

Earby Chronicles

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Salterforth Bridge in 1915 with an empty working boat on the canal.

In days long gone there was a thriving boat-building yard just beyond Salterforth, making barges, many for the old Leeds & Liverpool Canal Co.

SOCIETY AIMS:

To raise awareness, foster an interest and facilitate research into the heritage of Earby and district including Thornton-in-Craven, Sough, Kelbrook, Harden and Salterforth

BOAT BUILDING IN SALTERFORTH & THE WILKINSONS

In 1965 Mr & Mrs Thomas Wilkinson of Salterforth celebrated their Diamond wedding anniversary. Born in Newsholme in 1880, Thomas Wilkinson moved to Salterforth and since he was a lad he had worked there in the boatyard once owned by Holgate Marsden on the banks of the canal, (see Chronicles Spring 2019). For 35 years Mr Wilkinson plied his trade and he estimated that he built, or helped to build, 100 boats, mainly barges, during his career. Before the 1st World War three canal barges were turned out in a year by the firm, which in 1949 was under the ownership of Mr Thomas Wilkinson.

In later life his main occupation was that of a wheelwright and, when young, I recall visiting the Salterforth yard with my father from North Holme Farm. He took hay time implements, cart shafts and wheels, to be repaired by Mr Wilkinson in the days when horses and carts were used to gather in the hay. Thomas Wilkinson died in 1968 at the age of 88 and I have found two articles, one from the Barnoldswick and Earby Times 16th September 1949 (reproduced over) and the second from the Craven Herald in 1955 (which will be reproduced in the next edition of the Chronicles), where Mr Wilkinson recalls the Salterforth boat building trade.



Alice and Tom Wilkinson

Local Boat Making (Barnoldswick and Earby Times) – by “Recorder”

Few, if any, one man businesses can surpass that owned and worked by Mr T Wilkinson, of Denholme Lee, Salterforth, for novelty and usefulness. Journeying by bus, the other day, from the top road near Lane Head Inn, one could obtain a good view of his works, and craft, nestling in the hollow alongside the British Waterways at Salterforth, more popularly known by its former name of the Leeds and Liverpool Canal. So next day I decided to investigate, and my curiosity was well rewarded. I enquired the route from the landlady at the Anchor Inn and, to my surprise and delight, was told to proceed along the towing path for a few hundred yards when I should be able to visit the works by going underneath the canal. Well I have been under the River Mersey at Liverpool, but had no idea we had a miniature water passage in this area.

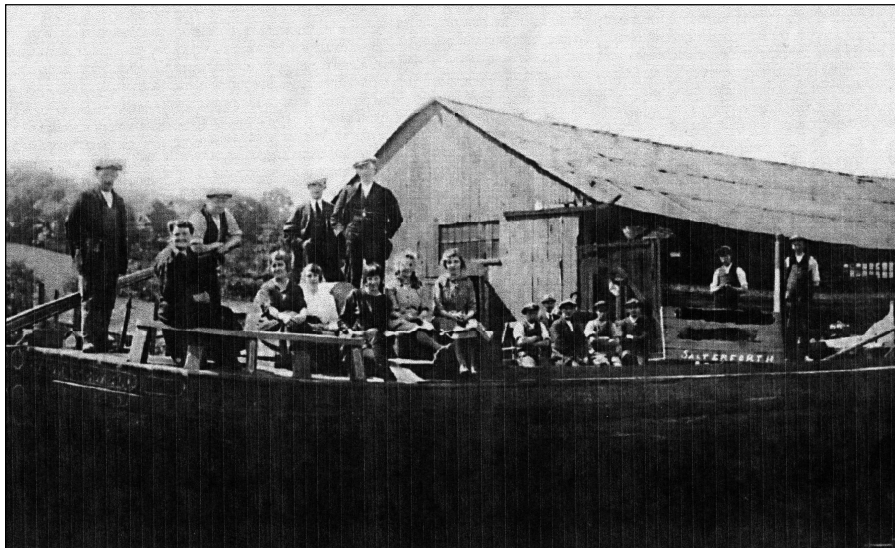
However my doubts were soon allayed, for surely there is a large stone built culvert with the canal overhead and water swiftly flowing down the centre underneath, with a pathway on either side. I heard tapping sounds nearby and coming from within the interior of a pleasure boat, elevated in dry dock, was Mr Wilkinson, who has the only boat-building business in the district. Established over fifty years ago by the late Mr Holgate Marsden, who was succeeded by the late Mr J Travers, the business has been carried on for the past 30 years by Mr T Wilkinson. The reason for the subway is that there was boat building on both sides of the canal, an average of three new boats being built annually, in addition to repair work. For a number of years past, the building of small boats of the pleasure type has been the principal business and has been confined to one side of the canal, where the conversion of a former ship's lifeboat into a pleasure craft was actually in progress.

Climbing a six foot ladder, along with Mr Wilkinson, I was soon in an “amateur bargee's paradise” to use the words of the electrician therein engaged. The boat of an overall measurement of 28 ft. by 9 ft. with lantern roof, contains two sleeping bunks, two folding sleeping bunks, two folding wardrobes, aluminium sink, calor gas cooker and lavatory, as compact a floating household as one could wish to see. Moored

close by was the completed Cynthia 259 with her small Union Jack at the masthead proudly fluttering in the breeze – a pleasure cruiser formerly converted from a Bailey Bridge pontoon. It was started in October last year, and completed in April this year – and is replete with all modern sleeping compartments “Danette” upholstered and adaptable to the necessary requirements. Quite near was another private craft The Rancher 206, similarly converted.



Salterforth Boatyard 1930



Salterforth Dockyard

Originally Mr Wilkinson told me there was no power installed in the works and everything was done by hand, but after a period, a steam engine, circular saw and band saw were installed. Now the premises have electricity, which is generated on the spot. In addition to the pleasure boat building an extensive wheelwright's business is carried on, and Mr Wilkinson who is aided by his son Mr H Wilkinson told me there was no unemployment there but plenty of sawdust as a result of a busy time. Mr Wilkinson expressed his pride in the continuance of the old established business in which there was no “clocking on” or time sheet preparation, but real honest-to-goodness workmanship which will stand the test of both time and water, especially the latter.

WHERE IS THIS TREE? DIAMOND JUBILEE TREE PLANTING AT THORNTON IN CRAVEN

Craven Herald November 1897

In common with many of the villages, Thornton has its tree planted in memory of the record reign of Her Majesty. The ceremony of planting took place on Saturday week, when Mr Jas. Carr, solicitor and Registrar of the Colne County Court, and who resides at Thornton, opened the proceedings by a neat and interesting address, in which he stated that the tree about to be planted was an offshoot of a chestnut tree that was brought from Constantinople to this country 300 years ago. At the conclusion of his speech Mr Carr asked Mrs Smith, of Fence End, to honour the village by planting the tree, and that lady did so in a suitable manner. The Rev. L B Morris, who was present along with Mrs Morris, gave a short address, in which he eulogised Mr Carr for the active part he had taken in the Diamond Jubilee celebrations, and for his kindness in offering £50 towards the cost of a memorial window to the late Canon Morris that is proposed to be put in Thornton church; and he further stated that his brother Edward had given £20 for the same object, and the sum necessary for the work was nearly complete so that the work could be preceded with.

Mr Morris moved a vote of thanks to Mr Carr, Mrs Smith and all who helped to carry out the interesting proceedings of that afternoon. There was a considerable number of spectators present and the National Anthem fittingly terminated an interesting afternoon's proceedings.

THE LOCAL POSTAL SERVICE IN THE 19TH CENTURY

Bob Abel

This is one of a series of articles on the history of our local post offices. During the latter part of the last century and continuing into this, post offices have been closing due to social changes and cost cutting so it is important to record their histories.

The Royal Mail can trace its origins back to 1516 when Henry VIII created the Master of The Posts in Sir Brian Tuke but this was restricted to the use of the King and his court. It wasn't until 1635 that the service was opened to the general public and 1784 it became known as the Royal Mail and mail coaches began carrying the mail across the country. The mail coaches were run on a contract basis and tenders for operating a mail coach service were regularly advertised.



In 1838, Her Majesty's Postmaster General was advertising for ten-

ders for running a mail coach with two horses from Skipton to Colne.

There are memories of the coaching service amongst records of evidence given to Earby Urban District Council in the 1920s regarding the usage of local roads and particularly the old road from Foulridge to Kelbrook.

James Wormwell born 1842: "he doesn't remember the stage coaches but his mother informed him that they came on the old road from Colne, it being a penny stage from Mere Clough to Kelbrook Bridge... in his youth, older residents informed him of an old public house on the east side of Lancashire Gill Brow and just below a stile there"

Don Parker, 32 Waterloo Road Kelbrook:

"The old public house.... The old stage coaches used to draw up there and change horses".

The coming of the railways speeded up the mail service in the 1830s and Royal Mail coaches quickly disappeared as the rail network expanded. The Manchester Times of 23rd September 1848 reported that "the Blackburn to Skipton mail coach has now ceased running between Blackburn and Burnley in the consequence of the opening of the East Lancashire Railway. The mail bags are conveyed by mail cart from Blackburn to Burnley and will be continued to be so carried until the contract is expired after that they will be brought by railway. The mail coach runs yet from Burnley to Colne and Skipton."

The rail link between Burnley and Skipton via Colne would soon be completed allowing mail to be carried all the way by train.

The mail coaches continued to connect with the railway to reach places not yet served by a rail service. Bradshaw's Railway Guide gives a good example for Skipton: "The Kendal Union Coach now leaves the Devonshire Arms after the arrival of the 11am train from Leeds, the 11-30 am from Bradford and the 8.45 am from Colne and arrives in Settle in time for the mail (coach) to Lancaster and at Kendal in time for the trains to Carlisle, Windermere etc"

In the 1830s Rowland Hill began to campaign for the reform of the

postal service. Originally the postage charge was paid on receipt of a letter and postage rates were complicated and confusing. In 1839 a standardised postage rate was initiated with the sender meeting the cost and in 1840 the world's first pre-printed postal stamp, the penny black, was introduced. The postal service now came within more people's affordability.

Thornton Post Office

The first reference I have come across about a post office is in Piggot's directory of 1834 under the entry for Gisburn which documents that the "post office at Thornton has Jane Broughton as post mistress". There is also a James Broughton listed as a grocer and draper. Perhaps John and Jane were man and wife and combined the two businesses.

The 1835 Piggot's Directory had an entry for Thornton as follows - "... John Southwell, Post Master – Letters from Skipton, Leeds, Bradford, Halifax and the North and East arrive every afternoon at one and are despatched every morning at nine. Letters from Manchester, Burnley and London etc every afternoon at one and are despatched at a quarter past. Letters from Barnoldswick arrive (by foot post) every afternoon at half past twelve and despatched at half past one."

The next reference found is in the 1851 census when John Southwell was recorded as a farmer of 43 acres and post office letter receiver. There is no indication as to the location of any post office. At this date John's age was given as 72. His son Richard was the poor rate collector and it is not inconceivable that if John was busy with the farm, Richard would do the postal duties. The 1841 census shows John just as farmer and Richard as district overseer.

The first edition of the ordnance survey map surveyed 1849-50 indicates a Post Office at Thornton but as can be seen over the location is very imprecise. Was it on Booth Bridge Lane?

The 1896 edition shows the post office where it remained until closure.

The 1861 and 1871 censuses are devoid of any mention of a post office or a postal service employee. However in 1854 the post office



created a new job of runner Skipton to Carleton, Elslack, Thornton and Earby, presumably to deliver to and collect post from these villages.

Thornton in Craven entry in Kelly's Directory for 1881 includes one John Cowgill Riley described as Wheelwright, shop keeper and post office. The 1881 census has the entry for John Riley, carpenter, living with his family at the "grocer's shop".

John C Riley was still living at the post office in 1891 and gave his occupation as Post Master and carpenter. His wife, Hannah was described as grocer. John was 62 years old and his wife Hannah 64 and perhaps getting close to retiring from the business. In fact by the 1901 census the Rileys had moved out of the Post Office to Barn Cottage where he continued the carpentry business.



John and Hannah Riley 1905

IRISHMEN AT SKIPTON HAYTIME HIRINGS OF LONG AGO

Stephanie Carter

I am able to recall a little of those far off summer days on our farm, prior to the horse being superseded by the tractor, when hay-time was a major event in the year of Craven. Gathering in the hay for winter feed was a long and laborious business, recalled by my father in his memoir "Earby of Yesteryear". He often reminisced about the haytimes of his childhood when "the throngs of Irishmen gathered in voluminous groups on Mondays in Skipton High Street. They all wore navy blue suits and carried their possessions in black cloth bags; these to be replaced with emancipation with a brown suitcase. Most of them came from County Mayo, leaving their womenfolk to manage their small holdings until their return after the corn and sugar-beet harvests. Most returned year after year for hire on the same farms, subsequently bringing their big young sons to carry on the tradition. Hay-time rarely began before early July. Wages were about £25 a month or less, which included board and lodgings. Sunday was a work day especially in unsettled weather. The first duty though was to attend Mass, as all were devout Catholics. Patsy Forton came to North Holme for many years, to be followed by his sons John and Jimmy. He was an expert scythe mower and stack builder and a man of absolute integrity. His letter announcing his impending arrival always contained the words 'Please God I will be with you on the 25th'.

Skipton was only one of the places in the western Dales renowned for its hiring fairs; others included Settle, Long Preston, Horton in Ribblesdale and Kettlewell. The Irishmen at Skipton Hiring Fair made yearly newsworthy items in the local press.

11th July 1903 "Rowdy Irishmen – Skipton was invaded on Monday by between 200 and 300 Irish labourers who were seeking engagements for the hay harvests. During the day some became very boisterous in their conduct and several brushes took place. In one case there was a fight in which one of the combatants sustained a broken leg. No one seemed inclined to take the responsibility of securing medical assis-

tance and the poor fellow was allowed to lay for some time in great agony...It is just possible that the injured man, who was removed to the workhouse, will have to have his leg amputated. The rowdyism continued throughout the afternoon and evening".

3rd July 1916 "Irishmen at Skipton Hiring Fair – At the hiring fair at Skipton today the farmers complained that Irishmen, of whom there was a goodly number in attendance, were demanding unreasonable wages, evidently believing that they could take advantage of the scarcity of labour. The wages accepted were from £7 to £8 for men, £6 to £7 for boys. Some of the men asked for wages from £13 to £14 per month. Many of the farmers complained that it was not right that they should have to send their sons into the army whilst these yearly migrants from Ireland were not liable for military service. The hay crops in the Craven district are expected to be very heavy"

4th July 1939 "Fewer Farmers Attend Skipton Hirings – the supply of labour considerably exceeded the demand at Skipton yesterday. There was a big number of Irish harvesters, but as the local livestock markets are still suspended owing to the foot and mouth disease restrictions, there was not the customary influx of farmers. Men engaged had to accept rather lower terms than the average for recent years".

24th June 1940 "Land and Labour – "A good many Craven farmers are wondering whether there will be any Irish harvesters at Skipton today. The outlook is not very promising. The tractor mowing machines under the management of the local Agricultural Committees for the use of which a charge of 7s 6d an acre is made, will doubtless be in good demand and in some areas tractor-drawn trailers to transport the hay from meadow to barn are available.

Many people take it for granted that the Skipton hiring fairs for harvest labour are of great antiquity. Actually there are veteran farmers who can recall when the main centres at which Irish harvesters congregated were Malham, Horton in Ribblesdale and Kettlewell..."

16th July 1945 "Irish harvesters have been asking between £30 and £40 for a month's work in the Yorkshire dales, with board and lodg-

ing in addition. The pre-war rate was £12 to £14...”

7th July 1952 “Irish labourers crowded Skipton High Street yesterday for the traditional harvest hiring day. There were more than in previous years and they were asking more; £40 to £50 plus board and lodging for the month... One striking point was the large number of labourers waiting for hire, and a farmer commented that there were more labourers than there were farmers to hire them. There are two reasons for this. One was the increasing mechanisation and the consequent labour-saving on the dairy farms, and the second was the gradual diminishing in haymaking throughout the Dales, many farmers now preferring to make silage. The hire of haytime workers in Craven shows little change from early Victorian days. The Irish labourers still gather in the Dales town’s market places or outside the most prominent public house in the place. Each man and each farmer makes his own terms and drives the best bargain he can”.

17th July 1953 “Increased Costs of Haymaking –Each year about this time Irish labourers come into this district seeking work during the haymaking period, and in recent years there has been considerable perturbation among the farmers at the high price asked by the Irishmen for their services. With the state of industry as it was last year it had been felt locally that farmers should where possible take on local men who were out of work. Some of the farmers however seemed to prefer experienced hands, regardless of the high wages they demanded. This year there are more Irish labourers about than ever, and they are asking for £40 to £50 plus board and lodging. Many of the local labourers have been engaged at about £35. To be taken into account is a very important factor. If the weather is unsuitable, the men are “played” but they still get their money for the month. When the men are really experienced and the weather favourable, they have finished their work in less than a month and have gone somewhere else to get a second wage.

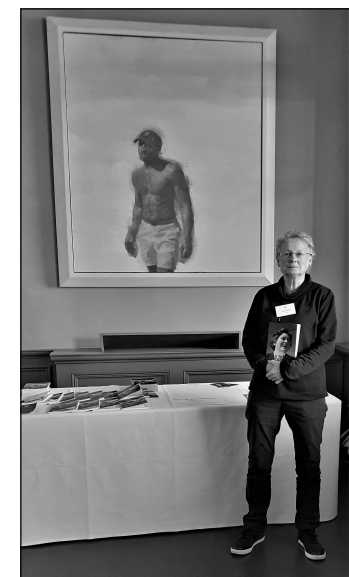
Several reasons have been put forward for the increase in numbers of those seeking jobs over the last two years. One is that the increased mechanisation put many of them out of work. In the Dales some farmers who have previously used their meadows for hay are

preferring to make silage...

During hay time the experienced Irishman works from five in the morning until midnight and most of them give good service...”

RE: MEMORABILIA OF JOAN WILKIE WILKINSON

As detailed in the last edition of the Chronicles, the above memorabilia has been donated to the Cricket Museum at Lords. Margaret Brown had an enjoyable time in London where she attended the exhibition “Evolution of Women’s Cricket”.



HAPPENINGS IN OUR VILLAGES IN 1922 – 100 YEARS AGO

Information taken from local newspapers, Editor

KELBROOK

11th March – Rev A E Chance, vicar of Kelbrook offered the living of St Peter's Keighley. The living was to the value of £350 a year and a house. Owing to the strong representation of his Church Council, Mr Chance declined the offer.

29th March – Fred Carter, of Sough, Kelbrook, a money-lender and general accountant with premises in Burnley and Barnoldswick was charged with using his Burnley premises on certain days for football betting purposes. He pleaded guilty and was fined £20 on the understanding he gave up the football betting business.

29th April – At the joint vestry and annual church meeting at St Mary's the vicar, Rev. Chance, appointed Mr W H Bishop church warden and F Forrest people's warden. Accounts showed a deficit of £2.18s and the Sunday School accounts a balance of £20 in hand. £125 had been raised during the winter for the school extension fund, a scheme for which plans had been passed and which was intended to provide accommodation for 200 more people.

15th Sept – PC Brown has been transferred from Shipley to Kelbrook in the Skipton Police Division. Brown was said to be a courteous and efficient officer was a Reservist when the Great War broke out in 1914 and was one of the first men in Shipley to join His Majesty's Forces.

4th Dec. – At Barnoldswick Mrs Greenwood Hartley cut the first sod of the new road from Barnoldswick to Kelbrook. The new road was to cost £100,000 and would take two years to complete. It would be 70 ft. wide and nearly two miles long. Work would involve the construction of bridges over the Leeds and Liverpool Canal and over the Midland railway line. A grant of 50% of the cost was made by the Ministry of Transport, 25% by the West Riding county council and 25% by the Urban Council

11th Dec.- Arthur Wilkinson, landlord of the Craven Heifer was summoned on four counts of providing intoxicating liquor during prohibited hours. He was fined £3 on each count.

SALTERFORTH

25th March – An appeal by a local committee for the Russian Famine Fund raised £117 in a house to house collection in Salterforth and Coates.

29th April – An inquest was held in Salterforth into the death of Ernest Balfour, Midland Railway passenger porter, whose dead body was recovered from the canal between Salterforth and Foulridge. On the canal bank was found a cap, wallet and a note which read "My dear sweetheart Dolly – My heart is broken and my life is not worth living, and I don't want to ruin yours as well. Forget me Dolly. I must do it. Break the news to mother gently; it will finish her".

5th May – A sequel to the above drowning – Thomas Webster a boatman from Latham was charged with stealing an overcoat, valued 30s, the property of the Midland Railway. He had found the cap, wallet and note on the canal bank and handed them to the police. The result was that the canal was dragged and the body of the railway employee discovered. He made no reference to the coat and was arrested in Blackburn. He admitted the offence and produced the coat from his cabin. He was remanded for a week before sentencing was given.

June – John S Pickles was the winner of Poultry prizes for his Ham-burgh fowls.

The death was reported of Edmund Heap, director of Salterforth Stone and Brick Co.

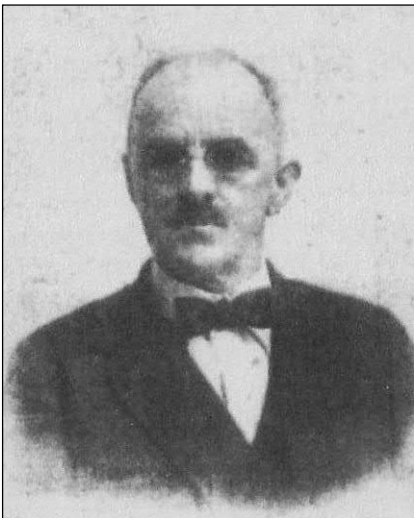
20th Sept – At Skipton Police Court Henry Duckworth, labourer, was summoned for an assault on William Watson in Salterforth quarry. The accused had jumped on Watson from about 4 ft. above him and rolled him among some stones and rubbish, inflicting several scratches and bruises. Had they rolled much further they would have fallen in the bottom of the quarry about 30 yards deep. Duckworth maintained that Watson "could not work, except with his tongue". He added that

he was going for a pick when Watson muttered something, so he had jumped on the top of him. Watson prevented him from getting away by holding his wrist with his teeth. There was no danger of them falling over the edge. A fine of 10s was imposed.

22nd Nov. –At Manchester Assizes Mary Lupton (45) weaver of Barnoldswick claimed damages for breach of promise of marriage from John Thomas Clark, also a weaver, of Mill Cottages Salterforth. Plaintiff said they had met 23 years ago after the death of his first wife and that he had proposed marriage. This year she had heard that the defendant had married a Miss Smith. On hearing this she wrote to the defendant asking for the return of £15 she alleged he had borrowed to pay a deposit on a house he proposed to buy for them to live in after their marriage. In this letter she wrote “Good luck to a devil like you. Remember your day will come”. Defendant denied he had promised to marry the plaintiff and had never walked out with her. He suggested Miss Lupton had proposed marriage to him but he had refused. Verdict was for the plaintiff for £30

THORNTON IN CRAVEN

6th Jan. – “The New Knight – (below Sir Amos Nelson)



The conferment of the Knighthood upon Sir Amos Nelson, of Nelson, is of special interest to the public of Craven by means of the fact he is well known in the district., having been in residence at Manor House, Thornton in Craven for some years. He has also become a large landowner in the locality, purchasing last year from Colonel Roundell, MP for the Skipton Division, the Gledstone estate, containing 9,000 acres and including practically the whole of the parish of Martons Both, with considerable

holdings in Barnoldswick, Coates, Bracewell and district. Mr Nelson wields a big influence in business circles in Lancashire. His interests are largely centred in the cotton industry, being one of the largest individual employers in Nelson, of which he has been three times Mayor.”

28th April – For Sale – Thornton House, Thornton in Craven, Skipton, containing 3 reception rooms, good kitchen, scullery, pantry, 6 bedrooms, 4 attic rooms, good cellars and wash-house; garage, 2-stall stable and harness room; well laid-out garden, greenhouse, bungalow, together with 5 cottages and about 4 acres of land. The house is fitted with electric light and is in good repair. Vacant possession at an early date.

Marriage of Mr J H Clay – The marriage took place at Thornton in Craven Parish Church between Mrs Ruth Hettie Hope, the Limes Nelson, elder daughter of Sir Amos and Lady Nelson, the Manor House Thornton in Craven and Mr James Harold Clay, second son of the late Mr & Mrs Charles Clay of Luddenden Foot. (*Ruth was the widow of Mr A J Hope, who at the time of their marriage 15 years ago was gas engineer at Nelson Co-Operation*)....The bridegroom is a keen motorist, being a member of the Brooklands Racing Club. He was a member of the firm Messrs James Clay & Co. Ltd. Woollen manufacturers, Luddenden Foot until the business was sold a few years ago. On giving up business he went to reside in the Lake District and more recently in the south of England...

7th July – Death of Mr G Proctor JP. The death occurred at his residence Fence End, Thornton in Craven yesterday of Mr George Proctor JP, head of the firm of Messrs. Proctor and Proctor, accountants, Burnley. Deceased, who was 60 years of age, promoted the first room and power mill in the Burnley district and was well known in cotton trade circles. He was either secretary or director of between 30 and 40 cotton mills. Mr proctor had many commercial interests in Nelson, where he was also a large landowner. He leaves a widow and three daughters.

15th July - 40 Motor Vehicles in Funeral Procession – The funeral of the late Mr George Proctor JP, which took place at Burnley cemetery

on Monday, was of a most impressive character. The obsequies attracted a large and influential gathering, representative of the business and social life of a very wide area, the cortege comprising no fewer than 40 motor vehicles, while the hearse was preceded by five cars containing floral tributes (*250 people were assembled*). It was a remarkable expression of the high esteem in which Mr Proctor was held not only in the immediate vicinity but throughout the country.

Services were conducted at Mr Proctor's residence, Fence End, Thornton in Craven, by the Rev A E Chance, Vicar of Kelbrook, who also officiated at the graveside. The body, which was enclosed in a shell, with an outer coffin of fumed oak, the engraved plaque bearing the inscription 'George Proctor, born Sept. 25 1860, died July 6th 1922' was conveyed to the burial ground by motor hearse, the principal mourners following in motor coaches. ..

16th Sept – The Executors of the late Robert Bond offered for sale Rock House with 4 sitting rooms, 6 bedrooms and attics, a good cellar, outbuildings, stables and a large garden.

CONFIDENCE TRICKSTER IN EARBY IN JUNE 1904 SPENT 45 YEARS IN GAOL

From Northern Daily Telegraph

At Skipton on Saturday James Embley (73), described as an engineer, of no fixed abode, was charged on two counts of obtaining money by false pretences.

It was stated that during his long life of 73 years the prisoner had been in gaol nearly 45 years.

He went to the house of a widow named Mary Pickles of Earby on the 13th May, and represented that he was a sea captain just returned from New Zealand, and that he had brought a valuable parcel from the prosecutrix's brother-in-law, who was out there. Without receiving any of the contents of the supposed parcel, Mrs Pickles advanced him £2 for a silk dress and £2 for a sealskin jacket, which, he said, would be sent on from Manchester. The confidence trick was played to such

an extent that she even advanced him the sum of £4 to purchase a watch, which he said he would take back to her brother in New Zealand.

The prosecutrix in the second case was a lady named Frances Mann, who keeps a confectioner's shop at Earby. This lady's tale was that on the 16th May the prisoner came to her shop and introduced himself as Captain Hamer. He asked her if she had a brother in New Zealand, and she acknowledged that she had. He thereupon said he had brought her a parcel of silk from her brother. He told her he would not have anything for the silk, but as he had paid the 30s duty on it, she might advance him that sum. The prosecutrix believed him and gave him the 30s, but as in the other case, no silk was forthcoming.

Prisoner was committed to prison for six months for the first offence, and three months for the second.

DR ALEXANDER FALCONER – AN EARBY DOCTOR

Stephanie Carter

Alexander Falconer was born on 13th October 1874 in Aberdeen. His parents were George Falconer and Mary née McKilly. He achieved his medical qualifications at Aberdeen University and was engaged as a doctor at Burnley Victoria Hospital prior to arriving in Earby in 1899, following the departure of Dr Hunter. In 1901 he married Elizabeth Dugan Gibson in Fleetwood. The couple moved into 34 Water Street, (Oldfield House) Earby, headquarters of the medical practice, but in about 1925 took possession of Harrington House, adjacent to the railway crossings at the bottom of School Lane.

The 1911 census for 34 Water Street reads:

Alexander Falconer 36 medical practitioner b Aberdeen

Elizabeth Dugan Falconer wife 34 b Bootle

Doreen Falconer daughter 6 b Earby

George Donald Falconer son 9 months b Earby

Grace Moorby 34 general servant b Skipton

Dr Falconer volunteered his services to the war effort in 1914. In August 1916 the Local Government Board informed the War Office to grant a commission in the Royal Army Medical Corps to Dr A Falconer. He served with the Royal Medical Corps in British East Africa. In his absence on war service Dr Alderton of Barnoldswick was appointed his deputy as Earby's Medical Officer of Health, .



Writing in 1935, John Hartley said "Dr Falconer soon won his way to the hearts of the Earby people, a place he has retained through all the varying years by his unfailing tact and courtesy, combined with fidelity to his honourable calling. He is so much at

home in Earby that he claims the privilege of addressing his innumerable friends by their Christian names, and the young people he has seen grow up regarding him with singular affection.

Dr Falconer has been associated with the ambulance movement all through its career in Earby and has been unsparing in his efforts to ensure its splendid success. (see over) All those who have passed through the Ambulance Brigade and Nursing Division, as well as those who are still attached to other organisations, hold him in the very highest esteem. During the time of the old Institute, Dr Falconer was one of its keenest supporters, and none felt it more keenly when it closed.

Dr Falconer's son Alec has just completed his training at Edinburgh University, and is a valued member of the staff at Burnley Victoria Hospital."

Indeed Dr Alexander Falconer was Medical Officer of Health to Earby Urban District Council for 35 years, delivering quarterly reports to the Council. The period of service ended in January 1948 as a result of

the decision of the County Council to establish a divisional system for Medical Officers of Health. He was House Surgeon and an examiner for the St John Ambulance and Nursing Division at Earby and Barnoldswick and helped the organisation in Skipton and conducted the first aid examination for firemen in Nelson.



Dr Falconer with Earby St John Ambulance

The following notice of Dr Falconer's death in the Aberdeen Evening Express 11th December 1953 under the heading -: Aberdeen Graduate Dies in Yorkshire - read:

Dr Alexander Falconer, a native of Aberdeen and graduate of Aberdeen University died yesterday at his daughter's home, Rectory House, Thornton-in-Craven, Yorkshire, aged 79.

For over 40 years Dr Falconer practised in Earby, Yorkshire, until he retired five years ago. He graduated M.B., C.M. in 1895. He is the brother of Mrs J Speid Benson of Aberdeen and is survived by a son and daughter.

The following obituary, under the heading - Death of Former Earby Doctor - was printed in the Barnoldswick and Earby Times 18th December 1953

"After being ill for the last 6 weeks and confined to his bed, Dr A Fal-

coner died on Thursday last at his daughter's home in Thornton in Craven. He was in his 80th year.

Dr Falconer was educated at Robert Gordon's College and later at Aberdeen University where he graduated MB, CM in 1895. Previous to taking up practice in Earby in 1898 he was on the staff of Burnley Victoria Hospital.

In 1901 he married Miss Elizabeth Dougan Gibson. From 1909 to 1948 he was the Medical Officer of Health at Earby and for 52 years acted as lecturer and examiner for the St John Ambulance Brigade.

During the First World War Dr Falconer served with the Medical Corps in British East Africa. 7 years ago he retired and went to live in Thornton in Craven. Pre-deceased by his wife 5 years ago he leaves a son and daughter, both married. His son is also a medical practitioner.

Dr Falconer was of a sunny, cheerful disposition with a ready smile which brightened up many of his patients and made them feel less depressed. He took a keen interest in football and was always ready to have a few words with friends and acquaintances when and wherever he met them.

The remains were cremated at Skipton on Monday and on Wednesday were interred in Thornton churchyard."

At probate Dr Falconer's effects were £6950.10.8 His wife Elizabeth had pre-deceased him dying on 17th October 1948.

TWO EARBY BRASS BANDSMEN BLEW IN AND OUT OF TOWN IN THE 1950s

25th November 1955 Barnoldswick and Earby Times

The Band Played at No. 38

Earby Brass Band played hymns outside No 38 Shuttleworth Street, Earby on Sunday morning.

It was the Band's musical tribute to one of their best known and most popular members 66-year-old Robert Edward Rimmer. Mr Rimmer, a bandsman since he was 13 years of age, died on Friday. Born in Rishton, Lancashire, he came to Earby in 1911 and immediately joined the Earby Band. Among other instruments he played the tenor horn and the cornet and he had taught these instruments to many people in Earby including quite a few members of the present Earby Band.

Once he had himself played at the Crystal Palace shortly before it burnt down.

Members of the Earby Band were at the funeral and acted as bearers.

Mr Rimmer, a weaver by occupation who retired from Johnsons Fabrics 18 months ago was, in addition to his Band Club connections, also a member of the Conservative Club and the Cricket Club. In the First World War he had served with the Kings Own Yorkshire Light Infantry.

11th May 1956 Nelson Leader

Kenneth (Aged 8) Blew into Town

Proudest possession in eight-year-old Kenneth Bland's wardrobe is a peaked cap, denoting his membership of Earby Prize Brass Band. For a year he has been blowing his tenor horn at band practices; but Saturday was his big day when he brought out his new peaked cap and walked with the band in the Earby May Day Festival.

Young Kenneth need not have worried too much about getting tired in the procession from Kelbrook to Earby and round the town. Marching alongside him was his father, cornet-player Charles Bland, who has been a member of the band for 35 years, and would certainly have given him a lift on the way.

The Bland family have another member of the family in the band. Fifteen-year-old Duncan also plays the tenor horn, but on Saturday he was unable to get time off work from British Railways to march with the procession.

But back to young Kenneth, for Saturday was his big day. It was his first public performance and he did well. At the end of the day he went to bed without any protests. "It tired me out" he told our reporter. Soon a new jacket and trousers will join his peaked cap to make him a fully-fledged band member.

N.B. The brass band is still going and now practices in the All Saints Church Hall. They keep busy with regular engagements and concerts. They have rehearsals on Thursday evenings 7.30 – 9.30pm.

THE WEAVING SHED THAT WASN'T – ROSTLE TOP SHED EARBY

by Geoff Shackleton

Rostle Top Weaving Shed was to have been built on a site on the opposite side of Colne Road to Earby Railway Station but a little towards Kelbrook. Due to the First World War and problems in raising the necessary capital the shed was never built.

Newspaper articles and the architect's drawings (dated 1914), the latter being held by Lancashire Archives, are all that appear to be left to tell the story.



Architect's Drawing of Shed

THE ROSTLE TOP SHED

Co. LTD.

NEW WEAVING SHED AT EARBY.

Shed Banner

Burnley Express 21st April 1915, plans have been approved for a new weaving shed for 1,200 looms for the Rostle Top Shed Company. The plans drawn up by Mr. W. H. Atkinson of Colne were first submitted last year but were rejected on a technicality being not in compliance with byelaws and were also delayed by the War.

Burnley News 14th August 1915, the proposed new weaving shed for the Rostle Top Shed Company is set to proceed conditionally upon the subscribed share capital being increased to £18,000 and the whole of the looms space being allocated. Tenders for the shed have been invited and the nominal capital of the company is £40,000. The shed is intended to hold 2,000 looms.

Burnley Express 18th August 1915, the Directors of the Rostle Top Shed Company invite applications for room and power in their new shed for about 1,500 looms. The shed is expected to be ready in eighteen months' time. Particulars from J. H. Brown, Albany Chambers, Earby.

The engine had been ordered and partially completed when it had to be cancelled

The proposed engine for the mill is described in the Pollit and Wigzell order book:

1915, Pollit & Wigzell of Sowerby Bridge O/N RT 1414, for the Rostle Top Shed Company, Earby, a 1,000 ihp horizontal cross compound condensing steam engine, cylinders 22 + 43 x 60 ins., both cylinders Corliss valves, vertical Edwards air pump 32 x 18 ins., piston rods 5 ins. dia., flywheel 20 ft. dia. with 20 ton rim and total weight 30 tons.

Note about the author

Geoff Shackleton spent his working life in Power Plant Engineering. In retirement he turned his attention to completing his study of textile mills and their steam engines. In 2006 his book "The Textile Mills of Pendle and their Steam Engines" was published.

OPENING OF MORRIS'S CAFÉ

OLD GRAMMAR SCHOOL

April 8th saw the opening of the newly named "Morris's Café" in the Old Grammar School. The event was well attended, with Andrew Stephenson MP cutting the ribbon. (see below) The trustees wanted to have a memorial for Morris (Horsfield), who passed away last year. He was a long-standing and loved trustee and the group quickly settled on naming the café as it was always Morris's wish that the trustees should run a café, and he loved a brew and a cake!



The café will be open most Friday afternoons, alongside the shop selling donated items. Opening hours will be extended if more volunteers come forward. If anyone would like to help please get in touch via the

website www.robertwindlefoundation.org or via email on robertwindlefoundation@outlook.com or pop in on a Friday afternoon and have a chat with the trustees with a brew and a cake.



Inside Morris's Café Old Grammar School

DOES ANYONE KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THIS KELBROOK BUILDING?

The notice at the top of the building reads CONSERVATIVE CLUB



LEGACY OF MR WILLIAM CROWTHER

Keighley News 22 March 1879:

“The Late Mr William Crowther—At six o'clock last Sunday morning Mr Wm. Crowther of Earby died at the advanced age of 82 years. Mr Crowther was for many years a shopkeeper in Earby, and was much respected. Some years since he retired from business to enjoy the evening of life, and “crown a youth of labour with an age of ease”. The deceased was a widower, his wife having died a few years since, leaving no family. It is rumoured that part of the property left by the deceased will be devoted to the founding of some alms houses in Earby, and it is hoped that the rumour, is correct, as they would be a pleasing memorial of Mr Crowther’s kindness to the people of his native village”.

Craven Herald 6 September 1879

“Opening of Mr Crowther’s Alms Houses—During the present week the Alms Houses provided and endowed by the late Mr William Crowther have become occupied. The following are the names and ages of those who are able to reap the benefit of Mr Crowther’s charity—No 1, Elizabeth Crowther aged 67 years; No 2 Mary Whitaker aged 73 years; No 3 Elizabeth Hartley aged 70 years. They are all natives of the village, and it is hoped that their declining years will be cheered by the good fortune of which they are the subjects. It will be remembered by the readers of this paper that the management of these alms houses is vested in the Rector of Thornton and the Church Wardens for the time being.”

The houses, now sadly demolished, were built on the site of and using materials from the first Wesleyan Chapel in Stoney Bank Road. (see photograph over).



Alms Houses in Stoney Bank Road Earby

Changes to Meeting Nights

You may have noticed on your current membership card that there is no December meeting this year as attendance is usually low being so near Christmas.

Besides this the committee has decided to alter the meeting months for 2023. Instead of having a break during the summer months we will have the break from meetings in the winter. So in effect there will be no meetings in the darkest winter months of December, January and February but we will meet through the summer with meetings in June July and August instead.

The AGM will then be in April.

THE SOCIETY

Meets at the Community Centre, New Road, EARBY on the 3rd Tuesday of the month at 7.30 p.m.

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PROGRAMME FOR NEXT QUARTER

June, July, August—no meeting

20th September —The Life of Captain Cook before his epic voyages,
Chris Helme

18th October – Dating and Understanding Your Old Photographs,
Stephen Gill

15th November—Jack's War , Ian Lockwood

December NO MEETING

DATA PROTECTION ACT

Members details are held on computer for mailing and compilation of a membership list. The details will not be used for any other purpose without the express permission of the member. If you do not wish your details to be held on computer please inform the Treasurer immediately.

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