HUDDERSFIELD & DISTRICT FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

The Society was formed in 1987 and its aims are to promote and encourage mutual help between people interested in family history and genealogy. It caters particularly for those with interests in the Kirklees Council area which comprises the towns and districts of Batley, Colne Valley, Denby Dale, Dewsbury, Huddersfield, Holme Valley, Kirkburton, Meltham, Mirfield and the Spen Valley. It covers an area of nearly 160 square miles and within its boundaries lie the ancient parishes of Almondbury, Batley, Birstall, Dewsbury, Huddersfield, Emley, Hartshead, Kirkburton, Kirkheaton, Mirfield and Thornhill.

Membership of the Society runs from 1 August to 31 July and the subscription rates, per year, are as follows:

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<th>Membership Type</th>
<th>Cost</th>
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<tr>
<td>Individual Membership</td>
<td>£12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Membership</td>
<td>£15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overseas Membership</td>
<td>£18</td>
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Family Membership consists of two named persons at the same address, receiving one Journal. Please ensure that cheques are in sterling only and are made payable to:

‘HUDDERSFIELD & DISTRICT FHS’

Subscriptions may be paid by PayPal via the Society website, or to The Root Cellar by sterling cheque, or in person by cash. If you are a UK income tax payer you may consider paying your subscription with Gift Aid. This will increase the value of your payment to the Society at no extra cost to yourself. Life Membership of the Society is available at twelve times the annual subscription in force at the time of application. This sum is payable with Gift Aid in four equal, annual amounts.

Meetings are held at regular intervals during the year at various Town Halls throughout the area, starting at various times. Please refer to the Programme in this Journal or the website for more details. Occasionally, due to unforeseen circumstances, it may be necessary to change the programme and so if you plan to attend a particular meeting, please make sure that you check the Society’s website (see below), three or four days prior to the meeting.

Sale of Goods Act: UK postal customers may change their mind within seven days of receipt of the goods, returning them at their own cost. There will be a charge of 50p per book plus 50p per order to cover our costs.

Publications: The H&DFHS Journal is published and distributed to members four times a year in January, April, July and October. The Society’s Project Group has produced complete indexes of both the 1841 and the 1851 censuses for the whole of our area (more than 200,000 names and 1/90th of the population of England and Wales for 1851). These are available in booklet form and also on CD-ROM. The group is currently indexing Parish Registers (baptisms, marriages and burials) for all the major local churches. This information is available in printed form, as is information from the ever-growing database. Most of these works are listed on, and can be purchased through, the Society website (www.hdfhs.org.uk) or a full publications list can be obtained by writing to the Book Seller or Membership Secretary at ‘The Root Cellar’ (details inside the back cover), enclosing a large letter SAE or two IRCs (International Reply Coupons).

Data Protection Act: As a ‘not for profit’ organisation, we are not required to ‘notify’ the Data Protection Authorities in the UK regarding the holding of personal data. However, you should know that we hold on the Society’s computers the personal data that you provide to us. We also make this information available to other members for the purposes of following up ‘Members’ Interests’. If you do not wish the Society to make any of your details available without your authority, please contact ‘The Root Cellar’ by letter, email or phone.

Society website: www.hdfhs.org.uk
HUDDERSFIELD & DISTRICT FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY
Registered Charity No. 702199

October 2015

VOLUME 29 NUMBER 1

Hepworth Holy Trinity Church, photo taken by Marcia Kemp

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Please note that queries regarding non-arrival of Journals should be sent by email to membership@hdfhs.org.uk or by post to the Root Cellar at Meltham.

Journal Submissions: Please send items for publication to the Editor by email or post, and include your membership number, name and postal address. Items sent by post can only be returned or acknowledged if a SAE is included. Please state if an article has been printed in, or submitted to another publication. Items should be clearly handwritten, typed in Microsoft Word with a file name ending either .doc or .docx. Please do not send any attachments in Word formats which are pre-1997. The Editor welcomes letters and articles on any aspect of family or local history. Items with relevance to the Kirklees area are of particular interest; as are cuttings, hints and tips. Editing of articles may be necessary, depending on available space.

Deadline for inclusion in the next Journal: 1st December 2015
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### General Interest

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Just like the evangelists going out to meet the people and spread the word so the Society has been doing that in the summer months. Talking to the people of Huddersfield in the Pack Horse Centre at a ‘pop-up’ shop and engaging with passers-by, just to share the message of the family history. The village hall in Shelley was the venue for Family History ‘On Tour’ on the Saturday of August Bank holiday. This was followed by an invitation to the All Hallows Parish Church at Almondbury on Heritage Weekend. The Society was also at Doncaster in the month of September. Various members continue to help at local libraries and some of these sessions result in more members joining which helps to keep the Society active. The big event of course will be our November Fair. Last year’s was a resounding success thanks to all the hard work of organising done by our secretary Susan Hutson who was also responsible for the choice of venue. There are more details in this Journal.

For myself I took a day out and journeyed to a little village called Low Bradley on the outskirts of West Yorkshire to ‘experience’ an incident, which took place one hundred and twenty years ago in my family history. This involved the suicide of a young girl who drowned in the Leeds and Liverpool Canal. A very sad case that had more to it than I would have ever imagined, but to see the canal now with pleasure craft, didn’t exactly reflect the cold February day of her death. The Methodist church where she was buried is now an Anglican church. Her home was still there but the name of the row of cottages had changed. The mill where she worked is now a group of 28 apartments. The cemetery where she was buried sadly did not show a headstone. Surprisingly the Public House where the inquest was held was still there. Even the name hadn’t changed which nowadays is unusual. As I walked through the doorway it was like stepping back in time. Nothing appeared to have changed, somewhat dark in appearance but today provides excellent food for the visitor who manages to track down this hidden away gem. The landlord, besides providing excellent fare for his visitors, also provided me with information and a map of 1900, which showed all the features of the village over one hundred years ago. So it’s not just the Society helping members with their family history there are still strangers out there helping us.

Janet Le Billon

Family History in your Local Library

Many libraries in Kirklees offer family history sessions, often supported by members of our Society, including new ones which will start fortnightly in October at Huddersfield Local Studies Library. We intend to update our records of ‘drop in’ sessions in local libraries in the near future but in the meantime please visit the Kirklees website:


for more information about family history related events at your local libraries throughout the Kirklees area.
Tuesday 17 November 2015, 7.45 pm Huddersfield Town Hall - following the AGM which starts at 7.00pm
‘Medieval Iron Working in the South Pennines’- Stephen Moorhouse

Monday 26 October 2015  Huddersfield Local History Society – ‘Miners and Mining in New Mill’ – Pamela Cooksey. The meeting will be held in Heritage Quay (Central Service Building) University of Huddersfield, HD1 3DH at 7.30 pm. Admission for non-members is £2.00.

Saturday 14 November 2015 Our Annual Fair - see advertisement, including the following speakers

FindMyPast – a talk on the 1939 Register project

David Griffiths – ‘Greenhead Hall’

Vivien Teasdale - ‘Murder and Mayhem’ - Different Aspects of Crime And Punishment

Lindsay Ince, assistant archivist at Huddersfield University - ‘Uncovering family history in the University of Huddersfield’s Collection’

Tuesday 17 November 2015 H&DFHS AGM at Huddersfield Town Hall, HD1 2TA, 7.00 pm, followed by talk - see Programme of Speakers above.

Wednesday 18 November 2015 Lunchtime Club at the Huddersfield Library, Princess Alexandra Walk, HD12SU - ‘Bronte Inspirations’.

Local historian Janet Senior will talk about the people and places that inspired the famous family. Meeting held in the Light Reading room at 1.00 pm.

Monday 30 November 2015  Huddersfield Local History Society ‘World War II immigrants in Huddersfield’ – Dr Janette Martin. Meeting will be held in Heritage Quay (Central Service Building) University of Huddersfield, HD1 3DH at 7.30 pm. Admission for non-members is £2.00

For more details of family history fairs and events see: www.geneva.weald.org.uk
Notice is hereby given of the

28th Annual General Meeting

To be held on Tuesday 17 November 2015
At the Town Hall, Huddersfield, at 7.00 pm

AGENDA

1. Welcome and Chairman’s opening remarks
2. Apologies for absence
3. Minutes of the last meeting held on 11 November 2014
4. Matters arising
5. Chairman’s Report
6. Treasurer’s Report
7. Acceptance of 2014/15 Accounts
8. Election of officers
9. Appointment of Auditors

Please note that this AGM may only be attended by fully paid up members of the Society and we would like to encourage as many of you as possible to come along and hear about the Society’s achievements over the last twelve months and our plans for 2015/16 – our Society is for you, its members, and we would like you to assist us in shaping it for the future.

Speaker Meeting following the AGM

Please note that this year we have decided to reinstate the option of having a speaker following the Annual General Meeting. It is anticipated that the speaker will follow the meeting at around 7.45 pm and everyone will be welcome, including non-members at a charge of only £1.00.

Stephen Moorhouse has kindly agreed to give an illustrated talk on Medieval Iron Working in the South Pennines, which will link the trade to local surnames.
**Who Do You Think You Are**

**Live at the NEC Birmingham**

**7 - 9 April 2016**

**Advance information**

WDYTYA Live is the major Family History exhibition in the UK. It has been held in London for several years but last year moved to the National Exhibition Centre at Birmingham.

The exhibition web site is at www.whodoyouthinkyouarelive.com/

Trade Exhibitors and Family History Societies provide a wide-ranging variety of material and information for Family Historians.

A number of Yorkshire Societies book their own stand whilst others contribute to a joint stand organised by the Yorkshire Group of Family History Societies (YGFHS). This year H&D FHS contributed to the joint stand and, together with other societies, provided some assistance in manning the stand during the exhibition. This still left a heavy load on the YGFHS people to ensure that the stand was manned throughout the exhibition.

There is the opportunity therefore for H&DFHS members who would be interested in visiting the exhibition to help to staff the YGFHS stand for an hour or two. There are likely to be a limited number of free parking and entry tickets available for this purpose. Visiting for the day and spending half the time helping on the stand leaves time to enjoy the rest of the show as well.

More information and contact details for this offer will be available in January 2016.

Roger D Gill
webmaster@hdfhs.org.uk

**Whilst at the York Fair we had a visitor to our stand who brought our attention to this book and thought it might be of interest to our members and in particular to the members of the Batley area – Ed.**

**Catherine Exley’s Diary**

This book introduces the story of one of Batley’s heroines, Catherine Exley. Here was an ordinary woman who found herself in extraordinary circumstances (the Spanish Peninsular War*) and survived, despite dangers and privations.

Catherine was born in Leeds in 1779. At the age of thirty, having married a soldier of the 34th Regiment, she boarded a ship and sailed to Portugal. Her memoir of the years spent following the regiment is unique, the only first-hand account of the Peninsular War by the wife of a common British soldier. Published shortly after her death in 1857 as a booklet, it survived in The Batley News of 1923, to be rediscovered by one of her great-great-great grandsons.

Her story is one of hardships, which by today’s standards, are difficult to comprehend. She lost three children as infants while on the march, her clothes were ‘covered with filth and vermin’ and she herself almost died more than once from illness and starvation. Despite seeing many shocking events, she still had the composure to manhandle blackened corpses on a battlefield in search of her missing husband, when hardened soldiers could no long stomach the task.
As well as including a reproduction of Catherine’s own writing and a short chapter on the ‘rediscovery’ of her story, the book has chapters which set her writing in the context of the times in which she lived. Experts from the UK and USA consider aspects such as the plight of wives of prisoners of war, the contribution of the 34th Regiment, Catherine’s French and Spanish counterparts, the French women who were providers of provisions for the French army, the challenges of clothing or lack of it in the theatre of war and the religious journey which Catherine underwent during and after the war.

The editor of the book is Rebecca Probert, who regularly features on the **WDYTYA** programmes.

The book is available through booksellers such as amazon.co.uk by searching for *Catherine Exley*. ISBN 978-0-9563847-9-9

Richard Woodhead

*The Spanish Peninsular war took place from 1807-1814

**WDYTYA Who Do You Think You Are

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**Folk Tales on the Settle-Carlisle Railway**

This book will appeal to those who have an interest in Railways.

The new publication has been written by a former editor of The *Dalesman*, W. R. Mitchell, MBE, Hon D.Litt. In *Folk Tales on the Settle-Carlisle Railway*, join the driver and fireman on the footplate of a locomotive. Stand behind a range of levers in a signal box or be one of a gang working on the permanent way, sweating in the summer heat or shivering after a heavy snowfall. Maintenance men in Blea Moor tunnel needed patience and good lungs; the tunnel might be thick with locomotive smoke or draped with icicles.

On the Settle-Carlisle journey, we are thrilled by a slowly changing landscape, glancing at Pen-y-ghent, which crouches like a lion above Ribblesdale. Further north, we admire the broad acres of the Eden Valley, which lie between the northern Pennines and the gaunt fells of the Lake District.

An afternoon passenger train that took in the line from Garsdale to Hawes was named Bonnyface; when it turned up workers smiled as they were about to go home. The Garsdale tank house was used for dances and an adjacent wheel-less carriage was the refreshment room.

Publication 30 July 2015

Price £14.99
Extent 112 pages
Illustrations: 39 mono
Dear Janet

I received the excellent Journal today and noticed a letter from Christine Aspinall (A078) in which she referred to an unusual name Pharaoh Hellewell, her 4 x great grandfather from Thurstonland.

My paternal side (Hellewell) also originate from Thurstonland and I was aware of Pharaoh Hellewell, but have never been able to link with him or that side of his family. I wonder if it would be possible for you to let me have Christine’s address (either email or postal), for me to contact her that we might be able to share our Hellewell data.

Incidentally, I published an article in the Journal (Vol.14, No1, 2000) *Thurstonland Township, Parish Chest Records*, 1695-1861, so I do have a lot of information which may be of interest to Christine.

Kind regards

Dr Edward G Hellewell (H208)

Hi Janet

The article in the latest journal by Keith Earnshaw about Paddock churchyard reminded me about an incident that took place in, I think, the early to mid 1990s.

My great grandfather lived at Upper Brow Road in Paddock and I suspected that he was probably buried in Paddock Churchyard. It was on a Sunday that I decided to drive over and have a look around the churchyard to see if I could see a gravestone.

When I got there I was surprised to see men digging out some of the graves.

A man came over and asked if he could help me. I explained and he then told me he had bought the church (in 1985) and turned it into a house and was now emptying the graveyard.

He further stated that the notice had been published in the Huddersfield Examiner letting people know about the proposed action. If I remember rightly he said that the Church of England would pay a sum out for those people who wanted to take family gravestones away.

He asked my name and he thought that he remembered the name on a badly eroded stone. There was a pile of broken gravestones there, but not one for my family.

It later transpired that Great Grandfather and other members of the family are in Edgerton Cemetery.

I understand that the owner David Aveyard turned the church into a 6 bedroomed home which became known as Kirke House. In 2011 the house was described as ‘derelict’ and now has no roof.

Hope this helps.

David Milsom (Wednesday morning lad)
Hello Janet

Having read the Spring Journal, I have been galvanised into action once more. For ages I have been researching the Jaggars of the Huddersfield area, mainly coal proprietors, miners and land owners, but I have discovered that I am probably not related to them but to a family called Fitton with several spinsters producing babies.

The article on Unusual Forenames has prompted me to write to you as I may have a great great uncle called Tedber Fitton in my new family. Born in 1821 to a Martha Fitton, spinster, he was baptised at All Hallows Church, Kirkburton, and lived at High Burton. He appears in all the censuses with an "a" rather than an "e". He is described as a ‘fancy weaver’ but by 1871 he is described as ‘an invalid’ and the 1881 census has him as ‘blind’. He appears not to have married, and died in 1882.

Leading on from unusual forenames, I believe that Tedber's sister, Patience, may be my great great grandmother as she was also born to a Martha Fitton, spinster, and was baptised at All Hallows Church, Kirkburton. She produced three children, and in the 1851 census she was living with Matthew Jaggar as a lodger. Patience died aged 28 in 1852 and one daughter in 1854, leaving my great grandfather, John, aged 4 and his sister aged 2, to be brought up by Matthew Jaggar. John's marriage certificate of 1874 has a blank for ‘father's name’ indicating that Matthew Jaggar was not his father. The baptism and census records for the family and the ten children show that over a period of years their father and mother changed their name from Fitton to Jaggar, and some of the children took Fitton as a second christian name and Jaggar as the surname, all eventually becoming Jaggar. I wonder if this was a common practice to assume another's name to become legitimate, or was it more out of respect for the man who had brought him up?

On my grandmother's side, there is great great uncle Hallas Heywood born in 1854. I have discovered that his mother was Harriet Hallas prior to her marriage to John Heywood. I wonder how common this was, that is taking the mother's maiden name as a Christian name for a child. Nowadays, it is quite common for a child to take both the father's and mother's name as a surname. The name Hallas does not appear to have gone any further, as Hallas and his wife had one surviving child called Willie.

I hope that this is of interest to you.

Kind regards

Madeleine Butterfield (B520)

Dear Janet

Further to the article on Page 14 of the April 2015 Journal entitled 'Unusual Forenames', I too have the name Lavinia in my family tree as well as other unusual forenames such as Armitage, Anderson, Orlando and Captain.

I am tracing my mother's ancestors and the family name was Kershaw.

Yours sincerely

Pat McKinnell (M264)

Pat has provided extra information on her Kershaw family of Halifax.

Isaac Kershaw married Betty Broadhead in Elland in 1809. They had five children Harriet 1810, Mary 1812, Samuel 1815, Ruth 1819 and James Kershaw 1823.

The family lived in the Soyland area of Halifax.
Family & Local History Fair
Cathedral House, St Thomas' Road
Huddersfield, HD1 3LG
Admission £2.50    Accompanied children, under 16, free

Ample Free Car Parking
Whether a beginner or experienced family historian, or interested in local history, there will be something for everyone
A large number of stands and exhibitors including a variety of family and local history societies, books, maps and genealogy supplies and software
Lectures on Family History related topics
Refreshments available throughout the day
Check the Society website: www.hdfhs.org.uk for the latest details

Saturday 14 November 2015
10.00 am to 4.00 pm
Our Family and Local History Fair
Cathedral House, St Thomas’ Road, Huddersfield
Saturday 14 November 2015

Following last year’s successful Fair we return once again to Cathedral House for our 2015 event. If you didn’t manage to make it last year please try to come along to this vibrant venue with excellent car parking facilities and a top class cafe on the premises. At the time of writing the following mix of family and local history societies and commercial suppliers will be taking stands. Bookings are being received all the time so for up to the minute details please consult the events page on our website – www.hdfhs.org.uk. If you know of any other organisation or individual who may be interested there are still a few tables available.

The Federation of Family History Societies
University of Huddersfield – Heritage Quay
Wakefield & District Family History Society
Toll House Books
Huddersfield Local History Society
The Idle Booksellers
Bradford Family History Society
National Coal Mining Museum
Colne Valley Museum
Wharfedale Family History Group

Chris Makepeace Maps
Steve Whitwam – Colne Valley Research
Calderdale Family History Society
Lancashire Family History Society
Holme Valley Civic Society
Doncaster Family History Society
Huddersfield Local Studies Library
Honley Civic Society
Barnsley Family History Society
My History Genealogical Suppliers

This year we will have four speakers with a family or local history flavour to entertain visitors and we are pleased to confirm the attendance of the following:

Myko Clelland, Partnership and Outreach Manager at FindmyPast will be discussing the imminent release of the 1939 Register. He will explain the project, the history behind the records, tips on what can be found and how to search. His talk will be followed by a Q and A session.

Vivien Teasdale, author of a number of history books local to our area, will talk about ‘Murder and Mayhem’ and will discuss aspects of crime and punishment ‘then and now’, with examples from around Yorkshire. Sources of information will also be included to help anyone wishing to investigate a particular crime, or trace criminal ancestors.

Lindsay Ince, Assistant Archivist, at Heritage Quay at the University of Huddersfield will be speaking on: University Challenge: Uncovering Family History in the University of Huddersfield Collection and her experience of undertaking the cataloguing of the archives.

Regular supporter of our Fair, David Griffiths, will be giving a talk about his latest book: Huddersfield’s Best Address: Four Centuries of Life at Greenhead Hall and he will be selling copies on his Local History Society stand.

The committee of Huddersfield & District Family History Society look forward to welcoming you to our 2015 Fair.

Susan Hutson
Secretary
Writing Lives Project

I would like to draw your attention to the Writing Lives Project as notified to me by Helen Rogers who wrote:

I’m a historian at Liverpool John Moores University and I’m leading a collaborative project to make working-class autobiographies 1700 – Present, available and searchable online. If we are successful in getting funding the website will be built by the team that created the Old Bailey Online and our database will connect with lots of other databases, such as the British Library 19th century newspapers. Ahead of the funding bid to be submitted this autumn we are conducting a survey to find out how the non-academic and academic researcher would use and value this resource. I would be very grateful if you could share this with your members http://www.writinglives.org/news-events/writing-lives-survey

Your responses and suggestions will help us plan the Writing Lives project and to make the best case for its support. We will value your answers, however brief or full. (If you can’t tick more than one box for some questions, please just note your answers in comment).

Do take a look at the website.

Thank you

Philippa McCray
Administrator
Federation of Family History Societies
PO Box 8857
Lutterworth LE17 9BJ
Email: admin@ffhs.org.uk
Tel: 01455 203133

Irish Parish Registers Online

Images of Roman Catholic parish registers should now be free to view on the National Library of Ireland’s (NLI) website. Ciara Kerrigan of the NLI said, ‘this is the most significant ever genealogy project in the history of the NLI. The microfilms have been available to visitors to the NLI since the 1970s. However, their digitization means that, for the first time, anyone who likes will be able to access these register without having to travel to Dublin.’

Catholic parish registers are a key resource for family historians with an interest in Irish genealogy, particularly as returns for the censuses taken prior to 1901 were largely destroyed in Ireland. These records date from the 1740’s to the 1880’s and cover 1091 parishes across Ireland. Typically, the parish registers include information such as the dates of baptisms and marriages, and the names of the key people involved, including godparents or witnesses. Genealogists will find researching easier if they have some idea in which parish their ancestors lived. The digital images will be searchable by location only, and will not be transcribed or indexed.
Membership Renewals

Thank you to all those Members who have renewed their membership for the coming year. Details about how to renew were enclosed with the July Journal and the new membership year started on 1 August 2015.

If it has slipped your mind over the summer please could you arrange to renew as soon as possible to ensure your continued membership of the Society.

If you have misplaced the form that was included with your July Journal you can either download a form from the website, by following the link to Membership on this page: http://www.hdfhs.org.uk

or you can email the Membership Secretary – membership@hdfhs.org.uk. If you don’t have access to a computer, please ring The Root Cellar, details on the back page of this Journal.

As the new subscription rates took effect over two years ago please may we remind the few members who sent additional payments last year to cover the shortfall in their standing order to ensure that the mandate has now been altered at their bank? Every penny counts!

Thank you for your continued support.

We are looking for a new Membership Secretary

Unfortunately our current Membership Secretary, Alan Starkey, has decided to stand down with effect from the Annual General Meeting in November, but thankfully he will continue helping the Society as our Data Manager, looking after our computers and printer at the Root Cellar, our laptops for events and fairs and generally managing the various computer problems which every organisation encounters.

The role of Membership Secretary is important as it is the interface with you, our membership, and the post holder ensures that subscriptions are up to date and paid at the correct rate and that the database is correct each quarter when the journal is sent out to members. The Membership Secretary also sends out membership packs to new members of the Society and liaises with the journal editor to ensure that appropriate membership details are entered in the journal.

Perhaps in your working life you are or were responsible for managing a database of some sort and have some skills which you would be willing to use on a voluntary basis to help the Society. Although some similar experience would be useful, full training will be given and all that is initially needed is an ability to use a mouse and a keyboard. Accuracy and attention to detail will be important. Maybe you have a few hours a week which might be utilised to help us further our charitable aims.

If so, we would love to hear from you. We are a friendly group of people who have worked hard over the last few years to ensure the Society is on a firm financial footing in order to promote its aims to help people to build their family trees.

If you would like to know more please get in touch with me, details inside the back cover.

Susan Hutson
Secretary
From the Root Cellar Librarian

Donated books for the Root Cellar Library
Miners and Mining Aspects of Life in the New Mill Valley
Cooksey P & Tinsdeall A
Huddersfield & District under the Stuarts Law and Disorder (Reference)
Redmonds G
Huddersfield’s Best Address, Four Centuries of Life at Greenhead Hall
Griffiths D
Shepley Believe it or Not!
Billingham D
Parish Records for Scammonden with Deanhead - may be used at the Root Cellar, or loaned by special arrangement.

Penistone Parish Records
The Society has added copies of the indexes for the parish registers for St John the Baptist Penistone to its collection. The registers date from 1643 to 1746 and include Baptisms, Marriages and Burials for not only Penistone, but also the chapel of Denby. In addition, there are a series of handwritten transcriptions, (not indexed) of Baptisms for 1796-1801, Marriages for 1797-1801, 1837-1840 and 1848 and Burials for 1813-1817 and 1840-1843. Denby is situated to the south of our area, whilst Penistone is located to the north of the Barnsley area. Such artificial boundaries in this rural area would have been unknown to our ancestors, so these records could hold the name you have been searching for. The records can be viewed in person at The Root Cellar, or by contacting the Research Team, who can undertake a search.

Maureen Wheeler
Librarian

Family History on Tour at Shelley
On Saturday 29 August 2015 we held one of a programme of events where we take family history around the districts. On this occasion we were lucky to have the opportunity to visit Shelley Village Hall, a community facility which recently received a Biffa grant to extend and improve its premises.

We invited a number of local history groups to join us and were pleased that Shelley History Group, Shepley Local History Group, Honley Civic Society, Holme Valley Civic Society, Kirkburton History Group and Huddersfield Local History Society along with Huddersfield Rugby League, were able to help to make it an enjoyable and varied day for our visitors. We offered refreshments and homemade cakes and this was a new aspect to the day which was very worthwhile.

The owners of the building, Shelley Community Association, also held a display of their own archives in an adjoining room. The day was very successful for us and we hope that when we arrive in your area you will come and join us, when you will be able to get a taste of the help and expertise we can offer the experienced family historian as well as the beginner.

Ian Stevenson
Vice Chairman
Castlegate 150 Years Ago

I have heard it said of this Huddersfield district in the 20th century that it was so ‘tough’ that the police constables had to walk in twos. Here are a few of the cases from 19th Century, 150 years ago. Perhaps there may be some black sheep just waiting to be found. The courts seemed busy dealing with the residents of this lugubrious part of town.

Nowadays there is no reference to the actual district although part of the ring road near to the Police Station has taken the name. Very few young people will know of its original location at the bottom end of the town running from the Shorehead Roundabout in the direction of Quay Street Turnbridge and Old Leeds Road.

Reading the Huddersfield Chronicle from October until December of 1865, reveals just a few cases that came to court. There is not enough room to publish all of the incidents, which took place in Castlegate, but here are a few.

Breaking up of the ‘Small Gang’ – Patrick Doyle, John French, and Edward Flannagan, were charged with assaulting Hannah Hopwood, wife of William Hopwood. Mr Superintendent Hannan stated that the defendants belonged to the notorious ‘small gang’ which he was most desirous of putting ‘down’. A young ‘small gang’ was being established; and people could not walk along the street without being subjected to annoyance if not assaulted. Complainant stated that the prisoners came to the Brown Cow, Castlegate, on Monday, and called for a quart of ale, for which they refused to pay. They knocked a man off a chair, and she told them that conduct like that could not be allowed. One of the defendants thereupon threw a glass of ale in her face, and consequently she ordered them out of the house. French then struck her and, aided by the other two defendants, got her into the passage of the house, where Doyle seized a woollen handkerchief with which her head was covered. She asked for the handkerchief, and received a thump from French, who knocked her down. Afterwards the defendants jumped upon her, causing her to spit blood for many an hour, and rendering medical assistance necessary. On the evening in question the defendants came down and brought with them another gang; and, to prevent another row, they were compelled to close the house at nine o’clock. There were plenty of witnesses to the assault, but they would not come forward unless summoned. The defendants had promised to pay her in a fortnight, if she would settle the affair. Defendants, who were not in custody, were each sentenced to two months imprisonment. – October 7th 1865.

Theft at a Beerhouse – Elizabeth Long, advanced in years, was brought up charged with stealing a Paisley shawl, value 10s, the property of Rachel Boothroyd, a young woman. The prosecutor is a domestic servant at a beerhouse kept by a person named Hallas, in Castlegate. The prisoner, who was ‘fresh’, went into the house on Thursday, when she was permitted to wash her hands at the back of the premises. She contrived to secrete and carry away the prosecutor’s shawl, which was hung on a line in the yard. Police-sergeant Mellor apprehended the prisoner on Saturday night in Kirkgate. He charged her with stealing the shawl, which she had over her head, and she replied “I was drunk at the time, or I should not have taken it” – The prisoner now alleged that she had been in the habit of going to the house, that she was there all day on Wednesday, and that the shawl was lent to her – she was committed for trial at the sessions - October 28th 1865.

Disorderly Character - Mary Kenny was brought up charged with being idle and disorderly, and not giving a good account of herself - Police-constable Nutton, of the borough force, stated that he saw the prisoner in Bradley-street at twelve o’clock on the previous Thursday night and ordered her away. He found her a second time in Castlegate, at one o’clock, with a young man, and a third time shortly after two o’clock.
Kenny, who had previously been convicted of felony and other offences, was committed to prison for a month - November 4th 1865.

A Boy robbing His ‘Second Cousin’ – James Brannon, about 16 years of age, dyer, Castlegate, was placed in the dock charged with stealing a pair of boots, the property of Ann Brannon, of Windsor Court. The prosecutrix stated that on the 15th August she had a pair of boots under her bed. She missed the boots on the 17th August, and gave information to the police. The pair of boots produced were the same that she missed. In answer to the Bench prosecutrix, said “I am second cousin to the prisoner” – Alice Atkin, daughter of Robert Atkin, pawnbroker, said on the 16th August the prisoner brought to their shop a pair of women's boots to pawn. He said the boots belong to his aunt, and she advance 2s upon them. Inspector White deposed that, in consequence of a report made on the 17th August, at the police-office he went to the shop of Mr Atkin and received the boots produced from the last witness. The prisoner, in the meantime had left the town; but on the 29th October he gave instruction to one of the police officers and the prisoner was brought to the station. The inspector showed him the boots, and charged him with stealing them and he replied “It's a mistake” Brannan now pleaded guilty; and his ‘second cousin’ addressing the Bench exclaimed “I expect your lordships to be as light as you can with him. It is his first time”. When questioned by Mr Starkey, the prisoner did not assign any reason for having committed the theft, but alleged that he had given the money to another boy. He was committed to the Wakefield House of Correction for 14 days - November 4th 1865.

Assault - William Mowbray, of Lockwood, was summoned for assaulting Ann Sykes, wife of ‘pie Jos’ beerhouse keeper of Castlegate. On Sunday evening last defendant and a friend went to this house and called for a pint of beer. Before they had touched the ale the complainant’s husband drank of it twice, and made third attempt, on which ‘Jos’ struck defendant in the mouth and cut his lip. A scuffle ensued, and the complainant was struck, and this was the assault that she complained of. The case was dismissed - November 4th 1865.

Breach of License - Ann Senior, landlady of the Unicorn Inn, Castlegate, was summoned for having committed a breach of the night closing act. At five minutes to two o’clock on the morning of Saturday, an officer was on duty in Castlegate, and heard someone singing in the house of the defendant. He and another policeman went into the house, and found in one room five men, and there were on a table several glasses, two of which contained liquor. He asked the landlady if she knew the time, and receive the answer “a little after eleven o’clock”. It was then two o’clock and there were two drunken men in the house. Mrs Senior stated that her butcher was in the habit of coming to her house on Friday night. He came last Friday night, and began to treat several friends; but she had not served any beer for half an hour before the policeman’s visit. One man, who was rather quarrelsome, did sing a song, and made a very great noise. Inspector Townend stated that the house had been very fairly conducted by Mrs Senior, considering the neighbourhood in which it was situated. This being the first offence, their worship only inflicted a fine of 5s and costs - November 4th 1865.

A Serious Mistake - Henry Freeman, labourer, was charged with being in a dwelling-house with intent to commit a felony. About a quarter-past twelve on Friday night, the defendant was found behind the counter of a greengrocer in Castlegate. The shopkeeper and his wife went to bed about a quarter to 12 o’clock, and in half an hour afterwards someone was heard in the house. A light was obtained, and the defendant was found behind the counter downstairs, with his face to the floor. He pretended to be tipsy, and would not speak - Police Constable Walker was called in, and he discovered the man in the same suspicious position.
Prisoner: “I got full of drink and mistook the house” - He was discharged and the chairman cautioned him that he had better keep sober. - Prisoner: “I will, sir; I’ll keep off drink for six months (laughter) - November 11th 1865.

Dispute about a Dog – James Carter, mason, Castlegate, was summoned for having stolen a blue terrier dog belonging to James Henry Firth, French polisher, Dock-street. It appeared that on Saturday, about five o’clock in the afternoon, the defendant met him in Castlegate, and claimed as his property a whelp, which he (complainant) was walking out. About half-past eleven o’clock the defendant came to the house where he lived, opened the door, and took the dog away. The whelp had been bred at the house of his mother. It was given to him by his father; and there was a mark by which the dog could be owned - Complainant’s mother said the whelp was one of five bred at her house. She spoke to the whelp (and knew it) by a hole which her son had punched in its ear. He had set his mind upon the dog, and it was marked so that he might know it. On the other hand Richard Carter, the defendant’s brother, asserted that the whelp belonged to him and that he saw it last seven weeks ago – The Bench made an order for the restoration of the whelp, or its value 10s - November 25th1865.

A Drunken Cab Driver- Humphrey Dyson cab driver for Mr James Kaye, was charged with being drunk and disorderly, in Quay-street, on the morning of Saturday- Police-constable Boler stated that, when on duty in Castlegate, at two o’clock on the above morning, he saw a horse running away with a cab. The animal turned down Quay-street, and at the bottom of the street the cab was broken to pieces. A fine of 10s and costs 8s was inflicted. December 9th 1865.

Alleged Robbery of Twelve shilling - John Conroy, beerseller, Castlegate and Thomas Connolly, were brought up charged with robbing John Rogers, of a tobacco box, three florins and 6s. Mr Learoyd appeared for the prisoners. Prosecutor stated he went to Conroy’s house about seven o’clock on Saturday night, and about nine o’clock, when paying for a quart of ale for himself and his mates, a female waiter made a snatch at the box in which his money was, and which he held in his hand. She did not get the box, and he put it in his pocket. Afterwards, the prisoner Conroy sat beside him, and with three others, began beating him. They threw him on the floor, and one of them took the tobacco box and money from his pocket. The fellows went outside of the house, he followed and at the door asked Conroy to give him the money as he had “no bread” to eat, and nothing more would be said about it Conroy again kicked him and knocked him down. In cross-examination he said he was sober till he was knocked down. There being no corroborative evidence the case was dismissed - December 9th 1865.

Unjust Weights and Scales - George Earnshaw, greengrocer Castlegate, was fined 2s 6d, and costs 7s for having a 1lb weight a drachm deficient on the 6th inst. - December 30th 1865.

One can only feel sorry for George Earnshaw. Whilst there was a keen check on Weights and Measures it must have been a ‘Jobsworth’ of 1865 to be fined for being one drachm short in weight. I had to check how much it was, as even in my pre-decimal days I hadn’t come across the weight. Just for the record it is 60 grains or one-eighth of an ounce.

Janet Le Billon
How your research can take an unexpected course

Several months ago the Society was approached by George Binns, one of our members, who has been researching and writing a book to support the 150th anniversary of the Moldgreen United Reformed Church (formerly Moldgreen Congregational Church) which takes place this month (October). He was looking for some support from the Family History Society to check some aspects of his work and whether we felt there might be anything further to add to expand on the story of the Moldgreen community through the years.

Those of you who live in Huddersfield may know that Moldgreen United Reformed Church was relocated to a modern building when the road widening scheme took place in Moldgreen in 1988. Moldgreen Congregational Church used to stand on the right hand side of the old Wakefield Road soon after you passed the bottom of Almondbury Bank, coming from Huddersfield. Some members may remember the old Regal cinema which was next door to the Congregational Church.

As a Committee member with ancestral links directly to the Moldgreen/Dalton area, and having attended the Church’s Brownie pack in the mid 1960s, I agreed to read George’s work whilst thinking about my own research and my investigations into the associated social history of my ancestors.

Little did I know the adventure I was starting out on - particularly in relation to my great, great uncle, Benjamin Livesey, the younger brother of my great grandfather, Jesse.

I already knew that Benjamin held a reasonably important position in the Moldgreen community as I had located his obituary in the Examiner at the time of his death in 1924 - how much so in relation to Moldgreen Congregational Church I was yet to learn.

When I related my own links to the Church as a child and my family history research in the area to George Binns he surprised me some days later. He had been looking through the church minute books and various other documents which he had taken out of the Archives in order to undertake his research and had found something which he hoped would interest me. There he had found evidence that Benjamin Livesey, b.1861 had been a Deacon of the Church and extremely active in Church affairs, holding various elected positions to the Church and its associated bodies from the 1880s until the time of his death. George had found from the minutes recorded in 1894 that Benjamin and a Mr Moseley had requested to be speakers at an open air service on Trevelyan Street, Moldgreen. He also found that on 7 April 1895 Benjamin had been elected as a Deacon.
A couple of days later a photograph arrived in the post from George of a group of eight very smart gentlemen Deacons and the Minister, taken in 1915. It was clear from the associated text that my great, great uncle was one of these men and by a process of elimination using George’s own knowledge of the Church’s history and the age of my uncle at the time we managed to reduce to two the possibilities as to who Benjamin might be. As I believed I came from a very working class background I plumped for the gentleman wearing an ordinary tie as opposed to a bow tie, second to the right on the front row of the photograph. Having dismissed some of the others as not possible George agreed that this was most likely.

Then came another surprise a few days later; George had found, through a family relative, a picture of Benjamin at the wedding of one of his own daughters, and we were both proved to be incorrect in our assumption. Benjamin was very clearly the gentleman first on the left on the back row. I have very few photographs of my ancestors and many of you will understand the excitement of unexpectedly coming across such a photograph completely out of the blue.

This new information about Benjamin has led me to undertake further research into his family and I have made a number of discoveries. Three of Benjamin’s eight children died young. I found that in 1892 his eldest son William France Livesey died aged 5 years; in 1902 his baby daughter Florence (also known as Flora) passed away and in 1908 his son, Norman Lee Livesey, died aged 17 years.

I suppose that I should not have been surprised by these deaths as, living in an industrial area just outside the town such as Moldgreen, they would have been susceptible to the illnesses of the time. Having sent for their death certificates from the GRO I found that all three children died from pneumonia with Florence having the added complication of measles. It was of course to be many years before penicillin became available.

Interestingly, this is in direct contrast to Benjamin’s own generation; Benjamin had eight siblings and they lived as children in the much more rural area of Gawthorpe in Lepton. All nine children survived well into adulthood and most lived at least into their sixties – and so we find some evidence here that it may not necessarily be when families lived in relation to high mortality rates, but perhaps more to do with where, and the living and sanitary conditions there at the time.

I was given the opportunity to research in detail the records of the church and I now have a whole new chapter to my family history and I shall always be immensely grateful to George Binns for setting me on the path to Uncle Ben’s history and his involvement in Moldgreen Congregational Church.

Susan Hutson
Secretary

The Church recently celebrated its anniversary on the weekend of Saturday and Sunday 3rd and 4th October.

George Binns’ book is a great read and I can recommend it as a Christmas stocking filler for anyone with an interest in the history of Huddersfield. It is priced at £10.00 and available from Jean Whitehead (01484 430556) or George Binns (01484 428530) or you will be able to buy one at the Root Cellar or at our Family & Local History Fair on 14th November.
## New Members

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<th>Mem No</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
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### Members submitting their Interests

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- **H470** Mr Steve L Hirst  
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Members’ Interests

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Christmas Closure

Please note that we expect the last day we will be open for research at the Root Cellar will be Wednesday 23 December 2015 and that we will re-open after the Christmas and New Year Break on Monday 4 January 2016. Please check our website nearer the time for final confirmation.

Your January Journal is likely to be posted out during the second week in January.
I loved the photograph of Batley St Mary of the Angels RC church in the April 2015 edition of the HDFHS journal. My family association with the parish dates back to 1860, almost from its inception pre-dating the building depicted. It is the church I have attended all my life. I also spent around three years researching the lives of the 76 men on the Parish First World War Memorial. This is the story of one of them, Robert Randerson. Widely believed to be the first Rugby League player to be commissioned as an officer, he was killed in action in the Dardanelles on 7 August 1915, age 24.

Robert was not a Batley native. He was born in York in late 1890, the son of Robert and Annie Randerson (née Wilkinson). I have traced five other Randerson children: Annie (1886), Benjamin (1889), William (1892), John Wilkinson (1897) and George (1899).

The family were comfortably off with Robert senior earning his living as a master corn miller then as a grocer and corn merchant. By 1901 the family lived on Haxby Road, York and remained here at the time of Robert’s death.

They were also a family with strong religious connections. Young Robert’s uncle, Benjamin, was the parish priest at St Charles’ RC Church, Sculcoates for a number of years. The 1911 census shows his sister, Annie, was a nun at St Wilfrid’s Priory, Arundel. She was employed in that town as a head mistress at St Phillip’s Infants’ School. His younger brother, John, was a boarder at the Franciscan College at Cowley, Oxfordshire.

By the time of the 1911 census Robert, who had been educated at Archbishop Holgate’s Grammar School in York, was well on his way to following his sister Annie’s teaching footsteps. A student at St Mary’s College, Hammersmith, this establishment’s objective was to train Catholic men to serve as teachers in Catholic schools throughout the country. It was whilst there that Robert demonstrated his sporting prowess. In an inter-College sports contest he broke all previous records for the 100 yard flat race, covering the ground in a shade over 10 seconds.

Robert came to Batley in around 1913 as an assistant master at St Mary’s school. He became quickly involved in the local community. Besides his teaching job, he held the role of Church choirmaster. However he became known beyond the confines of the Catholic population when he started playing rugby for Batley. Initially in the reserves, he made his first team debut in a cup-tie at Halifax on 14 March 1914. His career was limited by the outbreak of war, but in this short time he made five appearances for the Batley first team, all on the wing, scoring four tries.

When war was declared Robert’s strong sense of duty kicked in. He was the first Batley player to enlist and was quoted as saying: “I am not a fighting man; I don’t like to fight, but I ought to go and fight at a time like this”.

He joined the Leeds University Officer’s Training Corps (OTC) and the London Gazette of 25 August 1914 lists Robert as amongst those OTC cadets and ex cadets appointed as temporary 2nd Lieutenants. He served with the 6th (Service) Battalion, Alexandra,
Princess of Wales’s Own (Yorkshire Regiment), one of Kitchener’s New Army battalions. His enlistment necessitated a re-arrangement of the St Mary’s Boys Department school timetable, an event noted in the school log book.

It was whilst serving with the Yorkshire Regiment based at Belton Park, Grantham, that he made his final appearance for Batley against Keighley on 10 October 1914. He told the club secretary Kershaw Newton that it would be his last game with the Gallant Youths until peace was signed as, with his officer responsibilities, he could not afford to risk injury playing rugby. Poignantly he wrote: “...I will come and hope to see many of my old friends round the railings as a sort of good-bye until we get the serious business through and when honour and justice are satisfied I trust to have many a jolly game on the hill”.

Robert scored one try in Batley’s 19-0 victory. But, ironically given his concerns about injury before the game, he suffered the misfortune of a kick to the head. This blow confined him to a darkened room for a few days on returning to Belton Park.

In January 1915 the London Gazette announced his promotion to temporary Lieutenant with effect from 10 December 1914. Within months, on 15 May 1915, he became a temporary Captain as notified in a June edition of the same official journal.

Some debate occurred in the local press in March 1915 as to who was the first Northern Union player in Yorkshire and beyond to obtain a commission. The “Huddersfield Daily Examiner” and “Yorkshire Evening Post” declared that in Yorkshire the accolade fell to Wakefield Trinity’s William Lindsay Beattie who was appointed temporary 2nd Lieutenant in the Border Regiment on 15 March 1915. He too was to lose his life in the War, on 27 January 1917. Lancashire-based Wigan’s Gwyn Thomas, who joined Huddersfield in 1919, was reputed to be the first commissioned Northern Union player, but I believe this was around December 1914.

The Batley Club were firm in their defence that the honour was Robert’s. In their Annual Meeting of May 1915 they stated: “Randerson ... was the first N.U. player to receive a commission. This honour has been claimed by others but it belongs to Lieut. Randerson and the Batley Club”.

On 3 July 1915 Robert and his Battalion left the port of Liverpool bound ultimately for the Dardanelles. Initially landing at Mudros they moved onto the island staging post of Imbros where they acclimatised and practiced night landings and attacks. On the evening of the 6 August they left Imbros and at around 11pm that night they finally disembarked on the Gallipoli peninsula, south east of Nibrunesi Point on B Beach. The aim was to take Lala Baba, a low hill between the southern side of Suvla Bay and the Salt Lake. As the men moved off from the sea shore they were immediately engulfed by the darkness of the night, it being impossible to see a body of troops at a few yards distance. Lala Baba was eventually taken, but the Unit War Diary records a heavy price paid with 16 officers and about 250 other rank casualties (killed and wounded) in the fighting during those first hours of the night of 6/7 August 1915. This was out of a total of 25 officers and 750 other ranks that set off from Imbros only a short time earlier. Robert was amongst those officers killed. He died on 7 August 1915 within hours of landing. According to a fellow officer he met an instantaneous death as a result of a gunshot wound to the head.

The first news of Robert’s demise reached Batley around the 12 August when Mrs Power, with whom he had apartments in Norfolk Street before the war, received a brief note from his father informing her that he had been killed in the Dardanelles.

Local tributes poured in for him, newspapers referring to him as ‘Gentleman Bob’. The Batley Reporter and Guardian stated that he “was a true sportsman and a most popular player on the field and a perfect gentleman in private life”.

H&D FHS Journal Vol. 29 No.1
The members of the Batley Education Committee were equally fulsome with their tributes to Robert in their meeting at the end of September 1915. They expressed sympathy with his family and appreciation for his work in the town. Alderman H North said that: “Captain Randerson was a typical gentleman; an ideal leader of boys and a man appreciated by his scholars and school managers... His death had removed from Batley a most capable servant of the education committee... The town was poorer by his demise”.

I will leave the final word on Robert from the school in which he worked. Almost exactly one year to the day from the St Mary’s log book entry about timetable changes forced by Robert’s enlistment, the same log book has an entry on 16 August 1915 announcing that school re-opened after the midsummer holiday. It went on to say in a restrained, understated way: “News received that Captain Randerson, Assistant Master from this school, was killed in action at the Dardanelles on August 7th”.

Jane Roberts (R128)

Donated Certificates

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Thank you for the donated certificates. If anyone has an interest in them please contact the Publicity Officer at the email address below. There is a small charge to cover postage.

Margaret Woodcock
publicity@hdfhs.org.uk

Ancestral File Book

Priced at £5.00 plus p&p these are an ideal way to record your family history. You can enter up to 16 great grandparents and keep all your notes together about each ancestor. These can be ordered through our website or in person at the Root Cellar.
The Mayor of Huddersfield

Isn't it interesting how one small nugget of information can provide access to a whole story? For me it began with my aunt’s revelation that her grandfather, Alfred Willis, was once the Mayor of Huddersfield. I’d never known much about my dad’s Yorkshire ancestors and sadly by the time I became curious most of the ‘living archives’, with the exception of my aunt were no longer living. Fortunately she provided this one crucial clue as well as a wonderful collection of family photos.

I’d already sketched a skeletal account of Alfred’s life from census records but when I learned of his career in public life I was able to discover a whole lot more.

I decided to contact some possible sources of further information in Huddersfield and this led to my first encounter with those invaluable ladies in the Local Studies Library. As I live in Buckinghamshire, my initial contact was by phone and I was delighted when they quickly came up with a detailed obituary and a stunning photo of Alfred in his mayoral regalia.

Subsequently I visited Huddersfield myself and spent some neck-cricking hours searching through microfiche records and from what I learned I was able to piece together a much fuller picture of Alfred’s interesting life. Articles from the ‘Yorkshire Post’ and the ‘Huddersfield Examiner’ provided much of what follows.

Early Life

Alfred was born in Leeds on 5th December 1865. His parents Edwin Willis and Sarah Rose Walker, from Berkshire and Somerset respectively, moved up to Yorkshire after their London wedding in 1861 and Edwin set up a business as a tailor and hatter. Alfred was the third of their eight children and the eldest son. As a schoolboy he was apparently so precocious that he was made an underage pupil teacher, earning five shillings a week. A fortune for one so young!

Despite this early success he wasn’t tempted to take up teaching as a career. Instead, like his father and both his grandfathers, he opted for tailoring, working initially for J Hepworth and Sons until at the age of eighteen in early 1884 he embarked on the biggest adventure of his young life.

He set sail from Liverpool on the newly built steamship, ‘City of Chicago’ bound for New York where he went to work for the upmarket tailoring company of Isaac Walker on Fifth Avenue. A cousin of Alfred’s mother, Isaac Walker, went to the States to make his fortune in 1864 and by the time of Alfred’s trip he had established a successful business catering for the upper echelons of New York society. What better place then, for Alfred to learn his chosen trade? And what mind blowing experience it surely was for a young lad from Leeds.

Alfred remained in New York for almost two years and I suspect that what he witnessed there exerted a lifelong influence upon him. The lure of a glitzy lifestyle however was insufficiently strong to persuade him to stay, possibly because of the even stronger lure of a sweetheart back home. Alfred returned to England in late 1886 and almost immediately married Ellen Dews, my great grandmother, in Bethel Chapel, Leeds.

The young couple, both aged twenty, began their married life with a move to Huddersfield where Alfred took up a post as foreman cutter for the firm of A Taylor and Co. They were to stay in Huddersfield for the rest of their lives.
The Middle Years

Four children, a busy career and a growing involvement in local affairs were to follow. After being a manager and traveller for the business of Mr George Crosland, he later went into partnership with a Mr A Firth before eventually setting up his own business at 70 John William Street and later in Upperhead Row.

On a recent visit to Huddersfield I found 70 John William Street (now the Chilli Lounge!) and was struck by the elegant architecture and happy to see it was probably little changed from the time of Alfred’s occupancy. With premises in this smart area of town, I can only assume he was doing well. By this time he was no longer strictly a tailor but described in local directories as a ‘clothing manufacturer’.

His career in municipal life began in 1911 when he became the Conservative member for the Birkby Ward and he continued in this role until being made an Alderman in 1926. During his years on the council Alfred was involved in numerous important projects including the Lindley Adult School, where at some stage he had every office and rarely missed a Sunday meeting. He was also active on the Mental Hospitals Board and during his period as chairman he managed to persuade his colleagues to purchase better quality and more stylish clothing for both staff and inmates. Still a tailor at heart then!

In the early nineteen hundreds Alfred and Ellen bought a brand new house in Oakfield Road, Birkby where they were to live for the rest of their lives. I have vague memories of my dad mentioning Oakfield Road where as children he and his siblings went to see their grandparents. My aunt also told me in more recent times of a visit she made at around the age of sixteen when she was given her ‘first grown up, silk dress’ and driven to a masonic function in the mayor’s car. It was delightful, at nearly ninety years of age, to see her eyes sparkle with excitement at the memory.

Reading accounts of Alfred’s activities frankly made my head spin; I find it hard to imagine how anyone could be involved in so much. President of the Cowcliffe Conservative Club, vice-president of the Birkby Conservative Club, teacher and general secretary of Lindley Zion Sunday School, chairman of the Huddersfield Wholesale Clothiers Association, founder member of the Concord Masonic Lodge; the list goes on; and there was very little let up until the end of his life.

‘Father’ of the Council

Around 1923, Alfred sold his clothing business, apparently intending to retire and take things more gently. However he quickly became bored and within a few months embarked upon his second business enterprise, this time as the proprietor of Birkby Hall Motors Ltd. A driver since 1908, he was something of an enthusiast and by the time of his death he was the owner of three garages.

His new business activities however did nothing to curb his enthusiasm for council affairs. For many years he’d been involved in a project very close to his heart and for which he was probably best known to the people of Huddersfield at the time. This was the building of the Cambridge Road Baths.

The Baths, built at a cost of £60,000 and finally opened in 1931 was a long time coming to fruition. Alfred, first as a member of the Baths Committee and later as its chairman played an important role in bringing the project into reality. He apparently never missed an opportunity to emphasise the great need for a modern baths in the town.
The decision to build was taken in 1919 but it wasn’t until 1928 that the first sod was cut and Alfred, along with the mayor of the day, Alderman Thomas Canby, laid the foundation stone. When the Baths finally opened in August 1931, Alfred formerly opened the main door of the building and at the opening ceremony one of his granddaughters, Ellen Treherne Gledhill, swam the first length of the ladies’ pool.

It was mainly at Alfred’s suggestion that the larger of the two pools was covered in the winter months and used as a venue for dancing and social events which according to one news report in 1937 was a successful venture, both financially and in terms of public pleasure. At that time there apparently remained two unoccupied rooms in the Baths and according to the article if Alfred had his way, one of them would become a gymnasium. I’m afraid I don’t know if that ever happened.

Sadly, though a handsome building in its day, the Baths no longer survive; I believe they were demolished during the nineteen nineties. Nevertheless, from what I’ve read, for many years it was a significant landmark in the town and a source of great enjoyment to the people of Huddersfield; a fitting memorial to the determination of Alfred Willis.

Alfred eventually earned the accolade of ‘longest serving member’ or ‘Father’ of the council and in all he devoted around thirty years of his life to the service of the people of Huddersfield.

He became the Mayor in 1937 but sadly by this time he had lost his wife. Ellen died on the 14th July 1936 and I found her death reported in the Huddersfield Examiner. Floral tributes listed include those from the Mayor, Huddersfield Baths and Model Lodging-House committee, staff of Birkby Hall Motors, members of the Lindley School and officers and staff of Storthes Hall Hospital. It’s clear that Alfred and Ellen were held in great esteem by many in the town.

Without a wife, Alfred needed a consort to fulfil his obligations as Mayor and this role was apparently filled most successfully by his unmarried daughter, Aubrey. At the end of his term of office he acknowledged that he could not have carried on without her. He also comments that in one respect he felt he had failed and that was on the Bench. He is quoted as saying, “I cannot sentence anyone and I don’t want any hand in it. There are men who are made for that job, but it is not in my line. It is the only thing I have duffed at”.

I like that sentiment; to me it reveals a compassionate nature and a man who cared about people. Alfred died on the 1st January 1942 at the age of seventy-six and he is buried along with my great grandmother, Ellen, in Edgerton Cemetery.

I’m immensely proud of my great grandfather and would very much like to have known him. It is largely due to him I now feel a connection with Huddersfield I could never have foreseen.

Sue Hassett (H471)
The Man With No Name

How many of us have let out a cry of exasperation having come across a birth certificate with no father's name recorded? Immediately the obvious route to tracing the previous generation is denied us and we are left contemplating the endless possibilities which seem destined to plague us for years to come and the increasing frustration as the empty sector on our family tree grows wider and wider as the rest of our research progresses.

The stigma of illegitimacy in the nineteenth century meant that either stories were rarely told or sometimes explanations were invented to put a better gloss on circumstances. Occasionally the whole truth was known and passed on by someone in the family but too often a web of half-truths and guesses are all we have to go on. My first encounter with illegitimacy arose when I pursued my mother’s Wimpenny line back into the nineteenth century. Her grandfather Fred Wimpenny was the son of Martha Wimpenny of Netherthong. Martha was unmarried when Fred was born in 1866 and on his birth certificate there is a strong line scored through the box for the name of the father. Six years later Martha did marry but there is no indication that her husband was the father of her first child who was largely brought up by his maternal grandparents, Henry and Mary Ann Wimpenny.

And this is where the story stayed for many years until a family gathering to celebrate the 80th birthday of my mother’s elder sister. For her present I had given my aunt a copy of the Wimpenny family history and this caused quite a bit of interest among the guests at the party. The file was passed around and people poured over the details of their ancestors. Inevitably the matter of Martha’s son born out of wedlock attracted some attention. One of the guests, a cousin of my mother’s, was the only daughter of the only daughter of Fred Wimpenny. Thank goodness women talk! How many family stories would have been lost without the cosy mother and daughter chats which have taken place over the years? Invaluable snippets of family history have been safeguarded for future generations because women talk to each other. The cousin commented to me that she knew about Martha – my ears were out on stalks in a second – “Oh yes”, she said “my mother told me that Martha’s young man and the father of her son Fred intended to marry Martha but he died.” I thought of all the young women whose futures had been blighted by the loss of their young men to disease or accident in an age when such tragedies were commonplace. I asked the cousin what had happened to the young man - without any hesitation she told me that he died at a party, choking on a coin after flipping it in the air and catching it in his mouth. My immediate reaction was that this was such a dramatic and unusual story that there was almost certainly some truth in it. I was desperate for more information but the cousin could give me no more details, she didn’t know where or when the sad event had taken place and she didn’t know the name of the unfortunate young man.

Have you ever tried looking for the death of an unknown person? It’s a very tricky business. Over a decade or so I kept looking at the few bits of information I had and tried to plot a way forward. Initially I had no joy in tracing an inquest, after all I didn’t know whose death I was asking about! On the basis that the young man had been alive when Fred was conceived it seemed likely that he had not died before the autumn of 1865. Whilst it was probable that he was local there was no certainty of that. I tried all kinds of avenues without success. I realised that the local newspapers were a possible source but again the lack of a name made a search difficult. Then last year I discovered the online search facility of the British Newspaper Archive which allowed me to use key words to look for articles relating to the mystery. I tried many options but in the end it was the combination of Netherthong and post-mortem which produced a reference to an article in the Huddersfield Chronicle of Saturday 16 November 1867. I quote it in full below so you
can see for yourself just how close the story which passed down through the women of the family was to the facts of the case:

**CURIOUS DEATH** – A person of the name of Joseph Milner, son of James Milner, joiner of Holmfirth, has been working at Huddersfield for some time, and about three weeks ago he tried the trick of tossing up a penny and catching it in his mouth. He managed to do it, but only too well, for unfortunately it went down his throat. The penny could not be got out. On Wednesday evening week he came home complaining of being unwell, and on the Thursday morning he commenced spitting blood and died immediately, the penny having broke a blood vessel. An inquest was held on Friday week, at the Queen’s Arms Inn, Netherthong, before Mr. Ingram, deputy-coroner. A post-mortem examination had been made, and the penny was found at the entrance of the stomach, having ruptured a blood vessel and causing death. The verdict was ‘Died from accidentally swallowing a penny.’

The Coroner's verdict was faithfully repeated on Joseph's death certificate which recorded that he died aged 21 on 6 November 1867 at Netherthong. However his name was recorded as Joe Milner *Mallinson*. Where had the extra name come from? I was just thinking that I had solved a mystery and it seemed that another might be presenting itself, but then that's what family history is all about.

Claire Binns (B243)
On 8 September we welcomed Eric Houlder to Huddersfield Town Hall who gave an interesting and entertaining illustrated talk on Coaching and Coaching Inns over 200 years.

Eric is currently Chairman of the Pontefract Archaeological Society, a retired teacher and former Archaeologist at the British Museum.

He developed an interest in the subject of his talk in the 1960s and realised the importance of ensuring that a record was taken of this important part of our history so he travelled around taking photographs of former coaching inns and looking into their history. His first photo was of The Angel at Ferrybridge during its demolition. Since then he told us how he has been on a mission to find and document the history of all the coaching inns on the Great North Road and to look into the pre-history of this method of transport from 1660 – 1780.

Eric described how the toll gate buildings operated and the need for bay windows so that they could anticipate arrivals in both directions. He noted how the toll gate operators had to be on duty 24 hours a day and the importance of large families to them to ensure that the workload could be shared.

Eric discussed the start of mail coaches in 1784 and how paying travellers would subsidise the cost of carrying the mail. The first mail coach ran in Yorkshire in 1786 and people came from all over the world to see this new transport system. Private coaches also ran but were much less well organised, however, some people preferred this more leisurely approach. The more affluent hired post chaises - pronounced ‘po shay’.

It was noted that 1784 to 1850 was the main coaching era and that during this time coaching inns were built at the particular stages of the journey to provide for stabling of horses as teams of horses were able only to work for 15-20 miles, hence the term 'stage coaches'.

In the 18th century the Industrial Revolution meant that the country needed better transport and it was from around the middle of this century that Turnpike Trusts took over specific stretches of road and improved them. This work was led by Thomas Telford. Eric amusingly described how the Turnpike Trusts were sticklers for the use of specific types and size of stone and that the gauge that workers were instructed to use when forming the size of stone was their own mouth!

During the second half of Eric’s talk we were entertained with a history of various coaching inns along the Great North Road, some of which were familiar to the audience. Eric had an extensive selection of pictures of the inns at the time and his own photographs of the buildings taken over the last 50 years, some of which have unfortunately been demolished in recent years.

Of course the advent of the railways was the end of the road for stage coaches and the last one ran in Scotland in the 1870s.
Often when visitors come to the Root Cellar searching for the burial place of their relatives, the death and resting place of a miner can be overlooked. Ancestry has now the UK Coal Mining accidents and death index for 1799 – 1950.

I must admit before I started showing an interest in family history and the occupations of many Victorian men in this area I had never realised that mining was such a widespread occupation. My knowledge of the mining community was more of their strikes in the 1980s. To know that small mines existed every few miles, although the owners appeared to be better known than the name of the mine, came as a revelation not having many miners in my immediate family.

A website describing mining in Huddersfield can be found by placing Underground Histories in the search engine of a computer and taking a look at Alan Brooke’s Coal Mining in the Huddersfield area. A wealth of information can be found, but it is too extensive for this article, but worthy of a read.

Searching through the information on Ancestry I did a trawl of the deaths in this area. Over four pages of deaths appeared in the Dewsbury area and a much less number in the Huddersfield and Batley area. The numbers are much higher in the areas where the deeper mines existed such as the Durham coalfield, for anyone wanting to research further afield.

The index gives the date of death and the cause of the accident, roof fall, explosions and firedamp being the main causes of their untimely deaths. The owner of the mine is also entered.

It then follows, by confirming the deaths with a report in the local newspaper that many of these men never came to the surface again. Their burials will never be found, but it can offer an explanation for the missing details.

A further means of searching information on local miners in the Fulstone area can be found in a book on our shelves at the Root Cellar. The Holme Valley Civic Society Local History Group have produced a book on Aspects of life in the New Mill Valley entitled ‘Miners And Mining’ by Pamela Cooksey and Alan Tinsdeall. There are over 150 pages of information and maps of the local area to New Mill. You will find further information about the various small pits, which were mined, sometimes by whole families.

There are details of interviews given at the time to children, giving an insight into the local industry. There are many records of the death and disasters, which took place in the unregulated working conditions of the time. The names that appear in the book, of the local population, are a wealth of resource for anyone researching their family in the Fulstone and surrounding areas. There are six columns of names listed in the Appendix.

This book is available to be loaned from the Root Cellar library, please contact Maureen Wheeler our librarian if you are unable to visit. Information, including mining records, is available on Ancestry and other records on Findmypast at the Root Cellar.

Janet Le Billon
Mining accidents including Comb’s Pit at Thornhill Dewsbury

Searching through old newspapers and the new Ancestry records about local pit disasters in our area unearthed some very sad occurrences.

From the earliest mining accidents found in the records was one at Lindley Huddersfield where the deaths of five men Edward Booth, George Batley? Snr, George Batley, Thomas Crosby and John Tiffany were caused by an explosion in a mine owned by James Waterhouse. This happened on the 30 May 1833 at Lindley Top. It is not the sort of area associated with this employment today.

In Holmfirth a young boy named Joseph Barraclough was killed by a sudden explosion at the Holmfirth Colliery on the 3rd September 1839 aged just 14.

The town of Batley saw a Mr Lockwood aged 28 who fell down the pit shaft, at the mine owned by E Lockwood. He died on the 27 November 1874 and was a banksman at the Woodwell Colliery. John Flint aged 34 died in 1867 at Cross Bank, owned by the Holliday Bros, as he entered an area of ‘foul air’.

Compared to the rest of the mining areas such as Durham, we came off relatively unscathed but not the same can be said about Dewsbury. There are over two hundred deaths reported and none as great as the local mining disaster in Comb’s Pit at Thornhill on the day of July 4th 1893. Whilst Thornhill is just a distance from Dewsbury it became part of the Borough of Dewsbury in the early 1900s.

Did your family lose a relative on that date?

From a report in the Leeds Mercury of July 6th 1893 it stated that an explosion at the Comb’s Pit left the whole shift, apart from ten men, dead.

*Dewsbury Wednesday. The first two men to be brought this afternoon from Comb’s Colliery, from yesterday’s explosion, were found to be alive. They were brought to the bank at 5.15 p.m. this evening and intense excitement was quickly manifested in the district when it became known that all hope was not in vain.*

*From daybreak large crowds had occupied slopes adjacent to the colliery and that throughout the entire day they patiently waited. So fierce was the fire following the explosion that it was impossible for the assistant Government inspector Mr Mellor or Mr Nevin to enter the main shaft. However Henry Crosby under manager of the Ings Mine, belonging to the same owner heroically descended, accompanied by Albert Lodge, night deputy at Comb’s Pit and brought to the bank the bodies of James Scargill, blacksmith, of Thornhill married, Roland Garthwaite, hurrier, single age twenty six Samuel Croft twenty six, hanger on and Walter Field sixteen, pony driver. It being then impossible to reach the remainder of the imprisoned men the pit’s mouth was closed and the mine was partially flooded. The dead it was described as lying in a peaceful attitude as though suddenly overcome by fire damp…*  

*… The inquest on the four bodies recovered on Tuesday was opened yesterday at the Thornhill Local Board by Mr Thomas Taylor, District Coroner. The jury having been sworn, they proceeded to view the bodies, which had been removed to the different houses.*
William Scargill was the first witness called. He identified the body of James Scargill as that of his father, who was 50 years of age last Friday and lived at Thornhill Combs. The deceased was employed at the colliery as a blacksmith. He was a member of the Order of Oddfellows.

Stephen Field of Thornhill Combs said that Walter Field, whose body had been recovered from the pit, was that of his son who was employed in the mine. He was fifteen years of age. He was insured by the Prudential Insurance Company for £10.

The other two persons were also insured by the Prudential Insurance and disclosing the amount seems to us nowadays a little blunt, given the circumstances, but perhaps reflective of the Yorkshire attitude about ‘brass’. A free advertisement for the benefit of paying for an insurance policy…maybe.

On the following page are the deaths registered on Ancestry as being killed on July 4th 1893 together with their probable year of birth. This information has then been cross-referenced with FreeBMD. All entries marked with a * suggest slight amendments.

It can only be imagined the impact this disaster would have on the families. Some of the dead were no more than young boys of twelve or thirteen, working in a man’s world. Many from the same family. How many people in Dewsbury today know of this tragedy?

The photograph of the survivors unfortunately doesn't have all the names. From left to right on the back row is Harry Wraithmell, Friend Senior and Willie Lightowler. The men on the front row are not named.

From the family history viewpoint it is to be remembered that this information is only as good as given. Names and stories need to be cross referenced with other sources, such as FreeBMD, the local newspapers of the time or collecting the information from the local libraries in Kirklees. As an example the report of the accident in Lindley states in the newspaper of the time, the Leeds Mercury, that James Waterhouse was killed but this does not tally with the records shown on Ancestry.

All records no matter how helpful must be accepted in good faith but checked to prove if accurate.

See appendix overleaf

Janet Le Billon
Alexander Andrews 1878-15
John Ashton 1858-35
Joshua Ashton 1870-23
Oliver Ashton 1878-15
Herbert Asquith 1861-32
John William Beaumont 1877-16
Ephraim Beaumont 1881-12
Aquila Brook 1860-33
Charles Brook 1860-33
Charles Brook 1879-14 not traced
Henry Halstead Burton 1863-30
George Chapman 1875-18
Joseph Coates 1865-28
Willie Coates 1881-12
William Cole 1877-16
John Croft 1860-33
Samuel Croft 1865-28
Samuel Crossley 1828
George Crossley 1870-23
*John Crowther 1868 not traced
Stephen Drake 1853-40
Herbert Dunford 1875-18
Tom Dyson 1860-33
William Ellis 1833-60
John Ellis 1857-36
*Thomas Ellis 1861-31
Edward Fearnley 1838-55
George Fenton 1857-36
Walter Field 1878-15
Charles Firth 1847-46
Alfred Firth 1874-19
George Fisher 1868-25
John Fox 1878-15
Thomas Fox 1880-13
Eli Frith 1876-41 possibly Firth
George Frith 1878-15 possibly Firth
William Goldthorpe 1823-70
William Goldthorpe 1852-41
*Arthur Grimsdale 1878-15 possibly Grimsdell
Henry Halstead 1836-57
*William Hampshire 1857-37
John Hardcastle 1844-49
Walter Hardcastle 1869-24
James Hill 1868-25
Thomas Stanley Hills 1879-14
Jonathan Hinchcliffe 1847-46
Harry Hinchcliffe 1873-20
William Jackson 1866-27
Matthew Jessop 1867-26
Harry Jessop 1876-17
Lewis Lee 1867-26
Sykes Lee 1875-18
Isaac Lightowler 1857-36
Henry Lightowler 1862-31
Joseph Little 1871-22
John Longbottom 1853-40
Smith Longbottom 1878-15
George Milnes 1842-51
Benjamin Milnes 1871-22
James Milnes 1876-17
*Fransord Milnes 1881-12 Possibly Franceford
Edward Mort 1857-36
*John Buckley Netherwood 1878-15
Joseph Nobel 1849-44 possibly James
*G Noble 1865- possibly Frances Noble
Arthur Oates 1875-18
Fred Oates 1878-15
Richard Pickard 1844-49
Matthew Ramsden 1834-59
David Ramsden 1849-44
Abraham Ramsden 1854-39
Benjamin Ramsden 1862-31
Alfred Alonzo Ramsden 1876-17
Willie Ramsden 1877-16
Josiah Roberts 1853-40
Charles Rusby 1853-40
*Fred Rusby 1876 (states 14 on FreeBMD)
Joseph Scarfe 1877-16
James Scargill 1843-50
Robert Scargill 1853-40
Lot Scargill 1865-28
Rufus Scargill 1877-16
Lot Senior 1831-62
James Sheard 1839-54
Ernest Sheard 1880-13
John William Smith 1851-42
Mark Smith 1864-39
Herbert Speight1865-28
James Joseph Steadman 1869-24
William Stevenson/Stephenson 1878-15
Henry Summerscales 1834-59
William Henry Swallow 1868-25
Lambert Thones 1879-15
John Tindale 1859-34
Thomas Watkins 1878-15
*Walton Henry Oxley Wilcock 1842-51
George Wilcock 1863-30
George Wilkinson 1841-52
Sam Wood 1853-40
George Wood 1854-39
Joseph Wood 1878-15
William Wood1881-12
Herbert Wraithmell 1875-18
Willie Wraithmell 1880-13
William Varley Wroe1885
Greenhead High School, HUDDERSFIELD

Monday
When Greenhead Girls’ High School broadcast tonight, it was believed to be the first time in the history of the wireless that a school had done so as a whole on Speech Day.

The Speech Day was held in Huddersfield Town Hall, and the 500 girls sang various works of Bach, under the conductorship of Miss Edith Spikes, the music mistress. Mr Arthur Rooke was the accompanist.

The Mayor, Alderman Fred Lawton, presiding, recalled that when he had just been elected to the Town Council, 32 years ago, a heated debate was in progress regarding the suitability of founding a girls’ school at Greenhead. He felt sure that in the light of events such as these those who were in favour of the scheme had been proved indisputably in the right.

After presenting certificates, prizes and cups the Dowager Lady Nunburnholme congratulated the girls on their singing, “I am a Yorkshire woman by marriage” she said, “and everyone knows that Yorkshire people are noted for their singing”. Comparing England today with England 100 years ago, she said that then we had a fine leader in William Pitt, and today we have another fine leader in Neville Chamberlain.

Miss Hill, the headmistress, in her report, recalled that Greenhead first opened with 246 pupils. “For many years that number has been double”, she said, “and in that 30 years 3,339 girls have passed through the school”. She emphasised the importance of girls who had a complete high school education aiming as high as possible. “There is always a dearth in the world of people who are well equipped, capable of taking responsibility and administrative posts”, she said.

Susan Hutson

…whilst it might have been said that Neville Chamberlain was a fine leader when this article was written, thinking about another quote from the Huddersfield born prime minister Harold Wilson, when he allegedly said ‘a week is a long time in politics’. By 1939 Chamberlain’s popularity was on the wane and sadly he died the following year – Ed.

__________________________________________________________

Once more we have had a couple of ‘Strays’ sent to the Root Cellar

The first is an obituary for a Hanson Hirst who died aged 92 in November 1986. He was a cable splicer for the New England Telephone Co and had worked for them for 40 years before retiring in 1959. He died in the Rhode Island Hospital, Providence, United States and was the husband of the late Bertha May (Armstrong) Hirst. He was born in Huddersfield, England, a son of the late Walter and Martha (Hanson) Hirst.

The second stray is of a Winifred Drake nee Roebuck of Anola, Manitoba, Canada the wife of the late Norman Drake. She died at the age of 94 back in 2004. She was predeceased by her two brothers Reg and Fred Roebuck. Winifred was born in Huddersfield and her family emigrated to Canada in the 1900s.
Quite frequently we have had enquiries following visits to auctions or flea markets, when some once cared for possession has lost an owner. Whilst at Pudsey Fair back in April 2015 a visitor to our stand mentioned such a gem. Here is the story of a member of the Tuplin family who once lived in Huddersfield.

Do you know of any Tупlins? - Ed

Several years ago I was browsing around the Thursday flea market in Leeds where I came across an old scrapbook (not a published book). It had been put together probably during the 2nd World War, or shortly after. In it are postcards, typed poems, a telegram, tickets, a Christmas card, newspaper clips, drawings etc. As I flicked through it I realised it was someone’s story of their time in the W.R.N.S and I felt quite sad that it had ended up on a stall at the flea market. As I am interested in history and have been researching my own family history on and off, mostly off, for about thirty five years, I thought I would buy it and try to re-unite it with a member of the family of the person who had put it together. I now know this was Miss Marie Tuplin. I paid £15 for it, which doesn’t seem much for a big chunk of someone’s life story.

Marie Tuplin passed out from Wimbledon as acting Petty Officer. On the 2nd Nov 1943, she reported to St. Leonard’s Withernsea, a rail ticket for her bicycle, a ration card, poems and some photos of her fellow Wrens are stuck in her album. There are also some postcards of Withernsea and a brochure of the hotel they stayed in with the watchroom marked on. She then moved to Plymouth, more postcards, photos, a leave ticket and a letter from a friend. Wren Tuplin then moved to Gorleston on Sea Great Yarmouth, then Chatham in January 1945. More photos, postcards, HMS Pembroke House Menu. She then moved to Churchill’s underground bunker at the Admiralty, there is a post war newspaper article (Sunday Dispatch 12 May 1945) about the secret ‘fortress in the Mall’. In the book she has stuck a government railway passenger warrant for a journey from Oxford to London for P.O. Tuplin. There are then newspaper clips from VE night with the crowds outside Buckingham Palace. The following page has a letter advancing her to Chief Wren 25 May 1945, followed by some comic sketches of slave labour down in the dungeon. The book ends with her release on 20th September 1945 with a war gratuity and post war credit of wages. War gratuity 10/8d per month x 45 months, total £24. Post war credit of wages 4d per day x 1414 days, total £23 11s 4d. The last page has a copy of a glowing reference of her service as a Wren.

In the back of the book were two loose colour photos of an elderly lady who I suspected was Marie Tuplin. On the back of these was a stamp of the Huddersfield Examiner, with date and reference. I contacted the newspaper and spoke to a very helpful man who looked up the article to which the photos belonged. The story became even more interesting detailing her exploits in the intelligence service after the war.

Months after acquiring the book my husband and I were at a family history fair and talking to a lady from The Royal Armouries, who had a stand there. The scrapbook was mentioned and she said she would like to see it. We took the scrapbook to the Armouries and to our surprise one of our contact’s colleagues recognised the book immediately. She had wanted to buy it but didn’t have enough money with her, when she returned later it had gone. She was delighted that it hadn’t been bought by someone who wanted to dismantle it for the saleable items.
The book is now on loan to the Royal Armouries in Leeds for education purposes.
If any of your members are researching the Tuplin family from Huddersfield I will be happy to arrange for them to see the album/scrapbook.

Eileen Crosfill
Should you wish to know further details please contact the Editor

For anyone wishing to visit the Royal Armouries in Leeds the opening times are 10 am to 5 pm. The last visit is 4.30 pm. Admission is free and open daily. Closed Dec 24, 25, 26
The Royal Armouries collection consists of some 70,000 examples of arms, armour and artillery dating from antiquity to the present day.

General enquiries tel 0113 220 1999
Address Armouries Drive LS10 1 LT
enquiries@armouries.org.uk

We have had an offer of photographs that may be of interest to one of our members. These photographs were originally the property of a Miss Mary Lockwood of 17 Dingley Road Edgerton who died some time in 2013. On a letterhead of Mary’s is written the names of Gordon and Enid Minter, of Lascelles Hall, possession of documents and photographs concerning Hammond Yard and Dr. Wilkes”.

The envelope, which contains these photographs, has the name of “Miss Margaret Emmeline Dixon, of Fixby Road Huddersfield”. The photographs, which have names on them, are of Margaret Dixon, Mary Dixon, Joseph Hammond brother to Ann and Elizabeth Hammond.

There are no dates on them but are obviously taken in the late 19th and early 20th Century.

This request is made before they are destroyed.

Hilary Gee G103
Any enquiries please make via the editor and I will be pleased to forward your email or contact details to Hilary.

This is an interesting thought about saving photographs. I inherited many from my late mother in 1985 but haven’t thrown any of them away. I have left messages on the back, which state whether they are relatives or strangers. One envelope I had contained two photographs of Frank Hobson. No idea who he was, thinking he might have been a friend of my grandfather…

…Whilst driving down the M62 from Huddersfield to the Pudsey Family History Fair in April this year a chance conversation with our librarian Maureen Wheeler about her Grandma Hobson who, it turned out lived next door to my grandparents in Trinity Street formerly West Parade. I immediately remembered the name on this photograph and as a throwaway remark asked if they had a son called Frank. Incredibly they had. One of the photographs showed a young man in army uniform. It would appear that he didn’t survive WW1. He was the same age as my late uncle and would probably have been a close friend before the war. Hence the reason to keep photographs for over a hundred years.

As they say… every picture tells a story-Ed
War Cemetery Appeal

I am acting on behalf of the authorities at the United Nations Memorial Cemetery Busan, South Korea, where over 800 British servicemen are buried.

The authorities there wish to obtain photographs of those servicemen interred there and also of those who died but have no known grave. The photographs will be attached to their records and will also be displayed on the walls of the Cemetery Hall of Remembrance, for all time.

The following are just some of the young men from Yorkshire who gave their lives in Korea: Gnr Norman Graystone; Sgt Edward M Hall; Cpl Rowland F Firth; Pte Dennis Walker; Cpl Charles E Trott (RM); Pte Baden Pickles; Fus Kenneth Foster; Pte Ronald P Kelly; Pte Roy Gibson; Gnr George Cawood; Fus Robert South; Gnr Malcolm Tinkler; Fus Peter Dutton; Gnr Robert Harrison and Fus James W Cannon.

Any family who lost a loved one in the Korean War from 1950 - 53 and wish to take part can send the photograph to me at:

Brian Hough, 116 Fields Farm Road, Hyde, Cheshire, SK143NP.

If more details are required phone 0161 368 5622 or 07467 037742. You can also email me at bhough116@gmail.com

May I thank you for any help that you can give on this matter.

Brian Hough
Cheshire

‘They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning

We will remember them’

Robert Laurence Binyon 1869-1943
Dewsbury Town Hall

The foundation stone of Dewsbury Town Hall (see back cover) was laid by the Mayor, Thomas Bateman Fox, on 12th October 1886. The decision to construct the building was taken because Dewsbury Corporation, established in 1862, had no single building from which to carry out its functions and those which were being used had become inadequate. The building was designed by Henry Holtom of Dewsbury in the Renaissance style and completed at a cost of £40,000.

On the day of the building’s official opening, 17th September 1889, a general holiday was observed in Dewsbury and district and from early morning tram cars brought large numbers of people from the outlying areas to the town centre. The streets were decked with bunting as a procession made its way from the West Riding Courthouse to the Town Hall. Mounted police led the way followed by the band and members of The King’s Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, officers of Dewsbury Corporation, leaders of various local organisations and Town Clerks and Mayors of several Yorkshire towns and cities including Bradford, Halifax, Huddersfield and Batley.

On reaching the Town Hall the Mayor, Alderman John Walker, was presented with a gold key and, to cheers from the watching crowds, unlocked the gate leading into the building. The dignitaries proceeded into the large concert hall where the local choral society led the singing of the National Anthem, speeches were made and the ceremonies completed. In his address the Mayor read out a communication from the Home Secretary advising that the Queen had “graciously acceded to the request that the main hall of the building be called the Victoria Hall”.

In 1974 Local Government reorganisation saw Dewsbury County Borough merged with ten neighbouring authorities to form the Borough of Kirklees into whose ownership Dewsbury Town Hall passed and remains today.

Richard Hutson (H391)

Thursday Evening Opening Times

The Root Cellar is open from 7.00 pm until 9.30 pm on the following dates.

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THE ROOT CELLAR
33A Greens End Road, Meltham, Holmfirth HD9 5NW
(Adjacent to Greens End Garage)

Opening Times

Monday 2.00 pm to 4.30 pm
Tuesday 2.00 pm to 4.30 pm
Wednesday 10.00 am to 12.30 pm and 2.00 pm to 4.30 pm
Thursday 2.00 pm to 4.30 pm
Thursday evenings (alternate weeks) 7.00 pm to 9.30 pm
Saturdays 2.00 pm to 4.30 pm

Why not come along and:

- Carry out your research
- Speak to people with similar interests
- Work on our computers including using Ancestry.com Worldwide
- Seek advice from our team of volunteers and explore our resources
- Purchase our publications booklets and look at old maps of the area

Ring ‘The Root Cellar’ 01484 859229 for information

We operate on a voluntary basis
HUDDERSFIELD & DISTRICT FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY
(A member of the Federation of Family History Societies)
Registered Charity No. 702199

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* Indicates non-committee member