DERBYSHIRE MISCELLANY

The Bulletin

of

The Local History Section

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Derbyshire Archaeological and Natural History Society

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DERBYSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL & NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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DIARY OF MEETINGS

1957

June 29 Saturday — Members will meet outside the Church at Eyam at 2.30 pm. Will those intending to be present please advise the Section Secretary by return. The party will be led by Mr.Clarence Daniel.

September 7th - Saturday — A tour of the old cotton mills in the North West of the County will be led by Mr.Owen Ashmore. Members will meet at Bakewell and from there proceed by hired bus to places of interest. Notice of intention to join the party should reach the Section Secretary by the end of July when full details will be given.

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SECTION NEWS

Meetings

In March, Mr.G.R.Micklewright once more put at our disposal the Library Lecture Room in Chesterfield and Miss Nellie Kirkham came to talk on her experiences when investigating lead mines and soughs in the County. In spite of the difficulties caused by petrol rationing an audience of over forty, which included several pot holers, heard a most entertaining account of Miss Kirkham's methods. The talk was followed by a long and useful discussion.

Members interested in Enclosures met on April 13th at the County Offices in Derby, when Mr.J.M.Bestall demonstrated the use of county records in studying local history. Mr.Wild of the County Records Department put on show those documents which members had specially requested and he stated that he would be pleased to help wherever possible. Members who wish to see records should apply, preferably by post, and giving several days notice, to The County Records Clerk, County Offices, St.Mary's Gate, Derby.

The succession of Statutes introduced after the Restoration caused the Clerks of the Peace to keep large numbers of documents, e.g.Hearth Tax Rolls from 1662, Sacrament Certificates under the Test Act 1673, registers of Dissenting Congregations under the Toleration Act 1688, lists of free-holders qualified to serve on juries from 1696, and so forth. Documents accumulated by families and those connected with private estates are also kept in the Records Department and all these are of immense value to the local historian as sources of information.

In May, a number of those interested in Enclosures met at Taddington and led by Mr.J.M.Bestall studied the district from there to Chelmorton. An account of this enjoyable expedition will be given in the September bulletin.

On Saturday June 29th there will be a meeting of the Section at Eyam under the guidance of Mr.Clarence Daniel. There are prehistoric remains on the moors some distance from Eyam and Mr.Daniel will show flints, etc., discovered there. A visit will be paid to the Glebe mine and a village shoe factory and specimens of silk woven in Eyam can be seen as well as many other points of interest in the village.

Mrs.Hall of the Miners Arms Hotel will provide tea at 3/- each. This inn was the one at which the Rev.Joseph Hunt, a former Rector of Eyam, became involved in a mock marriage with disastrous results.

The tour of early cotton mills in the north west of the County, led by Mr.Owen Ashmore, has been delayed on account of the petrol shortage, but will now take place on Saturday September 7th.. Members will meet at Buxton and from there proceed by motor coach or a convoy of private cars, depending upon the numbers involved.

For both this and the Eyam meeting notice of intention to join the party should be sent to the Section Secretary at least two weeks before the date. Detailed particulars of final arrangements will then be sent.

Benefactors - Through the generosity of a member wishing to remain anonymous, who has donated £5, and of Mr.G.R.B.Ward who has sent us the gift of £1, the duplicator on which we have set such high hopes can now be paid for. On behalf of the Section we send our most sincere and grateful thanks to these two friends.

Those who have enjoyed reading the numbers of Amateur Historian given to the Section by Miss D.Barrington will have seen with regret the announcement in the Spring issue that publication may not be possible after the summer.

The Burdett Map - At last we have received from the printers the reproduction prints of the map. The work, though so delayed, has been very well done. Wherever possible copies have already been delivered and on the inside back cover of this bulletin is a list of addresses from which copies can be collected. This method has been adopted to prevent damage in transit. Please pay promptly on receipt - the price is 6/- each set.

Supplements - There has been an unavoidable delay in the printing of the "Elizabethan Survey of Chesterfield" but it will be circulated as soon as it comes to hand.

This year is the centenary of the death of Richard Furness, the Derbyshire Schoolmaster poet. Although he lived for many years in Dore where Glover has recorded him as "Schoolmaster and Parish Clerk" he was born in Eyam, and this year a well will be dressed there in his memory. Mr.Clarence Daniel has written an appreciation of Furness and this is now Supplement No.1. Copies may be obtained from the Section Secretary.

Later in the year we are hoping to publish some of the valuable work done by Mr.R.Thornhill of Great Longstone on local Constables' Accounts.

Original Documents - Mr.R.Johnson has loaned to the Section some of his collection of documents and these can be seen at the Chapel Room by arrangement with the Section Secretary.

They are:-

(1) A Survey of the Estates near Derby taken by Vernon c.1730.
(2) "An Act for Dividing and Enclosing a certain Common called Hulland Ward otherwise Hollin Ward in the County of Derby 1771".
(3) A document mentioning many fields and Hazlewood Hall and drawn up between Edward Lowe of Hazlewood and Sir Nathaniel Curzon in 1744.
(4) A document concerning the Ockbrooke Openfields 1767.
(5) Counterpart of Mortgage of Lands in Hazlewood 1770.
(6) Document concerning land in Derby 1692.
(7) Abstract of Act Enclosing the Commons etc. in the Manor of Matlock 1826.

Cheese - The article by Mr.R.A.H.O'Neal has been based on a report in the Agricultural Review which came out towards the end of the last century.

Milestones - Mr.Munslow would be very glad to receive help, to enable him to complete his survey of milestones in Derbyshire. If interested please write for further particulars to 1, Lonsdale Place, Derby. (See NQ.31).

Street Names - Members could do a great service to Local History if they would use their influence wherever possible to preserve the names of fields that are being built over. For example, a new road in Quarndon has been named Asherfield Avenue (the old field name of the site). Some time ago the Breadsall Parish Council agreed that a new estate of bungalows being built near Brookfields Farm Breadsall should be named Brookfields Drive. In this way the memory of the old fieldscan be preserved even after they have disappeared.

Finally it is hoped that members will note with approval the better reproduction which we have endeavoured to achieve with this number!

THE CHESTERFIELD MEETING
Miss Nellie Kirkham on Lead Mines & Soughs

In her talk Miss Kirkham concentrated not on the lead mines themselves but on her own approach to the work she had done on them, and she gave a detailed description of the methods employed in locating "lost" mines and drainage systems which had been named in old documents or on old maps. Trying to discover some sough (that is a drain of water from a Derbyshire mine) a 1" map would be studied to get a general picture of the situation, then a 6" or even a 25" map in an effort to identify the exact spot.

The next step was to visit the places armed with maps, notes, note-books for further notes, a torch, a steel measuring tape, a hammer and binoculars. Miss Kirkham's own work had been concentrated on an area from Buxton to Matlock and from Castleton to Wirksworth (the limestone area).

Old mine plans, old manuscripts and court cases about mine claims held a great store of information and much could be gleaned from gossip with local people. "Miss Kirkham had encountered a natural prejudice towards a female investigator and this had to be overcome in order to elicit help. Farmers were especially suspicious of a woman equipped with maps and papers and suggesting the "Min. of Ag."! But once suspicions were allayed much helpful information was forthcoming. It was essential to know the lead-mining words used locally.

Women had been connected with the lead mines for centuries. They usually worked above ground carrying the whiskets or baskets from one place to another, crushing the stones, sorting and doing other jobs at the surface. There were also records of payments to women for mining underground.

In one account in 1764, of the 15 workers referred to, 3 were women earning from 2/6d to 4/- weekly while the men earned up to 6/-. In 1630 in Wirksworth women and boys were earning from 1/8 - 3/6 weekly.

At the Magpie mine the sough was still open with water running from it. It opened out at the Ashford fish farm, the water in the sough being clear with trout swimming in it and the stones on the bed clearly visible. This sough was driven in the 1880's and was very different from the earlier ones, some of which were very narrow and coffin shaped in section to accommodate the body of the worker and today covered deep in mud.

There were certainly lead mines in this area in Roman times when the news of lead might have attracted the legions to the Peak. But so far there had been no proof of lead being worked before this period or of the Phoenician traders having penetrated to Derbyshire in search of it, although stone hammers similar to those found in barrows have been discovered in the mines.

There was in the old days a theory that the lead actually grew and so renewed itself in the vein and this accounted for the Church titles on lead as claimed on all growing things.

The miners moved from one district to another and there were records of Derbyshire men in Devon mines in the 13th century and Derbyshire miners being impressed to go to Cornwall.

The Duchy of Lancaster Records a valuable source of information that had never been thoroughly searched, provided rewarding material.

Miss Kirkham had created an elaborate but completely efficient filing system and had her own "bush telegraph" system also. She had become so interested in the subject that it now claimed all her spare time.

Maps, photographs and mineral specimens were produced for examination after the talk.

RIDGEWAY LEVEL, WHATSTANDWELL, by Nellie Kirkham

In Mr.O'Neal's interesting article on "Some Notes on the History of Whatstandwell" mention is made of Meerbrook Sough on the west side of the

river, and also of the saw-mill a little distance above the bridge on the east side, and here there was a lead mine sough called Ridgeway Level (or Wakebridge Level or Whatstandwell Level). The outlet is now only a flow from a pipe, and there is no longer a true sough entrance. In a short distance there is a shaft onto the sough, and the joinery works used to drive a turbine from this shaft to work the saw-mill, and also for their electric lights. Earlier than this, the water from the sough was used to turn a water-wheel to work the sawmill. Earlier still, before this works was built, the sawmill was at the house about a hundred feet higher up the hillside, and then there was a wheel worked by the surface stream which flows past here, but there was a fire, and the sawmill was moved down to the present site. I was told that the water still flows warm sometimes, and that it changes from warm to tepid in the space of a few hours. It is a clear flow with no ochre deposit, and has been analysed and contains 67% of lead. The warm water comes from Crich Cliff mines, and formerly has been described as of the "warmth of new milk". The water coming down from Wakebridge Mine is cold, but the Crich Cliff mines are said to have been unusually warm to work in.

In mine ledgers of the 1850's and 1860's it is called Ridgeway Sough, and this name has been accepted by the Geological Memoirs, but Farey calls it Wakebridge Level or Sough, and states that "it is now driving", that it had then gone three-quarters of a mile, and that it was being made to drain Crich Cliff Mines. By the 1880's it was nearly a mile in length, and is called Wakebridge Level, locally it is also known as Whatstandwell Level.

It is not possible to trace the line of the sough under the old quarries, but a number of the shaft-mounds can be seen in the brook-valley of Oxhay Wood. The sough went to Gingler Shaft, which can be seen on the west side of the Holloway to Crich Road. (1100' east of south from Wakebridge Farm 43/340.553). Here the sough divides, one branch going under the mines of Crich Cliff, and the other going northwards to Wakebridge Mine (43/339.557).

I was told that the sough is 4' 6" high. It was what is called a "standing level" i.e. the water being kept at a certain depth, in this case of 15" at least, as the boats used on it required 14" of water. Inside the sough there were slotted stones on either side and timber was put across to raise the water. There was an underground pumping engine at Gingler Shaft at one time and coal was carried to it by the boats.

By 1846 Ridgeway Level was draining Crich Cliff Mines, also Wakebridge Mine, and at the latter a steam engine of 50 h.p. lifted the water to the sough, and also worked an ore-crusher. Wass & Co., who worked Mill Close Mine last century, also worked this mine. A Wakebridge Mine ledger of mid 19th century reveals many items of interest. Some of the mine buildings were thatched, as was common. In 1856 the engine house was being built of stone, and by the next year it was ready for the engine, and James Elce, the agent for the mine, journeyed to Hull to select pitch-

pine and memel (Scots pine exported from Memel, a port of Prussia) baulks for the beams of the engine, the pump rods etc. He was paid £55 a year, and £10 was spent on a new desk for him. The sawing of the wooden pump-rods cost £13. Miners were paid 2/6 a day, or for a shift of 8 hours, boys earned 1/6 a day. As was usual on a big mine, men of various trades were employed, the carpenter had 3/6 a day, and by the end of 1857 he was paid 4/- a day. Another man did the 'plumering' and a blacksmith did a good deal of work, for nothing could be bought, even screws and nails were hand-made. A riddle cost 2/6, and a signal bell and galvanised wire cost £2. There were ale and refreshments to the men starting the engine. The two enginemen were each paid 4/- a day, and they worked a six-day week. Payments for ale to the men occur fairly frequently as is common in lead mine accounts, and ale and bread and cheese for them have entries for as much as £3 - 16 - 0d a time. "Refreshments" occur in most of the sets of entries, and there are a number for the miners' holiday. In 1859 a lightning conductor was fixed for £7 - 12 - 0d.

The Standing Level (the sough) had work done on it from 1858-60, and, at that time, about sixteen men were employed, not counting the blacksmith and enginemen, or engine-tenters.

In 1861 there was an accident in the mine, for Cantrell and Webb (Note 1) attended Frederick Bunting and amputated his arm for £10 0 0. The entry for a coffin for Bunting gives a tragic end to this. The same year £10 was paid for a cow which fell down a shaft.

Eventually the pumping engine was moved to Mill Close Mine, where it was still in use this century as one of the auxiliary engines, and was named "Alice" by the miners.

The house on the other side of the brook opposite the Wakebridge engine house used to be "The Hack Inn", its licence ceasing in the 1880's.

I was sent to see Mr.R.Marshall, who was born in 1874, and worked at Wakebridge Mine when he was sixteen, for about eighteen months. He worked as the boy to two men at the ore-dressing floor in 1890, and was paid 10/- a week.

In the 1890's the old methods for dressing the ore were still in use, and Mr.Marshall gave me a vivid description of them. The ore was drawn up in the kibbles to the surface, mostly in smallish pieces, which he described as "rough chatter" (over most of the mining area it was called "bowse" but that word does not seem to be used here). There was the picking table, which was a raised sheet of iron, and under one corner of it was the fat, or vat, and under this end of the table were three whiskets (baskets), numbered 1, 2 and 3, into which the best ore was thrown, according to fineness. The deads (stony matter without ore) were thrown into a wheelbarrow, under another corner of the table, to be wheeled away onto the hillocks. On the picking table they did the sorting with a right-angled iron implement about as long as a small table knife. They also riddled the ore, and washed it in a square pen (this is called a standing-buddle) with water running in at one end. Three men and a boy usually worked on the dressing floor, while twelve miners worked underground, at one time there were forty-two miners. In earlier times, buckers

(a kind of flat hammer, like the one in Derby Museum) were used for breaking the ore, but by the 1830's there were mechanical crushers, worked from the winding engine. There were two sets and the top wheels were ribbed, with flat rollers below which crushed the ore very finely. After crushing, the ore was washed again in three vats, by jigging it with what they called the "water-pole" (Note 2). The Reckoning, when the ore was measured, was six weeks and seven weeks alternatively, and, as was customary, at the Reckoning, the miners made "bargains" as to the length of vein they would work. The miners in 1890 worked shifts of six hours, and the shifts went on all the time, day and night, this was quite common. When frost or bad weather stopped the dressing work on the surface, or when in the first two weeks of a reckoning when the miners were starting their bargain and drilling, and nothing was being raised from the mine, the three men and the boy could not work on the surface, and would go underground to help the miners by sinking shafts etc. and when the dressing work was rushed, the miners came up to help. (This same sensible sharing of work can be noted in 18th century lead mining documents).

At the measuring at Wakebridge Mine, the Dish of ore was smoothed with the hand, but (unlike earlier times) it was also by weight, 60 lbs. being reckoned for a dish. Every so often a dish was weighed on a scale. Suddenly, when a dish of ore was being smoothed by the hand, "Up" would be cried, and it had to go on the scale, and this was done at random.

In the Derbyshire Archaeological Journal of 1894 there is an excellent description of the descent of Wakebridge Mine by the geologist H.Arnold-Bemrose, and, judging from this description, they went along what is called the Long Gate, which was a continuation of the Ridgeway Level northwards from Wakebridge Mine. That they walked dry along this is explained by the fact that it is at a slightly higher level than Ridgeway Level. Some water came in a short distance along Long Gate, but it was turned down an underground shaft to a level 240' below, where it went to the foot of the pumping shaft, and then up to the sough.

Note 1 They were surgeons in partnership in Coldwell Street, Wirksworth.

Note 2 The vat was nearly filled with water, and the mixed ore and spar etc. was put on a riddle at one end of a pole. The other end rested on the man's or boy's shoulder, and was jigged up and down (in parts of north Derbyshire this is also called hotching or hutching). The lighter substances, as they rose to the top, were skimmed off with a 'limp' made of tin or iron).

With thanks for information to Messrs.W.Barber, J.Gibbons, R.Marshall, C.Waterfall and A.Watkins, and to Mr.V.Stevenson for loan of the Mine Ledger. Thanks are also due to the late Mr.H.V.Taylor. Mr.Kirk who was Mr.Taylor's partner at the Joinery Works states that the Works is now closed.

THE ILKESTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

Mr.C.Hargreaves, the Borough Librarian, states that although the Ilkeston library cannot claim a very large collection it is being added to continually and includes a set of the Ilkeston Pioneer from 1854. He is very anxious to collect material of any kind dealing with Ilkeston and places within a three mile radius of it. Gifts of local photographs or objects of interest to add to the small museum nucleus are always welcome and Mr.Hargreaves would also be glad to hear of local books or other items of interest available for purchase by the Library.

WASHING ORE IN LONGSTONE
by Robert Thornhill

It has been suggested from time to time that lead ore was brought to the village of Great Longstone for washing and whilst it is quite possible that this may have been the case, it is advisable to consider what evidence is available in support of the theory.

The story may have been passed down from the miners of old as many descendents live in the village but first it may be best to consider the way in which ore was washed.

Some interesting notes on lead mining are given by Bray in his "Sketch of a Tour into Derbyshire and Yorkshire" the second edition of which published in 1783. On page 220 he states:-

"The lead ore, when brought out of the mine, is broken with heavy hammers on a stone called a knock-stone, and is then put into a wooden sieve, and rinsed in a large tub; ore falls through, and leaves the lighter rubbish, which is skimmed off, thrown out at a hole in the wall, and thence taken to the buddle, where it is rinsed again by a small current of water, the lead falling to the bottom. What is carried down by the current is washed once more in the same manner, and the deposit here, which is almost as fine as flour, is called belland. The beating and first rinsing is done by women who work nine hours in the day and earn about seven-pence. The men earn about eight shillings a week".

Dealing with the evidence:-

(1) The washing is supposed to have taken place in a small field of about half an acre, in the Mires at the lower end of the village. The field is No.476 on the 1898 Ordnance map and No.184 in the Enclosure Award of 1824 when it was part of the allotment to Edward Dunton.

(2) The land is always spoken of as being "belland" and animals on it for any length of time are likely to die as a result of lead poisoning. The presence of lead can only be due to it having been brought there, as the nearest lead workings or rake is over half a mile away.

(3) A story is told of water being taken to the mines for ore washing and of the donkey boy considering that he should receive more pay. Donkeys with panniers were used and no doubt water would be obtained from one of the two village pumps. It is probable that the same donkeys may have been used to bring finely crushed material to the village for separation in what would be the nearest running water.

(4) The suggested washing site is on level ground and there are no signs of any heaps of discarded material. On the other hand it is unlikely that any large volume of material would be conveyed to the washing site, which presumably was only used for the separation of fine material which had to be dealt with in running water. Traces of fluor gravel, also lead ore, have been found in the area so waste material may have been spread on the ground near to the washing place. It is reported that soil was afterwards spread over it.

(5) For some years the surrounding area has been very wet due to a drain which runs underneath having been blocked. The drain was the original village sewer but since a new sewerage scheme was complete some 25 years ago, the old drain has been used mainly for surface water from the roads. To the drain are connected the overflows from several wells and springs so there is a constant but small flow of water always passing through it.
(6) The stone lined drain or sewer follows the main road as far as a bend in the lower part of the village and then crosses four small fields to the sewerage works which were constructed in two former willow beds. In 1859 these beds were described as "Bishpond and Willow Piece" and no doubt at that time, or a little earlier, only spring and storm water would run into them.
(7) Until the early part of the present century, when it was piped, the "drain" across the first field was for about 60 yards in the form of an open ditch. The remainder is stone built in three sections of approximately 90, 60 and 90 yards in length. The two 90 yard lengths are built to form rectangular drains about 15" x 15" with stone covers but the 60 yard length in the centre is of particular interest in view of what was found when it was opened up for cleaning in 1956.
(8) It was at this time that the discovery was made regarding the three sections and that the centre one had been built with sloping sides, that it was about 24" wide at the top and 18" at the bottom. The depth was roughly 18" and very large cover stones had been fitted. As a drain there is no reason why this section should be any different from the others but as a washing place the construction appears to be admirable.
(9) The dimensions given are approximate as it was unfortunately not possible to make a very detailed examination during the time when the drain was being cleaned out but the information obtained was sufficient, however, to confirm the theory regarding washing ore in the village and Longstone can claim to possess a very fine BUDDLE although it is not on show.

A WAKES WEEK CEREMONY FORMERLY HELD IN DERBYSHIRE

by R.A.H.O'Neal

Derbyshire cheese has always been well-known and popular in its native county. It used to be the object of a special ceremony until at least the middle of the last century. In the days when cheese was made regularly in most Derbyshire farmhouses it was the custom to have the best cheese ripe for the Wakes or some other annual festival. A June cheese was considered to be the best, but one of any summer month would do almost as well.

The ceremony of cutting the cheese was a serious and solemn occasion and those who could not appreciate the gravity of the affair were not expected to be present. It was the culmination of the careful attention which had been lavished on the cheese by the mistress of the house for a year or more. The dairy-maid, usually the farmer's wife, turned and wiped the cheese at intervals and protected it like a child from draughts and cold air. For the first several months, perhaps even for the whole time, the cheese was wrapped round with a band of stout calico which was turned over for about half an inch at the edges. The uncovered ends turned a pale

blue-green as the mould formed on the ripening cheese but the parts protected by the wrapping remained a pale amber colour. The quality of the colouring of the outside was a sure guide for experts as to the fitness of the cheese. On younger cheeses there was frequently a patch free of mould in the centre.

At the feast, the cheese was carried in state and placed in the middle of the table where it was the centre of attraction and the subject of everyone's conversation. The whole family would be present at the meal as well as friends and relations and it was the privilege of the master of the house to cut the ripe cheese. A large knife was always used for the cutting in order to preserve the characteristic flaky grain which a wire would have obscured. The farmer usually cut out one quarter first, which was sampled by all those present, and it was always the cause of great pride for the farmer's wife if it was pronounced good having a mild scent and smooth flavour.

SOME NOTES ON OLD BELPER

By F.T.Herrison

The first reference to Belper is contained in a charter granted by Robert Ferrers, who died in 1139. In this he gave certain land at Heage, held from the King, for service rendered in driving wolves out of the Lordship of Belper. This is mentioned in Jeaye's "Derbyshire Charters", although some authorities have questioned it.

The first settlement in the vicinity of Belper was probably at Bradelee, which is mentioned in Domesday Book, and which was situated somewhere between the Laund and Whitemoor. The name Bradley persists in Bradley Brook, which runs south-east of the town, and in Bradley Laund, which appeared until modern times in Duffield parish registers.

The first mention of Belper on which reliance can be placed is in the year 1231, in the Close Rolls. It is probable that one of the de Ferrars built the old church of St. John in the Butts, and that this church was later endowed by an Earl of Lancaster when the de Ferrars estates became Crown property.

In 1272 there were three parks in Belper - Lady Park (Lady Well Park), Little Belper Park, and Morley Park, each containing fallow deer. Morley Park was noted for its oaks, and charcoal burning was carried on there.

Edward I was at Belper on March 24th 1291.

Edward II visited Duffield forest in 1323 and again in 1325.

The early nail making industry has already been mentioned (see Bulletin No. 4 p43). After flourishing in the 14th century, we find no mention of it during the 15th and 16th centuries, when Belper is referred to as a hamlet pertaining to Duffield.

A COACHMAN'S EXPENSES BOOK 1817 - 1820

By R.Hayhurst.

A large and imposing legal document can make very monotonous reading, whereas a great deal of useful information can be gleaned from apparently simple, everyday records. This coachman's book which is amongst the recently calendared documents at Tissington Hall, is an example. It is an ordinary notebook, with soft, brown leather backs, ruled pages, with cash columns, interleaved with blotting paper. The cost of the book is the first entry in it, 1/9d, on the 29th September 1817.

Thomas Reynolds is the coachman, and he makes small payments himself, and is re-imbursed at the end of each month, or sometimes after two months. He includes his own board and wages at the rate of 10/- per week. His job is no sinecure, for, as it is his custom to pay the turnpike dues, he enters them daily and the book thus gives a record of his journeys, throwing an interesting light on his master's travels.

When away from home his pays 1/6 to 2/0 for his dinner or supper, and he pays the waiter, the chambermaid, and the "horsler" varying sums according to length of stay. For one night the waiter and chambermaid will have 1/6 each and the horsler 6d. Then there is the horses' "baiting" as "3 horses hay 3 nights, 13/6d". Greasing occurs fairly regularly at 1/-, and sometimes shoeing, as "3 horses shoeing 7/6d." Not infrequently the horses have "Diuretic Balls, 2/-, and Chordial Balls, 2/-". He buys blacking at 1/- and a gallon of neatsfoot oil at 6/-.

The following is a typical extract, year 1818,

Nov.	6	Turnpks to Hopton	1	Nov.	17	Turnpks 6
Nov.	7	do Cromford	2½		18	do 6
	8	do	1			2 horses hay and corn 2.0
	9	do Barrow Hill	1.6			Horsler 6
	10	To Ashbourne	6		19	Turnpks 1
		2 horses hay and corn	2.0			1 dozen of stable brooms 3.6
		Horsler	6			Blacking 6
		Expences	2.0		20	Turnpks 1
		Niter and sulpher	1.0			Horsler 6
	11	Turnpks to Ashbourne	6		21	Turnpks 6
		2 horses hay and corn	2.0		23	Turnpks 6
		Horsler	6		25	do to Colledge 1.10
	12	Turnpks	1		26	do to Ashborne 1
	13	Toll Bars to Colledge	1.8		27	do 2
	14	To Ashborne	7		30	do to Colledge 4
	15	do	1			
	16	Turnpks to Summercell	7			
		3 horse hay and corn and straw	9.9			

And so on: "Sumercell" is visited fairly regularly, and so is Barrow Hill. Willersley occurs, and Hopton. There are trips further afield, to Derby, Nottingham, Sheffield and Worksop, Harrogate and York.

On a journey from London in July 1818 the horses have corn at Elstree, and St.Albans on the 8th, at Newport Pagnell on the 9th, on the 10th at "Highgate Inn" and Willford, Leicester and Loughborough. Night at Leicester 7/-. Night at Derby on the 11th and also shoeing at Derby 7/. Corn at Ashborne also entered on the 11th.

NOTES AND QUERIES

Information regarding any query should be sent to the Section Secretary who will also be glad to have notes on any branch of Local History.

NQ.34 (ref.NQ.33) - Thomas Blore 1764 - 1818 - Topographer, born at Ashbourne, Dec. 1st, 1764. Educated at Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School, Ashbourne. Solicitor at Derby. Moved to Repton to manage Philip Gell's affairs. Entered Middle Temple 1795. Later, lived at Berwick Hall collecting materials for the topography and antiquities of Hertfordshire. His collections became the basis for Clutterbuck's History of Hertfordshire. Later, moved to Mansfield Woodhouse, then to Burr House, Bakewell, Manton, Rutland, and finally Stamford. Was unsuccessful Whig candidate for Parliament. Edited Drakard's Stamford News for short time. Died London, 1818, and buried in Paddington church. Epitaph in the church: Sacred to the memory of Thomas Blore, Gentleman, of the Honourable Society of the Middle Temple and member of the Antiquarian Society, whose days were embittered and whose life was shortened by intense application. He died November 10th, 1818, aged 53 years. (See: Dictionary of National Biography, Vol.5 and The Reliquary, Vol.3, 1862. p.1-13: Thomas Blore, the topographer: a chapter in biography, by Llewellyn Jewitt.) R.A.H.O'Neal.

NQ.35 (ref.NQ.33) - Sir Thomas Monson, Bt., 1564 - 1641 - Master of the armoury at the Tower. Matriculated 9th December, 1579, aged 19, from Magdelen College, Oxford. Left Oxford without a degree. Created M.A. 30th August, 1605, when he accompanied James I to Oxford. Knight, 1588. Succeeded to his father's estates 1593. Entered Parliament 10th October, 1597 as member for the county of Lincoln. M.P. for Castle Rising 1603 - 04, Cricklade 1614. Master Falconer to James I. Appointed Chancellor to Anne of Denmark, Keeper of the armoury at Greenwich and, in 1611, Master of the armoury at the Tower. Created Baronet 29th June, 1611. Appointed keeper of naval and other warlike instruments at the Tower 1612. Accused of complicity in the Overbury poisoning case October, 1615 and imprisoned. Tried inconclusively. Released from the Tower on bail October, 1616. Pardoned February 22nd 1617. Not restored to royal favour till 1620. Had lost all his appointments in 1615 and in 1620 he had to leave his lands in Lincolnshire to pay his debts. Appointed Clerk for the King's Letters, Bills and Declarations before the Council of the North in 1628. Shared the Stewardship of the Duchy of Lancaster with his son about 1638. Spent his old age in retirement and amused himself writing a book. Died at South Carlton in May, 1641, aged 77. Buried in South Carlton church on May 29th, 1641. (Summary of the account in the Dictionary of National Biography, Vol.38.) R.A.H.O'Neal.

NQ.36 Water Mill at Westhouses - Answering Mr. Munslow's plea for information about Water Mills, I know of a mill in my old village of Westhouses which lies near Alfreton in the parish of Blackwell.

The mill was at approximately 411576 or 4 on Sheet 112 of the 6th and 7th editions of the O.S. 1" map. Actually it lies in the parish of Shirland and all that remains is the old mill leet, much of which is either filled in or under culverts. There was an old stone bridge and some masonry by the leet N of the road. Some of the old field tracks round the mill were once of a higher status I believe. Gordon Warwick.

NQ.37 (ref.NQ.31) - Gate Stoop, Monyash - The gate stoop referred to by Mr. Fisher from the May '95 issue of "Notts & Derbys Notes and Queries" was in situ two or three years ago, when I saw it: and I have little doubt that it is still there. It is of course a guide stone, and is mentioned by Mr. R.W.P.Cockerton in "Derbyshire Countryside" for January 1941, where he states that it is made of limestone; and no doubt the expression "Derbyshire marble" means no more than that. Guidestones in this material are rare, but there is at least one other in the county, and possibly more. The Monyash example is, so far as I have been able to ascertain, the only one in Derbyshire which bears the name "Cheadle". The lettering is somewhat defaced but the inscriptions undoubtedly were:-

B V X T O N	CHE	DARBY	BAKE
B R	DEL		WELL
R O A D	R O A		

Some years ago I commenced a survey of the ancient milestones of the county, based on the articles by the late T.I.Tudor in the "Journals" for 1936/7. Many new examples have been located, and much additional information obtained about some of those mentioned by Tudor, but the survey is as yet incomplete. The reason is purely geographical; the area still remaining unsurveyed is the N.W. part of the county lying beyond Buxton, which is not easy to deal with satisfactorily from a centre as far away as Derby.

I have in the past approached several people in the area, who have readily agreed to help, but unfortunately they have all been unable to fulfil their promises and so no progress has been made.

I would be most grateful if some member of the Section could find time to assist me, and so enable the survey to be completed. It would be necessary to locate and visit the milestones, and take a description of them: but as there are not likely to be more than ten or a dozen items the time required to do this would not be excessive. I already have certain clues which I can pass on to anyone who is really keen to help.

D.W.Munslow

NQ.38 (ref.NQ.31) - Milestone at Monyash - I wonder if the following is the one to which the query refers, as it is a gate-cheek. O.S. map 6" to 1 mile, Derbyshire XXVIII N.W. 43/157.656. It is a gate-cheek on the E. side of Derby Lane (from Long Rake to Monyash) just where the lane takes a N.W. angle. I saw it in 1948, and my notes merely give the lettering. DARBY 9 (on E. side) BVXTON (on W. side) BAKEWELL (N. side)

CHE DEL (on S. side). I have no note as to which kind of stone, but I suggest that "Slab of Derbyshire marble" merely means that it is of encrinoid limestone. (After all these years I cannot remember what it looked like.) It is not a great distance from Monyash Quarry from which this limestone was obtained, and called "grey marble". It was much used for ovenmantles to fireplaces, in fact for the whole surround of fire-places. Nellie Kirkham.

NO.39 (ref.NO.26) - Can anyone supply any information about coaches in Derbyshire prior to 1820? Names of coaches, times, routes and fares are all wanted. Fairly complete details are held for services after 1820 but any information on fares would be welcome. R.A.H.O'Neal.

NO.40 - Longnor to Longstone in the late 18th century - During the latter part of the 18th century cheese, wool, pots, shoes, and other goods were brought from Longnor and near-by places in Staffordshire to Longstone which is near Bakewell in Derbyshire and which would be quite a difficult journey particularly during winter months. Some consignments were from Hardings Booth about 1½ miles west of Longnor others from Crowdycote nearly the same distance east and just within the Derbyshire boundary, and one from "Cheadleton". This may refer to Cheddleton between Leek and Longton as it concerns a crate of pots. The question naturally arises regarding why goods should have been brought from Longnor, was it on one of the stage wagon routes and was it a distributing centre at that time?

During the period chert was being supplied from Longstone to the Potteries and possibly the goods were picked up on the return journeys and later it may be possible to compare the dates of chert deliveries with those of goods being collected. The large consignments of cheese - in some instances a ton or more - can be accounted for by the fact that there were cheese factors in Longstone evidently in a fair way of business.

Passenger and goods transport in Derbyshire has been dealt with by Mr. H.S.Twells in "Mr. Drewry & the Derby Wagons" D.A.J. 1942 and "Derby's Flying Machines & Earliest Coaches" D.A.J.1943. Robert Thornhill.

NO.41 - Cotton Mill at Bakewell - The following early references might be added to Mr. Ashmore's list p59 Earliest reference in "Sketch of a Tour into Derbyshire & Yorkshire" by Wm. Bray. First Edition 1778 with preface dated November 1777. On p73 is a reference to the Bakewell Mill being built. The second edition 1783 refers to a third mill having been built at Bakewell. This reference appears on p118 under Cromford not under Bakewell. In D.A.J. 1889 p160 White Watson records the opening of the Cotton Mill in 1777.
Robert Thornhill.

NO.42 - Edward Gray Bagshawe - May I draw the attention of members to the "Obituary of Mr. Edward Gray Bagshawe" and "Some Notes of the Provenance of the Bagshawe Family of Derbyshire and Sheffield" by J.B.Himsworth which appear in the Hunter Archaeological Society Transactions Autumn 1956 pp276, 277. Mr.Bagshawe was a personal friend of mine over many years and contributed a considerable amount of information in the interests of Derby-shire. Many of his papers were given to the Sheffield City Library by his brother Major B.W.Bagshawe and a further batch of papers was later purchased by the Library. Many of the documents refer to lead mining in and around the Eyam district, and when this important collection has been catalogued at Sheffield it would be useful if details of it could be given in the Bulletin. Edwin Walker.

RICHARD FURNESS-The Peakland Poet

Born at Eyam 1791. Died at Dore, 1857

By Clarence Daniel

"I, Richard Furness, schoolmaster, Dore,
Keep parish books and pay the poor;
Draw plans for buildings and indite
Letters for those who cannot write:
Make wills, and recommend a proctor;
Cure wounds, let blood with any doctor;
Draw teeth, sing psalms, the hautboy play
At chapel on each holy day;
Paint sign-boards, cart names at command,
Survey and plot estates of land;
Collect at Easter one in ten --
And on the Sunday, say Amen !"

If you want a pot pourri of romance and religion, politics and poetry, legend and literature, music and mathematics, humour and humanitarianism, all concentrated in the life of one person; then I would recommend you to read the biography and poetry of Richard Furness. For both his life story and his literature are fragrant with the summer scent of herbs and flowers which flourish in the sheltered dales, and on the wild and wind swept moors of Derbyshire.

As your eyes travel over the pages of this fascinating chronicle and its anthology of verse, your imagination will be lured to :

"Where high Sir William lifts in clouds o'ercast,
His giant shoulders on the western blast --
Peers o'er a thousand dales, and looking out,
Views Win-hill, Mam, and distant Kinderscout".

Or else to

"Where Derwent pours in angry floods,
O'er huge misshapen blocks through hanging woods:
Where the blue hills in bold perspective rise,
And marble mountains colonnade the skies".

Some people write books for a living; others write books that live. Richard Furness belonged to the latter class. Compared with Anna Seward, the much lauded "Swan of Lichfield" who was a native of the same village as Furness, he could scarcely be called successful in the sphere of poetry.

While printers and book-binders feverishly produced edition after edition of Miss Seward's works, and rival publishers anxiously solicited her patronage - an enviable and unusual experience for most poets - the works of Richard Furness had to be published by the method of subscription.

Yet the success of Miss Seward was purely contemporary; her literature scarcely survived the generation which had so hysterically greeted each new production. Even Sir Walter Scott, whom she appointed to edit her posthumous works, described much of the material through which he was sifting as "absolutely execrable." But while the books of Miss Seward have been exiled to the obscurity of reference library shelves, I would venture to claim that there are more copies of the much rarer editions of Furness's poems treasured in Peakland homes today.

Maybe I am guilty of prejudice, but I would say that if anyone is worthy of the title "Poet Laureate of the Peak" it is Richard Furness. And I would further be bold enough to contend that his claims to literary recognition are equal, if not superior, to those of Miss Seward, or William Newton upon whom she conferred the dignity of "Minstrel of the Peak" or the Rev.Peter Cunningham, the poetical curate of her father.

Furness was an artist with words: an artist trained in the delicate medium of water colour with its sensitive tones and gentle hues, and yet equally skilled in using the deeper and more luminous shades supplied by oils, or in producing the contrasting light and shade of pencil or pen. Portraits, landscapes, architectural studies, animated scenes or still life, all hang in the gallery of his collected poems. Sometimes a fugitive sketch has been rescued from oblivion, as, for example, the rhyme which introduces this article. It was "doodled" in pencil on a survey being plotted by the poet, and was never intended for publication.

Poetry often mirrors the mood of the poet, and this was true of Richard Furness. There are times when painting becomes too mild a metaphor to describe his poetry, for there were occasions when he forged his words into angry weapons with which to wage war against social injustice, religious intolerance, political tyranny, or industrial oppression. The poverty and pain suffered by the occupants of the poor-houses, and the long hours, low wages and squalid conditions endured by the workers in mines and mills, not only excited his sympathy but roused his fiery muse in a crusade against these contemporary evils. Nor was it the acidly bitter poetry of a political reactionary with a personal grievance against society, but poetry inspired by honest conviction.

No doubt his works would have proved much more successful had he used the silken smooth words of the perfumed poetry which was so popular in his day. But, instead of portraying pretty pastoral scenes, he insisted upon drawing attention to the grim scenes and harsh conditions existing in the "dark satanic mills" of that period.

Yes, Richard Furness was a man who defended the defenceless and championed every attempt to improve the conditions of the poorer classes.

That was why, on a dull December day in 1857, a solemn procession of scythe and saw-makers, colliers and farmers, escorted a horse-drawn hearse and mourning carriages for some distance from the village of Dore. And that was why, on the same day, a company of lead-miners, silk-weavers, farmers and tradesmen walked slowly and sadly out of Eyam to meet the same hearse and carriages. Their faces were grave; their conversation subdued, and their carefully groomed clothes reflected the mood of mourning and melancholy. When the cortege appeared in sight they stood silent and bare-headed as an act of homage and respect, and then fell in behind the vehicles to re-enter the village in a slow and solemn procession to the Church.

After the funeral service, during which the choir sang the anthem, "Vital Spark", the coffin was carried reverently from the Church and laid in a grave beneath the lime tree where his first wife and three young daughters lay buried. And there must have been those among the congregation of mourners who recalled the prophetic lines of his longest poem, "The Rag Bag", when he wrote :

> "Near those tall elms, in that sequestered spot,
> There all these rags in quietness shall rot
> With their poor bard, who never sang for fame,
> (Since rags, and shrouds, and mortals are the same)".

One hundred years have passed since that cold December day, but the thoughts and sentiments enshrined in the poetry of Richard Furness live on. And as a tribute to the memory of their village bard, the members of Eyam Wells-dressing team plan to create a floral tableau during their annual festival to mark the centenary year of his death. They will forge his signature in flowers and reproduce a picture of his birthplace in this rustic medium of art, as a testimony to the respect, esteem and admiration which still lingers in the village where he was born.

The birthplace of the poet is a splendid example of that type of rural architecture which so well illustrates the solid strength and independence of the sturdy yeoman tradition to which it belongs. So much so that one hesitates to try and paint its portrait in print, for it is a house that cannot be easily described in the cold, impersonal language of a guide book.

Neither too fussy nor too formal, the house has long since outgrown its architectural adolescence and become so mellow and mature as to mould itself into the village landscape. Its stone mullioned windows have leaded lights of diamond design, and are protected by dripstones. Similar mouldings protect the well preserved initials and date "R.F 1615", over the doorway. The two gabled dormer windows are dignified with stone shields carved with conventional heraldic devices, and the roof of stout local slate is completely in character with the rest of the building.

Built at the beginning of the 17th century by a Furness of yeoman stock, the house is still tenanted by a member of the family who carries on the farming tradition.

I always think of this old house as a museum of memories. For as it broods over its long life, it remembers a day when a company of 17th century Quakers gathered within its walls, and were rudely disturbed and roughly handled before being marched off to the House of Correction at Derby where they suffered brutal and inhuman treatment. It also recalls the time when 18th century Methodists were heckled and abused at their first meetings held in its forecourt. And later still it remembers many a Dickensian scene when horses were harnessed to an omnibus for weekly trips to Sheffield.

But let R.Murray Gilchrist describe this scene with which he was so familiar. "All the way they could see Cowper's yard, where the old-fashioned yellow omnibus stood piled with hampers, ready for the three flea-bitten horses to be led from the stable...The three women occupied the seat behind the driver; at their back, covered with a sheet of tarpaulin, was a crate of week-old ducklings, incubator-hatched for the Malton market; beyond this were egg and butter baskets, and hampers of trussed fowls. Some time was passed in the yard, where Cowper's son strutted, lustily crowing through a green-rusted brass horn, to warn all would-be passengers that starting time was near...."

It was in this house on August 2nd 1791, that the midwife announced to Samuel Furness that his wife, Margaret, had given birth to another son -- one of their family of seven sons and two daughters.

Taught by his mother, Richard was able to read with ease at the age of four. As a boy he studied mechanism and sculpture, and carved "a sun-dial which would have done credit to one much further advanced in years."

One day Richard was conscripted to lead the horses while his father guided the plough. Observing that he was turning an erratic furrow, the father discovered that the boy was neglecting his duty and appeared to be absorbed in some mental preoccupation. Picking up a piece of turf he hurled it at the boy with an angry demand to know what he thought that he was doing, whereupon Richard confessed,

"I was thinking of a rule in Murray's Grammar."

Leaving school at fourteen, Richard found employment as a clerk for two village factories where "dimity, fustians, and other cotton goods were woven". A condition of employment was that he should have a practical knowledge of the business, but, after spending a period of training, two uncles objected to his continuing this career, and arranged for his apprenticeship to Mr.Joseph Graham, a Chesterfield currier who became Mayor of the town.

This introduction to town life provided opportunities for the cultivation of Richard's interests and the development of his talents. His master, who subscribed to a library, encouraged his apprentice by granting him occasional tickets with which to obtain books. But Richard's appetite for knowledge was not so easily appeased, and he was guilty of forging further tickets to supplement the number allowed. In order to study his illicit supply of literature, the apprentice had to resort to further deceit. Hours of employment were long, and the leisure to read was restricted by the family rule "early to bed". When the family was asleep, Richard was often absorbed in a book propped inside a box containing a candle, while, as a further precaution, he was in the habit of hanging a "borrowed" hide of leather behind the door to prevent the escape of tell-tale rays of light.

This habit of encroaching upon the hours of sleep persisted throughout the life of the poet, though it did not impair either his physical or mental energy. It is recorded that "he scarce knew what fatigue was in early or confirmed manhood. A few hours' sleep fitted him for the labours of the day."

It was during his apprenticeship that Richard found opportunity to cultivate his instinctive taste for music. Members of a neighbouring family named Rice invited him to share in their musical activities, and gave him instruction in playing various instruments. Later in life he devoted himself to composition, and often provided the settings for carols which he wrote each Christmas. He wrote about thirty carols and thus, quite unwittingly, assured for himself some measure of immortality — at least locally — for some of them are still sung during the festive season at Dore, Eyam, Foolow, and other villages.

Another educational achievement was his mastery of the French language which he acquired by friendship with a number of French officers who had been taken prisoners during the war with Napoleon I, and who were on parole at Chesterfield. One of these officers also encouraged his interest in mathematics by giving him guidance in the more abstruse principles of this science.

Then, at the age of seventeen, Richard was converted to Methodism and undertook the responsibilities of the lay ministry. In addition to conducting services in village chapels near Chesterfield, he frequently addressed open-air meetings at which he was quite often subjected to heckling and argument by the critics of his doctrine.

When he reached the age of twenty-one and had discharged the obligations of his apprenticeship, Richard became bewitched by the magic spell of London — that "far country" which has beckoned and beguiled many a prodigal from parents and home. To those in search of fortune, the adventurous and the ambitious, London has always had a fateful fascination. Its call has proved irresistible.

And so it was with Richard Furness.

Packing his few belongings and saying his "good-byes", he started on foot on the long pilgrimage to that shrine which he hoped would help him to realise the fulfilment of his dreams and desires. He was assisted on his long journey by members of his trade, for at that early date the curriers had a recognised trade union which not only demanded a reasonable rate of wages, but also supplied financial help to unemployed or travelling members. Availing himself of the advantages and benefits to be derived from this source, Richard was able to reach his destination without undue hardship.

Shortly after his arrival in London, he had the good fortune to secure employment, but the ill fortune to suffer a six weeks' illness. His next step was to join the Volunteers. Whether this was from necessity or choice we do not know, but his biographer, Dr.Holland, was puzzled as to how he could reconcile this militant occupation with the pacific doctrine of his religious faith. But Richard had strong patriotic feelings, and the expression of these in the composition of a song caused his subsequent secession from the Methodists who objected, not so much to the sentiments of the song, as to the fact that it was sung in public-houses.

While in London, Richard was invited to preach in City Road Chapel before the celebrated Dr.Adam Clarke who congratulated him on his sermon.

After a year in the city he discarded his uniform and returned to Chesterfield where he worked as a journeyman for his old master.

It was during this period that the breach with the Methodists occurred. Richard had been requested to write a song to commemorate the defeat of the French in Holland, and this was sung to the music of the national anthem at a public dinner held at the Angel Inn, Chesterfield. This fact was construed as a violation of religious ethics by some of his fellow Methodists, and, as a result of the ensuing controversy, Richard returned to the more tolerant fellowship of the Established Church.

At the age of twenty-two, he was back in Eyam trying to anchor his restless spirit to the currier's bench, for he had started business on his own account. But concentration on manual work was militated by a greater affection for mental culture, and often his leather was neglected to satisfy his hunger for learning and literature.

Such distractions from business had serious enough repercussions for a bachelor, but Richard's position became further complicated when he fell in love with Frances Ibbotson, a Hathersage girl, whom he met at the annual Wakes. The girl's father — who, incidentally, had prophesied that carriages would one day be drawn without horses — was a shrewd farmer with a less Micawber-like philosophy than the poet. He regarded the romance with blunt disfavour, having no doubt acquainted himself with Richard's reputation as a man of business, and seeing little prospects for the future prosperity of his daughter.

But the couple were not easily daunted, and when the father still refused to countenance their courtship they resorted to elopement. Early one morning in the December of 1816, the Vicar of Hathersage (Rev. J. le Cornu) was roused from his sleep by someone hammering on the vicarage door.

"What do you want?" he demanded sleepily, opening the bedroom window. "To be married" was the impatient reply.

"I dare not marry you before eight o' clock; if I do, old Matthew will strip my gown," protested the clergyman as he recognised the couple beneath his window.

Although the girl had succeeded in evading the vigilance of her father, delay was dangerous, and so, after a hurried consultation, the Vicar admitted the prospective bride and bridegroom into the church in which they were safely locked until the clock struck eight and the marriage was duly solemnised.

Matthew wisely became reconciled to the runaway couple, for, being a widower suddenly deprived of his housekeeper, he decided to remedy the situation by inviting them to share his home. Upon their arrival at his house, Matthew greeted his son-in-law with the comment, "Well, you have fought a hard battle". To which Richard rejoined with some satisfaction, "And I have won".

From a domestic standpoint the new arrangement worked quite smoothly, but from a business angle it was not so successful. The currier -- his attention divided by cultural pursuits and home interests -- did not find it easy to apply himself with diligence to a business situated five miles away; particularly as he had little affection for the business concerned. He was not guilty so much of indolence as indifference; but there was only one sequel to be expected, and he closed the door of his currier's shop at Eyam for the last time. And one suspects that it was with a feeling of relief from an irksome responsibility, rather than with a sense of genuine regret.

While at Hathersage, the attention of the poet was divided between occasional work on the farm and employment at his old trade. He also developed a friendship with a local surgeon, Dr.Cheetham, of Hope, who initiated him into the mysteries of the profession of healing, and found him a useful colleague when performing operations. Richard studied surgery and medicine so assiduously that his medical biographer, Dr.Holland, confessed that "as a surgeon he had considerable talent, and often succeeded in effecting important cures in cases in which clever and regularly educated practitioners had failed. In the other branch of the profession, medicine, though not equally skilful or well informed, he did great good in inflammations, fevers, and other ordinary affections."

After a happy four years spent at Hathersage, the poet obtained a situation for which he had been unconsciously prepared by travel and self-education. He was appointed Master of Dore Free School, and took up his duties during the October of 1821. These consisted of instructing eighteen children for the sum of £18, with the privilege of accepting "boys whose parents could not consistently take advantage of the foundation." His house was also rent-free.

Dore was then a village five miles away from Sheffield, with a population of about 500 inhabitants. In addition to farming, the chief occupations were those of making scythes, anvils, and saw-handles.

The trustees were so satisfied with the conduct of the school that they soon decided to increase the master's salary to £30, and the number of free pupils was correspondingly augmented. With all the vigour of his strong mind, Richard devoted his leisure time to improving his knowledge of music, mathematics, medicine, poetry, theology, history, travel and biography.

At night he was in the habit of reading in bed, and a copy of Ebenezer Elliott's poems, smeared with candle grease and scorched by fire, together with a singed night-cap and bed-hangings, testified to the danger of this practice.

Richard was later appointed vestry and parish clerk of Dore Church, and the additional income from this source was welcomed by the mother of an increasing family. This appointment was followed by that of District Registrar, another duty for which he was well qualified.

But increased emolument was not the chief concern of the poet. If the sacrifice of principle was involved, then he was quite prepared to renounce his work and its welcome revenues. For example, while carrying out the duties of clerk, he always refused to make the responses when the Vicar read the Athanasian Creed, closing his book and resuming his seat at this point of the service. Fortunately the Vicar respected the convictions of his clerk, and a gentleman in a neighbouring pew deputised for the rebellious Richard who maintained that he would not pray for the damnation of heretics, preferring to leave that duty to "a Being who cannot err."

There appears to be no end to the resourcefulness of Richard, for when his friends persuaded him to submit plans for the building of a new parish church, these were accepted in preference to those of qualified architects. He not only supervised the actual work of building, but personally carved the ornamental stonework. These duties were carried out gratuitously, and, inspired by the schoolmaster's example, farmers carted the stone free of charge, thus reducing the cost of building to £1,000.

In 1832, Richard ventured into print with his longest poem, "The Rag Bag." Published by subscription in pamphlet form, the 500 copies sold quickly and brought the poet a welcome profit of £18 10 0.

In the political sphere, Richard was a man of strong Radical persuasion. At election times he stoutly advocated the principles of his faith both on the public platform and through the medium of the Press. On such occasions he exerted considerable influence upon public opinion, and his party adversaries once offered him a handsome bribe to enlist his services. But, to his credit, he resisted temptation with the words,
"No, I am a poor man, but I am not to be bought."

Several people in the Sheffield district were interested in finding a solution to the elusive problem of squaring the circle. James Montgomery, referring to a theory advanced by Furness, wrote:- "The poet waited upon me several years ago to demonstrate to me that he had resolved the notable problem of the quadrature of the circle. As I could not at once detect the fallacy of his very elaborate scheme, I showed it to a mathematical friend, who instantly perceived and pointed out the erroneous datum which lay at the foundation of this ingenious specimen of labour in vain."

After Richard had served the village for 27 years as its schoolmaster, a situation arose which resulted in the termination of his teaching career, and created serious domestic difficulties due to the loss of his salary.

The old vicar had died and was succeeded by a less indulgent clergyman who concerned himself with the political as well as spiritual welfare of his parishioners. Attempts to reform the political views of his clerk were repeatedly resisted, and so the vicar avenged himself by effecting the removal of the recalcitrant clerk from his post as schoolmaster. Charges were made concerning his management of the school, and these accusations -- although not without some foundation -- were so bitterly resented that Richard immediately resigned the position. His biographer says: "There can be little doubt that political feeling and personal prejudice were, to some extent, if not altogether, at the foundation of the complaints urged against the poet". Some of the 12 trustees of the school -- including Earl Fitzwilliam and D'Ewes Coke Esq. -- used their influence to secure him a life pension of £15 per year as a testimonial of respect and in acknowledgement of his untiring work for village education.

With advancing years, sorrows seem to have been multiplied in the experience of the poet, for in 1844 the devoted partnership which began without either wedding bells or well-wishers in Hathersage Church, was ended by the death of his wife. And the poet composed the simple elegy inscribed to her memory on the tombstone in Eyam churchyard:

"Love like a pilgrim came
With hope, and raised this urn
Where Elegy's sad muse
Long lingering shall mourn,--
Shall pour ambrosial dews
T' embalm the virtuous name
Of Frances, the wife of Richard Furness,
who died Aug. 12, 1844, Aged 52".

Together they had drunk of the wine of life; together they had tasted of its wormwood. Nine children had blessed their union, though three had died in infancy. The story of how the last of these little daughters died in a terrible thunder storm was told in tender verse by the bereaved father. The poem concludes with the verse:-

"Ah! no -- be unavailing grief suppressed
Our eye is on thee, on thy joy and light:
Our loss is they blessed gain, for thou art blessed:
"Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"
Beneath the tree
There now lie three
Once lovely little sisters, side by side
Spring, hang they dewy rosaries on their sod:
Heaven gave, and took away, that human pride
Might bow. For ever blessed be the name of God".

- continued -

Six years later, another Mrs. Richard Furness came to live at Dore. She was the widow of Mr. John Lunn, of Staveley. This marriage brought with it the assurance of financial security, and the poet's last years were lived in a moderate degree of happiness and comfort. Moderate, we say, because he was the victim of severe physical affliction due to frequent and prolonged attacks of tic douloureux. Yet, in spite of the agonies he endured, the poet had sufficient humour to compose a poem which vividly describes the tortures and torments of this complaint. He was also a victim of asthma.

He spent the last years of his life at Dore, but, in the words of his biographer, "Eyam and its beauties were strongly impressed upon his heart, and he has sung them in lines that succeeding generations will not allow to die. He was a son of the Peak, had breathed its invigorating air and felt its awakening influence. It was the green spot in memory to which he affectionately turned amidst the monotony and vicissitudes of life". It was fitting, therefore, that when an epitaph was inscribed upon his tomb, it should be a verse selected from "The Tomb of the Valley," a poem concerning the plague which desolated his native village:

"Land of my Fathers! how I love to dwell
On all thy scenery! barren as thou art,
Still hast thou genuine charms, or some sweet spell
That binds thy beauties to my ravished heart:
That spell will never break, till death's sure dart
Shall reckless strike this penetrable crust.
And oh! 'tis sweet to think my baser part,
Shall then be mingled with my mountain dust,
Rocks, hills my monument to be - no chiselled bust."

The Burdett map sets are now available and those members who have applied for them and who have not yet received their sets will be able to collect them from the following centres:-

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THE NOTTINGHAM UNIVERSITY RAILWAY History Research Group at Derby is working under Mr.C.R.Clinker on a history of the Midland Counties Railway which it is hoped will be published in due course. Particulars will be given in a later Bulletin.
