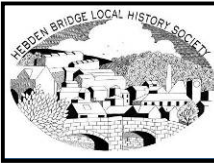


2016 No 1



HEBDEN BRIDGE LOCAL HISTORY
SOCIETY NEWSLETTER
www.hebdenbridgehistory.org.uk

Spring 2016



CAN YOU HELP?

St James' to celebrate
the Queen's 90th birthday

Details Page 3

**Published by the Hebden Bridge
Local History Society**

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The society has sections for those with a particular interest in local prehistory, family history and folklore.

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Welcome to the Spring Newsletter. Here you'll find reports of the lectures for 2015-2016, news from the Family History and Prehistory sections, activities and forthcoming events. If you'd like to share your research or pose a query on something historic for the Summer 2016 issue please send it to the Secretary by 1 August 2016.

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The Local History Society needs your help

All of the organisation and running of the society rests on a few shoulders and we really need a few more shoulders to assist us.

The following roles are assisting people who are already involved in these functions. These are team efforts. Full support and training are given where necessary.

Help your Society!

Technical set up

To be part of a team who set up the projector and sound at the 12 meetings at the Methodist Church.

This is not necessarily needed at every meeting, possibly on a rota basis.

Written instructions and procedures have been developed

Tea making at meetings

To work with others on a rota basis.

Setting out before the meeting

Making and serving the tea in the break

Clearing and washing up.

All these tasks can be carried out as part of a team.

The committee provides all the supplies.

Publicity

There are several roles in publicising what the Society does. Not all need to be done by the same person.

Help with updating the web site.

Preparing the pre-meeting notices on Power Point.

Assistance in preparing and sending reports or articles to the media.

Developing a membership leaflet.

Please email me or come and have a chat if you are interested.

Barbara Atack ataxjb@btinternet.com

St James, Hebden Bridge to celebrate the Queen's 90th birthday

To coincide with official celebrations taking place in London, every parish church in England has been encouraged to organise a festival over the weekend of 10-12 June 2016 to celebrate the Queen's 90th birthday and her role as head of the Church of England.

St James, Hebden Bridge plans to put on an exhibition of the life of our parish over the previous 90 years, charting the changes in the life of our community since 1926, as well as being a celebration of our church and the people that it serves.

In order to put on this exhibition, we would like to borrow any photographs, artefacts, oral or video history connected with St James or the surrounding community. Contributions from Hebden Bridge Local History Society and Hebden Royd School have already been promised and it is intended that the exhibition will run from Sunday 5th June to Sunday 19th June. As part of its celebration St James will have Revd Canon Peter Calvert talking about his time as a Chaplain to the Queen at a special service on Sunday 12th June at 11am.

If you have anything that you would like to share and contribute to the exhibition, please contact Revd Howard Pask (Email: vicar@stjameshebdenbridge.com T: 01422 842138).

NEW

**ERRINGDEN,
LANGFIELD
AND STANSFIELD
PROBATE RECORDS
1688 - 1700**

Edited by Mike Crawford and Stella Richardson



Hebden Bridge Local History Society

Occasional Publication N° 6

Erringden, Langfield and Stansfield Probate Records 1688 – 1700. Edited by Mike Crawford and Stella Richardson. Published 2016. Hebden Bridge Local History Society Occasional Publication No.6. Paperback. 209 pages. ISBN: 978-0-9933920-0-9. £9.99 (plus £2 towards shipping)

This collection of wills and inventories is a companion volume to publications of probate documents for Sowerby and Soyland, and also for Midgley.

The documents offer vivid insights into life and death among the people of the Upper Calder Valley townships of Erringden, Langfield and Stansfield at the end of the seventeenth century. Many were involved in the dual economy of the domestic textile trade and farming. Intriguing insights into family relationships are revealed through bequests, property transfers and the choice of executors. The documents show the desire of the testators and the efforts of the probate courts to ensure that the estate was administered as intended.

The inventories not only describe household goods and personal possessions, titles of books in one case, but also trade tools and farming implements. Small details like the names given to cows bring us closer to the people. The wealth of these families was the basis for building the mills in the next century.

The volume contains a description of the probate process, extensive indexes of persons and places, and a thorough glossary of usage for this period.

Lecture Reports 2015 - 2016

23 September 2015

**WHEN OXFORD UNIVERSITY CAME
TO HEBDEN BRIDGE**

Andrew Bibby

Hebden Bridge was a star name in the world of co-operation when in 1891 a great banquet was organised to celebrate the twenty-first birthday of the Hebden Bridge Fustian Manufacturing Co-operative Society. The 'Nutclough Pioneers' were seen as a shining example of how a producer co-operative could be established and by the end of the nineteenth century a fully integrated fustian producing business from weaving to garments was prospering.

But co-operation was about much more than production; it had a strong commitment to education, and it was this aspect of its story that Andrew Bibby revealed in this talk.

At a time when the mass of people had access to only the most basic education, the co-operators of Hebden Bridge were keen to open up an intellectual life for working people. To this end, what was described as 'an almost romantic attachment' was established between the fustian society and the University of Oxford. The universities, which for the working man may as well have been at the north pole, as one of the co-operators put it, had woken up to a responsibility to 'bring the great boon of cultivation' to those who had for so long been excluded. Working men and women couldn't get to

Oxford, but by the means of the University Extension movement, Oxford could come to them.

So the Fustian Society hosted an annual series of lectures, given by young idealistic dons who travelled the country opening up history, politics, literature and science to anyone who wished to attend. In Hebden Bridge, the talks, held in the newly extended Co-operative Hall, were hugely successful, regularly attracting between 300 and 700 people, who delighted the lecturers with their intelligent questions and animated discussions. Alongside the public lectures there was the chance to engage in closer study through tutorials and essay writing, and some successfully took examinations. Later there were summer schools held at Oxford and Cambridge which allowed those who could attend to get a stronger taste of the stimulation of University education.

What emerged strongly from Andrew's talk was the huge contribution made by those fired by co-operative principles to the civic life of Hebden Bridge. One of the most successful participants in the extension movement was Robert Halstead, a weaver at the Nutclough mill. He strongly believed that 'those who are poor in material goods need not succumb to the greater curse of poverty of ideas'. Eventually he helped to form the Workers' Educational Association, to bring a wealth of intellectual life within the grasp of the working class.

Another of the alumni of the Oxford University's links with Hebden Bridge was Crossley Greenwood, son of the Nutclough's founder Joseph Greenwood. He was

instrumental in setting up the Hebden Bridge Literary and Scientific Society, of which the Hebden Bridge Local History Society is an off-shoot, thriving and still contributing to the intellectual life of the town.

Andrew Bibby's book about this nationally important Hebden Bridge co-operative '*All Our Own Work*' is available now.

14 October 2015

THE LOST KINGDOM OF ELMET

Dave Weldrake

The name Elmet has strong poetic resonances, but Dave Weldrake, archaeologist and heritage educator prefers to take a strictly archaeological approach. In his talk he used the evidence from place names and archaeology to illuminate this lost kingdom of the Celtic twilight.

Evidence from the time after the Romans left Britain is rather sketchy, but evidence exists of a British kingdom stretching from the Wharfe to the Don and from the Pennines range in the east to an area in the west where places such as Barwick and Sherburn still have 'in Elmet' as part of their names. Kingdoms of the north such as Craven and Elmet survived until the invasion of the Northumbrians in the early seventh century.

References in the writing of Bede send archaeologists looking for a monastery in the forest of Elmet, which Dave Weldrake believes was probably at Eccleshill. Eccles is a Saxon word for church, and lies in the middle of a host of places with names ending in ley, such as

Keighley, Shipley, Ilkley and Headingley. 'Ley' signifies a woodland clearing.

Archaeologists are hopeful that modern scientific advances might shed more light on this lost Kingdom, and the secrets hinted at by place names that have survived over the centuries.

28 October 2015

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

**Barbara Attack and
Keith Stansfield**

An insight into local dialects and surnames of the Calder Valley, and the sometimes unexpected historical links between both.

Barbara Attack spoke about how, around the fourteenth century, the surfeit of common Christian names (John, William) in a growing population created the need for surnames, and how in many cases these were derived from either occupation, parentage (e.g. Jim o'Bobs meaning 'son of Robert'), a nickname ('Longbottom') or a place name such as Stansfield or Wadsworth. In the Upper Calder Valley, surnames based on habitat were commonly used thanks to dispersed settlements across the region. But the growing number of names for any given location means that historical records often become confusing or misleading. For instance, Heptonstall Parish Records from 1594 to 1812 show 3,785 entries for Greenwood and 2,946 for Sutcliffe. This does not necessarily imply any blood relation, causing quite a headache for family historians!

Stansfield is a name with 833 mentions in the aforementioned records, and Keith Stansfield's family connections in the area can be traced back many centuries. Mr Stansfield entertained his listeners with an account of lost phrases and idioms ("You've been laiken in't wattergate again" – you've been playing in the river) and reminding them of that everyday greeting of yesteryear, "Nah then, then?" – to which the respondent would, of course, reply "Nah then..."

In fact accents were often so particular to small regions in the Calder Valley that speakers from one homestead would be unintelligible to those from another. Mr Stansfield spoke of an ancestor, Joe a'Jim o'Bobs, who attended Colden School upon its opening in 1878. In the same year the headmaster wrote in the school log that the pupil's poor spelling was most likely due to local pronunciation; perhaps accounting for why in official documents Earlees, Jim O'Bob's home, was written as 'Yerlees'. Showing, for instance, how a family name based on the long-vanished hamlet of Etough might become a surname such as 'Atack'.

4 November 2015

TED HUGHES AND GALLIPOLI

Nick Wilding

With Remembrance Sunday approaching, Nick marked this important World War One anniversary by taking his audience on the journey made, one hundred years ago, by young men from East Lancashire and West Yorkshire. These lads had joined up with the 1/6 Lancashire

Fusiliers and ended up fighting in the Dardanelles. They included Ted Hughes' father, Billy Hughes, from King Street, Hebden Bridge. Based upon extensive research in the Ted Hughes archive at the British Library, Nick discovered unpublished letters that reveal Ted's thoughts on World War One and its impact on his home and the Calder Valley.

Born in 1930 and growing up as another conflict approached, Ted says that he was conscious, during his childhood, of living in the shadow of World War One. Ninety-six year old Lois Smith, in an interview on screen, described it as a dark cloud casting a shadow over everyone. She was at the talk.

Nick screened film of the late Donald Crossley, Ted's childhood friend, in Slack Top graveyard, looking at the graves of certain men who died after they had returned from the front. He remembered that many men never wanted to talk about what they had seen. However, Ted's father appeared to re-live it, both in his nightmares and in his thoughts and Ted as a child had witnessed this. He wrote his poems, 'Out' and 'For the Duration', based upon the post-traumatic stress that he had witnessed his father suffering.

Nick wanted to understand what Billy Hughes and other men had lived through, whilst they were in Gallipoli. He discovered letters from him to the Hebden Bridge Times, including one that even mentioned one close shave with death when, in the middle of a great bayonet charge, some flying shrapnel embedded itself in his paybook in his top pocket, thereby saving his life. This was kept by

him and then later by Ted for the rest of their lives and features in the poetry.

Using personal reminiscences of other men who went there, Nick revealed why the Gallipoli campaign would become the butt of criticism in subsequent years and attempted to convey to his audience some of the experiences that so traumatised 'survivors' like Billy Hughes for the rest of their lives.

11 November 2015

THE HISTORY OF CALREC II

Stephen Jagger

An unusually modern story was told by Stephen Jagger, until 2009 managing director of local audio pioneers Calrec. We are used to celebrating the old textile industries which prospered in Hebden Bridge, but this account of the later history of Calrec shows how the company successfully met the uncertain and challenging times of the late twentieth century.

Stephen Jagger gave a real insight into the way the company learnt from its mistakes, such as takeovers and technological challenges, to establish a leading brand in producing the highly sophisticated audio mixing desks required by modern outside broadcasting. Calrec's speciality was equipping the outside broadcasting trucks that are essential to successful sports reporting. Although the company established contracts with big broadcasters across the world, the fast moving pace of the industry

meant that innovation was crucial to survival, and in the nineties, the holy grail was a reliable digital mixing system which could handle the subtleties of sports and music broadcasting. An important factor in their success was to establish an entirely new, flexible management system, giving the greatest possible autonomy to their skilful engineers. Luck, skill and investment paid off and the first Calrec digitally equipped OB truck was used in the USA in 2001, where its first test was a live outside broadcast with the US president.

The need for a continuous cycle of investment in research and development contributed to the decision to sell the company at a time when its reputation and products were at their peak. The business still thrives, happily housed in the Nutclough Mill which nineteenth century innovators built and an equally proud part of the history of Hebden Bridge.

25 November 2015

WIDDOP AND THE SHACKLETONS

John Shackleton

Anyone who has watched 'Who do you think you are' will have marvelled at the exotic journeys embarked on when following the paper trail of records. In John Shackleton's case, they led to the remote hill top settlement of Widdop, where visitors often asked the Water Board ranger who had lived up there 'in the middle of nowhere'. John knew only a little of the family's story when he embarked on his quest, but he discovered a rich vein of documents in

various local archives which helped him to fill in some of the details of the story.

The detective work began on the ground with two barns, one of which has since been demolished, which had belonged to one of the farms which made up the hamlet of Widdop. Census returns showed which of the farms John's ancestor had lived in, and surveys and maps from the Savile archives revealed even more, giving names of tenants and listing the field names and what was grown on this poor ground. These records enabled John to trace his family back to the early seventeenth century. They had stayed put in the small settlement right through till the nineteenth century, subsisting with farming and some weaving.

Archaeology added more detail: low water levels at the reservoir revealed pack horse trails which connected Widdop with the outside world. Close to where John's branch of the Shackletons had farmed were fragments of medieval pots, early glass, evidence of kilns and even a coin from the reign of Charles I.

It is amazing to realise how much documentation can be found when tracing a family history, even when it is based in such a remote corner of West Yorkshire. John has used maps, wills, land surveys, censuses and court rolls to help him put together the jigsaw of his family's past. He has now created a website of his findings, and helping others in their search: www.widdop.moonfruit.com

Anyone inspired by John's talk and website to set out on their own voyage of family discovery can get help and

advice from the Hebden Bridge History Society Family History Section, which has regular sessions based in the Society's archive at Birchcliffe Centre. Details can be found on the back cover and on the society's website www.hebdenbridgehistory.org.uk

9 December 2015

VANISHING FOR THE VOTE

Jill Liddington

Jill Liddington's talk, based upon her book 'Vanishing the Vote' dealt with a fascinating moment in history when in 1911, suffragettes urged women, still without representation at that time, to boycott the census. Many did. Some wrote 'No Vote, No Census' boldly across their schedules. Others hid in darkened houses. Emily Wilding Davison, on the night of the census, famously hid in a cupboard in the Houses of Parliament.

Jill described how this happened in a period of bitter conflict. The Liberal Government of Asquith and Lloyd George had achieved some significant health and welfare reforms, but chose to shelve modest plans for a bill on women's suffrage. This failure to act lit the fuse for the campaign and Halifax was one of many towns in Britain that joined in. Jill introduced us to the interesting local women who were central to this initiative, including Lavena Saltonstall of Unity Street, Hebden Bridge, Mary Taylor of Skircoat Green and Dinah Connelly and Laura Wilson from Pellon. She then ably performed the role of Emmeline Pankhurst, speaking at the Halifax Mechanics Hall, attempting to persuade local people to take part.

Members of the society played the roles of hecklers, with scripts of the real dialogue used at the event.

However, on census night, whilst some women chose to evade the census, including 570 in a roller skating rink in Manchester, 57 in Sheffield and 10 in Bradford, many chose to comply with it. This included many suffragettes who you might have expected to have made a stand, including Laura Wilson and Dinah Connelly. Jill asked people to consider why that was the case and many ideas were suggested.

In November 1911, Asquith received a deputation of adult suffragists. He invited them into his office and announced that he was proposing a franchise extension to every adult man in Britain. This was not what the women were campaigning for and led directly to a sustained wave of window-breaking and damage to empty buildings. From then on, the suffragette campaign became a feature of life in Britain and Jill finished by asking everyone what they would have done on census night in 1911.

13 January 2016

TALES ALONG THE PACKHORSE WAY

John Billingsley

As they crossed the Pennines between Burnley and Halifax the old packhorse men were guided on their way by the Packhorse Litany. John is the author of six books on local folklore, and has collected many of the tales told

about the places passed along the Long Causeway, this
'bleak and comfortless road.'

*Burnley for ready money,
Mereclough nooa trust,
Yo tekken a peep at Stirperden,
But Ca'at Kebs yo must.
Blackshaw Yed for travellers,
An Heptonstall for trust,
Hepton Brig for landladies,
And Midgely on the Moor.
Luddenden's a warm shop,
Roylehead's varry cold,
And if yo go to Halifax
Yo mun bi varry bold.*

Many of the stories seem to feature encounters with the devil or his creatures, with ghosts, love, sex and murder also contributing to the entertainment.

Burnley might have been the place for 'ready money' but John also had a story of St Peter's pigs, who wrecked work on the new church by moving materials to a new site – whether their message was 'from God or something else' the church was built in the spot they preferred. The devil also made an appearance as Striker, a huge black dog with red eyes, who could terrify travellers in Lancashire, but was himself scared off by Yorkshire folk! Making the climb from Mereclough you might hear of deals with the devil, or the romantic story of Maiden Cross, where the ghost of a young woman whose lover was lost in the Civil War would wait for him to return.

Stiperden was border country between Lancashire and Yorkshire, and borders were also believed to be the threshold to a third dimension. This superstition led to the heads of beasts which had died of sickness being taken here in the hope that the disease would be carried away. Kebs was the familiar name of the Sportsman's Arms which had its own ghost lady in a long dress. Ghost stories persist, and sightings of Blackshaw Head's ghost dog walker, known as Ernest, have been reported right up to modern times.

Hebden Bridge's landladies offered a night's rest for the travellers, as well as an opportunity for fighting between the lads of Halifax and Heptonstall who would traditionally meet for a rumble at the foot of the Buttress, close to the bridge where the Roundheads and Cavaliers clashed. More stories arise from the moorland landscape of Midgley: the suicide buried without rites who refused to rest in peace, and the milk maid who lost her way on the moors and died near the stoop which was then named Churn Milk Joan. Luddenden offered hospitality at the Lord Nelson, famous both for being the first lending library and for being Bramwell Bronte's local.

Fear of Halifax was probably justified, as the home of the gibbet. Lack of a qualified hangman meant that the town got permission to use its own guillotine to execute those who offended. It was argued that having valuable cloth stretched out in the tenter fields made Halifax merchants particularly susceptible to theft, and a deterrent was necessary. Inevitably there are gruesome stories, one

recorded by Daniel Defoe, of what happened when the head went flying off.

We can all appreciate a good story on a cold winter's night, especially when told with such vitality and humour. We might dismiss them as a just 'little bit Yorkshire', but as John pointed out, these stories form part of our folk culture and history, and many have roots of truth.

27 January 2016

RESTORING A UNIQUE ORGAN

Peter Jeffery

St Michael's, Cornholme, is the home of a unique church organ, but as Peter Jeffery explained no-one realised quite how special it was as he related the story of how the organ came to be restored during the time when he was vicar of Cornholme.

The first surprise to many was just how complicated these organs are: behind the serene exterior of the shining pipe façade, a thousand pipes, 'a collection of tin and wood whistles', operated by keyboards, foot pedals and stops, work furiously to make the magnificent sounds. The very earliest organs used wooden rods to open and close the airways to the pipes. By the nineteenth century, a pneumatic system, based on networks of lead pipes, used air to operate the mechanism. Cornholme organ, built in 1904, used this system.

Peter explained that organists always commented that it was a fine organ, but in a bad way. Repairs were likely to cost £20,000, a sum way beyond the parish. However, a

generous gift of £1000 towards repairing the organ set the whole process of restoration on its way. As various experts visited it became clear how important an organ this was. It had been constructed using experimental techniques by Peter Conachers of Huddersfield. One distinguishing feature was the use of stop keys instead of the usual pull stops, previously known only on theatre organs and introduced in 1928. Such an important and unique organ, which had never been rebuilt since its installation, had to be restored, it was agreed.

The estimated cost of restoration rose until it reached a seemingly unachievable £62,000 – until the Heritage Lottery Fund offered £50,000 – the maximum it could grant. The remainder of the money was raised by the parish, and restoration work could begin. The work was carried out by Woods Organs, Huddersfield, and proved a difficult and demanding task for their experienced workforce. They had to purchase five complete sheepskins to replace the leather parts of the bellows, and locate rabbit fur glue for the fixing.

The result was a magnificent organ as good as it had been one hundred years before. On 6th October 2006 the church was packed for an opening recital by Mytholmroyd organist Darius Battiwalla. A final treat for the audience was to hear a recording of that day, the soaring sounds of Widor's Organ Symphony making maximum use of the organ's newly restored power. All that amazing music controlled by puffs of air travelling through the festoons of lead pipes. Magical.

10 February 2016

RAILWAY ROUNDABOUT

Paul Kenny

Clouds of smoke billowing across the sky, the raw power of the engine – there is something about the old steam trains that is essentially photogenic, and captures our imagination. Paul Kenny, by profession a signal-man (including at Hebden Bridge) is also a keen photographer, and shared his slides and his stories.

Some of the names of engines he has captured on camera are familiar even to non-train buffs – *Mallard*, *Sir Nigel Gresley*, *The Duchess of Hamilton* – but other engines also have interesting stories. One engine that ended up at the Keighley and Worth Valley Railway had travelled through Iran and Egypt; others have taken part in films, like the *Railway Children*, and even ended their lives in spectacular explosions all for the sake of a film adventure. *Nellie* was an engine that pulled the trucks carrying waste from the Esholt Sewage works on a private track, and is now at the Bradford Industrial Museum.

The railway age left its mark on the landscape, not only with the tracks, but with often quirky architecture, with castellated towers and elaborately decorated tunnels enhancing a practical structure. Where railway men lived, there are often rows of cottages provided by the company, with names like 'Midland Terrace' giving a clue to their origins. Where they died they are sometimes commemorated – in the churchyard at Otley is a Navvies' Monument for the 23 men killed; close to Ribbleshead viaduct a chapel honours the 200 men, women and

children who died in the shanty villages during the construction of the line.

Inevitably, signal boxes featured in Paul's show – from the Hebden Bridge signal box, now a listed building, to the garden hut that had unexpectedly replaced his usual signal box at Kildwick when he returned from a holiday! Finally there were the animals – the statue to a faithful collie on the Settle Carlisle line, who uniquely was allowed to sign a petition to save the line by paw print because it was a fare-paying passenger. There was also the Hebden Bridge Signal Box Cat, who lived there for 14 years, and who became something of a celebrity for train passengers.

It seems that steam trains and all things railway have a safe place in our affections even now, with enthusiasts pouring their energy and time into keeping up the engines, and special steam excursions still attracting thousands of keen passengers. And people like Paul taking photographs to share.

24 February 2016

The Alan Petford Memorial Lecture

**CALDER VALLEY CONNECTIONS
TO MAGNA CARTA**

David Cant

David Cant delivered this first annual lecture in memory of Alan Petford, who died far too soon and whose contributions to the study and enjoyment of local history are immense and greatly missed.

The national celebration in 2015 of the 800th anniversary of Magna Carta reinforced how the great charter has had resonances down the centuries. Yet, as local historian David Cant explained, the charter was basically a peace treaty that was broken within months of being agreed.

The battle was between King John and the barons, who formed the second tier in the pyramid feudal structure by which society was organised in the thirteenth century. Unsurprisingly the discontent felt by the powerful barons was rooted in money. King John had embarked on expensive, and unsuccessful wars in France, and he imposed ever more severe taxes to pay for his ventures. To make things worse he paid scant attention to the rules of chivalry, starving his captives to death rather than taking a ransom.

Faced with an insurgent London, King John agreed to the barons' demands as set out in Magna Carta and, despite its annulment in the same year, by 1297 its basic premises were agreed. This formed the basis of our constitution, restricting the power of the Crown to pursue individuals beyond the law. It is the cry of liberty, which established a belief in the right of the individual against an arbitrary state and influenced freedom movements across the centuries and around the world.

The Calder Valley, having no strategically important castles to defend, escaped much of the fighting between King John and his insurgent barons. Two families held sway – the de Lacys held the Manors of Clitheroe and of Pontefract and the de Warennes the Manor of Wakefield,

and the de Lacys in particular were skilful in changing sides when it was in their interest.

Neither family tended to spend much time in the area, leaving decisions in the hands of local officials. Much can be learned about everyday life in this period from Manor Court Rolls, recording all kinds of infringements and disputes about how the land was used. Large areas of land were set aside as hunting forests and subject to strict forest laws. The famed independence of our valley may well have its roots in the unwillingness of the barons to get much involved.

Magna Carta is rightly celebrated as a symbol of liberty; it established the idea of the rule of law and the right of the individual which remains the basis of our constitution.

9 March 2016

**'AND IF A GERMAN
VIOLATED YOUR MOTHER?'**

John Rhodes

1914 had seen a kind of war fever, where any anti-war sentiment would be howled down as unpatriotic. However, as the war dragged on and stories came back from the front, the supply of volunteers started to dry up and it became clear that the government would have to impose conscription. This talk described what happened to those who opposed the war and those who sought exemption from military service on grounds of conscience.

After the introduction of male conscription in March 1916, every unmarried man between the ages of 18 and 41 was

deemed to be a member of the armed forces and would be called up. Later this was extended to married men. Men could seek exemption on grounds of health, being in a certified occupation, hardship or conscience. Decisions about whether to grant exemption were made by military tribunals held in every urban district. The panels were made up of local business men, often the employers of those who were appealing, and were held in public. In Hebden Bridge they took place in the Council Office committee rooms. Using the verbatim reports published in the local press John was able to reconstruct one of these appeals, which on average lasted less than fifteen minutes. The questioning focused on what the man would do if faced with a German about to 'violate' his mother, and the answer of the conscientious objector that he 'would give his life, but not take a life' was as much as he was able to say about his reasons for refusing to serve in a combatant role. Those few who were granted exemption on grounds of conscience were expected to work in the national service, often in very tough non-combatant roles; those who were refused exemption could be sentenced to prison terms with hard labour.

The reasons for refusing to fight were various: although many gave religious reasons, there were a number who had political and class reasons for objecting to a war against fellow workers. Some drew comfort and support from friends and neighbours – a particularly high number of conscientious objectors in Mytholmroyd seems to have been connected to the beliefs of the Independent Labour Party there, several of whose officers refused to fight and

served prison sentences. The views of one revolutionary socialist must have shocked the tribunal when he stated that he was not a pacifist and would gladly take up arms against the ruling classes, but not against his fellow workers.

John's research has also revealed some less than noble characters who served on the tribunals – the local eminence of military age who nevertheless was not in uniform, though he took his car and driver to France to aid the ambulance service for six months. The men on Hebden Bridge tribunal, largely local clothing manufacturers, saw none of their sons in military service. Historians like John Rhodes continue to uncover extraordinary stories of local men which contribute hugely to our understanding of this poignant period of our history.

23 March 2016

JOSEPH WOOD, A YORKSHIRE QUAKER Pamela Cooksey

Joseph Wood was a Yorkshire Quaker who, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, travelled the country, recording his journeys, his thoughts and his impressions in a notebook he kept in the pocket of his long coat. One hundred notebooks survived, kept safe by the family, like a hidden treasure. Pamela's determination to transcribe them revealed the story of a remarkable man, and his varied and detailed descriptions of his travels shine a light on life two hundred years ago. He has been celebrated as the Samuel Pepys of Quakers.

Joseph Wood was born in 1750 at New House near High Flatts, Penistone, the eldest of seven children. His Quaker parents were clothier farmers, and after Joseph was educated at a small Quaker boarding school at High Flatts, it was expected that he would be apprenticed to his father. However the Quaker meeting recognised his 'gift of ministry' and so the course of his life changed, and he became a public Friend and travelling minister of the gospel. Along the way, he often managed to 'do a little business' trading in cloth.

The notebooks themselves, covered in a selection of brightly coloured Georgian wallpapers that belie the monochrome image of Quakers, include memoranda, journals, letters and articles. They detail the routes he took, the places he stayed, the people he met and his thoughts on some of the events of the time. Now transcribed, they provide a rich resource for social historians as well as a glimpse of a past time through contemporary eyes.

He visited the Calder Valley frequently, recording his amazement at the new Piece Hall, and the 'lately made canal'. He describes the delightful wooded valley and the 'moorish high mountains' and noted that the inhabitants of Heptonstall were 'much addicted to drunkenness'. When he stayed at the Cross Inn he complained he was kept awake until three in the morning by the 'drinking, cursing and horrid oaths'. However, his public meetings in Todmorden, Sowerby and Luddenden were very popular, and he commended the behaviour of the visitors.

The notebooks are packed with gems of contemporary journalism – detailed accounts of taking the sulphurous waters in Harrogate or using the special ‘houses on wheels’ which enabled him to enjoy sea bathing in Scarborough. He records serious disturbances in Huddersfield after the 1807 General Election, and notes his own support for abolitionist William Wilberforce.

After ten years in his company, it is clear that Pamela came to like and admire Joseph Wood, and her enthusiasm and hard work has made these unique writings accessible for future historians. The original notebooks are now held in the Brotherton Special Collection at the University of Leeds.

Prehistory Section

Another excellent series of seminars at the University of Bradford where we heard of the current interpretation of the Stonehenge complex as a theatrical landscape; prehistoric climate changes evidenced by the abandoning of Angkor Wat, the Mayan collapse, the end of the Harappian culture and the desertification of the Sahara; the view of caves as a bioarchaeological archive; and the English Landscapes and Identities Project, which succeeded in combining datasets from the Historic Environment Record, Historic England, and the Portable Antiquities Scheme in a GIS-based compilation - the first time this has been done.

We attended the Pennine Prospects annual conference which this year focused on the future development of South Pennine landscapes. The buffet was very good.

The documentation from the Ridge Rough Project is now archived at Birchcliffe, and the finds will be deposited there once PAS (Portable Antiquities Scheme) recording is completed. The excavation report is now available as a free download from our HBLHS website.

A bibliography of South Pennine prehistory has been provided to HBLHS and should appear on the site soon.

Fieldwork has been somewhat compromised by the inclement weather, but the Ringstone Edge site above Ripponden has continued to reveal a wealth of material which is prompting a reinterpretation of the area. It is hoped that further ploughing in spring will inform our work.

Another two talks have been delivered, the second as a stand-in for an indisposed speaker. The fee, and a collection from the audience, made £55 for the Calder Flood Appeal.

David Shepherd

Exhibitions

Widdop from 6,000 B.C. is the theme of the next exhibition at Hebden Bridge Town Hall. This has been put together by Brian Howcroft and the Prehistory Section. It has been combined with John Shackleton's research into

families in the area from the late Middle Ages to the twentieth century. John's painstaking research has unearthed tremendous detail of the lives of people living at Widdop. Some of the finds made by the Prehistory Section will be exhibited.

The exhibition will be at the Town Hall from September 5th until 3rd October 2016.

Family History Group

Grave Transcriptions at Heptonstall Church

We have nearly finished transcribing all the gravestones in Heptonstall Old Churchyard. There are still a few to complete behind the old church. The area tends to be fairly overgrown so it is advisable to try and work there whilst the vegetation is still fairly low.

We are planning to meet there on the morning of Thursday 21st April at 10am, but work will need to continue throughout May. If you can offer help please contact me and I will arrange to meet you and explain what needs to be done.

We would welcome any help. Some people prefer working by themselves and others in pairs. We tend to designate an area of graves to each helper depending on how much time they think they can spend, so if you are unable to come on that date, please contact me and we can arrange to meet at your convenience.

One of our members has just completed a grid of all the plots in the New Churchyard at Heptonstall. Help is now

also needed to transcribe these gravestones. Again we need to start before the overgrowth takes over.

It would be lovely to complete this task this year.

Dying Matters

Saturday 7th May

Hebden Bridge Town Hall

Overgate Hospice are holding another event in Hebden Bridge to highlight various aspects about death and dying. Last year David Cant gave some talks and organised a walk in town looking at local graveyards. We also put on a small display pinpointing all the graveyards in the locality.

This year we are hoping to take part again with a display about the role of Family History and how it can give us an insight into our lives. Our display will centre on photographs past and present and how we can use them to find out more about who we are.

Meetings

We still meet regularly twice a month and have many visitors, some local and some from far away, who are asking for guidance in tracing their family history. We usually meet on the first Saturday and the third Thursday of each month at the Birchcliffe Centre between 2pm and 5 pm – see back cover.

Barbara Atack ataxjb@btinternet.com

William Nowell (1880-1968) of Heptonstall and Hebden Bridge.

Confusing when I began, because there was more than one William Nowell locally, but intriguing nevertheless. Initially I noticed in the Natural History archive of the Society that there were six papers on the diseases of crops in the West Indies but who was the author and what were they doing there?

When I delved further I found that William Nowell (1880-1968), the author of these papers, was the driving force behind the formation of the Hebden Bridge Literary and Scientific Society in 1905 and the Natural History section a year later and is regarded as the founder of both of these.

William Nowell was born on 9 May 1880 in Heptonstall, to John, a mechanic, and Elizabeth Fanny Nowell (=Noviss) of Heptonstall. He was baptized four months later at St Thomas's Church in Heptonstall. After early schooling he later trained at Halifax Municipal Technical College and for a time was a Fustian Cloth Brusher, living at 3 Bank Side, Hebden Bridge. In 1906 he married Jemima (Jenny) Rushworth at Halifax. A keen local amateur naturalist, specializing in botany during his time in the Society, he later became a professional mycologist (expert on fungi).

Strongly influenced by the Oxford University Extension movement in Hebden Bridge and an attendee at their summer Schools, he did not stay long in Hebden Bridge.

He left in 1909 for a two year training course at Imperial College in London and then embarked on a career in the Colonial Service in the Caribbean and later in Africa. He rose to high rank as a Director of Agriculture in the West Indies and then Director of an Agricultural Station in East Africa and received high honours (C.M.G., C.B.E., D.I.C., F.L.S.)

This work is ongoing but members might be interested in the founder of their Society. Has anyone seen a photograph of him?

R. A. (Sandy) Baker.

News from the Archive

The Archive has received a large collection of books donated by the estate of the late Alan Petford. These include an almost complete set of the Wakefield Court Rolls, the missing volumes of which are in process of being obtained to complete the set. However, the most significant part of the donation is a large collection of books on various aspects of textile history. These are being catalogued as a new section of the Archive and eventually all existing material in the Archive on textiles will be added to this collection. Accommodating this extra material has necessitated the purchase of four more bookcases. Over the next few months all collections will be moved around to create more space where it is needed for these and other new acquisitions.

Family History Meeting Times 2016

These are the dates when the Family History group meet in the next few months. Dates tend to be the first Saturday and the third Thursday each month. All openings are from 2 pm to 5 pm.

2016	Saturday 2 - 5 pm	Thursday 2 - 5 pm
May	7 th	19 th
June	4 th	16 th
July	2 nd	21 st
August	6 th	18 th
September	3 rd	15 th

Archive Opening Times 2016

The Archive at Birchcliffe will be open on the afternoon of the second Wednesday of the month; and on the morning of the fourth Saturday of the month.

2016	Wednesday 2 - 5 pm	Saturday 10 am - 1 pm
May	11 th	28 th
June	8 th	25 th
July	13 th	23 rd
August	10 th	27 th
September	14 th	24 th