

NEW MILLS LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 46, Spring 2011



Watford House (Home for some refugees)

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 January 14	Peter Del Strother MBE (Castle Cement Ltd)	History of Cement
Friday February 11	Dr Paul Hindle	Roman Roads in Britain
Friday March 11	David Jenkins (Corporate Records Manager)	Pathways to the Past: The Work of the County Record Office
Friday April 8	Dr Raymond Briddon	Looking at the Dead Sea Scrolls
Friday May 13	A.G.M. followed by Ron Weston	Sarah Newton, 1787-1850: A Stockport Girl makes Good

Committee 2010-2011

Chairperson	Gaynor Andrew (743117)	
Vice-chairperson	Barbara Done (742617)	
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Hon. Editor	Ron Weston (744838)	
Ordinary members	Catherine Bolton	Olive Bowyer
	Derek Brumhead	Barry Dent
	Pat Evans	Barbara Matthews

www.newmillshistory.org.uk

www.picturenewmills.org.uk

Editor's Note

Dear Friends,

Unfortunately, owing to the cancellation of our December meeting, we were unable to play host to Judith Wilshaw and were thus denied the opportunity to hear her talk on Samuel Oldknow. This is the second occasion that bad weather has prevented Judith's attendance. I hope that a future date can be arranged; in a warmer month of the year, perhaps?

On Friday 8th October last, we were given an excellent presentation by Brian Rich, entitled "Place-names in the Landscape of the Peak District." Brian very kindly made the text of his talk available online, which I've put into this newsletter – an account far superior to any brief summary of the talk that I would have been able to write.

Early in the New Year, the Society will be launching a major publication, "New Mills People and Places", an assemblage selected from the written contributions of many members of the Society over the years appearing in our New Mills History Notes series and the Newsletter. The book contains an abundance of early photographs, selected from our recently-digitised archive, many of which have never appeared in print before. It is being produced in two volumes (in A4 size) by New Mills School. I have just received copies of Volume One; the second volume will be printed in January. Volume Two features many reminiscences of elderly residents of New Mills recorded on tape. I shall be making Volume One available at our January meeting at a discount price for members of £4-75.

Wishing you all a prosperous and happy New Year,

Ron Weston.

A 1920s Bleaching, Dyeing And Weaving Mill

Glen Atkinson

3rd September 2010

Almost exactly a year ago, Glen Atkinson gave us a stimulating and amusing account of the building of "the big ditch," that is, the Manchester Ship Canal. The talk was illustrated by a remarkable collection of glass slides taken at the time of the canal's construction. Glen has done it again! This time he retrieved an old volume of photographs, destined for destruction, showing in graphic detail all the operations taking place at the Burgess Ledward mill at Wardley, near Walkden. Glen has converted these old prints into digitised images of high quality.

The Burgess-Ledward mill dates from the 1860s. It was Walkden's first textile mill: no more than a workshop opened by Burgess. Expansion came when Ledward, a Manchester textile merchant buying Burgess's cloth, became a partner. When in 1894 Burgess's son came into the business, he added a dyehouse sufficiently large to bleach and dye the yarn produced by other mills in the region.

Soon the firm was a major employer in the town. Burgess, a man of liberal principles and something of a pioneer, urged his employees into adult education with considerable success.

But it should not be supposed that Burgess-Ledward mill was a utopian workplace. Bleaching and dyeing was a primitive and dangerous enterprise and remained so well into the twentieth century. Glen Atkinson used the 1920 illustrations to bring home the truth of this. Workers in the dyehouse and bleachworks worked with toxic chemicals without protective clothing. Clogs were essential footwear as the factory hands paddled about in corrosive liquid. In the weaving shed, which at the height of its productivity employed over 1400 people, the noise must have been indescribable.

Glen took us on a tour of all the premises, showing us the various operations taking place there. So much of the work on offer was repetitive and monotonous; hours were long; conditions dire. This was the common experience of millions of workers during that era, not least in New Mills. As these experiences fade from living memory, it is salutary and instructive to be reminded of them as part of our social history and, as such, Glen's retrieved images are precious evidence.

Ron Weston

New Mills Festival Lecture

20 September 2010.

This year's New Mills Festival Lecture was again hosted by the society in New Mills Town Hall when Derek Brumhead gave a talk entitled 'New Mills Then and Now'. The talk (aided by a PowerPoint presentation and the magnificent new electrically-operated large screen for which the society made a substantial donation) made use of the society's magnificent collection of old black and white photographs on the photographic website www.picturenewmills.org.uk, which Derek contrasted with modern photographs which he had taken from the same localities. This popular approach produced some startling contrasts, for instance the talk commenced with a modern view of Church Road (from the Marsh Lane crossroads) followed by a view taken from the same spot in the 1880s showing a tollhouse and toll bar gate, and no houses ! Another contrast showed a modern view of Dyehouse Lane with one pub (the Pineapple) followed by a 1912 view showing four pubs with another two off camera. No wonder the 'Drunkard's Reform' (former town jail) was conveniently nearby !

But this popular event was not just about the lecture. The society's editor, Ron Weston, held a 'fire sale' of society publications which allowed any five publications to be purchased for £1, and this resulted in £70 being taken. In addition, the Cooperative Society (Stockport and Macclesfield District Committee of which New Mills is a part) had made arrangements for a reprint of 500 copies of John Humphrey's out-of-print book on 'New Mills Co-operative Society 1860-1890' in a handsome A4 format. Martin Flanagan from the Co-op made a brief introduction. Every member of the audience was presented with a free copy and they were also given a free copy of the DVD 'The Town on the Torrs' made a few years ago. This was not the end of this evening of 'freebies', for the town council, as in previous years, provided a magnificent spread of cheese and wine, and it was gratifying how many of the audience stayed on to enjoy this and talk among themselves for almost another half an hour.

Over 200 people attended the event and a 'bucket collection' resulted in £200 being donated, a most welcome amount for the cash-strapped festival committee, which puts on such a splendid varied festival programme lasting three weeks every year.

Place Names in the Landscape of the Peak District

Brian Rich

8th October, 2010

The main focus of this presentation will be to look at the different words or elements that were used to describe natural features in the landscape. You will find a number of these on the sheet that has already been distributed.

However I want to begin by presenting you with a brief outline of the different languages used in the formation of place names. The majority of place names in the Peak District are based on the language of the Anglo-Saxons, namely Old English. However their predecessors the various Celtic races, i.e. the British had already named places though many of these were replaced by the Anglo-Saxons using their own language.

Some examples of surviving British names are Mellor (bare hill); Chevin (ridge); Crich(hill), Crook Hill (hill); Kinder (unexplained); Cown Edge-the first element being identical with Clowne, a British river name *Colun* (an earlier name for the river or stream below the rocks) and so Cown Edge is the edge above the river *Colun*; and Pentrich (boar's hill). A significant number of river names have retained their Celtic origin such as Dove (black or dark), Derwent (abounding in oaks) and Goyt (channel).

Moving on, now, to the corpus of place names based on Old English. You will know that many places which end in -ton are based on the OE element **tun** (farm, estate, settlement), from which the word "town" is derived. Many of these are pre-fixed by a personal name as in Taddington, Elton, Kedleston, Castleton and Kniveton in Derbyshire; Adlington, Bebbington, Tytherington and Ashton in Cheshire. The set Aston, Weston, Norton and Sutton are named with respect to their geographical situation to places of more importance than themselves. For example Aston is the "east estate" in relation to Hope.

However, as you know, life is not intended to be straightforward, and traps lay in wait for the unwary. Some place names whose present spellings end in -ton do not derive from OE **tun**. We know this by looking at their earliest spelling (often the spelling from the Domesday Survey). Local examples of these are Chelmorton, Hartington, Longstone. These originally ended in -don or -dun from OE **dun** "hill". Longstone was spelt Langsdune in the Domesday Book and it was not until 1339 when the spelling became Longston. The meaning "long hill" refers to what is now Longstone Edge which overlooks the present settlements of Great and Little Longstone. Chelmorton retained the -don ending until the 15th century when a scribe wrongly interpreted the pronunciation of Chailmerdon. Hartington was spelt Hortedun in the Domesday Book. The conclusion here is that it is risky trying to interpret the meaning of a place name

from its present written form. It is the early spellings of a place which need to be studied and we will see this when we discuss the name Alderley.

Our Scandinavian visitors in the 9th, 10th and 11th centuries had some influence in the naming of places. The Scandinavian equivalent of OE **tun** is **by** or **byr**, as in Derby, Denby, Smisby in Derbyshire. But the scarcity of places ending in -by in this area as compared with those ending in -tun implies that the Scandinavian influence here is by no means as extensive as in Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire. In Cheshire we would expect to find some place names using Scandinavian words in the Wirral. Here we have Raby, Haby, Irby; these were given by either Scandinavians from Ireland or from the Isle of Man. The first part of Irby tells us that some Irish people accompanied these Scandinavians. The first element of Raby is ON **ra** "boundary", so Raby was a farm or estate on a boundary. Near Great Longstone is the small hamlet of Rowland, which was spelt *Ralunt* in the Domesday Book. The last part of this is ON **lundr** "coppice wood". Rowland then originally was a coppice wood on a boundary. Flagg derives from a Scandinavian word for "a turf or a sod". In the Domesday Survey Flagg is a berewick or outlying hamlet of Ashford and may well have been the source of turves for roofs and peat for burning for the main manor of Ashford.

The Normans did not arrive in sufficient numbers to re-name places. Old English, later adapted to Middle English, continued to be the native language with many French words added. Many of our christian names are as a result of the Norman invasion. However there are a few places in Derbyshire which derive from the Old French language. Belper was not named until the 13th century and by a lord whose family originated in Normandy. The earliest reference is in 1231, when the spelling was *Beaurepaire*, with the meaning "beautiful retreat", from Old French **beau, repaire**, as in the place still called Beaurepaire in Hampshire. A fair description of modern Belper? It is not intended to be as it referred to the situation in 1231 of a manor house overlooking the Coppice Brook and a deer park on the far side of the brook. Beauchief, once in Derbyshire, now within Sheffield describes the elevated position as "beautiful headland". Not all was good to the Normans; in Cheshire, Malpas has the meaning "dangerous passage or road". Malcoff in the Chapel-en-le-Frith area has something bad, but place name scholars have not been able to identify what it is that is bad! The name Chapel-en-le-Frith is not recorded in that form before the 16C; it was recorded as Chapel-in-the-Frith in 1385, where "le" was commonly used in middle English for "the". It is the later replacement of "in" by "en" which makes the name sound French, but this is not earlier enough to be significant. An interesting place name deriving from Old French is the Wiltshire town of Devizes. This name derives from the OFr **devisé** "boundary", giving the meaning of "place on the boundaries". Haltemprice in the East Riding of Yorkshire, the site of a priory of Augustinian canons, is from

French **haute emprise** "great undertaking". On the edge of Leek is the Cistercian Abbey of Dieulacresse and has the meaning, from French "may God increase it".

I want now to return to the main thrust of this presentation which is to emphasise the feeling for the natural landscape which the Anglo-Saxons brought with them and is apparent from the different words they used to describe topographical features. So, for example, there are a number of different names for a ridge depending on its shape or whether it was smooth or rough. This will be illustrated shortly. The Anglo-Saxons applied different elements to naming valleys, depending on their length, shape and topographical position. So the element **bece** is reserved for valleys which contain streams and arises in the names Sandbach, Comberbatch and Gradbach. A deep valley or ravine has the element **cloh**, giving the Middle English word "clough". A valley between two ridges is **corf**, as in Corfe Castle in Dorset. The element **slaed** was reserved for a side valley. The element **hop** was reserved for a secluded valley or just a remote place as in nearby Hassop. The element **slakki** has the meaning "shallow valley" as in your Raven Slack. Both the elements **dael** and **denu** were words for main valleys, as in Edale, Howden and Longdendale. The element **cumb** had the specific meaning "short,broad valley,usually bowl or trough shaped with three fairly steep sides".

The Anglo-Saxons had different names for woods. A holt was a wood which contained just one species of trees; a hurst was a wooded hill; a grove was a managed wood i.e. by coppicing or pollarding; a hanger was a wood on a slope i.e. a wood which appeared to be hanging over the land below it; a shaw originally meant a small wood. In time some of these precise meanings were sometimes used more loosely, so that, for example, the word shaw was applied in the course of time to a wood of any size.

With regard to hill names the element **dun** was consistently used in settlement names for a low hill with a fairly level and fairly extensive summit which provided a good settlement site in open country. I will show you some slides of "clouds"; these are hills with rocky tops from **clud**. The element **hlaw** can refer to a natural hill or, often in Derbyshire to a tumulus or burial mound.

The OE **leah** which gives rise to places ending in -ley, such as Darley, Rowsley and Beeley has been a source of confusion to scholars as it has three related meanings of "wood, wood pasture or clearing in a wood". However, in respect of settlements named by the Anglo-Saxons and ending in -ley, as above, the implication is that those places had an original emphasis on an economy based on wood pasture. In time some of the wood was cleared to make way for the cultivation of cereals and other edible crops but the ORIGINAL economy was woodland based.

Many place names include a word for a species of tree, such as Ashford, Birchover, Agden, Ewden, Aspenshaw and Thornsett. Ollersett (*Alresete*, temp. Henry 3) was the pasture or fold where alder trees grew. The Old English is **alor**. In some places we find the alder is part of the place name as in Aldercarr in mid-Derbyshire, reminding us that alder trees prefer wet ground on which to spread their roots. Owlerton to the north of Sheffield was the farm or estate where alder trees grew, NOT where there was a profusion of owls. Again the study of place names can be a minefield. Alderley in Cheshire is not an alder tree clearing or wood. The first written spelling of it (*Aldredelie*) and similar subsequent early spellings tells us that the first part of the name refers to an Old English personal name.

OE. **wordo**. This gives rise to place names ending in -worth. In North West Derbyshire there are: Buxworth, Charlesworth, Chisworth, Ludworth and Rowarth. The latter is a mis-spelling of the earlier *Roworth* (1285 Forest Eyre). The basis sense of **wordo** seems to have been "enclosure", but soon it has the meaning "enclosed settlement". In the West Midlands and the South West we find the elements **wordoig** and **wordoign**, with the same meaning. The first of these is confined to the South West where we can find place names ending in -worth and -worthy. The simplex place name Worthy can be found in Devon, Wiltshire, Hampshire and Gloucestershire. Place names derived from **wordoign** are found in Shropshire and Herefordshire giving rise to place names ending in -wardine such as Leintwardine and Wrockwardine.

I will conclude by reminding you of the pitfalls of trying to guess the meaning of a place name simply from its present spelling. In order to have any chance of predicting a meaning you require a list of its various spellings from its very first spelling. For settlement names the first spelling is often that in the Domesday Book i.e. in 1086.

These are the range of spellings recorded for Alderley in Cheshire

Aldredelie in 1086, *Aldredelega* in circa 1208,....., *Aldrudeleg* in 1285. However there are some spellings in the 13thC which essentially transpose the fourth and fifth letters giving spellings like *Aldirdeleg* and even *Alderdeley* in 1275. However it is the presence of the third letter "d" in these spellings which convince place name scholars that the first part of the place name is from the Anglo-Saxon female personal name *Althryth*. The important point that may convince you is that the Old English word for alder was **alor** i.e. there is no letter "d" in it. So the 1086 spelling for Alderley in Gloucestershire was *Alreli*. Similarly Alderholt in Dorset was spelt *Alreholt* in 1285. I do hope that this convinces you that the derivation of the Cheshire Alderley is as the place name scholars explain it.

The Experience of Guernsey Evacuees in Cheshire and Derbyshire 1940 –1945

Gillian Mawson

12th November 2010

Gillian Mawson of Whaley Bridge, a researcher in the History Department at Manchester University, gave us a graphic and moving account of her research into the experiences of those young evacuees from Guernsey, ahead of the German invasion of the Channel Islands in June 1940, who were accommodated in our local area.

THIS ISLAND "NEWSPAPER" PUBLISHED DAILY
GUERNSEY'S OLDEST NEWSPAPER
ESTABLISHED 1841

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ST. PETER'S PORT, GUERNSEY

CIVIL—No. 146 WEDNESDAY, JUNE 19, 1940. GRATIS

ISLAND EVACUATION
ALL CHILDREN TO BE SENT TO
MAINLAND TOMORROW

Mothers May Accompany Those Under School Age

REGISTRATION TONIGHT

WHOLE BAILIWICK TO BE DEMILITARISED

Strong Advice To Men Between 20 and 33

Altogether, around 20,000 people fled Guernsey, including the men of military age, school children and mothers with their infants and babies. They embarked on any boat made hurriedly available, the children bearing one small suitcase containing a change of clothes and a sandwich.

The children had been assured that their parents would be joining them on the next available boats; but that was not to be. Within a few days, the Germans bombed the harbour at St Peter's Port and everyone had to remain in Guernsey, not knowing where their children had gone or whether they would ever see them again.

After arriving in Weymouth, the children were hastily boarded onto trains heading north, 1,200 of them destined for Stockport. Council officials in Stockport had been given only forty-eight hours notice of their arrival. The evacuees were billeted in public buildings in the town: the Town Hall, Masonic Hall and Stockport Sunday School, for example. Camp beds had been installed and this remained the children's only accommodation until more suitable provision could be made.

The ordinary people of Stockport responded to the crisis with warmth and generosity, providing blankets, clothing, food, toys and entertainment. Many of the children were taken into the homes of local people. One Disley resident told Gillian:

"We were a family of eight children living in a two up, two down terraced house. My father walked in with a little boy called Morris Brehaut. He had a little grey suit on; he just fitted in with us; he became one of the family for five years"

Many Guernsey children attended local schools, but some schools were set up specifically for the evacuees, at Disley, Cheadle Hulme and Great Hucklow, for example.

Many Guernsey fathers who had enlisted in the armed services were able to maintain contact with their children. On the other hand, communication between Britain and Guernsey was impossible, except via the Red Cross. Short, heavily censored messages reached the island from time to time; but this was the only news that many parents received regarding the welfare of their children.

In May 1945, Guernsey was liberated and many evacuees returned to their families. However, some chose to remain in England, having put down roots here. Many Guernsey teenagers married locally and settled here.

Ties between Guernsey and this area have remained strong over the years, cemented by the gratitude of parents and evacuees to many local families who responded so generously in a time of need.

Some of the evacuees who settled here, now in their seventies and eighties, were in our audience, one of whom gave a moving account of his memories of that extraordinary time.

This was a heart-warming topic that showed how a human crisis can bring out the best in people and how this can lead to many more acts of kindness and fellowship as the years go by. Good can spring from the most unpromising situations – even from the perils and hardships of war.

If you'd like to read about the German occupation of Guernsey, I can recommend an account that has been described as "a uniquely humane vision of inhumanity". It is called "The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society", by Mary Ann Shaffer and Annie Barrows, published by Bloomsbury as a paperback in 2009.

Ron Weston

Children endure harsh rite of passage

IT WAS an unaccountable sea journey for all. Few remember it with any fondness: the ships were tanky cargo vessels, which had been used to carry coal, flour, stones or other bulk cargoes. Most had little or no passenger accommodation. People had to lie on the open decks or in dusty holds for the 12-hour voyages, and then there was, for most, a delay of several hours before the ships berthed in Westmouth.

Evacuation by sea was a routine process, which carried on at a frantic pace until Saturday 26 June. The previous day, the Southern Railway steamer *Isle of Sark*, under Captain T. H. Coddling had arrived in Jersey from Southampton at 10.15.



■ DATAVIER IV: 800 children cross the Channel on this Dutch cargo vessel.

(Picture courtesy National Maritime Museum)

steadiness of the crew, the passengers and the people on the quayside. As soon as he felt the people on board were steady he walked across the quay to telephone the naval authorities, and then returned to the bridge, although his telephone and landing were going on at the time.

'When the banking was made, he had to decide how many he could take on board from the number who were clambering on the quay.'

Reginald Hinde, the sergeant in charge of Southampton docks, made efforts to send more steamers to the islands for evacuees but he received a telephone message from the *Ballin* of Jersey, Alexander Gourandhe, which said that no further evacuees was being planned for the islands.

The Local Historian

The May 2010 issue of *The Local Historian* has been placed in New Mills library and the articles in it include:

Clive Field, 'Zion's People: who were the English Nonconformists ? Part 1: gender, age and ethnicity'.

Margaret Bullock, 'The Women's Land army in the Craven district of Yorkshire during the Second World War.'

Michael Heery, 'Neglected practitioners: the bonesetters of early modern England'. Paul Jennings, 'Liquor licensing and the local historian: inns and alehouses 1753-1828.'

Mark Smith, ' "Opinion: No longer the 1999 show": the Sheerans, postmodernism and local history in the twenty-first century'.

Various Correspondents, ' "No longer the 1948 show" — local history in the 21st century: readers reply.'

Book reviews include: Sussex clergy inventories 1600-1750; Regional separation in the East Midlands; Yorkshire landscapes past and present; Local history on the ground; Medieval Colchester's lost landmarks; Recording medieval lives; Exmoor: the making of an English upland.