

Chairman

Mr. J. W. Barwell

Secretary

Mr. J. W. Barwell

DERBYSHIRE MISCELLANY

The Bulletin

of

The Local History Section

of the

Derbyshire Archaeological and Natural History Society

Number 8

February 1958

Notice of future meetings will be found on the outside

cover of the Bulletin.

It is hoped that the Bulletin will be of interest to all members of the Society. It is published quarterly and is sent to all members of the Society. It is published by the Local History Section of the Derbyshire Archaeological and Natural History Society.

DERBYSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Local History Section

Chairman

Mr. J M Bestall,  
6 Storth Avnue,  
Sheffield 10

Tel. Sheffield 33016

Secretary & Editor of the Bulletin

Mrs. F. Nixon,  
"Southlea",  
Hazlewood Road,  
Duffield,  
DERBYSHIRE.

Tel: Duffield 2325

Treasurer

Mr. R. Hayhurst,  
Tissington,  
Nr. Ashbourne,  
DERBYSHIRE.

Tel: Parwich 17

COMMITTEE

Mr. Owen Ashmore  
Mr. J. Marchant Brooks  
Mr. C. Daniel  
Mr. Francis Fisher  
Mr. C. C. Handford  
Mr. C. H. Hargreaves  
Mr. G. R. Micklewright

In Charge of Records : Mr. A. E. Hale, Mr. A. H. Hockey, Mr. H. Trasler

In charge of Duplication : Mr. W. D. White

---

Notice of future meetings will be found on the outside  
back cover of the bulletin.

DERBYSHIRE MISCELLANY

Chairman's Letter

At the beginning of the third year of our Local History Section, it is very satisfactory to be able to record a continued growth in membership and in the scope of its activities. These have ranged from the study of records in the County Offices to the exploration, in part subterranean, of the site of an early cotton mill.

Members are widely and somewhat unevenly distributed in the county. Centres, such as Ashbourne, Matlock and Ilkeston, are hardly represented at present. Although all meetings have been reasonably well attended, we should welcome some larger gatherings to secure a widening of the personal contacts between local historians, which are proving increasingly fruitful. The interchange of ideas and information during the open discussion before the A.G.M. was, for example, generally felt to have been notably successful. At some date, if a sufficient number of members were interested, such opportunities for informal discussion could be extended by the kind of week-end conferences that are now held in other counties.

It is always helpful to know of the activities of similar organisations and this is one of the advantages the Section may gain from its membership of the Standing Conference for Local History, a national body established in 1943 to bring together societies of many kinds with a common interest in advancing the study of local history. Until recently, Derbyshire has been one of the small number of counties not represented and we are very pleased that this has now been rectified.

J. M. Bestall.

---

SECTION NEWS

As mentioned in the last Bulletin and discussed at the Annual General Meeting last November there will be three issues of the Bulletin during 1958, in February, June and October. This is made necessary by the additional load occasioned by the preparation and issuing of a number of Supplements and by the rising cost of production and circulation which the Supplements are helping to repay.

Through the generosity of the authors the profits from the sale of Supplements are making a vital contribution to the funds of the Section. It is felt that through them it will be possible to disseminate much useful and valuable information while at the same time ensuring that the Section's activities will not have to be discontinued through lack of money.

Supplement 1 "The Life of Richard Furness", written for us by Mr. Clarence Daniel has realised £5 15 Od. No more copies are available from the Section Secretary, though a few are still on sale in Eyam at 1/- per copy.

Mr. Daniel has written for this Bulletin a short account of the Richard Furness Centenary celebration at Eyam.

Supplement 2, "A Village Constable's Accounts" written and produced free of all cost to us by Mr. Robert Thornhill has already sold 53 copies (at 3/6d. each); and I am informed by Mr. Thornhill that copies have been accepted by the British Museum and the Bodleian Library. He is working on further records and hopes to produce a selection of these entitled "About a Derbyshire Village".

Supplement 3, which will be on sale in March is a monograph on the Whitehurst family by Mr. W. Douglas White who has made a special study of this subject over a long period of years. It contains information not previously published about these Derby clockmakers concerning whom surprisingly little is known. Mr. J. Howard Smith has in his possession a painting of the eldest Whitehurst, by Joseph Wright, and he has kindly allowed a photograph of this to be reproduced as a frontispiece. The price of this supplement will be 1/9d post free, from the Section Secretary.

On September 7 members of the Section travelled by motor coach from Bakewell under the guidance of Mr. Owen Ashmore to study the Peak Forest Tramway and Samuel Oldknow's Cotton Mills at Bottoms Hall. On three occasions we left the coach and had a most interesting time walking to inspect the Tramway, the canal at Bugsworth and the ruins of the mill.

The Peak Forest Canal was inaugurated in 1794. This canal was a branch from the Manchester Ashton and Oldham Canal and passed from Ashton in Lancashire, through Cheshire, entering Derbyshire east of Disley and finishing at Bugsworth (now spelt Bakworth). We inspected the Canal at this point.

The tramroad was authorised to continue the line up to Peak Forest where there were extensive limestone quarries. This tramway was 7 miles long and was the last horse drawn tramroad to remain at work in the county, being used until 1914. Benjamin Outram was the engineer, and the line was opened in 1800. Our party walked down the incline studying the stone sleepers and visiting the buildings where the horses had been stabled.

A most pleasant walk through beautiful woods led to the ruins of Oldknow's Mill. The house where his workers lived is still there and looks much more pleasant than Blincoe pictured his apprentice lodgings. Mr. Ashmore recommended for reading "Samuel Oldknow and the Arkwrights" by George Unwin and he has written for the June Bulletin an interesting account of the early textile industry in North Derbyshire.

The Annual General Meeting of the Section was held on November 30th in a room at the Derby College of Technology very kindly loaned to us by Mr.C.Middleton, the County Borough Director of Education. We have to thank Mr.Sim of the College for the loan of his projector and screen. The following members attended the meeting :-

Mrs.R.Milward	Mr R Hayhurst	Miss M J Lintott
Miss D M Orwin	Mr H Trasler	Mr F Nixon
Mr C J Smith	Mr A H Hockey	Mr C C Handford
Miss M P Vowles	Mr A E Hale	Mr H R Window
Mrs N K Webb	Miss A B Smedley	Miss R A Coulson
Mrs G Garratt	Miss B M Grieve	Miss A M Rowland
Mr F W Munslow	Mr J H Bompas Smith	Mr R Johnson
Mr R Wilkinson	Mr J M Bestall (Chairman)	Mrs A A Nixon (Secretary)

Apologies for absence were received from Miss L Northrop, Mrs A L Hunter, Miss EH Smith, Mr. Owen Ashmore, Mr G R Micklewright, Mr & Mrs R Thornhill, Miss Bell, Mr. and Mrs.W D White, and Miss P D Smith

Mr.J M Bestall was chairman of the meeting.

The afternoon started with a series of short talks by members.

Speaking of the records available to him at Tissington Mr.R.Hayhurst said he found it difficult to know how much to specialize. He found such a diversity of matters in the papers that he was continually side tracked. He lived in a house dating from 1609 and has searched for evidence of earlier houses and of alterations to present structures. Then other interesting things caught his eye - at the mention of one of the large stone water troughs of Tissington one could not help wondering where all the other old troughs had gone.

There were interesting local bills and many London ones for clothes, some of which were shown by Mr.Hayhurst. In 1835 Sir William bought a gold chain for 6 guineas and an emerald and brilliant broach. There were notes concerning Outram, Rennie and a Canal.

Mr.C.Handford asked if there were any "frankings" amongst the documents as he was very interested in these and Mr.Hayhurst promised to look for them.

Mr.Francis Fisher then spoke on Derbyshire family personal names. A Doxey from Shelston had gone to London and being successful there had returned to the village as Lord of the Manor.

Hawley (Halley) and Smedley were Derbyshire names. There have been Revils and Bonds at Eggington for 600 years, Wheatcrofts at Crich since 1387, and Blaydons at Repton for 600 years. The Tiveys in Melbourne came

there 150 years ago and the name does not occur in any other County. Mr. Fisher has promised to write for us some of his researches on the subject.

Mr. R. Johnson talked about his work on enclosures. He had studied the Alfreton survey of 1652 and this gave a list of names with a list of the fields and areas. It was interesting to study this with the 1823 map of the area.

Miss A B Smedley finally gave us a most delightful picture show. Looking at her excellent colour photographs brought home very strongly the extreme beauty of the county and its historic interest. After tea the meeting got down to business Mr. W D White asked that his resignation as Treasurer should be accepted. Mr. R. Hayhurst was elected as new treasurer and agreed to serve. All the other officers were re-elected. Mr. Johnson proposed that Miss A B Smedley should be appointed to the committee and this was unanimously agreed upon. Miss Smedley has however written asking to be excused from serving as other business takes up her time.

Mr A H Hockey described how local history records had been filed. These files are now available in the Library at the Bridge Chapel.

The Balance Sheet for 1957 is on the inside of the back cover. Study of it shows that members' subscriptions do not cover the overall cost of producing the bulletins and that the sale of Supplements is very necessary.

It was suggested that the Section should organise an Exhibition and further information about this will be given in the June Bulletin.

Mrs. A L Hunter's suggestion (NQ.46) regarding the site of James Brindley's birthplace at Wormhill was discussed at some length. A tablet could not be erected until the Parish Council and the owner of the land had been consulted and it was decided to ascertain their views.

On November 14th Mr. Ashmore, Mr. Bestall and Mrs. Nixon attended as guests the Annual Meeting of the Standing Conference for Local History. Talks on the cost of publications were most interesting and helpful.

The Local History Section has been invited to become a member of the Conference and will function as the County Local History Committee for Derbyshire.

Robert Blincoe and the Early Factory System.

by A. E. Musson

The Memoir of Robert Blincoe is a classic document in the history of the Industrial Revolution, revealing the worst horrors of child labour under the early factory system. Soon after its first appearance, indeed, its publisher claimed that it was "now a standard work, to which future ages may refer, as to a specimen of the Christian character of some of the people of England, at the commencement of the nineteenth century".<sup>1</sup> Litton Mill in Derbyshire was thereby made notorious as one of the blackest examples of factory slavery. The Memoir declared, in fact, that the condition of the "white infant-slaves" in the cotton spinning mills of England was far worse than that of the negro slaves on the American cotton plantations.

Earlier historians of the Industrial Revolution such as the Hammonds and Mantoux severely condemned the exploitation and ill-treatment of helpless child labour in the first cotton mills. Recently, however, there has been a tendency to whitewash the Industrial Revolution and to depict the early capitalist factory owners in a new and more favourable light.<sup>2</sup> It is worth-while, therefore, to read again such documents as Blincoe's Memoir and the numerous volumes of evidence given before Parliamentary Committees and Royal Commissions in the early nineteenth century, to try to arrive at a balanced judgment upon this question.

Blincoe's Memoir first appeared in a Radical weekly paper, The Lion, Vol. 1, Nos. 4-8, Jan. 25 - Feb. 22, 1828, printed and published by Richard Carlile at 62, Fleet Street, London. In the thirteenth number, of March 28, it was announced that the Memoir was "now on sale, in a separate pamphlet", presumably also published by Carlile. 3. The author was John Brown, a native of Bolton and writer of numerous other works, now little known. 4. He states in the Memoir that it was "in the spring of 1822, after having devoted a considerable time to the investigating of the effect of the manufacturing system, and factory establishments, on the health and morals of the manufacturing populace, that I first heard of the extraordinary sufferings of R. Blincoe. At the same time, I was told of his earnest wish that those sufferings should, for the protection of the rising generation of factory children, be laid before the world."

By that date the state of factory children had attracted considerable public attention and sympathy. Sir Robert Peel had secured the passing of an Act in 1802 to protect the "health and morals" of parish apprentices in the textile mills, and in 1815, stimulated by Robert Owen, he had introduced another Bill to amend and extend this Act, to include "free" as

well as pauper children. After a great deal of enquiry and debate another Act was passed in 1819. But this applied only to cotton mills, it still permitted excessive labour, and it was never effectively enforced. Agitation continued sporadically during the 'twenties and then boiled up into a ferment during the early 'thirties, resulting in the Acts of 1831 and 1833.

John Brown, however, was dead by this time, having committed suicide a few years after writing Blincoe's Memoir. Richard Carlile apparently acquired possession of his papers and decided to publish the Memoir in his periodical The Lion. He did so without consultation with Blincoe himself, who, as we shall see, was still living in Manchester. Blincoe, not unnaturally, was "at first, inclined to be angry about it". After explanation, however, "he became good humoured, and acquiesced in the propriety of its being published." 5.

When the factory agitation was at its height in the early 'thirties, Blincoe's Memoir was republished by John Doherty, the trade-union leader, who was very prominent in the factory reform movement in Manchester. Doherty, originally a cotton-spinner himself, was by this time a small printer and publisher at 37 Withy Grove, Manchester, and made repeated attacks upon the factory system in his weekly paper, The Poor Man's Advocate, at the same time reprinting Blincoe's Memoir, in 1832.

Robert Blincoe was born in about 1792 and placed in St. Pancras workhouse, London, in 1796, an illegitimate child, whose mother died shortly afterwards. In 1799 he was sent with a batch of about eighty pauper apprentices, in two large waggons, to Lowdham Mill, near Nottingham, belonging to Messrs. Lambert, cotton spinners, hosiers, and lace-workers. He states that the children were misled by the parish officers with glowing accounts of their future prospects, so as to produce a ready acquiescence. They were quickly disillusioned, however, by conditions at Lowdham Mill - bad and insufficient food, hard work (first picking up loose cotton from the floor, then winding rovings), for fourteen hours a day on average (excepting Sundays), continual beatings from the overlookers, and frequent accidents from the machinery Blincoe himself losing part of the fore-finger of his left hand. When he tried to run away he was caught, brought back, and flogged. After the 1802 Act, however, there were considerable improvements, and looking back, after his later experiences, Blincoe considered that on the whole he had been comparatively well-off in Lowdham Mill.

Soon after these reforms, unfortunately, the mill stopped working and Blincoe was transferred, with most of the other apprentices, to Litton Mill, near Tideswell, belonging to Ellice Needham, of Highgate Wall, near Buxton, Derbyshire. Here he was subjected to the most frightful conditions and barbarities, despite the recent Act "and in the face of the visiting Magistrate whose visits were ... too frequently directed to the luxurious table of the master, to admit even a chance of justice to the apprentices". Blincoe and his fellow sufferers were

totally unaware of the Act and had no idea that the magistrates came to redress grievances. "So great was the terror of the poor ignorant apprentices, no one dared to complain", and Blincoe could not recollect that the magistrates "ever gave themselves any other trouble, than merely going over the mill. Everything was previously prepared ... The worst of the cripples were put out of the way ... The magistrate could never find out any thing wrong, nor hear of a single individual who had any complaint to make!" The 1802 Act was, in fact, "a dead letter".

The food at Litton Mill was grossly insufficient, so much so, indeed, that the apprentices tried to steal meal from the master's pigs, scavenged refuse dumps, and gathered hips and nuts from the woods. They also lacked clothing, were rarely washed, and slept in overcrowded conditions. The hours of work averaged sixteen a day, often without breaks for meals. The work was unskilled - picking up cotton, piecing, and winding - for the obligations in the indentures as to teaching the apprentices the whole trade were ignored. Many of the apprentices died of fever and other diseases, but there was always a plentiful supply of more cheap apprentice labour to replace them; the others were usually undergrown, deformed, and unhealthy. Atrocious cruelties were inflicted upon them, not merely to drive them at their work, but out of sheer sadism. Blincoe's life was "one continued round of cruel and arbitrary punishments". He was continually beaten, so that "his body was never free from contusions, and from wounds". It was also a common thing to be kicked, or picked up by the hair or ears and thrown to the ground, or to have his ears pinched till the blood ran. Moreover, the ruffianly overseers vied with each other in devising new "sports", such as tying him up above a machine, so that he had continually to raise his legs to prevent them being caught in the machinery; fastening weights to his ears and nose, and many other bestialities. These doings were not, as was often apparently the case, unknown to the mill-owner, for Needham and his sons encouraged and joined in such barbarities. It was not until towards the end of Blincoe's apprenticeship, when he grew rebellious and fled to lodge complaints with the local magistrates, that these cruelties were relaxed.

There seems little doubt that Blincoe's story - though almost unbelievable in its horrors - was a truthful account of his sufferings as a parish apprentice. Brown stated that Blincoe was "in his language, temperate; in his statements, cautious and considerate". He repeatedly admonished him "to beware, lest a too keen remembrance of the injustice he had suffered should lead him to transgress the limits of truth". Blincoe's statements were fully confirmed by others who had suffered with him in Litton Mill. 6. When the Memoir was published, Blincoe, having read it, stated that it was "true, so far as it went; but that the enormities practised in Litton Mill were much greater than those related in the memoir". He still bore scars on his head, face, and ears as witness to the cruelties inflicted upon him, yet said that he himself "was not so ill-treated as many others were at the same mill".

A few years later Blincoe confirmed the truth of the Memoir in sworn evidence before Dr. Hawkins, of Manchester, printed in the second report of the Royal Commission on the Employment of Children in Factories. 7. He showed Dr. Hawkins his deformed knees and the scars of ill-treatment in Litton Mill, but said that there were "many far worse than me at Manchester".

Blincoe's story is also backed up by the masses of evidence collected in the course of the official enquiries in the first half of the nineteenth century. There is no doubt whatever that children were exploited and ill-treated in the early textile mills, that they were used as cheap factory labour, that their hours of work were far too long, that accidents, ill-health, and deformities were common, and that cruel punishments were often inflicted. There is no doubt that, as the Memoir asserts, the owner of Litton Mill, "although perhaps one of the worst of his tribe, did not stand alone". Every report substantiates these facts.

On the other hand, however, bad conditions were by no means universal. All factory owners were not cruel exploiters, for some reduced the hours of work in their mills, established reasonable working conditions, and prevented infliction of cruelties. Some also provided good accommodation, food, and clothing for their apprentices. Conditions were worst in the older, smaller mills, especially water-mills in isolated hilly areas - like Litton Mill, "at the bottom of a sequestered glen, and surrounded by rugged rocks, remote from any human habitation". In such mills, owing to the difficulty of getting adult labour, large numbers of parish apprentices were employed. In such places, moreover, there was little protection from the magistrates. Blincoe pointed out in his evidence of 1833 that ill-treatment of children was worse "in country places" than in towns like Manchester, "where justice is always at hand". Some of the worst employers belonged to the first generation of factory-owners, men of "obscure" origins, like Ellice Needham, who was "said to have arisen from an abject state of poverty" to a position of great wealth, by ruthless methods. On the other hand, it is evident from Blincoe's and other evidence that adult operatives, not the employers, were frequently responsible for the cruelties to children.

The evils of child labour were not confined to the textile mills. In many other trades, such as coal-mining, the metal trades, and potteries, conditions were equally bad if not worse, as revealed by the Children's Employment Commissions of the early 'forties and the 'sixties. The textile trades were the first to be subjected to legislative control because child labour was there employed on such a large scale, and because the evils were more apparent, more inspectable, and more easily regulated in large factories than in small workshops. Exploitation of child labour was not a new thing. Children had long been employed in domestic industry for excessive hours and under bad conditions. Parish apprenticeship dated back to the first half of the

sixteenth century and had long been subject to grave abuses, having degenerated into a means of relieving the poor rates by the parish officers, on the one hand, and a means of getting premiums and cheap labour by employers, on the other. The system of "settlement" had encouraged churchwardens and overseers to dump their pauper children in this way on other parishes.

The growth of the factory system, however, did increase the evils of parish apprenticeship. Children were now employed in far greater numbers and in greater proportion to adults than previously, owing firstly, as already mentioned, to the difficulty of recruiting labour for the early factories, and secondly because many of the factory processes were well-suited to child labour. 8. As Blincoe's Memoir points out, however, most working parents were at first very loath to place their children in the textile mills, so that recourse was had to parish apprentices in increasing numbers. They were now, as never before, sent off in waggon loads from the great cities - like Blincoe and his fellows from St. Pancras in London - to mills far distant from their parents or friends, and were thus remote from protection, save by the local magistrates. It was to remedy this evil, that an Act was eventually passed in 1816, limiting the distance to which London children could be sent to 40 miles.

By this time the evils of parish apprenticeship had greatly diminished in the textile trades. The 1802 Act caused many factory owners to give up taking apprentices, and with the development of steam mills in urban areas there was less necessity for such labour, since adults and "free" children were now readily available. The 1807 returns of factory visitations in Derbyshire show that the use of "free" child labour had superseded parish apprenticeship in almost all the local mills. Such mills as still employed parish apprentices were the smaller and less satisfactory concerns. 9. Conditions in the newer, bigger mills were a good deal better than in the older, rural water-mills. Blincoe himself testified in 1833 that such atrocities as he had experienced were now of rare occurrence, though the evils were still such that he would rather have his own children transported than put them into factories. Parish apprenticeship had almost disappeared from the textile trades by the early 1830's, though it still survived strongly and with many evils in some other industries, such as coal-mining and the metal trades.

With all allowances, the early factory system cannot escape severe condemnation for its harsh exploitation. It is pleasant, however, to discover that Blincoe, despite his early sufferings, lived to enjoy comparative comfort in later life. After completing his servitude at Litton Mill, apparently in 1813, he remained there for about a year as an adult operative, but then left to drift from mill to mill in Derbyshire, Cheshire, and finally Manchester. By 1817, however, he had grown sick of exploitation as a wage-earner, yet, ~~by his thrift and living sparsely~~ had managed to save enough

money to set up on his own as a small cotton-waste dealer in Manchester. After marriage in 1819, he occupied a shop at 108 Bank Top, but gave this up in 1824, to live at 2 Edge Place, Salford, and invested some of his capital in cotton-spinning machinery in Ormrod's mill, near St. Paul's Church, Tib Street. A fire, however, entirely destroyed the machinery and almost ruined him. Indeed, in the autumn of 1827, just prior to the publication of his Memoir, Carlile discovered that, "having engaged in some kind of shop, he (Blincoe) had become insolvent, and was, or had been, confined in Lancaster Castle for debt." The Manchester Directory for 1830, however, shows him as a weft and cotton-waste dealer at 32 High Street and shopkeeper at 407 Oldham Road. When his Memoir was republished in 1832, he was said to be residing at 19 Turner Street, where he kept a small grocer's shop, and was also engaged in manufacturing sheet wadding and as a cotton-waste dealer. In his evidence of 1833 he stated, "I rent power from a mill in Stockport, and have a room to myself; my business is a sheet wadding manufacturer". He then had three children, the eldest aged thirteen, but was careful to send them to school and keep them out of the cotton mills.

The directories of the later 'thirties show him still as a wadding manufacturer and cotton-waste dealer, at 5 and 19 Turner Street, his private residence then being 23 Garden Street, Ardwick. By 1843 his business was at 4 Turner Street, his private house at 4 Bellevue Street, Hyde Road. Thereafter he disappears, apparently having either died or failed in business, but he has left in his Memoir an enduring epitaph.

---

#### References

1. The Lion, Vol.I, No.13, March 28, 1828.
2. See, for example, F. A. Hayek (ed.), Capitalism and the Historians (1954), especially the chapter by W. H. Hutt on "The Factory System of the Early Nineteenth Century", which originally appeared in Economica, March 1926.
3. Abel Heywood, the Manchester printer and publisher, stated in 1888, however, that the memoir was "published by W. M. Clark, of Paternoster Row, London", not by Carlile. Manchester Notes and Queries, June 30, 1888. No copy of this pamphlet appears to have survived.
4. Ibid., July 14, 1888.
5. The Lion, March 28, 1828.

6. One of these confirmations, by John Joseph Betts, who became secretary of the cotton spinners' trade society in Ashton-under-Lyne, was printed at the end of the Memoir.
7. Parliamentary Papers - 1833, XXI, D.3, 17-18
8. Derbyshire, where Blincoe suffered, had been the scene of the earliest exploitation of child labour in textile factories. William Hutton has left an account of his sufferings, as an apprentice in the first English throwing mill, built by the Lombe brothers near Derby in the years 1717-21. (History of Derby, p.160). Arkwright also employed child labour in his first factory, also built on the Derwent, in the early 1770's.
9. Reports of the Society for Bettering the Condition of the Poor, V, App.24, pp.171-8.

NOTE

It is interesting to note that Mrs. Francis Trollope, mother of T.A.Trollope, appears to have based a good deal of her novel, "The Life and Adventures of Michael Armstrong, The Factory Boy" (1840) on Blincoe's Memoir". She and her son visited the northern factory districts in 1839, where they met Doherty, Oastler, and other leaders of the factory reform movement. See T.A.Trollope, "What I Remember" (2nd edn.1887) pp.7-13, and M.Sadleir, "Trollope, A Commentary" (1933) pp.93-94.

---

THREE ANCIENT WATERMILLS

by

R. Johnson

In the Rutland Collection is a document which may be dated c A.D.1212. It is a Confirmation of an Exchange of Lands made between Henry de Grey, Lord of Codnor and Shirland, and William, Lord of Alfreton. Now, the Manor of Alfreton lay between the Manors of Shirland and Codnor, being separated from each by a stream, from Shirland by the Grivelle, now called Alfreton Brook, and from Codnor by a brook, which, rising at Greenhill, flowed through Golden Valley and joined the Erewash.

By the exchange William received a triangular piece of Shirland Park, lying on the N. side of the Grivelle and extending from the Shirland Delves to a point a short distance W. of the present bridge on A.61. Henry obtained a strip of land lying on the N. side of the brook in Golden Valley, Land which now lies below Codnor Park Reservoir.

The purpose for which the exchange was made is not disclosed in the Deed, but it is significant that both Henry and William erected a water mill by his newly acquired strip. Having possession of both banks of a stream the lord could proceed with the essential works for his intended mill. Dams, leats, weirs and sluices could be made without fear of interruption by a neighbouring lord.

Although now disused for many years, much remains of William's Alfreton Park Mill. The mill house, much altered, stands at the foot of the park by the side of the path leading from Alfreton Church to Shirland. The curious may still see the drained mill pond, the long head race, the steep tail race and the complex system of embankments. I well remember the water wheel 45 years ago, but this, with any other machinery, was removed years ago.

Lord Henry de Grey's mill stood until the Cromford Canal came into being. Its site was chosen as the spot to make a great reservoir to compensate the loss of water passing through the locks on the fall down to Langley Mill. About A.D.1792 the mill was demolished and the complete site was submerged. In former times there was a way leading direct from Codnor Castle to the mill. It left the castle and proceeded by what is now Castle Lane as far as where the water tanks now stand on Monument Hill. Leaving the line of the present road it went straight on down the hillside to the water mill.

In Bulletin No.6 Dr.G.Warwick made mention of a watermill at Westhouses. Actually it is Shirland Park Mill and was built by the Greys. It stands near the junction of Alfreton Brook with another brook, which, rising near Morton, flows in a southerly direction and forms the eastern boundary of Shirland Park as far as Alfreton Brook. The lands around the confluence of the two are low-lying and are liable to extensive flooding in wet seasons. On a line comfortably above flood level those early engineers constructed a massive barrage, over 200 yds long, completely blocking the flow of the stream coming in from the north. It was of sufficient height to retain the waters of a great pool of 32 acres in extent. An anonymous writer of c A.D.1700 thus describes it "...in which park was a noble pool or Damme which for fyshe fowle and bignesses had not ye equal in ye County of Derby."

The mill leat passed via a culvert under the east end of the barrage to the mill, which stood in a depression at the foot of the said barrage. A stone causeway ran from the mill, along the top of the barrage and then in a direct line across the park to Shirland Hall, close by the church. Park Lane follows the line of it. I remember the causeway in its entirety but now only a few yards remain. The Damme was drained soon after the Restoration of Chas II and enclosed as meadow and pasture land, but the mill was still being driven by the brook 50 years later. In 1786 a new length of Turnpike Road from Alfreton to Tibshelf was carried along the old dam barrage. How many road users are aware of the history that lies buried in the great ramp they travel across as they leave Westhouses bound for Alfreton or Shirland ?

---

THE PETTY CONSTABLE

by

Philip T. Meldrum

"The office of constables is of great power and authority, especially by night, at which time they have the whole rule and government and ought to be obeyed, as well without their staff of office or authority, as with it, provided they declare and make themselves known by that title, in the King's Majesty's name."

(The Office of Constables)

Thus wrote Sir Francis Bacon in the year 1610, when holder of the office of Solicitor General. He was then destined to become Lord Chancellor of England, and is now reputed by many to be the author of the works of William Shakespeare. Being a realist, Bacon did not blind himself to the fact that certain constables were of "inferior, yea of base condition", but if proof were ever required that this precise and punctilious mind did not produce the plays of the immortal Bard, one need hardly proceed further than a comparison of Bacon's general attitude towards the petty constable with that of Shakespeare. Pursuing his point regarding the power and authority of constables by night, Bacon contends that "...for that reason constables ought to be cherished and respected, if they faithfully discharge that trust committed to them." Shakespeare, on the other hand is merciless in his ridicule of the constable, as personified by the characters of Elbow in "Measure for Measure", by Dogberry in "Much Ado About Nothing", and by Dull in "Love's Labour's Lost". Elbow, for example, introduces himself in tones essentially servile, as follows:-

Elb. If it please your honour, I am the poor Duke's constable, and my name is Elbow; I do lean upon justice, sir, and do bring in here two notorious benefactors.

Elbow's malapropism, which is one of many, is evidence of his illiteracy, and by it he is immediately branded a clown, sufficiently blank as to be undeserving of blank verse. The character of Dogberry receives similar treatment in "Much Ado" and as for Dull in "Love's Labour's Lost", one need hardly look further than the name with which the Bard baptised him to discern the low regard in which he was intended to be held:-

Dull: Me, an't shall please you; I am Anthony Dull

In point of fact the petty constable had, of necessity, to be far from dull. The common law required him to be "idoneus homo" that is, apt and fit to execute the office, and Bacon said of constables in towns that they "ought to be of the better sort of residents in the said town, save they ought not to be aged or sickly men, but men of able bodies in respect of the keeping of watch, and the toil of their places." James Gyffon, constable of Albury in Surrey, put this in a nutshell in his "Song of the Constable", written in 1626:-

"A constable must be honest and just; Have knowledge  
and good reporte; And able to straine with bodie and  
braine, Ells he is not fitting for 't."

The essential truth contained in this jingle can be readily appreciated if one considers the requirements of the extremely onerous oath which was originally administered to the petty constable upon his election to office, its terms being as follows:-

You shall swear that you shall well and truly serve the King and the lord of the law day: and you shall cause that the peace of our sovereign lord the King shall be well and truly kept to your power.

And you shall arrest all those that you see committing riots, debates and affrays in breach of the peace.

And you shall well and truly endeavour yourself to the best of your knowledge that the Statutes of Winchester for watch and hue and cry be put in force; and the Statute made for the punishment of sturdy beggars, vagabonds, rogues and other idle persons coming within your office that the offenders be punished.

And you shall endeavour upon complaint made to apprehend barretors and riotous persons making affrays and likewise to apprehend felons: and if any of them make resistance with force and multitude of misdoers you shall make outcry and pursue them till they be taken.

And you shall look unto such persons as use unlawful games.

And you shall have regard unto the maintenance of artillery.

And you shall well and duly execute all process and precepts sent unto you from the justices of the place of the county.

And you shall make good and faithful presentments of all bloodsheds, outcries, affrays and rescues made within your office.

And you shall well and duly according to your power and knowledge, do that which belongeth to your office of a constable to do for this year to come.

So help you God.

By the time Robert Thornhill, petty constable of Great Longstone, had been compulsorily elected to office for the first time in 1791, the oath had become mercifully curtailed. The duties of the constable, however, had been increased by the legislature in inverse proportion to the length of their oath, to such an extent that it might justifiably be said of the petty constable that he had by that time become by statute the residuary legatee of almost every odious duty.

-----

THE ACCOUNTS OF THE OVERSEERS OF RIPLEY 1674-1712

by

Francis Fisher

It may be of interest to record that some extracts from a Minute Book of the Town Overseers of Ripley from about 1674 to 1712 have been placed in the manuscript collections of the Society now being arranged by members of the Local History Section. The original book is, it is believed, in the care of the Parish Council.

Records of this period are not uncommon, and many such accounts have been printed. Nevertheless, the contents have interest for the general reader and particular value for the local historian. A few items taken from the extracts may therefore be acceptable.

1864	Spent in Ale at Ripley for joy of the victory against the D. of Monmouth	2. 6d
1688	Given to Margret Godbere at 6 severall times when her daughter lay sicke above weekly pay	3. 0d
	Paid William Boultbody for strokeing and applying things (to) Margret Godberes daughters neck when she was sick	2. 9d
	paid to John Sidbotham for daulbing his own house	6d
	paid more to John Sidbotham for watling and daulbing his own house (John S. was a parish pauper)	6d
	Given at several times to John Hollingworth's wife when he was in Geale (Jail)	6. 0d
1639	paid for a certificate for the poors Chimneys to be excused	6d
	Spent for three persons goeing to Derby to assess the first Land tax	3. 2d
	Spent by neighbours upon Coronation day	8. 6d
	paid for ale when neighbours agreed of a price for horses conveying the Danish Souldiers to Derby	6d

1692	Payd for Laying Stones for Steps in the Town Street	6d
1693	payd to Timothy Wyld and Samuel Marriatt for getting stone upon Ripley Green each of them 9d a day for 22 days	16. 6d
1694	Payd for Lodging and watching a simple man yt threatened to fire towne	3d
	For carrying a sick man to the next Constable	6d
1695	payd for setting down stoups to preserve the Causways	4d
	Spent about setting 3 men in the Stocks	6d
	pd for taking of an Excommunication against Enoch ffletcher by consent of neighbours	3. 4d
1697	Spent with Mr. Hand when he came to view the windows	6d
1701	payd to Richard Ryley for a warrant he brought for the punishing drunkards in the stocks	1. 0d
1702	given to John Greensmith for tenting the old Clock	1. 6d
1750	(a note) It was agreed att a publick meeting yt Robert Buxton shold be sent to a Hospitall att London to be cured of his lameness and yt hee shult have ye money gathered by ye present overseer Thomas Stocks	

-----  
BRASS RUBBINGS

by

L.A. Officer

In discussing brass rubbings I am frequently asked the question, "How are they done?" The necessary equipment for the job consists of lining paper and heel ball; the former, obtainable at any decorator's, is laid over a carefully dusted brass, and the latter, sometimes known as cobbler's wax, rubbed vigorously but cautiously over the surface of the paper. The idea is obviously similar to a pencil and paper impression of a coin.

Heel ball is hard to find these days. So many shoe shops send their 'repairs' away. Some cobblers use an inferior quality; others belong to a large concern and are forbidden to sell it to the public - these last can sometimes be prevailed upon to produce small pieces no longer required, seldom large enough to hold comfortably in the hand. Some multiple stores sell it but their "black" turns out to be dull purple and the texture is poor for rubbing purposes. The 'Monumental Brass Society' will produce it in quantity for a very monumental price.

A thorough search has, however, won for me the kind co-operation of a shoe repairer who buys cheaply a good quality wax.

Once rubbed, the rubbings are cut out and mounted on more lining paper or linen. Subsequently they are considered morbid by the family, rolled up and laid to rest in the attic or lumber room.

It is estimated that there are 600-700 brasses on the Continent, as compared with about 10,000 in the British Isles, of which the greatest number are to be found in Eastern England, south of the Humber. Kent - 327, Essex - 237, Norfolk - 232, Oxfordshire - 213, Suffolk - 211.

The earliest existing brass is near Hanover, commemorating Bishop Yso Wilpe who died in 1231. The oldest surviving English brass is to be found at Stoke D'Abernon in Surrey, dated 1277. After the Civil War in the reign of King Charles I the use of Brasses died out, until more recent times. So it would be fairly correct to extent the period covered by old Monumental Brasses in this country over a period of three and a half centuries.

Many and varied are the types portrayed : knights, with and without their ladies, ecclesiastics, merchants, academic gentlemen, each reflecting the changing modes of architecture, dress and lettering. The inscriptions, pious, informative, or amusing, vary from prayers for mercy to eulogistic catalogues of worldly attainment.

Since the Reformation many brasses have been relaid in fresh surroundings in memory of Tudor Englishmen and their wives. The most common form of 'palimpsest' has been inscribed on the reverse side before being relaid; others have merely been adapted to the latest fashions. Stone ready cut and faced from the dissolved monasteries was used in building private houses on the same sites; brasses were plundered and sold for re-use in parish churches. Perhaps it was not without cause that a Commonwealth inscription from Fornham All Saints in Suffolk reads as follows: 'LET NOE MAN STEALE AWAY THIS BRASSE BUT HE WHOE KNOWS HINSELFE UNWORTHIE MEMORYE'.

Brass memorials, like sculptured effigies, had their origin in the incised slabs, or coffin lids, which depicted the outline of the deceased. At first, only recumbent, and with an animal to break an abrupt ending with the soles of the feet. Brasses of the mid fifteenth century show a standing position, with grass, or amongst flowers of the primrose variety. Another favoured pose was 'in prayer at a prayer desk'. Some brasses are canopied, thus showing strong connections with the current designs in architecture. Some stand on pedestals; some figures kneel at the base of a cross, or stand within its floriated arms, and of course there are curiosities in this sphere as in all branches of the arts and crafts.

The plates were made of latten, an alloy of copper and zinc with a little lead and tin, the quality of which (and its thickness) gradually diminished over the years, as did the actual size of the figures.

I do not claim to be an expert 'rubber' but this particular pastime is a re-creational one of considerable fascination, and I look forward to showing some of you the fruits of my labour in the not too distant future.

CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS AT EYAM

by

Clarence Daniel

Centenary celebrations arranged to commemorate the death of Richard Furness, the Eyam-born poet who died at Dore, were introduced at the annual wells-dressing festival held at Eyam last August. The poet's birthplace was then portrayed in the central panel of the floral tableau, and the supporting design of books, ink-stand, quills, scroll and violin, together with his signature copied in vetch pods, illustrated the contribution he made to the Arts.

In December a further commemoration took place. On Thursday, 12th December, a public meeting was held on the centenary eve, when a varied programme drew attention to the poet's life and literature. Mr. G. R. Micklewright (Chesterfield) acted as chairman, and spoke of Furness's association with Chesterfield where he served his apprenticeship as a currier.

Mr. C. Daniel briefly outlined the poet's career, and the Rector of Eyam (Rev. E. M. Turner) gave his impressions of his literary work. Mr. H. A. Farnsworth, organist of Dore Church, dealt with Furness's musical ability and particularly in relation to the carols he was in the habit of writing each Christmas.

The programme was varied with a selection of carols by Furness which had previously been recorded for the occasion by the Foolow and Eyam Chapel choirs, while the Dore Church choir contributed two others which were added to the recording.

Mrs. L. W. Furness, who is frequently a member of the cast of the Great Hucklow Village Players, and whose husband is a member of the poet's family, charmed the audience with her rendering of three poems each written in an entirely different mood.

Several direct descendants of the poet were present, and Mr. Spalton husband of one of two surviving granddaughters, and Mr. G. R. Wrigglesworth, a great grandson, said a few words for the family, both expressing appreciation of the co-operative effort which had gone into the arrangement and presentation of the programme.

The evening concluded with a number of colour slides shown by Mr. A. Taylor, and they included pictures of the poet's birthplace, his tombstone, and the well-dressing prepared in his memory.

The following night the actual anniversary was marked by a muffled peal on the Church bells, creating a suitable atmosphere for the remembrance service later conducted in the Wesleyan Reform Chapel by Mr. C. Daniel. The lesson was read by Mr. G. R. Wrigglesworth, of Dore.

Ebenezer Elliott's hymn "When wilt Thou save the people", was sung as a duet by Mrs. H. O. Garratt and Mrs. C. Daniel, in recognition of the admiration Furness had for the Corn Law Rhymer to whom he dedicated a poem in his memory. A congregational hymn by James Montgomery -- a friend of Furness -- was also sung during the service.

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.51 CONSTABLES AND HEADBOROUGHES OF HOGNASTON. The following is a list of inhabitants elected to serve respectively the Offices of constable and headborough for the village of Hognaston during the years 1753 to 1757, prepared from information extracted from the rolls of the Great Court Baron of Philip Gell, Esq., Lord of the Manor of Hognaston :-

	<u>Constable</u>	<u>Headborough</u>
1753	William Heathcote	Edward Bown
1754	Caleb Millington	Richard Wheeldon Senior
1755	Caleb Millington	Edward Trueman
1756	Caleb Millington	Nicholas Bagshaw
1757	Caleb Millington	Richard Kirk

How many other Courts were there in Derbyshire, I wonder, in which both constables and headboroughs were annually sworn in?

Philip T. Meldrum.

NQ.52 A Whitehurst Clock. The brass plate attached to Clock at Tissington Hall Stables states :-

THIS CLOCK WAS MADE BY  
JOHN WHITEHURST OF DERBY AD 1738  
AND WAS REPAIRED FOR  
SIR HENRY FITZHERBERT, BART.,  
BY JOHN WHITEHURST OF DERBY  
GREAT NEPHEW OF THE ABOVE, AD 1849.

R. Hayhurst.

NQ.53 (ref NQ's 27 and 47) Codnor Dovecote Mr. R. Johnson has stated that the Codnor Dovecote was certainly damaged by a bulldozer. He inspected the building within an hour of the accident and was instrumental in having the masonry banked up with earth to prevent total collapse.

NQ.54 Preservation of local landmarks Would it be possible for the Local History Section to take steps, where appropriate, to preserve landmarks of local interest? I have in mind the birthplace of James Brindley in this parish (Wormhill) which was marked by an ash tree when we came to the village some seven years ago, the tree has since blown down and I feel there is a risk of the remaining stump proving inadequate in years to come. There may be other similar sites which it would be of interest to mark in some permanent way.

Agnes L. Hunter.

NQ. 55 Derbyshire Millstones. The subject of Derbyshire Millstones is one which does not hitherto appear to have formed the subject of serious research, and I have been unable to trace any authoritative book on the subject. I have therefore recently embarked upon an attempted study of Millstones in Derbyshire, and would appreciate from members information as to the whereabouts of any manuscripts, letter, invoices, accounts, or other original sources containing any reference to Derbyshire Millstones. It would also be appreciated if members would write me (at Thernial House, Bakewell) with any information concerning the whereabouts of Derbyshire Millstones, Pulping Stones, Lead Crushers, etc. and also with details of any old Mills which may have their stones still "in situ" (please quote National Guide references whenever possible). Information of the whereabouts of old stonemasons implements, and any other information of a general nature would also be of great help.

Philip T. Meldrum.

NQ. 56 (Ref. NQ. 43) Milestone at Monyash. I think this guide stone should be left in situ and not removed as in its present position it is almost the sole remaining clue to an ancient way which crossed Derby Lane at this point coming from Bakewell via Burton and Bingham Low it can be seen crossing Lathkill Dale on the Monyash side of the Marble Quarry and proceeding up towards the Guide Stone by a route now evidenced only by blocked bridle gates in the boundary walls which cross its path. The direction on the stone is forward to Cheadle in Staffordshire and it seems to me that a route passing near Pilsbury Castle Hills would be the way out of the County of Derby towards Cheadle. I have dealt with the Derby Lane route and the route crossing from Bakewell in articles in the Derbyshire Countryside, to which reference should be made.

R. W. P. Cockerton.

NQ. 57. The slipper manufacturing industry in Eyan was introduced by James and John Bromley, in the factory we visited they had apprentices living in. I have been looking up White's Directory for 1857, and the name of West is not included in the list of tradesmen or manufacturers at the time but they must have become established soon afterwards. Messrs. Ireland and Froggatt followed the Bromleys, I believe, and carried on business in a factory which had served as a silk-weaving or cotton factory, and is now a row of cottages. Ridgeway Bros, Wests, and Samuel Wilkinson, Sellars, were all producing shoes in 1895 according to my copy of Bulmer's Directory, but how much earlier than this, I haven't any record available here. There is another factory in Eyan where the latest method of making shoes on the moulded principle is carried out. This factory was formerly a silk-weaving factory.

Clarence Daniel.

NQ. 58 Ridge and Furrow. As I am carrying out a survey of ridge and furrow - i.e. examples of the curved ridges with the reversed - S shape - in Derbyshire, I wonder if any members could please let me know the exact locations and any other information (possible purposes, dates of formation etc). of the examples which they know personally.

James C. Jackson.



1958

FUTURE MEETINGS

March 8 Saturday at 3.00 pm in the Library Lecture Room Church Way, Chesterfield, Mr.F.Nixon will talk on "Eighteenth Century Steam Engines in Derbyshire Lead Mines".

---

April 16 Wednesday at 7.00 pm in the Bridge Chapel Library at Derby Mr.L.A.Officer, B.A., Mus.Bac., will talk about the work he has done on "Monumental Brass Rubbings".

---

May 17 Saturday - a whole day excursion and picnic lunch. Mr.J.M.Bestall will lead a party to explore the Hathersage district. For further information please write to the Section Secretary.

---

June Mr.R.Johnson will lead a party to explore Wingfield Manor and other places of historical interest in the Alfreton area. This expedition will take place on a Saturday and for further particulars any one wishing to join the party should contact the Section Secretary.

---