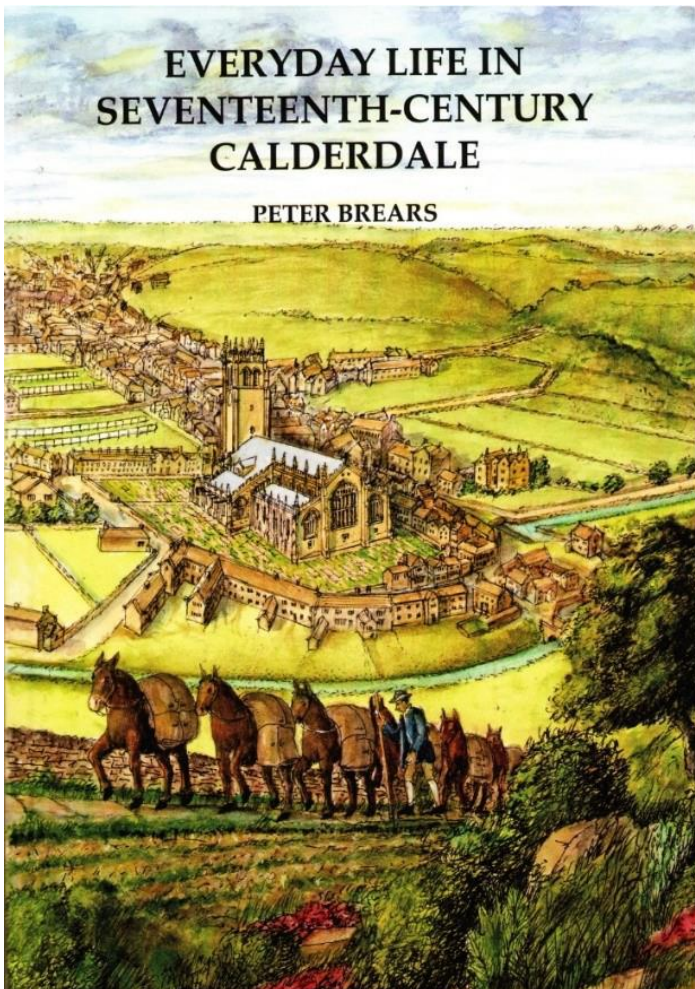


HEBDEN BRIDGE LOCAL HISTORY
SOCIETY NEWSLETTER
www.hebdenbridgehistory.org.uk

Autumn 2025



Mystery Picture - Where am I?



Welcome to the Autumn Newsletter. Thank you to everyone who has contributed. Here you'll find details of the Society's activities for 2025 - 2026.

To avoid duplication the lecture reports will continue to be on the website only now. The newsletter will be published in Autumn each year. A regular enews will let you know about local, regional and national local history matters.

If you'd like to share your research or pose a query on something historic for the next issue, please send it to the Secretary.(secretary@hebdenbridgehistory.org.uk)

You can receive the 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

Above: see later

Cover: See page 4 - Coming soon to a bookshop near you - or online <https://www.hebdenbridgehistory.org.uk/pages/publications>

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

The Birchcliffe Centre

Birchcliffe Road

Hebden Bridge HX7 8DG

Secretary: Barbara Hall

secretary@hebdenbridgehistory.org.uk

www.hebdenbridgehistory.org.uk



www.facebook.com/hebdenbridgelocalhistory

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Membership Renewal Reminder

See back page for details

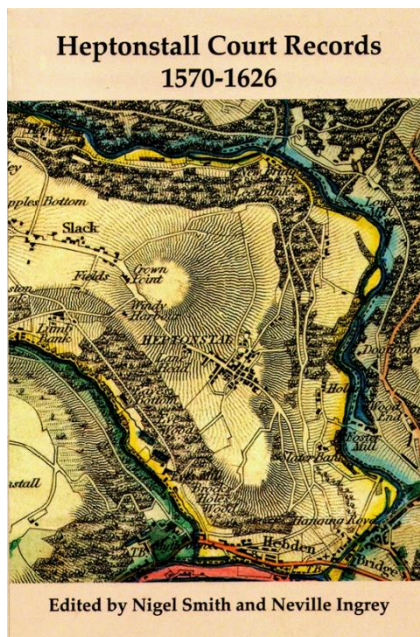
Local History Society Publications

We are celebrating the culmination of our most ambitious project yet: the publication of a handsome and hefty volume of the manor court records for Heptonstall from 1570 to 1626. The volume will be of immense interest to family and local historians, as well as those interested in the ways society was organized at a local level.

The project began with a group of members of the Society working to increase their knowledge of both Latin and local history by translating local historical documents. The tutor was Neville Ingrey, previously a Latin master at Hipperholme Grammar School. When the Covid pandemic put a stop to meetings, the group decided to use email contact to undertake the translation of the Latin entries in the Heptonstall manor court rolls. Neville ensured the accuracy and consistency of the translations.

A detailed introduction by co-editor Dr. Nigel Smith makes clear the context and explains the complications of the rules-based system of local management.

The manorial court was an early system of regulating the community, and these entries record the proceedings of the



baron court, which dealt with transfers of property, upholding the rights of the lord of the manor, and ensuring that offences against the community were punished. Juries were selected from the lord's tenants, both freeholders and copyholders, though in practice the roles were held by the most affluent tenants.

Transfers of land were made symbolically as well as in law, with the property surrendered and 'given up with a straw'. Three of the documents have the actual straw threaded horizontally through three short vertical cuts in the paper.

Local by-laws or 'pains' were tailored to the needs of the community, and after the jury had submitted their report, the court could issue a fine. Some of the infringements were against the lord, such as encroachment (taking in land from the moors without consent) or poaching game (which all belonged to the lord). The stability of the community was valued, so offences against the neighbourhood were taken seriously. Subdividing houses risked increasing the number of poor and beggars who would be a drain on the township; hedges and water courses had to be maintained and livestock kept under control.

There is extensive information about local families and the properties they owned, with searches made possible through the comprehensive indexes of people and places. This volume provides new opportunities for family and local historians. The detailed subject index allows anyone with an interest in how society was organized to see how disputes were settled and norms of behaviour set to manage the day-to-day necessity of getting along with the neighbours.

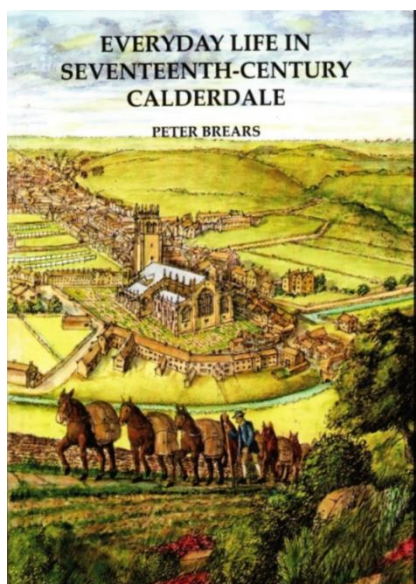
A glossary helps with unfamiliar terminology you might encounter, and images of the original rolls give some sense of the scale of the achievement.

This is a limited edition and available now online <https://www.hebdenbridgehistory.org.uk/pages/publications> at meetings and expected to be available from the Book Case in Hebden Bridge.

Heptonstall Court Records 1570-1626

Edited by Nigel Smith and Neville Ingrey

476 pages, 7 illustrations, 4 maps. £20.



Ranging from farming, cloth making and many other occupations to the houses people lived in, the furnishing of those housings and how people dressed and ate, this book provides an evocative picture of daily life in Calderdale between 1688 and 1700.

Anyone wanting to understand how their ancestors or predecessors in this upland area of Yorkshire used to live will find this book hugely informative.

For ten years two groups of local historians meticulously transcribed and published hundreds of wills and lists of contents of people's houses in the Calder valley. This book

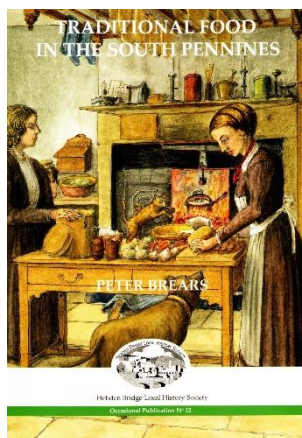
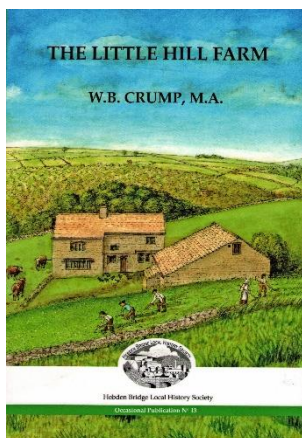
draws on this huge mass of information to provide a vivid recreation of life and work in Britain's wealthiest and most productive upland region. Its economy was based on wool textiles that financed the exceptional buildings in the hills of the Calder valley as well as the flourishing town of Halifax. In this volume all the food, artefacts, equipment and products are studied and illustrated in great detail, drawing on solely local examples of this period. The result is a unique account of life and work in this part of seventeenth-century England just before it was transformed by the Industrial Revolution.

Peter Brears is a museum and historic house consultant and has worked on many projects with the National Trust and Historic England after a career managing major museums in Yorkshire. His extensive knowledge of historic physical artefacts, combined with a lifelong interest in the history of the Calder valley, has enabled him to both explain and illustrate the way in which people in the valley lived at the end of the seventeenth century.

**Everyday Life in Seventeenth-Century Calderdale
by Peter Brears 300 pages, 91 illustrations. £20.**

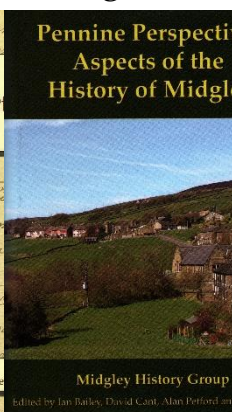
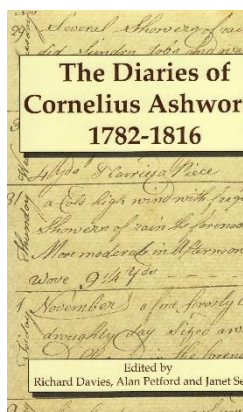
This is a limited edition and available now online <https://www.hebdenbridgehistory.org.uk/pages/publications> at meetings and expected to be available from the Book Case in Hebden Bridge.

Recent titles



£11.99

Bargain basement



£5

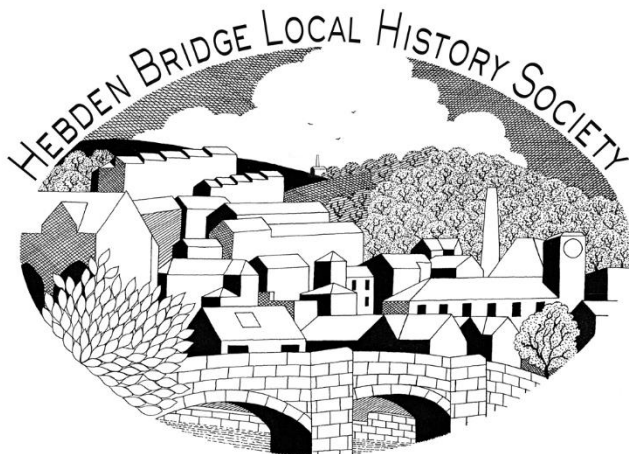
£5

£10

Order now:

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

Annual General Meeting 2025



The next AGM of the charity will be held on

Wednesday 12th November 2025

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@hebdenbridgehistory.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 187 members.

The Society held only eleven talks this year as one of the proposed talks was rescheduled to next year. Subjects ranged from the growth, development and decline of football in the Calder Valley to the experience of civil conflict in Sowerby, 1638-1660, and the opening of the Hebden Bridge Trades Club and the first Labour government. Seven of the talks were given by members of the Society which is testament to the breadth of knowledge amongst the membership. 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 39 members and visitors on the night and 27 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 volunteers 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. The archive continues to receive donations to its collections and notable acquisitions this year include:

- the archives of Out in the Valley, a LGBT+ social group
- the archives of Calder Valley Organic Gardeners
- scrap books kept by the Cragg Vale branch of the Yorkshire Country Women's Association
- deeds relating to several local buildings

- documents and artefacts relating to past local industries and chapels.

In October the Society was delighted to receive a grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund for £54,827 to protect and develop South Pennine Archives, a partnership between the digital image archive owned by Pennine Heritage and the document archive owned by the Society. The project runs until June 2026 and will deliver:

- The digitisation of a selection of documents from the Society's archive. So far 5,500 natural history records have been digitised, with another 1,550 to go. These are important local habitat and species records collected by naturalists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Stonesheygate collection will then be digitised, an estimated 3,000 pages of material covering the late eighteenth and much of the nineteenth centuries which provide detail on farming, cloth making and estate management operations of the period.
- A new website to host both the Pennine Horizons digital image collection and the digitised documents. Development of the website is now nearing completion and work on uploading content will commence shortly.
- Refurbishment of the foyer and reception area of the Birchcliffe Centre. The foyer has been restored and repainted in its original colours, including the mosaic floor. This area will house permanent exhibitions on the history of the Birchcliffe chapel and the history of Hebden Bridge. The floors of the reception area and

main corridors have been sanded back to their original colours. A new desk, made from original chapel furniture remnants, has been installed in the reception area. The next stages are redecoration of this area and installation of museum cases to showcase documents and artefacts from the Society's archives.



The Society has published the results of two long running research projects this year. *Heptonstall Court Records 1570-1626* is a translation from the Latin of the manorial court records, a project that started during the Covid lockdowns. *Everyday Life in Seventeenth-Century Calderdale* is an illustrated account of the equipment, food and housing of Calderdale inhabitants based on the transcriptions of their

wills and inventories from 1680-1700 that the Society and the Halifax Probate Group have published over the last ten years.

We now have 20 books still in print. We have sold a total of 281 books this year. 107 were through our website, 145 at 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, and 29 at meetings and events.

The trustees have worked well as a team this year. The decision to rotate the chair at meetings has been successful, trustees have responsibility for different areas but come together to support each other as required. Trustees have been assisted by several volunteers who have helped in the archive (Jim Botten, John Crampton, Juliet Frobisher, Diana Monahan, Hudson Ray) answering queries (Diana Monahan, Keith Stansfield) and Michael Peel who has attended trustee meetings as a co-opted member.

Secretary: Barbara Hall

Treasurer and Membership: Rachel Smith

Lecture programme: Hilary Fellows, Sheila Graham

Lecture recording: Anne Mealia, Rachel Smith

Archive: Nigel Smith, Sarah Keates, Anne Mealia

Family History: Barbara Attack, Anne Mealia

Publications: Nigel Smith

Social media and Newsletters: David Cant, Catherine Chatham

Exhibitions: Barbara Attack

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 Alan Petford Memorial Fund has now closed, the Society receiving one of the last grants of £1,412 towards the publication of Heptonstall Court Records 1570-1626.

Lecture Programme 2025 – 2026

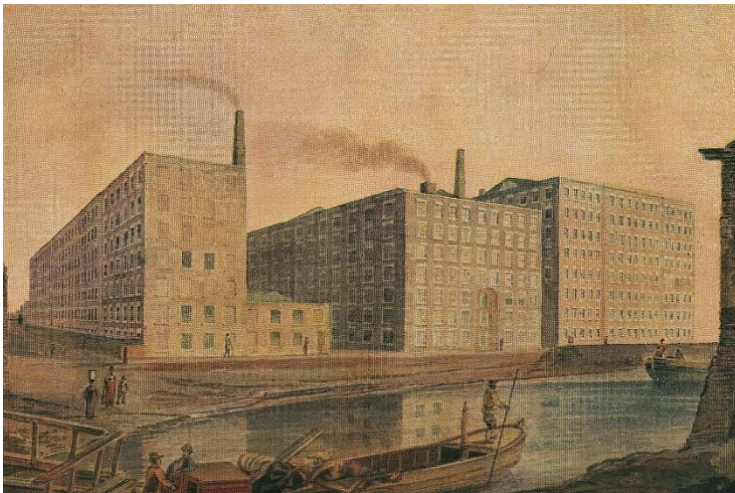
Meetings will be held on Wednesdays at Hebden Bridge Methodist Church, at 7.30 pm.

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

24 September 2025

Brian Groom

MADE IN MANCHESTER - THE STORY THAT SHAPED THE WORLD



Explore the astonishing story of how the people of Manchester and its surrounding towns (including Hebden Bridge) shaped the world from the time of the Romans to the present day. Who were the individuals who built the region and its culture and what part will it play in Britain's future?

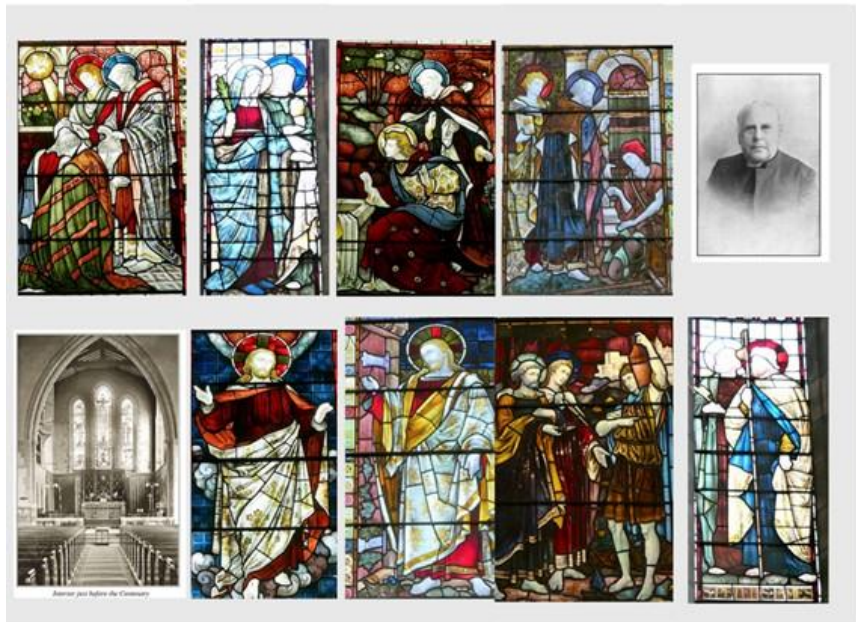
Brian Groom was born in Stretford and lives now in Saddleworth, after spending much of his career as an editor at the Financial Times. Brian is the author of the best-selling *Northerners: a history* and more recently *Made in Manchester*.

8 October 2025

Dave Smalley

SCOTLAND YARD, THE TITANIC, ROCHDALE TOWN HALL
AND ST JAMES CHURCH, HEBDEN BRIDGE:

A story of Victorian stained glass



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 of Heaton, Butler and Bayne. Complete schemes are unusual and this one is particularly well documented through the parish magazine. This degree of evidence is 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,

Dave Smalley describes his 'childish fascination' with light and glass since lecturing on gemstone identification in the

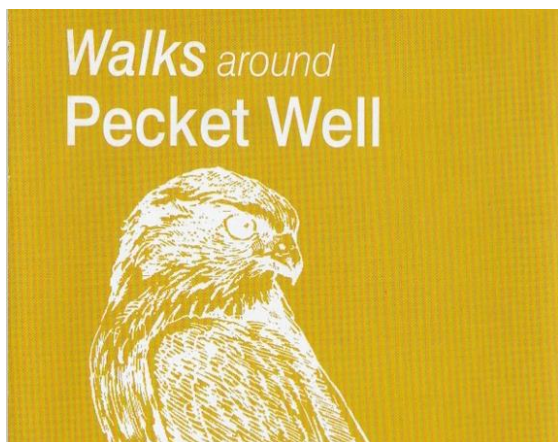
1970s and 80s. He has been studying stained glass through the Continuing Education Department at the University of York with a personal focus on Victorian glass over the last 8 years. He has given several memorable talks to the Society on a range of topics.

22 October 2025

Paul Degnan

A CROW'S EYE VIEW OF "WALKIN ROUND PECKET"

The making of the Pecket Well Village Walks leaflet



The Pecket Well Village Walks leaflet is the latest in a series of leaflets published by Friends of Calderdale Countryside (FOCC) in conjunction with CROWS (Community Rights of Way Service) volunteers. The talk covers a post-Covid community effort in making the leaflet: the key players involved, the surveys and the repairs of the three walks. There are tales to be told about landmarks and features encountered on the walks, including Pecket Well village, the moorland landscape and the view over Old Town.

Paul Degnan has been a CROWS volunteer for ten years and manages the Wadsworth area. A resident of Old Town, Paul retired from a career in Social Work in 2013. A keen hiker, storyteller and writer, he helped to run Shaggy Dog Storytelling Club for many years and in 2021, published a collection of short stories, many of which relate to the local area. Paul loves walking out in the countryside to study the local flora and fauna along with discovering the local history of the place.

12 November 2025

LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY AGM

Followed by

ECHOES FROM THE MEADOWS:

Paul Knights

A history of High Hirst Farm



High Hirst was a grand, 16th-century farm that once loomed over Hebden Bridge from the hilltop which is now home to the Dodnaze Estate. This talk will trace the generations of farmers who stewarded its fields, revealing rich stories of agricultural life, changing land use and the interwoven lives

of those who lived and worked there. With the recent revival of traditional scything in High Hirst's meadows, this is an opportunity to hear the stories of a vanished farm that the land still remembers.

Paul Knights has spent the 16 years he has lived in Hebden Bridge exploring the deep relationship between people, place and nature in the upper Calder Valley. Through writing and photography, guided walks and community projects, he examines how people have shaped – and are shaped by – this remarkable landscape.

Image courtesy of Pennine Heritage Digital Archive

26 November 2025

Stephen Dean

ARCHAEOLOGY; A TALK OF TWO HALVES

From the Staffordshire Hoard to Hebden Bridge

Work on the Hebden Bridge Flood Alleviation Scheme offers an opportunity to uncover items that shed light on the history of Hebden Bridge. As a senior archaeologist with the Environment Agency, Stephen is keen to engage with local groups, keeping us up-to-date with what is going on.

The second half of the talk will be about some of the important items uncovered elsewhere, among the gold and silver that makes up the Staffordshire Hoard. What does this hoard tell us about tensions in society in the 7th century?

Stephen Dean has an academic and professional background in archaeology, having worked for Staffordshire County Council as an archaeologist for 13 years, involved in numerous projects including the discovery of the Staffordshire Hoard.

As a Senior Archaeologist with the Environment Agency he has advised on flood defence schemes in Kendal, Carlisle and now Hebden Bridge.



THE MAKING OF SOWERBY BRIDGE



The story of how a few small hamlets strung along the River Calder grew into a milltown that was at the forefront of the industrial revolution in West Yorkshire. It was ahead of Halifax, Hebden Bridge and Todmorden. Hand-in-hand with its industries, the hamlets evolved into a complex Georgian community. Skipping a century and a half, the story will be brought up-to-date with the testimony of a few of the last millworkers.

Julian Carr is a local historian living in the Ryburn valley and the author of three books. The first focused on a mill and its people in Ripponden; the second ventured further afield to explore the mills of the Ryburn valley. In his latest book Julian looks to the big valley and the mills and people of Sowerby Bridge.

SAM HILL OF SOYLAND



Sam Hill is probably our best known and most successful eighteenth century textile manufacturer, thanks to evidence from the extensive collection of his business documents held in Calderdale Archives. However, this talk aims to show him in a much broader light: as family man, a neighbour and man of property. There was more to Sam than being merely a man of business.

Anne Kirker has been a regular speaker at Hebden Bridge and this talk revisits one given several years ago. Sam Hill retains his fascination. As a volunteer for Calderdale Heritage Walks, Anne has devised guided walks around Sam Hill's properties in Soyland. She has also published articles in the Transactions of the Halifax Antiquarian Society. Anne is a volunteer with Calderdale Industrial Museum and has a keen interest in the history, buildings and people of Calderdale.

FROM WESTERMAN TO WEBSITE

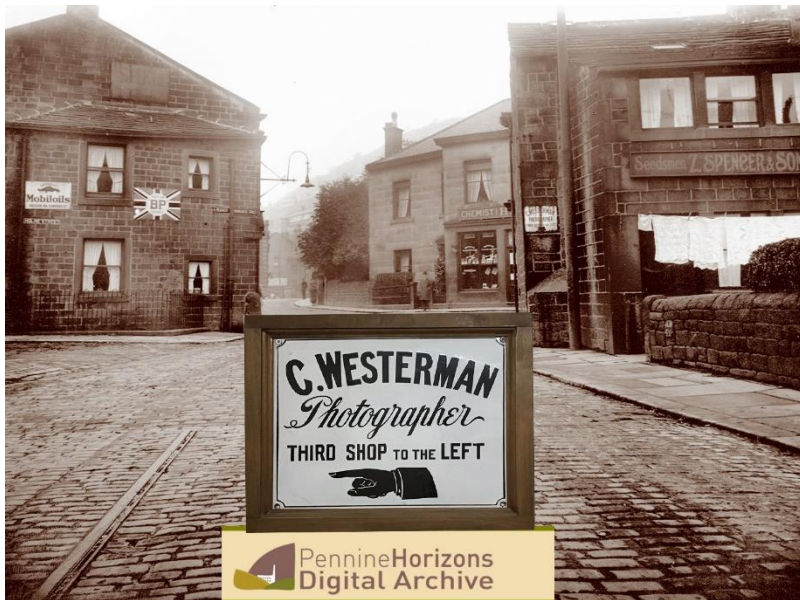


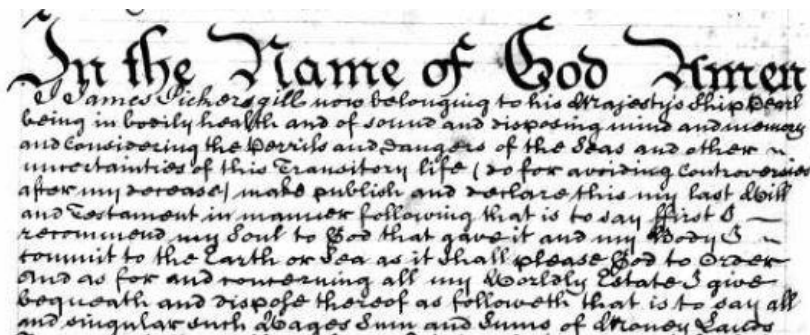
Image courtesy of Pennine Heritage Digital Archive

A well-illustrated presentation that tells how a mill worker started a photographic business that lasted for 100 years, and how it led to the setting up of a digital archive that is preserving the photographic heritage of the area, an archive that is gaining interest not just locally but world-wide.

Ann Kilbey's interest in local history started when she began working for Tourist Information in 1975! She is a longstanding member of the Local History Society, for at least 25 years, contributing hugely in many roles. She became involved with the Alice Longstaff Collection soon after Alice died in 1992, and this presentation tells the story of what happened after that.

DID HE LEAVE ME ANYTHING?

The history and traditions of will-making



In the Name of God Amen
 I James Pickersgill now belonging to his Majesty's Ship Pearl
 being in bodily health and of sound and disposing mind and memory
 and considering the Perils and Dangers of the Seas and other
 uncertainties of this Transitory life (so for avoiding Controversies
 after my decease) make publish and declare this my last Will
 and Testament in manner following that is to say first I
 recommend my Soul to God that gave it and my Body I
 commit to the Earth or Sea as it shall please God to Order
 And as for and concerning all my worldly Estate I give
 bequeath and dispose thereof as followeth that is to say all
 and singular such things Sum and Summe of Money Lands

Wills have always caused controversy and while many are straightforward, others can give an insight into complex family relationships and the customs and laws of the time. This talk explores the history of will-making from mediaeval to more recent times, some of the customs and the process of making and proving a will. It looks at how people ensured their loved ones received their inheritance and those out of favour didn't, using examples of loving and not so loving families.

Anne Mealia is a professional genealogist and historical researcher and runs her own business, Evergreen Ancestry. She is a member of the Association of Genealogists and Researchers in Archives (AGRA). She has carried out research for *Who Do You Think You Are* and was Archives Researcher for the Channel 4 documentary *The Queen's Lost Family*. She is a guide with Calderdale Heritage Walks and regularly leads walks in the Todmorden area.

25 February 2026

Kim Pearson

WAINSTALLS WAIFS

From 1876 more than 250 young girls came from the depths of the Liverpool Workhouse to Wainstalls Mills, more than a thousand feet above Halifax, to find employment, friendships, love and a future. This talk explores the context and the human story of this mass migration.

Kim Pearson describes herself as ‘born, bred and buttered’ in Halifax. Having lived for forty years in Wainstalls she felt a compulsion to know more about the story of these girls. This led to twenty years of research and an intimate knowledge of the girls that made them feel like family. Kim feels she is just a conduit for their real story.



11 March 2026

Matilda Wilding

MURDER AT SNOW BOOTH

Gender and justice between the wars



What can the story of a local 1933 murder tell us about gender and justice between the wars? What might it reveal about those same themes in the modern day?

It's midsummer. Hill top farmers above Hebden Bridge are taking in the hay. Evening is falling. The final act of a cruel and brutal marriage is about to play out.

Matilda Wilding is the creator of *Yorkshire: A Murderous History*, a podcast in which historical homicides (and sinister mysteries) are investigated for the illumination of the past and insights into our present day. The often untold stories of Yorkshire's working-class women are front and centre of her work.

25 March 2026

Trish Colton
Diane Hollway

LAWLESS LADIES: A THOUSAND YEARS OF FEMALE CRIMINALS

For more than a millennium women have been committing a range of crimes, including piracy, highway robbery, witchcraft and religious crimes. Some of these women were from Yorkshire, a few even from Calderdale. This talk describes the times, the women involved and the punishments they received.

Trish Colton and Diane Hollaway are sisters who have lived in Yorkshire for many years and are now retired. They write non-fiction books on historical themes, and enjoy having the time to carry out the research. *Lawless Ladies* is the second book that Trish and Diane have co-authored.



Family History News

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. We are available **by appointment** at Birchcliffe on Tuesday mornings from 10 am to 1 pm.

An important (fairly) local event:



Family & Local History Fair

Greenhead Masonic Hall
26 Greenhead Road, Huddersfield, HD1 4EN



Saturday 25 October 2025 - 10 am to 4 pm
Admission £5 Children under 16 free
Refreshments and Free Car Parking Available

Talks on Family & Local History topics
Ask the experts Family History Research Service
Exhibitors includes family & local history societies, books,
maps, genealogy supplies & more

www.hdfhs.org.uk Charity No. 702199



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

8 October 2025 Votes for Women – Everywhere

1866 – 1928 A one day online event

11 October 2025 Crossing Counties: Transport History in Herts, Beds and Bucks

One day conference in Barton-le-Clay, Bedfordshire

15 October 2025 Drax of Drax Hall: researching the landed gentry in Britain and the Caribbean Evening online event

11 December 2025 Annual Dymond Lecture (online)

Railway Accidents digital archive

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

History from old newspapers

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. The Autumn programme includes talks on the legacy of war, buildings and sustainability, and insects and climate change.

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/

Calderdale Libraries

Calderdale Council offers various resources

<https://new.calderdale.gov.uk/leisure/local-history/local-studies>

A podcast <https://new.calderdale.gov.uk/events/history-out-loud>

A history blog: <https://www.calderdalelocalstudies.blog/>

Archive and Family History Research

Birchcliffe Centre, Hebden Bridge

Mystery picture (inside front cover) is the foyer here

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 2025/26 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
- One newsletter a year with news, lecture information and short articles
- Regular email news on society and local history matters