

New Mills Local History Society Newsletter



Edition 22

Spring 1999

SPRING PROGRAMME 1999

Fri. 8th January

JOAN POWELL

“Hayfield Union Workhouse”

Fri. 12th February

DAVID FRITH

“Legends of Longendale”

Fri. 12th March

J.G.CLIFFORD

“Eyam (further aspects of its history)”

Fri. 9th April

TONY WINSLADE

“The Manners Families and Their Home”

Fri. 14th May

MELANIE TEBBUTT

“Local Worthies of New Mills”

COMMITTEE 1998-99

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METHODISM IN HAYFIELD

11 September 1998, Alan Rose

Hayfield is one of the earliest centres of Methodism in the country, the earliest date being a meeting held in a private house in 1741 only two years after John Wesley first started preaching in the open air. It is probably not surprising that the key person in the introduction of Methodism into Hayfield was John Bennett (c 1714-1759) who was originally a member of one of the earliest non-conformist chapels in the country, the independent Chinley Chapel. He was a well-known packhorse man trading between Sheffield and the High Peak. His grave can be seen in the graveyard of Chinley Chapel along with his wife Grace Murray whom he married much to the disappointment of his friend John Wesley, from whom she moved her affections. Adjacent is the grave of James Clegg, minister 1708-55.

John Bennett was converted to Methodism in 1739 after hearing David Taylor, perhaps the earliest apostle of Methodism in the Peak, preaching in Sheffield, where Bennett had gone to place a bet on a horse race, but heard Taylor instead. Later, Taylor visited and preached at Hayfield. From 1741, meetings were held privately in houses in Hayfield but there was much opposition in the village when they turned to holding public meetings in the open air, such meetings being a mark of Methodism for many years. At one meeting in Hayfield in 1742 an attempt was made to disturb the meeting by running dogs through it. When David Taylor attempted to preach in the street in Chinley Chapel in 1741, James Clegg wrote in his diary that 'some persons set the bells a ringing, which gave him great disturbance and highly provoked many'. Clegg was uneasy - 'many flock to hear him, if any good be done I shall rejoice. I ought to do so by whatever person it is done'.

John Bennett quickly became a leading Methodist in the region. He created a circuit or 'round' in Derbyshire, Lancashire and Cheshire (although strangely it did not include

Methodist Conference in 1774, a conference which consisted of ten persons. The minutes which he took of these early conferences are historic documents.

Although John Wesley was not a promoter of Methodism in Hayfield he was invited there to preach in the open air by John Bennett and afterwards made other visits to Hayfield. His journal gives a graphic description of the great flood which hit Hayfield in July 1748, describing the destruction including the scattering of bodies from the washed-out graves of the churchyard. Of New Mills, which he visited in 1774, Wesley wrote 'I preached to an earnest, artless loving people'.

About 1748 an unusual event occurred - the Anglican curate of Hayfield, John Badley recently appointed (1748-64), was converted to Methodism, an unusual occurrence for an Anglican churchman. Uproar resulted in the village. John Bennett wrote to John Wesley 'The minister of Hayfield, a church town within two miles from my fathers is lately converted and preaches the pure Gospel of Jesus Christ. The town is up in arms against him, breathing out slaughter, notwithstanding he is as bold as a lion and not ashamed of the truth'. Badley organised the parish as if it was a Methodist chapel, dividing the congregation into groups or classes. When his young daughter died in 1758, John Wesley came from Manchester to conduct the burial service and it seems that by then Methodism was finding acceptance among the people of Hayfield. Wesley

wrote in his journal ‘Who would have looked for a congregation as this in the High Peak of Derbyshire?’ In the same year, John Wesley’s brother Charles, the hymn writer, came to Hayfield and preached in the church, an unusual event even for Hayfield. ‘I did not spare them’ he wrote. A plaque to John Badley can be seen in the gallery of Hayfield church.

Normally, Methodism became established in areas where the Anglican church was weak, i.e. where there was no parish church. But Hayfield had a long-established church, (the registers date from 1620), being a chapelry of the mother church of Glossop. It was New Mills which did not have a church, yet the focus for Methodism came upon Hayfield, a result of John Bennett’s influence and the conversion of the incumbent. New Mills’ first chapel was not built until 1766, and it still stands, somewhat altered, on High Street.

By the 1780s the Hayfield Methodists were ready to build their own chapel. A plot of land was bought for £12 on New Mills Road (opposite Station Road) and the chapel was opened in 1782. Only thirteen chapels in the country still in use are older than this chapel, and it is the oldest still in use in the Manchester district. Like St George’s chapel in New Mills, it had a bell. John Wesley preached in it in 1789, his last visit to Hayfield.

The creation of Sunday Schools sowed the seeds for division in the Methodist church. It became a substantial movement - there were 290 children on the Hayfield register in 1803, when Hayfield could not have had more than about 600 people. When it started to teach reading and writing it came into conflict with the general movement who saw it as daring to educate the working class, for there were no other schools for the mass of people. The Wesley Conference in 1836 said that the teaching had to stop and the result was a breakaway group which built the Bethel chapel. The same thing happened at New Mills, where Mount Pleasant chapel was built next to the Town Hall. Later, another breakaway group was formed, the Primitive Methodists who said that preaching should return to the open air, a movement which started in Staffordshire in the 1810s and reached Hayfield about 1820s. Their first chapel was in Little Hayfield near Clough Mill. It is now a house. Then another chapel was built on Kinder Road in Hayfield, the present Library. So, by the 1860s there were three chapels in Hayfield. The Religious Census of 1851 showed that Hayfield had the best attendances of any place in north west England. The three chapels continued until 1932 when Methodists became reunited although still continuing to use their own chapels. Bethel closed in 1956 and was demolished when the bypass was built. The Primitive Methodists chapel, later called the Hugh Bourne chapel closed in 1969.

Alan Rose is probably the leading historian of Methodism in the Manchester region. He is also a practising preacher and his incisive, knowledgeable and witty delivery him a most interesting speaker. Although he claims not to know much about this region he obviously does have much local knowledge, enhanced by fieldwork, which allows

him to relate the local history and geography to the audience. He is an authority on the forward to a third

talk. *Derek*

Brumhead

BESS OF HARDWICK

9th October 1998, J.P. Skvner

Mr. Skyner led us with great skill, through the complicated and fascinating story of a Derbyshire lady, Bess of Hardwicke. He showed how the fortunes of Bess ebbed and flowed as, with great determination, she survived the wheeling and dealing at the court of Elizabeth I. Bess had a full and at times hectic life and seems to have had little childhood, being a widow at the age of thirteen years following the death of her first husband. This marriage created a connection with the Grey family, of which Lady Jane Grey was a member, and was to cause Bess problems in the future.

Bess married again, this time to William Cavendish, a surveyor of monasteries for Thomas Cromwell. They had eight children, most of whom survived, and Bess set about developing Chatsworth House. After ten years William died leaving Bess in financial trouble, with the children to care for and the debts from the building of the new Chatsworth.

Bess became Lady-in-Waiting at Elizabeth's court and met her third husband St. Low. He upset his family by bequeathing all his money to Bess. After a time Bess was back at court as Lady of the Bedchamber, but fell into disfavour with the Queen for helping a pregnant friend, Katherine Grey, to marry without the Queen's permission. Bess and Katherine were sent to the Tower. While there, Bess was accused of poisoning her husband by his family. This came to nothing and eventually she was freed. Her husband died in 1664, leaving Bess a widow once more, but with money and land.

Bess married again and became Countess of Shrewsbury. She began to marry off her children and Chatsworth was completed at a cost of £80,000. Bess then bought Hardwicke Hall for £8,500 and threw herself into renovating it. Bess and her husband were saddled with the task of looking after Mary Queen of Scots whom they held as a prisoner on behalf of the Queen at Chatsworth. The upkeep of Mary and her retinue soon landed the Shrewsburys in debt. When the Earl died he left his wife in dire straits once again. Eventually she gained control of her husband's money and properties and came to enjoy an income of £60,000 a year. Bess was an astute businesswoman increasing her wealth through moneylending. She married George Talbot and continued to work hard on various building projects right up to her death at the age of eighty-eight.

Bess, the farmer's daughter, had helped create six dynasties and was given a funeral with great pomp.

JOHN HUMPHREYS

BLACKPOOL IN THE 1930's

13 November 1998, John Walton

It is perhaps a paradox that Blackpool, seen by most of us as a place of thoughtless pleasure, should be given serious attention by academics; but Professor John Walton soon made us aware of more penetrating contradictions in his lively and absorbing account of this, the first working class holiday resort. Despite a high rate of unemployment nationally, Blackpool expanded rapidly in the 1930's, attracting those lucky enough to be in work, who benefitted from a regime of falling prices. It was in this decade that the resort extended its tourist catchment to include the Midlands industrial Scotland and Ireland. Yet behind the facade of opulence there lay a great deal of back-street poverty in Blackpool, a situation exacerbated by seasonal unemployment.

The reputation of the resort for its entrepreneurial spirit of private enterprise conceals the fact that in the 1930's the key innovations came through the efforts of the local council, which invested heavily in the redevelopment of their promenade, public gardens, swimming baths, roads and other facilities designed to promote the idea of healthy, active holidays amongst the middle class. The entrepreneurial side of Blackpool, epitomised by The Pleasure Beach and The Golden Mile, offered somewhat naughty attractions and promoted a boisterous, free-and-easy atmosphere; yet the town was very orderly and safe, for visitors and residents alike. A major cause of Blackpool's rapid growth was its growing popularity as a place to retire. Salubrious Southport was the place where the bosses went to die; but Blackpool suited the pockets of many lower middle class folk just able to afford a three-bedroom semi.

It is not surprising that the tourist trade provided the most important source of occupations in Blackpool. It is impossible to calculate how important this was because it was a "hidden employer." Much of the work was seasonal, many of the workers were itinerant and the infamous Blackpool landladies included many who simply let out the bedrooms of their modest homes, somewhat more than a stone's throw from the sea. Sports and entertainment gave employment to a significant number, but there was a singular lack of jobs in manufacturing, despite the efforts of the local authority to attract light industry.

Turning his attention to the holidaymakers themselves, Prof. Walton emphasised the concentration of the holiday season into the weeks around August Bank Holiday. During that time the resident population of Blackpool., (some 100,000 people) temporarily expanded to several million by the inclusion of visitors. It became much the largest of the British resorts. Many of the holidaymakers were young adults who came on holiday in small groups, attracted by the prospect of music and dancing. Theatres and cinemas abounded in Blackpool, catering for every taste and age-group.

Thanks to the enterprise of the local council, the illuminations successfully extended the season, as did the conference trade and the promotion of a Christmas season. It was the spirit of “municipal capitalism” that made Blackpool a brilliant success in that gloomy economic decade. It enabled the town to enter the second half of the century better equipped than most resorts to meet the challenges of change that came about in the tourist industry. Despite the extent and pace of those changes, for the generation growing old in the present decade 1930’s Blackpool remains a vivid folk memory of a major component of working class culture.

RON WESTON

CHRISTMAS IN VICTORIAN MANCHESTER

11th December 1998, Chris Makepeace

In Victorian times ideas regarding how Christmas should be celebrated changed radically. On the one hand, there was a harking back to the past by a newly-prosperous, recently-emerging, urban middle class attempting to enjoy the festive season in the way it imagined the landed aristocracy had enjoyed it in country houses before the industrial age. On the other hand there were a number of innovations introduced from German traditions. There was a considerable influx of Germans into Manchester during the last century, most of whom were connected with the cotton industry. The popularity of the Queen’s German consort, Prince Albert, himself a great innovator, also created sympathetic interest in German ways of doing things.

In Britain generally, the custom of decorating a Christmas Tree, a German tradition, became established, as did the sending of Christmas cards, which was a result of the creation of a cheap and efficient postal service, itself made possible by the coming of the railways. In Manchester in particular, the German Fair was established, a combination of bazaars and entertainment’s appropriate to the festive season. The first pantomime came in 1845, and most theatres had special Christmas programmes, including concerts.

Chris Makepeace’s slides, drawn from the illustrations appearing in a number of Victorian journals and other contemporary literature, showed graphically the scenes of a Victorian Christmas: in the streets in the home and in the shops, clubrooms and hostelrys. It was an evocation of the world we know from a reading of “A Christmas Carol” and other works of Dickens, who, our speaker informed us, was no stranger to Manchester at Christmas time. The shops were bursting with food, with great emphasis on traditional fare: plum pudding and the roast beef of Olde England. Meat of every kind was consumed in prodigious quantities over Christmas in middle class households and at Christmas dinners organised by every society, club and institution.

Christmas became the most important event in the churches and special efforts were made to promote charitable giving. For the poor and destitute of Manchester Christmas was no different from any other time of the year, except for those fortunate enough to be the beneficiaries of middle class charity, which was considerable. Churches, newspapers and journals encouraged generosity towards the poor. Even the inmates of the city's workhouses were provided with Christmas fare through charitable donations, to the extent that some commentators complained that the paupers were better off than many poor people amongst the working class.

Many aspects of the Victorian Christmas are still with us over a century later: witness our concern with the commercialisation of the season and neglect of its religious significance; the importance of entertainment and sporting fixtures; the provision for the homeless living on the streets of Manchester today; the centring of the celebrations on hearth and home; the emphasis on remembering one's family in an age when family life is said to be falling out of fashion.

This was a lively, topical and thought-provoking presentation and a fitting conclusion to our programme for this year.

RON WESTON

OLD ORDNANCE SURVEY MAP OF HAYFIELD

The 25 inch map of Hayfield in 1919 (reduced to 15 inches to the mile) has recently been published by Alan Godfrey. It is on sale at the Heritage Centre, at shops in New Mills and Hayfield, and at Society meetings. The price is only £1.95.

Our region is now well provided for by these fascinating maps with their great detail, which have on their reverse side a commentary and reproductions of contemporary railway timetables, directories and advertisements. The maps available are:- New Mills (Newtown) 1896, New Mills (North) 1896, Birch Vale 1896, Whaley Bridge and Bugsworth 1896 and Disley 1907.

THE LOCAL HISTORIAN

As usual, the following issues have been placed in New Mills Library (Local History section).

May 1998

Julie Rugg, 'Researching early-nineteenth cemeteries: sources and methods.'

Catherine A.Crompton, 'An exploration of the craft and trade structure of two Hertfordshire villages, 1851-1891: an application of nominal record linkage to directories and census enumerators' books'

Pauline Lynn, 'The impact of women. The shaping of political allegiance in County Durham 1918-1945'.

Edward Royle, 'Local history in context: twenty years of the Conference of Regional and Local Historians (CORAL).

Book reviews include: 'Topographical writers in south-west England' by Mark Brayshay; 'The Tudor housewife' by Alison Sim; Family life in Shakespeare's England, Stratford-upon-Avon 1570-1630' by Jeanne Jones; 'Contours of death and disease in early modern England' by Mary Dobson; 'Clothes and the child: a handbook of children's dress in England 1500-1900' by Anne Buck; 'Local communities in the Victorian census enumerators books' edited by Dennis Mills and Kevin Schurer; 'Cinema West Sussex - the first hundred years by Allen Eyles'

November 1998

Derek Brumhead, 'Social structure in some 'dark peak' hamlets of north-west Derbyshire in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries' *

R Muir and J Amos. 'Nidd: the death of a village'.

'The Difference What ! Landholders and their labourers in early-nineteenth century Kent'.

Elizabeth Roberts, 'Continuity and change: oral history and the recent past

J Scliga. 'A neighbourhood transformed: the effect of Indian migration on the Belgrave area of Leicester, 1965-1995'.

Peter T Walker, The documentary use of the word "Melgress"

**Derek's article, which is a development of part of his work on his thesis. will be available as an offprint on sale at society meetings and in the Heritage Centre.*

Reviews of books, include some which will be of particular interest to certain members, viz: 'London and Southwark inventories 1316-1659: a handlist of extents for debts' by Martha Carlin; 'Workhouse children' by Frank Crompton; 'In pursuit of Devon's history: a guide for local historians in Devon', compiled by Ian Maxted; 'Historical atlas of Trafford' by Don Liayliss; 'Trafford Park - the first hundred years'

by RobertNicholls; 'Land and society in Edwardian Britain' by BrianShort.

DERBYSHIRE MISCELLANY

It is a pleasure to record that starting with the Spring 1998 issue this publication (a sister publication to the Derbyshire Archaeological Journal) will in future be taken by New Mills library and kept in the local history section. We are very grateful to the librarian, Gwenda, for her support in arranging this with the library service, in addition, all the back numbers from the first issue in February 1956 until Autumn 1976 have also been obtained. (The library already takes the DAJ). Below is a list of the articles in DM which are of more local interest.

Volume (Part) Date

1, (8), *February 1958*. A F Musson, 'Robert Blincoe and the early factory system' [apprentice at Litton Mill], pp 111-117

1, (9), *June 1958*. Owen Ashmore, 'The early textile industry in north west Derbyshire', pp 129-136. [A little known but very important seminal article on our area.

2, (2), *February 1960*. R A H O'Neal, 'Errwood Hall, Goyt valley, PP 241-44.

2, (4), *October 1960*. Talk by C W Hage on 'The Cromford Canal', pp 274-82.

2, (8), *September 1962*. Nellie Kirkham, 'Magpie Mine and its tragedy pp 359-82. [Other volumes have important articles by this accomplished historian on a variety of themes, particularly lead mining and boundaries].

2, (9), *November 1962*. MA Life [later known as Peggy Bellhouse, historian of Combs], 'Records of two ancient water corn mills in Combs Edge', pp 392-96.

3, (8), *June 1966*. MA Life-Bellhouse, 'Tunstead Mill'. pp 647-50.

4, (3), *April 1968*. MA Life-Bellhouse, 'Some notes on Bradshaw Hall', PP 130-37.

4, (3), *April 1963*. Brian Lamb, 'The Bugsworth complex of the Peak Forest Canal and Tramway', pp 156-59.

4, (4), *Autumn 1968*. Robert Thornhill, 'Notes [substantial] on some Derbyshire toll houses and turnpike roads'. Pp 185-216.

5, (3), *Spring 1970*. John E Heath, 'Stage coach routes in 18th and 19th century Derbyshire', pp172-3 (includes useful maps).

6, (6), *Summer 1973*. Joseph Scott, 'Turnpike roads in Derbyshire', pp198-209.

7, (5), *Spring 1970*, I E Burton (former librarian of Buxton), 'The Buxton Crescent', pp238-43.



This photo has been given in at the Heritage Centre.

Can anyone please identify it?

Suggestions to Derek Brumhead.

DIPLOMA IN LOCAL HISTORY VIA THE INTERNET

Some members are making more use of personal computers and even perhaps ~surfing the net'. They may be interested in knowing that Oxford University now offer a Diploma in Local History via the Internet. It uses teaching material over the internet with the full support of a personal tutor. Students will receive a practical introduction to the concepts, sources and methods in family and community history. The significant advantage of this course is that you are able to study at home in your own time. The Diploma is a one-year programme comprising two modules (1) Databases for historians (April-August 1999) and (2) Concepts and methods for local history (Mid-September-December 1999). The course starts in April 1999.

There are leaflets available at Society meetings or you can get an information pack and more information by writing to Certificate Administrator, OUDCE, 1 Wellington Square, Oxford, OX1 2JA or check their website on <http://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/courses/lhistl>.

THE FORMER YATES BRASS FOUNDRY, TORR TOP STREET

Recently, the Society was given a lease dated March 1863 in which 'a piece or parcel of land, foundry, boiler house, reservoir, buildings' were assigned to the Marple New Mills and Hayfield Junction Railway. These premises were Yates Brass Works on Torr Top Street, which were built about 1838, and recorded on the title map of 1841. Part of the works with its chimney, currently under redevelopment still stands opposite Torr Top Car Park. It is hoped that it will be possible to retain the chimney as a feature, since this is probably the oldest industrial site in the centre of New Mills. The assignment was due to the fact that the railway company was constructing a tunnel under the works for the railway to Hayfield opened in 1868.

Only days after receiving this lease, I paid a visit to the Leawood Pumping Engine at Cromford. The brass oil lubricator has a plaque on it - 'Yates Brass Works, New Mills'.

Derek Brumhead

Local Government Alterations 1936 & 1974.

1936 Derbyshire/Cheshire County Boundary Alterations and 1974 Local Government Reorganisation.

Glossopdale Rural District Council (Derbyshire) ceased to exist on the 1st. April 1936 when the parish of Ludworth, part of the rural district, became part of Marple Urban District (Cheshire) which became part of the Borough of Stockport on the 1st. April 1974.

Mellor (Derbyshire) the detached part of Hayfield and Mellor Rural District also became part of Marple Urban District (Cheshire) on the 1st. April 1936 when the rural district ceased to exist with the Hayfield part becoming part of the Chapel-en-le-Frith Rural District on the 1st. April 1936 then to become part of the newly created Borough of High Peak on the 1st. April, 1974.

Furness Vale from Bankend to the Soldier Dick Hotel formed part of the Rural District of Disley (Cheshire) but it was partially separated by a part of New Mills Urban District from the Brook at the Swan Hotel to Bankend. On the 1st. April 1936 this Disley part of Furness Vale became part of the newly created Whaley Bridge Urban District which replaced the Yeardsley-cum-Whaley Urban District (Cheshire) which included the other part of Furness Vale south of the Soldier Dick Hotel, then on the 1st. April, 1974 the Whaley Bridge Urban District became part of the newly created Borough of High Peak. A smaller Disley Rural District remaining in existence until becoming part of the newly created Borough of Macclesfield on the 1st. April, 1974.

County Boundary Alterations. These meant that the Parish of Mellor, the detached part of Hayfield's Mellor Rural District and the Parish of Ludworth from Glossopdale Rural District were transferred from Derbyshire to Cheshire and the Furness Vale portion of the Disley Rural District, access to which was partly through Derbyshire, being transferred from Cheshire to Derbyshire on the 1st. April, 1936.

Ludworth, Mellor, Hayfield, Disley and Whaley Bridge retained Parish Council status with Whaley Bridge achieving Town Council status after becoming part of the Borough of High Peak. The newly created (1st. April, 1974) Borough consists of the former Boroughs of Glossop and Buseton; the Urban Districts of New Mills and Whaley Bridge and the Rural District of Chapel-en-le-Frith.

1936 Boundary Changes

Mellor was detached from Hayfield's Mellor Rural District by an area of New Mills Urban District and transferred to Marple Urban District on the 1st April, 1936.

Boundary:- Clockwise from Jordanwall Nook, Pole Lane across fields to the triangle at Thunrose Lane, west of Stony Piece, Shaw Farm, Brookbottom, east of Strines Print Works, Strawberry Hill, Roman Bridge, Roman Lakes, Marple Bridge (brook just south of Hollins Lane/Town Street junction), Mill Brow, Brook Bottom, Far Bradshaw, Ludworth Moor, Gun Farm, Robin Hood's Pickings Road, Pictel Farm, Moorfield Arms Hotel, Skitoh Road to Jordanwall Nook.

Ludworth. Transferred from Glossop Dale Rural District to Marple Urban District on the 1st April, 1936.

Boundary:- Clockwise from Marple Bridge (brook just south of Hollins Lane/Town Street junction), river Goyt and river Etherow to Compsall Bridge, river Etherow upstream to north of Lower Sturup Farm; west and south of Boar Fold, across the Marple-Glossop road west of Far Woodseats Lane, west and south of Indikes Farm, Sandhill Lane, Gun Road, Robin Hood's Pickings Road, Gun Farm, Ludworth Moor, Far Bradshaw, Brook Bottom, Mill Brow, and following the brook down to just south of the Hollins Lane/Town Street junction at Marple Bridge.

Furness Vale. Transferred from Disley Rural District to the newly created Whaley Bridge Urban District which succeeded the Urban District of Healdley-cum-Whaley on the 1st April 1936.

Boundary:- Clockwise from Bankend Farm, Buxton Road; down to the Canal, on to the river Goyt, along the river to Joure Bridge then along the brook upstream under the Canal and under Buxton Road, continuing up Furness Clough, south of Broadhey Farm, west of Broadhey Hill, east of Moorwood Farm, east of Shriphey Collyer, rear of Redmoor House and Bankend Cottages to Bankend Farm.

Derbyshire to Cheshire:- Mellor and Ludworth.

Cheshire to Derbyshire:- Furness Vale along with the superseded Healdley-cum-Whaley Urban District

Lusworth and Charleworth transferred from Glossopdale Rural District to Chapel-en-le-Wath Rural District.

J.A.P.
23rd Nov 1998

THE NEW MILLS AIR-RAID : These items appeared in Tom Waghorn's "Memories" column in Manchester Evening News, 17th Jan. and 28th Feb. 1998. Thanks to Marjorie Jones for spotting them!

Dear Tom,

THERE is a mix-up in some of your readers' minds about the "Luftwaffe over Withington" saga. They are probably confusing two separate incidents.

The episode that Mr E Buchan (Memories, December 13) speaks of happened in midsummer 1943. Two German aircraft came from the direction of Stockport and dropped a bomb near New Mills railway station.

This is in a very deep hollow. The blast sucked out the windows of the Railway pub into the street at the Market Street/Union Street junction rather than blowing them in.

The planes then flew on and strafed the recreation ground where children were playing and I believe a football match was in progress. They then followed Hayfield Road to Hayfield. Just past Low Leighton a man in his garden was shot at and I think he was killed.

I was living at Rock Hall, Hayfield, which is on a rise just off the end of Valley Road. At about 8pm, I heard an unholy row. Running out of the front door, I was confronted by an aircraft firing its machine-guns - whether it was firing at me or just strafing I will never know. There was another aircraft just ahead: I think they were Junkers fighter bombers.

I looked across the valley towards Kinder Road. There was a plume of dust and smoke where a house used to be. I ran towards it (about a quarter of a mile) where I found six or seven people standing there in shock. The house was flattened. I asked whether anyone was inside, but nobody knew.

Going through a hole in the side (probably what was left of a window hole) I found an elderly lady deeply shocked and in distress. I pushed her through the hole to the people outside who managed to get out of her. "My two grandchildren are inside."

Searching in the dirt and dust, I found two small children aged about eight or ten - both dead. I passed them out to the people outside and went home, putting the whole episode from my mind until a few months ago.

The planes flew on towards Edale where another bomb was dropped but it didn't explode. I believe the planes were brought down after that.

J Williamson, Irlam.

FRIDAY, July 3, 1942. It was 8pm and the town hall clock at New Mills, near Stockport, was striking the hour. Many townsfolk were watching a Will Hay film in the Union Road cinema.

Suddenly two German aircraft - twin-engined Junkers 88s - flew from the south-west up the Goyt Valley. They split up, one following the direction of the main railway viaduct line where it dropped two bombs on Wood-side Street; one failed to explode.

The other aircraft banked over the gasholder in Mousley Bottom where it dropped a bomb and sprayed machine-gun fire on the cricket field and streets, where children were playing.

The planes roared on to Low Leighton, where another two bombs

were dropped, demolishing two houses and the Methodist Chapel (affectionately known as the Tin Mission). Two people were killed in the attack - 10-year-old Joan Handford, who was in one of the houses, and Dan McKellar, caretaker of the chapel, who died in hospital next day as a result of being struck by bullets and falling debris. A number of incendiaries were also dropped. From here the aircraft flew on to Hayfield where another bomb demolished three houses, killing five adults and a young girl.

No air-raid warnings were given of the attacks.

The two aircraft were later shot down over Lincolnshire by four Spitfires of a Polish squadron based at Kirton-in-Lindsey. One crew of four was killed; the other crew was taken prisoner.

After the war, Ron Collier, the Glossop aviation historian, traced Major Olek Rokibnicki, the pilot of one of the Spitfires which shot down the raiders. He sent Mr Collier the picture reproduced here of the Spitfire and part of the Junkers bomber which it brought down.

● *Special thanks to a number of readers who added their recollections of the New Mills bombing to the letter of J Williamson (Jan 17). A booklet on the raid, by Derek Brumhead and published by New Mills Local History Society, costs £1.50 from the Heritage Centre at Rock Mill Lane, New Mills, via Stockport SK12 3ES.*

Information provided by M. J. Scattergood, October 1998. This advertisement appeared in the St. George's Parish Magazine c.1926.

SCATTERGOOD & SONS, LTD.,

Joiners, Builders, Contractors, Registered

Stone planing machine
Ladders, poles, etc for scaffolding
An assortment of Gravestones in stock.

Telephone: No. 3, New Mills.

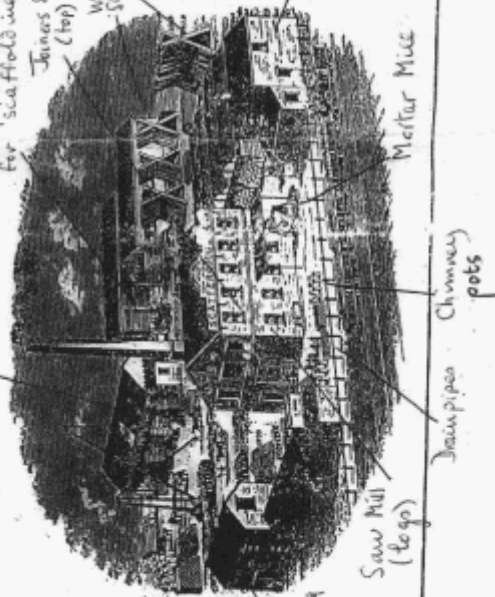
Re-setting and Lettering promptly attended to.

English Oak and Ash. Ground Marlar, Cement and all kinds of Building Materials kept in stock.

Agents for SIDOL.

HURST FIELD STEAM
Saw Mills,
NEW MILLS,

Via STOCKPORT.



Office
(They build up
steel here)

Saw Mill
(to go)

Chimney
pots

Ladders, poles, etc
for scaffolding

Joiners Shop
(top)

Wood
stacking

Merlar Mill

Stables