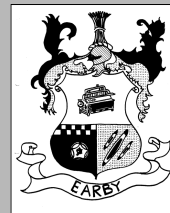


Earby Chronicles

Edition 31

Winter 2003



SOCIETY AIMS:

to raise awareness, foster an interest and facilitate research into the heritage of Earby & district including Thornton in Craven, Sough, Kelbrook, Harden, Hague and Salterforth.

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Squire Firth
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£1.50
Members of
Society free

AUTUMN FAIR 2003

As usual, the society had a stall at the New Road Community Centre in October. The overall theme was "That's Entertainment".

Members Gwen Fisher, Betty Smith and Doreen Turner volunteered to organise a cake stall which raised £57 towards Society funds, thanks go to them and all who donated goodies for them to sell. We also had a stall of our local history publications.



Left to right: Sue Janion, Ada & Fred Dolphin & Squire Firth

We used the occasion to take the opportunity to ask local people to help identify faces on some old photographs we have recently been given.

Recent talks & features

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This photograph shows visitors doing a fine job remembering many names.

Thanks are also due to Margaret Greenwood, the Society Archivist, for putting on a exhibition "Entertainment in Earby in bygone days". A few memories were jogged and some useful information was gleaned from people viewing the display.

OAT CAKES AND ORGANS

by **SQUIRE FIRTH**

An old, well used book, entitled "Songs of Praise and Prayer" recently came into my possession and was of such local interest to me that I decided to find out more about it.

The book, printed c 1895, contains 60 hymns with words by Henry Powers (born Hull 1854) and music by Lloyd Hartley (born Earby 1882). It also contains a preface written by the two men along with their photographs.

Lloyd Hartley's father, William (born 1845), was the youngest of five children to William and Olivia Hartley. Lloyd's father, William, was employed in his early teens as a doffer in the local cotton mill. He started to learn music and to play the piano under a highly gifted musician called Henry Pickles. Mr Pickles owned a grocery shop at the top of Aspen Lane in Earby but he devoted all his spare time to giving music lessons. He was well known in the area for his excellent 'cello playing and there is a monument to his memory in the church yard in Thornton-in-Craven. Henry Pickles was so impressed with young William that he introduced him to the local churches and chapels where he had the opportunity to play the piano or organ if required.

At nineteen years of age William gladly accepted the position of Organist at Kelbrook Church. At about this time there was a school for Gentlemens' sons at Hague House run by Mr. Tunnicliffe. The boys at the school always attended the church services at Kelbrook where they often provided the bulk of the congregation. Mr Tunnicliffe, himself an accomplished musician, gave William advice and encouragement for which he was forever grateful.

After five years at Kelbrook, William gladly accepted the position of Organist and Choirmaster at Earby Baptist Chapel; he was to remain in this post for 30 years.

At that time the organ in the chapel was an old 'G' organ which had previously belonged to the Wesleyan Chapel at Skipton. Always very keen on pedal work, William had the organ altered and new pedals put in. He was later quoted as saying that he could "move his feet about on the pedals like a fish in water". Eager to improve his playing, he attended lessons at Broughton Hall under the tutelage of Mr. Skippings who was reputedly the finest organist in the area at that time. He also made the acquaintance of Father Marshall who took an interest in him.

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It was around this time that William became a member of Earby Brass Band, playing the trombone. The band played at Broughton Hall sports day and William was spotted again by Father Marshall who told him that playing in the band would ruin him and he did not want to see him with a trombone again! William took his advice but did not end his association with the band entirely. In fact, he tutored and conducted the band on many occasions. He never went out with the band to a contest without winning a prize. The band won four prizes at a contest in Skipton and a prize at Kew Gardens. In fine weather the band rehearsed at "Brigstones" in the open air. This was convenient as many of the bandsmen lived in the surrounding cottages and farms. Banding was hard work. William admitted it was like "leading a cow from Skipton market and trying to get it into a fresh boose (shippon)"

William married Sarah Smith of Earby in 1873 and they had six children, all boys and named after famous musicians: Handle, Haydn, George Frederic, Novello, Lloyd and Halle. Sarah died about 1888 and William went on to marry Margaret Ann Hartley (same surname) of Stacksteads,



William Hartley and Family c 1895

Standing - Lloyd, Handel, Haydn, George Frederik
Seated - James Stanley, William, Sarah Ella, Margaret Ann, Amy Olivia.
Front - Halle
Lloyd is holding his book 'Songs of Praise and Prayer'

Bacup in about 1890. They had three children Sarah Ella, James Stanley and Amy Olivia. Margaret died in 1897 at the age of 41 and William married again to Martha Ann Singleton, a widow, from Raikes Bank Farm, Earby.

As a young man, William embarked on a new career as a baker of oatcakes and muffins at 53 -55 Red Lion Street, Earby. To establish his business he would go round Earby and the surrounding towns and villages hawking his produce. Eventually his business became well known throughout the area and was continued for many years by his sons when he retired. Even today, elderly people in Earby can remember "Hartley's Famous Oat cakes". William was known locally as "Little Bill Hartley", being small in stature and to distinguish him from another William Hartley who was also a musician living in Earby.

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In the late 1870s there was a notable musical community at the top of Red Lion Street known locally as "Top o't'town". Anyone passing by in the evenings would have heard all kinds of musical instruments being played and people singing.

In one house lived Vandeleur Wilkinson who ran the bobbin mill at Booth Bridge. He had a large family, mostly boys. He was a very good violinist as was his son Herbert. Three more of his sons played in Earby Brass Band.

Next door lived William Turner and family. One son played the bass the largest instrument in the brass band. Two other sons, Levi and James played the piano and organ and sang in the Baptist Chapel choir. Levi had been choirmaster at the chapel and his daughter Millicent taught music at Alder Hill School and was one of the best violinists in the area.

However, the outstanding musical family in the area was that of William Hartley who lived across the road from the others, next door to his bakehouse. As well as being organist and choirmaster at Earby Baptist Chapel he was also conductor of the Earby Orpheus Glee Union which was mainly made up of members of the Baptist choir. They practised in the Baptist school room and were successful in winning many prizes at local festivals.

The outstanding musical event in William's life and perhaps in Earby was the performance of Haydn's Creation in the Baptist Chapel on May 22nd 1886. The principals were Miss Tomlinson, soprano from Bradford, Mr Parratt, principal tenor from Ripon Cathedral, and Mr Varley, bass and choirmaster at St. Peter's Church, Blackburn. The chorus consisted of the Baptist and Wesleyan choirs from Earby and Barnoldswick and members of the Skipton, Colne and Nelson choral societies. The orchestra of over 30 musicians included members of Earby String Band, Earby Brass Band and players from as far away as Burnley and Birstall and even a member of Halles's famous band from Manchester.

The event was a great success and much talked about in the area as well as being a personal triumph for William. The orchestra had rehearsed for the occasion in a room over William's bakehouse and never was such music heard at Top o't' Town before or since.

The proceeds from the performance went towards a new organ which was installed shortly afterwards in the Baptist Chapel by Driver and Haigh of Bradford. The organ was always a source of pride for William who continued as organist and choirmaster for a further 15 years. When the Reverend Walter Wynn was pastor he requested that William choose the hymns and tunes for the services, an arrangement which continued for several years.

Barrett's Directory for 1902 states :

William Hartley, Teacher of music, organist and musical instrument dealer. 55 Red Lion Street, Earby.

The services of William to the Baptist Chapel were recognised on December 17th 1892 when

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he was presented with an illuminated address and a purse of gold. The address read as follows :-

“Presented to William Hartley with a purse of gold by the members of the Church, choir and congregation of the Baptist Chapel , Earby, in recognition of his valuable services as organist extending over a period of 20 years and also for his enthusiasm in helping to conduct the services of the church in the most harmonious manner, making it a real pleasure to listen to his beautiful performances lifting them up as it were from worldly thoughts to enjoy the delights of heavenly music by his good example and unostentatious fulfilment of his duties. He has been a light to all around him working out his daily life in the love and fear of the Great Master, glorifying in his service and we feel sure that when his days on Earth are passed in this life he will be called to hear the voices of the Heavenly Choir for ever,

Signed Church John Green
 Choir William Hartley
 Congregation Charles Watson

William died in 1931 at the age of 86 and is buried in Earby at Wheatlands Cemetery.

Many of William’s children naturally took an interest in music. Handle and James the

West Craven History Association 2nd Local History Seminar

Saturday 8th May 2004 at Rolls Royce Social Club.

Guest speakers :

Dr Mary Higham - Mediaeval roads,
Vaughan Jones - The Leeds and Liverpool Canal Community - Past and Present
Simon Wright - The English Civil War; Local Events and the Wider Context
PLUS the **SEALED KNOT SOCIETY (Civil War re-enactment society)** giving demonstrations.

Fee £14 Further details 01282 843850.

eldest and youngest boys were professional musicians, being players and teachers of the ‘cello. However, it is to Lloyd to whom the story now turns.

We will hear more of Lloyd in the Spring Edition of Chronicles.

THE SETTLE-CARLISLE EXPLORER

There was a clear blue sky and the weather was set fair as the Settle-Carlisle Explorer trip set forth from Earby’s New Road Community Centre. It is often difficult to fill a large coach with members from one society so this was what is hoped will be the first of many joint outings organised in conjunction with the Barnoldswick History Society. The first stop was in Barnoldswick to pick up our friends from there and then on to Settle for morning coffee.

The trip was a combined coach and rail journey looking at sites of interest along the Settle to Carlisle railway line.

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We passed Stainforth Gorge where the route for the railway was so narrow that the river had to be diverted and on to our first stopping point at Ribbleshead. Here we had a magnificent view of the imposing viaduct and a chance to photograph a train crossing it. The typical midland railway cottages at Ribbleshead are called Salt Lake cottages after the Mormon camp near by. The Mormon church has its head quarters in Salt Lake City, Utah, and the Mormons were trying to convert the Navvies and their families into their religion.

Then on towards Ingleton to visit the tiny church of St. Leonard's, Chapel le Dale, where over 200 of the navvies and their families who died through accident or disease during the seven years of railway construction are buried.

Life was tough in the shanty towns which sprang up to house the workers. They were given names e.g. Jerusalem and Sebastopol where cholera and smallpox were endemic.

We then returned to Ribbleshead to visit the station with its visitor centre before continuing northwards for a lunch break in Hawes passing Blea Moor tunnel en route.

After lunch on towards Garsdale following the route of the former Wensleydale line to view the Dandry Mire Viaduct. It is hard to believe that this viaduct was originally to be a high embankment but no matter how much infill was used the mire just swallowed it up until eventually that idea was abandoned and the present viaduct constructed. The viaduct can be likened to an iceberg as two thirds of the height of the viaduct pillars are below ground level.

Entering the beautiful Eden Valley with its surrounding moors including Wild Boar Fell we stopped to visit Pendragon Castle, one of the several homes of Lady Ann Clifford of Skipton Castle. Our coach continued along the Eden Valley to Appleby where there was time to look around the town or just have tea before catching the train back to Settle where the coach picked us up to return to Barnoldswick and Earby.

All agreed it had been a wonderful outing and that we had seen the Dales and the Eden Valley at their best.

LADY ANNE'S WAY A 100 mile walk from Skipton to Penrith.

Following on from the previous article, those who missed Margaret Brown's slide show at the September meeting might be interested in the following publications:

Lady Anne's Way by Sheila Gordon. Published by Hillside Publications, 11 Nessfield Grove, Keighley, BD22 6NU (1995)

Proud Northern Lady by Martin Holmes. Published by Phillimore & Co., Ltd., Shopwyke Manor Barn, Chichester West Sussex (1984)

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The trip was organised through David Allison's "Tracks North" and David himself was our guide and provided an excellent and knowledgeable commentary. His trips can be thoroughly recommended and I wouldn't be surprised if we teamed up with him again.

NEW ADDITION TO THE SOCIETY ARCHIVES

Peter Charlton came across a letter book during a house clearance and through member Morris Horsfield it has been donated to the society. The book contains copies of letters sent by the Earby Amateur Operatic Society and date from the 1920's.

The first letter is addressed to Mr Doyle Carte at the Savoy Hotel, London, asking permission to stage one of the Gilbert and Sullivan Operettas.

This very interesting artefact is a valuable addition to the Society's archives.

AND MORE

Thanks to David Hustler of the Pendle and Burnley branch of the Lancashire Family History and Heraldry Society we now have a compact disc containing the following additions to the Society's records :-

Colne Times Newspaper - an index to obituaries 1874 - 1899

1891 census surname index to Pendle Area and "Burnley Rural District"

1891 census surname index to West Craven Area (contains - Barnoldswick, Bracewell Brogden, Coates, Earby, Kelbrook, Martons, Salterforth and Thornton-in-Craven).

Local Churches, Chapels and Burial Grounds past and present - This an extremely useful compilation giving location, brief history and listing the records of each establishment. It covers Padiham, Burnley, Nelson Colne and West Craven.

Colne Cemetery Records - 1860 -1976

Colne Wesleyan Chapel of St John - Burial Accounts 1825 -1958

YORKSHIRE CISTERCIANS (October Talk) by Pamela Maryfield

The October talk was given by Society member Pamela Maryfield. Pamela studied Medieval Ecclesiastical History at University and is therefore well versed in the history of the Cistercians particularly in the Yorkshire area.

The Cistercian order was founded at Citeaux, in Burgundy, as a reaction to the perceived

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view that the old Benedictine order had become corrupted and a number of monks broke away to follow a more austere life more detached from centres of population. The order received a boost with the arrival of Bernard, later St Bernard, who arrived in Citeaux with a large group of his family asking to be allowed to join. St Bernard was a major driving force for the order.

The expansion of the Cistercian Order was perpetuated by the mother abbey sending out 13 monks (representing Christ and the twelve apostles) to found daughter abbeys.

Yorkshire in the 11th and 12th centuries was a desolate place having been laid waste by William the Conqueror and was ideally suited to the Cistercians.

Riveaux Abbey was the first to be founded in the desolation that was Yorkshire when in 1131 a plot of land was given by a local land owner to Abbott William and with a short space of time Riveaux was one of the leading Cistercian abbeys and was founding its own daughter abbeys in Yorkshire and far flung parts of Europe.

The custom was for the abbot of the mother abbey to visit all the daughter abbeys annually and also for the abbot to visit Citeaux once a year, the only exception being if the journey would take more than a month one way. This meant that a Yorkshire Abbott would have about two months of his year taken up journeying to Burgundy and back.

There were three main principals for the Cistercian monks to follow; simplicity, personal poverty and austerity and these were a reaction to the wealth and comfortable Benedictine Monasteries.

This was exemplified by the simplicity of the architecture of the monastery buildings, the plain food they ate and their general way of life.

Six hours a day were devoted to prayer and services, two hours to reading and study and four hours to manual labour in the monastery.

The monasteries, particularly Riveaux, were particularly adept at sheep rearing and were soon establishing Sheep Granges on the open moor lands and producing exceptionally good quality wool. As the monasteries expanded they had to take in so called lay brothers who did most of the work but also took part in some areas of monastic life without being full monks.

SOCIETY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Society's Annual General Meeting will be held on Tuesday 17th February 2004 at New Road Community Centre at 7-30 pm. Nominations are open for any of the positions on the committee. Nominations and any proposals to put before the AGM for discussion should be submitted to the secretary by January 31st 2004.

Pamela concluded her talk with the story of the founding of the short lived Mount St. Mary's Monastery in Barnoldswick on land gifted by the de Lacy family of Pontefract Castle. Following a succession of bad harvests, raids by Scottish marauders and a feud with the local church the monks removed to Kirkstall near Leeds and re founded the abbey there.

Thanks to Pamela for this insight into monastic life in the 12th century.

REMINISCENCES OF OLD EARBY (Part II)

By Florence Wright (nee Smith)

Chapels

On Sundays we went "ter T Mission" the Primitive Methodist Chapel, situated where the surgery now stands. We went up some wooden steps to the chapel. I remember Raymond playing the harmonium for the services. Two services every Sunday, morning and evening. Sunday school was in the afternoon.

We had a "Band of Hope" group which met during the week. We once had a lantern slide show and I played the harmonium to accompany Marjorie Perry, who sang "Won't you buy my pretty flowers?".

There were three workshops underneath our chapel. Speak's paint shop and Starkie's bakehouse. Behind the workshops, where the doctors' car park is now, were some stables (*smelly places*) and in summer, when we had our chapel windows open, there was an awful smell from the stables and big blue-bottles flew in; so we decided to raise some money to build a new chapel.

We were in Barnoldswick circuit. The Minister was Mr. Longstaff, followed by the Rev. L. Graydon Beardsall. We raised enough money to buy a plot of land, but the project fell through and the chapel closed. So we started going to the Baptist Chapel.

There were three Methodists Chapels in those days. Our Primitive Methodist, George Street Methodist, where Elaine Nuttall (nee Foxtrot) was the organist, Riley Street Wesleyan Methodist (now St. Peter's) where Rennie Pawson was the organist, later Elaine.

Once a year in August, we had a Sunday School walking day, usually a beautiful day, when the tar on the road melted and blackened our white shoes. A few days previously the council tarred the roads, sprayed with water. Then the steam roller came along to flatten the surface. Every Church had a banner and we stopped at various places in the town and sang hymns. After walking round Earby, we would go back to Chapel for sticky buns and coffee. What a treat. The Salvation Army would show lantern slides about "fallen women and drunken husbands".

Memories of Mount Zion Baptist Chapel.

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When I started going to the Baptist Chapel, the Minister was the Rev. Joseph Tinker, very popular. We had a baptistery in the old big Chapel, in which I and my friends were baptised by Mr. Tinker.

Behind the chapel was the old Sunday school with a stage, where we had concerts. Some of the artists being Milly Turner - violinist and contralto singer, Clara Watson and her sister Grace - soprano singers, Herbert Lord - bass, Tommy Nuttal - tenor, Dorothy Perry - pianist, John Smith - accompanist, and others. We used to have concerts on Saturday evenings and we young ones, who always sat at the back, used to go across to Aunt Louie's "Wooden hut" at the interval to buy sweets. My favourite's were black Victory V lozenges - yum-yum!

Once a year we had a choir weekend, when we invited celebrated artists to come and sing e.g. Elizabeth Harwood the soprano, John Lawrenson and others. There was always a celebrity concert on the Saturday night, followed by an oratorio on the Sunday afternoon and evening. John Smith was the organist, and Levi Turner was the conductor. Later, John Smith was the conductor. Milly Turner once took the part of Queen Elizabeth in the choir's production of "Merrie England".

We also had a "League of Young Worshippers" group and we sometimes went on trips. We used to go on rambles at Easter. On Good Friday, after morning service, we rode to Skipton for a picnic lunch, then on to Burnsall. There were rowing boats on the river there and at Grassington. Easter Sunday we usually walked from Skipton to Ilkley and up on the moors. Easter Monday there was usually a special train from Leeds to Bell Busk, which we caught at Skipton. Then walked from Bell Busk to Malham, spent the afternoon there, then walked back to Bell Busk Railway station and back home. Sometimes as many as fifty or sixty of us.



Maggie and Joe Foulds were very good caretakers (cleaners). Mr Tinker wrote quite a few plays, which were performed on the stage in the "old School" behind the Chapel. One of these was called "Sea Fever".

The big organ in the Chapel was a two manual one. The wind for the organ was provided by hand operated bellows, the operator sat at the back of the choir. Later we had an electric

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pump installed in the "black hole", a little room situated under the organ, behind the stage of the old school. We used this room and the minister's vestry as changing rooms when we gave plays.

Other Memories.

Earby used to have an "Earby Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society. Once a year they gave a musical at the Empire. The Arcadians, No No Nanette (Phyllis Watson "Pip" was Nannette - very dainty). The Mikado etc. Names like Bolton Crowther, Jim Watson come to mind, Henry Bailey was the accompanist. Saturday night was always a full house.

We used to have two cinemas, The Empire and The Cosy (today's library). There were three shows at the Empire on Saturdays, a matinee in the afternoon, 'silent films' featuring Charlie Chaplin and other comedians and in the evening 'first and second houses'.

Earby was a very busy place on Saturday nights, people coming and going between the two shows. The Salvation Army used to come and stand opposite our shop, playing their tambourines and singing hymns. We stayed open much later on Saturday nights, because there were plenty of people about.

Earby had a brass band and on summer evenings we could hear them in our backyard

FORTHCOMING PROGRAMME

Tuesday 20th January 2004	Fred Holcroft - The plague in England.
Tuesday 17th February 2004	Annual General Meeting & Photograph Evening
Tuesday 16th March 2004	Derek Clabburn - Clocks and clock making
Tuesday 20th April 2004	Margaret Curry - In the steps of the Brontes

practising at the Band Club in the New Road. I also remember the "big Mill " that is Victoria Mill being on fire one Saturday night and firemen coming into our house for a drink of tea, sweat running down their faces and dripping off the ends of their noses. Whenever there was a fire, a buzzer sounded and Teddy Lancaster had to go and round up the horses (they were kept up Bailey Banks) to pull the fire cart, with the hose pipes on. The same buzzer was sounded at 12 noon on Saturdays, to mark the end of the working week. Later it went at 10 a.m., when all the weavers came out of the mills.

Part III to be continued in the Spring 2004 edition.

LETTER TO TO THE EDITOR

BEWARE THE CENSUS From Bernice Clough

In the Spring edition of the Earby Chronicles, a reader asked for any information about her grandfather Harry Brown of Earby.

Margaret had researched the last published Census of 1901, found a Harry Brown who fitted the scant information she had on her grandfather's early life and spent many hours tracing the family history.

Several members of the Historical Society recognised the Harry Brown in question. None more so than myself - it was my grandfather ! I had no knowledge of my grandfather's life prior to 1927, when his daughter Nellie married my father Arthur Wormwell (Edgar's cousin) and moved in with my grandparents. Therefore, understandably, it took a considerable length of time before I finally contacted Margaret.

To my great relief, but obviously to Margaret's great disappointment, the Harry Brown and family she had been researching was the wrong one. After corresponding with Margaret we definitely do have different grandfathers and Margaret has generously offered to let me have all the research she has gathered on mine.

Margaret is not the first, to fall into this trap - no doubt she won't be the last. For us, her story illustrates how important it is to corroborate all the evidence we find, not just in the Census.

A useful book on the Census is "MAKING SENSE OF THE CENSUS" - the manuscript returns for England and Wales 1801 - 1901" published by the Public Record Office (Handbook No. 23) ; there are also a number of good books on family history research available in most public libraries.

Several people have told me that the Census can be very misleading when researching family tree and unfortunately, in this instance, this has proved to be the case. As Margaret says, this will warn others of some of the pitfalls that can occur, in family research.

If you knew, or know of Harry Brown of Earby contact Margaret Milree or Bernice Clough Longroyd, 28 Nidd Approach, Deighton Bar, Wetherby LS22 7UJ.

HOUSE HISTORY WORKSHOP

Saturday October 25th was the occasion of the first History Workshop run by the Society. The subject matter was House History and was attended by some 30 potential house

detectives.

Two speakers were invited, Jim o'Neil from Hoylake on the Wirral and more locally Christine Bradley the reference and local studies librarian at Colne library. In the first session Jim looked at some of the physical features of old and not so old houses which could give clues as the buildings history. In the second session we looked at some of the documentary sources including deeds, maps and census returns. The third session took the census entry for one particular house in 1871 and we tried to build up a picture of the people and their life in that house at the time.

The house in question was called Sandheys and was inhabited by a cotton broker and his family and domestic staff. The session finished on a novel note when Jim gave us 30 minutes to write a poem, draw a picture or compose a playlet based on the material we had been studying and a wealth of hidden literary talent was discovered.

The event was perfectly rounded off by Christine Bradley of Colne library assisted by Martyn Bennett (who dealt with the technical aspects of the presentation). Christine explained how the library services can help with research by detailing the relevant types of documents and records which are held in the local libraries.

As Jim explained it is difficult to cover adequately such a diverse subject as House History in the time we had but hopefully it provided some pointers as to where to start and gave encouragement to those who wanted to discover the history of their house.

If any one has any ideas for another workshop event in the future please let one of the committee members know.

RESEARCH REQUESTS

SEARCH FOR HARRISONS

Ian Harrison of Victoria, Australia, has contacted the society for help in searching for his Harrison ancestors. We think we have traced his great great grandfather Henry to Earby with the following entry in the Thornton -in- Craven baptism records " Henry HARRISON son of Wm and Jane (nee Dean) baptised 7th October 1804" .

3rd ANNUAL DINNER The dinner will be held on Sat. 28th February 2004 at Auntie Emily's in Earby. As numbers will be limited members will have first option and any spare places will be available for guests. A booking form and menu is attached to this issue. Please return the completed form and payment to Helen Horner by 17th February. Please indicate if you may need extra places which, if available, will be allocated on a first come first served basis.

Other children to William and Jane were Jeremiah, Jane, Ann, Thomas and William. We have found burial records for both a William and Jane HARRISON of about the right age in Broughton parish registers. their addresses being given as of Carleton.

Jane HARRISON of Carlow Beck nr Carlton buried 28/12/1847 aged 74
William HARRISON of Carlton buried 31/3/1848 aged 79.

Can anyone help prove that these Broughton Harrisons are the same people as the Thornton Harrisons? If this is the case then we have dates for their births and we can search for their baptisms. So can you help with these HARRISONS? If so contact Bob Abel on 01282 843850 or bobabel@talk21.com .

THE BATTLE OF ELSLACK - OR NOT? **Member Trevor Tattersall gives an alternative view**

Some weeks ago several members of our committee received phone calls from a gentleman in Rochdale asking for information on the Roman fort at Elslack which initially appeared quite straightforward but which on further enquiry became curiouser and curiouser....

Apparently this gentleman with some connections to the television documentary field had developed a theory that the battle of Brunanburh (of which more later) had taken place at our local Roman fort and could we help him with any supporting information?

After politely indicating that I felt his theory was unlikely and answering as many questions as I could, I considered the matter closed, but on further reflection and having had mad theories of my own I thought that the question deserved a closer look.

Where had his theory come from? – Whitakers History of Craven in the section on Elslack has two possible sources:-

Dodsworth - MSS. v. 71 " – Burwen Castle – they say it was besieged and raised by the Danes; there hath been found a bagg full of leather peches which hath been used for money; there hath been found coyne of all years with the plow, and brikes of all colours -."

Whitakers own note – "Skeletons and a battle-axe have been found within it, and also gold coins; but I have not seen them, and am not able to ascertain to what period they belonged."

If these are the sources of the theory they are not very conclusive and more concrete information would be needed for proof.

The fort was excavated about 1912 but apart from the remains of the walls, both the original clay and the later masonry rebuild, nothing was found but some cobbled paths in the interior. The excavators concluded that it was an enclosure into which cattle were driven in times of danger !! So no help there.

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Now let us turn to the Battle of Brunanburh itself to see if we can glean anything from the historical record.

Although the battle is quite well documented for a Dark Age event, the site has not been identified with any certainty, but may have taken place on the southern border of Northumbria (which at that time covered most of northern Britain) along the Don valley in what is now Yorkshire.

It took place in 937 AD, some 800 years after the fort at Elslack was rebuilt in stone, some 400 years after the Anglo-Saxon invaders landed in Kent and East Anglia, and less than 50 years after the Vikings had landed and established their dominance over the Danelaw covering most of north-eastern Britain.

The king was Athelstan of the West-Saxons, arguably the greatest but not the best-known of the Saxon kings and he was acknowledged as overlord of the many British and Danish sub-kings and earls, having in the previous decade soundly beaten them in battle. Only three years earlier in a campaign lasting some three months or so he had marched with his army from Winchester to just south of Aberdeen to subdue King Constantine and his fellow North British kings and returned home after accepting their homage.

Although other kings had claimed to rule Britain in the past, this was the first time that any could claim to be truly King of England, but not for long.....

Constantine might have been forced to bow the knee to overwhelming force but he was not prepared to let matters rest there. He formed a plan to build a grand alliance of all Athelstan's opponents but including the Danes of Ireland under Anlaf Guthfrithson of Dublin and the Anglo-Scandinavians of Northumbria led by traditional northerners like Earl Orm and Archbishop Wulfstan of York.

The plan appeared to have been to consolidate their forces in the north and ravage south of the Humber, hoping to attract Danish settlers in the eastern Midlands to their standard. But all these preparations took time and it was Autumn before things really got moving. Anlaf was still in Dublin in early August, press-ganging a pirate fleet into his service. He is reported to have sailed round Scotland in bad weather and high winds to land his forces in the mouth of the Humber but this is disputed by many historians. It would certainly have been more sensible to sail across the Irish Sea to the mouth of the Ribble or the Mersey and to march across to York to join the assembly. Nothing is known of the movements of Idwal and his North Welsh – they may have planned to attack Athelstan's western flank or may have marched up through Cheshire to join the main army.

Meanwhile, what of Athelstan? – surprisingly he appeared to do nothing. No doubt his agents in the north would keep him in touch with the progress of events. He would know the size of the forces ranged against him and he would need time to mobilise his army consisting of levies from Wessex (Sussex/Hampshire area) and Mercia (the Midlands area)

Earby Chronicles

fter the harvest and perhaps he was allowing the northern alliance to exhaust their food supplies. However he did move north to meet the threat in the last quarter of the year but his route is not known for certain. Three years before he advanced through Derby, York, Chester-Le-Street, Edinburgh and Perth. Perhaps he felt that Constantine would expect him to advance along the same traditional route based on the major Roman roads that offered reasonably swift travel even then. Or perhaps he changed his route to take his opponents by surprise.

Whatever route he used, he made a fast attack to confront his enemies at a fort called Brunanburh which was on a hill called 'Weondun' ('holy hill') where there had been a heathen sanctuary or temple. The battle opened with a dawn attack on the burh by the English fighting in separate armies – West Saxons against the British, Mercians against the Scandinavians – the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle describes savage hand-to-hand fighting in regular battle order, while the Annals of Ulster say the struggle was 'immense, lamentable, horrible and desperately fought'.

The battle was obviously closely fought between evenly matched opponents but eventually the well-armed troops of the southern English won the day and the beaten northerners were pursued until nightfall, eventually making their way back to their ships. Losses were heavy on both sides but the invading army had been destroyed. Among the northern dead were five kings, including the King of the Western Isles and Owain of Cumbria, seven of Anlaf's earls and one of Constantine's sons. Anlaf himself arrived back in Dublin 'with a few' early in 938. Thus ended the aspirations of the Celtic British to regain their land from the Saxon invaders and Athelstan was confirmed as the first King of England.

So much for the Battle of Brunanburh – but where was it fought? Geographically the most likely place appears to be somewhere along a line between the Humber and the Ribble, possibly near the Aire Gap which was the traditional cross-Pennine route at the time – note the find of a Viking hoard of silver in the bank of the Ribble dating to a little later in history.

Elsack fort could be a possibility with the finds of gold, battle-axe and skeletons mentioned by Whitaker but it is in the valley bottom rather than on a hill and rather than the siege of a fort, the battle was fought in regular order so I would reluctantly discount it as the most likely site.

However, if we speculate that Athelstan did change his route from that of his Scottish expedition three years earlier and instead of advancing directly on York, he veered off to the west, maybe to intercept the North Welsh and/or the Dublin Vikings, or simply to cross the Pennines through the Aire Gap and attack from the flank. One of the routes he could have used is that known as the Long Causeway running along the shoulder of Upper Calderdale from Halifax towards Burnley. This ancient trackway is now a surfaced road which runs straight through hill pasture above the valley bottom and ends above Burnley giving access to the Aire Gap and the old Roman Road to York - still in use in the early 1700's. Most significantly of all it passes through an area of earthworks and much disturbed

Lancashire Calder.

As far as I am aware this area between Worsthorne and Mereclough has not before been suggested as the site of the Battle of Brunanburh, and is probably controversial to say the least, but from what I can deduce, it has as likely a claim as any other site so far advanced.



So maybe our friend from Rochdale was not all that far out in his search for the site of the Battle of Brunanburh – it may be closer to home than he originally thought.

Main sources

History & Antiquities of the Deanery of Craven by T.D.Whitaker
In Search of the Dark Ages by Michael Wood

A HISTORY CONSULTATION EXERCISE

FUTURE MA HISTORY COURSES

On 11 Nov 2003 the Society was represented by Derek Clabburn at a consultation event at the Edge Hill College, Ormskirk. The college has accreditation links with the University of Lancaster.

The History Department there is considering a number of developments in its course portfolio and the consultation event was arranged to take soundings from representatives of Lancashire's local history groups, English Heritage, County archivists, family history groups and others on the best approach that might be adopted to reinvigorate the current MA history (further degree course).

From the floor came requests for subject areas such as family history, local history and for archival support units and teachers/lecturers in secondary schools and colleges of further education. These might be in co-operation within the existing MA structure of distant learning packages and might evolve into free-standing modules forming part of the accreditation leading to an MA degree by research.

Taking into account the cost of higher degree courses together with an awareness that most local history society members are unlikely to wish to pursue a further degree anyway it was still felt that many local historians were still anxious and often eager to enhance their own history skills. To fill this "gap in the market" the local history group suggested that dedicated short-term courses were likely to appeal and within these there might well be a mechanism that would allow those who might wish to, to use these as modules of an MA study course.

The areas identified for such an approach might be:

- ⇒ research methodologies
- ⇒ organising/getting started
- ⇒ identification of resources, topics or field of study
- ⇒ uses and abuses of archival resources
- ⇒ understanding and interpreting archival material
- ⇒ getting to grips with language and palaeography of old records/documents
- ⇒ landscape history in Lancashire
- ⇒ need to conserve/record local oral knowledge/history of the 20th century



A WISH FOR PEACE AND HAPPINESS AT
CHRISTMAS AND A PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR
TO ALL OUR READERS
FROM THE EDITOR
AND ALL THE COMMITTEE OF
EARBY AND DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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EDITOR**

Don't forget this is
your newsletter. Send
in articles, photos and
any other anecdotes,
so that we get as wide
a flavour of Earby &
District, yes that
means Thornton in
Craven, Kelbrook,
Sough, Harden and
Salterforth as well.

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