

NEW MILLS
LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER

the new mill



Detail from a 17th century map showing the location of
Beard Mill or New Mill.

AUTUMN PROGRAMME 1991

Our first meeting of the new season will be on Wednesday 25th September, in the Library Lecture Room. Roger Bryant our archivist is giving a talk entitled "New Mills 600". See "Events at Michaelmas 1991" for further details of celebratory events.

Would members please note that our next and subsequent meetings will be held at Sett Valley House on the 2nd Friday of the month.

11th October 1991 - "The History of Belle Vue", Robert Nicholls. (who is the author of a book on the subject)

8th November 1991 - "17th Century Rainow", Jane Laughton.

(Jane has written a book on her findings from Macclesfield Forest papers and probate records. It will be interesting to compare with work carried out by members of our own group who will be giving the January lecture.

13th December 1991 - "Innsignia", Dennis Snape.

(History of Inn Signs,) Very appropriate for the season of "Good Cheer".

THE AGM OF THE SOCIETY - 8th May 1991

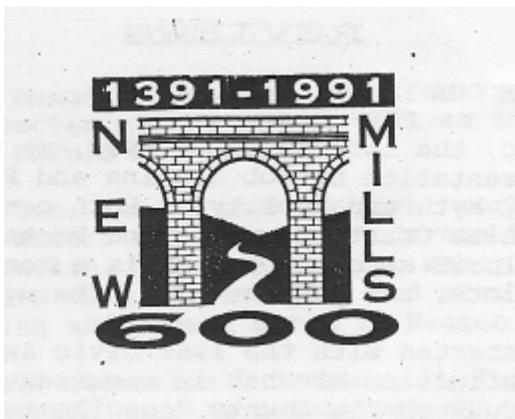
The minutes of the previous AGM and this years officers' reports were submitted and approved by the members.

The Members of the Elected Committee are:-

Chairman	Derek Brumhead
Vice-Chairman	
& Publications Editor	Ron Weston
Secretary	John Humphreys
Treasurer	Barry Dent
Archivist	Roger Bryant
Newsletter Editor	Margaret Cooper
Programme Secretary	Barbara Matthews
Membership. Secretary	Kath Dent
Committee	Olive Bowyer
	David Pitcher
	John Symonds

Following the AGM John and Brenda Parkin gave us an insight into their hobby of collecting postcards. They brought along a large display of cards representing many areas of interest. Many of the cards formed sets, ie. Ladies in Hats, and Alphabets. Some could be held up to the light thus illuminating the windows of the houses, some were described as risque, there were even a few local views and war time memories.

Perhaps we should choose our holiday postcards with more care.



LOCAL HISTORY EVENTS AT MICHAELMAS 1991

The earliest known reference to Beard Mill, later the New Mill, is Michaelmas 1391 and during that week in 1991 a series of celebratory events is being held.

1. "Before and after the New Mill: 900 years of local history". A series of 10 evening meetings on the history of New Mills under the sponsorship of New Mills and Hayfield WEA will commence on Thursday 19th September at 7.30pm at New Mills School, Church Lane. The tutors will be Roger Bryant and Derek Brumhead. A separate leaflet is available.
 2. "New Mills 600". A public lecture by Roger Bryant of New Mills Local History Society will be held on Wednesday 25th September at 7.45pm in the Library Lecture Room.
 3. "New Mills 600" Exhibitions. An exhibition of maps, documents and photographs illustrating the history of New Mills will be held in the Library Lecture Room from Saturday 27th September to Thursday 3rd October.
A second exhibition of photographs illustrating New Mills "then and now" will be held in the Heritage Centre between Saturday 21st September to Thursday 24th October.
 4. "The New Mill and other mills: a guided walk". A guided walk led by John Symonds and Derek Brumhead will be held on Sunday 29th September. The walk starts at the Hare and Hounds, Low Leighton, at 1.30 pm.
- PS. Don't forget your Mac!

REVIEWS

TWO FOR THE PRICE OF ONE

On Wednesday evening, the 14th November 1990, we were treated to a double starring presentation by Bob Hawkins and Richard Tuffrey titled 'Conservation Areas, Myth and Reality'. Both conservation officers, Bob with the Derbyshire County Council, and Richard with the Borough Council, gave us a lucid account of what is a conservation area, how it works, the conflicts, the public view, the myths and realities.

Conservation areas started with the 1967 Civic Amenities Act. This gave us the legal definition of what is a conservation area, and places a statutory duty on the County Councils to protect and enhance the designated areas. In fact, the Act only offers slight protection, being concerned primarily with the demolition of buildings and the felling of trees. It is not an all embracing Act and does nothing to ensure good practice. Much more help is required to make it a success. The reality is that it does give recognition to the special qualities of an area, increasing the awareness of residents, and offers a positive framework for conservation and enhancement work. It offers one of the best opportunities for the distribution of grant aid, which is the means of getting things done.

The other government Act, applicable only to specific buildings, is the listed buildings legislation. It was interesting to learn that the parish of New Mills, last surveyed in 1977, has 67 properties listed as being of special architectural or historical interest. By today's standards there seems to be several anomalies in the listing. The Town Hall, Methodist Free Church and the Library to name just three.

The Civic Amenities Act was to look at wider areas, not just individual properties. 1985 saw the establishment of the New Mills conservation area. It was extended in 1986 and again in February 1990 as a preliminary to the establishment of the Town Scheme. The New Mills Town Scheme is the second in the High Peak, the Buxton Scheme was established in 1980. The Town Scheme is an arrangement between English Heritage, D.C.C. and the High Peak Borough Council, and offers a generous level of grant aid to the amount of £20,000 per year for the next three years. This aid is for the repairing of selected buildings within the conservation areas. But in the end, it will be the level of local support from the town that will ultimately determine just how successful the scheme is.

Throughout their talk both Richard and Bob showed many slides of the more notable areas and buildings, both grand and not so grand. These were much enjoyed. Their enthusiasm was contagious and prompted much discussion over a nice cup of tea.

David Pitcher

SAMUEL OLDKNOW

Ann Hearle's talk on Samuel Oldknow on the 16th January gave us an insight into the character of the man as well as an account of his vast achievements in Marple and Mellor.

Born in 1756 in Anderton, Samuel Oldknow first worked for his Uncle Thomas in Nottingham before returning to Anderton to manufacture fustians, linen and muslin. After borrowing money from Richard Arkwright he moved to a mill in Stockport and also a warehouse in Manchester and a dyeing and bleach works in Heaton Mersey.

Oldknow then turned his attention to Mellor, buying Bottoms Hall Estate. He again borrowed heavily before embarking on his plans for the area. He demolished Bottoms Hall before building an apprentice house and modern farm on the site. His mill was to be the largest in the North-West, 400ft. long, six storeys high and was to take two years to build.

Oldknow, who was described as a healthy, hearty and handsome man, was a good employer. He built houses for his workers, most now demolished but Red Row in Mellor is still in existence. He then became interested in building a canal, becoming Chairman of the committee concerned with the building of the Peak Forest Canal. Money was still a problem and by 1780 his assets were £83,974-10-8 but he had debts of £97,400-18-5 and his old friend Richard Arkwright once again bailed him out. Despite his massive debts Samuel Oldknow must have been a popular and respected man for he became the President of Derbyshire Agricultural Society and in 1824, at the age of 68 years, the High Sheriff of the County of Derby. The talk provided an interesting and informative look at the man who changed the face of Mellor.

Kath Dent

INDUSTRIAL TOKENS

On 15th February last, the Society was treated to a very interesting illustrated talk by Bill Kennett on Industrial Tokens.

I for one, in my ignorance had supposed Industrial Tokens to be the same as truck tokens, the like of which were issued by Samuel Gregg of Styal Mill to his workers as wages. These could only be exchanged in shops, public houses etc. owned by him.

Industrial Tokens were issued by private individuals, companies and municipalities originally in order to pay their workers as there was a lack of government small coinage at this time. Some were commemorative eg. the building of Iron Bridge at Coalbrookdale and the opening of the Severn/Thames Canal, but most were made or commissioned by manufacturers and the owners of coal mines or brass works.

They could be roughly divided into three groups

- a) 17th century trade tokens.
- b) Late 18th century provincial tokens.

- c) Early 19th century, i) Silver token issue
- ii) Copper token issue.

Considerable variations in quality occurred, they were usually of values between 1/4d and 2d the majority being of 1/2d. The later issues were bigger in size and of a higher value. The tokens could be exchanged anywhere, even in different areas of the country. The trader could then cash them in for money with a local agent.

Mr. Kennett illustrated his talk with slides and fascinating snippets about the industrialists and their companies as well as bringing along his collection of tokens for our perusal.

Margaret Cooper

OLLERSETT IN 1841

Ron Weston gave his talk to coincide with the publication of his book "Ollersett in 1841 : Land and People". If you missed the talk, then you missed a most interesting and informative evening which was well attended by members and a good many non-members alike.

Ron started with a blank canvass and painted for us a colourful picture of the hamlet of Ollersett in 1841. He told of how the history of farming methods, the use of the natural resources of water, stone, coal and land all contributed to the scene in that year. Collating the information from the census returns and the tithe documents he produced an integrated account of its land and people.

Ollersett was divided between many owners, but most were absentee landlords. The Cavendish family as well as owning nearly all of the Hamlet of Beard, had the finest of the Ollersett farms, High Hill. Thomas Brocklehurst of Lyme was a coal owner, hence his interest in acquiring land here. Many were owners by default as they had previously loaned money to George W. Newton who until 1835 was the principal landowner. He had had grandiose ideas of creating a gentlemen's country estate similar to Lyme, but had mortgaged and re-mortgaged his property to such an extent that by 1835 he could not meet the initial payments. The Estate was divided up between his principal creditors thus changing the character of ownership dramatically. The Estate lodges, Moscow and Ollersett Cottages, and the imposing boundary walls are all that remain of George Newton's dream: the Ollersett Estate was increasingly exploited for its coal resources.

I found this a fascinating account of a local area that is all too easy to overlook: if you want to know more I can certainly recommend Ron's book to you. A few weeks later Ron conducted a short walk around the estate, unfortunately it wasn't the nicest of evenings but nevertheless it was most interesting to actually look at some of the features and buildings that we had heard about in the talk, bringing that canvass to life.

Margaret Cooper

LINDOW MAN

The Library Lecture room was filled to capacity for our April meeting when Velson Horie, Keeper of Conservation at Manchester Museum gave an interesting talk on "Lindow Man". The body was found in a peat bog on Lindow Moss near Wilmslow in 1984. This was of particular interest to me because Lindow Common, close to Lindow Moss was one of my childhood haunts. The speaker explained how the body was found by peat workers and told of its removal from the peat in the presence of archeologists, botanists and pathologists whose combined knowledge made the task possible. Also in attendance were the Wilmslow police hoping for evidence to close their file on a missing person.

Carbon dating of the body gave two differing dates, 4,000 BC and 1,000 AD. Examination of stomach contents showed his last meal consisted of bread containing barley and burnt bran. His finger nails were mysteriously highly polished, suggesting that he had not worked in any way for a long time.

Mr Horie set the scene of the time when Lindow Man, who was probably a Celt, was alive and explained that his death was not from natural causes. He was stunned with two blows on the head with an axe or similar object and garrotted, possibly a Celtic ritual. The police by now had lost interest as their files did not go so far back in time. The body was taken to the British Museum, but is currently on exhibition at the Manchester Museum until 21st September. It was a fascinating talk and as our chairman said in his vote of thanks, "a change to have history from below ground".

Barbara Matthews

"FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENTS"

LANCASHIRE BOILERS IN THE SETT VALLEY.

In the latter part of the last century, my grandfather had a boiler-making business in Heaton Norris, Stockport, and as well as supplying boilers to the Stockport mills, he did so to the many calico print works and bleach works along the Goyt and Sett valleys, and also to several of the collieries around New Mills. From copies of his letters I find that in the 1880's four of his boilers were at Edward Rumney & Co's Watford Bridge Calico Print Works, three were at John Bennett & Sons' Birch Vale Print Works, and others were at the print works at Strines and Kinder Bank, as well as at Slacks' Paper Works at Hayfield. These boilers were generally 30 feet long, 7 feet in diameter, weighing 20 tons, and their transportation must have provided interesting problems, especially through the narrow streets of Hayfield to Kinder Bank. He undertook repair work at these places, and carried out regular boiler inspections, but what I find most interesting are his business dealings with the collieries in the area. It has amazed me that in some cases boilers were rivetted up by hand down the pits, where

presumably they were required to operate pumping engines, and the following extracts from letters refer to this.

December 2nd 1898. Ollersett Colliery Co. "My men would only go down the pit on condition that I paid them time and a half... a good deal depends on how the men are taken down to do their work, and the lights they have when at work - tallow dips are too much trouble."

February 25th 1885. Thomas Bennett Esq., Thornsett Hey Colliery. "I propose to cut up the boiler I fixed for you at the above colliery into pieces similar to what it was when taken up into its position, and use every care to keep the plates good for putting together again. You to provide candles and all light, and remove the plates away as the work proceeds."

March 17th 1886. John Bennett & Sons, Birch Vale Print Works. "I propose to connect your boiler which is now lying in parts at Thornsett Hey Colliery as follows - You to deliver the whole by truck at New Mills or Birch Vale sidings (Midland Rail Co.) consigned to me. I will then put the boiler together and rivet it by machine in my works, provide all rivets, etc. as required, give the whole outside one good coat of paint, and fix it upon its bed for the sum of £62."

It appears that Bennetts of Birch Vale had interests in several local collieries, as a letter of June 17th. 1886 to Thomas Bennett shows. "As requested by you I wrote to your Mr. Joseph Hyde to meet me at your Bugsworth Colliery on Tuesday last, but for some reason or another he did not turn up, and the boiler house being barricaded up I could not make a proper inspection of the boiler, but by taking some of the timber away I saw enough to satisfy me that it is in working condition. It would perhaps be best to remove this one from Bugsworth to your Coldharbour Colliery, and after leaving here I walked to Coldharbour to inspect the way the boiler would have to travel."

This boiler made the journey from Bugsworth to Coldharbour, and the Thornsett Hey one arrived there eventually, as the following extract from an invoice shows:- "Aug. 14th. 1886. Thomas Bennett Esq. To cutting up boiler at Thornsett Hey Colliery as tender of Feb.25th.1885, remaking it again at my works and delivering it at Coldharbour as tender of March 17th.1886. To removing boiler from Bugsworth to Coldharbour as tender of July 4th. 1886." The total charge was £90.

March 21st 1885. The Aspenshaw Colliery Co., Hayfield.

"I propose to make you a Lancashire boiler 24 feet long by 6'2" diameter. The material to be delivered to your colliery my me, removed up the shaft by you and then erected and finished off entirely by me."

It is almost beyond belief that such work was ever undertaken.

Tom Oldham

Reporter Saturday March 3rd 1894. "The Doings of a Mad Bull"

"On Tuesday afternoon considerable excitement was caused along Spring Bank and Market Street by the antics played by a young bull. It appears that the animal had been purchased by a man named Bradley from Mr. George Woodward of Hollins Farm, Rowarth. It was known that the "beast" was wild, never having before left the place and to ease its removal three stirks were driven from the farm to accompany it to New Mills. For half an hour the bull stood quietly with the stirks near the White Hart Inn waiting for the arrival of the purchaser. As soon as the stirks were taken away the bull became furious and in its rage ran about the road wildly. After running up some steps opposite the White Hart it dashed over the wall separating Spring Bank from Dyehouse Lane, and how it escaped breaking its neck seems wonderful. Having been secured with a rope, it was thought to be safe, but its strength was such that it escaped and mounted the steps of the garden leading to Messrs. Hill's house and played havoc with the garden. Subsequently it entered Dr. Anderton's garden doing considerable mischief. When it reached the Crown Hotel it again broke loose and running along the street dashed into a shop occupied by Mrs. Sidebottom on Market Street. The animal rushed through the shop and entered the living place at the rear. Mrs. Sidebottom in her terror rushed into the furthest corner of the room, but the beast rushed at her, and gored her on the back of the neck with its horn. Fortunately the owner and others came to the rescue and the animal was got outside. Very naturally Mrs. Sidebottom, who was unwell, sustained a serious shock and Dr. Anderton was sent for and has been in attendance since. With much difficulty the animal was got into the yard in the rear of Market Street and the same night it was taken in a milk cart to Stockport."

Kath Dent.

THE PICTUREDROME, and an INTERESTING COURT CASE

The Spring 1991 edition of the Newsletter included a reproduction of a post-card advertising, on June 24th 1912 at the Empire Theatre in New Mills, a performance by "Consul, Almost Human", pupil of Frank Bostock, Animal Trainer. This date was the first anniversary of the opening of the Empire Theatre. It was not the first of New Mills cinemas; the Picturedrome had opened 4 months earlier, in February 1911.

On January 28th 1911, the High Peak Advertiser reported an accident "at the site of the Picturedrome being erected behind the Crown Hotel; two labourers were injured when a beam slipped." On February 14th, Mr. Stratton Wells was granted a licence to operate a Picturedrome, to seat 400-500 people; it was a timber building with a concrete floor, and a fireman and operator would be in attendance. The cinema opened the following day.

The major item on the New Mills page of the Advertiser of January 12th

1912, under the heading "New Mills and Stage Plays," was an application by Mr. Stratton Wells, proprietor of the Picturedrome, and Mr. David Taylor for a theatrical licence and renewal of the annual cinematograph licence. The application was made to a Special Petty Sessions Court at New Mills, before Justices Mr. S. Hilton (chairman), Mr. J. Turner, Mr. W. Whitehead and Mr. H. Yates.

In his opening speech Mr. A. Walker, Mr. Wells' solicitor, stated the his client wished to be placed on the same basis as "the other place of entertainment in the town". An advertisement on the same page as the report of Mr. Wells' application shows that plays were staged regularly at the Empire; plays for the week were "The Girl Who Went Astray" and "When Woman Hates". Mr. Walker stressed that Mr. Wells was "a fit and proper person" to have the licence; in engaging artistes he stipulated that there must be nothing obscene, vulgar or immodest" in their performance. A petition had been laid before the magistrates, signed by 896 persons, including "4 medical men, 3 solicitors, practically every large employer.... and the principal residents." Dr. Whitehead of Newtown had been several times to the Picturedrome with his wife and daughters and had seen or heard nothing to which they could take exception. Mr. Samuel Mellor, manager of the Wirksmoor Mill, "would much prefer that workmen went to the establishments of this kind than to public houses." They and Mr. J.T. Scattergood, would act as the necessary sureties.

There were no questions from the Bench at this stage; and surprisingly, no statement was made or evidence given in opposition to the application. The magistrates retired, and returned to give their decision; the application would not be granted. Asked by Mr. Walker the reasons for their refusal, the Chairman replied that they had unanimously decided not to give them; nor would they commit themselves to state a case if Mr. Wells appealed.

Some light is shed on this mysterious decision, by the questions put to Mr. Wells when renewal of the cinematograph licence was considered. Had hypnotism ever been practised at the Picturedrome? No, Had boxing contests ever been held? Yes, he had held a competition for local boys, but would undertake not to repeat it. The licence was renewed, on the condition that no boxing contests should ever take place. The inference must be that there had been unseemly incidents unknown to, or ignored by, the 896 persons.

The theatrical licence must have been granted eventually and the ban on boxing removed. In his reminiscences the late Mr. Gordon Wright recalled visits to the Picturedrome, mentioning plays, musical comedies, boxers and wrestlers, in addition to silent films accompanied by Mrs. Morton at the piano. A reference to slides of the sinking of the Titanic provides a date later than April 1912 for these memories. Mrs. Linda Ferguson however recalls no plays, only faded flickering films of Charlie Chaplin and of Bruce Bairnsfather's caricature characters during World War I.

Mr. Wright said that the cinema was "a wooden building behind the Market Hall". Mrs. Ferguson and Mrs. Hilda Jackson remember entering through the Indoor Market and climbing a flight of rough wooden steps, not the present concrete ones, to a wooden door at the top which led directly into the cinema where they sat on wooden benches. So it seems that the upper floor of the Market was built on the site of the Picturedrome.

A listing in Kelly's Directory 1916, "The Pavilion, Market Street, New Mills", could indicate a change of name for the cinema, which probably closed before the end of World War I. The reason may have been a fire. Mrs. Nellie Stansfield recalls going to the Indoor Market, about 1917, and seeing old, dirty placards showing Lilian Gish and Paula Negri, by the sides of the rough steps; wooden boards blocked the top of the steps and she thinks her mother told her that the cinema had been closed because of a fire. A sad end for the earliest Big Screen cinema in New Mills.

Eileen Miller.

MORE TREASURE TROVE FROM THE TOWN COUNCIL'S ARCHIVES

I have been continuing my periodic searches through the town's archives which the Council have asked the Society to look into. Among the latest material to come to light are the costings, contracts, bills of quantities, contractors final invoice and engineer's final reports to do with the building of the Union Road Bridge in the early 1880s. There is also material on the repair of the Church Road Bridge in 1888. This unique material has been lying in a trunk which has probably not been opened for over sixty years! I have to thank Paul, the Town Hall caretaker, for "heavy gang" assistance.

UNION ROAD BRIDGE

1. Petition to New Mills District Local Board by Ratepayers for "the necessity of creating some direct means of communication between the portion of New Mills situated in the County of Derby and that rising locality known as Newtown in the County of Cheshire" signed by over 200 persons with their occupations and address.
2. Form of Tender and Bill of Quantities (4 copies)
3. Specification "of work to be done in the erection of a bridge across 'the Torrs' at New Mills....prepared by J Some Story CE, County Surveyor, Derby", with accompanying letter dated 22 September 1882.
4. Report of Bridge Committee to New Mills Local Board dated 7th September 1885.
5. Bill of Quantities according to the plans and specification prepared by the County Surveyor J. S. Story amounting to a sum of £3,384,18,11.
6. Contract between Mr. M. W. Walmsley and the Local Board for the District of New Mills for "the construction of a bridge and roads and approaches there-to at New Mills in the County of Derby".
7. Two other contracts between Mr. Walmsley and the New Mills Local Board.

New Mills Tract.

Final Certificate of Work executed by

M^r. Walmsey.

<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Per</i>	<i>ft</i>	<i>in</i>	<i>to</i>	<i>of</i>	<i>ft</i>	<i>in</i>
1695 cu yd	Excavating Foundations.	1/4	101	7 1/2				
2462 cu yd	Excavation to cisterns.	1/4	24	16				
832 cu ft	Concrete Cistern Masonry.	1/4	185	16				
1028 cu yd	Block in course openings.	1/4	53	8				
761 cu yd	Random Cistern Masonry.	1/4	33	2				
92 cu yd	Block in, under arching.	1/4	91	13	5			
1088 cu ft	Parapet Walling.	1/4	156	12				
273 cu ft	Articles to Cisterns strings &c.	1/4	136					
17 cu yd	Gravel.	1/4	5	19				
638 cu yd	Asphalt.	1/4	27	17				
10 cu yd	Best Iron in pipes &c.	1/4	8					
3707 cu yd	Leveling & Finishing Surfaces of Ground.	1/4	50	17	10			
300 cu yd	Gravel under backing to abutment.	1/4	15					
	Putting down all Building.		5					
	Ordering to face of piers.		1	2	5			
	Lithography.		1	10				
133 cu yd	Excavation to foundations below that shown on the (submitted) Drawings (extra)	1/4	10	7	2	3500	1	
232 cu yd	Building Boundary walls - Contract.	1/4	90	2	5			
574 cu yd	Iron drains - do per Contract.	1/4	46	12	9			
18.88	Water to wall near Basin Cistern.		5					
V.B. 69	Gate post.		3					
V.B. 69	Basin post.		3					
910 cu yd	Excavating rock to east of Basin Pond.	1/4	42	5		196	12	
	Loss received on account					3600	-	
	Balance due					3421	-	
						179	-	

Examined & Certified to be correct
J. W. Malmsey
Contractor

8. Surety of Mr. M. W. Walmsley and associate for £1000.

9. Final Certificate and account (£3,600) of work executed by Mr. Walmsley.

CHURCH ROAD BRIDGE

Form of Tender for repair of bridge at New Mills.

Finding the Union Road Bridge material is particularly appropriate at this time for the building of the bridge was only made possible by the inclusion of Newtown into the newly-formed New Mills Local Board in 1875. The decision to include Newtown in New Mills gave rise to a great deal of controversy in the town. Not only was Newtown at this time on the other side of the River Goyt and in Cheshire; many of the inhabitants objected to being attached to New Mills in order that the people of New Mills could build their bridge - for which, of course, Newtown people would have to contribute through the rates! Despite their objections most of Newtown (but not all) became part of New Mills Local Board, later New Mills Urban District Council - ie. in the Administrative County of Derbyshire while remaining in the geographical county of Cheshire. In 1936 this part of Newtown (plus Woodbourne Road) was transferred into the geographical county of Derbyshire, but part of the original Newtown still remained in Cheshire.

This boundary controversy has recently been revived by the proposals of the Boundary Commission to transfer to Derbyshire the last remaining part of Newtown which remains in Cheshire described in one paper as a "tug-of-war over 400 people". It is of interest therefore to note the historical background of Newtown's relationship with New Mills and the part played by the Union Road Bridge. The New Mills Local Board took out a public loan for £4,400 over 40 years to pay for the bridge - the first of many loans which were to assist the Council as it began its duties of the municipalisation of the town.

Derek Brumhead

POLITICS

The following item appeared in a copy of the "Reporter" in April 1922.

It was a footnote to an account of the local election to the Urban District Council which had just taken place in the Newtown Ward.

It was the first election in which a Labour candidate had entered the fray. This departure from tradition so alarmed the "opposition" that they sought to "gang up" on him.

"An interesting story about a bit of secret diplomacy in the Newtown Ward election is just now going the rounds. Labour had decided to concentrate its forces so that there would be no waste of resources with consequential vain regrets. Someone conceived the brilliant idea that those who were opposed to Labour should form a sort of unofficial Coalition and also concentrate their forces. An informal meeting was held, and the absence of one candidate was accounted for by his not

having received an invitation to join the Coalition. Naturally it was thought most appropriate that this particular candidate should retire so that there should be no waste of resources and no weak spot in the line opposed to Labour. The ambassador went on his mission, but all his arguments about the Coalition and so on were unsuccessful. The candidate was adamant. Then the ambassador played his master diplomatic stroke, and thus addressed the candidate: "Yo' know, mestur, it's brains that are wanted on th' Council." Needless to say, this kind of ambassadorial diplomacy failed to secure the desired withdrawal. Not only so, but the candidate concerned is now a Councillor. Naturally, he considers the Council has got what the ambassador said was wanted - Brains." The Labour candidate of course was not successful. He did however receive a "good press" and was congratulated upon the manner in which he had conducted his campaign.

Linda Ferguson

HIGH WALLS OF OLLERSETT.

A simple life is all George Newton asks:
A herd of deer; a park to graze it in;
A pond or two; a manse to lodge his kin;
Servants, few but loyal, performing tasks
No gentleman dare undertake, who basks
In good opinion of his fellow chin-
Less wonders, snobs and fops who smirk and grin
At working folk whose homespun style unmasks
The emptiness behind the manner born.
Whose monuments are these, high, gritstone walls
Of Ollersett: he who put the land in pawn,
Or quarrymen and masons? Praise falls
Not on Newton for castles in the air.
These stones salute the humble workman's care.

Ron Weston

THE NAVVY VILLAGE

One of the events which had considerable impact on Disley, High Lane and to a lesser degree on Marple and New Mills, around the turn of the century, was the construction of the Heaton Mersey and New Mills branch of the Midland Railway (now usually referred to as the Midland Direct Line), and in particular the Disley tunnel.

This work brought an influx of labourers, or navvies, many of whom had their families with them. They were never fully integrated into the local community, since their stay in the area was a comparatively short one. Moreover, many of them were rough, or even violent men, and local people were unwilling to give them house-room, (even if their homes were not already overcrowded) so a wooden hutted village was built at Wybersley to accommodate them. The addition of something like 300 extra children must have been a tremendous strain on local educational resources; both Disley and High Lane schools were small and old, in fact there was already talk of a new elementary school at Disley to replace St. Mary's School, though in effect it was not built until 1910.

Local clergy evidently felt concern for the spiritual welfare of the navvies, for in December 1897 the Rev. Charles Goodall, Vicar of High Lane, engaged a missionary to work among the men employed on the railway, and lent the Parish Room for this purpose. This arrangement evidently continued for some 15 months, but in April 1899 a Mission Hall was opened for them. The "Ashton Reporter" of 6 May reports it thus:

"OPENING OF A NAVVIE MISSION HALL - By the kindness of the contractors of the new line of railway passing through Disley, a nicely fitted up and comfortably furnished Mission Hall for the use of the navvies has just been opened at Jackson Edge-Lane, Disley. On Monday afternoon a public tea meeting to celebrate the event was laid on in the room, over 100 persons being present. After tea a service was held, when the Revs. G F Ockford, Canon Symonds and the Rev. Charles Goodall, MA, took part. Dr. and Mrs Sealey were also present."

In June it was reported that the recently opened mission was successful. Talks were given to the men during their dinner hour, and in July an Open Air Musical Festival was held on a Sunday afternoon. The local paper reported that several hundred people were present on the field next to the Mission House at Wybersley. "around which had been gathered quite a little village of wooden residences for the workmen engaged in the tunnel of the Midland Railway (New Mills and Heaton Mersey length). Strines Orchestral Band, conductor George Wells, figured prominently, Mr Bearcroft was at the harmonium, and persons from New Mills, Disley, Marple and Strines took part"

The programme included both sacred and secular music. The report goes on to say that a group of Disley gentlemen had subscribed 7 guineas (£7.35) for the purchase of a harmonium and a Mr Bell gave £15 to buy a bagatelle board for use in the evenings, so the Mission Hall was evidently used as a Social/Community Centre during the week.

In October a Harvest Festival was held, and the collections provided a tea for local children. By this time a navy missionary, Mr T P Carter, had been appointed, probably the same one who had previously used the High Lane Parish Room. In August 1900 open air services were again held, conducted by Mr Carter assisted by Mr Parker of Disley. There were large congregations both afternoon and evening, and High Lane Brass Band was in attendance. There was another Harvest Festival the following month, and the last week in September a special mission was conducted among the navvies by Mr T Massey.

There were numerous accidents during the building of the tunnel, some serious, as for example when one of the wooden huts caught fire in February 1900, causing an explosion which smashed the windows of the Mission Hall and could be felt at Disley and Strines Print Works. There were many injuries to workmen, some fatal, such as when scaffolding gave way and bricks and timber fell on a workman known as "Scotty" breaking both legs and his back, in September 1900. (Many men seemed to be known by nicknames, there being no record of their full names or other particulars). The 6th October edition of the "Ashton Reporter" tells of 3 serious accidents on the new line at Newtown, so the work was evidently progressing beyond Disley by that time, though the following week there is another report of services at the Mission Hall, which was apparently still functioning, probably because the Wybersley village was still in use.

But in December, 3 tramps were sent to prison for 7 days for sleeping in a hut at the new railway, so by that time some at least of the buildings must have been vacated. In August 1901 a fire broke out at 5am in a shed belonging to a contractor on the new railway. It was brought under control, but much damage was done. Possibly by then most of the navvies had moved on and the fire was not discovered until it had taken a good hold or there may not have been sufficient man-power available to deal with it quickly and efficiently. This seems to be the last mention of the navvies in the local press, and the railway was finished by 1902. The wooden village and the Mission Hall, were variously described as being situated at "Jackson Edge" (the old name, without the "s") or "Wybersley". Probably the site was actually at Wybersley, with access from Jackson Edge-Lane. When the huts were no longer required they were taken down and moved on. What became of the Mission Hall is uncertain - it may also have been demolished, or it may have been converted into housing, since in the 1930s there was a bungalow at Wybersley (since rebuilt) which was partially constructed from sheets of corrugated iron, and this might have been the former Mission Hall.

Old newspapers always seem much more interesting than current ones, and the "Ashton Reporter" between 1897 and 1901 throws unusual sidelights on the construction of a local railway.

Olive Bowyer.

MAYORS AND MOCK MAYORS (Part 2)

In the last issue I gave details of the "mayors" of Hayfield and Disley. Parts of New Mills also had "mayors". There was evidently a late nineteenth century popular fashion for them, although some of them were regarded as disreputable characters by the newspaper writers.

Low Leighton. The mayor's "proclamation" was reported in the Ashton Reporter of Saturday June 28th, 1873.

"THE MAYOR OF LOWLEIGHTON. - Many of our readers may not be aware that the hamlet of Lowleighton can boast of possessing a mayor. But if they had been in that locality on Thursday evening week, they might have heard a well-known person proclaiming himself as the possessor of that title. To give more effect to the proclamation the self-styled civic officer had gaily decorated himself with ribbons, and a number of youths and young men were raising him into an elevated position. The scene was of rather a noisy character, and seemed to afford much amusement for the youngsters."

The mayor's name was James Bagshaw. But he was soon in trouble with the law, as shown by the following account in the Stockport Advertiser of August 29th, 1873.

"NEW MILLS PETTY SESSIONS."

"THE "MAYOR" IN TROUBLE. - Joseph Arnfield, and James Bagshaw, with Richard Kelly, who had absconded, were summoned for having been drunk and riotous on the 11th inst., at New Mills. The defendant Bagshaw is better known in Low Leighton as "The Mayor", where he pretends to exercise certain authority. Police-sergeant Carter stated (amid much merriment) that at about half-past three o'clock on Monday, the 11th inst., he was on duty in Market-street, when he saw the defendants, who were all drunk. They had a donkey cart with them, Arnfield was pulling the cart whilst Bagshaw was sat in it, with a red coat on, and held a trumpet in his hand, whilst Kelly was pushing behind. They all stopped at the Market-street Tavern, where the defendant Bagshaw blew his trumpet, and read a sort of nonsense about some one thrashing his wife. Witness told them to desist from it, but they went forward and stopped again at the Dog and Partridge, when they were refused admission. Witness followed them down the hill through High-street, and when they were opposite the Bull's Head, Bagshaw fell out head first, he was so drunk. Witness told them he would summon them. They were followed by a crowd of children. Defendants afterwards took the cart away. - Bagshaw, in defence, said a man had been beating his wife at Torr Top, and as he was "mayor" of Low Leighton he came down to New Mills, and thought he was "mayor" there too. He had got some drink, but was not drunk. He had been "mayor" for 13 years, and kept the peace very well, - Both were fined 5s. each and the costs."

Newtown. In the following year a mayor of Newtown made an appearance during the Wakes Week celebrations, as reported in the Glossop-dale Chronicle of September 26th, 1874.

"MAYOR OF NEWTOWN". - A dirty- looking young fellow, calling himself "The Mayor of Newtown", was staggering about on

Wednesday stuck over with paper of different colours; he was as much conspicuous for his jolly appearance as anything about him."

Thornsett. Several years later a mayor was elected in Thornsett. Here is the account of the "election" as given by the Glossop-dale Chronicle of Friday October 7th, 1892.

"THORNSETT."

"ELECTION OF MAYOR". - At a local hostelry a few days ago there were some proceedings of a most dignified character. Nothing less than "the election of mayor of Thornsett for the ensuing year". The members of the "Corporation" assembled in strong force, and were unanimous in the election of "E. R--, Esq.", to that highly important and dignified office. The result was received with loud cheers, and it was considered to be "extremely popular" with the whole of the rate-payers of the "borough", in fact the new dignitary was considered to be such a remarkable personage that it was utterly unnecessary to elect a "deputy", as the newly-appointed one could even add the qualification of ubiquity to those of "intelligence, business tact, and local economy". The "mayor" duly returned thanks for the "great honour" which "that august assembly" had conferred upon him, and amid loud and continued cheering, he not only declared himself "in favour of an Eight Hours Bill for bleachworks, printworks and coal-pits", but he was even prepared, "and knew the way how", to introduce a bill into the "New Mills County Council" at the first opportunity, which would enable the "borough of Thornsett" to acquire "two resident councillors to look after the rate-payers' pockets!" Bravo!"

Roger Bryant

STRINES (Part 1)

The word strine originally meant a stream. Later it seems to have been used for a ditch or any water channel. The earliest documentary evidence we have found so far about any building by the stream is the will dated 27th August 1598 of NICHOLAS WOMBWELL gentleman of THE STRYNDES in the parish of Glossop in the countie of Derby. His wife Elizabeth Cowper, son Nicholas and daughters Ann and Elizabeth benefited from the will. The inventory of his goods and chattels "moveable and immoveable" was compiled on 1st September 1598 by four assessors. It is said that table forks as distinct from prongs were not introduced into England from France until about 1600. Certainly no silver was listed but £3.6.8d worth of brass and pewter and six books were amongst his possessions. He had three kynes worth £7, some calves and a horse, two swords, guns and daggers. Among his debts was one of £20 to William Clayton.

The next reference to the property comes in the year Sir Walter Raleigh was beheaded. In his will proved in 1618 WILLIAM CLAYTON of STRYNDE being "sick of body" disposed of "the capital messuage or tenement called the STRIND wherein I now dwell together withall orchards gardens lands meadows pastures feeding grounds woods and underwoods." All this was willed to his brother Ralph and brothers

-in-law Robert and Edward Alleyne with instructions about the advancement and preferment of his eight children. The eldest son Francis was to follow him at the Strynde. The second son Robert inherited his interests in Beardhough. Wife Elizabeth received the farm "himpliments and husslements" which included silver bowls, linen woollen, pewter and brass.

Then followed what must have been disturbing times with the rise of Oliver Cromwell and the Parliamentarians and the execution of King Charles. Surely the proximity of the Royalist Leghs of Lyme and the Parliamentarian Bradshaws of Marple would have caused anxiety to the owners of Strynd.

In 1660 the Monarchy was restored with "tumultous joy" according to Lady Legh and in 1662 the Hearth Tax was introduced. In July of this year FRANCIS CLAYTON'S will was proved at Derby. I wonder how many hearths at two shillings each he had? After requesting burial at Disley he went on to bequeath one third of his house-hold goods "within my dwelling house called STRYNDE" to his wife Joyce except for various heirlooms. He gave the three cornered piece of land called Kerchief Nook to Anthony Stafford of the Shaw. In view of what was to follow it seems possible that Anthony was his brother-in-law, husband of his sister Ann. His lands, tenements and presumably the heirlooms Francis bequeathed to his brother Edmund. The inventory is detailed and ranges from eight kine value £24, in sheep £12, his heirloom silver bowl and mazar (cup) £3 and bedding, linen and woollen £14.13.4d. to riddles and sieves 1/- to manure at 6d.

At the instigation of the wool lobby 1667 saw the law requiring all burials to be in woollen. Monetary penalties were inflicted on those who preferred linen. In 1668 EDMUND CLAYTON of STRINDES gentleman made his will. Edmund died in 1675 itemising a number of bequests to his nieces and nephews and to his servants but all his lands and tenements at Strindes were demised to Anthony Stafford of Shaw. Anthony was his sole executor. The silver bowl and mazar and three silver spoons mentioned in the inventory and now worth £4 are not given to any specified person. The goods, chattles and cattles including six cows and veal calves £30, six bullocks £24, two twinters and a thwinter at £8 were assessed as worth £169 in total.

In his will dated 15 May 1680 JOHN RANDELS of the Strindes left his goods, cattles chattells etc. to his only daughter Mary who was under twenty one. His executors were his "beloved friend Anthony Stafford of the Shaw" and James Ridgeway of the Lilleybanke.

Further documentary evidence about Strindes is provided by the will of ANTHONY STAFFORD of Shaw dated 1682, probate 1686. In this he gives to his wife Ann "the housing and land named in the deed of settlement made at our marriage". She also had three cows, 20 good sheep, a mare, some meal, £10 of silver and one third part of the estate. Son John inherited the rest of the estate. Anthony left his best suit to John Pott and his old clothes, hat and boots to William Stafford. A poor relation perhaps?

JOHN STAFFORD of Straynds, gent, omitted to make a will and in 1700 his widow Priscilla was required to pay his debts "soe far the invy of his goods and chtls will extend and the law shall charge you". The Consistory Court at Lichfield required the making of an inventory

which is dated 5th August 1700 and includes cows, oxen and a young boare value £117, one teniment £80 and plate and linen £50.

PRISCILLA widow and relict of JOHN STAFFORD late of Straynds died in 1705 and the inventory of her personal possessions included one silver cup and silver spoons value £4. Her estate was administered by her son Anthony. John and Priscilla had several children of whom we know John was the eldest son and heir, Anthony the second and amongst the youngest were James, Edward and Priscilla.

SAMUEL SMITH of Straindes, husbandman, made a will in 1731. He had sons John and Samuel and a daughter Hannah. Bequests to his children and to Martha Slater of Stockport and to Sarah Knowles of Bredbury were monetary. Samuel senior had stock and farming implements. The inventory compiled by Robert Swindells and Thomas Torkington lists and values goods "in house, in buttery, in parlor, in chamber over house, in chamber over kitchin, in kitchin and in loar parlor".

Perhaps Samuel was Anthony Stafford's tenant?

Patricia Priddle

ERRATA

Crossword puzzle, Edition No.6 Spring 1991

Unfortunately there were several errors, I hope it did not spoil your enjoyment or prevent you from solving the clues.

30 across Initially the residents of this seaport may have been what the name suggests, but no longer.

2 down May be near Castleton - or in New Mills.

11 down A nesting place for birds of peace approached by the Peak Forest Tramway?

NOTICES TO MEMBERS Data Protection Act

We the Society, in accordance with the Data Protection Act are obliged to inform members that a list of names and addresses are being stored on computer for administration purposes only. If anyone has an objection to this, please contact the secretary.

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Please note that your annual subscription of £1.50(under 18), £3(individual) or £6(family up to six members living at the same address) fall due on the 1st September but may be paid before that date or at our first meeting. If you wish to pay by deed of covenant, please see the treasurer.