

# NEW MILLS LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

## NEWSLETTER

Issue 52, Spring 2014



## Meetings 2014

Meetings are held in the main hall of New Mills Town Hall, starting at 7:45pm. You may obtain easy access from the entrance on Aldersgate.

Friday January 10	The Mersey-Irwell Navigation in Manchester and Salford	David George
Friday February 14	Coal mines around Poynton	David Kitching
Friday March 14	The Forest of the Peak	Derek Alsop
Friday April 11	Exploring ordinary lives in early-modern Cheshire	Dr Paul Booth
Friday May 9	<b>A.G.M.</b> followed by John Taylor and his account book for the Aspenshaw and Ollersett Estates	Ron Weston

## Committee 2013-2014

Chairperson	Barbara Done (742617)
Vice-chairperson	Gaynor Andrew (743117)
Hon. Secretary	John Humphreys (743581)
Hon. Treasurer	Maureen Hall (742837)
Hon. Archivist	Roger Bryant (744227)
Hon. Editor	Ron Weston (744838)
Ordinary members	Derek Brumhead, Nicki Burgess, John Crummett, Barry Dent, Peter Done, Pat Evans

*[www.newmillshistory.org.uk](http://www.newmillshistory.org.uk)*

*[www.picturenewmills.org.uk](http://www.picturenewmills.org.uk)*

## **From the Editor**

Dear Friends,

In 2013 we've had a plethora of new publications from our research authors: Derek Brumhead, Roger Bryant, John Crummett and Rosemary Taylor. In the spring of 2014 there's an attractive programme of talks to look forward to.

So, we look forward to your continuing support: keep buying our books and attending the meetings.

Remember also that there's much to learn and enjoy by logging in to our websites and visiting the Heritage Centre.

With best wishes for a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year,

*Ron Weston.*

P.S. Please keep those items for the Newsletter coming in.

**The Fighting Parson: The Reverend Ricketts Raymond Ricketts.  
Vicar of Hayfield 1877 - 1906.  
John Crummett (September 13, 2013)**

**I**n November 2009, John Crummett gave a talk to the Society on Abel Buckley Wimpenny, the manager of Wood Mill print works in Hayfield in the late nineteenth century. Wimpenny's non-conformism and devotion to the Liberal Party's reform programme under Gladstone's premiership guided his attempts to bring social changes to Hayfield, particularly regarding education. But he was considerably hampered by the opposition of the vicar, the Reverend Ricketts Raymond Ricketts. Verbal duels between these two opponents in committee after committee provided splendid copy in the local press. In his latest book, entitled "The Reverend Ricketts Raymond Ricketts," John Crummett has used these newspaper reports and other primary sources to flesh out Wimpenny's rival. His talk gave us a vivid and detailed account of this complex and gifted character.

Wimpenny and Ricketts found themselves on opposite sides on several topics, but it was their differing views on the provision of education in Hayfield that had the most serious effects. In short, Ricketts opposed the establishment of a Board school in Hayfield. His strong conviction was that education should be the prerogative of the Church of England. Secular education, he maintained, might be subject to undesirable influences if the curriculum and its teachers were not under the direction of the established church.

The Reverend Ricketts was a forceful and commanding character in the life of the village. His strident character and emphatic views made him impossible to ignore - one was either for or against him. Although the differences in viewpoint between Wimpenny and Ricketts were profound and acrimonious, it is clear that they sometimes colluded in good-humoured badinage for the entertainment of onlookers and the press. If the conduct of the vicar sometimes fell short of that expected from a man of the cloth, we have to allow that he acted from what he considered to be the highest of motives, the promotion of the right of the Established Church to be the moral guide to the population at large.

John Crummett has rendered a great service to Hayfield in researching Abel Buckley Wimpenny and the Reverend Ricketts Raymond Ricketts and publishing his findings in two handsome volumes at his own expense. Their opposing opinions and the causes they espoused make them very much men of their times and these biographies command an interest that goes beyond the village of Hayfield. These accounts are for all who want to know more about the social history of late Victorian times.

“Abel Buckley Wimpenny, The Life and Times of a Nineteenth Century Hayfield Manager, Political Activist and Social Reformer 1844-1905” by John Crummett, price £5.00.

"The Reverend Ricketts Raymond Ricketts, Vicar of Hayfield, Derbyshire 1877-1906" by John Crummett, price £7-50.

Both publications are available at the Society's meetings and also at the Heritage Centre.



## **New Mills Festival Lecture**

### **The Roads of New Mills**

**Derek Brumhead - September 23, 2013.**

**T**he historic core of New Mills, a cluster of homesteads around the early corn mill and the bridge over the river Sett which stood at the head of the Torrs, soon became a focus of routeways. Burdett's map of Derbyshire of 1767, shows at least five paths and roads from over the hills converging on the little packhorse bridge. Before the coming of the cotton industry to the town, there were no valley routes, which only later were to be served by canals, turnpike roads or railways.

Derek then gave us one of his typically spirited accounts, taking each of these ancient routes in turn, before proceeding to the later roads that developed in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The most important of these early roads left the old road from Disley to Whaley Bridge and, via Redmoor Lane, crossed the Peak Forest Canal (which opened in 1796). In 1833, the Turnpike along Albion Road made this route redundant. The earliest turnpikes ( such as what is now the A6) tended to by-pass New Mills, despite the town's growing industrial activity. Then, in 1801, a direct link through New Mills came with a branch from the Stockport to Marple bridge turnpike from Marple, through Strines - a completely new section of road.

A connection with the Buxton to Manchester turnpike (the A6 route) came in 1831 when roads between Thornsett via New Mills to Furness Vale were linked or improved. Derek showed in some detail how the line and length of Marsh Lane has been subtly altered in order to facilitate this route and adjust it to changes, such as the building of the railways.

Derek emphasised the key role played by the many bridges that were built in and around New Mills during the nineteenth century. Only by bridge-building on an heroic scale did it become possible to overcome the difficulties of negotiating steep valley sides and spanning the Torrs to make the town accessible. Derek mentioned in particular the building of the high level Albion Road bridge in 1835 and the need, subsequently, to strengthen its arches and

later, in 1884, the opening of the Union Road bridge. Eventually, there were over thirty bridges serving the growing town.

The construction of new highways did much to determine the shape of New Mills in the nineteenth century. Properties tended to grow up along the new roads as they were built. This explains the somewhat tenuous extension of New Mills into the surrounding countryside.

This brief summary cannot hope to do justice to the wealth of information that Derek's talk imparted. Full details may be obtained from Derek's article in vol. 107 of the Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian society, which Derek has made available as an off-print under the title "Roads and Bridges of New Mills 1760s -1880s", price £2.00.



## **The London and North Western Railway and the Midland Railway at Buxton**

**John Morton (October 11, 2013)**

**O**ne can only commiserate with John Morton. His laptop was faulty and he was unable to show consecutively the images he had chosen to illustrate his talk. He did succeed in showing us a miscellany of past railway scenes and steam locomotives, some local, others from further afield.

This was a disappointing evening, particularly because the opportunity to mark the hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary of the two railway stations which had stood side-by-side in Buxton was missed.



## **Gaps in the Glossop Story**

**Roger Hargreaves (November 8, 2013)**

**R**oger Hargreaves began his talk by lamenting the fact that little historical research had been done on Glossop during the past twenty years, or so. Tucked away on the edge of the county, beyond the sphere of influence of conurbations, Glossop has been neglected by mainstream researchers, with the notable exception of Dr. John Smith, whose work on the history of Glossop has been outstanding. Roger mentioned the lack of useful records. The manor belonged to Basingwark Abbey in the medieval period and Glossop's early records were lost or destroyed at the time of the Dissolution. Latterly, the manor was in the hands of the Howard family ( that of the Dukes of Norfolk). The estate records were moved to Yorkshire when the family left Glossop in the 1920s, whereupon, the records disappeared! Only a few have since been discovered. In earlier times Glossop seems to have lacked families of wealth, power and influence - families that might have generated a steady stream of

documents. Finally, Roger regretted the lack of archaeological investigations that might have supplemented the paucity of written records.

The rest of Roger's talk recited the work that was being done to rectify this sad state of affairs and pointed to promising lines of enquiry that might be followed in the future.

Lynchets (former cultivation terraces) have been revealed in the rural landscape near the town and these might be investigated to increase our understanding of the prehistory of Glossop. The site of the Roman fort at Melandra has now been cleared and this opens the way for future excavations (only a small part of the site having been excavated in the past). The civilian settlement outside the fort (the vicus) is under threat from modern housing development and urgent action is needed to investigate what remains to be found. Although the lines of Roman roads in the vicinity of Glossop are known, their actual position through the town itself still needs to be established.

Place-name evidence in and around Glossop suggests a strong survival of Celtic (ancient British) inhabitants into the Anglo-Saxon period. Very little is known about the Anglo-Saxons in the area, though the survival of strip fields at Chunal and Padfield, two settlements mentioned in the Domesday survey, suggest that landscape archaeology might yield more information. No vernacular building surveys have been made in the settlements around Glossop, though it is evident that some properties are very old and probably date to the medieval period.

The valuable pioneering work led by Dr. John Smith on sixteenth and seventeenth century wills and probate records has thrown up several questions regarding life in and around Glossop at that time - questions that need to be addressed. Why, for example, did the population of the town go into decline at a time of population growth in the Pennine fringe region generally?

Much is known regarding the development of the cotton textile industry in Glossop and the building of Howard Town under the direction of the Dukes of Glossop. Nevertheless, there is much to be discovered, particularly through research into industrial archaeology. The last part of Roger's talk covered this aspect in some detail, showing what had been achieved by local volunteers in recent years. This work is particularly important since the revolution in textiles began early in Glossop but the industry's decline was also premature. Most of the mills had become disused or had disappeared from the town by World War Two.

Roger Hargreaves is an enthusiast determined to redress the relative neglect of Glossop's local history in recent years. The invaluable work of that notable champion of local history Dr. John Smith, who did much to instruct and inspire us here in New Mills, will surely be brought to fruition in Glossop by this new generation of researchers.

## The Peak Forest Canal and its effects on the local economy

### Grahame Boyes (December 6, 2013)

We have heard several talks on the subject of the Peak Forest Canal, usually from local experts (of whom the late Olive Bowyer was one; her three books published in the early days of the Society being our best-sellers for several years). Grahame Boyes' well-illustrated account gave us a different, more academic perspective, as the subtitle of his talk suggests.

The first generation of canals, which accompanied the earliest phase of the industrial revolution in the late eighteenth century, had succeeded in linking the country's most important navigable rivers, the Trent, Mersey, Severn and Thames. These were by far the most profitable, successful and long-lived components of our canal system. The second generation of canals, which were of regional rather than national significance, soon suffered competition from the railways and were not nearly as profitable. The Peak Forest Canal comes into this category. Only by establishing ancillary tramways and linking itself to the burgeoning railway system was the canal able to continue to operate successfully.

The Peak Forest Canal linked Manchester to the uplands of the Peak District, where some of the earliest developments in the water-powered cotton industry were located, and did so by passing through the coal-bearing regions of north-east Cheshire. Grahame Boyes displayed the percentage volumes of goods carried on the canal in 1835-6, which summarised perfectly how the canal fitted into the local economy:

Limestone	29%
Gritstone	4%
Lime	26%
Coal	14%
Merchandise	26%
Sundries	1%

Limestone quarried in the Peak Dale and Doveholes areas was burned in kilns, notably at Bugsworth, using local coal to produce lime. The industrial revolution was paralleled by an agricultural one, stimulated in part by the urbanisation of the working population and the threat to foreign imports which came with the wars with France between 1793 and 1815. Lime played a key part in bringing the upland commons into cultivation and the directors of the Peak Forest Canal were quick to exploit this demand by leasing limestone areas and opening up quarries linked to the canal by a series of tramways. Some of the largest quarries in Britain can now be found in that locality.

The “merchandise” consisted principally of cotton bales and finished textiles. It is interesting to note that some of the textile mills built in the mid-nineteenth century when railways were well-established, nevertheless had a canalside location. The mills in Newtown are notable examples.

Grahame Boyes gave us many new insights into the operation of the Peak Forest Tramway (originally known simply as “the Railway”). The canal engineer Benjamin Outram soon realised the impossibility of building a canal into the Peak District beyond the Bugsworth Basin and substituted a tramway. This was very much a pioneering venture. With its inclined planes, flanged rails and standardised wagons (“trams”) designed to take a strictly limited load the tramway became a state of the art model to be copied in many other parts of the country. This is why its remains are important to the nation's transport heritage. Grahame Boyes has made a detailed study of Outram's design of the inclined planes, showing how the creation of a track with a concave long profile could facilitate the safe and efficient downward movement of loaded trucks under gravity as well as the uphill return of empty trucks hauled by heavy horses. The wagons were attached to an endless belt, originally of rope but later replaced by a chain and finally a heavy wire. The job of ganger who had to bring the descending wagons to a halt by applying a hook and chain to the wheels was particularly hazardous and several deaths were recorded.

Grahame concluded his fascinating talk by showing us a series of excellent early photographs of premises along “our” section of the canal, some of them familiar, others which have now disappeared.

It was a privilege to be addressed by such an acknowledged expert as Grahame Boyes. The definitive book on which this talk was based, “The Peak Forest Canal and Railway, an engineering and business history,” by Grahame Boyes and Brian Lamb, published by the Railway and Canal Historical Society at £30, was available for our inspection.

*Ron Weston.*

## Papplewick Pumping Station and Newstead Abbey Summer Outing (June 16, 2013)

For five days before the summer outing I anxiously pored over the long range weather forecast for the 16 June. Each day the charts showed large black clouds dripping huge rain drops. The 16th turned out to be a sunny summer day. I blew a silent raspberry at the weatherman and sat back to enjoy the trip.

We crossed the border at 10.00am and arrived at our first port of call, the Papplewick Pumping station. What a striking site!, set out like a country estate. The geology of the land collected and held rainwater that required a number of pumping stations in the 19th Century to lift the water to reservoirs from which it provided a much needed supply to cater for the growing needs of the nearby city of Nottingham.

Papplewick is the last remaining example of the pumping stations, the others having made way for housing estates. We stood beside an ornamental lake as our guide, Gerry Barnes, the chief engineer, enthusiastically told us the story of the site. He led us on a detailed tour of the boiler house with its six Lancashire boilers and then into their pride and joy, the Victorian Pump House with its huge beam engines and beautiful decoration in tiles and coloured glass. At meetings later on in the week some members were overheard giving eloquent descriptions of the Victorian engineering and the wonder of it all. All too soon we had to drag ourselves away and head for our lunch and afternoon visit to Newstead Abbey, about fifteen minutes away.

Originally Newstead was a monastic house, founded in the late 12th century as an Augustinian priory. It was closed by Henry VIII in 1539 and granted by the king to Sir John Byron of Colwick from whom it passed down to Lord Byron the poet after which, it was eventually sold. We went on a most interesting conducted tour of the house led by two very knowledgeable lady guides who were ever ready to recite snatches of Lord Byron's poetry. They gave us a very interesting account of the Byron family story which is well worth hearing.

After lunch and the tour we had plenty of time to enjoy the extensive gardens and lakeside walks. The whole property eventually passed into the ownership of the City of Nottingham in 1931 and provides a welcome recreational resource for the people of the city. The Council are to be commended for the way they are looking after it and presenting it for public use. Well worth a day outing!

*John Humphreys.*

## A Walk up to Greenclough

Margaret Weaver

“Shall we have a walk up to Greenclough?” was my Grandpa's suggestion one fine afternoon, so shoes and a thick jersey were found and we set off up the stony track and over the railway bridge. Soon we arrived at the farm and Mr Richardson was standing by the gate with his dog. I don't know what he was looking at but Grandpa said “afternoon Joel” and the conversation began, “How are Mrs Richardson, Roger, Elsie and the other children?”. Then Joel's sisters Bertha and Florrie. All that dealt with, the weather came next. I watched the dog, he watched me.

At last we were off and I asked Grandpa if we were going to see Mr Sigley. He said we would go there another day and we turned left down a track I did not know. Grandpa opened the gate, we went through and fastened it shut. I got a bit worried “will there be cows under the railway bridge” I asked. “No” said Grandpa, “They are all up the field, they only go under the railway bridge when it's raining”. I thought it would be muddy under the bridge, it was, but we picked our way through and came out onto a rough track. This got wider as we came to the Roman Bridge. A little further on we could see and hear a train above us. Now we were going under the viaduct.

Next we came to a building with a lot of sides, Grandpa said this was Floodgate Cottage. I could hear the river on our left but the track was quite dry. Soon we came to the Roman Lakes, there would be little rowing boats here. I hoped we were not going to go in one of these. I had been before when grandpa rowed about on the black water. It was all right. We said “good afternoon” to a few people and turned to go back, we turned right and went over the Roman Bridge. Very often people would stand on this bridge to have their photograph taken. We did not linger but went up by Lumb House and came out on the main Strines road (New Mills to Marple road). The track was a bit rough and I was glad to walk on a proper footpath.

We turned left and walked past red brick houses on our right side, then we came to the “Sportsman”. Opposite was a stile and a track up to the canal, then we passed a row of houses. Grandpa knew all the people there but I could only remember Mrs Ramsey and Mrs Bagshaw. Next came the Post Office and Mrs Taylor. On the left was the “Royal Oak”, Ethel and Albert Hanson lived next door.

I was a bit tired of saying who or what came next so I said “don't know”. This gave Grandpa the opportunity to tell me about his Uncle David who used to live in one house. I never saw him but knew his son, cousin James William Clayton who often visited Grandpa and Grandma.

When we reached the Church I expected to be asked who lived in the next two houses but Grandpa said nothing. We walked past the Sunday School, the New Barn houses, the horse chestnut trees and over the bridge home. Grandma said “wherever have you been? You've been gone a long time”. Grandpa said “down the Roman Lakes”. I was glad to sit down and eat my tea.

The Roman Lake was a reservoir when Samuel Oldkrow had a mill by the river. He brought all his workers from London

It was a surprise to hear Grandpa call the bridge “Roman”. He usually stayed with the old name, Windy Bottom Bridge.

Peter Sigley, Grandpa's old friend and neighbour up the Banks sometimes talked about his (Peter's) mother. She was Ann Hulse who lived at Lumb House. I could not imagine this lady but wondered if someone would pop out of the house to talk to Grandpa.

I remember other things and people I could have mentioned on our walk down Strines Road. There was a huge stone tank full of water opposite the Royal Oak. It never seemed to empty. Did Mr Smith, the church organist live opposite the Royal Oak at that time? I knew that Mr George Taylor and his sister Miss Bertha Taylor lived in one of the semi-detached houses by Wood Cottage. Their neighbours were either Goddards or more likely Ricketts. A little girl called Margaret fell over her tortoise and injured her knee. I was told this story to discourage me from asking for a tortoise (a cat maybe or even a dog, but a tortoise! !)

NB Peter Sigley died in December 1934.

## Electricity substations of New Mills

Electricity substations are modest but interesting architectural features of urban and rural landscapes. The function of New Mills substations is to receive 11,000 volts (11kV) from a primary substation at Gowhole (Fig 1) and transform it down to 415V/230V for local distribution. New Mills, which didn't have a public electricity supply until 1930 has at least 50 substations.



*Fig.1. Gowhole 33kV substation 33kV 301671, on Lady Pit Road SK011838.  
This will not be the original equipment from 1930.*

Substations have transformers, switch gear, protection and control equipment. Smaller distribution substations may have encloser circuit breakers or fuses for the protection of distribution circuits should a fault occur.



*Fig 2 High Lea Road 333265. SJ995856*

Substations come in different types.

(1) Typically, they are a small building which may look like a garage (Fig 2). The clue is the 'Danger of Death' yellow safety sign on the door and the white notice with the substation's name and six figure reference number. They vary considerably in their size, design and building materials. Up to nationalisation in 1948 they were all built by New Mills UDC electricity department and why they are so varied is an interesting but unanswered question. Advances in technology means that the equipment located in substations is now much more compact. For instant, in the original substations on Marsh Lane and Wirksmoor Road (Fig 3) built in 1930 perhaps only 5% of the interior is now needed.



*Fig 3 Newtown substation 331923. SJ 997850. opened in 1930  
(Corner of Grove Road and Wirksmoor Road)*

(2) Outdoor substations with the separate components mounted on the ground and enclosed by a metal or wooden fence.



*Fig.4. Hague Bar Outdoor substation (338852). It replaced a kiosk which was adjacent.*

(3) Pole-mounted with the transformer above the ground on the wood pole.



*Fig 5. This is the Eaves Knoll substation on Eaves Knoll Road, which supplies Brook Bottom and Hague Bar substations. There are two poles here (GVR117 331353 and 33159). The circuit on the left hand pole goes through an autocloser and then up the line and on to Brook Bottom. The right hand pole has a small transformer which feeds the immediate properties. GVR means Gas Vacuum Recloser. It is an automatic circuit breaker that detects a fault, interrupts the fault current, waits a short time (typically 3 seconds) and then reclosers. If the fault is still there it will try the whole sequence again – usually three times.*

(4) A fully enclosed cabinet.



*Fig 6. Lady Pit Road 337889. SK 013839*

(5) Inside a building which resembles an industrial unit.

There must be several more than 50 substations tucked away in and around the town which so far have not been located. Postmen, however, are quite helpful in finding them !

*Derek Brumhead*

## The Local Historian

Volume 43, No 3 and 4 (August, October 2013) have been placed in New Mills Library. Volume 43, No 3 includes the following articles:

Graham Smith, *Lonely day without news: the confiscation of wireless sets in the German-occupied Channel islands 1940-45*. (Fascinating !).

Charles Sacconi, *Rebuilding St Mary's Church, Cheadle: gentry patronage in east Cheshire*.

John Chandler, *Long-playing record societies*.

Peter Spufford, *The British Record Society 1960-2010: a personal view*.

Evelyn Lord, *Review article: books about people* (Includes a long paragraph on John Crummett's books on Abel Buckley Wimpenny and The Reverend Ricketts Raymond Ricketts both of Hayfield).

Various contributors, review article: books on belief, religion and churches.

Book reviews: The medieval English Landscape 1000-1540: Wath-upon-Deerne - artistic views: House of the Weald and Downland: Oxfordshire Friendly Societies: The county community in 17th century England and Wales: Agriculture in Norfolk 1914-72: The views of the hosts of alien merchants: A history of some West Yorkshire epidemics.

Recent publications in local history

Volume 43, No 4 includes the following articles:

Malcolm Chase, *The "local state" in Regency Britain*.

Ian Hancock, *The "Irish Gent" and his strumpet: the story of Hercules Burleigh*.

Chris Jones, *Dr Stuart Hawthorne of Liverpool and his "infallible" treatment of Asiatic cholera 1848-1849*.

Natalie Burton, *The establishment and organisation of civil defence operations in Berkshire 1936-1945*.

Phoebe Merrick, *Prisoners of war in Britain in the 1940s*.

Kate Thompson, *Review Article: "Ye have the poor always with you"*.

Evelyn Lord, *Review Article: books about places*.

Book reviews include: Oxford City Apprentices 1513-1602: medieval property transactions in Rutland: Market Drayton in 1851: Towns of north-east Herefordshire's urban matrix: Bristol's stage coaches: Slavery in Yorkshire: The West Indies and the Arctic in the age of sail: The Great War in Coventry and Warwickshire: An historical atlas of Berkshire.