

New Mills Local History Society

Newsletter 32



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Spring 2004

Spring Programme 2004

All meetings are held in Sett Valley House, starting at 7.45 pm.

Friday January 9	“Disley: the story of a village” Chris Makepeace
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Friday February 13	“The Ordnance Survey” Keith Holford
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Friday March 12	“The Regeneration of Chapel-en-le-Frith” Mike Smith
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Friday April 2	“Derbyshire Historic Gardens” Dr. Dudley Fowkes
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Friday May 14	A.G.M. followed by “The Civil War in Cheshire: a unique experience?” Dr. Peter Gaunt
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NEW MILLS LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY COMMITTEE 2003-2004 (elected at the A.G.M.)

Chairman	BARBARA MATTHEWS (743935)
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www.newmillshistory.org.uk

A NEW YEAR LETTER

Over the years our twice-yearly Newsletter has taken on a familiar form, with our list of officers and committee members appearing regularly on the inside of the front cover below the details of our forthcoming programme. You will notice that we do not have an office of Hon. Programme Secretary (perhaps we should). This vital task is shouldered by one of the Committee members. Barbara Matthews did this job for several years; more recently it was Roger Bryant and currently it is Derek Brumhead.

I hope you find the programme for Spring 2004 inviting and will continue to give us your support.

Finally, on behalf of the Committee I wish you all a Happy and Prosperous New Year!

Ron Weston Hon. Editor

THE LOCAL HISTORIAN

The most recent issue of *The Local Historian* has been placed in New Mills Library. The articles include:

Russell Grigg: “The origins and significance of the school strikes in south Wales, 1911”

Tom Arkell: “Identifying regional variations from the hearth tax”.

Shirley Durgan: “Providing for the ‘needs and purses of the poor’: council housing in Chelmsford before 1914”.

Book reviews include:

“Digging up the past: an introduction to archaeological excavation” by John Collis.

“The English model farm” by Susanna Wade Martins.

“Devon Thatch” by Jo Cox and J.R.I.Thorp.

“The Armenians in Manchester” by Joan George.

Local History News accompanies the Journal. It has several short articles among which are “Ridge and furrow: medieval or later?”, “County confusion (where is Saddleworth?)”.

THE FITZHERBERTS OF TISSINGTON HALL 12th September 2003 - Mrs. Ruth Jordan

Mrs. Jordan, a guide to visitors at Tissington Hall, gave us a well-informed and amusing account of the present incumbent Sir Richard FitzHerbert and his ancestors, who came with the Conqueror.

Originally from Longueville in Normandy, Ralph Fitzhubert was granted several manors in Derbyshire for his services to William I and was one of the Tenants-in-Chief of the county. One of our earliest post-Domesday records finds the Fitzhuberts installed in the manor at Norbury near Ashbourne in 1125. The medieval Fitzhuberts featured in national affairs fairly consistently down the centuries. For example, two FitzHerbert names appear as signatories to the Magna Carta; while in 1415 FitzHerberts were in the company of knights from Derbyshire who fought for Henry V at Agincourt.

The FitzHerberts formed complex marriage alliances with other aristocratic families, chiefly from Derbyshire, including the Meynalls and the Beresfords. Throughout and after the Middle Ages, manors fell into and out of their hands in a bewildering fashion. Consequently, the family itself subdivided into several branches, including in the Elizabethan period those of both Protestant and Roman Catholic persuasions. They remained prominent in public life as lawyers, JPs and MPs as well as in commerce. FitzHerberts were among the earliest British plantation owners in the Caribbean.

The FitzHerberts had occupied the medieval Tissington hall from an early date and continued to do so into the early seventeenth century, when, in 1609, a new hall was built to replace the ancient one. When civil war broke out a few years later, the FitzHerberts supported Charles I, though Derbyshire generally had declared its allegiance to the cause of Parliament. The Parliamentary troops laid siege to the new hall, which sustained some damage.

With the Restoration of Charles II in 1660, the FitzHerberts recovered their fortunes and resumed their active roles in national affairs.

Tissington's most illustrious son was Alleyne FitzHerbert, a gifted and distinguished diplomat, who was created Lord St. Helens by a grateful nation. He died in 1839, aged 87.

A notorious and tragic figure was the widow of William FitzHerbert who became the mistress and then, secretly, the wife of the Prince Regent. "Mrs. FitzHerbert" was shabbily cast aside by the Prince when it became expedient for him to marry into the House of Brunswick.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, Sir Henry FitzHerbert and his wife the former Agnes Beresford invested a great deal of their joint wealth in developing the Tissington estate. Their successor, Sir William, bought up neighbouring estates at Thorpe and Fenny Bentley, creating an estate exceeding 5,000 acres.

Continued on page 6

MELANDRA, A NEW PERSPECTIVE

10 October 2003 - Michael Brown

In recent years television programmes showing 'live' archaeological digs have proved very popular. However, the recent 'Big Dig' programmes organised by the Time Team, in which the general public, with no archaeological training, were encouraged to dig holes all over Britain to see what they could find, has created controversy amongst the professionals. Many commentators say that if a dig is to be of value it should be done by properly trained field workers and research specialists. They forget that many of the famous excavations of the past were carried out by gifted amateurs. In recent times most of the stunning finds have been made by amateurs, many using metal detectors. There is a huge amount of remaining archaeology that the professionals have not yet been able to explore due to a lack of resources both human and financial

Michael Brown is a self-confessed 'pirate' or enthusiastic amateur who, as a boy of 14 years in the 1960s began to explore the grassy mounds of the Roman fort site at Melandra or Ardotalia. Glossop used one edge of the site as its town rubbish dump, there was commercial quarrying for gravel and the Gamesley overspill housing estate was built on another part of the site. Undeterred, Michael took his trowel and started digging holes in the site. His fascinating story told how the finds he made and the knowledge that he acquired brought acceptance by the archaeologists from Manchester University. This led to him being made a supervisor during the res-

cue dig of 1965-6. Michael's hard-won experience and knowledge allows him to present the story of the site and to provide educated guesses about what life would have been like for the Roman soldiers stationed in this fort on the Northern frontier of the Empire.

He began by using detailed diagrams to show us the outline of the fort under its covering of turf and to identify the gateways with the probable route of the roads coming from the fort at Manchester and passing on to the next fort at Brough, a days march away, to the East. As a result of his work Michael was able to identify the outlines of the barrack block, home to approx. 480 men and tell us something of their probable way of life. The soldiers of this fort were Auxiliaries who had come from two places, Frisians (Frisiavones) from Germany and, later, Portuguese (Bracaraugustani). This was established through the discovery of engraved tiles used for roofing. Michael was very excited about discovering the bath house, which played an important part in the off-duty life of the soldiers. He gave an interesting description of the central heating system, the water drainage system and the importance of roof tiles or Tegulae with their various designs, inscriptions and fingerprints and animal paw prints made when the clay was still wet. He gave detailed descriptions of typical soldier's uniforms and equipment and the duties expected of them especially when on the march and when setting up camp for the night. He presented evidence for

the possible existence of horses, which may have indicated the presence of a cavalry detachment. Michael's work on the site over many years together with his research into the history of the Roman occupation in the North West backed up by a wealth of detailed drawings provided us with a comprehensive survey of the discoveries to date hidden

under the grassy hummocks of the fort at Melandra. Anyone who has not been there should make a note in their diary that this would make a good half-day visit given a sunny day.

John Humphreys.

This snippet from a newspaper of yesteryear was contributed by Marjorie Jones, it appeared in *The Reporter* 16th. October 1915.

LIVELY TIME IN TORR TOP.—Before Mr.R. Thornley, at the Police. Station on Tuesday-morning, Isaac Angus and James Parker, two scissors grinders, were charged with being drunk and disorderly in Torr Top on Monday night. It was stated they were doing damage in a lodging house, breaking window and lamps, and creating a disturbance, The police were called in, and Constables Jowett and Smith ejected the men from the lodging-house. Some time later the police were fetched again, and found a lively entertainment in the street: The umbrellas belonging to the grinders were all over the placer. One wheel of the grinding machine was over a garden wall and the other in the road; The deputy of the lodging house was under the bed. She had a black eye and several bruises on the face, but these were stated to be due to her own actions.—Each prisoner was fined 15s, and both paid.

Continued from page 4

Like many great landowners, the FitzHerberts lost more than they gained during the twentieth century and the present lord of the manor, Sir Richard FitzHerbert, is having to be energetic, shrewd and enterprising to maintain his inheritance.

We can look forward to a possible group visit to Tissington Hall in the coming year.

Ron Weston

COTTON SPINNING MILLS AFTER 1890

14th November 2003 - Roger Holden

In an informative talk supported by a comprehensive collection of slides, Roger Holden set out to convince his audience that the later period of cotton mill construction, a neglected topic, was just as interesting and worthy of study as earlier phases. His opening photos of the enormous mills built by Stott and Sons at Oldham, Todmorden and Goyt Mill in Marple went a long way to illustrate his point. Cotton spinning at the turn of the nineteenth century was in its heyday in this country and epitomised Britain's manufacturing supremacy. These multi-storied, iron-framed buildings housed huge numbers of spindles. In 1911, Oldham alone had 27% of all the spindles in Lancashire, thanks to the concentration of this new generation of steam-powered "super mills" in that town, while Lancashire had one-eighth of all the commercial spindles in the world!

To some extent steam-power had liberated mill location: there was no longer the need to have mills on water-power sites that were frequently constricted and in inaccessible places (like Rowarth, for example). Nevertheless, the demand for water for steam generation was considerable and this goes a long way to explain the popularity of canalside sites for these new mills, even though canals

had largely been eclipsed by railways and roads as the main transport arteries.

Roger went on to show us weaving sheds. Weaving, he explained, had a different distribution from spinning and was concentrated in the towns north of Rossendale. Weaving sheds, as the name implies, were more modest buildings than the spinning mills, usually single storied and presenting only an immense blank wall to the passer-by. One feature that spinning mills and weaving sheds had in common, however, was the enormous chimney, a testimony to the paramount importance of steam in both branches of the textile industry.

Now the Lancashire cotton industry is virtually extinct: its splendid mills have been demolished, or taken over by other, perhaps less noble, commercial enterprises. Oldham once boasted over 300 mill chimneys; now only three still stand.

Roger ended by showing us some of the cotton mills that had been established elsewhere. Each type of textile manufacture, wool, jute, linen, had its own distinctive buildings.

At the end of the evening we were convinced that here was an important topic that fully deserved an airing.

Ron Weston

ABDUCTION! 12th December 2003 - Kate Atkinson

In 1826, fifteen year old Ellen Turner of Pott Shrigley, the richest heiress in Cheshire, was kidnapped from her boarding school. Her abductor, whom she had never met before, took her to Gretna Green, where they were married. The story of this forgotten victim shocked and fascinated the country, and members of the Society heard it from the author who spent 16 years researching and talking about it. Kate Atkinson, former education officer at Lyme Hall, first came across the story when she was researching the history of the Legh family. She combed archive offices and libraries all over the North West and gleaned much other information from various people.

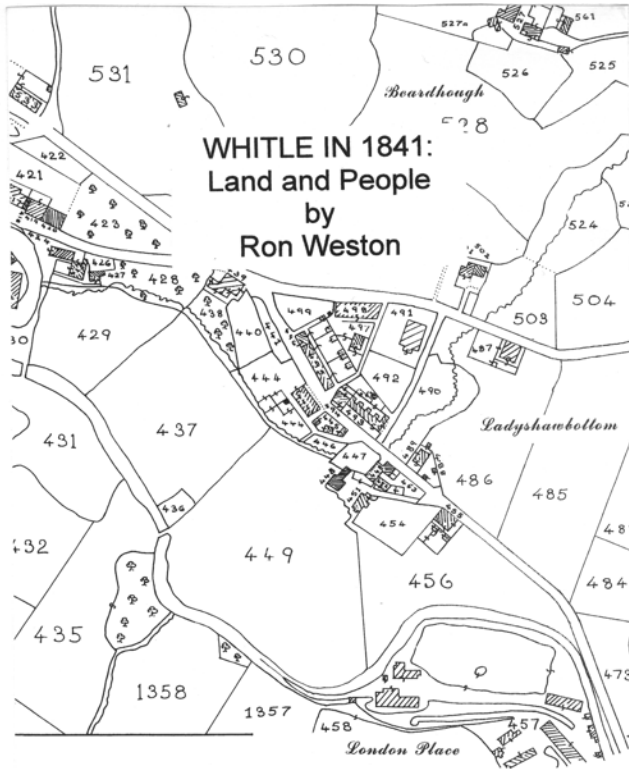
Ellen was the only child of a rich industrialist (a calico printer) called William Turner, who, when Ellen was nine, moved from north Lancashire to Pott Shrigley Hall where he soon became a member of 'the Cheshire set', eventually becoming High Sheriff of the county. Ellen was sent to a boarding school at Toxteth and it was from there that the abduction took place in 1826 when she was fifteen. One day, a coach and horses arrived with a message that her father was in financial trouble and that her mother needed her home. However, the coach went to Manchester where a Captain Wilson introduced himself. He was in fact Edward Gibbon Wakefield, a man who had a track record of abducting and marrying an heiress when they were both fifteen (she had since died).

Aided and abetted by his brother, William, he took Ellen to Gretna Green where he persuaded her to marry him under the pretext that he had a rich uncle who could rescue her father financially. From Gretna they travelled to London and then to France.

Of course, it was some time before the school and family realised that something was amiss. In fact, her father only found out by reading the marriage announcement in *The Times*! The rest of the press, national and local, was having a field day. Soon she was returned to her family. From this point, the story gets complicated and members are referred to Kate's book, which is on sale at the Heritage Centre. Suffice to say that both brothers were sent for trial at Lancaster Assizes in 1827 where they were sentenced to three years imprisonment. Edward Gibbon Wakefield proceeded to make a name for himself as an expert on emigration and the transport of prisoners. He eventually moved to New Zealand where he became a respected statesman and still has a massive reputation as one of the founding fathers of that country. There is, or was, a marble bust of him in the London Colonial Office!

William Turner was forced to go to the House of Lords to get the marriage annulled. In 1828, Ellen married Thomas Legh of Lyme, and in 1830 she died in childbirth. She was just twenty.

Derek Brumhead



New Mills Local History Society

"WHITTLE IN 1841: Land and People" by Ron Weston is our most recent publication (Sept. 2003). It combines information from two sources vital to the local and family historian, the 1841 census returns and the Tithe Map and Award published in the same year. The hamlet of Whittle was one of four hamlets constituting the present town of New Mills in High Peak, north-west Derbyshire. Most of urban New Mills as it existed at that date is covered here.

This A4 size booklet contains 48 pages and 12 maps, including complete coverage of the Tithe map for Whittle, the complete Tithe Award and Census entries, together with an Introduction containing a brief history of the hamlet and an analysis of the census and tithe information.

Price: £3-50 (plus postage 56p.)

Orders and further enquiries from Ron Weston, Hon. Editor, The Thorns, Laneside Road, New Mills, High Peak, Derbyshire, SK22 4LU.

Tel. 01663 7448338.

BEARDS, BERDES, BIRDS, BRIDS and BURDS - from BEARD

Some seven or eight years ago, on my way to the DRO in Matlock, I stood in amazement, reading the names on Glossop's War Memorial. So many Beards. Years before, I had read of Beard Hall. The writer - it was an old book - was sure there were Beards still living in his day, "not as lords of a manor, but as vendors of treacle and soap". The phrase stuck with me, and now I realise I had been reading Tilley. Recently I bought your "Wills and Inventories" from the DFHS. Treasure. Again, so many Berds and Beards. They are safe in my card index.

The earliest I have is Henry de Berde, sworn as a juryman in Derby in 1281. Then Johannes de Berd, paying his Poll Tax in Derby in 1377 and again in 1379 when he paid 6d and is described as "pandoxat" - a brewer. He was also an MP for Derby. Ricardus de Berd and his wife paid 3s 0d in Bowden in 1381. He is described as "cult" - a cultivator, which most people were, outside the towns. Richard de Berde and Emma, his daughter, and Peter Legh, whom she married, appear in the Derbyshire Feet of Fines in 1409; as do James de Legh and Emma his wife, nee Beard, in 1433, and Nicholas Berde in 1524. Earlier "feet" are published in the DAJ which I will look up when I can work out what these legal arrangements really mean.

There are Birds and Byrdes in those "feet" too, and Birds and Brids listed among the 15c. Derbyshire Gentry. By the 16c. there are three apparently distinct families bearing arms: Beard of

Beard Hall, (with three mens faces, bearded) "confirmed to William Beard of Beard in 1569, thought to be of the same ultimate stock as the Birds"; Bird of Bakewell, Derby, Nether Locko, Stanton in Peak (with a flying falcon) "borne by William Beard - -- 4th. in descent from John Bird of Derby, esq., MP." That's the brewer in 1379; and Bird of Over Locko, "used by Thomas Bird - - - c. 1600, 4th. in descent from John Bird of Derby." In an article in "Derbyshire Life" Maxwell Craven points out "the mutations later undergone by the surname" and says that John the MP "spelt his name Berd or Beard", and "left two sons, John of Derby - - - and Richard of Beard Hall". There is a Pedigree of Beard of Beard drawn at the Visitation of 1569, starting with this Richard.

By the time of the hearth tax returns the names have spread widely over the county. There are twenty-seven Beard households and fourteen Bird, Brid or Burd. All in the Glossop and Hayfield area are spelt Beard, except one Bird at Ludworth. Most have one hearth; John Beard of Crich has most, with four. Beard Hall appears under the name Ashenhurst, and has seven. I have not yet tackled the Parish Registers, being busy with my own line in Kirk Ireton and Elton, but I know the IGI has many 17c. entries in Hayfield and Chapel en le Frith. The evolving, mutating name intrigues me. Do those bearded faces, and that flying falcon tell us how the men who chose them spoke their name? Did they

deliberately choose to distinguish their family from another? How soon did those who moved away from the place, Beard, forget its name? Ekwall gives the place name as Berde in 1253 and Berd in 1316, from the Old English 'brerd',-brim, bank. People who worked up and down that bank would feel its brim in their bones and surely retain its sense for generations.

Transferring the spoken name to writing can be confusing. Even today mistakes occur. In 1706, Kirk Ireton PR records the marriage of Tho. Beard to Sarah Webster, followed by four baptisms. The father is spelt Birds, Bird, Beard and Beard; it seems the minister has got it. My very distant cousin David Beard (we are in touch courtesy of DFHS members'interests) has just got a copy of the marriage license of Tho. and Sarah, proving that Tho. was Thomas Beard of Elton. He was the son of Tho. Beard who had two hearths in Elton in 1670. There was also Tho. Burds with three.

Elton local history group tell me that there is a similar mistake in Elton PR. Elton Burds turned into Birds and two flew off to Winster and Bakewell.

The Thomas Beard who married in 1706 was about 25, so he was born about 1681. Elton PRs start in 1682, and his baptism is not recorded there. He died in the West Indies in 1745, and that's another story. His father had two hearths in Elton in 1670. How long had he lived in Elton? Was his family lured from Beard by the prospect of better land or with dreams of striking it rich in the lead mines, as many younger sons must have been? The challenge is to link him to Beard, the place. The answer might well be in those wills and inventories of yours. Maybe there are Beards in Beard, treacle vendors or not, who know all about it. David Beard and I, who descend from two sons of that 1706 marriage, would love to hear from you, as of course, from anyone who could help.

Tilley:	Old Halls Manors and Families of Derbyshire.
Hopkinson and Crook:	The Rolls of the 1281 Derbyshire Eyre.
Carolyn C. Fenwick:	The Poll Taxes of 1377 1379 and 1381
Yolt. Garratt and Rawcliffe:	Derbyshire Feet of Fines, 1323-1546
Susan M.Wright:	Derbyshire Gentry in the Fifteenth Century
Maxwell Craven:	A Derbyshire Armory (Derbyshire Life and
Countryside Vol. 18 No.3 March 1983)	
David G. Edwards:	Derbyshire Hearth Tax Assessments 1662-70
Eilert Ekwall:	English Place-names

Janet Beard, Armistead Farm, Litton, Skipton, North Yorkshire, BD 23 5QJ

STRINES PRINT WORKS

Strines Print Works was founded in or about 1792 by William Wright of Strines Hall. The Strines Hall estate was owned by the Egerton family of Tatton. Spinning and weaving had recently been mechanised, and there was a growing demand for printed fabrics. Many small print works were started in this area which is close to the new textile mills and had a plentiful supply of water from the River Goyt and its tributaries. The first works was centred on Strines Hall. Here 3 large three-story stone buildings were used for hand block printing. The only ones to survive are now part of Whitecroft farm.

Early in the nineteenth century, the Strines Printing Company built another works on the land between the river and the reservoir with the pigeon cote. This works had roller printing machines powered by steam. By 1840 Strines had 6 printing machines and 143 block printing tables. Many of the small works founded about the same time went out of business, but Strines continued to prosper, and as the business grew, more buildings were erected on this small patch of land. By 1851 the number of machines had increased to 13 and tables reduced to 130. One of the partners, Joseph Sidebotham was a pioneer photographer, so there are photographs extant which show the works in the 1850's and 1870's. At this time there were 350 employees.

In 1899 the Calico Printers' Association was formed by an amalgamation of 46 printing firms. The CPA bought the

land from the Tatton estate, and Strines became one of the largest firms within the Association and its products were exported all over the world. The partners C.H.Nevill, C.Heape and G.H.Norris remained in charge. They provided a Church, a Sunday school and facilities for bowls and tennis. The Church was transferred to the Diocese of Chester and the ownership of the Sunday school and of the sports grounds were each transferred to Trustees and are no longer owned by the CPA.

By the end of the nineteenth century more capacity was needed and, as a preliminary, a new boiler house and a new chimney were erected across the river. The building of the "new" works was hindered by the First World War, but eventually began in 1925. By that time total U.K. printing capacity exceeded demand and many small firms were struggling. This is the red brick works we see today. Strines had 20 printing machines and continued to export world wide, but its trade was severely reduced as the British Empire declined and as third world countries themselves began printing.

After several mergers, Strines became part of the Coates-Vyella Group. Having already closed many of their works, they decided to close Strines in 1982.

The works was saved by a management buy-out and re-opened as Strines Textiles Ltd., Commission Printers, in 1982. This meant that not all the buildings were required, and the spare buildings

were taken over by the several firms who occupy them today.

The management consortium sold the premises and the business to the Leeds Group plc. in 1993. New flat-bed, screen-printing machines were installed. When Leeds found Strines insufficiently

profitable, they sold the business to Walker Greenbank plc. and the premises to Harrow Estates plc. Printing finished in September 2001, and thus was ended 200 years of Calico Printing in Strines. At closure, 140 people were employed.

ARTEFACTS WORTHY OF PRESERVATION.

1 The Pigeon Cote appears on photographs as early as 1853. It should be maintained together with the reservoir in which it stands.

2 The Clock was made by the works mechanic, Thomas Bruce, born 1819, for the original Strines Hall works. It was given a place of honour over the main entrance when the "new" works was built in . This should be renovated and preserved.

Dr. Rosemary Taylor, Strines, 11th December 2003.

There is a proposal to build 117 houses on the site of the works. A public inquiry will be held at Stockport Town Hall starting on 17 February 2004.



CHARITY HOMES IN NEW MILLS

Following the success of the New Mills Festival, there was a revival of interest in the Mackie family of Watford House. At the exhibition in St. James' Church, Spring Bank, it was explained how the church came to be built, at the expense of the Mackie family. They had already provided six Almshouses in memory of Mrs. Mackie's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Ingham.

At the exhibition, John Humphreys, secretary of the Society, said he had been approached by a postman, who wanted to know about a plaque on the wall of a house on Diglands estate; did anyone know anything about it?

In 1871, Mr. John Mackie bought a farm and lands known as Digglands. After his death, his wife, Mrs. Mary Elizabeth Mackie had two houses built next to the farmhouse, known as 4 and 6 Digglands Villas. These two houses were for ladies of good character who had fallen on hard times; in effect, they were long stay holiday homes. The farm land was let for grazing. The Charity was known as The John Mackie Memorial Ladies' Homes. In addition, Mrs. Mackie provided money (but not more than £1.00 per week) for ladies in need, both in the Homes - lady occupants, and others - lady recipi-

ents. There were criteria, some of which I have listed:

1. Ladies had to be over 50, or incapacitated by physical infirmity, or otherwise prevented from earning a living.
2. Ladies had to produce Birth certificate, Marriage certificate, and Death certificate of husband where applicable.
3. Testimony in writing of three householders as to her character, respectability and pecuniary circumstances.
4. Production of a signed document from the Lady's next of kin that he or she would deal with the costs of the occupant's demise within four days of death, - or remove the said lady whilst living if the Trustees so desired.
5. Must profess the Christian faith and belong to the Church of England.
6. Any lady contracting marriage would cease to benefit.
7. Money payments would be suspended on evidence of misconduct.
8. Ladies must reside in the Homes for at least ten months in every year. During her life, Mrs. Mackie had the sole right of nominating lady occupants and recipients. The money to endow the Charity came from the interest on Railway Shares, letting the seven acres of farm land, and the

Ground rents of several properties in the Hayfield road area.

The Diglands Villas were sold in the 1950's together with the land (on which Diglands estate now stands). The houses had become dilapidated, and needed modernising. They are still there, and look good for another 100 years; the plaque is high up on the wall facing you, opposite the first elderly person's bungalow on Poplar Avenue. It is round, made of stone; large letters 'JM' in the middle, with 'In Memoriam' round the outer edge. Mrs. Mackie also set up a Charity known as 'The District Nurse En-

dowment Fund. This paid for the services of a District Nurse in New Mills. Mrs. Mackie was far-sighted in that she thought the service might come to an end, which it did with the advent of the N.H.S. in 1948. The Trustees seem to have let the Charity lapse following this, but twenty years later, a new body of Trustees was formed, and with the money that had accrued since 1948, bathrooms were added to the six Almshouses. Also a plot of land was purchased behind Market Street for the purpose of building a Community Centre - Sett Valley House.

This article has been written by Margaret Wood who is a Trustee of Mrs Mackie's fund.



Crowning Glories

After a conversation with my hairdresser some time ago I began to think about all the things women have done to their hair in the name of fashion; and in particular in my own lifetime.

Photographs of my grandmother and her generation show the up-swept styles so evocative of the Edwardian era. Those of my own mother and her contemporaries the "Bob" and the "Marcel Wave". The tools required to make these waves rather like bulldog clips with cruel looking metal teeth.

In my own Childhood, as those terrible school photographs show, hair was left more, or less in its natural state. If your hair was straight then invariably it was a side parting and a slide for you my girl! Some mothers could be persuaded to allow their offspring's hair to grow so that they might have plaits during the week and ringlets at the weekend. Plaits could be worn loose, or looped and fastened above the ears with a ribbon. On occasions even wrapped about the head (this was considered very grown up). For weekends and special occasions the hair was washed on Friday night when the tin bath came out of its hiding place. It was then bound in strips of cloth which we called rags and these were most uncomfortable to sleep on. It

was like lying on a dozen or more pencils of varied length and thickness. The rag ends would work loose and tickle your nose, or even threaten to strangle you for being so vain. The end result of course was sheer bliss. Lovely bouncing, spiralling curls. There would of course be disasters when one or more of the rags had worked completely loose and you were left with one straight piece which totally spoiled the desired effect.

Then there were the curling tongs which could produce a similar effect but had to be used with extreme care. Remember Jo in Little Women? The tongs were like a long pair of scissors with rounded blades which were inserted into the coals of an open fire until they reached the correct temperature. They were tested on a piece of paper, otherwise there would be that awful smell of burning hair and cries of "Oh mother, how could you?", a charred ringlet would fall to the floor leaving behind one very traumatised little girl. There really is no other smell quite like burning hair, especially if it's your own.

For school everything had to be plain and simple, the plainer the better because we had regular visits from the "nit nurse". Ours was called Fitzmaurice and she would inspect hair, and fingernails as you stood trem-

bling inside for fear you should be chosen to take home the dreaded brown envelope. Instructions within told mother to de-louse her child forthwith before returning her to school. What a wonderful treat was in store for those who took home one of these missives!

First your hair was washed in the most dreadful smelling gunge which had to remain on the hair for at least half an hour. Your scalp would then be etched as mother used her small toothed comb of strongest steel. Straight hair was bad enough; curly was an absolute nightmare to de-louse. Some mothers took a more enterprising approach and shaved off the offending locks, right down to the scalp. Imagine turning up at school next day with a head of designer stubble! It may be the height of fashion in the 21st century but then it most certainly was not. As the weeks went by the hair began to grow and out would come the pudding basin to reshape this stubble. There we were looking like characters from the Three Stooges, Curly, Larry and Mo. It took ages to get rid of the smell and still the nits thrived. Next came the stage when girls began to take even more interest in their hair and to notice boys. This produced some interesting styles created by way of mother's curling pins and wave clips along with hefty portions of sugar and water for a strong-

er set. This eventually replaced by a green setting lotion.

For myself and several friends the "in" thing seemed to be the fringe. After years of growing our locks to great length, all the better to attract nits, we now wanted to have the top cut short. This did not go down too well with mothers who had spent many long hours plaiting and ragging of course. Eventually we got our way and all sported the obligatory fringe. More shade of Larry, Curly and Mo in reality!

Something called a "pin curl" was next on the scene, a method of curling hair by means of clips, or grips. The hair was wound around like a flat Catherine wheel and held in place by two clips. Once more sleeping in them could be hazardous as stray clips stabbed ears and scalp. It was amazing how many styles could be produced by this method and just as you became an expert with hair and pins, the roller made its appearance. Not the roller of the 1980's, the comeback version, oh no! this was a hard metal spring which was covered with something akin to a flue brush and was all spiky like a horse-hair sofa (remember those?) This roller was hell to sleep in and often hell to remove leaving behind almost as much hair on the flue brush as on your head. Having these rollers inserted by a professional was called a shampoo and set which entailed

having a scarf wound around the rolled hair and being placed beneath a dryer. This was also another form of torture because they never got the temperature just right. Dryers could go from freezing to frying in nought point two seconds. One's face soon became the colour of beet-root and there were cries of "turn me down" or "have you forgotten me under here?" Once removed from this torture chamber the ordeal was far from over as the treatment continued with much hard brushing and being sprayed with lacquer. Nothing like the hair sprays of the 1990's, no something more akin to shellac which set as hard as iron and could withstand a whirlwind should you encounter one in New Mills.

You left the salon with the newly styled hair and a deep line on your forehead where the scarf had bitten deep. The lacquer once combed or brushed began to flake like a bad case of dandruff. Even the next six shampoos could fail to remove the residue.

Then there was of course perming and bleaching, dying and tinting. Home perm kits and bleaches often resulted in a panic attack and an emergency visit to the local hairdresser with suitable pleading look in ones eyes to ask the question, "can you do anything with it, anything at all, cut it all off perhaps?"

The opposite was often true. A visit to a salon just hours away from a special occasion ended back home with one's head in the sink and cries of "Oh no, I never wanted it this colour, it's yellow I wanted platinum blonde"

The sixties came and went with beehive hair styles piled high like Marie Antoinette, styles which with a bit of care could be made to last a whole week without being combed at all. Just re-sprayed with shellac. There was the cottage loaf shape and flick-ups, Greek goddess curls and cuts like Purdy or Vidal Sassoon. Hundreds of ways to mutilate your scalp then at last came the Blow-Dry. A freedom of sorts, no scalp mutilation, no sleepless nights with hard pins or rollers. The young of today took it on board as the young always do. Some older ladies did not trust it because without pain there is no gain. If it was so simple, and pain free, what use could it possibly be?

We had the punk era with hair dyed purple and puce, dreadlocks and skin-heads who so closely resembled those poor shaven infants after the nit-nurse paid her visit.

In the year 2000 rags seemed to make a bit of a come-back but it did not last long. Nits have not been eradicated but the children of today do not have to smell like a drain which has been liberally treated with Jeyes Fluid for a week. Shampoos come

in all kinds of bottles and tubes, a bewildering display for there are shampoos for normal hair, dry hair, greasy hair, permed or tinted hair, damaged hair, and even coloured ones to add a hint of a tint. Then there are conditioners to repair the damage we still manage to cause our golden tresses, now that mine have turned to silver!!!!!! I remember lovely shiny locks being produced simply by mixing a powder with water. This came in a paper sachet and the two names I most remember are Evan Williams and Silvikrin. In fact I can still remember the scent of

these. My mother and her family had their hair washed in household soap! As with all things even my generation had it easy when you compare the treatments meted out to the ladies of other eras. The styles created in France where the hair was formed over a cage and could be at least three feet high. It was never washed let alone combed and could in some instances be a suitable nest for mice. Never let it be said that women do not suffer in the quest for beautiful tresses.

A Wrinkly