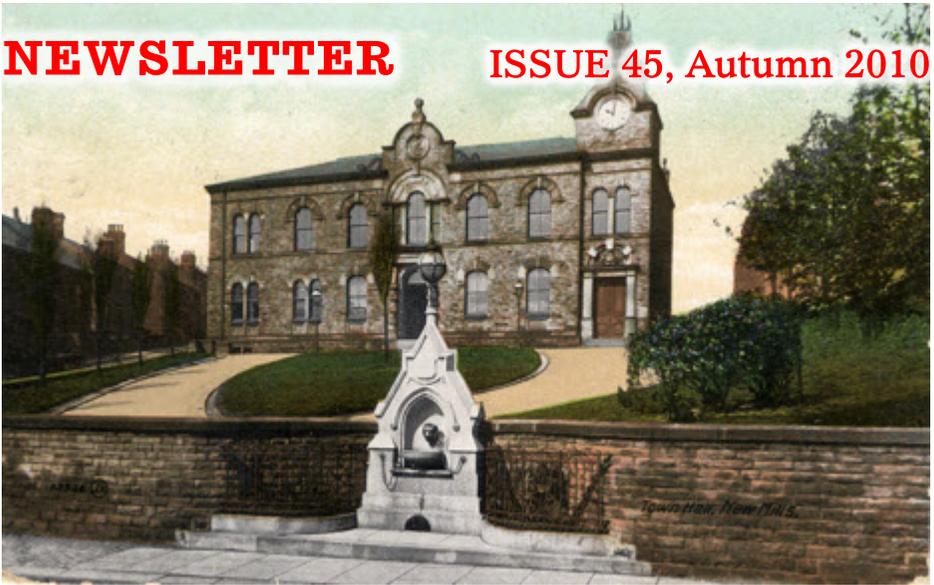


NEW MILLS LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 45, Autumn 2010



New Mills Town Hall before 1910, and now in 2010.



In This Issue:
• The Wesley Pulpit

Meetings

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

Friday September 3	Glen Atkinson	A 1920's Bleaching, Dyeing and Weaving Mill.
Friday October 8	Brian Rich	Place Names in the Landscape of the Peak District
Friday November 12	Gillian Mawson	The Experience of Guernsey Evacuees in Cheshire and Derbyshire, 1940-45.
Friday December 3	Judith Wilshaw	Samuel Oldknow: Marple's Famous Son

New Mills Festival Events

Monday September 20 (Town Hall 7:30pm)	Dr.Derek Brumhead	New Mills: Then and Now
Sunday September 26 (LowLeighton, opp Hare & Hounds, 1:30pm)	Ron Weston	Historic Ollersett

Committee 2010-2011

Chairperson	Gaynor Andrew (743117)	
Vice-chairperson	Barbara Done (742617)	
Hon. Secretary	John Humphreys (743581)	
Hon. Treasurer	Maureen Hall (742837)	
Hon. Archivist	Roger Bryant (744227)	
Hon. Editor	Ron Weston (744838)	
Ordinary members	Catherine Bolton	Olive Bowyer
	Derek Brumhead	Barry Dent
	Pat Evans	Barbara Matthews

www.newmillshistory.org.uk

www.picturenewmills.org.uk

Editor's Note

Dear Friends,

I'm sorry if you find Newsletter 45 somewhat anorexic: I've run out of articles and other items to print. So, please put pen to paper and make No. 46 disgustingly obese.

All the best,

Ron Weston

The South-west Peak – A History

Margaret Black and Eric Wood

February 12th 2010

Eric Wood began the evening with an illustrated account of hunting in Macclesfield Forest from Anglo-Saxon times to the end of the fifteenth century. It is clear from the written evidence that has survived that hunting was an important activity of the late Anglo-Saxon kings and the nobility. The Bayeux Tapestry shows Harold, the last Anglo-Saxon king, hunting with dogs and hawk. But it was not until after the Norman Conquest that the royal hunting forests were officially designated and forest laws introduced to protect the deer. Macclesfield forest was probably created as a hunting forest in 1089.

By the late thirteenth century, almost a third of England was subject to forest law and this proved increasingly irksome to all those with a vested interest in getting a living from the land. The forest laws prohibited the enclosure of land for agriculture (assarting) without a licence. Similar prohibitions against the building of houses or felling timber for building purposes were also in operation. There were also restrictions on the grazing of livestock on land subject to forest law. The thirteenth century was a time of population growth in England and there was increasing pressure to ease the restrictions on the forests. This occurred in 1215 with the granting of Magna Carta by King John. In 1217, the Charter of the Forest made further concessions and gradually the remaining laws were set aside, largely because the forest officials who administered the forests, particularly the local gentry who were hereditary Foresters of Fee, failed to enforce them. Indeed, the foresters of Fee were often the chief offenders when it came to taking in new land for farming and grazing.

Such was the effect of these legal changes that by 1350, the time of the Black Death, only 15% of England remained subject to forest law.

Macclesfield forest still contains some physical evidence of its former status as a royal forest. On Toot Hill, for example, is a ditched enclosure which has been interpreted as a deer hay. At Hurdfield is an area enclosed by "le fence." The former boundaries of the forest are known from later perambulations.

Margaret Black's presentation was in complete contrast to that of Eric Wood. She gave us a vivid account of what it might have been like for a peasant woman have to earn a living in Macclesfield Forest in Medieval times. She even dressed the part. As if working on the land wasn't difficult enough; the imposition of forest law made life much harder.

Margaret's humorous account captured the imagination of the audience and gave Eric's factual presentation a deeper significance. This was historical empathy at its best.

Ron Weston

Grabbing the Headlines: A Look at Derbyshire's Newspaper Publishing Industry

Ruth Gordon.

March 12, 2010

Right from the outset, newspapers, both local and national, have been regarded as ephemera: half-read and then cast off at the end of the day to become tomorrow's wrapping paper, or fire-lighting material, or worse. Derbyshire's earliest newspaper "The British Spy or Derby Post-Man", first came out in 1721. Only in recent years have we come to appreciate the value of early newspapers as an historical source. We now have cause to regret all those decades of universal throwing away.

Ruth Gordon, head librarian at the local history library at County Hall in Matlock, has played a vital part in rescuing back numbers of our local newspapers from oblivion. The British Library has undertaken an ambitious project to make all surviving early newspapers available online and now we can reap the benefit of Ruth's efforts.

Ruth's talk, illustrated by newspaper extracts and pictures of early printing presses, reviewed the changes in the character of the local press over the centuries. The surprising thing is how little newspapers have changed. Advertising has always played a major part in subsidising the cost of production. Today, the lack of advertising revenue is the chief reason why so many newspapers cease publication; this has always been the case. The local newspapers of the

eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries carried far more national news than they do today because the London papers were not readily available before the advent of the railways. Stamp duty on newspapers severely restricted sales to the wealthier classes at a time when, in any case, relatively few people could read. When, eventually, stamp duty was abolished and the mass circulation of the great national newspapers became the rule in the late nineteenth century, the population became much better informed about and more critical of the government of the day.

Thus, it was only after the mass circulation of national newspapers took place that local papers became truly local. Local politics, council meetings, church services and celebrations, local events, the lives of local celebrities, local sport, births, marriages and deaths, local property sales, filled the columns of the local papers. This is the very stuff of local history: raw material to be quarried.

Few villages and hamlets of any size were without their local reporters, while writing to the newspapers became a popular and widely-practised activity. All-in all, local papers became a part of many people's lives: in the words of one of our local papers, "A friend dropping in".

As Ruth handed round the softly-textured pages of centuries-old copies of the Derby Mercury for us to examine, it was ironical to realise that this and other local papers are now only available on the internet. It is, after all, the internet, together with radio and TV, that has brought the demise of so many cherished local newspapers.

Ron Weston

19th. Century British Library Newspapers

A million searchable pages of historic newspapers at your fingertips. 48 titles, including the Derby Mercury, the main county newspaper for Derbyshire, from 1800 to 1900.

How to get onto the Infotrac website at home

1 Go to www.derbyshire.gov.uk/24hrlibrary

2 Click on **Infotrac** newspapers, then choose **18th Century British Library Newspapers**.

3 In the login box on the sites homepage, enter the letters **DCC** followed by the number on the back of your library ticket - don't leave any spaces.

History of Woodford and A.V. Roe

Kevin Whitaker

April 9, 2010

Kevin Whitaker, Curator of the Avro Heritage Centre at Woodford, gave us a well-illustrated and detailed account of the aircraft pioneer A. V. Roe and the company which he founded.

One of the world's first aircraft builders, A.V. Roe & Company was established at Brownsfield Mill, Great Ancoats Street, in 1910. Roe had already made a name for himself as a pilot at Brooklands in Surrey.

One early product was the "Bulls Eye", a triplane with a twenty-foot wingspan. The company built the world's first totally-enclosed monoplane in 1912, but it was the biplane known as Avro 504 that kept the firm busy throughout World War One and after. Production at several factories, including those at Failsworth, Miles Platting and Newton Heath, ran into thousands and continued for a further twenty years after the end of the war.

After the war, there came lean times, and the firm was compelled to sell most of its shares to Crossley Motors. In 1924, the company left its aerodrome at Alexandra Park, where test flying had been taking place since 1918, and moved to Woodford, which continues to serve the successor company, BAE Systems, to this day – but not for very much longer.

In 1929, Crossleys sold to Armstrong-Siddeley. A.V. Roe resigned from the company he had founded, but continued his distinguished service to aviation by founding a new company, Saunders-Roe. After World War Two, this company developed several radical designs for combat jets, together with a range of hovercraft.

Meanwhile, at Woodford and its other site at Chadderton, Hawker-Siddeley (as it became in 1935) built a robust trainer biplane, the Avro Tutor, bought in quantity by the RAF. As another war loomed, the firm renewed its emphasis on combat planes: the Lancaster bomber being by far the most famous and most successful of these. After the war, the turbo-prop airliner, the Avro749, was built; but the interest in military aircraft continued with the Vulcan bombers, designed for nuclear strikes. Vulcans saw service as conventional bombers in the Falklands war in 1982.

The genius behind this succession of ever-more sophisticated planes (far more than have been mentioned in this brief revue) was the designer Roy Chadwick, whose association with Avro began before the First World War.

Amongst the last aircraft to be built at Woodford are the Nimrod "spy-planes", crammed with highly-secret, state of the art intelligence-gathering systems.

Today, the defunct Avro brand has retained its strong heritage appeal and a few precious Tutors, Ansons, Lancasters and Avro 504s are lovingly maintained by enthusiasts as reminders of that company's former pre-eminence.

Our audience included several visitors: local people who had worked for, or continued to be employed at, Woodford. There is much nostalgia for what has now passed and not a little bitterness at the impending demise of aircraft production at Woodford in the very-near future. The loss of an industry of which we can all feel proud is one that we may yet live to regret.

Ron Weston

The Architectural History of Strines Hall and its Renovation

Mel Smith

May 14th 2010

Mel Smith began his account of the restoration of his home, Strines Hall, by showing us a 1920s postcard. It depicted the reservoir and dovecote at Strines, with dilapidated buildings in the background, ripe for demolition. Strines Hall had been occupied until about 1900. Completely lacking in modern facilities, it remained neglected, its roof in holes and falling into ruin.

The local Council ruled that, although a listed building, Strines Hall could be demolished by the owners if they failed to find a buyer. Providentially, the hall was purchased by Mel Smith, who then set about restoring it to its former grandeur.

Anyone who passes by Strines Hall cannot fail to be impressed by Mel Smith's restoration. With its massive, fortress-like walls, the sheer scale of the place must have been daunting; no wonder the task took so many years.

Mel gave us a detailed account of the architectural features – doors, windows, fireplaces, roof beams, etc. – to show us how the house must have looked at the time when it was built, estimated to be around 1570, and the subsequent alterations that occurred during the centuries that followed. Documentary evidence, principally copies of wills and probate inventories, has helped to tie in the major rebuilding phases to particular owners. It seems likely that the stone hall had been preceded by a medieval half-timbered building on the same site, though the material evidence for this is slight. The earliest family to be associ-

ated with Strines Hall was that of the Claytons, who were lords of the manor from medieval times.

Mel Smith gave us a measured, scholarly and well-illustrated account. We could not fail to be impressed by the scale of his achievement. Mel is to be congratulated on this accomplished restoration of a fine and historically-important local building. It can only have been a labour of love.

Ron Weston

The Wesley Pulpit

In June, John Humphreys and I made a journey in a transit van to Abbot Hall, a former Methodist hotel at Kent's Bank near Grange over Sands to collect (rescue ?) the famous Wesley pulpit which resided in pieces in a garage buried behind agricultural machinery and a motor bike. It was a quite a struggle loading it into the van.

This pulpit had been installed in New Mills' first Methodist chapel on High Street in 1766 (now the Revival Church). Wesley first preached from it when he visited New Mills in 1768 and subsequently several more times; in the 1770's he says 'to an earnest, artless, loving people'. In 1810 a new Wesleyan chapel was opened on St George's Road (the 'Old Ship'), but the pulpit remained in the High Street chapel which later became a Sunday School.

In 1812-13 a chapel was built at Whitfield, near Glossop and the pulpit was generously presented to the chapel ('why', says Seth Evans, 'we are at a loss to understand'). In 1931 this chapel was demolished and a new chapel (it was actually an enlargement of an existing Sunday School building) built on Hague Street (it is now the Masonic Hall) and the pulpit moved there. In 1968 Whitfield joined the Glossop circuit and the pulpit went into storage in the minister's garage.

It was recovered by John Banks in Manchester and displayed, but not used for preaching, in the Central Hall on Oldham Street. Later, David Mycock, manager, at Abbot Hall Guest House, Kent's Bank, persuaded them to allow him to have the pulpit where it remained in use until David Mycock left. The pulpit was not then required for its purpose and stored in a garage until John and I recovered it.

John and I (together with a 'heavy gang' of Peter and Susan Bailey, Susan Stevens and Jane Butterworth) unloaded it from the van and placed it temporarily in the basement of New Mills Town Hall until John and his team of dedicated volunteers at the Heritage Centre can get cracking with some TLC and reassemble it. But where will it go ?

This has been an historic event in the history of New Mills Methodism, and Seth Evans would be delighted that the pulpit has returned home (there is a photograph of it in his book (which is now available as a reprint from the Heritage Centre).

I am grateful to Alan Rose (Methodist historian) for the details of the pulpit's movements. He is of the opinion that the pulpit must be one of the oldest in British Methodism.

Derek Brumhead



Extract from the Derby Mercury, Wednesday October 5, 1831

We have received the following List of Patents for new inventions during the month of September, from Mesrs. Newton and Berry, at the Office for Patents, 66, Chancery Lane, and can vouch for its authenticity :

To John Potts, Richard Oliver, and William Wainwright Potts, all of New Mills, in the county of Derby, engravers to calico printers, and co-partners, for their having invented an improved method or process of obtaining impressions from engravings in various colours, and applying the same to earthenware, porcelain, china, glass, and other similar substances. - 17th September - 6 months.

Extract from the Derby Mercury, Wednesday March 24, 1824

DERBYSHIRE LENT ASSIZES

As we stated in our last, the Lent Assizes commenced here on the 17th instant but before we proceed to report the business in Court, we shall indulge ourselves in the pleasure of laying before our readers the following particulars of the hospitality of the High Sheriff, and of the popular demonstrations of respect he received from all classes of society during his progress from his distant seat in the romantic regions of the Peak to this place.

(From the Stockport Advertiser.)

" THE HIGH SHERIFF FOR DERBYSHIRE.

" On Tuesday morning last, Samuel Oldknow, Esq. the High Sheriff for the county of Derby, entertained a very numerous and respectable party of gentlemen with a sumptuous breakfast (*a la fourchette*) at his truly beautiful and romantic villa at Mellor, near this town, previously to their accompanying him on his route to Derby. As early as eight o'clock the party had begun to assemble, and at ten the number of gentlemen and yeomen that had arrived exceeded three hundred and fifty, who partook in the several apartments prepared for them an entertainment, consisting, in the greatest profusion, of the rarest delicacies of the season ; the enjoyment of which was materially excited by the pleasing vivacity and unlimited hospitality of the worthy Sheriff. Our attention in one room, was surprisingly struck with an immense baron of beef elevated upon a purposely-erected stage, which appeared to be attacked with a keener appetite than the more delicate viands, and to afford incessant employment to Mr. Thomas Brindley, who had kindly undertaken the office of *Ecuyer-trenchant*. Prior to their departure from the house the health of the High Sheriff, with 4 times 4, was enthusiastically drunk ; in proposing which, Captain White opportunely passed an eloquent and well-deserving eulogium on the truly loyal and constitutional character of Mr. Oldknow, who, under the strongest feelings of agitation and embarrassment, returned thanks for the complimentary manner in which they had drunk his health, and the highly-distinguished honour which their voluntary and spontaneous presence had conferred upon him. About half-past eleven the procession began to collect, which by an excellent arrangement previously made was soon effected. About one hundred Derbyshire yeomen formed the advance of the javelin-men, followed by the High Sheriff in his yellow-bodied carriage drawn by four beautiful grey horses, driven in hand, and richly caparisoned. The equipage, liveries, and appoint-

ments were of the most splendid description, and the cavalcade which consisted of seventeen carriages, and three hundred horsemen moved off under a flourish of trumpets, and the cheers of several thousand admiring spectators, the High Sheriff standing up in the open carriage uncovered, waving his hand as a respectful token of farewell. After leaving Mellor, the procession moved through Marple, by the Chapel, over the Ridge, passing Wibbersley Hall, to Disley, where the inhabitants, with the excellent band of music belonging to the village, were waiting to receive them, anxious to participate in the general feeling. From Disley the cavalcade proceeded slowly on to Whaley, and was met by another band of music from New Mills. Having arrived at Horridge End, where the roads take different directions' the gentlemen on horseback formed themselves into a circle, and the High Sheriff, in the most respectful and affectionate manner took his leave of them and continued his route to Buxton, Bakewell, and Matlock, accompanied by his javelin men and suite ; at the latter place he rested for the night.

" From any thing that we can say our Readers will be unable to form a just or adequate idea of those enthusiastic sensations which pervaded all ranks of society on the appointment of so highly respectable patriotic a gentleman to this important station. We never witnessed a more pleasing and gratifying scene—a scene that so perfectly harmonized with our sentiments on that homage and respect which the members of a civilized community ought to confer upon superior worth, especially when appearing in the form of a public character. The tide of popular feeling on this occasion seemed to flow in one smooth and uninterrupted, current, and amongst the hosts of attendants it was with no small degree of pleasure that we recognized two gentlemen as the representatives of the Duke of Devonshire and the Duke of Norfolk. The majestic and rugged cliffs surrounding the house betrayed a grand and appalling spectacle ; immense crowds had at the imminent risk of their lives ascended their towering summits and rent the air with the liveliest acclamations of joy and gratitude on the appearance of the High Sheriff in his carriage. With such enthusiastic tokens of public esteem and approbation, and the prompt alacrity and cheerfulness with which the neighbouring gentry spontaneously undertook to pay this tribute of respect the High Sheriff could not fail to be sensibly affected ; indeed the adjacent villages were almost entirely deserted, for the roads as far as we went were crowded to an excessive degree with astounded spectators, anxious, notwithstanding the rain which began to fall about twelve o'clock, to view this novel procession."

Society Summer Outing 2010

The Manchester Jewish Museum to explore “The Jewish Experience”

On Sunday 23 May 18 members set off by coach to visit a part of Manchester in the neighbourhood of Cheetham Hill Road. We arrived at the Jewish Museum via rundown back streets, walked round to the front entrance on the main road and found ourselves looking at the frontage of the very attractive Spanish and Portuguese shul (synagogue) now the home of the Jewish Museum.



When Samuel Hadida from Gibraltar and Nissim Levy from Constantinople, arrived as Manchester's first Sephardim in 1843, they came to a city with a well established Ashkenazi community of some 1200 people, mostly cotton merchants and shopkeepers. This Ashkenazi community had been founded in the 1770's by a small group of pedlars who had been coming to Manchester since the 1740's, selling old clothes, optical lenses, cheap jewellery and other goods in common demand. By 1788 they felt secure enough to exchange their trays and pedlars' packs for small shops in the run-down area of Manchester's old town, around the cathedral. This small group of about twenty constituted the true founders of Manchester's Jewish community. The synagogue was designed by the distinguished Jewish architect Edward Salomons. We were warmly welcomed as they opened up for the day and we began by looking around the comprehensive and detailed displays illustrating the history of the Jewish community from the 18th century. We were then treated to a short introductory talk by Bill Williams, through whose efforts the museum became established, and Merton Paul who wrote the very attractive Visitor's Guide.

Bill and Merton then led us on a guided tour through the area which had been the Jewish community, showing us many interesting buildings and making frequent stops to provide detailed anecdotes such as, the arrival of Michael Marks of Marks and Spencers, the Ice Palace, the former Soup Kitchen, the Working Men's Club, the Maccabean Hall and many other famous sites. All this in the pitiless heat of Britain's hottest day of the year to date. Fortunately nobody conked out and we returned to the museum to sup the cups of cold water thoughtfully set out for us by the staff. After a short question and answer session we headed home after a most enjoyable experience. I do wish more members would come on our trips, we have had some smashing trips over the last few years.

John Humphreys