of HBLHS. He is a supporter of Farsley Celtic FC and a former supporter of the now defunct, Bramley RLFC.

26 March 2025

Alan Fowler

THE OPENING OF HEBDEN BRIDGE TRADES CLUB AND THE FIRST LABOUR GOVERNMENT

The Trades Club was opened in February 1925. In May 1924, one of the foundation stones was laid by Tom Shaw, Minister of Labour in the newly elected government and member of Britain's first ever Labour cabinet. His speech reviewed the success of the government. But by 1925, when the Trades Club was opened, Labour was in opposition.



The key figure at the formal opening was J.W.Tout, former Oldham MP and Secretary of the Todmorden Weavers, who became the Calder Valley's first Labour MP. The talk explains the significance of these two ceremonies and how they reflected the wider change of the 1920s in Britain.

Alan taught economic history at the Manchester Metropolitan University. He is a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society and has given many memorable talks to HBLHS about the Labour and Trades union movements in our area.



Calderdale is celebrating a *Year of Culture* in 2024 to mark the 50th anniversary of its founding as a Borough, a period

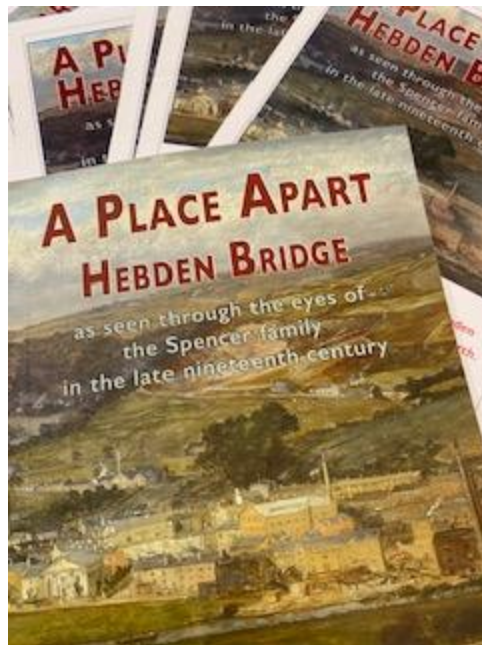
which has seen a profound transformation of the area from a major manufacturing centre into a thriving, multicultural area.

As part of these celebrations, **Bankfield Museum** is launching a new exhibition which explores the history of the Borough, from archaeological discoveries that have cast new light on the region's prehistoric past, to the repurposing of former industrial buildings by businesses, filmmakers, and cultural bodies to create a dynamic future.

Family History News

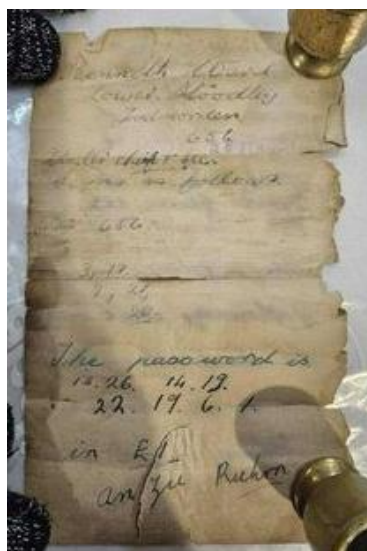
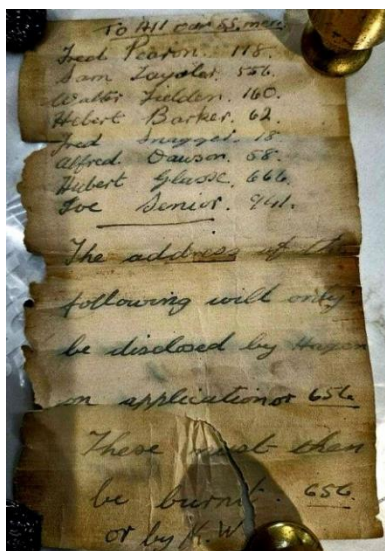
We have changed our arrangements and will be available by appointment at Birchcliffe on Tuesday mornings from 10 am to 1 pm. We continue to answer online queries and have helped several visitors to the area who are researching their local ancestors, several of whom have come from overseas.

You may remember Chris Collier shared his family history and research with us a couple of years ago. His book *A Place Apart*, which describes Victorian era Hebden Bridge as seen through the eyes of his ancestors, is available locally at The Book Case on Market Street for £12.95.



The message in the candlestick

An unusual enquiry arrived on the Society's Facebook page from the USA earlier in the year. While cleaning two candlesticks, purchased in a local store, fragments of paper were found. They contained names and addresses connected to the local area, but it was difficult to work out what they were about.



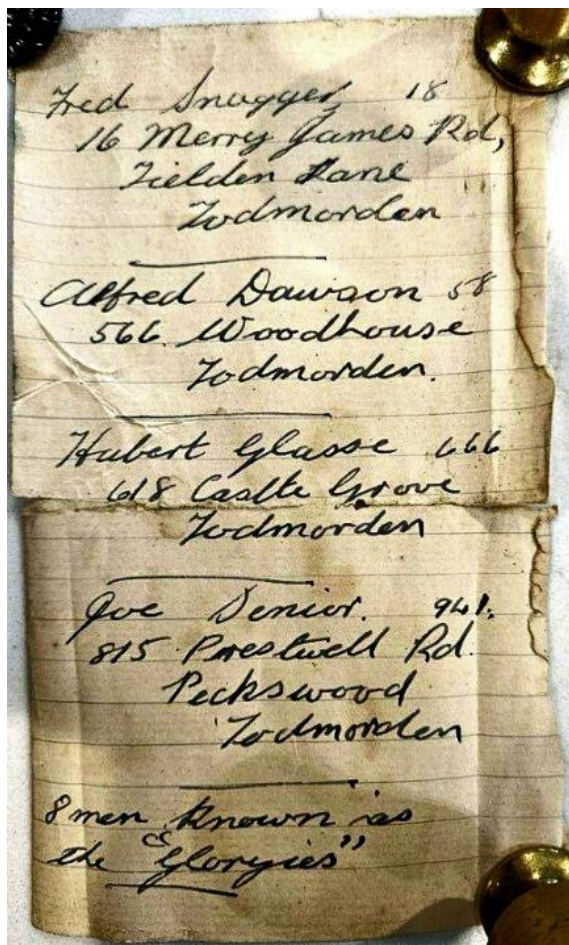
The ones above appear to be front (left) and back of the same piece of paper. The one on the left appears to be an introduction, and after the list of 8 names with numbers it states:

'The address of the following....'

On the other side (right) is an address followed by text and numbers. There is mention of a password, followed by more numbers and then the phrase:

'an zu Ruhm' which is German for *'forward to glory'*

There was also another piece of paper, which contains four names and what appear at first sight to be addresses.



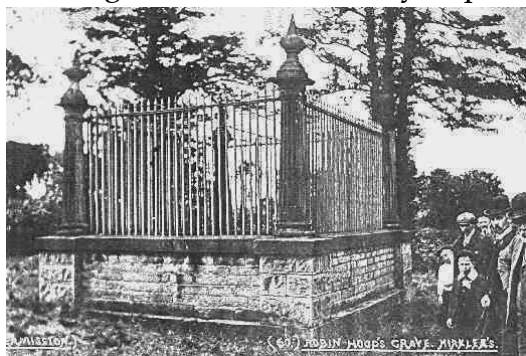
The final intriguing statement adds to the mystery:

8 men known as the "Gloryies"

If you have any ideas please let us know!

Folklore News

In July, the annual ‘Outlaws and Nuns’ walks run by Calderdale Heritage Walks took place at Kirklees Priory, near Brighouse. The main point of interest for many attendees is the visit to Robin Hood’s Grave (though the estate and buildings are also historically important).



Robin Hood's Grave 100 years ago. Sadly a little neglected in 2024

Of course, many people ask what Robin Hood is doing around here, having been brainwashed by the successful centuries-old Sherwood publicity campaign! Robin's association with Yorkshire's West Riding is far older than his association with Nottinghamshire. All the early ballads base his activities in Barnsdale, in modern South Yorkshire, not in Sherwood; the tales that took him further south, along with those (tellingly told by the gentry) that made him out to be some fallen aristocrat, emerged after the mediaeval period. Nottingham was a big market, and attracted storytellers and entertainers, who all knew that an audience would cough up more brass if you can localise a story, and make it about them!

The only ballad that gives a place of Robin's death is the 15th century *Robin Hood's death*, which clearly declares for Kirklees Priory, and that is the only claimant to a grave. So let's embrace our local hero, who is commemorated all over our Calderdale landscape – Robin Hood's Bed at Blackstone Edge, Robin Hood's Cave in Skircoat, Robin Hood's House and two Robin Hood's Wells in Widdop, two Robin Hood's Pennystones in Wainstalls and Midgley, a couple of pubs, and other tales affirm his Yorkshire claims! As for robbing the rich to give to the poor, we can read that in outlaw terms that echo the Coiners' practice – you share the proceeds of robbery with those that give you shelter to keep them quiet.

For more about our local Robin, see *Folk Tales from Calderdale 2: Hood, Head & Hag*, in which I argue that Robin was never a flesh-and-blood person, but a concept built around the idea of social fairness and right action from those in power; and that is why he's still popular today!

If you haven't been on the Kirklees walk, then join the Calderdale Heritage Walks mailing list to receive advance notice of next year's walk.

John Billingsley

History Resources

British Association for Local History

Our Society subscribes to BALH and members can join their events at a reduced fee. They also organise and support activities to encourage local historians, such as

21 September 2024 Untold Stories

One day event on recent history in Lincoln

27 September to 6 October 2024 All About that Place

Ten days of online talks and discussion

12 October 2024 Maps and Buildings

One day conference in Taunton

5 December 2024 Dymond Lecture (online)

Merchant Shipping and Maritime Communities

More information: www.balh.org.uk/events

History from old newspapers

Recently the inclusion of some editions of the Hebden Bridge Times was announced by the British Newspaper Archive. Old newspapers are a fascinating source of information although reliability is sometimes questionable.

Calderdale libraries made local ones available on microfilm some time ago. Digital media has made searching easier and by using your library card you can access some from home: <https://new.calderdale.gov.uk/libraries/digital-library/newspapers-and-magazines#historic-online>

Other events in our area

Hebden Bridge Literary and Scientific Society

We are pleased to support events staged by the 'Lit & Sci', the organisation that supported our own development for so many years. At the moment the Autumn programme is still being finalised. Please check their website:

<https://hblitandsci.org.uk/>

Heptonstall Museum

The museum is open several days a week, although it does depend on volunteers, so it is worth checking before you visit. They also run a varied series of talks and activities:

<https://heptonstallmuseumfriends.org.uk>

The Folklore Centre

The centre is based in Todmorden and hosts a regular programme of events and provides a space for discussion and investigation:

www.folkloremythmagic.com/

Archive and Family History Research

Birchcliffe Centre, Hebden Bridge

The archive will normally be open every Wednesday and Thursday afternoon from 2-5 pm for general research visits. However, this is subject to volunteer availability. Numbers at each session are limited. Non-HBLHS members £3.

Pre-booking is required

email: 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.

Family History Group

Meetings are usually held on the Tuesday mornings between 10 am and 1 pm at the Birchcliffe centre. Non-HBLHS members £3. 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 Tuesday we may be able to arrange for you to visit on another day.

Pre-booking is required

email: info@evergreenancestry.com

Unable to visit?

We also run an enquiry service via a form on the website

www.hebdenbridgehistory.org.uk

Membership

The subscription for 2024/25 remains at £15 and is due at the beginning of September.

You can pay your subscription:

- By bank transfer or standing order to our account:

Sort code 30-90-89 Account no: 20031463

Please use your name as the reference

- By cheque payable to:

Hebden Bridge Local History Society

Send to: Treasurer, HBLHS, Bramble Dene, Moss Lane,
Hebden Bridge, HX7 7DS

- By cheque or cash at a meeting

Membership includes

- 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
- 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