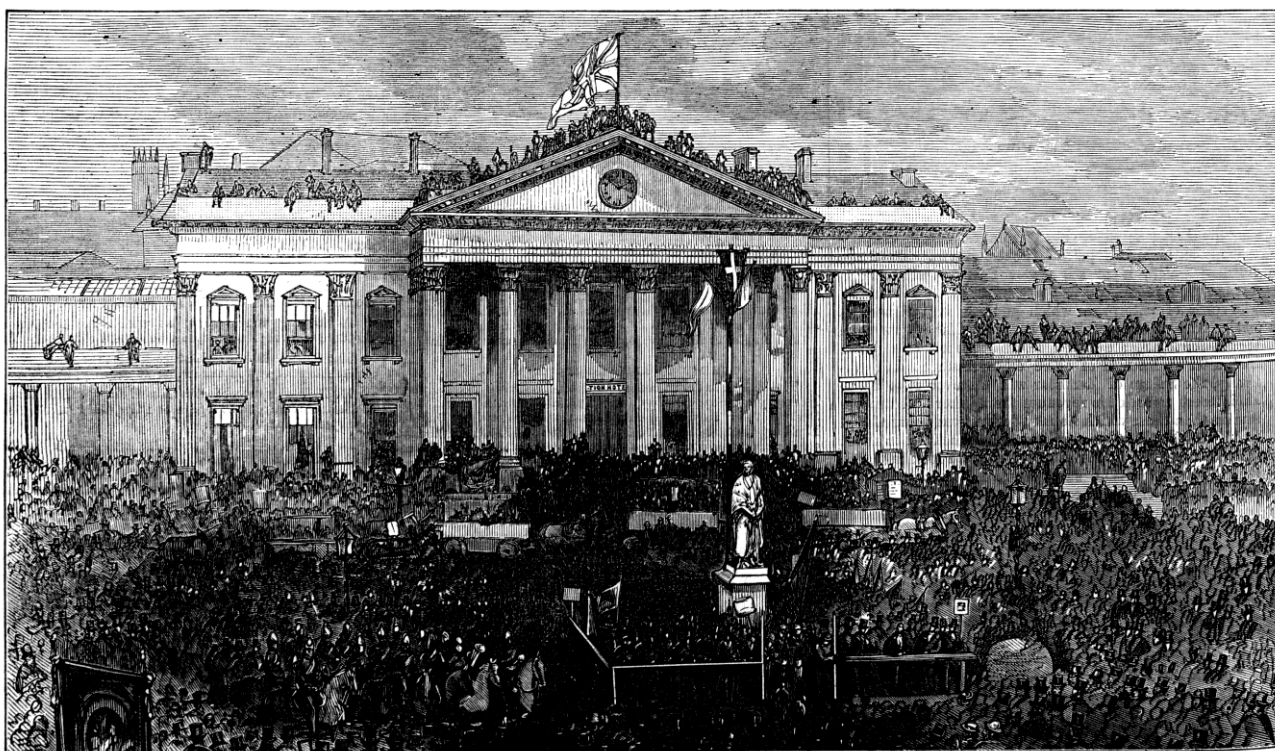


We would like to hear from you! Please send any news, details of events and books, requests for information and comments that you think may be of interest to other Huddersfield Local History Society members to publications@huddersfieldhistory.org.uk



Unveiling of the Peel Statue in St. George's Square (Illustrated London News, 21 June 1873)

Welcome to our May 2021 newsletter. In this month's edition, you'll find details of upcoming events, Society news and plans, and short articles on anything from bicycles to gooseberries, and buses to wallpaper.

We hope you enjoy it. The Society now takes a summer break – though you can expect your *Journal* – in June, and the next newsletter will appear in August.

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 May talk (and book offer)

We continue our programme of online talks with:

24 May 2021

Descent into Silence: Cawthorne's forgotten tragedy

Online presentation by David Hinchliffe,
introducing his new book

Descent into Silence is the untold story of an 1821 pit tragedy at Norcroft, near the West Riding village of Cawthorne, in the middle of the industrial revolution. Six boys and four men were killed in a shaft accident when the ascending corve carrying them to the surface plunged almost 120 feet after a chain broke.

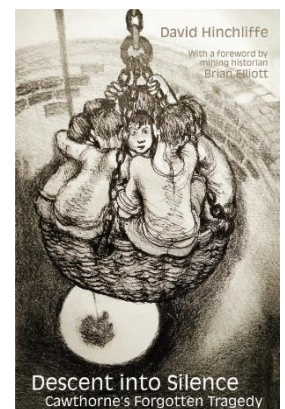
HLHS member David Hinchliffe, a relative of one of the two 8-year-olds killed, has undertaken detailed research into the circumstances of the tragedy, the backgrounds of those involved and what subsequently happened to the victims' families. The harsh treatment of two of them by the local Poor Law authorities is examined in detail.

At the time of the accident, the pit was being worked on land owned by the Spencer-Stanhope family of Cannon Hall and extracts from their estate archives, included in the book, offer fascinating insights into the profound changes in the area during the industrial revolution and the impact upon working class families.

The talk will be [available from our website](#) on and after 24 May 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.

Descent into Silence is available in bookshops, via Amazon or from [scratchingshedpublishing.com](#) at £12.99, with all royalties going to local heritage charities. HLHS members can buy the book at 10% discount, post-free, by contacting Ros Caplan at Philip Howard Books (0113 225 9797), quoting their membership.



The 2021-2022 Talks Programme

The Covid pandemic continues to affect our planning for next season's programme of talks and events. The University of Huddersfield will not be opening its premises to outside bodies such as the Local History Society before Christmas and, while we are being warned of the emergence of new strains of the virus, we cannot be certain of the likely advice and regulations about indoor meetings of more than 50 people such as ours. However, should Covid regulations and the general situation in the autumn allow, we may begin meeting again, probably at New North Road Baptist Church.

But, whatever we do about our meetings, we have decided that all of the autumn's talks, beginning on 27 September, will be recorded and available on YouTube like our 2020-2021 talks. The speakers are all agreed and you will find details in our forthcoming *Journal*.

Before the season starts, a joint meeting with the Civic Society, about Huddersfield architect W.H. Crossland, will go ahead at the Baptist Church at 7.30 on Monday 13 September, under whatever conditions Government regulations allow. The speaker will be Crossland's biographer, Sheila Binns, and this will be part of the Heritage Open Days programme.

We are also hoping to be able to hold our usual Study Day, this year on the theme Huddersfield at Play, on Saturday 27 November. We hope to give good notice of all of this on our website and in our newsletters.

My very best wishes to you all. Take care, stay well. I hope to see you all very soon.

Cyril Pearce (Chair)

Edward Law Prize awarded

We are delighted to announce this year's winner of the Edward Law History Prize as Beverley Norris, for her piece, 'The Peaker Sisters'. This year's competition was judged by University of Huddersfield's Diamond Jubilee Professor Emeritus Keith Laybourn, Dr Janette Martin and Dave Pattern of *Huddersfield Exposed*. The judges were impressed by the quality of this year's entries, and commended the work of Vicky Dunning, whose article, 'The Toffee Triangle', illuminated the history of Seaton's Toffee, now largely forgotten, but which made the fortune of its founder J. W. E. Seaton and was advertised across the country. They were also very taken with Richard Hobson's 'Riders on a Silent Steed', which brought to life the speed, excitement and endurance involved in cycling races at the end of the nineteenth century. (See also his short note below.)

Leading the field, however, was Beverley's article on three sisters, all servants in a Victorian household in Edgerton. The judges praised her piece as vivid, interesting, well-written and well-researched, and applauded the way it captured the elusive history of a middle-class family at the end of the 19th century.

Both Beverley's and Richard's articles will appear in the forthcoming *Journal*, and we are hoping to publish Vicky's in another proposed Christmas edition of the *Journal* this year.

The Society's latest project: Memories of Our Square

The Society has received funding from Historic England's 'Regenerating Historic High Streets through Heritage Action Zones' scheme to celebrate the history and heritage of St George's Square. By bringing vacant and underused buildings back into use – the George Hotel and Estate Buildings - the purpose of the Heritage Action Zone is to bring new life to the Square and encourage both residents and visitors to spend more time in Huddersfield's town centre.



Our government-funded grant will enable us to produce both a well-illustrated book, to be published in summer 2023, and a specially created website. Not only will we be looking for eye-witness accounts, images and maps from the past but we will be inviting anybody who has their own memories and photos of the Square to send them to the project's website.

So many things have taken place in St George's Square – happy and sad, public and personal. From the many businesses carried out in its splendid buildings to royal visits, carnivals, pageants, fairs and festivals of light, it has a rich and colourful history. Politics, music and religion have all played their part and, of course, the Rugby League was founded at the George Hotel. For many visitors to Huddersfield, St George's Square is the first thing they see. Whether it has been horse transport, steam tram, trolley bus or today's buses and taxis, the Square has always acted as an important transport hub.



Our Memories of Our Square website, which will be launched at the end of June, will allow us to collect material and make selections for the book. And where contributors give their permission, these submissions will also be passed on to the West Yorkshire Archive Service to be preserved for future generations.

Our project will sit alongside an exciting programme of cultural events taking place over the next three years, involving a wide range of partners. Further details of the programme as a whole will appear in the next Newsletter.

We would like as many people as possible to take part in this project and we will be asking members not only to consider if they have anything to contribute themselves but to circulate our appeal across their own networks of friends and societies.

The Memories of Our Square project is being co-ordinated for HLHS by Brian Haigh and Christine Verguson. As Brian says: 'We all have different memories of the Square, of taking part in tapathons, watching Morris men or making the difficult choice of which world cuisine to taste. We may have negotiated our first mortgage at the Huddersfield (later Yorkshire) Building Society. We may have attended a wedding breakfast at the George or bought a gown from Madam Lucette's. All these activities, and many more, are woven into the collective memory which Memories of our Square seeks to unravel and celebrate as its glorious buildings find new life and purpose.'

While we would ask you to wait until the website is launched to send in your own accounts and photos of life in the Square, if any members would like to get more involved with the project, or have any skills they would like to contribute, please do get in touch with Christine at info@huddersfieldhistory.org.uk

Forthcoming events (all being well!)

Discover Huddersfield currently plan to resume guided walks from the beginning of July, but these will be for limited numbers and strictly bookable in advance. They have a new web address, discoverhuddersfield.uk, where details will appear as soon as they are finalised – or you can join the mailing list by emailing:

discoverhuddersfield@gmail.com

The latest virtual history trail from Kirklees Library, **The Power of Protest – tracing black abolitionist history in Kirklees**, was live-streamed on 20 May but is now available, with earlier trails, on the Libraries YouTube channel. Full details can be [found here](#).

The biennial **WOVEN in Kirklees** festival has announced a huge range of textile-themed events from 5 to 27 June – details at woveninkirklees.co.uk

And watch out, from mid-July, for the **Sangam Festival**, a celebration of South Asian heritage across Kirklees.

Q & A section

This month's star query to our website was about gooseberries:

Hello,

I am a garden history student writing my dissertation on gooseberries. As you are probably aware the north of England was the centre of a passion for breeding new varieties of larger gooseberry in the 18th and 19th centuries. People often named their varieties after themselves or their home towns so I have been trying to find out more about them. On a list published in 1770 two names caught my attention - Malkin Wood and Shepley's Unicorn. Malkin Wood is still present in Holmfirth today, the earliest map I can find is OS County series - 560, 1854 which shows Malkin House and wood with several mills nearby. Gooseberry growers were often mill workers so I wondered if you might be able to suggest any documents/sources that I might be able to look at about the lives of working class people in Holmfirth or Shepley in the late 18th century? Maps which show allotments for example. Or anything related to gooseberries in the area really!

Many thanks, Ashleigh Davies

Dave Pattern has replied with some information from newspapers about late 19th century gooseberry shows. If you can help, please let us know via email@huddersfieldhistory.org.uk

Meanwhile member Richard Hobson is on the lookout for pictures of cyclists in the period 1885 - 1910, especially any related to the Holme Valley, and asks if anyone has photographs and could supply digital copies to him, at brianrichardhobson@hotmail.com Richard writes as follows:

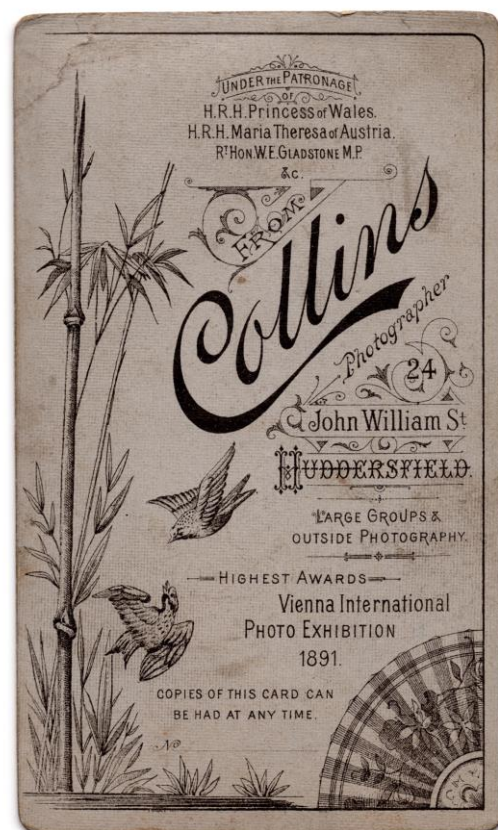
The cycling boom of the 1890s coincided with the growth of amateur photography following the introduction of dry plates. Indeed, photographic manufacturers produced camera cases that were designed specifically to fit onto bicycle handlebars or frames.

Frederic Collins was an early adopter of bicycles and cameras. The son of Thomas and Mary Collins, boot makers of Cross Church Street, he was described, in 1897 as well educated, 5' 5" tall with grey eyes. He had a studio on New Street, Huddersfield. Before that, he had several businesses in Byram Arcade. He advertised as a surveyor, architect, valuer, estate and insurance agent in 1888. He, later, ran a cycle dealership from there before concentrating on photography. He was busy taking photographs during the Queen's Jubilee in 1897.

As an architect he was responsible for additions to the Masonic Hall in Marsh and in 1891 designed Elland Upper Edge Baptist Church, described as a "plain substantial structure" built from stone from local quarries and Crosland Moor. Part of it collapsed in December 1894! To be fair, the building was in an exposed position and the winds were strong.

Fred was well known in cycling circles, serving on the National Cyclists' Union committee dealing with the question of professionalism. He also proved it was possible to cycle from Huddersfield to Leeds inside an hour. Described as 'that good old cyclist' when photographing members of the Huddersfield Volunteers Cycling Club, he taught them "Topography for cyclists'.

Careful readers of the Huddersfield papers in the early 1890s would know of his Brahma hens, his geese and his pug dogs. Clearly, a man of many parts.



A Roll of Wallpaper can lead to a lot of Trouble!

by Brian Haigh

Speculation about the cost of the Prime Minister's re-decoration of the flat above Number 11 Downing Street, the cost of the individual wallpapers selected by exclusive interior designer Lulu Lytle, and questions as to who paid for the work in the first place recently filled the press for days.

It's not the first time a leading citizen has found himself the subject of criticism over the choice of wall-coverings and who executed the work. 170 years ago, Sir John William Ramsden came under fire as a result of work undertaken at his Huddersfield seat, Longley (New) Hall.

Long-delayed work on an extension housing estate offices and accommodation for the resident agent began in 1849. Alexander Hathorn, the agent worked alongside the architect William Wallen and contracted local tradesmen to complete the plans. He obtained estimates for painting and papering from Messrs Burman & Calvert, of whom Mr. Wallen was said to have the highest opinion. What's more, the decorators and paper merchants were Ramsden tenants.

But it was not to be. Isabella Ramsden, the under-age baronet's mother and trustee, visited the recently opened Oxford Street showrooms of Duppa & Collins, the fashionable decorators, and chose papers to her own liking.

What's more, she wrote, 'they wish to put them up & say it will not encrease [sic] the expense as they have workmen now employed near Leeds.'

If employing London tradesmen incurred no additional monetary cost, it did cost a deal of the goodwill which Hathorn had fostered, providing the recently-established *Huddersfield Chronicle* with ammunition against the absentee landlords, who were already under fire because of the leasing arrangements on the estate.

An unsigned article, on 15 June 1850, set out the case. Most local inhabitants were tenants of the estate, which yielded £60,000 a year. A *quid pro quo* was in order; local tradesmen expected to be invited to tender for work on the estate. These expectations were dispelled when, 'a number of painters, paper-hangers, decorators &c. ... arrived from London, accommodation having in the meantime been provided for them at a neighbouring inn Were we not convinced to the contrary we should be led to infer that the tradesmen of Huddersfield are not competent to undertake the decoration of these baronial offices.'



*Longley Hall, 1873.
William Wallen's estate offices and the residence of
the agent are to the left of Rock's engraving.
[Huddersfield Local Studies Library]*

The story of Longley Hall is told in *Power in the Land*, the society's joint publication with the University of Huddersfield Press, edited by Professor Edward Royle and published last year on the centenary of the sale of the estate to Huddersfield Corporation in 1920. Members can obtain copies from gazellebookservices.co.uk at the special price of £20 (RRP £30) quoting **GZHUDD20** at the checkout. Thanks to the Huddersfield University Press, our partners in the publication, it can also be read online or downloaded at no cost: <https://unipress.hud.ac.uk/plugins/books/24/>

The County Motors legacy

by Philip Jenkinson

HLHS member Philip Jenkinson edits 'Wheels', a regular bulletin on public transport developments in the West Yorkshire Pennines. The recent news that German-owned transport giant Arriva is to sell its Yorkshire Tiger bus operation to French-owned group Transdev prompted him to include 'an extremely selective potted history' of its predecessor, County Motors of Lepton. Further edited here, we hope it will bring back memories for some members.

The Waterloo depot now occupied by Yorkshire Tiger was from 1919 until 1969 the base of County Motors (Lepton), whose 20-strong fleet of smart cream and blue buses operated a handful of routes broadly serving an area either side of Wakefield Road beyond the Huddersfield borough boundary – Kirkheaton, Grange Moor, Flockton, Emley and so on. The original owners had sold out the company in the late 1920s jointly to three larger local operators, who by 1950 had become Yorkshire Woollen (based in Dewsbury), Yorkshire Traction (Barnsley) and West Riding (Wakefield).

Yorkshire Traction had its own similarly sized depot in Huddersfield (in St Andrew's Road), from which it operated various routes to the south of County's territory (broadly either side of Penistone Road) – Kirkburton, Shelley, Skelmanthorpe, Denby Dale, etc. When the National Bus Company (NBC) was formed in 1968 it placed County firmly under the control of Yorkshire Traction, closing the Traction depot in town and centralising all the operations to the east of Huddersfield under one roof at Waterloo.

Now the area served by these routes underwent a substantial change in the years 1950-1975. Many of the places in question were traditionally pit villages in an otherwise rural area and, as the National Coal Board progressively closed smaller collieries in favour of 'super-pits' further east of Wakefield and Barnsley, so the 'County/Traction' area was filled by new housing occupied by younger car-owning professionals with jobs either side of the West Yorkshire/ South Yorkshire boundary established by local government reform in 1974.

The area may have fallen into Kirklees but its inhabitants had no particular allegiance to Huddersfield rather than either Wakefield or Barnsley, from which much of it was relatively equi-distant. As a result there was ever less demand for trunk bus routes into Huddersfield and Traction's Huddersfield depot increasingly serviced a spider's web of semi-rural routes wandering over the area between the three towns.

Privatisation of the NBC in 1986 saw Yorkshire Traction become an independent business based firmly in South Yorkshire and its Waterloo depot increasingly became an isolated rump. Meanwhile the former Yorkshire Woollen and West Riding

operations, equally firmly rooted in West Yorkshire, coalesced in due course into Arriva Yorkshire. Traction's cross-border links were further undermined by the establishment in 1983 and subsequent development of the Huddersfield – Barnsley – Sheffield railway link and it was no real surprise, once Yorkshire Traction had sold out to Stagecoach, another giant bus group, that the new owner chose in 2008 to dump its West Yorkshire outpost. It duly passed to Centrebus, which had few links with the area at all; services between Huddersfield and Barnsley effectively ceased; and remaining local services were rebranded 'the Huddersfield Bus Company'.

Centrebus didn't distinguish itself during its period of tenure and, five years on, sold its majority share in the Waterloo operation to Arriva, who had maintained a minority share throughout. In the meantime it had absorbed K-Line, an independent firm set up in post-deregulation days by ex-Arriva employees.

The resultant animal was re branded 'Yorkshire Tiger' and was launched in 2013 with some panache. However, it soon became apparent that it was just a low-cost subsidiary of Arriva from which the parent firm maintained a discreet distance, and it has become a by-word for shabby buses, unreliable services and a constantly shifting network in the Huddersfield and Halifax areas.

In the latest upheaval, Arriva is making sure that it keeps the through Huddersfield – Wakefield services, and already has most of the former County network. Really the only bit of territory which Transdev will inherit is therefore the old 'Trakky' Huddersfield – Kirkburton – Skelmanthorpe – Denby Dale corridor. Transdev's own operating area in Yorkshire lies predominantly north of Halifax and Bradford. Whether it is preparing a pre-emptive strike southward will become apparent in due course.



Paddock Congregational Chapel

*architect John Kirk
built 1871 and demolished prior to the early 1970s*