Huddersfield Local History Society

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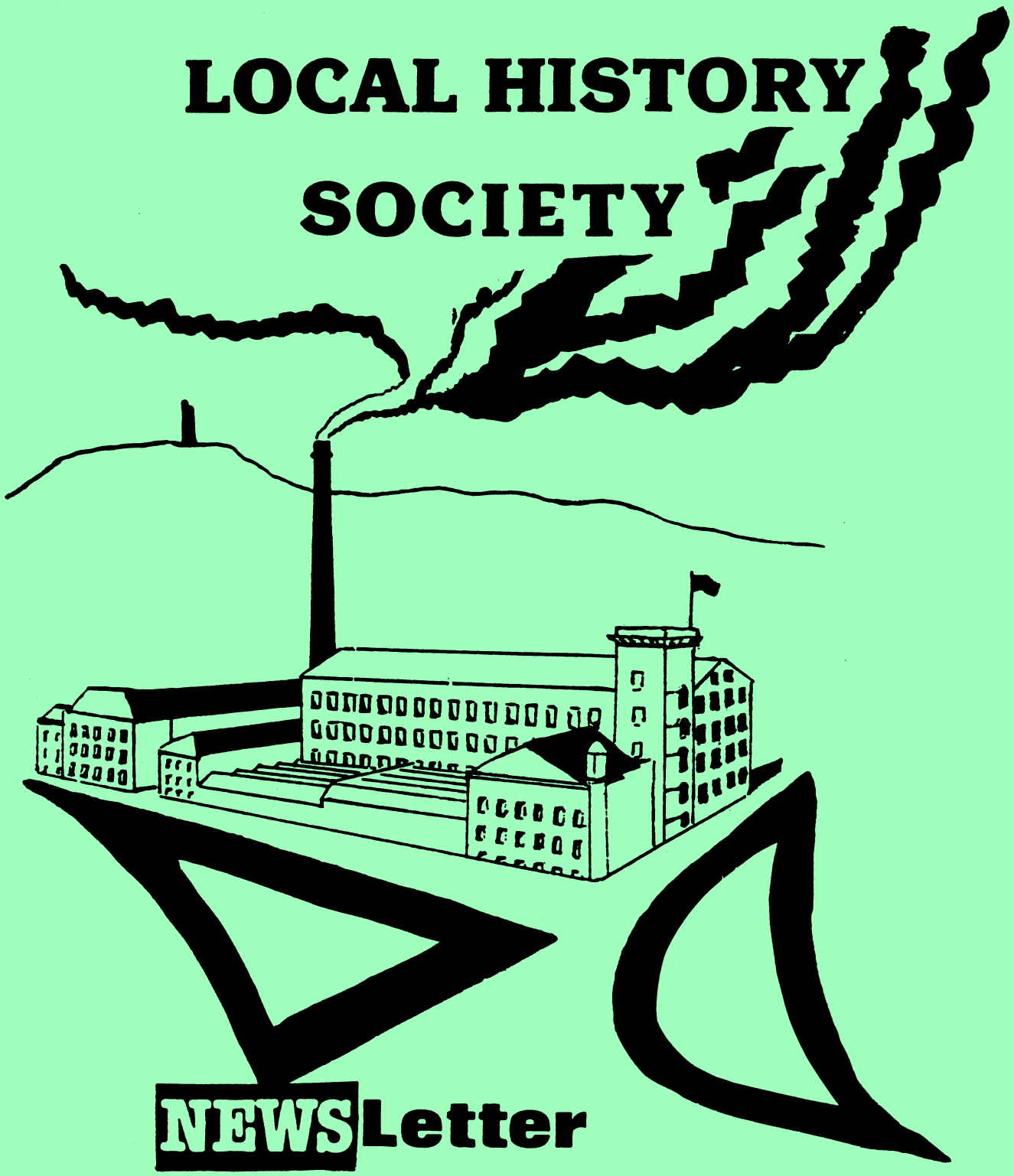
Huddersfield

LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY



NEWSLetter

No. 10 1990

EIGHTY YEARS REMEMBERED, 1906-1986.
Clifford Stephenson

The author of these memoirs will need little introduction to members. In a life spanning most of the century he has been a successful businessman, councillor, alderman -and local historian. As Chairman of the powerful Estates Committee of Huddersfield Corporation, he played a prominent part in the redevelopment of the town centre and presided over a department that managed over 13,000 homes and 120 public buildings - the property of the "Town that bought itself." But here, in the first extract from his unpublished autobiography, he describes life on a more modest rung of the property ladder.

LIVING BACK-TO-BACK.
Grandma lived in a back-to-back. Because Mother had long illnesses I lived with Grandma for long periods and so have a clear picture of a house typical in layout and furnishings of thousands of back-to-back cottages in Huddersfield 70-80 years ago. The key to the design -and the answer to the criticism that through ventilation was lacking, was the passage through the block. In the passage were side doors opening into a scullery and on the floor of the passage the lid to the coal chute to the coal cellar below. Between the scullery and the living room were steps down to the stone flagged keeping cellar and a coal place, and above them the stairs up to the bedrooms; at the foot of the bedroom stairs a little lobby and the front door. Except in summer front doors were little used; ingress and egress was usually from the passage door.

There was only one tap, a cold water tap to the stone (sandstone) sink at the window end of the scullery which usually had a gas fired 'set pot' for clothes boiling and bath water heating. There was an all black gas stove made by the local 'Hygenic Stove Company', for which a small quarterly charge was made by the owners, the Corporation Gas Department. The third item was the hand operated clothes wringer or mangle, underneath which stood the wooden wash tub (the 'peggy' tub) with a corrugated rubbing board standing in it. Alongside stood the peggy or dolly, a wooden shaft with a cross handle at one end and at the other a wooden disc with several six inch pegs protruding from it. This was used to agitate the clothes in the wash tub. There was another item, a wicker clothes basket which Grandma always called by its Yorkshire name a 'voider'. One of the characteristic and distinctive sounds of life in the cottage was the groaning and clanking of the mangle. Illumination of the scullery was by a gas 'batswing' open flame -it was poor. On the shelf in Grandma's kitchen stood a relic of her earlier days when she 'home brewed' beer -a 'hop temps', a horse hair sieve for straining the hops. Some say that the well known saying should be written "setting the temps on fire" (by vigorous rubbing).

The living room main feature was the large black cast iron kitchen range, the all purpose fitting of which the coal fire, retained by vertical bars, (the 'ribs'), dropped its ashes into the metal ash box below which was masked, for appearances sake, by the moveable 'tidy' sometimes called the 'tidy betty'. On one side of the fire was the cast iron boiler in which water was heated. The water was brought from the only tap in the house, situated in the scullery, in the so useful utensil a 'piggin' (a lading can). A loose round plate on the top of the boiler facilitated filling with the cold water and the ladling out of warm water. On the other side of the fire was the oven, heated by flames from the fire directed under it by a controlling damper. It was common practice to keep wood kindling in the oven making it nice and dry for the next day's fire lighting. Attached to the top of the vertical fire

bars was a cast iron open shelf, called the hob, on which pans could be simmered. Hinged to the boiler top was a cast iron frame which could be folded down over the fire to support pans requiring more heat; altogether a good range of facilities.

In front of the fire on the hearth sat the bright steel fender with steel tongs and poker resting on it -these were chiefly for show and for the ritual Friday night cleaning with bath brick or 'Shinio' metal polish. The working poker with its fancy hand grip was a more utilitarian blacksmith made instrument. Above the fire or on the hearth were likely to be black cast iron one sided model horses or similar ornaments, these, along with all the fireplace black metal work, were regularly polished 'bright black' with 'Zebo' black lead -a filthy job, but never shirked by conscientious housewives.

The high mantel shelf above the range almost certainly would have a pair of white, black spotted pot dogs, and other nick-nacks with the odd letter or bill tucked behind. A string or sometimes a rod under the mantel shelf was a must. On it the Friday night's delivery of newly baked soft oat-cakes were hung to dry crisp and hard. A cupboard with drawers underneath filled one recess beside the range. Here, were kept the family crockery, utensils, towels, table cloths etc. In front of the lace curtained window stood the almost obligatory Singer or Jones treadle sewing machine; against one wall a sideboard, against the other that sign of respectability and well doing, the piano -as likely as not after the children were married, with no one to play it.

The sewing machine and the piano were the first domestic items available on "the easy payment system" with the result that they were widely acquired. One street in Crosland Moor -Hawthorne Terrace- had so many homes with pianos that it was known locally as "Piano Street". Archibald Ramsdens of Leeds advertised 400 pianos in stock at prices from as low as £19.19.6 (£19.97½).

The rest of the furniture was dominated by the square four legged table with a scrubbed white-wood top on which the weekly baking was kneeded. It was covered by an 'oil-cloth' table cloth during the week and a plush one at the week-ends and holidays. Sometimes the polished legs of the table and the piano were protected by stockings during the week -the suggestion that this was done from prudery is probably fictitious.

Often there was a sofa of classic but horrid design, and when covered with a black horse hair fabric, as it often was, slippery and uncomfortable from prickings of the ends of the horse hairs. Only as a last resort did anyone sit on the sofa. Very different was the rocking chair which was comfortable and restful, though this was usually monopolised by the oldest inhabitant. The unwary could get nasty knocks on the shins from the rockers.

On the walls there were a few pictures, perhaps a print of Constable's 'Cornfield' or a very enlarged photograph (touted for at the door) of Grandad or Grandma -and in Victorian sentimental obsession with bereavement, a death memorial card printed in heavy black with a sickly sentimental message on it, framed with cork segments. In the middle of the floor a carpet of indifferent quality with a surround of oil-cloth, probably cracked and the pattern worn off. In front of the fire the inevitable pegged-rug made from cloth clippings. Not unlikely, propped against the wall, a wooden frame on which was stretched the partly made successor to the existing rug.

Illumination was by a single central 'patent incandescent gas mantle' a big improvement on the earlier batswing burner.

Almost always the large two pane sash window was flanked by long lace curtains. The light was shut out and privacy was ensured, by a buff-coloured paper blind unwound and rewound on its roller by an endless loop of 'blind cord' which at the bottom was passed round a pulley fixed to a tensioning screw.

The two bedrooms upstairs were strictly utilitarian, cold in atmosphere always, and in temperature in winter. Beds had iron railings at head and foot, with brass knobs at each corner; now they are again fashionable amongst the newly weds. The woven spring mattresses soon sagged into a body-shaped hollow out of which it was almost impossible to roll. The heavy flock mattress, turned every day -in well run homes- had to be fought and pummelled into shape. The floor was covered in the ubiquitous cold oil-cloth with just a mat or pegged rug near the bed for prayer and protection of bare feet against the cold floor. The one concession to age, infirmity or illness was the brick, heated in the fireside oven and wrapped in a blanket, or a stone hot water bottle. Under the bed the very necessary 'article' for need arising in the night when the 'loo' was remote at the bottom of the garden. Unlike today when we skirt round for a euphemistic name for a simple piece of crockery, we made no bones about calling it a 'po'. For a little boy it was a horrible invention with its ice cold rim and the difficulty to balance on it.

The batswing-burner light was perhaps kindly in its faint glow which left the inhospitable appearance of the room in shadow.

On Monday nights after wash day, especially in winter, there was little cheer to be had from the fire which was hidden behind the 'winteredge' (clothes horse) which had its name from the country practice of spreading clothes on the hedges to dry. In winter this was impracticable so the 'winter-hedge' came into use.

Cottage homes, always small and often full of children, offered little comfort for the men folk, who often sought and found it in the pub or club, spending there some of the small income which could be ill spared from the family budget.

THE WEEKLY ROUND.

Life was orderly, predictable and dull. Each day had its allotted task and routine meals. The main -often the only joint of meat was cooked on Sunday. At Grandma's for fifty Sundays in the year the joint was 'corner of inlift', preferred for its total lack of fat and its ability to 'go further'. For a long time it was bought at the Co-op, until Jess, the butcher, fell into disfavour for always cutting more (in the interest of improving his turnover) than was asked for, and so Grandma's custom was reluctantly taken to a private butcher. Afterwards I wondered why she didn't ask for a little less and so get the weight she really wanted. Yorkshire pudding of course accompanied the beef. On Monday the beef appeared cold, but with Yorkshire pudding and gravy. Tuesday, the beef (it did carve well) appeared again, it was now dry, leathery and unappetising, the gravy had run out; the Yorkshire pudding now appeared accompanied by a white sauce and jam, and with a few currants in one corner for anyone who fancied it. Wednesday, the beef left was chopped up and stewed with onions and potatoes as 'hash'. I know nothing less appetising than stewed previously cooked meat. Thursday -I forget- possibly a meat and potato pie or stew using shin beef, cheap but tasty.

Friday was fry day -pigs fry and very tasty- lovely gravy for Yorkshire pudding, and good with dumplings. Saturday was sausages -hot and tasty.

Most delicious of Yorkshire foods, season pudding. Cooked in the square Yorkshire pudding tin and deliciously flavoured with herb seasoning, it was 'risen' in front of the fire before going into the oven to finish off. It rose to about ¾ inch thick and with good gravy was food for the Gods -almost a meal in itself, and very filling. Only once have I come across it since; fifteen years or so ago it was on the menu at the Farnley Cock for a short time.

The daily chores followed a similar fixed routine. Wash-day Monday, ironing Tuesday, baking Wednesday or Thursday, house cleaning Friday. Equally important to every self-respecting housewife was the external washing of steps, flags and stone window sills, all finished off with an edging of scouring stone either white or yellow -and don't forget the privy; that too had its weekly clean. In the spring, usually amongst chapel-folk just before the Sunday School Anniversary, the great spring cleaning when everything was taken up or down and washed and polished. The carpets taken up to be spread on the clothes line and beaten with woven cane carpet beaters and sticks -a horrible dusty and dirty job. Where field grass was available the carpets were dragged face down across it as a final touch to brighten them. While the carpets were 'up' the wooden floor was scrubbed and washed clean. Wise husbands cleared out at spring cleaning time if they could escape.

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FREEMEN OF HUDDERSFIELD.

The greatest honour that a local authority could bestow was that of Freeman, and, as such, it was awarded very sparingly. During its 106 years of municipal life, Huddersfield Corporation honoured just thirty four individuals and two corporate organisations, the Duke of Wellington's Regiment and the Huddersfield Choral Society, in this way. The individuals included two Prime Ministers, Wilson and Asquith; two leading military figures, Field Marshal Montgomery and Earl Beatty; Joseph Woodhead and Sir Malcolm Sargent.

Local honours were few and far between, and, after the admission of Sir Malcolm Sargent in 1961, no more Freemen were created at all until the final year of the Borough's life. Then, in March 1973, three Aldermen were honoured; R Hartley, D Graham and C Stephenson. Thus Alderman Clifford Stephenson, became, by the simple process of alphabetical order, the very last Freeman of Huddersfield and completed a tradition that had begun eighty four years earlier.

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WRIGHT MELLOR OF HUDDERSFIELD.
Hugh Wright Mellor

One hundred years ago Huddersfield conferred the Freedom of the Borough upon one of its citizens for the first time. He was Wright Mellor, honoured in this way on 25th September, 1889.

Wright Mellor was born in Salendine Nook in 1817. His father, James, was a dealer in flocks and the family lived in a small farmstead which also had weaving sheds. Wright entered the business and took it over when his father died, when Wright was only twenty three. It was a bad time for

the trade, but he was fortunate in that one of his customers was Thomas Kilner, of Carr House, Northumberland Street (still standing, in somewhat sorry state). Kilner invited Mellor to travel for him in his merchandising business, which he did. He left his own business in the hands of his nephew and partner, Titus Calverley.

Wright had a deep religious faith and in 1840 he joined Highfield Church. One year later so did Harriet, eighth child of Thomas Kilner. In 1844 they were married, in the newly built church, and lived for a while in the old manse there. They had nine children.

From very early in life Wright Mellor took an interest in public affairs. He became a Poor Law Guardian for Lindley and took a close interest in education. He served on the Board of the Huddersfield Infirmary several times, was a manager of the Huddersfield Savings Bank from 1855 until his death, and was a keen supporter (vice-president for many years) of the Huddersfield Deaf and Dumb Association. He was very active in Highfield Church, as a deacon and in numerous other capacities. He became a County Magistrate in 1863, and he was an active member of the Liberal party.

His own business began to prosper again in the later 1840's and he and his partner moved it first to rented premises in Luck Lane, and then, in the early 1860's to a new mill at Milnsbridge. His father-in-law, Thomas Kilner, retired in the middle 1850's, and Wright Mellor took over that business as well.

Life however was to change radically for him in various ways from 1863 onwards. His wife died, shortly after giving birth to their sixth son, Frank, and at about the same time as the family moved to Cote Royd, a house they built in New North Road (it is now an hotel). He married again, in 1865, his second wife being Eliza Ann Hellawell, who became much beloved by his family. But he was becoming less interested in business, from which he had clearly done very well in material terms, and more interested in municipal affairs. The inhabitants of Huddersfield had been pressing for a Municipal Charter since 1841, (when the population reached 25,000) but had been unsuccessful: however in 1848 a step forward had been made by the Huddersfield Improvement Act, by which the government of the town passed to twenty one Improvement Commissioners. Wright Mellor became a Commissioner and as such was involved in promoting further agitation for Huddersfield to become a Borough. This was achieved in 1868 and he was elected councillor for the North Ward, being made one of the first Aldermen three days later.

That same year Mellor made his first, and last, attempt to enter national politics. The sitting Member of Parliament from 1865 had been T P Crosland, Conservative, a cousin by marriage but not of the same political persuasion. Crosland died on 8th March and -present politicians please note!- polling day for the by-election was fixed for eleven days later. The Liberal who had been deposed in 1859, Edward Leatham, was the official Liberal candidate, but his interests were thought by some to be focused too much on Dewsbury and too little on Huddersfield. The Conservatives were in disarray and some of them, and some of the Liberals, got together in what the *Examiner* called (in a misleadingly modern phrase) "a strange combination" where "the blue almost utterly overwhelmed .... strips of orange and green". They invited Mellor to stand as an independent. He did so, believing the invitation to be, as he put it, "an indication that the general feeling of the town was that someone well known to the inhabitants should represent them". It was a disaster. Mellor could give no answers to

questions about his policies for no one had worked them out, and on 14th March he announced his withdrawal. The Liberal was elected by 1,111 votes to 789.

Mellor was on the council for the rest of his life. He was the second mayor, for two years 1871-73, and was Mayor again in 1883-84 and 1886-87. During his last mayoralty he was greatly involved in the Queen's jubilee celebrations and was expected to receive a knighthood; "however", said the *Examiner*, "Mr Mellor was a Liberal, and a Conservative Government was in office". He became a Deputy Lieutenant of the County in 1869, and a Justice of the Peace for Huddersfield in 1870. In 1873, to the relief of his family who could see that his business interests were suffering because of the time he was devoting to public life, he sold his business to Titus Calverley.

His chief interests whilst he was on the council (though he also served on the Watch and Finance Committees) were in education and water supply. In education he was also active in promoting the Mechanic's Institution and the Girl's College. In water supply he was chairman of the committee 1872-92. It was stated in the presentation of the Freedom to him that "in 1868 ... the area supplied by the water commissioners was only equal to about a full sized farm in the agricultural district -476 acres. In 1889 the area was 50,139 acres or seventy eight square miles. The population supplied in 1868 was 40,000. In 1889 it was over 132,000". Blackmoorfoot, Deerhill and Wessenden Head reservoirs were opened during his period in office.

A portrait of Wright Mellor, painted by Mr S Gallimore, was presented to him in March 1888 and then presented by him to the town. It hung in the Council Chamber until 1973. With the Freedom of the Borough there was also presented to him what the *Examiner* descibed as "a beautiful casket containing a scroll ....(and) designed in the style of the Huddersfield Town Hall .... executed in silver parcel gilt and enamels". It is thought that this casket was also presented back to the Corporation but the present local authority has so far been unable to provide information about what has happened to it.

Wright Mellor died after a long illness in 1893.

* * * * *

WOODSOME REVISITED.

K Brockhill

To Sir Nikolaus Pevsner, surveying all the buildings of England, it was a "picturesque and mellow Elizabethan house". To an earlier, Victorian, writer it seemed a "typical example of the stone built 17th century mansions which harmonise so admirably with the Yorkshire landscape".[1] But to the local historians of Huddersfield it has always been rather more important than that. Typical its architecture may be, and picturesque it most certainly is, but in a district that is "not so rich in antiquarian treasures as some parts of England" -as one Victorian writer coyly put it, Woodsome occupies a special place, and it has long been an ambition of this society to gain admission for its members.

Success was frustratingly elusive, but finally came in December 1988 when our tenth anniversary dinner was held in these most appropriate surroundings. This was a memorable occasion for all concerned, but no novelty to a house that has been entertaining local historians since at least that August day in 1867, when members of the newly formed

The east front and terrace.

Huddersfield Archaeological and Topographical Association made their inaugural excursion through Woodsome and Almondbury.

The object of their attention, and ours, had begun to assume its present appearance in the mid 16th century, when Arthur Kaye encased the original timber-framed house in stone, added stone chimneys and plaster ceilings and "dyd glace all the wyndows".[2] There was still much to do as the family's status grew with their developing estates. Arthur's son John had twelve children and before moving to Slaithwaite, found that "lakk of Rowme" forced further improvements. One of those children, John, in his turn made a significant move at the end of the century, when new extensions were erected around a courtyard behind the existing hall. Graced with a colonnade of "short stumpy Tuscan columns", this remains one of the house's most distinctive features.

The dates of this early 17th century work are uncertain, but they appear to have concluded the main period of building. Further extensions were comparatively small and, despite their elevation to the baronetcy in 1641, the Kayes seemed content with their residence. This, together with the largely absentee landlordship of their successors, the Legge family, Earls of Dartmouth, preserved the Hall as the predominantly Elizabethen mansion we see today.

That we can still see an Elizabethan mansion in a comparatively rural setting, however, owes as much to 20th century sport as to aristocratic restraint. Canon Hulbert, in his *Annals of the Church and Parish of Almondbury*, published in 1882, noted approvingly that, following the death of the fourth Earl in 1853, his successors had become more frequent visitors to a house that had largely become the preserve of tenants. The fourth Earl had been of a "very retired disposition", but the new Earl and Countess had actively cultivated "more genial

relations" with the local population. It was not however destined to last for very much longer. In 1906 an "Elizabethan and Shakespearian village pageant" celebrated the past at Woodsome but within a few years the Hall was to embark on a very different sort of future.

Golf was an expanding sport that already occupied several courses in the Huddersfield area, but, by 1921, the *Examiner* was reporting that rumours connecting Woodsome with the sport were beginning to take substance in the plans of one Major Trestrail of Kirkburton. In October of that year, the paper covered a "numerously and influentially attended meeting" that was held at the George Hotel to consider proposals for a new course. Enthusiasm was running high and the meeting agreed to form a new club to lease, and possibly purchase, the "interesting and picturesque" Hall and 135 acres of land. For those able to participate, this offered a mouth-watering prospect of developments on American style country club lines, with tennis courts, bowling greens and putting courses spreading around the historic club house. Fortunately, from the historian's point of view at least, these plans did not come to fruition.

The Hall duly changed hands, but most of its contents were sold elsewhere. Sales of furniture and other effects were held in Huddersfield and London in the early months of 1922 with the pictures meriting a seperate sale of their own. Two well known paintings from the Hall were acquired by the Tolson Museum, but much furniture and a brass trumpet known as the "Luck of Woodsome Hall" came under the auctioneer's hammer, at prices that would turn a modern collector green with envy. At one sale realising £800, the most valuable piece of furniture raised a mere 44 guineas. The grounds meanwhile were converted at such a rapid pace that the first nine holes were opened for play on Easter Monday, 1922.

All eighteen holes are now a long established part of the local scene and no modern visitors could expect to be welcomed by the Earl of Dartmouth himself, as members of the British Association were in 1873. Our own second visit, in the summer of 1989, was conducted by the Club Secretary around the remaining landscaped grounds of the 18th century and through several rooms in the Hall itself. Much of the furniture referred to by Hulbert is long gone, as are the "curious matchlocks, swords, pikes and other warlike implements" noted by the visiting antiquarians in 1867. But panelled walls, fine plaster ceilings and some impressive fireplaces still remain and it does not require a great act of imagination to conjure up episodes from Woodsome's past. Especially at Christmas, when sitting in the galleried hall, beside the immense fireplace with its distinct inscription of the builders christian names, one thinks of the scene in January 1673 when Sir John Kaye summoned the dissenting ministers, Heywood and Richardson before him, and they in turn recoiled in righteous disgust from the "feeding, drinking and revelling" taking place round the great hall. Or when, after enjoying a substantial modern Christmas dinner, one hears the guest of honour speak of that remarkable double wedding four centuries ago, which required 3 calves, 6 ewes, 17 pigs, 2 red deer hinds, 1 ox, 40 couples of coneys, 3 swans, 6 turkeys, 26 capons and other birds too numerous to mention to satisfy the assembled Kaye appetites.

Huddersfield's pre industrial revolution history is at best thinly spread and few places can offer such a tangible concentration of that past as Woodsome does. Or even for that matter the intangible past. On a dark winter's night among the creaking trees and silent greens it is tempting to ponder the unanswerable question; did Rimington's unquiet ghost really return as a robin to the "haunted" room upstairs? Whether

he did or not, Woodsome Hall will always merit a return visit from the local historians of Huddersfield.

1 Wheater, W. *Some Historic Mansions of Yorkshire and their Associations*, 1889.

2 Redmonds, George, *The Heirs of Woodsome and other Essays in Local History*, 1982. This gives a useful summary of the C16th & C17th history. While an article by E Law in the current *Old West Riding* (Vol. 9, 1989) discusses some correspondence relating to the estate in the less well documented C18th.

Woodsome's courtyard, looking towards the rear of the great hall.

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SEEN AND HEARD

Our press representative recalls some talks and visits from the Society's programme.

The annual excursion on 26th June took the form of a coach tour guided by George Redmonds.
Part of the theme was the "leys" of the Huddersfield area. At Riley we noted the old lane along which the burial parties came from Thurstonland to Kirkburton Church. The journey continued on the narrow roads of Thunderbridge passing the sites of the Manorial corn mills of Shepley and Shelley before proceeding to view early buildings at Shepley.
Emley and Shelley were visited before returning to Huddersfield past Rowley and Dogley.

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During the summer members were favoured with an opportunity to visit Woodsome Hall, as noticed in the preceeding article. The opportunity was

taken up with enthusiasm, and the numbers meant that the visit had to be in two parties in July and August.

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The Society held its annual conference on 21st October.
During the morning session two talks were given. The first by Mr L Robinson on the fancy cloth trade of the 19th century. Its development was traced from the early 1800's with the introduction of the 'witch' and, later, the Jacquard. The trade was localised in the villages to the South and East of Huddersfield; among the factors which encouraged this were coal outcrops and plentiful water supplies. The talk was illustrated with patterns and output of waistcoatings, shawls etc. from Norton's mill, the originals of which were also available for inspection.
Mr B Haigh, curator of the Bagshaw Museum presented an illustrated talk on aspects of Huddersfield's textile history as depicted by the collections of the Tolson Museum. Apart from the fine collection of early machinery there are examples of fabrics, pattern books, illustrated letter headings and an extensive photographic collection dating from the end of the 19th century.
In the afternoon members visited the Tolson Memorial Museum, viewing the new textile gallery where they were able to see some of the machinery being worked by the staff.

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The Annual General Meeting of the Society in October was followed by an illustrated talk by Mr T Wainwright on the Field family of Skelmanthorpe. The Fields were located in the area some 300 years ago and ramified to such an extent that the family provided over 100 beneficiaries to a will of 1926.
The family founded four mills; from the original, the Garret, sprang the Elm Mills of F W Field, producers of blazer cloths; Edwin Field & Sons' Tentercroft Mills known to many as rug manufacturers; and Field & Botterill, weavers of pile fabrics. Among the illustrations were a series of portraits of the family which have recently been deposited with the Tolson Memorial Museum.

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In November members heard a fascinating account of that much maligned force of World War 2, the Home Guard, from Mr P A Laycock.
From its first mooting in 1940 as the Local Defence Volunteers it attracted a massive response: 70,000 in the West Riding with two battalions in Huddersfield and another three in the Colne Valley. Like any army it had special units, including cavalry, in country areas, signals, anti-tank and anti-aircraft. Quite heavy casualties were inflicted on the latter and personnel were directed to the anti-aircraft units from those in reserved occupations. Large factories had their own units as did strategic targets such as railway stations and post offices.
Contrary to the Dad's Army image it is thought that the average age of the Home Guard at the stand-down in December 1944 was 26. Whilst it was recognised that they would have been no deterrent to an invading army the force was a morale booster and gave an opportunity for those left at home to be involved in the war effort.

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Following the success of the dinner in celebration of the Society's tenth anniversary a Christmas dinner was held at Woodsome Hall in December when members enjoyed a convivial evening with good food and an appropriate talk on the history of food from Mr P C D Brears.

FOR THE BOOKSHELF

There is a particular pleasure in being able to start the new decade with a review of one of our own publications. Following the trail blazed by "Pritchett", we can now present *Joseph Kaye, Builder of Huddersfield c1779 to 1858*, by Edward J Law. The title is suitably ambiguous, for this son of a local publican was not just a builder of Huddersfield, for most of the first half of the nineteenth century he was THE builder of Huddersfield. His works ranged from major public buildings such as the Railway Station and Infirmary, through numerous churches and commercial buildings to at least one third of the entire housing stock. Very much a self made man, his works are still around us, even if the name is largely forgotten; and as redevelopment of the town centre becomes a major issue once again, this book is a timely reminder of the architectural heritage that Huddersfield still possesses. The price is just £1.50 to members and £1.75 to others.

One of Kaye's buildings also figures prominently in Geoffrey Moorhouse's new book *At the George and Other Essays in Rugby League*, Hodder & Stoughton, 1989, £10.95. The George in question is of course, the Hotel, and the first chapter is devoted to the birth of the Northern Rugby Football Union on its' premises in 1895. But Huddersfield also pervades other parts of the book, with some notably trenchant observations on the late Stanley Chadwick's *Rugby League Review* magazine catching the eye.

The broader architectural heritage of this area is surveyed in a *Brief Guide to the Industrial Heritage of West Yorkshire*, edited by W J Thompson for the Association for Industrial Archaeology. At £2.25 it is a modestly priced guide to 193 sites, many within Kirklees.

Biography is not always the easiest of subjects, especially when the potential biographee orders the destruction of all personal papers after their demise. So it is not surprising that Keith Laybourn's study of *Phillip Snowden: A Biography 1922 to 1931*, Temple Smith. 1989, £29.50, tells more of the politician than the man. Nevertheless there is much to say about the former Labour Chancellor, who was also a "profoundly controversial" M.P. for Colne Valley from 1922 to 1931.

Four centuries earlier, the important monastic Grange at Bradley also produced a controversial character, in the shape of Marmaduke Bradley, "trouble maker, liar, trickster" and last Abbot of Fountains Abbey. Those members who enjoyed Dr Foss's talk about this devious cleric might be interested in his article on the subject in the *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, Volume 61, 1989, pp 103 to 109.

Coming right up to date, Jack Ramsay's *Made in Huddersfield: The Post Industrial Pennine Landscape*, North of Watford Publishing, 1989, £14.95, deals with contemporary issues. Despite the deceptive title, this is not so much a study of social change, as an intensely personal account of one man's childhood and the enviromental factors that moulded it. Born in Milnsbridge as recently as 1961, the author draws on his own experiences to explore the changing nature of the Pennine mill towns and the uncertain future that faces them. Written with passionate intensity

and illustrated with starkly evocative black and white photographs, it is a difficult but powerfull work on an important subject.

A more conventional work, on an ever popular subject, is Peter and Michael Fox's *Pennine Passage: A History of the Huddersfield Canal*, Huddersfield Canal Society, 1989, £3.95. Profusely illustrated and minutely detailed, it chronicles the life of a canal that had to surmount a "mountain of difficulties".

Out on the extreme fringe of our area lies Flockton, a village whose long history has been summarised in *Historic Notes of Flockton*, compiled by E E Cavaghan and Eileen Preston, Flockton P.C.C., £3. This typescript is just what it says, notes rather than continuous text, covering Flokki's tun from its foundation to the twentieth century.

Hazel Wheeler's *Huddersfield in Old Photographs*, Alan Sutton, 1989, £6.95 however, seems to make a good case for not judging a book by its cover. The old photographs it contains are family ones, chosen from an extensive collection to show the town of the 'ordinary people' who lived in it from Victorian times to the present day. The finished work, however, after a promising beginning, develops a disappointing bias towards the personal rather than the place, that detracts from its wider historical value.

For those who wish to conduct their own research, the use of original documents is often necessary, but locating them can be a problem. Even when guides are printed, they are not usually among the most attractive or accessible publications. But now the West Yorkshire Archives and Archaeology Joint Committee have produced a very useful series covering their own district collections. For this area, *Kirklees Archives 1959 to 1989: An Illustrated Guide to Kirklees District Archives* is an attractively produced paperback, enlivened by numerous illustrations which help it to place the documents in their original social contexts. The cover dates, incidentally, are those of the department itself, for the modest price of £5.95 the reader is actually receiving a guide to seven centuries of history.