

# New Mills Local History Society

## NEWSLETTER 61



**Autumn 2018**

## From the Editor

Dear Friends,

It is my sad duty to report the retirement of Gaynor Andrew as Chairperson of our Society. Gaynor served for many years as a hard-working Committee member and Vice-Chairperson before taking up the leading role. She has guided the Committee with unfailing courtesy and charm and has brought good sense and thoughtfulness to its proceedings. Gaynor has exercised that same courtesy and charm when introducing our guest speakers at our monthly meetings, always striking the right note in her final remarks.

As yet, we have not found a new Chairperson, but until we do, rest assured, other members of the Committee will chair our meetings.

Our former Honorary Secretary, John Humphreys, has now retired from the Committee. John's service to the Society goes back to its beginnings. Apart from his work as Secretary, the range of his contributions has been wide: He would ferry incapacitated members to meetings on a regular basis, help with setting up exhibitions and give up his time to man them. Over the years he has performed innumerable chores to ensure the smooth running of our programme. One of his greatest contributions was to organize our summer visits to places of historical interest - a formidable task which he performed without fuss, bringing a great deal of pleasure to the many scores of members who attended over the years.

The Society will be the poorer for the loss of these two stalwarts, both of whom have earned the gratitude of us all.

*Ron Weston.*

## Committee 2017-2018

Chairperson	(Vacant)
Vice-Chairperson	John Crummett (749530)
Hon. Secretary	Mike Daniels (746449)
Hon. Treasurer	Maureen Hall (742837)
Hon. Archivist	Andrew Screen (742198)
Hon. Photo Archivist	Roger Bryant (744227)
Hon. Editor	Ron Weston (744838)
Hon. Website manager	Barry Dent (745837)
Ordinary members	Gaynor Andrew, Derek Brumhead, Nicki Burgess, Pat Evans, Chris Jones

## **The Bamford Dams**

### **Keith Blood, 12th January 2018**

In an earlier talk, Keith Blood spoke to us about the building of the dams in the upper reaches of the Derwent Valley to supply water to Sheffield and the East Midlands. In particular, he described life in “Tin Town”, the settlement of Birchinlee built to house the army of workers and their families during the years of construction in the early twentieth century. Keith reminded us of these events before launching into the second part of the story, the building of the dam at Ladybower, above the village of Bamford just before and during the Second World War.

This construction demanded a new Act of Parliament and involved the drowning of a considerable amount of farm land, together with two villages, Ashopton and Derwent. The reservoir that was created covered a colossal 504 acres.

Keith showed us photos of the construction phase of the great earth dam and the upgrading of the roads between Bamford, Sheffield and Glossop. But the most moving illustrations were of the villages of Ashopton and Derwent with their lovely old buildings and village streets thronged with youngsters, followed by scenes of dereliction as the houses and the church at Derwent were being demolished.

The old packhorse bridge at Derwent was eventually rebuilt in the Upper Derwent Valley, near Slippery Stones and the church tower and spire, which had originally been preserved as a monument, had to be destroyed when in a drought year it became possible for people to gain access to the village site again. The tower had become dangerous. The last service had been held in the church in 1943 and its bells, stained glass and other precious objects were redistributed among other local churches.

Keith showed us interesting pictures of the drought years in which the former landscape was reexposed. What memories and bitter reflections must these images have aroused in the former inhabitants! As always, there is a human cost to progress and it is usually ordinary people who suffer the most.

Ironically, the Derwent dams were used as a practice area for Lancaster bombers to perfect the dropping of the bouncing bombs, used successfully towards the end of the war to destroy the great dams in the Ruhr Valley. The catastrophic flooding of the industrial towns of the Ruhr no doubt helped to shorten the war, but surely the former inhabitants of Derwent and Ashopton must have experienced some fellow feeling with those German families whose homes had also disappeared beneath the floodwaters.

*Ron Weston*

## **The Silk Industry of Macclesfield**

### **Dr Mike Nevell, 9th. February 2018**

Eastern Cheshire was one of the chief centres of hand and factory silk production in England from the late 17th to the mid-20th centuries. Silk-covered buttons were manufactured by hand in Macclesfield from the mid-16th century and in Congleton by the 17th century, before the arrival of cotton. Raw silk had to be imported from the eastern Mediterranean and China. The big change in production came with the establishment of mechanised silk throwing techniques, introduced into Britain from Italy by John Lombe (by industrial espionage) with his water-powered silk mill in Derby in 1721. When his patents expired in 1732, Lombe's designs were used to build a number of silk mills across the north Midlands including Cheshire. The earliest one to be built in Cheshire was a small button mill in Macclesfield by Charles Roe, the famous industrialist, water power being used for throwing silk, i.e. preparing the yarn.

Weaving at first was done on handlooms in garrets above the weavers' terrace houses, the workshops often extending across three or more cottages such as can be seen today in Townley Street and Paradise Street in Macclesfield. Terraces of such houses are still very common in Macclesfield today. Power looms were introduced in factories in the mid-nineteenth century, the Jacquard loom being introduced to weave complex patterns, using an early punch card system, a chain of cards laced together into a continuous system. Multiple rows of holes were punched on each card with one complete card corresponding to one row of the design. It was invented by Joseph Marie Jacquard in 1804. These looms can be seen today working in Paradise Mill, now forming part of the Macclesfield Silk Museum.

There are still many good examples of mills surviving in Cheshire from the late 18th century and early 19th century. These later silk mills showed Palladian style influences such as shallow projecting central bays, topped by a pediment and a clock such as at Dane Mill in Congleton and Regency Mill in Macclesfield in 1810. Internally they had cast-iron columns supporting wooden beams and floors. Later mills had iron columns so contributing to a fire proof structure, not always successful, as mills were still destroyed by fire, particularly the very fine 1753 Park Green Mill in Macclesfield in 2009. Steam power became common in Congleton and Macclesfield mills from the 1800s. Increasingly these mill complexes added other manufacturing processes such as weaving and finishing as at George Street Mill in Macclesfield. 105 mills were built in Macclesfield between 1743 and 1940 and by 1830 nearly half the town's working population were working in the textile industry.

The Jacquard loom enabled the Macclesfield silk industry to survive when duties on foreign silks were gradually removed leading to complete Free Trade in 1860, although handloom weaving continued in the garrets as late as the 1930s. A revival came in the 1920s and 1930s with the introduction of artificial silks such as rayon, but even this industry declined in the late 20 century.

Dr Nevell is head of a degree-awarding department at Salford University and the author of many prestigious articles and books, a leading academic in industrial archaeology. Being also the leader of the Centre for Applied Archaeology at Salford (an excavation team) it was natural that he should finish with an account of excavating the site of the 1780s Carrs Mill in Wilmslow in 2006. He illustrated how the wheel pit, the site of a later water turbine was found and excavated

Dr Nevell brought with him several copies of the booklet ‘A Guide to the Industrial Archaeology of Cheshire’ and sold them all, generously donating £20 of the proceeds to the Society. Twenty surviving Macclesfield silk mills are described and illustrated in the booklet. As well as the mills, the weavers’ cottages are illustrated such as those in Paradise Street with rows of 15 and 17 cottages, the best surviving examples of domestic workshops in Cheshire.

Reference: Anthony Calladine and Jean Fricker (1993) East Cheshire Textile Mills (Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England; ISBN 1 873592 13 2)

*Derek Brumhead.*



*Weavers' cottages in Townley Street, Macclesfield*



*Jacquard loom punched cards.*

## **From Fields to Shops: The development of Market Street, New Mills.**

**Roger Bryant, 9th March 2018**

In his excellent publication “Market Street, New Mills, 1899 -1912”, Roger Bryant uses old photos of the shops, together with lists and accounts of their occupants between those dates. His talk took us back to the beginning of our principal shopping street, the circumstances and details of its development, beginning about 1830 and concluding in the 1890s. Thus, his talk leaves off where his book begins.

Before the building of the first cotton mills in the town in the late eighteenth century, the main shopping street was High Street, whose steep ascent from the bottom of New Mills must have rendered generations of inhabitants burdened with shopping bags breathless. With the rapid expansion of New Mills as a manufacturing town in the opening decades of the nineteenth century, the fields of Torr Top Estate, which, as the name suggests, occupied the hillside above the Torrs, became the scene of the next phase of urban expansion.

In 1801 a turnpike road opened which linked Stockport to New Mills via Marple and Strines. This road, which ran through the fields of Torr Top Estate to link up with the top of High Street, was in the following decades to become Market Street, the town’s new shopping street. The Torr Top Estate had been in the possession of the Bower family from as far back as the late seventeenth century when they purchased the “King’s Part” of the commons. When Thomas Bower, yeoman and woollen draper died in 1731, he left assets totalling £2280. He was the wealthiest man in New Mills at that time by a considerable margin. It was the descendants of the Bowers, who in the early nineteenth century were still in possession of Tor Top Estate, who were the first to divide the land flanking the turnpike into building plots for the future shops. Prominent amongst them was Miss Maria Cresswell, a reclusive lady living in Dublin. The Tithe Apportionment of 1841 reveals several landowners with an Irish connection, including Miss Cresswell, owning portions of the Torr Top Estate.

Another person who figured prominently in the early acquisition of building plots along Market Street was Richard Bennett. We know little about him. He was a shoemaker by trade - a seemingly humble calling, but one that gave him the wherewithal to trade in real estate. By the time of his death in 1859 Richard Bennett was the owner of many of the shops along both sides of Market Street. We need to find out more about this key figure in the development of our town.

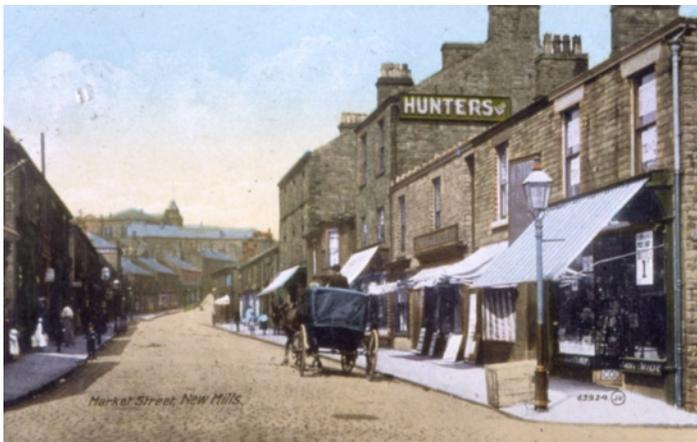


*Market Street.*

After outlining the history Market Street in this initial phase of development, Roger went on to show us the sequence of shop-building between the construction of the Crown Inn (1830-32) and the erection of the Market Hall on the last vacant plot in 1886. It had taken just over fifty years to create the street we know today.

Looking at Market Street today, we see above the facades of the present-day shops (those that still survive as shops) the upper storeys of the original nineteenth century stone buildings. In conducting this research into what remains the heart of our town, Roger has performed a valuable service.

*Ron Weston.*



*Market Street about 1911.*

## **Roman Manchester. Norman Redhead April 13th 2018**

In the 1950's I went to see the remains of the Roman Fort in Manchester. This consisted of a few small sections of wall concealed within enclosed railway arches at one time aptly described as the least interesting pieces of Roman remains in Britain! How different today.!

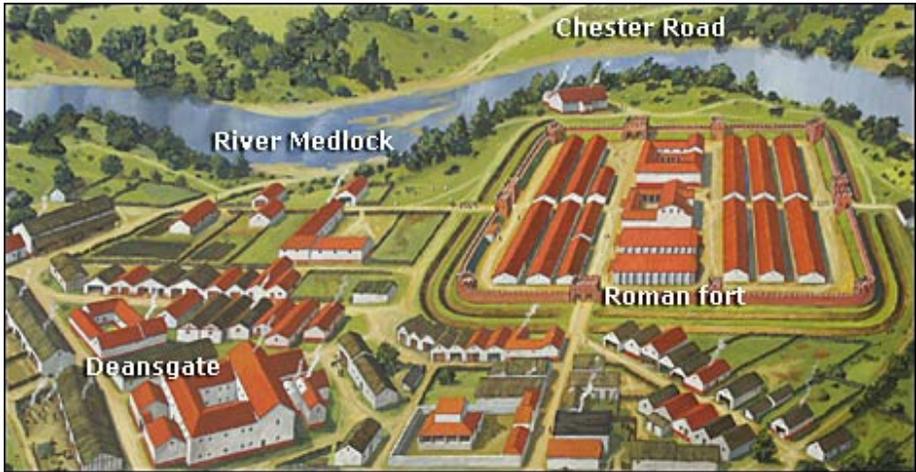
On a damp, uninspiring April evening, a sizable audience was treated to an authoritative and structured talk on the archaeology of Mamucium by Norman Redhead of the Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory service based at the University of Salford. Norman began by outlining the history of the fort from its foundation in 79 A.D by Agricola to the withdrawal of the Roman Legions by 400 A.D. Initially defended by timber and turf walls, it was strengthened with stone at various times, particularly about 200 A.D when the Emperor Septimus Severus visited Britain. The fort has to be seen as part of the defence system of Northern Britain on the military road between two legionary forts- viz Chester (Legion XX Valeria Victrix) and York (leg. IX Hispana).

Compared to the last two, Mamucium was a small fort garrisoned by a cohort (500 men) of auxiliaries recruited from Spain, Austria and Hungary. The fort was a typical playing card shape which, if short of evidence, could be reconstructed by analogy-comparison with other forts, the Romans being consistent in their planning. The site chosen was at the Southern end of Deansgate in the area which became known as Castlefield; an alternative site would have been near to today's cathedral.

The chosen site became the victim of the industrial development of Manchester in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the building of the railways and Rochdale Canal destroying or concealing much of the evidence.

The fort itself contained the necessary military and administrative buildings - barracks, stables and the headquarters buildings. The evidence from furnaces and granaries suggests the fort could have been a supply depot for Chester. A civilian settlement ( Vicus ) developed outside the walls, the result of providing for the needs of the fort and retired auxiliaries settling where they had served and married local women. Cemeteries were also outside the walls.

Norman gave a detailed chronological history of the excavation in the Castlefield area, particularly from the nineteenth century and emphasising those of the 1970's and 80's. This was accompanied by excellent maps and diagrams which enabled us to follow the developments in time and space and which culminated in the reconstruction of the North Gate and provision of a clearer impression of the site for visitors. Here we were able to see and hear of



the commitment and professional concerns of the archaeological teams of Norman's Advisory Service.

We were introduced to some of the archaeological evidence e.g. the significance and importance of Roman tombstones, their images and epigraphs providing fascinating details of Roman life. There is evidence for a possible Mithraic Temple, again outside the walls, this religion being particularly associated with the military. The fragment of a potsherd with a Rotas/Opera inscription was an exciting discovery. This is a magical word square made up of 25 characters to form Latin words. In translation they make little sense but re arrange the letters and you can construct a cross of 2 Pater Nosters with A's (Alpha) and O's (Omega) remaining. This suggests the possibility of Christian worship in Manchester in the second century A.D

For those local inhabitants in 79 A.D life was never going to be the same the day the strangers arrived and the wooden palisades went up. For us in 2018 what followed would never have been revealed but for the outstanding work of the excavation teams over the years - we are indebted to them and thank Norman for his revelations and for sharing his interests and expertise with us.

*John Crummett.*

**A.G.M. followed by  
The Bicentenary of the Rebuilding of St. Matthew's,  
Hayfield 1817-19  
John Crummett, 11th May 2018**

We decided to hold our A.G.M. in Hayfield this year, to mark an important event in the history of our neighbours, the bicentenary of the rebuilding of St. Matthew's Church. The meeting was held in the church hall. Our members attended in force and there were many visitors from Hayfield to hear John Crummett's talk. Consequently, the room was packed out, but there was a convivial atmosphere.

After the A.G.M. John gave an excellent talk, (the details of which appear in his own words below). John then led us into the church where he pointed out some of the features of interest there. Then, sustained by tea and cakes administered by "the ladies of the parish" the more agile ventured into the crypt, which contains stone supports belonging to the medieval chapel-of-ease that the present church replaced.

The evening proved a great success and we are grateful to John Crummett for organising this unusual event in our programme.

*Ron Weston.*



*The old church, before rebuilding.*

## **St. Matthew's Church, Hayfield. 2018 Celebration : An Introduction.**

The year 2018 marks the bicentenary of the rebuilding of St. Matthew's. The key to this year is the date stone 1818 on the crenellated wall above the East window.

By the early 19th century St. Matthew's could not provide a positive religious experience for Hayfield and district inhabitants in two respects- a) the physical building was in state of dilapidated decay and b) the accommodation was inadequate for a growing population. ( Hayfield Census returns : 1801-792; 1811-1286; 1821-1338.)

It took five years from 1813 to go through the whole process of rebuilding. A final document was issued on November 2nd 1818, a small copy of which currently hangs in the church near to the incumbents' board on the stairs leading to the gallery. This shows the approved ground floor plan with pew owners and pew rents (those who paid for places) clearly identified. Excluding "free" places the number of pew sittings in the church was 619.

Since 1818, building alterations e.g. the construction of the foyer and the removal of pews from the centre of the church, have altered the configuration and appearance of the interior. However, pews still bear their identifiable numbers (68 originally on the ground floor providing 383 sittings) as in 1818 and card name holders for "owners" still remain on many pews. In the galleries some copper name plates survive, e.g. for Park Hall, a large pew in the N.E. corner.

In 1818 there would have been no stained glass windows, all being donated after this date. The organ was not installed until 1849.

*John Crummett.*

## **The Local Historian**

The following issues have been placed in New Mills Library

### **Volume 48, No 1 January 2018.**

Christopher Dyer, 'Local Societies on the move in the middle ages: migration and social mobility in England 1100-1500'.

Elizabeth Norton, 'Parish bede rolls during the English Reformation'.

Andrew Pickering, 'Witchcraft and evidence in a Somerset parish in the seventeenth century'.

Ian Beckwith, 'The bewitching of Emma Smith'.

Harry Fairburn, 'Evacuation to Northallerton in 1939-1940: a community divided?'.

Paul Jennings, 'Review article: books on the local history of drink, drinking and public houses'.

Recent publications in local history.

Book reviews include:

Jonas Moore's map of the Great Levell of the Fenns 1658.

Mapping Saddleworth vol 2 manuscript maps 1625-1822.

The fighting Essex soldier: recruitment, war and society in the 14th century.

Birmingham wills and inventories 1512-1603.

History in the South Pennines; the legacy of Alan Petford.

### **Volume 48 No 2 April 2018.**

Cheryl Butler, 'Hiding in documents; the lives of women in a patriarchal society - sixteenth century Southampton'.

Peter Leese, 'The Trumper's Tale: poverty, vagrancy and witness'.

Peter W. Hampson, 'Industrial finance from the working classes in the later nineteenth century'.

David Thomas Taylor, 'Occupational and social mobility during industrialisation: the experience of a Black Country parish in the nineteenth century'.

George Sheeran, 'Trippers discouraged: New Filey, the building of a select resort, 1800-1900'.

A.D.Harvey, 'Opinion: a local historian's progress - down the ascending staircase?'.

Michael Haslam, 'Review article; six books about churches and chapels, their builders and their congregations'.

Book reviews include:

Schooling in England Wales 1660-1850.

The Hollway Sanitarium.

Voices from wartime Leeds 1939-40: three MO diarists.

A Londoner in Lancashire 1941-1943 .

Waging civil war in Shropshire 1642-1648.

## **Chairman's Report 2018**

Another season is coming to an end on an unusual high note, we are here to celebrate 200 years since the restoration of St Matthews Parish Church in Hayfield in 1817 to 1819. This has been researched by our Vice Chairman John Crummett, he has arranged the visit and he will be talking about the restoration after the meeting.

The Society has had another good year with excellent speakers, arranged by Derek Brumhead, the numbers have kept up well as the audiences appreciate the topics and also find the meetings as an opportunity for tea and chat. Many thanks to Derek

Our secretary has kept us in order, and kept his cool when we first heard about the new requirements for Data Protection which sounded daunting, but for us fairly straight forward.

Our treasurer Maureen Hall keeps the books in order with great calmness and knows the legal requirements.

The new archivist, Andy Screen, has been co-opted to the committee, and hopefully will be elected during this meeting. He has been working with Roger Bryant, now photographic archivist, to become acquainted with what is needed. He must be learning fast, already he is asking for money for more protective packaging for documents.

Ron Weston, our hard working editor, has published two new books this year as well as writing up reports of talks and also the newsletter, which he produces with the webmaster Barry Dent, who incidentally fields all the queries that come in. It was thanks to Barry that we got the archivist!

Again Pat and Lyndon Evans dressed a Christmas tree for the society in St Georges Church and afterwards in the Library on Derek's theme of Torrs past and present.

Peter Done, with other committee members, keeps the tea urn going for the cuppas, for which we are very grateful.

I have asked to retire as chairman, I feel it is time for a change. I thank the committee for all their support over the years and give my good wishes to the society.

*Gaynor Andrew*

## Receipts and Payments for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018.

	2017/2018	2016/2017
<b>Opening Balances</b>		
Current A/C	£1179.98	
Invest A/C	£1420.90	
2nd A/C	£24.01	
Pay Pal A/C	£26.39	<b>£2651.28</b>
<b>Receipts</b>		
Donations	£95.00	£130.00
Visitors	£117.00	£117.00
Gift Aid received	£118.24	£119.61
Subscriptions	£579.23	£617.00
Sales of Publications	£583.83	£508.60
Sales of Refreshments	£42.27	£52.81
Outings		
Sale of High Res. Prints	£38.88	£25.82
Interest 2nd A/C	£0.03	£3.35
Interest Invest A/C	£6.70	£8.49
<b>Total receipts</b>		<b>£1581.18</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>£4232.46</b>
Publications in hand		£2667.00

2017/2018

2016/2017

**Expenses**

Speakers	£308.20	£226.99
Newsletter	£65.00	£110.00
Hire of Hall	£397.92	£332.64
Archive materials		£0.00
Printing/Publications	£342.54	£512.50
BALH Subscription	£75.00	£65.00
Expenses	£194.31	£256.88
Outings		
Refreshments	£13.00	£10.00
Digit. Of Audio Cassettes		
Hosting Picture NM	£150.00	£150.00

**Total Expenses**

**£1545.97**

**Closing Balances**

Current A/C	£1220.92	
Invest A/C	£1427.60	
2nd A/C	£24.04	
Pay Pal A/C	£13.93	<b>£2686.49</b>

**Total**

**£4232.46**

**Audit Note**

The accounts of the Society have been audited in accordance with the books, vouchers and explanations given to me, and in my opinion, represent the affairs of the Society, as at 31/3/2018.

*Lesley James, 11/4/18*

## **New Mills Local History Society - Meetings - Autumn 2018**

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.

The meeting on September 17 is the New Mills Festival Lecture, is on a Monday and starts at 7.30 pm. It is followed by free cheese and wine provided by New Mills Town Council. Admission is free.

Friday Sep. 14	Investigating Local Housing: Physical Evidence in Context	Professor Geoff Timmins
Monday Sep. 17	40 Years of Swizzels-Matlow	Nici Matlow
Friday Oct. 12	The Social and Economic Implications of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway	Edwina Currie
Friday Nov. 9	The Women who made Manchester	Anne Beswick
Friday Dec. 14	The Towers Estate: its role in the making of Manchester and the scientific discoveries made there	Dr Diana Leitch

### ***Cover pictures***

*Swizzels-Matlow, Brunswick Mill, Albion Road, 2016, (n19843).*

*Swizzels-Matlow, Brunswick Mill, viewed from Church Road, 2016 (n20234).*

*Visit to Swizzells-Matlow by Her Royal Highness The Princess of Wales (Princess Diana), 1990, (n05736).*

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