

HLHS Members Newsletter

November 2021

huddersfieldhistory.org.uk

email@huddersfieldhistory.org.uk



We would like to hear from you! Please send any news, details of events and books, requests for information and comments that you think may be of interest to other Huddersfield Local History Society members to publications@huddersfieldhistory.org.uk



*undated photo postcard of Beaumont Park by Fred Hardcastle of the Beaumont Park Studio
courtesy of the [Roy Brook & Brian Kilner Collection](#)*

Welcome to our November 2021 newsletter, and Season's Greetings! In this month's edition, you'll find details of upcoming events and Society news and plans. We hope you enjoy it. The next newsletter will appear towards the end of January.

David Griffiths and Dave Pattern

Chair's review: Looking back, looking forward

Dear Friends,

We are approaching the end of what has been another difficult year for the Society. A year in which we have lost a number of dear friends and in which we have been unable to return to our much-missed monthly meetings.

Nevertheless we have managed to offer a complete series of monthly on-line talks which have been enjoyed by many of you and by people all over Britain and beyond; people who might never have been able to attend a 'normal' members' meeting. How we might continue to meet the needs of this new audience is a challenge to be addressed in the New Year. For this and much else I have to thank Christine Verguson for her indefatigable work in finding and organising the speakers and Dave Pattern for his technical wizardry in compiling and editing the [on-line talks](#).

Thanks are also due to Rob Piggott, who has edited yet another successful [Journal](#), and to all those who have helped bring Rob Vincent's writing to the point of publication. His [Colne Valley: A History of a Pennine Landscape](#), now looks set to be one of our most successful publications.

Through David Griffiths we have also continued to make our contributions to *Heritage Open Days* and with Maureen Mitchell to the work of *Discover Huddersfield*. Christine Verguson and Beverley Norris have led the way in the Government and Historic England sponsored project on the history of St George's Square. Steve Challenger, Val Davies and Janette Martin have kept the nuts and bolts of the Society in excellent working order, now joined by Richard Hobson, a welcome new committee member.

The way that 2022 is shaping up it looks as though it will be just as busy – although the effects of Covid look set to linger. It is still not clear when or whether we will be able to return to face-to-face meetings at the University. The plan is, after a break in December and January, to resume 'normal' meetings in February (with an extra one in June to make up). If the University continues to be unavailable then we may have to look elsewhere. In view of the uncertainties, we also now propose to dispense with the postponed 2021 Study Day and AGM until these become due again next autumn. Do, please, keep looking at [our website](#) and at future *Newsletters* for further details.

For now, my very best wishes to you all for Christmas and the New Year. I hope to see you again in 2022.

Cyril Pearce

HLHS Committee

Chair:

Cyril Pearce

Vice-Chair:

vacant

Secretary:

Dave Pattern

Treasurer:

Steve Challenger

Membership

Secretary:

Val Davies

Publications

Secretary:

David Griffiths

Publicity:

Chris Verguson

Journal Editor:

Robert Piggott

Web Site:

Dave Pattern

Other

Committee

Members:

Janette Martin

Maureen Mitchell

Beverley Norris

Richard Hobson

(co-opted November 2021)

With the exception of our own web site, Huddersfield Local History Society is not responsible for the content of any web sites linked to in this newsletter.

Our Autumn Talks

The last of these is:

29 November 2021

Lewis Allen, *'Fired with Love Unfeigned' - Discovering the Life and Labours of the Reverend Henry Venn, Vicar of St Peter's Parish Church, Huddersfield 1759-1771.*

Venn was a contemporary of Methodist founders John Wesley and George Whitefield, both of whom he worked with, and became one of the best-known figures of the eighteenth century Evangelical Revival. He was a hugely popular parish minister in Huddersfield (from 1759 – 1771) and elsewhere. When he resigned due to chronic ill-health crowds implored him not to leave, and he was sorely missed. His ministry left a lasting legacy in the religious landscape of Huddersfield and its surrounds, nationally and even internationally.

Lewis Allen moved to Huddersfield from London, with his family, to establish what is now Hope Church Huddersfield in 2010, where he is the Senior Pastor.

His talk explores who Venn was, how he came to love the people of Huddersfield and minister to their needs, and how his ministry gives valuable insights into his age – and ours.

As we've got used to now, links to the talks will be [on the website](#) from Monday 29 November.

The Society's new book

Our latest book, *Colne Valley: A history of a Pennine landscape*, by Rob Vincent, is selling well in the run-up to Christmas – do you have your copy yet? Priced at £11.95, it is available to members [post-free via the website](#) – at the check-out, use the coupon code **CVOFFER**.

Or you can buy the book at: Children's Bookshop, Lindley; Colne Valley Books, Slaithwaite; Colne Valley Museum, Golcar; Huddersfield Library (Local Studies); Marsden Library; Newstrack (Huddersfield Station); the Roots Cellar, Meltham; and Waterstones, Kingsgate.

Memories of Our Square

Have you been onto the [Memories of Our Square](#) website yet? Society members have developed this site and are adding content to it on a regular basis. Recent posts have included discoveries from [newspaper archives](#), such as an article from 1895 about the birth of Rugby League at the George Hotel. Another post imagines the experience of women arriving in Huddersfield for the first time after responding to adverts in their local newspapers placed by a Servant Registry, once located in the Lion Buildings. The most exciting part of the site is [Your Stories](#) where people have been sharing their own memories. These memories include Huddersfield Town celebrations, celebrity spotting, and even a romantic marriage proposal in the summer of 2020. If you haven't already, please take a look at these shared memories and, even better, add your own. They do not have to be life changing events. A seemingly every day memory can provide another piece of the story of St George's Square and what it has meant to people over the years.

Two Sad Losses

We are sorry to announce the deaths of two members, both local historians. They will be much missed.

John Halstead was a founding member of our predecessor, Huddersfield Local History Workshop, in 1978 and continued to contribute to the Society's activities and publications, most recently with a chapter in our Ramsden centenary volume, [Power in the Land](#) (2020). A short obituary appears on the [Society for the Study of Labour History website](#).

Dave Green was the author of *Huddersfield Pubs*, an illustrated historical tour of the pubs and beer houses of Huddersfield and its environs, published in 2007. Dave Green knew of what he wrote, having spent some years as landlord of the Slubbers Arms in Halifax Old Rd.

HLHS's Own History Archived

Enforced activity during lockdown provided an opportunity to get to grips with historic paperwork. The records of HLHS and the preceding Workshop for 1978-2017 – agendas, minutes, programmes etc – have now been deposited with the WY Archive Service. There were, however, a few gaps – if you happen to have a hoard of such papers, do please let us know.

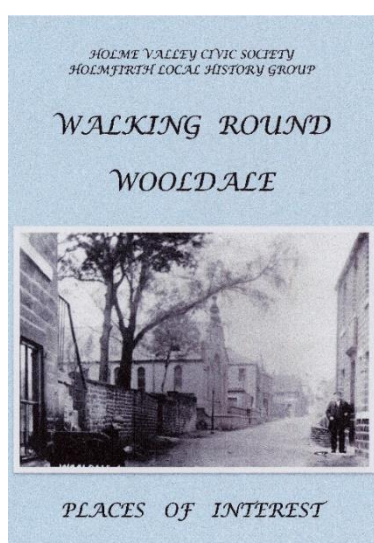
History Day 2021

Thanks to committee member Janette Martin, HLHS contributed to this national on-line event on 4 November. The theme this year was environmental history and we joined with the Tolson Museum to submit illustrated blogs on two pioneering naturalists. Our member Alan Brooke wrote about Seth Lister Mosley (1848-1929), first curator of the Tolson, ahead of his full biography which the Society will publish next year. Alongside this, Tolson assistant curator Nathan Smith discussed another Victorian naturalist, Henry Soppitt (1858-99), whose fungarium the Tolson holds. You can find both articles on the [History Collections website](#).

‘Creating Kirklees’

The West Yorkshire Archive Service holds a vast trove of records from the many local authorities that eventually formed Kirklees, through successive local government mergers from the late 19th century onwards. Occupying 30 stacks of shelves in WYAS storage, to date these papers have been uncatalogued and inaccessible to researchers and interested citizens. With the support of HLHS and other local societies, WYAS successfully bid for a £40k grant from The National Archives to employ a staff member for 18 months to catalogue this rich resource. The project is now under way, running to January 2023, and unexpected treasures are already emerging. HLHS (and Spen Valley Historical Society) are representing the voluntary sector on the project’s steering group, alongside Council and WYAS representatives. Our rep, David Griffiths, will be happy to provide further information on request, via publications@huddersfieldhistory.org.uk

New Book on Wooldale



The latest publication of the Holmfirth Local History Group, *Walking Round Wooldale: Places of Interest* is concerned with the many and varied aspects of the long and fascinating history of the village of Wooldale. Researched and written by three members of the Group, it offers a well-illustrated, well-referenced account of the village from mediaeval times, the development of the built environment of the village from the 17th century and the changing nature of the lives of the villagers. The chosen Places of Interest highlight the historical aspects of the buildings, the people who were connected with them and the activities that took place in them.

The book, priced £10.00, is available from Holmfirth Library and Tourist Information Office or Pamela Cooksey – g.cooksey@btinternet.com

Christmas in Almondbury

*The following extracts are from the Rev. Easter's 1883 book
"A Glossary of the Dialect of Almondbury & Huddersfield"*

This festival is kept up with some ceremony still. On Christmas Eve, and during the whole of the week till New Year's Day, may be heard the carols, of which the following is one of the most common.

Here we come a *wesselling*
Among the leaves so green,
And here we come a wandering
So fair as to be seen.

Chorus:— And to your wessel,
And to Jolly wessel,
Love and joy be to you,
And to your wessel (tree).

The *wessell bob* is made
Of rosemary tree,
And so is your beer
Of the best barley.

We are not beggars' *childeren*
That begs from door to door,
But we are neighbours' *childeren*
That has been here before.

We have got a little purse
Made of *ratching* leather skin,
And we want a little money
To line it well within.

Bring us out your table,
And spread it with a cloth;
Bring us out your mouldy cheese,
Likewise your Christmas loaf.

God bless the master of this house,
Likewise the mistress too,
And all the little *childeren*
That round the table go.

Good master and good *misteress*,
While you're sitting by the fire,
Pray think of us poor *children*
That's wandering in the mire.

Immediately after midnight various sets of singers go round from house to house (in the season of 1873 I heard two Parties; in that of 1875 not one, owing to the boisterous night), and sing generally three verses of the Christmas hymn so popular here, 'Christians, awake, salute the happy morn.' Sometimes as many as sixteen sets visit a house during the night, consisting of singers, bands, and hand-bell ringers.

In the minds of the superstitious a highly important part of the proceedings is 'the letting Christmas in,' which is sometimes done over-night, after twelve, but more commonly early in the morning. On this occasion no woman must enter the house first; but if possible a man with dark hair: one with light hair is objectionable, and with red hair quite inadmissible. Sometimes favourable black-haired boys or men go about and ask to be allowed to perform this function. They are paid or regaled with Christmas fare.

The same custom is followed at the opening of the New Year. I myself once, rather unwillingly, performed this duty. Some neighbours had passed Christmas Eve, or New Year's Eve (I think the latter), at my house. They remained till after twelve, and I (being duly qualified in respect of the colour of my hair) was entreated to go home with one family and let in the festival, which I accordingly did.

FOOTBALL.

Formerly at festal seasons great games of football were played in this neighbourhood, sometimes between Honley and Meltham, and sometimes between Almondbury and Farnley. These were played in a style which would astonish the athletes of our days. The last game between this village and Farnley is said to have taken place on old Christmas Day, 1819, when the ball was turned out in Farnley fields. The Farnley men were to drive it across Thurstonland boundary, and the Almondbury men across Almondbury boundary; thus they had a course of extremely rough country of about three miles long. Many ferocious kicks were given and received on this occasion; even when the ball was scores of yards away men stood kicking each other violently, and a portion of wall upwards of a rood was thrown down in the contest in one place. The kicks were by no means child's play, as they were all administered in clogs. The Farnley people won.

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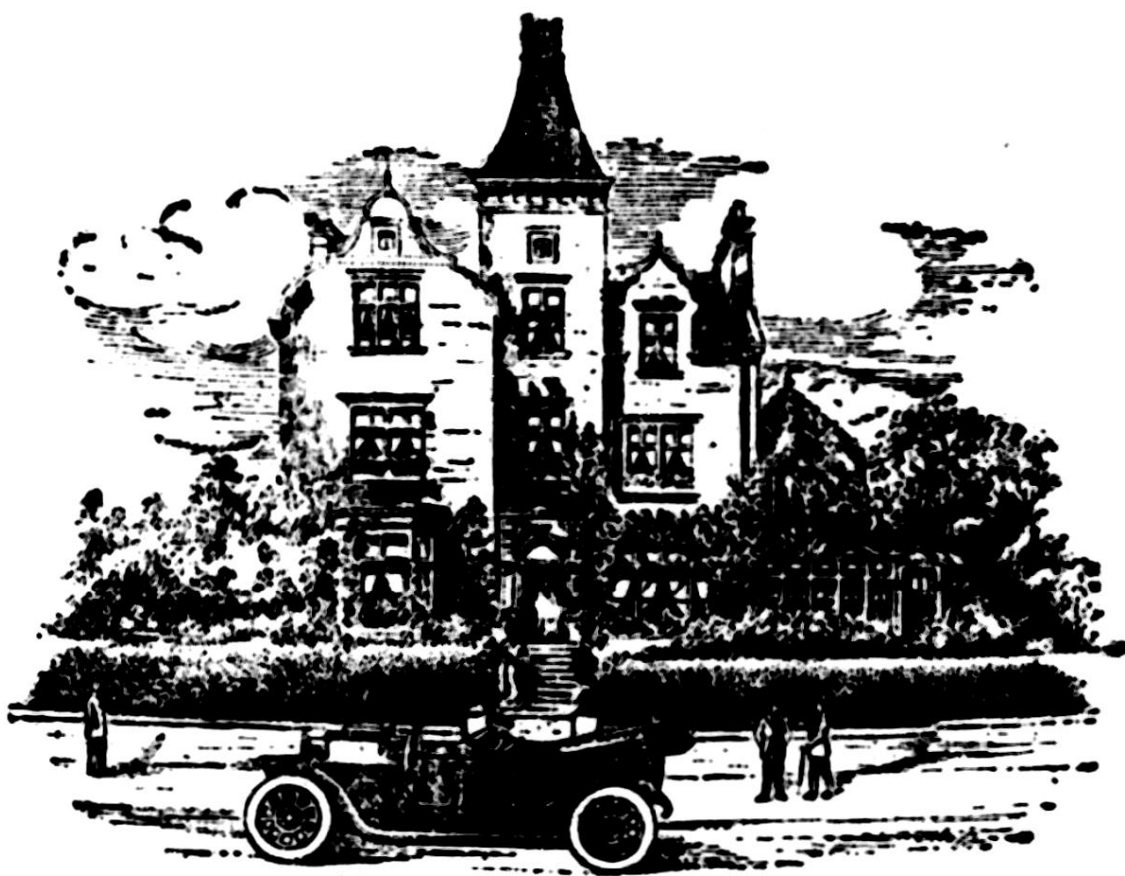
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