



NEW MILLS LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER

Issue 49, Autumn 2012



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 7	Keith Warrender	Underground Manchester
Monday September 24	Dr Derek Brumhead	New Mills Festival Public Lecture The Coal Mines of New Millsr
Friday October 12	Peter Brawn	Dunham Massey Hall, Cheshire
Friday November 9	David Templeman	Mary Queen of Scots: The Final Journey to Fotheringhay, 1584-871
Friday December 7	Chris Makepeace	History of Disley

N.B. The New Mills Festival Public Lecture on Monday, September 24 starts at 7:30pm, and is followed by cheese and wine (kindly provided by New Mills Town Council).

Committee 2012-2013

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

From the Editor

The death of Olive Bowyer on 30th April has cast a shadow over our proceedings this year. Olive was a founder member of this society. She served on our committee continuously from the beginning and was our Treasurer for several years. Olive could be seen behind our publications table right up to the end. Her contribution to the society has been immense. She will be sorely missed.

A full account and appreciation of Olive's life and work by Derek Brumhead appears in this Newsletter.

Ron Weston

OLIVE BOWYER



Olive died on 30th April 2012 after a short illness, she was 89. Olive, who had a career as a primary school teacher ending finally in Marple, was a founder member of the New Mills Local History Society in 1982 and, also, a member of the committee during all that time up to the last. She was the society treasurer for many years. In fact, she took an interest in all the Society's activities. As programme secretary, I was always receiving from her cuttings from the Buxton Advertiser with details of speakers to other societies who she thought would be of interest. And, in fact, I made use of several of her suggestions over the years.

When she retired she lived first in Hague Bar, before moving to New Mills. Some years ago she suddenly surprisingly decided to move to Chapel-en-le-Frith. We realised that this placed her more conveniently near her beloved donkeys at the sanctuary near Peak Forest which she supported for years including sponsoring a donkey. However, the move didn't stop her from continuing to attend meetings of the society, the society's committee and the Heritage Centre management committee. When she stopped driving John Humphreys very generously provided a honorary taxi service for a number of years.

Olive was a devoted church member. After starting in the Church of England, when she left home to go to college she went to a Baptist church in Cheltenham and this aligned her faith with what she read in the Bible. Her belief in the Bible was made manifest in a letter published only a few weeks

ago in the local paper. Her faith controlled her life in having a heart for people and animals who needed help and support and guidance. A celebration for her life was held at Disley Baptist church attended by a very large number of people. Members of some of the many charities which Olive supported spoke grateful words about Olive, including the Proclaimers (the Proclaimer is a digital player dedicated to playing God's Word in the local heart language), the Bible Society (she supported families in the Ukraine), the Life Association (saving lives in India due to the caste system) the Peak and Dales Advocacy, Revive-a-Life (offers hope to the orphan children and vulnerable adults of Uganda), Tearfund (a relief and development charity, working in partnership with Christian agencies and churches worldwide to tackle the causes and effects of poverty), the IWPS (Bugsworth) and our society.

Olive was in fact a great animal lover and owned dogs and cats. Her favourite was Glenda, who barked loudly and continuously in her car, you could hear them coming from miles away. Glenda has her own tiny plaque at a stile near Ollersett Farm (on the way to Gib Hey) – it's still there, it says 'Glenda of Whittle'. Olive lived in Ollersett at that time, so perhaps Glenda came from that hamlet. As far as Olive was concerned, animals could do no wrong, she welcomed dogs with open arms (literally) when working at the Heritage Centre, usually ignoring their owners. I made the mistake once of complaining that her dog jumped up at me. 'A menace' I foolishly said, to be told in no uncertain terms that it was some humans who were often a menace ! None of her dogs were let off the lead when on walkies and the cats always stayed indoors. One cat was white and since it was deaf (apparently all white cats are deaf ?) it was certainly not let out in case, Olive said, it got run over.

Olive was a strong-willed person, once she got something between her teeth she would not let it go until the matter was resolved. And she was tough, making an extraordinary recovery from a stroke and not only overcoming a hearing difficulty but getting involved in lip-reading and insisting that loop systems were working properly. She was also a long-term member of the Heritage Centre management committee and a volunteer for many years, going back to when it first opened in 1987. When we held the Christmas sales day at the Heritage Centre she always insisted on operating the till. Martin Doughty, Heritage Centre chairman and a knight of the realm, always helped her and, of course, always did as he was told !

Olive was also a long term member and supporter of the Inland Waterways Protection Society, whose truly dedicated members have for forty years

worked at improving and establishing the canal basin at Bugsworth as one of the most important transport history sites in North West England. She is remembered for her extensive knowledge of the canal system. Her three books, *Towpath Guides for the Upper and Lower Peak Forest Canal*, and the story of its *Construction and Development*, are the best available on the subject and provide a well-researched and detailed source of information for walkers and researchers alike. The members of IWPS found it a privilege to work with her when the books were updated during recent years and published jointly with the New Mills Local History Society. A stickler for accuracy she went through the texts with the proverbial fine-toothed comb but finally expressed great pleasure and satisfaction with the results. John Humphreys took the photographs for her. The books are for sale at the IWPS shop at Bugsworth Canal Basin and at New Mills Heritage Centre. Together with her friend and neighbour Madeline Mason in New Mills, she provided many plants, especially foxgloves, for planting around Bugsworth Basin and which still flower today as a fitting memorial to her kind generosity, which was also manifest in the twenty seven charities which she supported.

Derek Brumhead

Churches and Chapels of the Peak

David Frith, 13th January 2012

David Frith's opening picture of the wooden cross surmounting Cobden Edge, which overlooks our town and is the venue for an open air service on Good Friday each year, reminds us that before the age of churches and chapels worship was conducted outdoors. The never-failing spring at Buxton, for example, has been the scene of worship since prehistoric times. The spring was sacred to the Celtic goddess Anu before giving rise to the Roman town of Aquae Arnemetiae. The many votive offerings discovered at the spring bear witness to the fact that, like modern Buxton, the Roman town attracted many visitors. With the coming of Christianity, the pagan Anu was sanctified and transformed into St. Ann.

The many stone crosses in our area, dating from Anglo-Saxon times, whatever their functions (as landmarks, boundary marks, market crosses or preaching crosses) often have Christian embellishments added to them.

The person responsible for introducing Christianity into our area was St. Chad. The small chapel at Chadkirk is just one of several places associated with him.

In his perceptive and wide-ranging talk, David described the situation in North-east Cheshire and North-west Derbyshire in medieval times when the population of these districts was sparse. What few churches there were, at Hope, Prestbury and Mottram, for example, had to serve huge parishes. But as population increased, daughter churches grew up within these parishes. David made the interesting suggestion that Mothering Sunday was originally the day when the congregations of these daughter churches attended their original mother church. Many of these daughter churches subsequently hived off to command parishes of their own. Hayfield and Mellor were "chapels of ease" subsidiary to Glossop which became independent parishes in later centuries.

David then turned his attention to the spread of Wesleyan Methodism in the late eighteenth century. Methodism has always been strong in this area: John Wesley himself was a regular visitor and several local places are associated with him. David made the point that with the advent of Methodism the history of the spread of Christianity was repeating itself in that the earliest Methodist meetings were held outdoors. Later, in 1806, the Primitive Methodists, who broke away from the Wesleyans in an attempt to return to the roots of nonconformity, held meetings outside once more. David showed us local examples of splendid Methodist churches as well as

more humble places of nonconformist worship, some of the latter in quite remote places.

Methodism today is mostly in retreat and many former circuits have been dissolved or amalgamated. David was at pains to point out that our threatened churches and chapels of all denominations are part of our historic legacy and their demise should be a matter of concern, both nationally and in every locality.

Ron Weston

Goyt Valley Miner, Kevin Dranfield, 10th February 2012

Five generations of the Hewitt family mined coal in Kettleshulme, Whaley Bridge and Errwood; but Kevin Dranfield's talk was not so much a family history, more an account of a way of life in places that have changed so much that we have to rely on our imagination, a few old maps and photos, some ruins and archaeological remains to recapture their living reality.

The South Lancashire Coalfield extends southward into north-east Cheshire in a thin arm which splits into two even narrower limbs south of Stockport, one stretching through Poynton, the other following the Goyt Valley and thence into the hills beyond the Cat and Fiddle. The coal seams are thin and variable in quality, the "Yard Seam" being the thickest and most important. Extensive faulting subdivides the coalfield into individual basins, one of which is centred on Kettleshulme. This is where Kevin began his account: here William Hewitt, son of a Kettleshulme farmer, became a collier and coal proprietor in a small way, employing five miners in 1861 at the Sponds Pit, a drift mine whose remains may still be seen at the acute bend on the Macclesfield road, just before the turn-off for Pott Shrigley.

William's son, George, continued in the coal business, first at Sponds, then later at Whaley Bridge and Furness Vale around the beginning of the twentieth century.

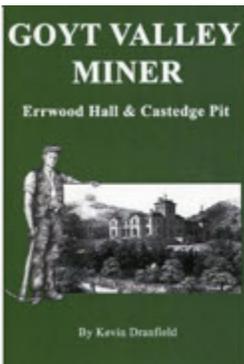
But the main thrust of Kevin's talk came when the next miner in the Hewitt family, Jack went to work for the Grimshawe family at Errwood Hall, in the Upper Goyt Valley. The Grimshawes, a wealthy Roman Catholic family,

developed their self-contained, self sufficient estate in the beautiful setting of what was then a remote location. One of their ventures was the opening up of a coal seam near to the hall which supplied the estate and the Goyt Valley community with its fuel and power. The small mine, known as Castedge was operated by Jack Hewitt with one or two assistants. The Hewitts and, indeed, the whole estate community seemed to have lived idyllic lives. This came to an end with their annus horribilis, 1930, with the death of Mr. Grimshawe, together with a terrible storm. The flood waters swept through the valley, carrying all before it. The mine was ruined, the hall and many other properties in the valley were abandoned. Errwood ceased to function as a living community.



Today Errwood Hall remains a melancholy ruin, made safe for the inspection of visitors, mainly walkers, along with other remnants of the estate's former glory. But one will search in vain for the entrance to the Castedge mine, securely hidden behind a substantial thicket of rhododendron. The Upper Goyt, now reclaimed for water supply and amenity, is a very different place from the one that Kevin Dranfield describes.

Ron Weston.



"Goyt Valley Miner" by Kevin Dranfield is a well-written account of this topic and includes several old photos which vividly recapture life at Errwood in the early decades of the twentieth century. (Price £5, available in local heritage centres.)

A History of New Mills Old Prize Band: 200 Years of Music Making. Dr Stephen Dearden, 24th February 2012.

This additional meeting to our normal programme turned out to be one of the more unusual we have had. As well as the speaker, members of New Mills Band were present and they punctuated Stephen's talk with tunes at relevant places. One of these tunes was 'Ransom' thought to be written by one of the band's earliest conductors, Stephen Beard.

The origin of the New Mills Old Prize Band lies in a brass and reed band formed in 1812 by Timothy Beard and it can lay claim to being one of the oldest bands in continuous existence. It was inextricably linked with the Beard family, starting with Timothy Beard (1780-1864) the founder, and the family's association with the band continued uninterrupted until the post-war period. Much of this information is dependent on the work of Kathleen Edwards, now living in Australia



In his researches, Stephen found that early records of the band were scarce and until Committee minutes became available in the 1930s sources were dependant on reports in local newspapers. Ann Mason has collected and collated a significant amount of material, and the staff of New Mills library assisted in the research. The talk was illustrated with photographs of the band from the 1890s, available on the society's website www.picturenewmills.org.uk.* Stephen's talk took us through the early years, the inter-war years, the second world war (when the band joined the Home Guard as 'C' Company (New Mills) 3rd Derbyshire Battalion of the Sherwood foresters), the post-war and contemporary band and into the new millennium.



The account is marked by much interesting detail on members who devoted years of service to the band including the musical directors, the fluctuating numbers of players, finances (and the lack of them), concern about the quality and number of instruments, rehearsal rooms,

the Junior Band, the first female member, (in the 1950s), squabbles and tensions, concerts and anniversaries. In 1974 for the first time the band became a sponsored band through a relationship with the Norwest Co-operative Society, resulting among other things in valuable sponsorship, premises for rehearsals, financial support and general stability. This relationship came to an end in 2012.

Stephen has written a fine illustrated book on the band's history. Its publication was supported by the Co-op and it was launched at the meeting. Refreshments were provided by the town council.

*Members are reminded that there are now over 10,000 photographs on this website, accessible on the internet and on computers in New Mills Library and the Heritage Centre.

Derek Brumhead

Wills In New Mills Library

The Society has donated to New Mills Library photocopies and transcripts of the 109 New Mills wills proved at Lichfield in the period 1540--1650. These can now be consulted in the Library along with an index to the wills prepared by myself and the late Dr Peter Andrew. If, for example, you are interested in a person called William Beard, the index will show you that there are 14 wills you should look at.

Most of the photocopies were obtained just before 1989 when a WEA class was set up to transcribe the wills. The resulting transcriptions provided a basis for further work that has so far led to publication of transcripts of the 50 wills up to 1607 in three books published by the Society. Another book is nearing completion.

Roger Bryant

Manchester Docks and the Ship Canal

Glen Atkinson, 9th March 2012

We welcomed the return of this popular speaker, an expert on the construction and history of the Manchester Ship Canal. After a brief summary of the building and opening of the Ship Canal, topics covered in detail on previous occasions, Glen Atkinson concentrated on the docks at Manchester.

He began by reminding us that the end of the Victorian era saw profound changes in the methods employed by civil engineers in major constructions. Steam powered cranes and mechanical diggers replaced the great army of navvies of previous decades, while miles of light railways superseded the horse and cart and temporary bridges, including swing bridges, spanned the existing roads, railways and canals to provide access to the construction sites.

One of the problems to be addressed was how to maintain access for pre-existing canals, such as the Bridgewater. The preferred solution was to allow other canal users free movement on the Ship Canal.

After a pictorial journey along the Ship Canal down to the sea using early photos, Glen turned his attention to Trafford Park, probably the world's first purpose-built industrial estate. This former medieval deer park was transformed by installing a series of docks connected to enormous warehouses and large factories by a complex network of light railways.

A little-known aspect of the Manchester docks, but one that has persisted down to relatively recent times, is the dry dock and ship repair facilities available there.

The variety of goods passing to and from the docks increased over time. The initial purpose of the Canal was to import raw cotton and other bulky raw materials directly to Manchester and its hinterland, audaciously by-passing Liverpool whose import charges were thought to be extortionate. With the passing years, a great deal of coastwise trade developed, while merchant ships from all over the world tied up at the inland port. The port also served the major engineering enterprises for which Manchester was famous. The existence of the Ship Canal facilitated the export of heavy machinery such as locomotives to many distant destinations.

New industries developed along the canal. The C.W.S., for example, a major shareholder in the Ship Canal Company, built factories producing goods such as soap, margarine and cereal products.

As the twentieth century wore on, oil became an increasingly important commodity. Ironically, this trade helped to bring about the decline and eventual demise of the docks at Manchester. Oil tankers grew bigger and bigger and eventually their size precluded use of the inland port. The wider and deeper water at Ellesmere Port sufficed for a time, but with the advent of the super-tanker even this proved inadequate. Soon, merchant ships everywhere were emulating the tankers and increasing in size to beyond the capacity of the inland port. Meanwhile Manchester's famous engineering industries were closing down, the coal trade was in terminal decline and the motorways, together with the introduction of the container system were revolutionising the way that goods were distributed.

The old port has now been transformed into Salford Quays, a residential, shopping and cultural complex. Decades of filth, squalor, neglect and decay have been swept away and with it the material remains of what was once a proud commercial heritage. But that's Manchester for you – forever reinventing itself. The capacity to do this, to cope with adversity and embrace change, is perhaps the true genius of the place.

Ron Weston

LOCAL HISTORIAN May 2012

The current issue placed in New Mills Library has these articles:

- Mike Huggins. 'The local history of British sport: approaches, sources and methods'.
Joanna Matthews. 'Built to last ? The rise and fall of the church house'.
Sean O'Dell. 'Holiday plotlands and caravans in the Tendering district of Essex 1918-2010'.
Barrie Trinder. 'County carriers revisited'.
Michael Winstanley. 'Review article: new directions in local history since Hoskins'.

Book reviews include: The keelmen of Tyneside 1600-1830; Victorian ironopolis: Middlesbrough and regional industrialisation; Early religious reformers in the Bristol region; Yorkshire's forgotten fenlands; An archaeological study of Anglo-Saxon Stafford.

Maps of Derbyshire

James Dickinson, 13th April 2012

James Dickinson, a dealer in antique maps, brought along an impressive and valuable selection of the early cartographer's art for our inspection.

The earliest printed maps of most of our counties were those drawn by Christopher Saxton and bound in his County Atlas, the first edition of which came out in 1579. This pioneering surveyor and cartographer was a man of genius whose work was copied virtually unaltered for generations to come. Saxton's maps and their derivatives emphasised landed estates, for their owners were the chief patrons and purchasers of these maps. On the other hand, roads, so much a feature of maps today, were not mapped at all. The early atlas maps were printed in black and white. Only later were handsome, hand-coloured versions produced when the aesthetic value of the maps became appreciated.

The earliest original maps of Derbyshire likely to be found on sale today are those of William Hould, together with the maps that accompanied Camden's "Britannia", a topographical encyclopaedia, first produced in 1607.

John Speed, a famous early mapmaker, dominated the county map market in the first half of the seventeenth century. He based his county maps on Saxton's atlas, but added plans of the major town or towns within each county. It is recorded that Speed maps were used by Parliamentary forces during the Civil War when seeking the location of country houses whose owners were loyal to the king.

During the latter part of the seventeenth century, Dutch map makers came to the fore. The Dutch cartographer, Blau, for example, produced some of the most attractive county maps, coloured at source. But, still no roads appeared.

This deficiency was rectified in the 1670's when Ogilvie produced road maps in long strips, enabling coachmen to unravel them as they rode. The Ogilvie maps are now valuable historical documents revealing vital evidence of what lay along our principal coaching roads before the advent of the turnpikes. From then on, county maps began to include roads; those of Morden, for example, dating from the 1670s.

Maps drawn to a larger scale began to appear in the eighteenth century, but were frequently reduced in size to appear in a county atlas. Greenwood's maps of Derbyshire are a case in point. The growing realisation that accurate, large-scale and detailed maps were important to the military, the

navy and to our mercantile fleet led to great improvements in the techniques of surveying, culminating in the triangulation of the whole country by the Ordnance Survey, originally a branch of the army, in the early nineteenth century. The production of these large-scale maps revolutionised the county atlas maps and made them more useful to a larger clientele, not least the turnpike trusts, canal and railway companies.

Nowadays, these early maps are appreciated mostly for their decorative value – maps do furnish a room – but if you want to grace the wall over your fireplace with an original page cut from a county atlas, it will cost you.

Ron Weston

The Railway & Canal Historical Society

Annual Clinker Memorial Lecture 2012

‘The Business of Running a Canal – evidence from the Peak Forest Canal’

will be presented by Grahame Boyes

at the

Radisson Edwardian Hotel, Free Trade Hall, Peter Street, Manchester,
M2 5GP.

(Nearest Metro Stop: St Peters Square)

2.15 on Saturday 10 November 2012

Entrance Free

This will also be the occasion for launching the Society’s new book -

The Peak Forest Canal: an engineering and business history

by Grahame Boyes and the late Brian Lamb

The Railway and Canal Historical Society was founded in 1954 to bring together all those interested in the history of transport, with particular reference to railways and waterways. Its main objects are to promote historical research and to raise the standard of published history.

Exploring New Mills Archives

Roger Bryant, 11th May 2012

Although members will be aware of the thousands of historic photos now made available on the "picturenewmills" website, many may not know of the immense collection of documents held by our archivist, Roger Bryant, or the extent of his labours in cataloguing and storing them effectively.

Roger informed us that he produced the first list of archive material in 1985 and has recently released list 26! These are now available on the Society's website: surely the starting place for any piece of research on the history of New Mills and its people. Roger mentioned in particular the extensive collection of probate records for New Mills now available in the library, which are a boon to anyone studying their family history.

Roger used the history of Ringstones Farm, near Rowarth, as a case study to illustrate the variety of sources available in the archive. A succession of maps, beginning with the Hibbert and Barton survey of 1640 through to the O.S. maps down to the present day formed the basis of this study, together with early photos of former buildings, deeds of sale at various dates and an aerial photo of 1976, showed that variety very effectively.

In his second case study, Roger used the wealth of early postcards of New Mills held in the archive, to illustrate their value as a window on the past. Large numbers of postcards were produced by local photographers and printers from around 1900, such as H. Critchlow, who had premises in High Street and produced views of New Mills from 1903 onwards. Another important source of early postcards were Luke and James Garside who were stationers in Hayfield. Luke died in 1913. Larger firms covering the district included the producers of the "Grenville Series", based in Stockport. Their postcards sold in large numbers in our area in the 1920s. These are just a few of the postcard publishers that Roger mentioned. He illustrated his account with a number of views of local places to show how they have changed over the decades. These aroused great interest from the audience and no doubt will encourage many to consult the "picturenewmills" website.

To digitise the many thousands of documents in our archive would be an impossible task; but there is surely a case for making a selection of our most important documents available. That is a task for the future. It only remains to thank Roger for all his efforts to make the archive accessible and for his informative and interesting talk.

Ron Weston

Front cover - 2 postcards from our collection.