

HLHS Members Newsletter

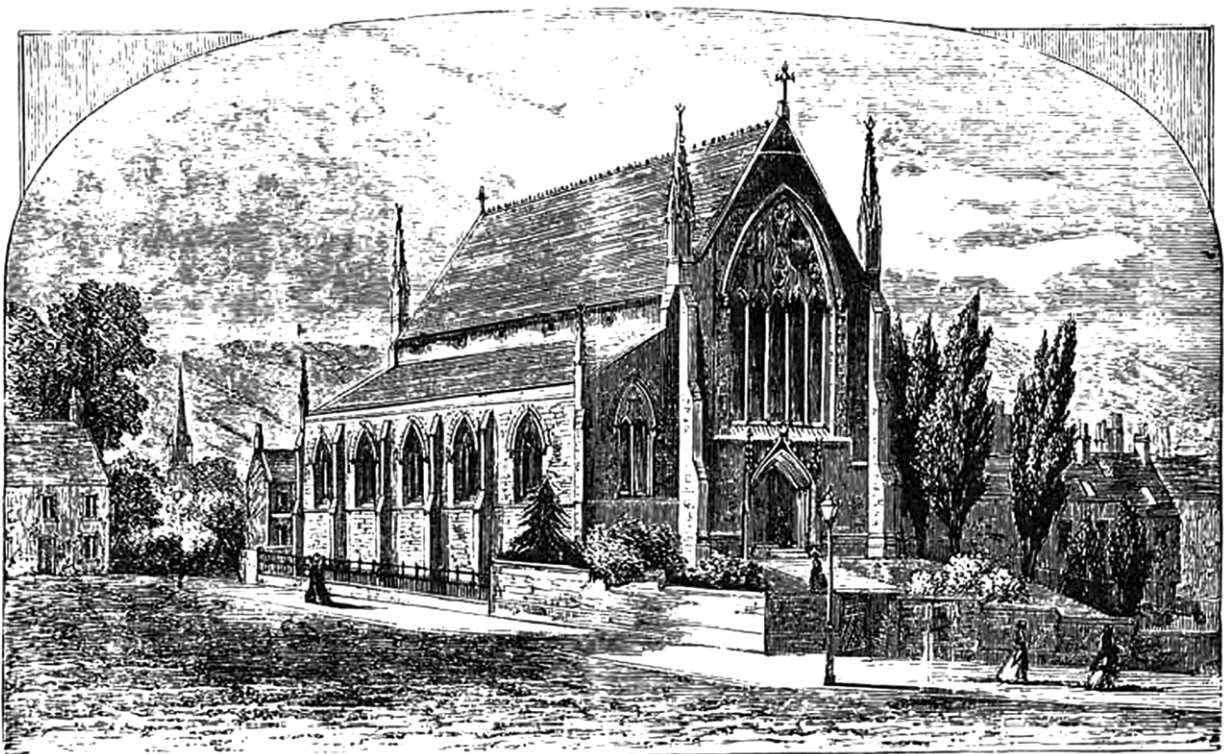
March 2021

huddersfieldhistory.org.uk

email@huddersfieldhistory.org.uk



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



Fitzwilliam Street Church, HUDDERSFIELD (Yorkshire).

Built in 1854.

Engraving from "Pictures of Unitarian Chapels" (1901) by Emily Sharpe.

Welcome to our March 2021 newsletter. In this month's edition, you'll find details of upcoming events and recent news, and a timely history of the hotels on Castle Hill. We hope you enjoy it.

David Griffiths and Dave Pattern

HLHS Committee

Chair:

Cyril Pearce

Vice-Chair:

Brian Haigh

Secretary:

Dave Pattern

Treasurer:

Steve Challenger

Membership

Secretary:

Val Davies

Publications

Secretary:

David Griffiths

Publicity:

Chris Verguson

Journal Editor:

Robert Piggott

Web Site:

Dave Pattern

Other

Committee

Members:

Beverley Norris

Janette Martin

Maureen Mitchell

Bill Roberts

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

Our Next Talk

We continue our programme of online talks with:

29 March 2021

***Veterans' Voices: Storthes Hall and the
Long Shadow of Shell-Shock***
presentation by Dr Alice Brumby

Despite the interest in shell-shock and mental disability amongst servicemen of World War I, little is known about the plight of the mentally afflicted veteran after the armistice and into the interwar years. This talk rediscovers the voices and experiences of ex-servicemen institutionalised within the Ministry of Pensions Hospital at Storthes Hall, Kirkburton during those years. By focussing upon the written letters of the patients, the talk will present some of the diverse responses of patients to their hospitalisation. Medical men came to regard these men as incurable cases, rather than as mentally ill veterans who deserved any special treatment. By retelling their stories, the talk will reveal one of the many hidden elements of war, which continued long after the armistice.

Dr Brumby is a lecturer in Modern History at York St John University. Her research interests focus upon nineteenth and twentieth century mental health care and patient welfare in England. With a PhD from the University of Huddersfield, she has published work on Storthes Hall, Huddersfield War Hospital, and the charity Rethink Mental Illness. A fuller report of her research on Storthes Hall is [available online](#).

The talk will be [available from our website](#) on and after 29 March or, if you have a 'smart TV' that can access videos on YouTube, you can find all our talks by searching for **Huddersfield Local History Society** or **#hlhs2020**

You may also wish to subscribe to our new [YouTube channel](#) where you can find this season's previous talks.

Annual Luddite Memorial Lecture

Our next online talk, available on Monday 26 April, will be the annual HLHS/University of Huddersfield Luddite Memorial Lecture. Initiated in 2014 to celebrate themes from Yorkshire radical history, it will be dedicated this year to the memory of Prof Malcolm Chase (1967-2020) of Leeds University. Prof Chase, who gave the 2015 lecture and contributed to other Society publications and events, sadly died in 2020. This year's lecturer Prof Edward Royle, a founding member of HLHS, will lecture on ***Radicalism in the West Riding 1790 to 1890*** – full details will be in the April newsletter.

Essays in memory of David Hey

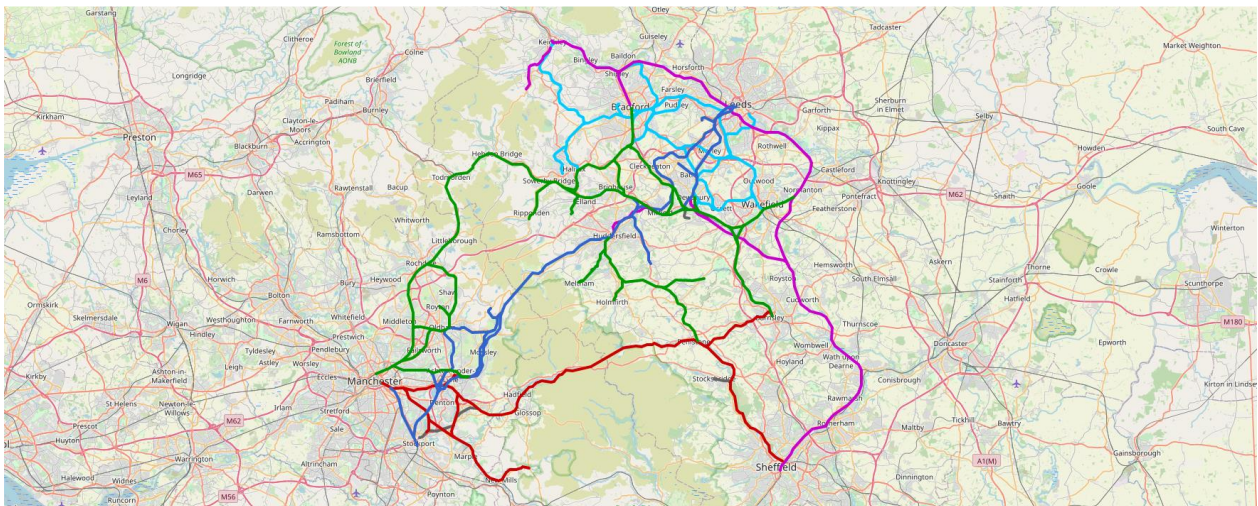
Another good friend of the Society was Professor David Hey (1938-2016) of Sheffield University. His major contribution to the history of Yorkshire — especially South Yorkshire — and to local history more widely is celebrated in a new book, ***Histories of People and Landscape: Essays on the Sheffield region in memory of David Hey***, edited by Richard Hoyle. The distinguished contributors include our own Dr George Redmonds (1935-2018), who was a long-time researcher and co-author with David Hey. Full details of the new book [can be found here](#). The paperback is scheduled for September 2021.

Lost Railways of West Yorkshire

The *Examiner* recently drew attention to a website offering a wealth of information on this subject, including among many others, the Holmfirth, Kirkburton and Meltham branches and Newtown goods yard in Huddersfield. The website in question is:

<http://www.lostrailwayswestyorkshire.co.uk>

Huddersfield Exposed also has [details of local lines](#), including some that were [proposed but never built](#) such as the [1845 scheme](#) to build a 65 mile line to Uttoxeter!



Uncovering Medieval Local History

Members with interests more medieval than modern – perhaps inspired by Peter Burton's [recent talk](#) on the medieval Holme Valley – may like to follow up with a BALH digital skills workshop on Saturday 12 April, offering practical advice on how to uncover local medieval history. Details of the workshop [can be found here](#) and, as we are a corporate member of BALH, HLHS members can use discount code **F-27428X** to obtain a price reduction.

Your Queries Answered

Presenting our talks on-line prevents those attending from putting questions to the speakers. As an experiment for the rest of this season, we invite you to submit questions after the forthcoming talks — we'll then put these to the speaker and publish answers of general interest in the next newsletter. Please direct them to:

email@huddersfieldhistory.org.uk

We also receive a steady trickle of queries direct to our website. These can be very specific but we plan to print a selection here when they seem to be of wider interest. Examples from recent weeks include:

I am a leathercrafter and cannot seem to find much information about leather tanneries in our area, despite their being places with names that relate to the leather trade [...] I was wondering if anyone from your organisation might be able to point me in the right direction as I am not having much luck.

We were able to provide links to historical sources, including trade directories and references to local tanning in 19th Century books, such as Moorhouse's *History and Topography of the Parish of Kirkburton and of the Graveship of Holme* (1861), as well as a list of some of the locations where tanning took place. If any of our members have knowledge about this particular industry, please get in touch.

My husband was a member of the Polish Resettlement Corps that came to work in the mills in Huddersfield in 1946. One of the things he remembered fondly was dancing three times a week at the Three Cranes. Was this a hotel? A dance hall? Was it in Huddersfield, or perhaps Barnsley. He died last year at age 93, and I am writing a book about him.

We were able to confirm it was indeed Barnsley. If any of our members have memories of the Three Cranes (or can suggest what the name represents), we can put you in touch with the enquirer.

Castle Hill – A Place of Resort and Refreshment

by Brian Haigh



Castle Hill Hotel, opened in 1854

At a recent meeting of Kirklees Council's Strategic Planning Committee, approval was given to an application to build a new restaurant, hotel and information centre on the site of the former Castle Hill Hotel. Locally, the controversial decision was met with surprise and disappointment. At the same time, memories of the former hotel have been prompted and questions raised about its history.

There has been a public house on top of Castle Hill since about 1810-12. In his book on the history of Leeds and its region, published in 1816, noted antiquarian, the Rev, Thomas D. Whitaker wrote: 'In digging for the foundation of a house within the precinct of the castle, a winding staircase was discovered, but was not pursued, as it ought to have been.'

This building was an 'L' shaped structure incorporating a licensed house and stabling. It is clearly shown on the early large-scale Ordnance Survey maps of the area. Occupying a site to the north of what was later to become the Castle Hill Hotel car park, it survived until after the Second World War.

Richard Ainley is listed in the 1841 Census as the publican. Aged 40 years, he was living at the house with his wife and three children. Richard's death in July 1848 must have come after a lengthy period of illness as his widow, Elizabeth, was later to claim that she had applied unsuccessfully for a licence to sell beer in her own right, on no fewer than thirteen occasions. It seems likely from what happened subsequently, that

the magistrates' objections were directed not at Mrs Ainley but rather at the building. She took over her late husband's licence, which came up for renewal in 1851.

At the Brewster [licensing] Sessions held in the Huddersfield Guild Hall on 23rd August, she appealed to the magistrates as 'a very respectable widow' who had 'conducted the house most respectably' in the three years since her husband's death. Initially refusing, the panel agreed to further discussion of Elizabeth's case which included proposals for a new hotel on the site. At the Police Court the following week, Mrs Ainley's plans for the new house were presented to the bench. Joseph Brook JP, who was also chairman of the Huddersfield Improvement Commissioners, was said to have remarked that, 'the public were crying out for accommodation and proper places of refreshment'. He had no objection to the new building as long as, 'a new and safe road was made' to the hotel. The application was granted on the condition that the new building was completed before the next annual licensing day.

This took place on 26th August 1852, when the magistrates refused to renew Elizabeth Ainley's licence as she had not fulfilled these conditions. In her defence, her solicitor Cookson Floyd argued that 'every exertion had been made to carry out the stipulations upon which the licence had been granted'. It appeared that the plans and specifications had been approved, the work let and the foundations dug, but construction was yet to begin. 'The great amount of work going on in Huddersfield and neighbourhood was the sole reason,' Mr Floyd argued. A successful appeal was mounted at the West Rising Quarter Sessions in October 1852 and building commenced in the following year.

On 25th March 1854, readers of the *Huddersfield Chronicle* were informed that arrangements were being made for the speedy opening of the new and spacious hotel which had recently been erected at Castle Hill. With the summer season approaching, the grounds around the new hotel were being laid out as a flower garden, pleasure grounds and a bowling green. For the townspeople of Huddersfield this would be a convenient summer resort, 'in a locality commanding one of the most picturesque and romantic panoramic views to be met with in the West Riding'. For their convenience an omnibus would run between the town and the hotel at stated times during the week.

Elizabeth Ainley had already advertised that the new hotel was to be let. In September the licence was transferred to Richard Noble of Almondbury. Elizabeth Ainley moved to the New Inn (previously known as the Wessenden Head Inn) at the Isle of Skye in Austonley.

William Wallen, Huddersfield's first professional architect is thought to have been responsible for the design of the new hotel, though there is no written evidence to support this claim. There are close similarities between the new hotel and the Ramsden estate offices at Longley Hall, now part of Woodley special school, on which Wallen was employed. Both buildings are strongly rooted in local building traditions.

With its castellated tower, the new hotel might have been a shooting lodge or a seventeenth-century yeoman's house. Wallen was familiar with Castle Hill and its history having sought subscribers for a proposed guide to the site in 1852. This was never published.

Another proposal by the architect was to come to nothing. This was for a prospect tower at Castle Hill. About 26 feet square and 95 feet tall, the tower was to accommodate a restaurant, museum and observation room. A wooden model was displayed and aroused much local interest in a town 'that was without any place of attraction for visitors'. Isabella Ramsden, a trustee of the Ramsden estate during the minority of her son, Sir John William Ramsden, was less enthusiastic. Her son's 'antiquarian taste,' she claimed, 'is quite shocked by the idea of the old fort on Castle Hill, being disturbed for a new erection of any kind or sort'.

The new hotel must, however, have had the young baronet's approval; it was built after he attained his majority. Perhaps it represented an improvement on the existing alehouse, which it was expected to replace. But this was not to be. It remained alongside the new hotel and, in the summer of 1855, re-opened as a temperance hotel. The landlord was said to be ready for all comers. 'Teetotallers can be provided with fermented ginger beer,' whilst in permitted hours, 'there is for those who require it stronger potations to moisten their clay.' Waiters moved from one hotel to the other. On Sundays, when the regulations limited the sale of alcohol, alternative refreshments could be offered. This could only add to the attractions of Castle Hill which, it was believed would become 'the chief pleasure resort' for the people of Huddersfield and its neighbourhood.



Aerial View of Castle Hill showing the Temperance Hotel alongside the new hotel
(Courtesy Huddersfield Civic Society)

From 1874, the Castle Hill Hotel was taken over by Bentley and Shaw of the Lockwood Brewery. Local historian Philip Ahier, in his book on the hill, lists the landlords from the 1890s to the 1940s. Bentley and Shaw were taken over by Hammonds in 1944 and subsequently became part of Bass Charrington. In this and subsequent amalgamations, a number of tied houses were sold. This included the Castle Hill Hotel.

Acquired by the Thandi brothers in the 1990s, there were plans to re-furbish the hotel and remove later additions which disfigured the building. Planning approval was given in 2002. During the course of demolition works, the tower became unstable. Permission was granted to replace the original building, but as construction progressed, it became clear that the new building was larger than that for which permission had been granted. Work on the site was stopped. Subsequently, an order was served for the demolition of the illegal building.

Since then, the leaseholders — the Castle Hill Hotel remains part of the Ramsden Estate which was bought by Huddersfield Corporation in 1920 — have submitted a number of new plans. These were all rejected until the present application was approved on 28th October 2020. The low-lying building - variously described as a much-needed facility, a monstrosity or as looking like a branch of McDonalds - is at the centre of an ongoing debate. The plans and the decision were the subject of ministerial scrutiny. The outcome was announced on 22 March. Subject to Scheduled Monument Consent, the development can take place. But what would Isabella Ramsden have thought of it?

The magistrate Joseph Brook, who approved the hotel in 1851, is the subject of a biography, *Joseph Brook of Greenhead: 'Father of the Town'* by David Griffiths, published by the Society in 2013 and [available here](#) at £6.

The architect William Wallen is discussed by Chris Webster in his chapter in the University Press/HLHS book *Power in the Land: the Ramsdens and their Huddersfield estate, 1542-1920*, available from [Gazelle Books](#): search on the title and apply the members' discount code **GZHUDD20** to buy the book for £20. For an electronic version of the book, please see the [University of Huddersfield Press' website](#).

