

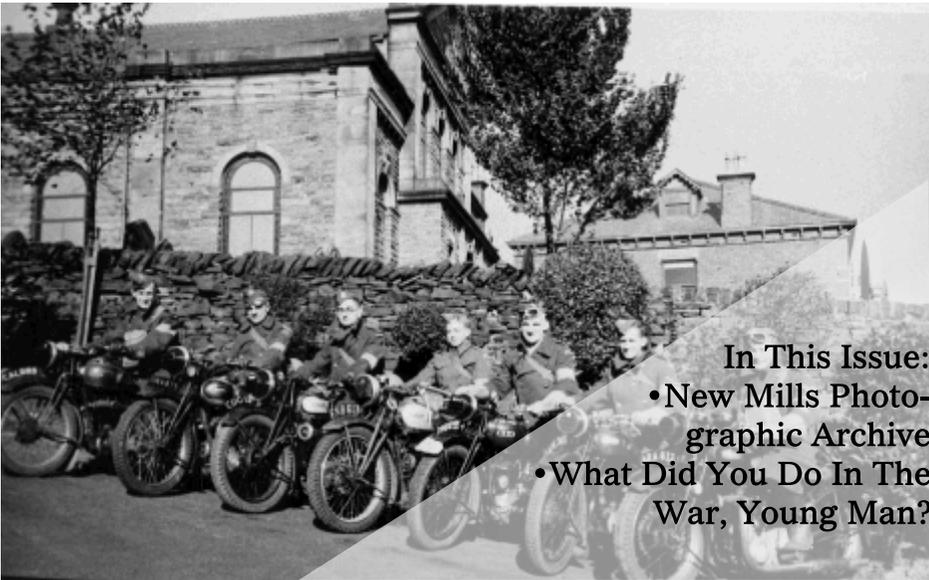


**NEW MILLS  
LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY  
NEWSLETTER**

**ISSUE 43, AUTUMN 2009**

# Picture New Mills

150 YEARS OF IMAGES



In This Issue:

- New Mills Photographic Archive
- What Did You Do In The War, Young Man?

## Meetings - Spring 2009

Meetings are usually 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 September 11	Glen Atkinson	Building the Big Ditch: a magic lantern slide show on the construction of the Manchester Ship Canal
Monday September 21	Dr Derek Brumhead	New Mills Festival Lecture - The Mills of New Mills
Friday October 9	Dr Fred Broadhurst	New Mills: its history over the last 300 million years
Friday November 13	Dr John Crummett	Abel Buckley Wimpenny – a nineteenth century Hayfield mill owner, manager, political activist and social reformer
Friday December 4	Emma Marigliano	Portico Library People

*Please note*

- i) The meeting on Sept. 11 is in the Library Lecture Room, adjacent to the Town Hall.*
- ii) The New Mills Festival Lecture is on a Monday (Sept.21) in the Town Hall main hall , starting at 7.30pm.*
- iii) The meeting in December is on the first Friday of the month.*

## Committee 2009-2010

Chairperson	Gaynor Andrew	
Vice-chairperson	Barbara Done	
Hon. Secretary	John Humphreys)	
Hon. Treasurer	Joan Powell	
Hon. Archivist	Roger Bryant	
Hon. Editor	Ron Weston	
Ordinary members	Catherine Bolton	Olive Bowyer
	Derek Brumhead	Barry Dent
	Barbara Matthews	Pat Evans

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

## Lost Buxton

Tony Swain

January 9, 2009

Buxton born and bred, Tony Swain spent his working life in the town as an estate agent. The 1922 edition of the O.S. 6 inch maps of the area, his constant companion at the office, became a rewarding object of study when, after retirement, Tony turned his attention to the changing face of Buxton over the pre-war and post war decades. With the aid of these maps and a remarkable set of early photos, together with scenes of the town today, Tony regaled us with a "then and now" presentation, enlivened with a commentary stemming from his unique personal knowledge and experience of living and working in the town.

Our tour began with the parks at the top end of the town near the viaduct. One, laid out in 1921 alongside the River Wye, is still there today; but the other, known as Sylvan Park and opened much earlier, in 1894, is now the car and coach park at the head of Spring Gardens.

With the aid of old photos, Tony conducted us down Spring Gardens, showing that the covered colonnade, now only intact around the Grove Hotel and adjacent shops, once ran continuously along the one side of Spring Gardens, giving visitor and local resident alike a welcome respite from Buxton's often-inclement weather. Indeed, it was once possible to walk from the top of Spring Gardens across to the Octagon in Pavilion Gardens entirely under cover, apart from having to cross the two main roads. Many of the old shops and other premises in Spring Gardens have been demolished over the years. Sadly, some of the building that have replaced them in recent years are much inferior to the originals.

We were offered grand views of the Broad Walk, Station Approach, the Pump Room, the Crescent and the many other fine hotels in their heyday, before the First World War, when Buxton was a fashionable spa, heavily invested in by the Duke of Devonshire. Our final destination was the market place, a more prosaic but historically interesting, area of the old town.

Buxton has always relied heavily on its visitors. The Romans visited the spring of Arnemetæ, which was later dedicated to St Ann. Mary Queen of Scots stayed here, though, being a captive, she had little choice in the matter. Poole's Cavern was one of the much-visited "Wonders of the Peak". The development of the baths and the spa facilities in the eighteenth century only continued a long tradition of hospitality. Tony Swain's excellent presentation completed the story into our own period.

*Ron Weston*

# Underground Tunnels of Stockport

Kevin Dranfield

February 3, 2009

Stockport's historic core is situated on a plateau overlooking an impressive gorge lying just downstream of the confluence of the rivers Tame and Goyt. At this confluence the river Mersey begins. Nowadays, one could be forgiven for not realising that the Mersey gorge has been carved out of thick beds of soft red sandstone. The Mersey Square shopping centre is suspended on concrete stilts across the gorge, concealing it completely. One has to peer down at the entrance to the gorge in Great Portwood Street, or lean over the parapet of the Wellington Road bridge to see the Mersey exiting the gorge between high banks of sandstone.

Through the ages, Stockport's inhabitants have been enthusiastically enlarging their properties by burrowing into the sandstone exposures to create deep and commodious caves, which could be used for storage or extra living space. Kevin Dranfield, from Stockport Heritage Trust, began his excellent talk by showing us photos of some of these early caves, including those exposed at Brinksway, excavated by railway navvies as temporary homes when they were building the great viaduct across the Mersey gorge.

Kevin concentrated his talk on the main phase of tunnelling, which was in the early years of the Industrial Revolution, when Stockport was transformed into a silk and cotton manufacturing town. It was the availability of waterpower that had stimulated this development in the first place, with early mills, including Castle Mill on the site of the former Stockport Castle, occupying the outside of bends on the Goyt. Soon the demand for water was so great that entrepreneurs began to build water tunnels to divert the waters of the Goyt from points higher and higher upstream. This led to bitter rivalries, legal disputes and even fisticuffs.

The scramble for water only died down later in the nineteenth century once steam had replaced water as the principal means of traction. But the people of Stockport never forgot their troglodyte traditions. When in the 1930s war with Germany was imminent, sophisticated plans were drawn up by the Town Council to protect the public against bombing by the construction of underground air-raid shelters on a massive scale by excavating tunnels in the sandstone. By 1943, an underground shelter in Chestergate had been built which could accommodate 7,500 people, one of the largest in the country. This was only one of the tunnel shelters to be built in Stockport. The shelters contained such basic facilities as dormitories, toilets, water and food supplies and even a hospital.

The former air-raid shelters are now part of Stockport's heritage and are a popular visitor attraction. Kevin's attractive presentation included a model of Castle Mill to show how the water wheel was harnessed and another showing the tunnel shelter.

The full story of Stockport's water tunnels can be found in 'Rivers Under Your Feet', by Coral Dranfield, an attractive, well-illustrated booklet containing excellent maps of the tunnel systems.

*Ron Weston*

---

## Mary Queen of Scots - the Captive Queen

David Templeman

March 13, 2009

It may be unkind to say so, but it is true that, until the coming of the industrial age, Derbyshire had not figured prominently in the great events that inform our nation's story. The one great exception one might make to this sweeping statement is the fact that Mary Queen of Scots spent her captive life here. Now, David Templeman has robbed us of even this dubious distinction: his researches show that she spent most of her time in Yorkshire, incarcerated in Sheffield Castle.

In an outstanding talk, David began by pointing out the vast amount of literature, both academic and popular, that has been, and continues to be, published on Mary Queen of Scots. Yet few pay any attention to the great houses and fortresses that contained her and her retinue. Indeed, her exact whereabouts at any given time is, in many publications, either vague or in error. David's great achievement is to establish exactly the domicile of the queen at practically any given time.



David adopted a chronological approach, illustrating Mary's journey after her exile from Scotland in 1568 to her

final arrival in Derbyshire under her appointed jailer, the Earl of Shrewsbury, who was charged to keep her "in the manner of a queen" for the next fifteen years, largely at his own expense. Mary's sojourns at Tutbury, Chatsworth, South Wingfield and Buxton (reputedly her favourite place) were all of short duration. In all, fourteen out of the fifteen years of Mary's imprisonment were spent at Sheffield Castle and, from 1573, at the nearby Sheffield Manor Lodge.

The final dramatic events in Mary's life were enacted neither at Sheffield nor in Derbyshire, but at Chartley Manor in Staffordshire, where the Babington plot fatally ensnared her in a treasonable act against Elizabeth, and finally at Fotheringhay Castle where she was executed in 1586.

Apart from setting the record straight regarding the importance of Sheffield Castle, David's lively and graphic picture of Mary's life in captivity was greatly enjoyed..

*Ron Weston*



## **Curiosities of the Peak District**

**Jack Hanmer**

**April 3, 2009**

Jack Hanmer is well known as a tutor for adult education classes and speaker to womens institutues. He has been, and still is, a writer of guide books, and a journalist for local newspapers, specialising in well written articles about places and people and a reviewer of books. He has spent much time driving around many parts of the Peak District, usually taking routes away from the main roads. This has enabled him to find some unusual places, hence the title of his talk. However, it was not illustrated and the small number of places described were rather unexceptional and did not really do justice to his knowledge of the subject. Most of the talk was taken up with an account of Jack's teaching and writing career, which showed his many varied interests and a love of travelling and discovering places.

*Derek Brumhead*

## George Craske 1795 -1888

Joan Powell

May 8, 2009

Many have heard of Stradivarius, Guinerius and Amati of Cremona, but Craske of Stockport ! ! !

My daughter in law, a professional violinist, bought a Craske Violin in Edinburgh and was told it was made in 1857 in Stockport and that the maker had been born in East Anglia. The idea of a famous violin maker in Stockport was the spur to go to Stockport Records Office to find out more. What started out as a simple afternoon trip to Stockport developed into visits to Bury St. Edmunds, Bath, Birmingham, Manchester and Salford, e-mails to Sheffield, Leeds, London and America and phone calls to the Halle and R.N.C.M. Manchester.

The result was a fascinating insight into the music world of the nineteenth century, but unfortunately very little about the person. He had a brother and two sisters in Bury St. Edmunds, but his will revealed that he had not kept in touch with them. He had married in Bath in 1826 but in the 1841 census in Birmingham, he was recorded as a widower. No record has been found of the death of his wife or the births or deaths of any children. However, his prodigious out- put of string instruments was mind boggling: 2050 violins, 300 violas, 250 cellos and 20 basses. In 1866 John Pearce (Violins and Violin Makers) wrote "Craske has made many violins, copies of Cremona makers, but has always said they were copies, but some dealers pass them off as original Cremona", showing that his work was a very high standard. He is said to have invested in Railways in the 1850's, and in Manchester City Water Corporation from which he received a good income which allowed him to do what he liked doing best - making violins. At his death his estate was £7,097.98 - a fortune in 1888.

Leslie Shepherd in *The Strad* said "if there was a record for making the greatest number of instruments of the violin family, unaided, in a lifetime it must go to George Craske".

Truly he was a Violin Maker extraordinaire!

*Joan Powell*

## Summer visit to Elizabethan Sheffield

### Site of the incarceration of Mary Queen of Scots

In March we heard an excellent talk by David Templeman about the imprisonment of Mary Queen of Scots By Elizabeth the First at Sheffield Castle and Manor Lodge from 1570 to 1584. It was decided to take up David's invitation to visit the site of the Manor, at Manor Lodge Park, for a tour of what is left of this important Manor house, which was an important feature in the life of Mary for fourteen of her last years, before her execution in 1587 at Fotheringay Castle aged 44years.

We set off, with the weather set fine, on Sunday 14 June for an hours drive over the hills to Sheffield arriving at Manor Park which is set in the middle of a Council housing estate. Sheffield Castle was completely destroyed in the 17th Century after the Civil War, as was most of the Manor House ,the stone and timbers being sold and used for rebuilding Sheffield town centre. Amazingly, parts of the Manor House survived including parts of the Long Gallery and Wolsey's Tower and more importantly, the Turret House. The 15th Duke of Norfolk recognised the importance of the Manor Lodge and spent money restoring the site which has ensured its survival to the present time. A £1.2million pound Heritage Lottery Fund grant is helping to pay for the continued restoration of the Manor site, archaeological digs and the building of a new Discovery Centre which opened a week before our visit.

David gave us a conducted tour of the ruins of the Manor Lodge, with an enthusiastic commentary on the various features to be seen such as the remains of the Long Gallery and Wolsey's Tower, where Wolsey stayed in 1530 as a guest of the 4th. Earl of Shrewsbury, before being dragged off to face King Henry in London, dying on the way at Leicester Abbey. The highlight of the tour was the visit to the Turret House a hunting tower built in 1574. This is a three storey building with a narrow, steep, winding stone staircase which led to upper rooms, one being a small banqueting room where spectators of the hunt would have taken refreshments of sweet desserts and wines. The room above, 'Mary's Room', contains a remarkable Tudor plasterwork ceiling. The ceiling is highly decorative and contains a number of motifs possibly relating to Mary's life. It is thought that possibly both Mary and Bess of Hardwick had a hand in the design. On a visit to Hardwick Hall we know that Bess used the various rooms but they are so large that it is difficult to imagine that one has been close to where Bess might have sat or stood. In the Turret House rooms it is very easy to feel the 'presence' of Mary and to get an idea of how she managed to negotiate the narrow, winding staircase in her long gowns. This ended our ramble around the Manor site and we headed off to explore the new Visitors

Centre where we were greatly tempted by home made chocolate cake and cream sponges which was cruel as we were about to move on to our lunch stop. The facilities at the Centre are excellent and there are plenty of displays and interactive things to play with including a working model demonstrating the beheading of Mary ! The group of people on duty both paid staff and volunteers were very welcoming and justly proud of their new Centre and its plans for the whole site.

We set off by coach for our lunch stop at The New Inn and its Ambers Restaurant. I thought it was named after the blonde behind the bar but it turned out it was named after her horse! The Sunday Lunch was not brilliant but acceptable and very reasonably priced and we had plenty of time for drinks and conversation.

After lunch we moved on by coach to Meersbrook Park to visit Bishops' House, an outstanding example of a timber framed Elizabethan house built about 1500. Nothing is known about the builder or the first occupants but it became the home of a farmer and local producer of scythes before the Civil War, William Blythe. He died in 1631, a wealthy and prosperous yeoman of his time. His name may have some connection with the relatively modern name of 'Bishops' House'. The story goes that two brothers shared the house: John Blythe, Bishop of Salisbury(1494-1499) and Geoffrey Blythe, Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry(1503-1533), although this has not been verified. However, the yeoman William Blythe became the owner and on his death it passed to his son, also William Blythe, who was a Captain in the Parliamentary Army and was one of the officials made responsible for the demolition of Sheffield Castle. Whatever the background to the ownership this is a house well worth visiting with its many original features. A young woman came in for a visit and we discovered that she had lived in the house as a child when her father was employed in the Park. Unfortunately she did not have any ghost stories for us. We returned to New Mills after an interesting day exploring Elizabethan remains very close to the recently rebuilt city centre. Sheffield is only an hour away by car and very accessible by train from New Mills and is well worth a visit to explore its Medieval, as well as its industrial past.

*John Humphreys*

## New Mills Photographic Archive Project

### PICTURE NEW MILLS

When the local history society was formed over twenty five years ago, our archivist Roger Bryant had three donated photographs in the society's possession. Today, the number is well over 5000. A great many of them were donated or loaned as prints and it was often necessary for negatives and prints to be made. In addition, Roger wrote a detailed index card for each, and carefully stored the photographs and negatives under archival conditions in sleeves, envelopes and boxes, at first mostly under his bed ! 1000s of hours and hundred of pounds were involved and the collection began to assume much importance.

However, it was always the case that the images were not easily available to the public for viewing and in any case there was no public list of what photographs we had. Roger was faced with answering questions concerning the existence of any particular photograph and then arranging for prints to be made on order, a most time-consuming task. It became increasingly obvious that such a rich collection of photographs was not so accessible to the public as it should be and five years ago it was decided that an application should be made to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a grant to digitise the collection and place it on public access computers in New Mills Library and New Mills Heritage Centre. In addition there would be a website. It took a year to draw up and complete the grant application. In November 2007, the Heritage Lottery Fund agreed to grant over £46,000 spread over four years for this joint project with the the Local History Society and Heritage Centre.

For four years our archivist has prepared the collection for scanning in a series of batches, which had to be taken away for scanning by the House of Images and returned, with each image accompanied by basic information from the index cards to form a large database. Thus the public can browse the collection in the library or heritage centre, and view the descriptive data and run off prints, for a printer is also provided alongside each computer to do this. Searching for images is made straightforward by using keyword lists. The grant has also been spent on the digitisation of the Society's audio tapes and on the Heritage Centre's collection of objects, which will be used for indexing.

Over these years, two of our members have spent one morning a week together adding data and keywords to each scanned image. Margaret de Motte, greatly experienced in using the same software having worked with it during her work at the local studies unit of Manchester Central Library, was able to highlight and list the large number of glitches which inevitably occurred as the images

and their data were added to the computer. Marjorie Jones, who with her great local historic knowledge of people, places and things in New Mills, added much crucial and important detail to the descriptions of each image. I cannot over emphasise the importance of this work by these two members, without which the collection would not have been satisfactorily launched.

Obviously the project would not have been possible with the grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund and we should like to express our thanks to the grants officers of the Heritage Lottery Fund of the East Midlands, firstly for approving our application to fund the project and for the support and encouragement over the four years, not to say the advice when things looked sticky. Our required contribution to the funding by the HLF was made in volunteers hours valued at £5000 (see budget below). However, over the five years, using the same HLF criteria, the actual total value of the volunteer work put in amounted to £32,100 ! We are grateful to our Treasurer, Joan Powell, who kept a close eye on the project's finances, issuing cheques, etc, and ring fencing the grant from the rest of the Society's budget.

A digital camera has been bought and work on the recording of the collection of objects in the New Mills Heritage Centre has been completed. These images will be indexed using the same data base installed on the website, but which will only be able to be accessed by centre staff. A local professional photographer, Derek Jones, who had already worked for the Heritage Centre, was engaged to do the work. Besides the two computers installed in the library and heritage centre, other hardware purchased includes two ink jet colour printers, and a digital projector and laptop which will allow demonstrations of the software to groups of people or societies.

The launch of the public access computers in the library and heritage centre took place at New Mills Town Hall on 27 March 2009 when over 80 persons attended. We are very grateful to the Town Clerk, Susan Stevens, for making the Town Hall available and for her and Jane putting on the wine and cheese. We are also grateful to Mark as caretaker for so carefully setting out the Hall. John Humphreys, the society's secretary, as always, did much behind-the-scenes work towards making the launch possible, for instance sending out all the invitations. Karl Sinfield made a marvellous job of designing the leaflets and arranging their printing.

The collection will also be available on an internet website allowing world wide access. A small sub-committee worked with Ian Smith designing it. It is possible to print off low resolution images and also there is the provision of an electronic ordering service of high resolution images. The website address is [www.picturenewmills.org.uk](http://www.picturenewmills.org.uk).

The project will enable local people, visitors and community groups via the public access modules and the website to identify, access and print copies for a variety of purposes such as family history research, political, social, economic and local history projects, community projects; and there are always requests from schools, local newspapers, and local organisations. There is also a version of software which can run on CDs and thematic selections from the collection can be made for distribution to schools for project work in local history or geography.

The main effect of digitising the collections will be to widen the number of users who can gain access to the images. Images available on the internet 24 hours a day will overcome geographical limitations and restrictions caused, for instance, by the hours of opening where the public access modules are kept, eg persons in small out-the-way communities without static libraries, or disabled persons, who would be able to view the collection in their own homes. There will be wider dissemination of information and content as a result. Also there will be a flow of new images and information into the collection from the users and a form is provided on the website for this purpose.

Finally, the scanning and the provider of software and hardware has been provided by the House of Images of Whitefield, Manchester who have been supplying such software and digitisation services for photographic collections since 1995. Among others, they have worked for Derbyshire County Council, Manchester Central Library (Local Studies Unit), Tameside Libraries, and Cheshire County Council, Sheffield City Council and many others. Over the years we have very closely worked with Ian Smith who from the beginning has provided us with all the software and hardware and the necessary guidance and backup, and it was he who gave a very effective demonstration as to how accessing the collection on the computers is done.

#### **New Mills Photographic Archive 2005-09**

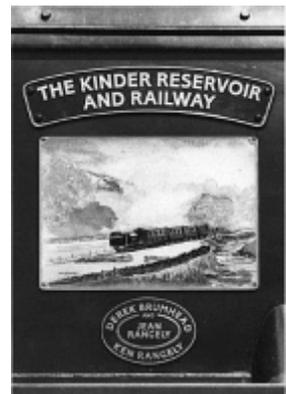
	<b>Cost</b> £	<b>VAT</b> £	<b>Total</b> £
Scanning and data entry	12111.50	2113.20	14224.70
Digitisation audio tapes	1800.00	295.00	2095.00
Contract	1500.00	262.50	1762.50
Software	2250.00	393.75	2643.75
Software	2250.00	337.50	2587.50
Sound archive software	1000.00	150.00	1150.00
PC	575.00	100.63	675.63
PC	850.00	127.50	977.50
Two inkjet printers	500.00	75.00	575.00

	<b>Cost</b> £	<b>VAT</b> £	<b>Total</b> £
Digital Camera	378.73	66.28	445.01
Digital projector and laptop	1000.00	150.00	1150.00
Installation	140.86	24.65	165.51
	395.00	59.25	454.25
Photography HC Collection	485.70	0.00	485.70
Photocopying and postage	80.60	0.00	80.60
	21.76	3.27	25.03
	6.52	0.60	7.12
	18.41	0.00	18.41
Setting up website	3500.00	612.50	4112.50
Hosting website	750.00	131.25	881.25
Design and print leaflets	962.90	144.44	1107.34
Stationery and postage	47.17	0.42	47.59
Launch	199.60	6.98	206.58
	30823.75	5054.72	35878.47
<b>Total Spent</b>	<b>35878.47</b>		
Volunteers time	5000.00		
<b>Total Spend</b>	<b>40878.47</b>		
HLF Contribution 88.02 %	35981.23		
Grant Payment Received	36630.00		
Refunded to HLF	648.77		

*Derek Brumhead*

## AIA Occasional Publications Award.

The “Kinder Reservoir” book by Derek Brumhead, Jean and Ken Rangeley was put forward by the President of the Association of Industrial Archaeology for their Occasional Publications Award, and we are delighted to report that it won. Derek will be collecting the award at their Annual Conference in September. Congratulations Derek, Ken and Jean for a well deserved award.



## **What did you do in the war young man??**

It was 1940 - I was 14 years old ,and had just started to work as a Trainee Weaver in a local cotton mill weaving Towels. I was the Son of a typical working class family, just my Sister Jean and myself, born and brought up in this little country town of New Mills with a population of about 10,000 folk ,most of them worked locally. War was in progress with Germany and Gas Masks had been issued and air raid sirens had been installed on high buildings ,also the Home Guard (a civil army) had been formed ,even though they only had wooden rifles !!

I had a little wooden hut with a coal stove which I shared with my Father and our six pigeons, it was here that I built my first radio receiver and learnt my Morse Code to read the dots and dashes coming from it, a very quiet life but it was soon to change, as I had seen the local Territorial Army Unit go to war and seen off by Father Heald the local Catholic Priest from St Mary's church.

The A. T. C. had been formed and I joined, this was a training Corps for the Royal Air Force, I learn't Morse, up to 20 words per minute, learn't to send and receive on the Aldis lamp to ten w.p.m. and went on summer camps to air-fields and flew with the R. A. F. in the Anson trainer and in the Tiger Moth, at the Polish flying school at Hucknall, and at the Heavy Bomber Base at Finnerley, all so exciting for a young lad of 15 who had been nowhere, never been out of his home town. How life was to change!! with future visits to Lisbon, Gibraltar, Freetown, Aden, Bombay, Columbo, Durban, Buenos Aires, Norfolk(v.a.), New York, Baltimore, Halifax-N.S., Montreal, Azores and Antwerp, all at the Kings pleasure, guess it was a world tour.

I got a vacancy at the Marine Radio School on Moseley St. Manchester and was put on test to the 20 w.p.m. Morse claim and passed, so started the Theory part of the Marine Exam. I attended the school in the evenings after work, and passed out and joined my first ship the 'Empire Cormorant' on Dec.30th 1943, I had never seen a ship before, and was informed this old ship was built in 1918 and could do a speed of 10 knots if pushed ,a dirty coal burner.

I went to find my cabin and found I shared it with the Second Radio Officer, we had a set of drawers, a wardrobe, two bunk beds, a hand wash basin, no water and no drain, this made me ask about the 'Officer' status ?????? We left in convoy from Liverpool and after a good trip arrived in the river Tagus, there was no berth for us ,and we 'tied up' to a German cargo ship, then after a weeks wait we went in and started to unload 7000 Tons of Prisoners Of War parcels, to be sent via Switzerland.

In 10 Days we were free of cargo and crept out of Lisbon and went down the 3 mile international limit to Gibraltar, then a search under our hull for Limpet Mines, these were being put on in Neutral Ports by agents of the Enemy, these Divers were a tough lot of lads, they found no mines on us and we went up the coast and arrived at Burriana for 7000 tons of Oranges. It took 2 weeks to load. On we went and arrived at the 'beauty spot' of West Africa Freetown, with its millions of Mosquitoes, open sewers, and we were there for ages unloading a few hundred tons into small ships, we had a bad cargo to get rid of this time !! We did unload and went up the river to Pepel, an iron ore mine ,what a river trip this was with naked men on the banks, painted bodies, dancing their native dance, and a spear like weapon in their hands, we also got a warning about the natives coming on board and had an armed guard on the ship. We also had some good news from the Mate who said if we go down with this cargo its 3 minutes.

We had a safe trip home to Sunderland, to Dorman Longs plant and after a few days leave reported to the Marconi office at Newcastle for a better ship this time. She was the 'Daghestan', a motor ship at last, the days of coal dust on our washing on the boat deck were over!! She used to be a CAM ship and had a ramp on the bow with a Hurricane fighter fired off by compressed air, it was God help the Pilot if he went off in the Atlantic.

This was now April 5th and the war was in Mid-Germany, who were getting heavily bombed by the allied forces and we heard on the 'grape vine' we were off across the big 'pond 'again .Our ship was built on the Tyne and looked modern by our old ships we had served on, the Radio Room was well fitted out and for the first time had Short Wave, as well as Medium wave transmitters, Echo sounder and Auto Alarm ,but no Radar. The usual big wet battery cupboard on the Bridge and that was one of my jobs to check them out and take a gravity reading every week. We left Newcastle and got into New York on V E Day 1945, only two weeks pay in the ship and we spent a lot of time around Time Square watching the news go round the top, also many visits to the American Services Club they looked after us very well knowing we were 'broke'.

We loaded for the East ,all sorts of 'yankee' cargo, Jeeps, new engines, thousands of Truck tyres, mobile vans for jungle use ,and a vast quantity of Malted milk tablets !!and loads of big typewriters, plus many more strange things to us!! We left in a small convoy to Gibraltar, then on to Suez, saw all the sunken ships in the Canal, and on to Aden for fuel and water, then onwards to Bombay. After a short stay of a week we went on to Colombo in Ceylon and unloaded all the other cargo, then on to Trincomalee and waited for a convoy to

South America, my 'boss', the senior Radio Officer, just missed his Son who sailed out on a Submarine to Japan. We went into the Harbour for a swim but soon came out after a shark attack and a sailor got his leg torn.

Off we went to Buenos Aires and we could not get ashore, a riot was on, gunfire was heard in the avenues so we held on until President Peron sorted it all out. We got alongside and loaded Animal Skins and food for Hens and such like, and a massive amount of Grain too, then after a nice stay and even a game of Golf with some nice Scotch folk we put to sea to make for Baltimore for some additional cargo, but found the ship infested with hundreds of rats running all over the place and the orders were then to go to Durban in South Africa for fumigation. We went from Lighters and then to Gib. For a convoy home to Newcastle-On-Tyne then on to my first leave 8 days, it was here we heard a story about an Invasion ??

My next ship was the 'Empire Tana' another old coal burner and a trip of only 15 days, on joining we saw welders cutting 'holes' at water level this was to be a 'block' ship to be sunk on the beachhead !!!! in Normandy. We left Newcastle-on-Tyne and went to London, then on to the Isle of Wight and anchored, then had to strip the Radio Room of all the gear and load it into Marconi's tender, then left the ship for London.

In London on 11th of May 1944 I was sent to join the ship 'Empire Fallstaff', another coal burner, but a bit more modern, she was loading Jeeps, Ammo, Motor Cycles, Tanks and some very large Scammel tank recovery trucks and later a full Signals Regt. amongst who was a local lad from our next village, Disley.

We arrived at Arrowmanche on D-day+3 and what a 'hell hole', noise from the battle ships 'Warspite' and 'Belfast' plus the action from German fighter planes, all round a mass of ships and action, the Pioneer Corps doing the unloading. We did 3 more trips ,and on our last trip saw the massive 1,000 Bomber raid on Caen ,air support had been called for as the troops were 'bogged down'there. The sickening thing that I always remember is the bodies of dead soldiers being cut with our Propeller as we had to keep our engine going slow astern to combat mini Submarines who were trying to put limpet mines on ships hulls.

It was August 16th we left London and the Normandy job behind and via Loch Ewe we joined a big convoy to plough our way across the Atlantic to Montreal. What a trip, I was very sick, we were 'hoved too' for 4 days and made no headway at all, lost ships due to not keeping up with the convoy, then the 'stragglers' got caught with the waiting Submarines. It took 29 days to com-

plete the trip, we were pleased to see the St. Lawrence river, and pass Quebec and also see there the Chateau De Frontenac, all dressed up, a big meeting was taking place with the top brass, i.e. Churchill, Stalin, Roosevelt and Mc'Kenzie of Canada. We then passed up the river to the loading bay and put on a full cargo of timber, then went down to Halifax n. s. and loaded a deck cargo of pit props, which we lost in bad weather going home.

We got home to Manchester on 4th November 1944. I went on leave, it was so handy from the city only 40 minutes by train and I got permission to take my Father to the ship, he loved to see the engines and meet the engineers .

Returning from leave I joined yet another coal burner, the 'Cape Breton', for a return trip across the Atlantic, a few problems with U Boats but these were always at night. Anyway we arrived at Norfolk VA for a cargo of top steaming coal to refuel mine sweepers in Africa, 8000 tons of this black stuff and what a place to go to, Freetown. We loaded in record time, caught a convoy South ,but had to put into Ponta Del Garda in the Azores for repairs as a bearing on the engine got hot and this was not a favourite place for it was a 'loitering ground' for U boats !!!

To a nice Hotel then went back on board and started off for Antwerp to unload, a battered city after the ravages of war and unloaded all our cargo Then Home sweet home and my last trip to sea. I then 'retired' and went back to the Cotton mill, my big mistake! I left the cotton trade in 1966 and joined the Post Office as a postman, worked there for 25 years, met some lovely people and enjoyed the 'dog fighting'.

I was so pleased to have been in the Merchant Service and lucky to have got Home in one piece, and to have seen the world and how some people have to live, but many times I think of the 33,000 Merchant Sailors who paid the price with their lives, and the loss of 1830 ships lost to enemy action and other causes at sea such as collisions at night and in bad weather and on the other side our German brothers at sea lost 350 U boats and crews.

I think I could have stayed at sea longer ,but to keep living out of a suitcase is a strain. I became a Radio Amateur in 1951 with the call sign G3HQB and am still on the Morse Key every day. It is nice to chat to all these far away places and to know I have been there and to think "all of this started with hearing those funny dots and dashes and being "nosey to find out what it was all about-- 'what are those wild waves saying ??????????

*Harold Froggatt (Radio Officers Association no 122) November 2005*

## THE LOCAL HISTORIAN

The following volumes have been placed in New Mills Library.

### **Volume 38 No. 4 (November 2008)**

*Rosemary Sweet*, ' "Mere dull description": antiquarianism and local history in the eighteenth century'.

*Mike Huggins*, ' Death, memorialisation and the Victorian sporting hero'.

*Andrew J H Jackson*, ' Local history and local history education in the early twenty first century: organisational and intellectual challenges'.

*Nigel Richardson*, ' Typhoid in Uppingham, Rutland, 1875-1877: reassessing the social context'.

*Dick Hunter*, ' "Then we turned our noses homeward": Merchant Navy officers and their families 1841-1941'.

*Oliver M Westall*, ' Obituary: John Duncan Marshall 1919-2008'.

Book Reviews include: Calendar of the Fine Rolls of Henry III: Bangladeshi, Indian and Pakistani people of Tameside: Medicine and society in the Midlands: Villages of vision: a study of strange utopias: Exploring Border Reivers history: Exploring Solway history.

### **Volume 39 No. 1 (February 2009)**

*Penelope Upton*, ' Thomas Fisher and the depopulation of Nether Itchington [Warwickshire] in sixteenth century'.

*John Hargreaves and John Chandler*, ' Publishing local history'.

*Roger Ottewill and Ivor Slocombe*, ' Parish councils in England and Wales 1894-1974'.

*John Dunleavy*, ' Nationalism and illuminated addresses: an Irish Catholic community'.

*Paul Jennings*, ' Liquor licensing and the local historian: the 1904 Licensing Act and its administration'.

*Jacqueline Fillmore*, ' Websites revealed: a further selection'.

*Evelyn Lord*, ' Review article; what is regional history ?'

Book Reviews include: Biographical index of British sundial makers: The lord lieutenants and their deputies: The Church of England and the Durham coalfield 1810-1926: The North through its names: The story of the Quakers of North East Yorkshire.

### **Volume 39 No. 2 (May 2009)**

*Adam Longcroft*, ' Local history and vernacular architecture studies'.

*Gerald Rimmington*, ' The Baptist churches and society in Leicestershire 1951-1971'.

*Kay Parrott*, ' The apprenticeship of parish children from Kirkdale Industrial Schools, Liverpool, 1840-1870'.

*Heather Falvey*, ' Voices and faces in the rioting crowds: identifying seventeenth – century enclosure rioters'.

*David Dymond*, ' Keynote review: Writing local history by John Beckett'.

*Christopher French*, ' Review article: three books on London'.

Book reviews include: The Witches of Warboys; Wicked practice and sorcery: Parks in Hertfordshire since 1500: Female occupations: women's employment 1850-1950: Sunderland and its origins; monks to mariners: Town and countryside in western Berkshire c. 1337-1600: The shadow of marriage; singleness in England 1914-1960.



## New Mills in 1987

A video, originally filmed by John Symonds in 1987, has now been digitised and made available as a DVD. This 30 minute film can be viewed as a whole or accessed throughout by using the DVD chapters. An attempt has been made to achieve a fairly comprehensive coverage of the main features of the parish and town of New Mills. Major landmarks, buildings and roads are labelled on the film. The film concludes with brief TV adverts from the same era, from one of the town's major employers and manufacturers, Swizzels Matlow Ltd.

The Local History Society is very grateful to John Symonds for all his efforts in making this historic record available in its current form.

This DVD, 'New Mills Parish 27th. August 1987', is on sale at Local History Society meetings and at New Mills Heritage Centre, price £5.00.

This DVD lasts approximately 30 minutes. The video was originally filmed in 1987 and has now been digitised and extensively edited. The film can be viewed as a whole or accessed throughout by using the DVD chapters. An attempt has been made to achieve a fairly comprehensive coverage of the main features of the parish and the town of New Mills. Major landmarks, buildings and roads are labelled on the film. The film concludes with brief television adverts from the same era, from one of the major employers and manufacturers in the town, Swizzels Matlow Ltd.



**DVD**  
PAL  
4.3

Running Time: Approximately 30 minutes  
 Filmed and Edited by John V. Symonds  
 Published in 2009.  
 Copyright: © New Mills Local History Society  
 DVD duplicated & printed by Quabron Visual Solutions - [www.quabronvisualsolutions.com](http://www.quabronvisualsolutions.com)

New Mills Parish 27th August 1987 ~ New Mills Local History Society



**New Mills Parish  
27th August 1987**

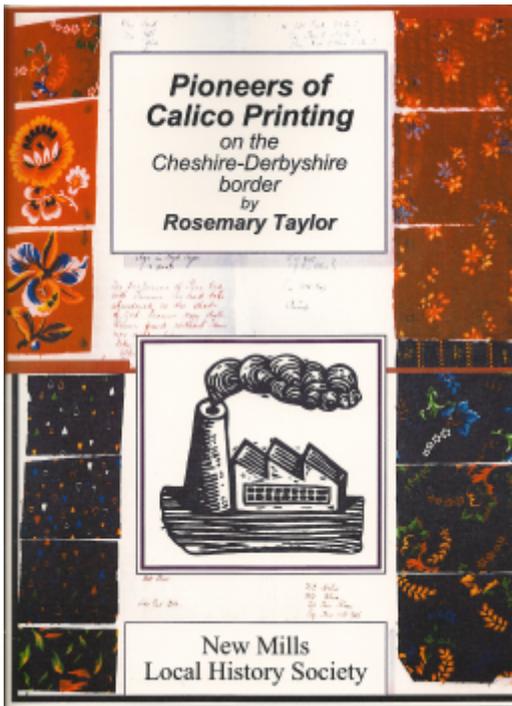


**NEW MILLS  
LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

**DVD**  
VIDEO

## Pioneers of Calico Printing

The enormous increase in the output of cotton cloth, which came with the introduction of new spinning and weaving machinery in the early phases of the Industrial Age, was attended by new ways to make it appear more attractive to a mass market. The "finishing" processes of bleaching, dyeing and printing required a good supply of dean water and needed to be located upstream of any polluting riparian towns. One such area included the valleys of the Govt and its tributaries, the Sett and the Etherow. Situated in the Pennine foothills on the Cheshire-Derbyshire border, this small area, about 7 miles long and 4½ miles wide, produced a large fraction of the national output of printed cotton fabrics for 200 years. Within what



became the Urban district of New Mills, there were print works at Birch Vale, Thornsett, Watford Bridge, Rock Mill, Strines and St. George's engraving works. Not far away were Kinder and Wood print works in Hayfield, with other works at Furness Vale and Disley. Further downstream, towards Stockport, there were centres of the industry at Chadkirk on the Goyt and Compstall on the Etherow.

"Pioneers of Calico Printing" is a detailed, closely researched account of how this industry came to be established and developed. It falls into two closely linked parts: the technical developments and the people who made them happen.

PIONEERS OF CALICO PRINTING on the Cheshire-Derbyshire border, by Rosemary Taylor, New Mills Local History Society, 2009.

An A4 publication, card covers, 72 pages, including 6 maps, 5 family trees and 20 illustrations (inc. colour).

Price £5.00 plus £1.00 postage. (Discounts for bulk purchases).

Apply to Ron Weston (Hon\_ Editor NMLHS), "The Thorns", Laneside Road, New Mills, High Peak, Derbyshire, SK22 4LU. Tel. 01663 744838.