



# Huddersfield Local History Society

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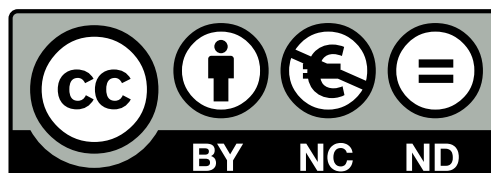
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# Huddersfield

## LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY



### JOURNAL

WINTER 2005 - 2006

## GLOBAL WARMING?

My Great, great grandfather on my mother's side of the family, Charles Sedgwick, was employed as a game keeper, shepherd, and quarry man by the Stanhopes of Canon Hall. He lived at Snailsden, a small isolated farm and later a shooting lodge which was situated between Dunford Bridge and Hade Edge above Holmfirth. It still exists today just above the side of Winscar reservoir.

Several years ago, Gillian, found in the Stanhope papers at the Sheffield City Archives copies of letters sent by Charles to the Estate manager at Canon Hall.

Recently, when I had been in a conversation about the succession of mild winters we have experienced, I recalled some of the words of one of Charles' letter dated February 11th. 1861.

He writes in his letter:- "But will begin about the weather, I think Saturday was one of the roughest days that has been here for this many years we have had great difficulty in collecting our sheep together and we are still about 7 or 8 short which I fears are under the snow as we cannot as yet find them we have snow I have no doubt in some places 7 or 8 yards thick I think I never saw it so drifted and it at present looks like to stay for some time....".

In my lifetime, I remember some particular bad winters, in particular 1947 when my grand parents lived at Bolster Moor which was cut off for about 6 weeks, and a bus was buried for most of that time, and some gas lamps, just poked out of snow. Also in the winter of 1953 or 1954 we had to walk back from school in Almondbury to Berry Brow and I remember enjoyed watching a snow plough unsuccessfully try to recover a bus buried in snow near the top of High Lane, just below Ashes Lane at Castle Hill. (At that time High lane had high walls on both sides which easily filled with snow).

Yet in these memories of mine I don't remember snow as deep as "7 or 8 yards thick"! So no doubt, Charles' letter is just another piece of evidence to prove that our climate has certainly changed over the last 140 years or so and no doubt will continue to do so. The real question is whether (excuse the pun!) man has influenced those changes or not!

Howard Robinson.

SNAILS DEN  
WINTER 1991.



SLADE RD BETWEEN  
GOLCAR & BOLSTER  
MOOR 1947



## The Great Escape..... In Huddersfield?

The year is 1911, the month is April, and Huddersfield is buzzing , Ehric Weiss is coming to town. Ehric WHO ? You will know him better by his Stage-name , Harry HOUDINI.

He was born on the 6th of April 1874, at Appleton, Wisconsin, U.S.A.

His father was a Jewish rabbi, Meyer Samuel Weiss. From an early age he wanted to be a performer, and when a travelling circus came to town, he persuaded the owner Jack Hoffer, to let him take a turn on the trapeze. When his mother found out she marched into the circus, grabbed young Ehric, and marched him straight out again, saying not a word. Unrepentant he managed to get jobs with other passing circuses, but his parents had other ideas, and apprenticed him to a locksmith, a job he hated ,and, in his own words, as soon he could he made a bolt for the door, and left.

Again he joined a circus, working as Clown , Ventriloquist, and Conjurer, using rope ties and handcuffs to perform escapes in the circus ring.

When the circus arrived on Rhode Island, and opened up in a town where Sunday performances were forbidden, they performed anyway. As a consequence the circus was fined ,and even when all of them pooled their cash they were unable to pay it, and all the personal were put in jail together in one small cell. The circus giant was too tall for the cell, and the fat lady too wide, and everyone implored Ehric to pick the lock and release them. He succeeded , and they paraded in single file down the main street. May be its true ,or it maybe just another of his stories ,he was his own best publicist, at every opportunity.

He was inspired to take the name Houdini after reading a book called Memoires, by Robert H oudin, who one of the greatest magicians of all time. From this time on Houdini travelled the world as "The Handcuff King", escaping from all kinds of restraints that people could devise.

And so it was that in April 1911 he was booked to appear at the Palace theatre for the week . The report in the Huddersfield Examiner tells us of the various challenges offered by the people of town ,including escapes from a straight jacket, a large can ,full of water ,with the top padlocked on the outside.He was nailed into a packing case, made by a local joinery firm, which was then roped up and the ropes nailed to the packing case. Another challenge offered by a local undertaker , was considered too unpleasantly suggestive for public consumption. A final challenge on Friday April 8<sup>th</sup> was made by Francis and John Ewbank Tindall, of Law Dyson & Son of Asply Place ,Huddersfield. This father and son team , would make a dreaded Sea Bag as set out in the hand bill accompanying this article, and in the second house Houdini would attempt to escape in full vei

of the audience and under the scrutiny of the Tindals committee. I am unable to discover any record of the outcome of his efforts. If anyone reading this was present-----??

After touring around the world he returned to America, and there he met an untimely death, by an incident partly of his own making. His performances required an exceptional standard of fitness ,and he was discussing physical fitness with a group of students, when one of them punched him hard in the stomach, to test his claim of being able to withstand such a blow. Not expecting this, he wasn't able to brace himself, and took the full force. A few days later , in Detroit he died as a result of the injury.

Today he lies in the Machpelah Cemetery, buried with Masonic honours, interred in the large bronze coffin he used in his show, this by his own request. The name of Harry Houdini is synonymus with escapology and magic, and remains a ledgend to both the public and the magical fraternity alike.

Long live the name of HOUDINI.

## THE VITAL INGREDIENT

In areas such as Huddersfield, adequate water supplies were vital for industry as well as daily existence. As D F E Sykes observed in his 1898 account of *Huddersfield and its vicinity*.

*It is to this district a prime necessity not only for drinking and ablution, but for the very industry on which the future of the town and neighbourhood depends. Even those ... most prone to grumble --- are apt to wax eloquent in eulogy of their water supply.*

A century later, Ernest Beaumont does likewise, in true Yorkshire style.

### WATTER

Ther's watter up on't maanten top,  
All deep an' cowl an' still.  
Bur aah can it just stop up theear,  
Reyt at top at 'ill.

-----  
Cos watter runs daan 'ill, tha naws,  
In riverlets an streeams.  
Cascadin' daahn them waterfalls-----,  
Only up 'ill I thi dreeams.

-----  
Them streeams the' join tagether,  
The' mack ther way daahn 'ill.  
Then the' join an' mack a river,  
Aay ther gerrin' bigger still.

-----  
The' pass through Taahns an' Cities,  
An' fill some reservoys.  
The' come rushin; through some places,  
By gum-- the' mack some noise.

-----  
Sometimes the' run on quiet,  
All gentle like an' calm.  
Just runnin slow an' peeasfull,  
By gow the' tack ther taahm.

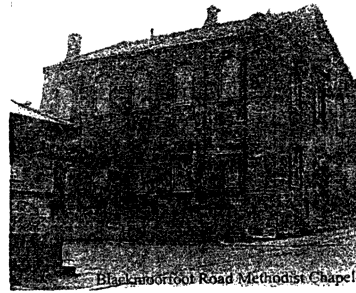
-----  
The' might stop a bit in t' valley,  
An' leeav a lake or two.  
But movin' this way ----- that way,  
The' mack ther way reyt through.

-----  
Bur onward ivver onward,  
The' try t' get t' t' sea.  
Bur alius goin' daanward,---  
Not upward, does t' see.

-----  
Nah we couldn't do baaht watter,  
It's as lifeblood runnin' by.  
It's es best friend an' es enemy,  
On that tha can rely.

-----  
Bur aah it stops on t' maanten top,  
Aal nivver understand.  
Cos up'ill isn't daan'ill,  
At least not in this land.

## MEMORIES OF BLACKMOORFOOT METHODIST CHAPEL



### Short history of Blackmoorfoot Methodist

A Sunday School was built first on 3 November 1845 which included a Mission or Preaching Room and ten years later in May 1855 a Chapel was erected. In 1863 the west wall was rebuilt and a new Vestry and 'Convenience' built. Sadly in 1959 the Chapel closed.

During the early fifties we moved house and I started attending Blackmoorfoot Road Methodist Sunday School in Crosland Moor. The Sunday School was old and even in those days quite shabby. The Chapel however which was a newer building seemed to be in good repair. The entrance to the Sunday School was on Nabcroft Lane and the main door of the Chapel was on Blackmoorfoot Road. The tennis courts backed onto Chapel Terrace.

I started in the Junior Sunday School which met in a room at the back. The main feature of the room was a large stove with an iron guard around it to protect us from burning ourselves. We sat in rows facing our Sunday School Superintendent and turned into a circle to listen facing our Sunday School teacher who then read the lesson. I always enjoyed attending except for when we sang the collection hymn 'Hear the Pennies Dropping'. My parents always sent me with a shiny sixpence or it could have been a silver threepenny bit but I always felt I should take a penny and fit in with the hymn!

As you got older you went into the main hall with a stage. We sat on benches in long rows with our teacher at the end, girls at one side of the hall and boys at the other. In the morning after Sunday School we went into Chapel for the first part of the service and children's address and then ran home to the smell of roast joint cooking in the oven. In the afternoons after our first hymn we went upstairs into small classrooms with skylight windows for light. Our teacher would read the lesson, word for word and then she would then read from books such as Anne of Green Gables, Little Women, What Katy Did, moral books teaching us about caring and kindness to others.

In those days people's social lives revolved around the Church. Very few people had a television although we had one for the Coronation in 1953. In the winter there were evenings with the Sunday School Parent Teachers Association. These usually took the form of a Beetle Drive for children and Whist Drive for adults. Naturally the Beetle Drive finished much earlier than the Whist Drive and we children then played Hide and Seek. Blackmoorfoot Sunday School was ideal for this. It had long velvet curtains at the window where you could hide behind, at the back of the piano, under the pews which went around the room, behind the furniture. Eventually our parents collected us, tidied us up and then we would have a supper of Meat and Potato Pie. After we had cleared away a social evening then took place. This sometimes took the form of entertainment.

Someone would sing a solo such as "Oh for the Wings of a Dove" or something from Gilbert and Sullivan, recite a poem such as 'Albert and the Lion' and once a parent played the 'spoons' and the 'bones'. Occasionally we had dancing such as the waltz, quickstep etc. However, this was interspersed with games in between and called a social because we were not allowed to call it a dance....? I remember we went quite dressed up and angora boleros were all the rage for girls.

In the Summer there was a trip for Sunday School scholars to the Seaside. I remember I only went once and it was to Southport. We set off in high anticipation and I had 6/4½d to spend in my purse, 2/6d was to save for tea in a café. We got there and sat on a grassy bank to eat our sandwiches. Unfortunately it was near a Fun Fair and as soon as we had eaten we dashed in and went on rides. By 1.00 pm our money was spent and my friend and I then walked around Southport with nothing to spend. The sea was miles away, the day was hot and we longed to be able to buy a drink or an ice cream. At last it was time for tea, we paid our 2/6d and we were soon sat round the table. The waitress brought everyone a ham salad. To my horror when I looked at mine there was a dead blue bottle on it. As it was quite unusual in those days to eat out, I didn't realise you could complain. Therefore I didn't eat it but made do with bread and butter and a cup of tea. When I got home of course I boasted that it had been a wonderful day.

The year after there was no money for a trip to the seaside. Instead the Sunday School walked in a crocodile down Blackmoorfoot Road to The Griffin, down Birkhouse and up to Greenhead Park where we played games, two legged races, sack races etc all for small prizes such as Mars Bars. We ate our sandwiches and then walked back home. What a happy day we had.

There were many social events held. We had our own concert party who entertained us with songs and dances. There was a Garden Party in the Summer held in the Tennis Courts. A party at Christmas where presents were given out and also we staged a pantomime where many of us were involved. As we got older the Choir was also something we were involved in. The photograph below was taken by the Huddersfield Examiner and I am third on the right as you look at the photograph.





One year we had a new Minister who was very much against gambling. Whilst we were on holiday my father sat in his deckchair on the beach relaxing and reading his paper 'The Daily Herald' when he found an article in about our Chapel. The new Minister had denounced the Whist Drive which met on a Wednesday afternoon as 'gambling' and it had not only made local news but had hit the national papers. It said he stormed out and shut the door after with him with such a bang that the Chapel shuddered. There was even a cartoon in the Daily Express by Osborne Lancaster. In the cartoon two quite well off people were talking together. One said to the other "Are you going to Monte Carlo to play roulette?" "No" said the other "I am going to Blackmoorfoot Road Chapel to play Whist". Needless to say the Minister didn't stay long (I don't know what happened to the Whist Drive).

The main event of the year was of course the Sunday School Anniversary which was always held on the second Sunday in May. We children were busy getting ready for this weeks before the event. Learning hymns, verses to speak and choral singing. To help us with our choral singing a musician came all the way from Holmfirth. He used to tap his baton and say "One, two threeeeeeeee!" his tone becoming higher and higher. We children used to wait for this and usually collapse into laughter. However, he must have eventually licked us into shape as we always seemed ready and prepared for the day. Although I was quite shy there was no question about not being involved, standing and saying your piece and singing a verse of a hymn.

You often hear of people from my generation say that they had new clothes for Whitsuntide but we had new clothes for the Anniversary. It could be quite cold in early May, nevertheless Summer clothes were put on even if the weather was chilly. Vests were discarded, woollen knee socks were replaced by white cotton socks, shoes with sandals.

On the day of the Anniversary each child had a rose pinned to their clothes which were given by a local benefactor. We climbed into the Choir Vestry and a sea of faces met us from the pews as both upstairs and downstairs was usually full. Everyone in the congregation were dressed in suits and costumes or alternatively cotton dresses with lightweight coats and of course most of the ladies wore hats.

A special speaker sometimes a Lay Preacher or Minister came for the day. One Minister came and he got quite worked up during his sermon, banging his fist on the pulpit. To our horror and I must say amusement his teeth flew out. He came along occasionally after that and we all waited with anticipation to see if this would happen again but it never did!

There was great rivalry between Park Road Wesleyan Chapel and Blackmoorfoot Road Methodist Chapel. Their Anniversary was the week before and we always liked to beat their Park Road's collection often a wealthy member at Blackmoorfoot Chapel topping it up in order to do this. However this didn't save Blackmoorfoot as I said before the building was old and in need of repair, the boiler burst and it was decided that the Chapel would close. It was on 31 December 1959 when the last service was held. Sadly the Sunday School and Chapel were demolished and a Shell Mex and BP Petrol Station was built. This didn't last long and remained an eyesore for some time. Eventually the land was bought and the Louis Brook Homes which are sheltered bungalows for the elderly were built. Cherry Trees were planted around the Homes and each Spring there is a wonderful display of blossom.

I was at a crossroads in life. I was soon to leave school and start on a two year Secretarial Course. Quite a few of my friends were already working and felt they had grown out of going to Church. What should I do? I decided to try Park Road Wesleyan Chapel. A few of us went and we received a warm welcome. I met my husband at Park Road and have very many happy memories of everyone there but that's another story.....!

Elaine Crabtree

## **NEWSOME IN 1930.** By Stanley Morris

Newsome was a much smaller village in those days, before the Corporation built the estate covering Newsome Avenue, Castle Avenue and the west of Towngate. A trip round the village may revive memories for some or may give some historical facts for others.

Starting outside the Lych Gate, the farm directly across the road belonged to the Benson family. They owned the fields on either side of Daisy Royd (then known as The Daisy) and either side of Newsome Road stretching out by the side of the mill.

The crossroads was the tram terminus where the tubby little cars with open platforms upstairs, specially built for the steep run from town, reversed. There was a round building with seats which served as a waiting room, and, next to it, in Newsome Road, was a wooden shop called "The Café" (although no teas or refreshments were offered), run by Mr and Mrs Beckwith selling confectionary, newspapers and periodicals.

Newsome Road was open fields as far as the Nook on one side, and to the larger houses on the other. The drive to the Mill, known as the Private, ran from opposite The Café.

The shops at the corner of Church Lane and Newsome Road South (then Berry Brow Road) had not yet been built. The Corporation houses along Church Lane were new and looked out onto a field which is now a row of shops. Moving along Church Lane there was the large workshop of Ernest Jenkinson, Joiner, Undertaker and one-time wicketkeeper at Hall Bower! Further along, at the top of the Scar, was the Co-op where most Newsomers bought their groceries and collected their annual "divi". I can still remember our Co-op number, 19508! Between the Co-op and the Mill was the large house of Stanley Taylor, the Mill owner, virtual "Lord of the Manor" and Vicar's warden.

Moving on to Towngate. The first shop on the left sold mixed groceries and confectionery, and also had facilities for re-charging accumulators, which were essential for powering radios, particularly for those with houses without electricity. Across the road was Dick Uttley's chip shop which, not only served fish and chips (1d for chips and 2d for fish), but also sold tripe and "wet fish". There were three pubs on Towngate. First on the left was *The Fountain*, then the three storey *Clarence*, and further along on the right, *The Wellington*, which was replaced much later by the new one now in Newsome Road. Half way along Towngate on the left hand side, was the old, stone built, water tank, which was used before mains water was available. Near this was another little sweet shop, very popular with children run by Mrs Dransfield.

The next shop on this side was Jossie Oldfield's butchers, run by two brothers which had for some time, its own abattoir at the back.

Next to *The Wellington* on Towngate was Bob Kaye's Barber Shop, where the only cut available was "short back and sides". Bob was a lifelong member of the Church and used to hand pump the organ before the electric blower was installed.

Separating Bob Kaye's shop from the school was the start of the footpath to Close Hill known as "the Intakes". The School was for children up to the leaving age (14). Infants Standard 1 were accommodated in a separate building which also included the home of the Headmaster, Frank Carter, who

was also people's Warden. There were separate playgrounds for boys and girls between the infants' building and the main school.. Downstairs was a large room, divided by a partition, which was used for many church functions such as Sales of Work, Concerts (including the annual Sunday School Concert and Prize-giving). Whist Drives and Dances, Pea and Pie Suppers etc.

Sunday School was held there each Sunday afternoon and children were also expected to attend morning service in church, where they sat in classes with their teachers in command at the end of each pew.

From the School, along Towngate to West End where it turned into Close Hill Lane, apart from the chapel and a few house, were fields, soon to disappear when the Corporation houses were built.

Opposite the School was the entrance to Saint John's Avenue, formerly known as "Slur Lane", due to its muddy condition before being surfaced when the Corporation houses were built on the left hand side.

At the top of the Avenue was, and still is, the Working Men's Club, then a strictly male preserve, with its bowling green at the rear. Half way down, where now Newsome Avenue starts, was the entrance to the Allotments, where many men of the village had their gardens.

Then, as now, the path to Hall Tower was opposite the end of Saint John's Avenue. The row of Corporation houses had been built down Newsome Road South, facing the private bungalows and houses which are still there.

On the left of Newsome Road South there was open ground, part of which was a vegetable garden worked by Georgie Parkin, a wiry little man no taller than five feet.

The remaining bit of Newsome was the hill, Daisy Royd, to the right of the Church, which was mostly Benson's fields, apart from the Vicarage, a pair of semi-detached houses half way up, and a group of nine houses made out of an old farm building where the road turned left and became Jackroyd Lane. Now long gone, alas, as that is where I was born in 1921. On Jackroyd Lane was the remains of an old pit with part of the old shaft still outstanding. It was possible to drop articles down the shaft and hear them splash into the water, far below.

Much has changed, but I still enjoy a day out from Manchester, over Holme Moss, through Honley, up to Castle Hill and then back through Newsome.

*(Produced by courtesy of the Newsome Parish Magazine)*

The Story behind a visit to Lambeth Palace on 24<sup>th</sup> October 1996  
by JOAN BATLEY

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It starts with a family in Armitage Bridge named Shells. Father, Mother and four children, 3 boys named Harry, Norman and David and one girl named Miriam. They lived in Dean Brook Road, the back door of the house looks onto a stream which runs down from Big Valley through Armitage Bridge. Father made his living selling fish and went around Armitage Bridge and Berry Brow hawking fish. My Mother used to tell me what good fish he sold.

The family were brought up to attend St. Paul's Church Armitage Bridge. Harry was a choir boy. When the boys grew up 2 of them worked in John Brook's Mill at Armitage Bridge. Harry worked in the office of an Engineering Works named Hopkinsons.

It was whilst working at Hopkinsons, Harry met my Father, Luther Bayliffe, and they became good friends, a friendship which lasted all their lives.

One day they were discussing Church life and my Father told Harry about the Young Men's Bible Class at Salem Chapel (United Methodist) which he attended. It was led by a Local Preacher named Joe Heeley. Harry was interested and joined the class. Harry and Luther studied to be Local Preachers tutored by Joe Heeley. For this I guess they visited Joe's home and there met Joe's daughters. Harry fell in love with Eleanor Gertrude Scott (Nellie) and my Father fell in love with Elizabeth (Lizzie) and eventually they married. They both offered for the ministry. Salem was to finance Harry and Shepley United Methodist Chapel was to finance my Father. In the meantime Shepley had their own candidate and gave backward for my Father. Harry was accepted and sent to Ranmoor College Sheffield and was ordained a Methodist Minister. He was stationed in Sheffield, Cornwall and Coventry.

My Father, Mother and my Brother would spend holiday time with them in Cornwall and one Sunday when Harry was preaching in a Chapel with a very high Pulpit, my Brother called out when all was quiet "Come down Uncle Harry before you fall"

Whilst Harry was stationed in Coventry he became very friendly with the Bishop of Coventry and Harry decided he wanted to go back to his roots in the Anglican Church. So he had to return to the Anglican College. During the time Harry was in college his wife and 2 children stayed with his wife's parents, Joe and Emily Heeley. There was no animosity that I knew of by the family, there was always plenty of love and care and although Joe and Emily were staunch Methodists, they accepted Harry going back to his roots in the Anglican Church.

I didn't arrive on the scene until my Uncle was well established in the Anglican Church. I spent many happy hours at the Vicarage in Mickliffe as a child with my cousins, Charles and Muriel. The large rambling vicarage made a wonderful place to play hide and seek. Sometimes we children got a bit out of hand and noisy and my Uncle would come out of his study and ask us to be less noisy. I can remember visiting farm houses with my Uncle and I was given a glass of milk and some baking fresh from the oven. I used to borrow a bicycle and cycle up the Lane to Hook Moor and around the Countryside. I remember cycling with cousin Muriel to Sherburn-in-Elmet, Church Fenton and Towton.

The War years came and my Uncle went to Hull to be a Vicar and later to Wetwang. My parents and I visited Wetwang, it was at the time of the Archbishop of York doing a pilgrimage, walking from village to village talking to the people in the villages. The

Archbishop arrived in Wetwang about noon on the Saturday morning and the people gathered outside to hear the Archbishop speak to them. 1943 the Tanks were all over the Wolds practising for D-Day and this Saturday morning they were out in full force and unfortunately the Archbishop could hardly be heard for the noise from the Tanks.

Muriel, my cousin, went to train as a Nurse and Charles followed his Father into the Ministry. Charles went to Boarding School in York, Archbishops Grammar School. He wasn't happy leaving home but eventually settled down to Boarding School life. He always wanted to be a Vicar like his Father. When he was a little boy he used to say when he grew up he wanted to be a Bishop. Charles was always a happy-go-lucky fellow and up to University didn't take life seriously at all, especially getting down to study. But after a struggle he made his exams and was accepted as a student at Durham University to study Theology. Once at University he worked hard and got his degree. His first appointment was at Almondbury Church as a Curate. He had charge of the Anglican Mission Church at the bottom of Somerset Road which is now a R.C. Church. Later he moved to London working in Newington and Wandsworth where he met his Wife Anne. They adopted 2 children, Sarah and Peter. Later they went to Norfolk to a shared ministry working with other denominations

Then he moved to Bristol Cathedral which was a Crown appointment and he had to go to 10 Downing Street for this appointment. He was made a Canon. Whilst in Bristol he worked with other denominations. He retired from Bristol and went to live at Wellow near Bath and then to Glastonbury. During his retirement he organised painting and prayer retreats. I have attended one of his painting and prayer retreats at Sleights near Whitby. When I was there it was Spring time and the daffodils were in full bloom, blossom on the trees so there was plenty of beautiful things to paint. From Compline 9 pm – 10 am we had to be quiet. The day started with Prayers followed by breakfast. At 10 am we could break our silence and go out to paint. A tutor was there to help us paint. Mid afternoon we gathered to show our work and to discuss it. Then we would go for a walk and come back to have a lecture about some great painter and his work illustrated with slides. On the last day an exhibition was held of our paintings and it was great to see what other people had painted. The retreats are for those beginning to paint as well as those who paint well. I found painting difficult and when I started to study to be a Local Preacher in the Methodist Church I gave up painting.

One evening in August 1996 the telephone rang and I answered to hear my cousin Charles inviting me to the Chapel at Lambeth Palace for the award service of the St. Augustine Cross. Charles said "I have been awarded a Cross". I naturally said "What for?". Then Charles said, "I will put Anne on the phone". Anne said, "Charles can't tell you himself, the Cross has been awarded for ecumenical work". In Charles' case it was for his retreat work painting and prayer which was ecumenical.

Each retreat would have a tutor, a priest, clergyman or minister from different denominations, R.C's, Anglicans and Non conformists, to administer sacrament.

I was delighted to be chosen as one of the people to attend the service and accepted the invitation. Charles could only invite 15 people to attend the award service. So I was going to the service without Eric, but he would travel to London with me. However, two weeks before we were due to go, Charles' son, Peter, was unable to accept the invitation. He had started a new business and couldn't take time off. So Eric was invited to go with me which put the icing on the cake for me.

On Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> October 1996, Eric and I travelled to London by Rapide and booked into an Hotel near Victoria Bus Station. At the Reception Desk we enquired about a Taxi to take us to Lambeth Palace for 5.40 pm. It was all organised for us. We received a telephone call in the Bedroom to say the Taxi had arrived and so we were taken to Lambeth Palace arriving early having given ourselves plenty of time because it was rush hour. So we walked along the Thames Embankment looking across at the Houses of Parliament.

Charles and Anne arrived along with other people attending the service and we all went through the large door which led into the quadrangle of Lambeth Palace. There were lawns, flower beds and a large curved drive which led to the door of the Palace. The door was opened for the visitors and we mounted the stairs; it was like going up the staircase of our Town Hall. When we reached the top of the stairs two Ladies greeted us and directed us along the corridor where there were oil paintings of past and present Archbishops. In a glass case were artefacts brought back from Mozambique by Archbishop Carey and his Wife.

We descended from the corridor into the Chapel. It was dimly lit, in fact the Archbishop apologised for the bad lighting, they were trying to introduce some extra lighting without spoiling the architecture of the Chapel. On the floor of the Chapel were black and white tiles. There was a beautifully embroidered alter cloth; it depicted light radiating out from a central point and producing the colours of the rainbow. The stained glass windows had Christ as the central figure, his life, his suffering in the garden of Gethsemane. Very beautifully carved simple furniture and alter rail. The whole Chapel was lit with candles. The Service was short and simple and a resume was given of each Candidate's work by the Archbishop.

There were four people awarded the Cross, one a Bishop, a Deaconess, a Lay Reader and my cousin. The Bishop had worked in South America with Bishop Harris who was at Kirkheaton Church for a while. Afterwards when I spoke to the Bishop he told me the reason he was at Kirkheaton was because of the Gulf war and he couldn't get a passage at that time to return to South America. I remember Bishop Pat Harris preaching in our Methodist Church at Berry Brow one Good Friday. The Deaconess had worked in Europe in ecumenical work. The male Lay Reader had worked amongst young people, encouraging them to become lay readers.

Each candidate was called forward in turn after the reading of the resume and the Archbishop hung the Cross around their necks. The Cross was held on a broad blue ribbon.

Prayers were said and the final hymn was sung, 'Tell out my soul the greatness of the Lord'.

We filed out of the Chapel and into a room where drinks were served and hot and cold snacks were handed around on silver trays. The Archbishop mingled with the people, he was so easy to talk to. My cousin told me he came from a poor family.

So ended a wonderful visit to Lambeth Palace, something I shall never forget

Next day we met Charles and Anne for coffee and then Eric and I did some sight seeing in London. Saturday we travelled back to Huddersfield and our home.

## BRIEF LIVES

*Taking a cue from Andy Warhol's statement that everybody will be famous for 15 minutes, we look at some individuals who attracted even fewer moments of fame in the local limelight .*

### **The doleful craftsman.**

Mr Harry Micklethwaite, an unemployed steelworker of Middle Oldfield, Honley spent 7 months of the bleak year of 1934 creating a full-sized violin from over 3,000 match stalks.

The raw material for this feat came mostly, and rather poignantly, from the gutters as he made his daily journey to the Labour Exchange to sign-on. 1,450 hours were then spent in gluing the stalks together in blocks of six to make the two, or sometimes three, layers that were necessary to give the instrument strength. Weather permitting, for the thundery days of summer made the stalks too supple, whereas dry days were more suitable to this delicate task.

It was also labour intensive, for after glueing, the bundles of matches had to be laid on card and turned frequently whilst drying.

The proud craftsman was photographed for the local paper with the finished instrument, though its playing qualities were not remarked on.

### **Flooded but unbowed**

History is sometimes shorter than we think, with a single life connecting events apparently far apart. So it was with the life of Hinchliffe Mill resident, Joseph Bower, whose life spanned much of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Dubbed the "Peter Pan grocer", his claim to fame was that he had survived the Holmfirth Flood and lived to tell the tale to his local paper eighty two years later.

Then just six years old, he had been awakened at 2am, on a moonlit night by his mother to witness the devastation from their home near the top of Co-operative Lane. His father's cows and barn were swept away before their eyes, minor casualties in a disaster that was to claim eighty one human lives. The experience seemed to be far from traumatising however, for he grew up with a life of constant endeavour. Despite working long hours as an apprentice in the shop he also walked an extra two miles to milk his employer's cows and in his remaining "spare time" killed pigs!

His rather feisty opinions on the brave new world of the 1930s were less than favourable. "Too much pleasure seeking and setting off", "and, even in those practically car-free days, "too much motoring and bus riding". Back in his young days, a blue apron and clean pair of clogs were sufficient to brighten the weekend without the need to rush off in a "riot of pleasure".

Surviving the district's greatest catastrophe and living to tell the tale more than an average life time later were not, in themselves, great achievements in his eyes. Dismissing them with typical Yorkshire brusqueness as "its nowt, nowt at all" he advised the interviewer to return when he reached the hundred, "I'll tell you something then."



## Tragic hero

Both water and violins combined to bestow an unlikely, and sadly posthumous, fame on another "local" man.

Lancashire lad Wallace Hartley was a teenager when his father gained a promotion to the Huddersfield branch of the Refuge Insurance Company in 1895. It must have been a good position, for the family was able to move into a "handsome 3 storey house" at 35 Somerset Road. Mr Hartley senior was obviously successful and ambitious in his chosen profession, but son Wallace was already working towards a different career entirely.

By 1901 he was a violinist with the Philharmonic Orchestra, and, while his family were moving to Cowlersley, was relocating himself to a professional post with the Bridlington Municipal Orchestra.

Within a few years, the life by the sea had become a career on it, and Wallace was working for Cunard on their Liners. Spells on the Lusitannia and Mauretania followed, and over eighty trans-Atlantic voyages later, Wallace, whose family were now in Dewsbury, considered re-locating to dry land.

Sadly, he didn't, and accepted a position on the White Star Line's giant new Liner as its bandmaster.

So it was that on April 15<sup>th</sup> 1912, Wallace slipped into the icy waters of immortality, as the Bandleader who carried on conducting as his ship went down, stoically playing *Nearer, my God, to thee*. Or so the story goes, for amid national hysteria the facts became rather clouded. The unfortunate bandsmen largely froze, rather than drowned, and their final piece could have been *Song d'Autonne* (White Star Song Book no137).

Whatever the facts, this "quiet, unassuming lad" became the best known hero of the Titanic, a symbol and focus of National mourning. His funeral in Colne was attended by 30,000 people, and, whatever the music played on the ship, *Nearer, my God, to thee* was definitely the tune for that day.

(A very detailed account of Wallace's life is covered by Yvonne Carroll's *A hymn for eternity: the story of Wallace Hartley Titanic Bandmaster*. Tempus 2002)

## BOOKSHELF

If ever there was an archetypal Huddersfield book this would be it.

*Huddersfield Mills: a textile heritage* by Vivien Teesdale is an extensive account of the industry and its people. Omitting some well-documented companies, such as Crowther and Brook of Meltham and Armitage of Armitage Bridge. It covers its subjects by area: the Lindley Ridge, Holme Valley, Colne Valley .

There are many well-known names among the numerous "biographies", James Learoyd, & Sons, Trafalgar Mills and Jonas Kenyon, to name but three, and many mills of which nothing remains, like Clough House in Birkby whose site has already been re-developed twice since its closure.

Where possible, each mill has its dates of opening and closing, photos, plans, descriptions of the actual processes and the people who ran them. There are the mill owners, good and bad, those who cut wages and those who organised "treats" (rather surprisingly, one Golcar firm was still running an outing as late as 1976).

Workers themselves had a hierarchy: skilled looking down on unskilled, dirtier jobs like weaving being patronised by the "maungy menders" with their cleaner conditions. But there were dangers that united them all: unguarded machinery, fire, and, especially in the early days, bankruptcy of the entire business.

Perhaps not many lived to benefit from the mid-C19th Taylors of Golcar's philanthropy, where 1s6d was given to every sixty year old at Christmas!

Nevertheless, the overriding picture is of an industry that dominated its people's lives to a degree that modern companies probably never will.

Printed in Wharnccliffe's usual immaculate style, this book leavens its considerable amount of data, with an easy, accessible style, that makes an easy read even for the non-specialist.

Mills had to be powered, preferably from supplies close at hand, and for steam power, that meant coal. This, in turn, produced a subsidiary industry whose role is now largely forgotten and erased from the landscape.

The role of this neglected trade is considered by W Hartley in his article in *Local History Magazine* (No.99 Nov/Dec 2004) *Bridging the gap: small collieries in West Yorkshire 1840-1850*.

This concentrates on the supporting role of small collieries in the development of the West Riding Textile industry, especially in Huddersfield and Halifax.

The spread of small collieries, such as the three that were established in Lockwood between 1840 and 1847 is noted, as is the role of the Ramsden Estate, which not only discouraged mines within a mile and a half of the town centre, but refused "wayleave" for the transport of coal from collieries on other estates, such as that of the Thornhills of Fixby Hall.

More informally, working life in textiles is recounted in *Tales of the Mills: life in the Mills in the Holme Valley from 1900*. Produced with the aid of a Lottery Grant by the Holmfirth Friend to Friend Project Group in 2001, this book, together with an exhibition and CD of reminiscences, was the culmination of two years work.

These are the voices of weavers and menders, old hands and nervous thirteen –year old new-starters. Life isn't idealised; there was a perpetual risk of fire in oil-soaked buildings and dangerous unguarded machinery caught the unwary. Conditions were often filthy, and rules ruthlessly applied – one minute late lost two and a half hours pay.

But, inevitably, there were also friendships, parties and works outings, all combining to produce a strong sense of belonging.

Well illustrated and equipped with a, sadly, all too necessary glossary of once commonplace terms, this book does convey the human side of an almost extinct way of life.

The demise of the mills was indeed painful for some, but their birth had been scarred by outright hostility and violence, as their presence was not entirely appreciated by a previous generation of textile workers.

Much written about, but little heard, the Luddites have always exerted a strong attraction for local historians. Noted for violent actions, their written protests are less well known, though a recent publication from the John Hopkins University Press offers an insight into their hidden world.

*Writings of the Luddites* edited by Kevin Binfield, is a selection of papers from Home Office files, covering the Midlands, North-West and Yorkshire. The editor notes that many of the Yorkshire pieces were more personally violent and less generally political than their Midland counterparts. An example is this letter sent to woollen manufacturer Frank Vickerman of Taylor Hill two days before his shearing frames were attacked.

*We give you Notice when the Shers is all Broken the Spinners shall be the next if they be not taken down. Vick man taylor hill he has had is Garde but we will pull down som night and kill him that Nave and Roag*

Less dramatically, there are versions of Luddite songs and a seditious version of the National Anthem, which brought one John Hoag of Birkby to the Home Office's attention.

Even with the textual notes, this is not an easy read, as most of the items are, inevitably, full of misspellings and grammatical errors, but it is an interesting one that provides an insight into the "cropper lads" and their very real grievances. (*available in Huddersfield Local History Library*)

If working life was hard, the consequences of not working were even harder, and many lived in fear of the workhouse's tender mercies. *Pray remember the Poor: the Poor Laws and Huddersfield* written by Alan Place and published by the Holmfirth Civic Society, covers the period to 1875.

Much space is devoted to the pre-1834 Township workhouses, which varied enormously in scale. Some were substantial buildings, others mere cottages, almost indistinguishable from their neighbours. They might contain fewer than twenty paupers, and rarely more than sixty, but they were numerous, more than twenty in the area stretching from Almondbury to Wooldale.

As the Century progressed the new Boards erected ever larger buildings, and when the new Union Workhouse opened at Crosland Moor in 1872 it could accommodate 413 inmates, a formidable Institution indeed.

Despite this, life did have its lighter side, and the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century also saw the birth of organised sports and other entertainments for working people.

One such, was cricket, whose link with Huddersfield is not as obvious as that with Football or Rugby League, but is none the less significant.

A new book by J R Ellam *Huddersfield's C19th Eleven*, looks at eleven local men who played for the County side. Six of these players came from the "Yorkshire nursery" otherwise known as Lascelles Hall, and grew up in the Kirkheaton and Dalton areas.

They included Wilfred Rhodes and G B Hirst, and less famous players, who nevertheless shared a common upbringing among the hand loom weaving families of the district. Apart from the obvious cricketing minutiae, there is much information about working class life itself.

Moving into the Twentieth Century, show business offered new opportunities for light relief.

The story of Bamfirths is well known, though a new study by Hazel Wheeler takes a perspective through the life of child model, Marion Barrowclough. *First of the Summer Wine*. covers the packed, if short, career of the local girl made good. Heavily illustrated and imaginatively told it makes for an interesting read.

By the second half of the Century, people didn't need outside help to be famous, for Rock n'Roll had arrived. *Do you want to be in a Group?*

*Huddersfield Rock 'n Roll Groups 1957-1963* by Roger Mallinson answers its own question, with a resounding yes. 130 pages are devoted to Groups and their members. At least forty- six are covered in considerable detail, with over 300 individual members listed in the index.

They played in such Groups as The Atmospheres, The Hobo Gents, The Cadillacs, the Jukes Skiffle Group, and, more recently, the Crown Jools .

The life of West Yorkshire's pubs and dance halls is evoked in this affectionate tribute, which is neatly summed up by its author

*Considering what untutored savages we all were, there was an amazing amount of first-rate musicianship in Huddersfield at the time.*

It seems appropriate to complete this survey, where it began, with a significant new title on the built heritage of our district. Published just in time for the Christmas market, *The Buildings of Huddersfield: an illustrated Architectural History* is compiled by two authorities on the subject. Keith Gibson was the principal Historic Buildings Conservation Officer for Kirklees Council and Albert Booth is well known for his life time's work as an architectural photographer.

They have much to work with, for what the old County Borough lacked in spectacular architecture, it certainly made up for in quality and quantity. It is one of those eye-brow raising statistics that, recently, Huddersfield could boast more listed buildings than any other provincial town or city, apart from Bath. No ordinary mill town this then, but one with a strong building tradition of "very special architectural quality".

The book proceeds in chronological order, from medieval churches , through the birth of the Georgian market town, to the Victorian heyday and the Twentieth Century – a period that "turned its back on the past", but produced some interesting buildings, such as that "engineering masterpiece", the Galpharm Stadium.

There is an enormous amount of detail to savour at leisure, but probably the best comment comes from the book itself, "Read the book. Go and look at the buildings and admire the town".

And finally ....too new to review, but due in the bookshops at any time, two more titles hot off the press. From two of our best known local historians, Lesley Kipling and Alan Brooke, *Huddersfield; a history and celebration*, published by Ottakers, and another of the almost annual offerings from the prolific pen of Hazel Wheeler, *Diary of a lollipop lady: memories of a crossing patrol in the 1960's*.

### **On the Web**

An increasing amount of local information is being "published" on web sites, often in forms that will never see the light of day as books, at least not in their entirety.

A good example is the *Moving Here* web site, which is being developed by YMLAC as part of a National project based at the National Archives in Kew. It aims to collect a vast database of original documents, digitised photographs, maps and even audio and film clips covering personal experiences of immigration into this country during the last 200 years.

The Yorkshire arm of the project is based in Kirklees and Rotherham and concentrates on the Irish, South Asian, Caribbean and Jewish communities. The well established Polish community in Kirklees is due to be added next year, as is the more recent Chinese one.

Form our point of view, one of the most interesting sections is *Stories*, which contains short verbatim accounts, such as that of Wesley Johnson, who was born in Jamaica in 1931, travelled to England in 1954 and became one of the first West Indian bus conductors in Huddersfield.

Likely to become a major source for this growing area of local studies, it can be visited at [www.movinghere.org.uk](http://www.movinghere.org.uk).

# Huddersfield Local History Society

## Programme 2005 - 2006

- |               |   |
|---------------|---|
| 26 September  | <i>Unitarians and Joseph Priestley</i><br>Kate Taylor   |
| * 8 October   | Study Day at Newsome South Methodist Church<br><i>Shopping Old and New</i>                      |
| 31 October    | <i>More of Lucy Fairbanks Legacy</i><br>Ian Baxter  |
|               | Incorporating the Annual General Meeting  |
| 28 November   | <i>The Yorkshire Frontier and Pennine Character</i><br>Cyril Pearce                             |
| * 14 December | Annual Dinner at Durker Roods<br>Final details still to be arranged                             |
| 30 January    | <i>Let's Go to the Pictures</i><br>Ken Kaye   |
| 27 February   | <i>A Victorian Exploration – The Willans Family in Huddersfield</i><br>Professor Clyde Binfield |
| 27 March      | <i>160 Years in the Same Row of Cottages</i><br>Duncan Beaumont                                 |
| # 24 April    | <i>Highways and Way Markers in Kirklees</i><br>Jan Scrine                                       |
| 22 May        | <i>Richard Ostler and the Factory Movement</i><br>Dr. John Hargreaves                           |
| * 21 June     | Excursion. Details still to be arranged   |

All Meetings except those marked \* and # will take place in the Children's Library,  
Huddersfield Library at 7.30 pm  
#Meetings in the Light Reading Room at 7.30 pm

The 2006-2007 series of talks will commence on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> September 2006

Membership Subscriptions: Single £6 : Joint £10 are due at the start of the session

Hon. Secretary  
Mrs Freda Hollingworth

