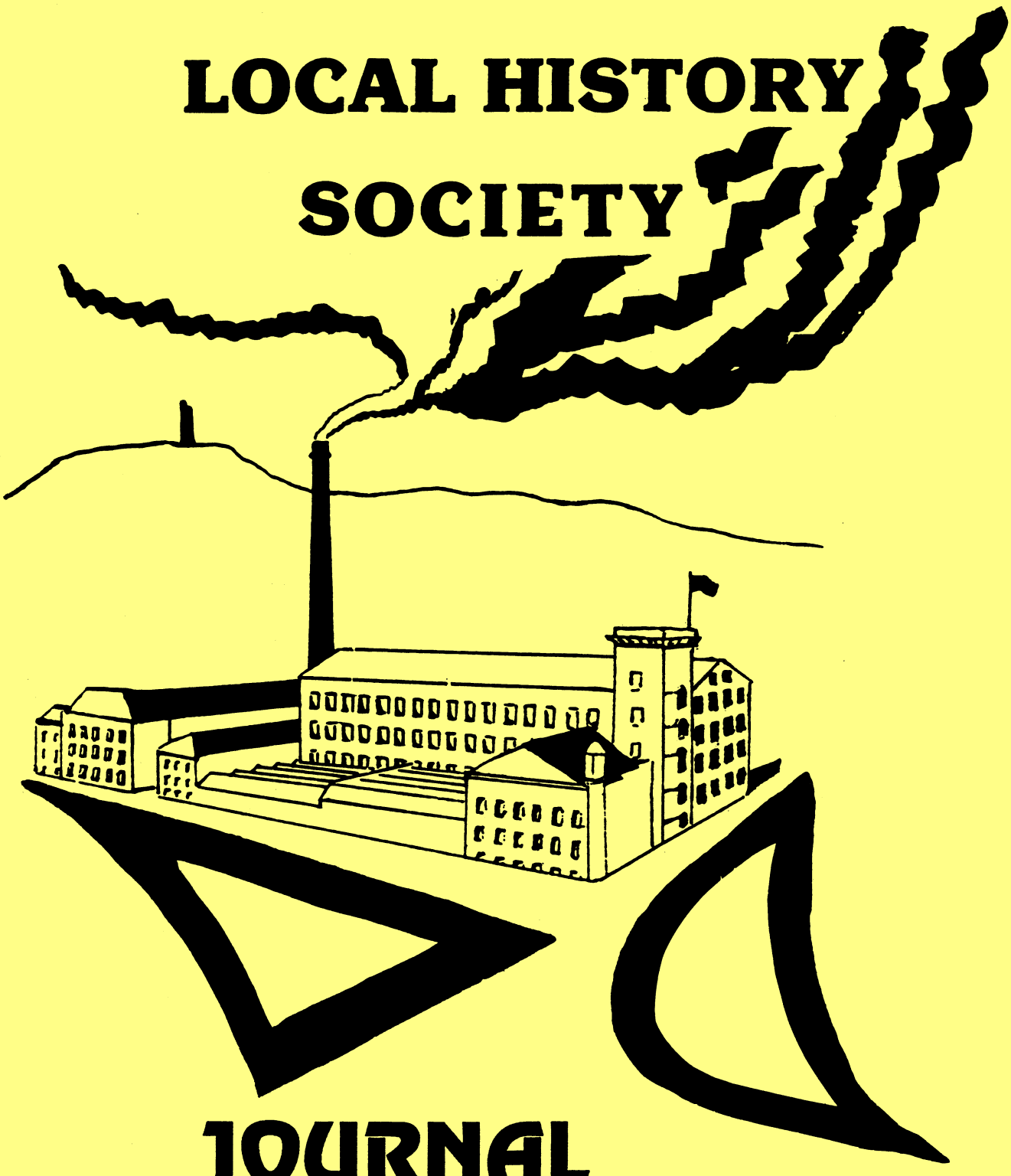
# Huddersfield Local History Society

**Huddersfield Local History Society**
huddersfieldhistory.org.uk

Journal No. 3
Autumn 1991

# Huddersfield

## LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY



# JOURNAL

No.3 AUTUMN 1991

**GAMES WE PLAYED.**

*Clifford Stephenson recalls children's games from the early part of the century.*

BELL HORSES.

Living in the period when the horse was supreme, it was natural that we should play "play horses". This I did with Harold next door. With reins made from the plaited fibre ropes which secured the two compartment boxes in which oranges were imported to the shops -tied to Harold's arms (he seemed always to be the horse)- I frequently 'drove' him to school. He entered into the spirit of the play by prancing, galloping, neighing and sometimes baulking. When three boys played horses -two of them 'belled-up' by joining crossed arms behind their backs, they were then driven as a pair.

Only recently did the derivation of the apparently inappropriate verb 'bell-up' become clear to me when reading about the trains of pack horses which were the old time transport across the moors. The leading horse was decked with bells to give warning of the coming of the train to other approaching trains -it was known as the 'bell-horse'. I have little doubt that by devious derivation the original use of the word bell was lost but the association with horses survived in 'bell-up'.

BULLYS.

In other parts of the country and in politer society, these were called 'hoops'. 2 to 2½ feet diameter made of bent wood for girls; of ¾ inch diameter rods of iron welded at the joining, for boys; they regularly appeared at the appropriate season in great numbers. How children know the right season for seasonal games and plays is still a mystery to me, but they do. The wooden hoops were propelled by girls with a stick, the iron bullys used by the boys, with a 'steerer', a twelve inch long iron rod with a closed loop at one end to grasp and a hook at the other which hooked onto the bully to steer and drive it. Boys with steerers close looped and fast to the bully were thought to be rather sissy. More adventurously the bully ran free driven on its way by blows from the steerer. Regularly down a hill, the bully got away causing panic to walkers, crashed into a wall, or had to be retrieved from the garden of an irate householder. In full flight a bully became a fearful projectile.

WHIP & TOP.

Another seasonal game. It required a whip, made from a short stick with a quarter inch wide leather thong as the 'lash'. At the end of the thong was a short length of very strong, thick, hard twisted string known as whip cord, usually knotted. Whip cord as a trouser fabric, probably derived its name from the fact that the thick strongly twisted yarn from which it is made resembles, but is finer, than whip cord originally developed for use by the drivers of horses.

Tops came in two kinds; a short fat stumpy model which in use stayed more or less in one place, and the other kind called a 'traveller', taller and slimmer, it not only rotated when whipped but also travelled across the ground. Marked with coloured chalk on its flat top, a pretty coloured pattern developed as the top rotated.

SKIPPING.

A group game, mostly played by girls, two of whom -each holding an end of the rope -turned it while the rest of the group ran in turn, into the twirling loop and skipped a few or as many steps as was agreed, then ran out. At the cry "pepper" the tempo of the twirling increased to a rapid

rate, and with it the rate of jumping of the skipper. Quite young girls became very adept at this not unskilful pastime. Boys, more usually, were solo skippers, practising two versions of the activity; static on one spot, with the rope turning either forwards or backwards; and alternatively skipping (a training activity) whilst running. The phrase 'skipping to school' perhaps refers to the latter, though to 'skip school' means to play truant. Just another of the many oddities in our language.

PIZE-BALL.
Played by two teams of girls and/or young boys, 'pize-ball' was the junior version of 'rounders', and the first introduction of a small boy to ball games. In play, the 'server' of the fielding side lobbed a soft (rubber) ball to the front player of the lined-up batting side, who hit it as far as possible with an open hand. The striker ran to touch as many 'corners' as possible while the ball was being retrieved. The fielder retrieving the ball endeavoured to hit the striker with the ball while the striker was running between 'safe' corners. If a hit was made, that striker was 'out'. This went on until all members of the side were eliminated. The sides then changed places.

From this children's game first grew organized 'rounders' played at girls schools, and later the extremely sophisticated and skillful game of baseball, America's national game and passion; some players of which become millionaires.

MARBLES.
There were several games under this omnibus name. The small globular piece of stone, glass or similar material were all included in the name of the game. They varied in size and material from the small chalky 'alley' which was also the unit of loss or gain in the game; to the inch diameter of white glazed pot, the 'pobbler'. In between were 'stirks' of various brown-green colours, 'glassies' with a coloured spiral twist inside them, 'poppies' extracted from lemonade bottles, 'beefies' (made from real marble), 'steelies' ball bearings of various sizes. Any except the alley could be used as a 'firer', which each player owned and used in the game. Steelies were much prized for their 'fire-power'.

The basic game required a nine inch ring scratched in dirt or sand into which each player placed the agreed number of alleys as his stake. From a toe line six or eight feet away, each player in turn rolled his firer towards the ring, pocketing any allies he knocked out of it. Having knocked an alley out, that player qualified for another shot and could so continue after each success. Alternatively, using his knuckled thumb to fire his firer, he could endeavour to 'kill' by hitting an opponents firer lying where it last came to rest. From this opponent he took away any alleys that opponent had won during the game. Eventually, all the other players having been killed, one player became the winner with all the alleys originally in the ring, in his possession. There were local rules and variations to this basic game. The cry "no brush" forbade the removal of casual obstructions. "Keep your nuck" meant knuckles on the ground.

THREE HOLES.
As its name implied, required a triangle of three holes scooped out of the ground. The game, played using the large pobblers, involved each player rolling his pobbler into each hole against a variety of hazards and penalties agreed by the players. A player's use of his pobbler to drive another's pobbler away was one ploy.

RED FAT UP.
A strange name of unknown derivation with no obvious relation to the game. Played again with pobblers, the final loser's pobbler became the target for all the other players to throw their pobbler at, driving the target pobbler as far as possible. Once as loser, my pobbler finished on Lockwood Road, having been driven out of the Mount Pleasant School yard down Mount Street and then on to Lockwood Road. I forget if their were any rules governing retrieval and return of the pobbler back to the pitch in the school yard.

TIN CAN SQUAT.
A popular game played by the neighbourhood 'gang' children. The boy who was 'it', was chosen by a traditional eliminating verse which 'counted out' the players in turn until only the 'it' was left. A tin can placed in a suitable open spot -the middle of cross roads was a favourite- was kocked as far as possible by one of the boys who, with the others, immediately ran to hide; meantime the 'it' boy retrieved and replaced the can. He was then free to seek out any hidden boy and by touching him made this boy 'it' in turn. The snag was that while searching for a victim, one of the other boys might run from his hiding place and kick the can again. The original 'it' boy had again to retrieve the can before he could resume his search for another victim. This could go on for a long time with the same 'it' becoming more and more frustrated.

RELIEVO.
A game with several features similar to Tin Can Squat, lacked the satisfying noise which was made by a can rolling down a cobbled street, as did the simplistic Hide and Seek.

DUCK-STONE.
Was very much a game peculiar to our stone wall district. It required a pile of large stones pinched from a near-by wall, balanced one on the other. On the top of the pile, he who was 'it' placed his 'duck' -his throwing stone. From a marked distance each player in turn threw his 'duck' at the pile, attempting to dislodge the duck from the top of the pile. So long as the duck remained on the pile 'it' could, by touching any other player as he tried to retrieve his duck, make that player 'it'; but if 'it's' duck had been dislodged meantime, the others could retrieve their ducks with impunity until the pile was rebuilt with the 'it's' duck on top of it. Duck-stone was a game for robust older boys.

SHIPS.
A popular school yard game, bore no resemblance that I can see, to its name. Played by seven, nine or eleven boys divided into two teams with the odd one acting as 'bolster'. The 'bolster' stood with his back to a wall and one team 'got down'. The first boy of the 'down' team, bent over, grasped the 'bolster', and tucked his head in. The rest of his team 'got down' in line behind him to form the 'rig'. ("Keep your rig" was an injunction to stay tight and firm). The other team in turn ran and vaulted onto their backs, each jumper going as far forward as he could. If the jumping team were all on, and secure, and thought at no risk of falling, 'salt' was called by the down team and the jumpers dismounted. The down team then reformed, but less bent over, thus presenting a shorter, higher and more difficult row of backs for the next jump. Progressively the row of backs got higher and closer together so that the jumping team found increasing difficulty both in getting on and staying on. It could mean that a later jumper needed to get high enough to land on the back of his own team mate. Sooner or later the jumping team either failed to get all of its team on, or once on, were so insecure that they fell off. Then the teams exchanged places and the

jumpers 'got down' in their turn. The poor bolster got no relief. A lad who was a bit slow or unathletic was the most liable to be nominated as bolster.

CRICKET.
As played amongst the local lads was a primitive version of the organised game. The pitch, as likely as not any moderately smooth piece of ground with or without patches of grass. The wicket, usually one end only, defined by two caps two feet or so apart. Out or not out was often a matter of argument -did the ball go between the caps or over one of them? The bat, a schoolboys' model often much the worse for wear; the ball any one of several varieties except the proper leather one. An air filled rubber ball was for girls not 'serious' cricket, usually we used either a 'corky' -a composition ball of ground cork- hard and unkind to catch, or very commonly a by-product of the local textile industry a "bandy" made from a tightly moulded ball of waste -sometimes with a hard core of stone to give it weight- the outside bound together by a network of strong string interwoven using (I believe) the blanket stitch as used for binding the raw edge of blankets. Bandies were a useful and serviceable kind of ball, found in the pocket of many a lad, and they had one supreme virtue -they cost nowt!

The lads about Bentley Street with whom I played when about ten years old, enjoyed one great advantage. A father of three of them, Mr. Wilkinson, who was 'in Insurance' -(as later so were all his sons), was a cricket enthusiast who joined in with us and ensured that we tried to play properly.

The cricketing moments of greatest excitement arose when the ball was hit too hard and landed in the garden of someone who considered both boys and the games they played, a nuisance. Then came the test of courage, who would approach him with the plea "please can we have our ball back?" Applying at the door of one such garden owner, a notoriously crusty old man, the cringing boy was invited into the old man's house. "There's your ball" said the old man, pointing to the heart of the kitchen fire, having carried out an oft made threat "I'll burn it next time". Even greater was the drama when the batsman took such a hefty swipe that the ball went through a window amidst the noise of shattering glass, followed by the angry householder shouting "you'll have to pay for it", if he were quick enough to identify the culprit.

FOOTBALL.
Amongst our age group in those days of the Fartown Rugby League Team's supremacy and glory, football meant the 13 a side rugby game, soccer locally was a minority sport, so naturally it was rugby or a simplified version of it -'Touch and Pass'- that we played. No one was sufficiently affluent to own a proper leather rugby ball, so we played either with a bundle of sacking tied into rough rugby ball shape, or occasionally with a blown up and tied pig's bladder. The former was more usual, bladders being too 'flighty'.

PIG & STICK.
A derivative of the ancient game of Knur and Spell; ours was a somewhat scaled down version of the game played by men, often for substantial wagers. We used a shorter and lighter 'pummel' -the cane stick with a flat faced cylindrical head- for striking the 'Knur' -a small wooden ball (originally Knur, a knot of wood). The Knur resting on the 'pig' (a small wooden shoe) was tipped into the air by lightly striking one end of the pig with the pummel, and then with a mighty swipe, driven as far as possible. It was not played competitively by us, and was already

dying out, as it was not well suited to playing in built-up areas. It was a game for the moors or other wide open spaces.

HURRY (or LORRY) CARTS.
Every boy, at some time or other, had one. Of varying degrees of elaboration, they were basically a flat board with a wheel -small pram wheels or old small pulleys- at each corner. The front wheels on a pivoted axle could be steered by the seated driver, by 'reins' of rope. Any sloping street with a flagged footpath provided a suitable track to coast down. No one seemed to object, though the solid iron pulley wheels made an awful clatter, and pedestrians had sometimes to jump for their lives.

HOP-SCOTCH.
Girls, of course, played more gentle games; one was hop-scotch. Again the flagged footpath -the 'causey' provided the pitch. A small piece of broken crockery on the flags was nudged by a hopping foot across the cracks from one flag to the next; a small ball being bounced and caught in unison, following some rule or ritual known to the girls, but a mystery to me. It was commonly played.

LESS A GAME - MORE A PASTIME.
There was a passing craze amongst the Bentley Street boys of producing a 'newspaper'. Two boys paired together in each enterprise. I, being younger than the rest was not much sought after as a partner until the last of the older boys, having failed to find a partner -I should have known why- asked me to join him. Though he was two years older than my ten years, it soon became obvious who had to do the work. His sole contribution to the supposedly joint venture, was it's name 'The Tiny' which was the name of his family's dog.

Our project was short lived -as were the others- only one issue, laboriously written by me in hand-printing, appeared. I forget most of the contents - stale football results were some, but one I can still remember and visualise was the 'competition' without which no respectable paper could hope to flourish.

The competition consisted of four sketches, each representing a local place name. Lockwood of course was easy, a sketch of a lock and a clump of trees; Berry Brow, a little more difficult, was represented by a black-berry and a man wiping the sweat off his brow. The others I forget.

In the best tradition of such puzzles, a prize was offered for the first correct solution. Not a motor car -but a half penny.

The sole issue had only one copy which was handed round. The project fizzled out, without the intervention of S.O.G.A.T.

* * * * *

> ..... *And if all that youthful energy generated a powerful thirst, who better to quench it than a local manufacturer, not unconnected with the author of these memoirs? As this handbill shows neither soft drinks, nor price rises were unknown in 1914.*

WILLOW LANE,

HUDDERSFIELD,

*September 28th, 1914.*

DEAR SIR (OR MADAM),

We beg to advise you that commencing on Thursday next, October 1st, our prices for Aerated Waters will be as follows:—

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Splits and Half-pints** | ... | **9d.** per doz. net. |
| **Imperial Pints** | ... | ... **1s. 2d.** per doz. net. |
| **Syphons** | ... ... | ...**2s. 6d.** per doz. net. |
| **Danzig Spruce Beer**<br>**Peppermint Cordial**<br>**Raspberry do.**<br>**Gingerette do.** | | **1s. 6d.** per quart.<br>**6s.** per gall.<br>Bottles extra. |
| **Lime Juice do.** | | **5s. 6d.** per gall. Bottles extra. |

We very much regret this advance in prices, but the very high price of Cane Sugar and other materials used in our productions has left us no alternative.

Yours faithfully,

(*Signed*) **BENJAMIN SHAW & SONS, LTD.**

## "AN IMPORTANT ACCESSION TO THE ESTABLISHED RELIGION": HOLY TRINITY AND ITS CHURCHYARD.

**John C Brook.**

*Such was the verdict of the Archbishop of York at the consecration of Holy Trinity, a church of "great benefit and utility" in 1819. Built to ease the burdens on the Parish Church less than a mile away, its utility was to be amply demonstrated in one notable respect. By the end of its active life, the churchyard was home to over 3,000 interments.*

The Church of Holy Trinity, Huddersfield, was built on a site about half a mile to the west of the town in 1818. It was provided with a graveyard on its south and west side positioned between the building and Trinity Street. The Church was finally consecrated late in 1819 and the graveyard opened for the first burials in March 1820. It was for the use of the inhabitants of Huddersfield, Marsh, Lindley and Fartown, though one fifth of the area was to be for the "benefit" of Benjamin Haigh Allen the founder of Holy Trinity. The graveyard remained in full use until 1855 when the opening of the cemetery at Edgerton meant that it was no longer needed. After that time burials were only permitted there

in an existing grave. It was around that time that the area of land now occupied by Trinity Place and which had previously been reserved for an extension to the graveyard was given up to building.

A study of the Burial Book of the Church shows that in the thirty five years between 1820 and 1854, during which the graveyard was fully open, about 2,770 persons were buried there. At the peak, which was during the last ten years of the period, up to 150 burials a year were taking place. As might be expected the infant mortality rate was high with no less than 28% of the total burials being of children up to one year old, and over half the number buried there is accounted for by children aged under ten. There was, however, some improvement in the infant mortality rate over the period. The first fifteen years from 1820 to 1834 show an average rate of 34% which had declined to 24% by the last fifteen years from 1840 to 1854. During the period none of the years varied sufficiently in the number of burials to indicate any extraordinary epidemic. The year 1851 had the largest number of deaths for those under ten years old.

After the age of ten the years up to twenty had the fewest burials recorded. From then on the number of deaths at each age was, perhaps suprisingly, appreciably greater between the ages of twenty and forty than from forty to seventy. Quite a number lived on to a ripe old age. Of those who survived to fifty, 29% went on to reach seventy years and 6% to eighty. Five persons went beyond ninety, the oldest being ninety six years old.

Thanks to a "monumental" survey carried out a few years ago by Edward Law, which listed every grave with the full inscriptions on them, it is possible to make some observations between the figures obtained from that survey and those from the burial book. Mr Law's survey lists 360 graves. A few of these carry no inscriptions and it is possible that some stones may be completely covered over with grass. However the inscriptions recorded cover the names of 740 people actually buried there between 1820 and 1854 which is 27% of the total burials during that period. Only 15% of infant deaths are inscribed whereas 36% of those over twenty five are remembered. The inscription dates are evenly spread, making it just as likely that a burial in the 1820s would carry one as would a burial in the 1850s.

It can be seen therefore that there are many unmarked graves in the yard. In particular this applies to the infants where overall only 130 out of about 800 are in marked graves. It may well have been the practice to bury the infants in communal graves having stored up the coffins for some time. A few of the graves carry inscriptions such as "4 infant children interred near this place" of "5 children lie near this place". One grave records the deaths of three children aged three, five and seven in the space of four days; another mother lost eight children, born over a period of twenty two years, varying in age from eight months to twenty four years. One couple had three of their teenage daughters die within seven weeks of each other. There is also a record of triplets, "Emma, Maria and Sophia born 11.4.1852 died in their infancy aged 8, 9 & 14 days". On the lighter side there is William Jackson who died aged sixty eight in 1862. His inscription tells us that for twenty two years he held office in the Oddfellows and "during that time attended 2,167 funerals".

After the partial closure of the graveyard in 1855 the number of interments, being restricted to existing graves, fell to around ten to twenty a year, a number reducing further by the end of the century to

only one to three a year. The present century saw a further thirteen interments; the last one of all being that of Violet Helen Howell of Trinity Street who was buried on October 25th, 1947 aged eighty seven years, bringing the grand total buried there to just over 3,200.

## SEEN AND HEARD

Mills and Methodism, two words that evoke so much of this area's history, and each the subject of one of this year's Society excursions. The visits began in June, when we visited Shelley and Skelmanthorpe and experienced Methodism in a "lone place."

Non Conformist chapels, noted A. R. Bielby in his book on the *Churches and Chapels of Kirklees*, "are an integral part of our landscape" and an "under-valued feature of the Pennine scene." As architectural history, these views would seem indisputable even if many of these chapels are now being converted to secular uses, or rebuilt in forms that would be unrecognisable to their founders. But some have survived, apparently little touched by the centuries, and one particularly enduring example is the Methodist Chapel at Far Bank, Shelley.

Opened for worship in 1785, on a site purchased two years earlier for just ten shillings, this can now claim to be the oldest non-conformist church in Kirklees still in regular public use.

A notable example of the early preaching house type of chapel, its dominant internal feature is the pulpit, rising high above the ground floor to the level of the surrounding galleries, where the original congregation sat. The installation of an organ in 1842 necessitated a major change in this original layout, and also removed one of the entrances by which men and women had made their separate ways into the segregated pews.

Further improvements in 1860 segregated the living from the dead when the burial space within the ground floor, (interments 5/- inside or 9d outdoors), was covered over and eventually filled with pews. But such earthy considerations must have seemed of little consequence to the early members, whose passions were expended on higher things.

Following the death of Wesley in 1791, three years after his memorable visit to Shepley, there was much discord within his church, both nationally and locally. The trustees of Shelley became so divided over their allegiance to the Wesleyan Church and the New Connexion that ownership of the Chapel was only decided after lengthy and sometimes violent disputes.

Returning eventually to more prosaic matters, the members erected a Sunday School in 1836 and the Chapel exterior received extensions in the 1880s that finally removed the mounting block, from which Wesley addressed his enthusiastic audience in 1788. But despite these alterations and the tempering of the original whitewashed interior with more elegant paintwork, the basic simplicity of the original building remains, surrounded by fields and tucked away at the end of a narrow lane, still recognisably the "lone place" of its founders.

Our own brief excursion down this particular Methodist trail ended at Skelmanthorpe's Pilling Lane Chapel, where Tom Wainwright provided the background history, while church members kindly provided the supper. Originally built as a Primitive Methodist Chapel in 1836, Pilling Lane

became Skelmanthorpe Methodist Church in 1977. Significantly, that church had begun its own life in the Wesleyan Methodist Connexion, when its founders were displaced by the troubles at a certain chapel in neighbouring Shelley.

* A. R. Beilby's *Churches and Chapels in Kirklees* was published by Kirklees Libraries and Museums in 1978, while the two chapels can each boast a recent history of their own. Judyth A. Rees wrote *A History of the Methodist Church, Far Bank, Shelley* in 1984 and Tom Wainwright marked the 150th anniversary of his church with *Our Methodist Heritage* in 1986.

* * *

In October it was the turn of the mills, already several centuries old when Methodism was young, to come under the spotlight of our annual "Day School." The word mill has now become so synonymous with the Industrial Revolution, that it is easy to forget the pre-industrial roots of these important buildings. Yet, as Dr Redmonds' painstaking research was to show, they were an important part of local life from at least the twelfth century. Not, of course, as the great industrial structures of the nineteenth century, but as humbler structures; corn mills, fulling mills, and, later, scribbling mills.

Part of the manorial system, their location was affected by administrative boundaries and that all-important supply of power, water. By the late 1200s there were at least a dozen such mills in the area, like Robert of Burton's at Burton, John of Linthwaite's at Lingards and the monks of Fountains' property at Colne Bridge.

The documentary sources are reasonably numerous, but sadly lacking in detail. Court rolls and estate documents provide some evidence, as does the distribution of the surname Walker. People with this name were originally fullers, and the appearance of the word in local records such as the 1379 Poll Tax gives some indication of those who derived at least some part of their income from the first mechanised textile process, while their counterpart, Miller, did much the same for the corn grinding process.

In addition there is physical evidence; goits, dams, "shuttles" or sluices, but it isn't until the latter centuries that documents provide details of the actual fabric of the mills. For the most part they are simply a presence; the home of a miller or fuller, the subject of a dispute about water rights, the place to which tenants must bring their cloth to be fulled or their corn to be ground, the important source of revenue for the manorial economy.

By the nineteenth century, of course, things could not have been more different, mills were now the dominant feature of a landscape that was changing beyond recognition. Cyril Pearce could therefore begin his talk with a series of images that contrasted vividly with what had passed before. Slides of industrial squalor, malnutrition, disease, grinding poverty, insanitary rivers and polluted air, presented a graphic picture of the dark side of Victorian industrialisation. This was the England of dark Satanic mills superceeding the green and pleasant land of manorial mills as described by Dr Redmonds. But real life is never as simple as that and even among the Industrialists themselves, there were those who sought to ameliorate the worst effects of the factory system. These men, who saw the relationship between employer and employee in a paternalistic light, formed the basis of Mr Pearce's fascinating insight into local industrial life.

Operating in a tradition that owed more to the traditional social obligations of the landed classes than thrusting industrial entrepreneurs, men such as Earl Fitzwilliam could produce quality workers' houses in communities like Ellsecar. While nearer to home, Edward Copley was building houses, library and school alongside his mill at Copley, Joseph Hirst was creating his small community at Wilshaw and the Brooks were creating impressive facilities in Meltham Mills. None of these was on a scale to match Saltaire, which is unusual in its sheer size and completeness, but all exhibited the same ideals, the same concern to provide a healthy, educated, loyal and useful workforce for their employer, who in turn was obliged to spend some of his profit in providing the necessary facilities for them.

Not all industrialists of course followed such a visionary course, but some still continued to influence the social life of their communities in less dramatic ways, as the park, cricket field and golf course at Marsden bear witness to the Crowthers' munificence.

That in brief, was the theory, after the A.G.M. we set out to see something of the practice.

As an example of a purpose-built industrial settlement, Wilshaw is a somewhat surprising place. For a start, there is no mill, that is long gone. There are cottages in a tree lined avenue and dwellings in St Mary's Court, but nothing to equal the serried terraces of Saltaire. There is a church, of unusual design, and farm buildings whose industrial history is only evident from their name, -Old Mill Farm. Joseph Hirst also had premises at Royd Edge and most of his workforce came in to Wilshaw to work, only a fortunate few, such as "overlookers and skilled workmen" actually lived in the "neat and commodious dwellings" planted in those sylvan surroundings*. From relatively humble beginnings in loomshops at the top of the hill, Hirst built up a substantial business which in addition to housing also provided an element of profit sharing for the workers. Now little of that remains and the air of industrial unreality is enhanced by the memorials to Hirst's daughter Mary, who died in 1859. The Almshouses are dedicated to her and a large memorial stands outside the diminutive church-cum-Sunday School, consecrated by a reluctant Bishop in 1863.

A short trip to Meltham and Meltham Mills soon dispelled any such poignant reflections, for here, despite recent demolitions at the Mills themselves, the Brook family legacy is still very much a living part of village life.

A cluster of terrace houses and allotments in the Calmlands area were erected by the Brooks in the 1880s to house workers, as was the remarkable development at Bank Buildings. Here, deep in the wooded valley just below Calmlands, stands the massive terrace of thirty four dwellings built in the time of Charles Leigh Brook, by an unknown architect, in an austere "Scottish" style that casts a strangely brooding presence over the little beck and the gardens beyond. These wooded walks, officially known as the People's Pleasure Grounds, were designed for Brook by Joshua Major of Leeds, to provide a suitable place of recreation for his workpeople.

Providing suitable fare for their minds was more problematic, many employers were wary of the Mechanics Institutions and their possibly "seditious" effect. Meltham, however, did achieve its place of further education -the Carlisle Institute- by courtesy of the major employer. Named after the company's managing director, J. W. Carlisle, it still

houses the village library and associated activities. While across the street, stands another monument to Brook influence, the Town Hall, dedicated to Edward and opened by Charles in 1898.

* Rev Joseph Hughes *History of the Township of Meltham*, 1866.

* * *

The most publicised local history event of the year was undoubtedly the Polytechnic's 150th Anniversary celebrations. Although that institution is actually only twenty one years old, it is heir to a continuous tradition of further education that stretches back through Technical College and Mechanics Institution to the Young Men's Mental Improvement Society of 1841. This somewhat unlikely sounding organisation was founded by the five employees of Frederic Schwann, a German merchant and eventual president of the Mechanic's Institution, at a temperance hotel in Cross Church Street. By 1884 the Mechanics had become the Technical School and Mechanics Institution, renamed as the Technical College in 1896, finally emerging as the Huddersfield Polytechnic in 1970. The story of the intervening years is told by Professor O'Connell in a special pamphlet, *The Polytechnic of Huddersfield: 150 Years of Achievment* which accompanied an exhibition staged at the Polytechnic library by our own Secretary. Entitled "From Mechanics Institution to Polytechnic" this depicted the various stages of the Polytechnic's history, with panels relating to Frederic Schwann 'The Founder of the Institute', the Mechanic's Institution and its library, the Female Educational Institution, the Exhibition of 1883, the Technical College, College of Technology and Polytechnic.

There has also been a series of lectures on local history topics, including one by Clifford Stephenson, who, in addition to describing the "Founders of local industry" was able to add a personal touch to the celebration by recalling his own student days at the College, over seventy years ago.

## BOOKSHELF

This has been an important year in the history of the local labour movement, and the event has been suitably commemorated in two publications.

The Colne Valley Labour Party, born at Nobbs Lane, Slaithwaite, a century ago has the distinction of being the country's first labour constituency party and its second independent labour organisation. As the party of Victor Grayson and Philip Snowden it has seen more than its share of the highs and lows of political life and these are faithfully chronicled by editor Cyril Pearce and a team of contributors. What they have produced is essentially an insider's view of politics, not, as the editor points out, a "serious" history, but a "book by members of the labour movement for members of the labour movement". In short, it is as a celebration, albeit a critical one, that the Party has produced the *Colne Valley Labour Party 1891-1991: A Souvenir Centenary History*. Much of the early material appeared in the *Jubilee Souvenir History* of 1941 and the text intersperses subsequent developments with biographies of the major personalities. The story comes right up to date; considering local politics in Kirklees as well as the fate of the constituency party itself, which was to suffer in 1987, "the biggest shock in its history" when the electorate took a sharp turn to the political right. As the editor pointedly observes, "that the constituency should be so served in

the Party's centenary year is probably the last thing that its founding fathers expected to see when they met in Nobbs Lane in July 1891".

That it was not always so, is illustrated by the formidably titled *Rising Sun of Socialism: Trade Unionism and the emergence of the Independent Labour Party in Huddersfield* by Robert B. Perks. Based on the author's Ph.D. thesis it is one of seven essays in a collection edited by Keith Laybourn and David James for the West Yorkshire Archive Service, under the even weightier title *Rising Sun of Socialism: the Independent Labour Party in the textile district of the West Riding of Yorkshire between 1890 and 1914.*

The latest publication from Kirklees Cultural Services aims for a much more popular market. *Words on War: memories of the 'Home Front' during the Second World War from the people of the Kirklees area*, is a thematic compilation of personal memories, contemporary photographs and Bamforth postcards. Introduced with the necessary qualification that Kirklees didn't actually exist fifty years ago, Helga Hughes' compilation brings to life the memories of those who lived through the war, and lived to tell their tale to the Kirklees Sound Archive.

"Exciting architecture with glimpses of a bygone age" is the subject of the Colne Valley Society's new publication, aimed at those who prefer to see historical sites for themselves. *Exploring Old Marsden*, produced by the Society's Local History Group, outlines the village's history before embarking on a detailed tour of notable buldings.

## IN BRIEF

Mr John B. Brierley adds a footnote to the history of smoking in Huddersfield written by Edward Law for last autumn's *Journal*. The "Pestilential smoke" may be an unfashionable commodity in these health conscious times, but Huddersfield can still boast a thriving, if somewhat unlikely, connection with the tobacco industry.

Down at St Andrews Road, in a former Brook Motors factory is the only surviving pipe-cleaner manufacturer in the country. Founded by John L. Brierley Ltd. as a sideline to the declining chenille yarn trade in 1936, the business operated for many years out of just one room in Turnbridge Mills, until trading conditions lead to the purchase of their only rival, Hewitt & Booth Ltd. of Wallasey. The new business, which employs as many as twenty five people, now inhabits the larger premises at St Andrews Road and counts itself the largest European supplier of this most specialised trade.

* * *

What's in a name (2). The answer to this fishy question seems to be rather less flippant than might have been originally supposed. A news item unearthed by Mrs McLester in the *Popular Illustrated Guide to Holmfirth*, published in 1909, refers to a list of "notable Holmfirth People" which includes news of a Holme Valley exile, for whom the injunction to "go west" had an unfortunate consequence.

> Professor Allen Haddock, editor of *Human Nature* is a native of Underbank. The family removed to Batley and from thence Mr Haddock emigrated to America. Here he has earned success as a professor of phrenology and newspaper editor. Unfortunately the San Francisco earthquake caused him much personal loss.

* * * * *

Editor: Mr. K. Brockhill,
52 Croft Gardens,
Birkby,
Huddersfield.