

# Earby Chronicles

Edition 37

SUMMER 2005



## 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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**£1.50**

Members of  
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## TENTH ANNIVERSARY YEAR

### EXCITING DEVELOPMENTS ON THE SOCIETY WEB SITE

If you haven't seen the society web site yet you will be in for a treat. There have been major updates since the last edition of the Chronicles, which are worth viewing.

During the 1920's and 1930's numerous articles were published in the Craven Herald and Pioneer about the History of the Earby area. As part of the updating of the Earby and District Local History Society's web site a section has been devoted to presenting as many of these articles as possible on the Internet. The articles have been transcribed by Society members Bob Abel and John Turner with the intention of making them available to a wider audience.

Some were historical studies and some were recollections of Earby in a former era. The latter were written mainly by John Hartley who was born and bred in Earby, living all his life there until his death in 1943.

John Hartley was born 1875 in one of the old weavers cottages in Green End Road, his father was George Presland Hartley and his mother Elizabeth (nee Green). Neither parents' families were from Earby. John's father, George Hartley, was born in Thornton and his grandmother was from Chester. His mother Elizabeth's family came from Gargrave. Both families had come to live in Earby when Victoria Mill opened and many of them were employed there either as spinners, beamers or weavers.

George was a mule spinner at the Victoria Mill but left this job in the mid 1880s and was for six years manager of the Earby Co-operative Society. In 1895 he was a founder member of the Earby Manufacturing Co. Ltd being one of the first directors, eventually becoming chairman for several years.

### Recent talks & features

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On leaving school, John followed his father into the company, working his way through every department until just before the first World War he became managing director. At one time he was what was known as the "Manchester Man" for the company and could be seen setting off from Earby Railway Station to attend the Cotton Exchange in Manchester.

John Hartley was a stalwart of the Methodist cause in the area and held many positions of responsibility in the local church and the Barnoldswick Circuit.

He was also involved with local education being on the School Board and the Education sub committee and also a governor at Ermysted's Grammar School in Skipton

John obviously enjoyed recalling his younger days in Earby, remembering the events and the personalities. This led to him writing numerous articles for the Craven Herald and Pioneer. There were three main series of articles, "Earby - Our Village", "Earby Through 60 Years" and "Earby of Long Ago" totalling many individual articles. These amongst others are being put on the History Society's web site.

The Craven Herald described his new series of articles as follows, *"Earby Through 60 years is the title of a series of articles which, beginning this week, will appear in the Craven Herald and Pioneer from the pen of Mr John Hartley, who may be aptly described as Earby's unofficial historian.*

*Mr Hartley has an unexampled knowledge of old Earby families and institutions and his engaging literary style, tinged with the gift of telling an anecdote admirably, invests his writings with a special value"*

Thanks are due to Mrs Elva Wilkinson for the loan of a scrap book of John Hartley's articles collected by John Hartley, Elva's Uncle.

Another contributor to these Craven Herald articles was Mr A.H.Clegg who many locals will remember as a former Head Master at New Road School. Archie Clegg had access to all the Thornton Parish Church records when they were kept at the church. These records are now housed at the North Yorkshire County Record Office in Northallerton although the Society now has a transcript of the birth, marriage and death registers.

It will be an ongoing job to transcribe all the articles but when complete they will be of invaluable use to local and family historians alike.

In addition, the photograph section has been updated and greatly extended including a search facility. This is also part of an ongoing project to copy electronically as much of the Society's picture collection as possible.

Special thanks go to Jay Bourike our web site manager and her husband Steve for all the

### **A VISITOR FROM ROCHESTER, NEW YORK**

In February this year the Society was contacted via the web site by Stephen Aldersley from Rochester, New York. Stephen is researching as many branches of the Aldersley family as he can and asked if he could have access to the Society archives to try and fill in a few gaps. In March he was visiting his sister in Stoke-on-Trent and made a detour to Earby to look at the Thornton parish register transcripts and other items in the archives.

The article following, written by Stephen gives an over view of his researches.



Stephen Aldersley searching the Thornton Register Transcripts during his visit to Earby

### **THE ALDERSLEYS**

On August 14th 1739, at St. Andrew's in Kildwick, Johannes Aldersley of Cowling married Margaret Smith of the same village. Margaret proceeded to have 12 children, 10 of whom were boys. In the 260 odd years since that day, Margaret and John's brood of Aldersley's has produced, on the male side alone, by a conservative estimation, upwards of 700 new Aldersleys. As one such, I am following in my father's footsteps in being interested in how this all came to be and what they have been up to. First, a disclaimer : as anyone with a genealogical interest will know, tracing individuals on the female line, across generations, is extraordinarily difficult. Where I have encountered the children of married Aldersley daughters, I have incorporated them into my overall Aldersley file, but it is primarily a record of the direct male line. To date I have identified what I estimate to be about 75% of the total number. Every new contact adds to this number and I am hoping that Bob Abel's invitation to write this article will lead to the addition of even more.

There were of course Aldersleys before Johannes. I have been able to trace his line back another 200 years to about 1560 and for that whole period the family and its offshoots appears to have remained in or close to Cowling. There were other branches, notably one in Kent, and I have not so far succeeded in finding the original connections between these branches, though I assume there are such. My focus has been and remains on John and Margaret's boys. During their marriage John moved to Lothersdale and seven of the boys were born there. Of the ten, one died in infancy and one removed to Kent (where he ran a pub frequented by Charles Dickens). The others stayed close to home but the process of gradual dispersal had begun. One moved to Thornton, another to Gargrave. As jobs diversified and movement became easier, subsequent generations moved east to the Bradford area, west to Colne and Burnley or south towards Salford. My own immediate line went north to Grassington. One or two made much greater leaps, to the United States and Canada, Australia or New Zealand. However, most stayed in Craven or north east

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Lancashire, at least until the mid-twentieth century. It was then that diversification rapidly picked up speed and Aldersleys can now be found in pretty much every corner of the country. The greatest concentration, however, even today, remains in Skipton and environs.

Most nineteenth century Aldersleys worked in mills, though some farmed. None appear to have been very wealthy, though a few did a little better than most and probably saw themselves as belonging to a somewhat higher social class. Not many rose to such heights as Peter Aldersley, who was the proprietor of lime kilns in Raygill. One Robert Rycroft Aldersley worked as an overseer at Dewhirsts in Skipton before taking his family to St. Petersburg at the turn of the century to run a mill there for five years. Another, Edward, owned 262 looms as a tenant of Butts Mill in Barnoldswick in the early 1900's, where apparently he and his children made something of a name for themselves. Over the years, there have been a good number of Aldersleys living in Earby itself. Some that I know of, with their birth years in brackets, include Mary (1866), Mary Elizabeth (1878), Bateman (1880), William Holmes (1883), Jeremiah (1890), John Arthur (1898), Ivy (1908), Frances (1919), Eric (1921) and Eunice (1929). I am sure there have been more recent members of the family than these.

At its most basic, of course, an interest in family roots centres on finding the significant dates of one's ancestors and perhaps in hunting down some of those fascinating family secrets that those involved "never wanted to talk about". (One thing you come to understand pretty quickly most every family has its fair share of these secrets - that perhaps wouldn't have to be so secret if it were understood that they are so commonplace.) My own interest after ascertaining when and where most Aldersleys were born, married and died, is to go beyond the basic facts that one can find in parish registers, censuses and registration certificates and try to piece together more of their "stories", the everyday events in their lives, and why they made the decisions they did. A fanciful goal, perhaps, but more challenging than simply hunting down dates.

So, if anyone has any "Aldersley stories" they would like to share with me, including more about Edward of Butts Mill, I would be delighted. As I noted above, there is a good dozen Aldersleys still in the Earby-Barnoldswick-Skipton area and there are a lot more within living memory. One in particular I am curious about - I read in the Autumn 2001 edition of the Earby Chronicles of one J.E.Aldersley, UDC surveyor, who was described as designing Earby's war memorial. Does anyone know about him?

For the record, my grandfather was a Bradford Aldersley who ended up in Stoke-on-Trent after a few years in Salford. My dad lived his whole life in the Potteries, from where I unwittingly joined the mid-20th century dispersion to end up on the southern shore of Lake Ontario in Rochester, New York.

**Stephen Aldersley, 169 Wisner Road, Rochester, New York 14622, USA**  
**E-mail sfance@rit.edu**

### POSTSCRIPT

Stephen Aldersley contacted Arthur Aldersley in his search for information on the Aldersley family and Arthur asked his daughter Margaret Berry to contact the society.

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Arthur was born in Earby in 1916 on Pleasant View later living in Stoney Bank before moving to Barnoldswick on his marriage to Gladys Beaumont. Edward, his brother, still lives in Earby.

Two generations further back Margaret's great grandfather, George, farmed at Moor Hall and later at Coolham. Margaret would be pleased to hear from any one who has any old plans or photos of these farms.(contact the editor)

### EARBY CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY

The Co-operative is one of the world's most successful businesses. It began in 1844 with the Rochdale Pioneers as a social movement with shopkeeping and grew into a large scale international business completely owned and controlled by its customers.

The working classes had shops of their own, and subscribers originally paid 3d a week to raise capital to open a shop; they had a shareholding and interest was paid on the shares. Every store was run by its own Society with a Committee approving all resolutions and transactions. Dividend was paid twice yearly on purchases.

An entry on Earby in the 1886 edition of the Craven & District Household Almanack reads "It is however noted by all who visit it in wet weather for its very dirty roads, especially from the station to the village. There is an Industrial Co-operative Society, President Wm Turner, Secretary Wm Hartley and Treasurer John Wilkinson". Earby was one of the 1000 Co-operative Societies established by this date.

Records of the Committee meetings of Earby Co-operative Society 1886-88\* give us a fascinating insight into the day to day needs of our forebears 120 years ago. Together with



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the above named officials, the Committee also comprised George Hartley, Edward Ellis, Wm Slater, Thos Crowther, Thos Smith and Sagar Walker. At their weekly meetings, at 7-00pm on Friday evenings, resolutions approved the purchase of everyday items required for stock and the efficient running of the store. "It was agreed that we get a new minute book and put our committee meetings into a more business like form".

From the following extracts between 1886 and 1888 can be deduced much of the day to day running of the Society, the wages received and various happenings in the town.

"That the balance sheet as presented to the committee by the secretary be adopted and accepted as very satisfactory indeed, reflecting great praise on the managers of the shop. Passed unanimously"

"That we pay the Dividend on Saturday 26 June 1886 from 6 to 8 o'clock in the evening".

"That the Divi be paid 23 December Friday".

"That Sagar Watson be paid £20 share money and William Briden £10"

"That Chas Cowgill be admitted as member without paying the usual entrance fee again"

"That we accept Richard Wensley as a member of this society"

"That Wm Hartley assist our new shopman for 1 week, and that our new shopman be reminded that the rule of Society requires the sum of £20 as a guarantee to the Society".

"That Wm Hartley and John Wilkinson clean the shop through and charge per hour for their labour".

"That we pay Wm Hartley and Ellen Brown 15/- for shop cleaning".

"That we have the shop cleaned at once and that Wm Hartley have the absolute oversight".

"The shop to be shut up 3 nights at 8 o'clock, 2 at 9 and 1 at 10 o'clock" (1st Aug 1887)

"That the shop be closed for Feast holidays on Monday and Tuesday "(July 1887)

"That we introduce the Penny check into our establishment".

"Stock to be taken Friday night and pay Wm Hartley and Jn Wilkinson a days wage to take the shop on Friday".

"That the committee commence stocktaking on Tuesday night Dec 6 '87 to complete on Saturday Dec 10 without fail"

"That we advance our shopman's wages 2/- a week at commencement of 1887 now 24/- ."

" That we make a change in the management of the shop, by providing as assistant in the person of William Hartley and that he be paid 6/- per week for his assistance. The same to

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be deducted from our present storekeeper's wage which will henceforth be a pound a week. The assistant to be required to serve 3 nights a week, Tues, Weds and Saturday".

"That we advertise in 2 papers, Burnley Mid Weekly Gazeteer and Craven Pioneer for storekeeper."

"That we hereby in committee assembled agree to employ George Pressland Hartley as storekeeper at 26/- a week." (Nov 1888)

"That the storekeeper be instructed to stop further arrears in the cases of Mrs Rushton and Mr Croft stating to them that the arrears must be paid as far as it will from Dec dividend and in the case of James Smith that no goods be supplied without money having no share in the Society".

"That we have window doors sign renovated, troughing and ough else outside that requires painting – see S Hartley Crowther".

"That the committee room be enlarged as requested by the committee and that Wm Hartley be entrusted with the work and done at once" (August 1888)

"That we demand from John Wilkinson carrier one half of the expenses of 1 bottle of sweet oil which he broke by accident".

In the next edition of the Chronicles read about the household purchases made by the people of Earby 120 years ago.

\* Held at Barnoldswick Reference Library

Stephanie Carter

### **LIFE AND TIMES OF WOMEN PIRATES**

At our March meeting Brian Halliwell regaled us with tales of swashbuckling pirates but not as most might expect about the famous male pirates but their female counterparts.

He began with Alvilda a Scandinavian princess turned pirate who having spurned the marriage to Prince Alf of Denmark eventually married him after an epic battle between them. But is this myth or history??

The next woman pirate was Grace O'Mally who was born in the West of Ireland in 1530. Her family lived from the sea and Grace was soon to become a skilled sailor and following many twists and turns she established her pirate empire on Clare Island just off the coast of her ancestral home.

Mary Reade was born in London and appears to have been brought up as a boy which allowed her (him) to inherit her father's estate but when the money ran out she got employment. After adventures in both the army and the navy with a settled spell as an Inn Keeper she again fell on hard times and eventually fell in with the crew of the notorious pirate, Calico Jack Rakham.

Ann Bonney (nee Cormac) was born in County Cork, Ireland, the illegitimate daughter of a prominent lawyer and his wife's maid. The ensuing scandal forced father and daughter to flee to

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America. John Bonney married her to get his hands on her father's estates but she was disowned and the couple went to the Bahamas. There her husband turned informer on the pirates and they split up and eventually she also fell in with Calico Jack Rakham.

Eventually Calico Jack, Mary and Ann were captured tried and sentenced to hang but as both women were pregnant at the time there was a stay of execution. Mary Read died before her child was born and Ann Bonney disappeared from the records.

Several other female pirates were told about including Charlotte de Berry, Rachel Wall and bloodthirsty tales about Ching Shih from the China Seas.

A very entertaining talk from Brian.

Ed - The story of pirates will have a degree of romanticisation associated with them as stories are told and retold through the ages but most seem to be based a real people and events.

### ADDITIONS TO THE ARCHIVES

The Society has purchased a number of copies of documents relating to Victoria Mill and associated land and properties dating from 1887 to 1891 when the Mill company went bankrupt. The original documents are kept at West Yorkshire Archives, Calderdale Office, which is housed in the Central Library, Halifax. The documents which are a selection from the Halifax archive are summarised as follows :

Sale Schedule with Plans for the sale of houses and building and farming land in Earby - Dated 1887

Sale Schedule and Plan for Moor Hall Farm - Dated 1889.

Papers relating to a case in the High Court, Chancery Division, between Rev Joel Mallinson (brother of Sir Dyson Mallinson, the bankrupted owner of Victoria Mill) and the executors of Thomas Riley (Dyson Mallinson had a mortgage on the mill with Thomas Riley) - Dated 1891.

Sale Schedule with inventories and plans for the sale of Victoria Mill and associated land and cottages - dated 1890

Proposal for the Barnoldswick Gas and Light Company to take over and extend the Victoria Mill gas making plant - Dated 1889

### QUESTIONNAIRE

Results of the questionnaire sent out with the Spring 2005 Chronicles will be published in the next edition of the Chronicles once the findings have been discussed in committee.

In the mean time thanks to those who returned the questionnaires.



Proposal for the take over of Victoria Mill as a going concern - Dated 1890

**PARCEVALL HALL**

Our guest speaker at the April meeting was Keith Hillery a member of Skipton History Society who gave a marvellous talk about Parcevall Hall and its history.

The story goes back several centuries and it has been debated whether Parcevall Farm, as it was then called, belonged to the monks of Bolton or Fountains Abbey. The latter has been suggested as the most likely as the nearest roadway links with Fountains Abbey.

The farm buildings were extended several times but by the early twentieth century the building was beginning to decay.

In 1927 it was purchased by Sir William Milner, 8th Baronet of Nun Appleton near York. He was a well known architect with a practice in London. He bought the farm not particularly to restore any historic architecture but to make himself a home. Keith suggested that it might have been a case of "position, position, position" which made him buy the dilapidated farm. He was a keen gardener and the house had a south facing aspect with a combination of acid and alkaline soils, ideal for a plant enthusiast who would be able to use the site to its full advantage.

It took four to five years to renovate the building and create the terraced gardens. Sir William used local materials for the work, using local stone and timber recovered from buildings in the area which were being demolished. He also used local labour which at a time of high rural unemployment was a boon to the area.

He also had the house furnished with country made items, many obtained through Laycock's of Skipton.

Sir William was a gentle, religious man and 6ft 7 ins tall. He had to have the floors lowered by two feet to accommodate his height.

He was a keen gardener and a founder member of Northern Horticultural Society based at Harlow Carr Gardens Harrogate of which he was the second director.

When he died he left the property in trust to the Guardians of Wolsingham Shrine with which he was involved and the property eventually passed to the Diocese of Bradford. It is now used as a retreat and also for secular residential courses.

Keith's slides showed the building before and during renovation and as it is today with its magnificent gardens.

The Hall and grounds are open to the public and as Keith said very well worth a visit.

Thanks to Keith for a superb talk with excellent slides.

### **CAN YOU HELP?**

I have in my possession a pendant given to me by my late aunt. It is small in size measuring  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch by  $\frac{3}{8}$  inch and stamped "sterling silver" on the back. The pendant is attached to a silver chain by a loop at the top.



The interesting part is the front which is enamelled in white, blue and green. The centre piece is the Earby Grammar School with the white rose of Yorkshire above and the word Earby below. Does anyone know when and why it was made? Has anyone else one in their possession?

Squire Firth.

### **HELP WANTED**

Do you have computer skills, particularly using data bases? We need your help!

The Society has an ever growing archive of material relating to our area. In order to let members know what information we have we need to catalogue the contents of this archive.

We would like some one to work with our archivist to set up a searchable data base index of all the items. This will eventually be published on the web site.

If you can help please contact Bob Abel (01282 843850).

### **ADDITIONS TO THE PHOTOGRAPH COLLECTION**

Through Squire Firth, Mrs Betty Brayshay loaned the society a photograph album which belonged to her late Aunt, Eliza Coulthard. This is a fascinating album with most of the photographs being pre World War II and obviously many of them are family pictures.

However there were several of a more general interest including Earby Wesley Guild outings and rambles, the casts of several shows put on by local church groups, photos of walking days and processions and a superb photo of Earby Brass Band outside the Band Club all of which Betty allowed us to copy.

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We have now started making a digital copy as well as a negative and print of loaned material, bringing the society more into the 21st century.

### EARBY STATION

(Recorded in 1984 by the late William Shuttleworth of North Holme Farm;  
transcribed by his daughter Stephanie Carter)

How swiftly nature obliterates the works of man. Only 14 years have passed since the last train drew into Earby station. Now only remnants of a track remain, fast vanishing as the grass and the weeds spread their net, and the walls crumble into ruin. This is all pointless and sad, as this track betwixt Skipton and Colne was an integral part of West Craven and beyond. As a man walks the old track he is sometimes tempted to reminisce on the busy pulse of life and commerce that flowed through Earby station when the railway was in its heyday.

The Skipton to Colne line was opened in 1848; the branch line to Barnoldswick somewhat later as my grandfather assisted in its construction. Barnoldswick was the end of the line and only one train was allowed past the junction as a safety measure. When Puffing Billy, as the engine was affectionately called, entered the Barnoldswick section the driver had to collect a staff from the signalman and deliver it on his return, thereby ensuring that only one train entered the section at once. Many humorous tales are remembered about the old tank engine which is said to have once reached the junction before they discovered that the carriages had been left behind in Earby.

In the years between the Wars, the goods yard and warehouse, latterly Preston's, were a hive of activity. All the coal for the mills had to come this way and offices of the various merchants lined the yard opposite the weighbridge. Shunting was a daily operation and long lines of wagons were detached by means of a hooked pole and sent rolling down to the required sidings. The finished cotton from the mills was brought up by old Joe Smith on his horse drawn lorry. His successor, Amos Holden, carted coal for Birley's and he and his horse Prince were the last on the road. Farmers called at the warehouse in the goods yard to collect their lime and feeding stuffs and all the essential needs of the farm. Indeed the railway boasted a crane to deal with the heavy goods.

In the balmy days when Victoria was queen, the stationmaster was a man named George Andrews who lived at Crowbeckle Farm. He maintained a horse drawn transport business as a sideline. Manchester was often complaining that despite large issues of straw that the cloth was wet and dirty on receipt. Mr Andrews was of course using plenty of straw to bed his horses. He used to wire back to Manchester " Please note cloth wet and dirty when received - plenty of straw used". He was apparently a very plausible man and always rubbed his hands when explaining any complaint away. Those were the days when sacks of mussels came for the local shops. Complaints were frequent that they arrived damaged. However a stove or two were available for roasting in the station office.

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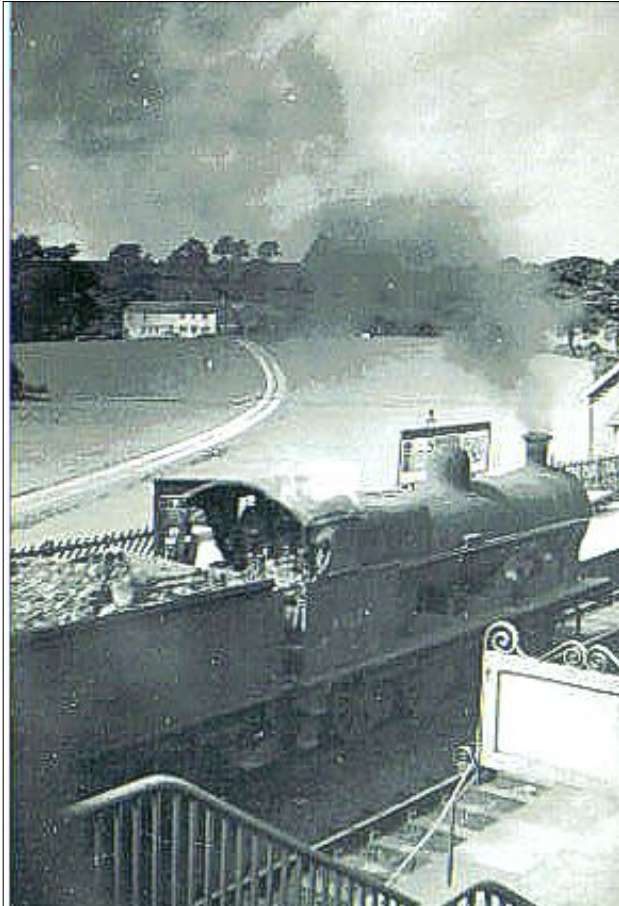
Early in the 20th century Mr Elgy became stationmaster, to be followed by Mr Graham, Mr Henthorn, Mr Grisedale and finally Mr Lemon. They all occupied an independent office. The level crossing gates were operated from the signal box by turning a huge wheel. Pedestrians crossed the line through two small gates which were locked from the box when a train was approaching. This was much to the annoyance of those who had to wait and sometimes mount the steps of the bridge which spanned the line on a wet and windy day. At times passions flared especially if anyone got trapped as the gates were slammed fast.

A little way up the line was the cattle dock where farmers loaded sheep and cattle to be transported to Skipton or Hellifield auction marts. Lambs and pigs were loaded on to the Salford goods which left at 9.15. I well recall great cries of excitement when several escaped down the line. Young calves were sent in the guard's van of the passenger train - they looked very pathetic encased in a sack with a label tied round their necks.

Friday night was pigeon night. Earby's homing fanciers gathered in the Station Hotel yard to witness their birds being ringed and placed them in baskets to catch the next train for Salford, Macclesfield, Gloucester or even Bournemouth. In the days before the war all the milk went by rail and farmers with their milk floats raced

from far and near to catch the early morning train. Outside the station were thick wooden railings where the horses were tethered before being loaded with the empty churns.

At the July holiday the platforms were crowded with people. Excursion trains ran to Blackpool, Morecambe, North Wales and the East Coast. The platform was illuminated by gas lamps. The waiting rooms were warm and cosy with a fire in cold weather. These duties were performed by the porter in charge. The last of these worthies was Vincent Cook who was much beloved by the children who flocked on to the 8am train to attend Skipton Grammar School. The 8.33 for Colne was the cotton manufacturer's train on which they travelled to Manchester to seek orders on the Cotton Exchange.



A Midland 0-6-0 engine drifts through Earby Station heading for Skipton North Holme Farm the home of William Shuttleworth can be seen in the background

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Actually Earby had two level crossings. The other one was down the line near the Parish Church. This was manually operated by railwaymen who had been crippled on war service. This crossing was the scene of a tragic fatality when Mr Powers the local postman was struck by the morning train to Skipton and killed instantly. Although no serious accident has ever occurred on the line, Earby station crossing has seen two fatalities, both women struck by the 4pm train for Colne. The worst tragedy of all was in the summer of 1948 when a young couple were killed crossing the line at Thornton on their motorbike.

During the winter of 1947 when the roads were blocked by snowdrifts, keeping the line open was an unforgettable struggle. One night, March 13th, a train was trapped and snowed over at Thornton station. It was fast for many days and nearly £2000 of damage was done to the engine. The passengers were carried over the fields to the Punch Bowl Hotel. On another night of storms the 10.28 from Skipton was marooned at Earby. Some passengers slept in the police station and others in the Station Hotel.

Many local characters worked and frequented the now vanished station - Ben Smith, Arthur Grinnel, signalmen Mason, Hodgson, Sankey and Spragg. One renowned character was Billy Crowther known as Silly Billy, who transported the newspapers to the shops in his little cart, and maintained discipline with a heavy hand on boys who strayed on the line. He was of course mentally handicapped and was taken advantage of by some who should have known better. He was often asked to give the train a push and they fastened him at times in the fish van despite his cries of terror.

Earby station has had its moments of glory when the Queen, latterly the Queen Mother, passed through when visiting Colne. Then one day the mighty Flying Scotsman steamed through. Another memorable epic was when a guards van ran away down the line. It crashed through the level crossing gates minutes before a bus crossed. Fortunately no train was in the section and travelling at terrific speed it was turned into a siding at Skipton to wreck itself.

Travelling by train was stimulating and held many compensations. One made friends with regular passengers; also the choice of compartment was your own, and many pleasant friendships were made between Skipton and Colne over the 120 years of travel. Now only the remnants of the track and a few bridges remain. The walls crumble into ruinous decay, whilst the track is a haunt of rabbits and many creatures of the wild. In summer the old line

### DONATIONS

Member Nick Livsey has donated a book "Enclosure Records for Historians" by Steven Hollowed and member Irene Stacey has donated an historic photograph of the workforce of the Rover Company at Grove Mill. Copies of the photo were presented to the workforce after the World War II had ended.

Thanks to Nick and Irene for their generosity.

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is gay with flowers; willowherb and meadowsweet adorn and cast their fragrance whilst the wild rose gently spreads its arms to hide the scars. If nature has her way the old track will revert to hedge and field, or perchance a motorway may come this way.

And so I end in a mood of speculation. There remain at North Holme farm two small crossing gates to keep ever green the memory of the Skipton to Colne line.

### **JAMES ROBERT GRANVILLE EXLEY**

Member Celia Austin is interested in finding more about JRG Exley. He was a well known artist in his day specialising in etchings.

Although he was born in Horton, Bradford (in 1878), son of James Exley, he has local connections. He is related to the Kelbrook Exleys and JRG married Elizabeth Shuttleworth of Earby at Thornton-in-Craven Church in 1911.

Educated at Bradford Grammar School he spent some years on the staff at Skipton Science and Art School before taking a two year course at the Royal College of Art in London.

He exhibited work at many galleries including the Royal Academy in London.

Following a successful career he retired to Grassington and died in Buckinghamshire in 1967.

Celia has been collecting his work for some thirty years and is currently compiling a document on his life and works.

If any one has any family details or has any of his etchings she would be glad to hear from you, her address is

Mrs Celia Austin, 15 Wildmoor Lane, Catshill, Bromsgrove, B61 0NT.

### **JOHN WILKINSON EARBY'S "DICK WHITTINGTON"**

Member Louise Gawne has been researching her Wilkinson ancestors and traced them back to the Earby and Thornton-in-Craven area. It is well known that there are and have been many Wilkinson families in the area and the further back one delves the more difficult it becomes to sort them out. However Louise can confidently go back to the mid 18th century.



John Wilkinson  
Mayor of Nelson 1891



## Earby Chronicles

One of her ancestors John was born in 1845 the son of Thomas and Ann Wilkinson. John moved from Earby as a boy to attend school in Skipton subsequently working at Bell Vue Mills for Dewhirsts. However he was an ambitious lad and wanted something better and went in search of work in Burnley where his career took off and by 1881 he describes himself as "cotton manufacturer employing 150 persons" in Nelson.

Nelson was an expanding town and a Board of Incorporation, with John Wilkinson as Chairman, was set up which culminated in the incorporation of the Borough of Nelson in 1890. John Wilkinson became the 2nd Mayor of the Borough in 1891.

John died in 1905 at Barleyfield House his Nelson home.

The culmination of Louise's research has been a book entitled "John Wilkinson, Mayor of Nelson and his family", a copy of which she has kindly donated to the society's archives. The book is an excellent read and Louise would be delighted to hear from anyone who can add to or correct what she has written.

She can be contacted at  
The Old Post Office, Forest Hill, Oxford, OX33 1DZ  
e-mail [dlskawne@aol.com](mailto:dlskawne@aol.com)

### TURNER FAMILY RESEARCH APRIL 2005

About 25 years ago, my wife and I spent an evening in Earby with my Aunt, Rene Smith. Her husband, Raymond Smith, used to own the Earby plumbing business E.W. Smith & Son. They had a shop in Victoria Road and workshop in Water Street opposite the old Cinema.



William Turner born 1832

We spent the evening with my Aunt going through a collection of family photographs she had collected and she talked about who the people were and how they were related. I'd taken with me a tape recorder and recorded our conversation together. We then borrowed the photographs to have copies made. My wife then did quite a bit of research on our family tree and went back as far as my Great grandfather William Turner, born in 1832.

My interest in family history re-started about 2 years ago and



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## Earby Chronicles

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since then like many other people it's become quite a hobby. In the process of my research I've uncovered many interesting things but one thing stands out in particular - all that my Aunt told us has proved to be correct. This is one of the most important aspects of starting out with family history - talking to older living relatives about the past. Amazingly many older folk whose memories of recent events are poor can have clear recall of their early life and family connections.

My search for my ancestors' has brought me into contact with a lot of interesting people whom I would never have had contact with otherwise and I've had help from several older Earby residents. In an article published in the Craven Herald back in 1928 by Mr A.H.Clegg, the headmaster of New Road School, wrote:

### **OLD LOCAL SURNAMES.**

*The following surnames are mentioned in the registers during the period 1566 to 1571, that is, over three and a half centuries ago :-Aerton, Accarrenley, Bauldwyne, Bawle, Brown, Brears, Banks, Batty, Carr, Charyar, Cowgill, Craven, Dryer, Dixon, Ellis, Emot, Grandirge, Hartley, Hytchin, Higson, Heber, Hirst, Hargreaves, Jackson, Mytchell, Parker, Rippon, Riddialgh, Robinson, Redman, Swyer, Smyth, Staw, Swynden, Swayne, Slater, Taylor, Towne, Wyndle, Wilcocke, Watson, Willian, Wode, Whythead, Wright.*

*Between 1698 and 1703, that is, nearly a century and a half later, the following surnames recur :- Ayrton, Brown, Cowgill, Craven, Driver, Emmet, Grandorge, Higson, Hartley, Parker, Riddeagh, Staw, Slater, Smith, Swire, Taylor, Watson, Wright, Windle, and, in addition, the following are recorded :-Atkinson, Armistead, Boulton, Barrit, Barrett, Dodgon, Dodsyon, Edmundson, Flud (also Flood), Howorth, Halstead, Johnson, Kaye, Kendall, Manknowlids, Morwill, Polard, Pate, Robert, Skakelton, Spencer, Sharp, **Turner**, Tillotson, Tonge, Wane (also Waune and Wawne), Wilkinson, Whitwham, Wilson (Willson), Wormall, Wadington.*

*It will be noted that a good proportion of the above surnames survive to the present day in the locality, but many seem to have disappeared.*

My search so far has taken me back to 1802 when in the Thornton in Craven Parish Registers we have:

**Joseph Turner** (illegitimate) baptised 13/6/1802 son of Sarah reputed father John Cock carpenter Earby - Date of Birth 7/6/1802.

There is no reference to Sarah Turner's birth in the Parish records but from the 1841 census when she is living with her son Joseph and his family we know that she was born about 1767.

I wondered if anyone has done any research on Earby records so far back and could give me any pointers where I should be looking for any additional information.

If anyone has any ideas then please contact me:

John Turner



## FAMILY HISTORY RESEARCHES

Since the Society web site has been updated there has been an increase in requests for help with family history research, the following being the latest inquiries.

New Member Michael Brown is researching the **WORMWELL** branch of his family. Michael's mother Winifred nee Wormwell was the daughter of John Wormwell (1867-1937) and Elizabeth Ann nee Smith. Previous generations are Henry Wormwell(1846-?1915) who owned a quarry, James Wormwell who married Mary Ann Brown and Michael's 3 x great grandfather also James Wormwell.

Clive Godson is looking for information on Rueben James **HILL** who was born in Bradford in 1875 and was living in Barnoldswick with his parents James and Mary Hill in 1881. Reuben married Martha J. Scott from Todmorden and their children were born in Barnoldswick. It is believed they moved later to Hartley Street in Earby.

Jacqueline Howarth is seeking information on William **SMITH** thought to have been baptised at Thornton-in-Craven in 1828.

Michael Bebbington has the difficult task of sorting out **WILKINSON** forebears.

Cecilia Wilkinson is trying to find details about a Rev. William Henry **WILKINSON** who at one time lived at Fence End, Thornton-in-Craven.

If you think you can help with any of these enquiries please contact Bob Abel, 22 Salterforth Road, Earby, Lancs BB18 6ND.

### ALL'S WELL AT ST. MARY'S UPDATE

Work on the Thornton-in-Craven church well project got underway when a band of fifteen willing volunteers tackled some site clearance in preparation for the main works.

A landscape architect has now been appointed and a site visit and survey has been undertaken. It is hope to take advantage of the Summer weather for the main works with completion by the end of September.



Photograph courtesy of Chris Church

At Easter there was a miniature garden competition at the church, entrants were asked to create a miniature garden about the size of a biscuit tin lid with the well as the theme. Claire Whitaker Chocolatiers of Skipton donated two Easter chocolate prizes. The winners were the Leeming family, James, Katy

**RESTORATION OF THE PENDLE HIPPODROME**

Brian Bird, president of Colne Operatic Society, was the guest speaker at the May meeting who regaled us with the story of a dream coming true.

In the 1970s there were three Operatic Societies performing in the Pendle area; Colne, St John's Nelson and the Free Lance Society, all looking for a permanent venue for their shows.

In 1978 EMI was closing the Hippodrome Bingo Hall in Colne and a steering committee was offered the building lock stock and barrel for what seemed a generous price of £10,000. Little did they know of what work they had in store to bring the building up to a suitable standard. There was every sort of rot and a leaking roof to contend with, as well as rewiring and plumbing and general restoration.

However with sheer determination, hard work and with the help of several members who were qualified in suitable trades the job was gradually done and in 1986 there was a grand opening with Simon Townley Lord Lieutenant of Lancashire performing the opening ceremony.

The legacy of this historic institution can now be handed on to the new generation by way of the flourishing youth theatre.

Congratulation to all involved in making this dream come true.

**PROGRAMME**

Tuesday 26th July	Trip to Co-operative Museum, Rochdale -Depart New Road 6-00pm
Tuesday August 16th	Hazel Wilkinson "Howzat"
Tuesday September 20th	Ian Lockwood "The History of the Craven Herald"

**PRODUCED & printed by Earby & District Local History Society.**

**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.

**THE SOCIETY**

Meets at the Community Centre, New Road, EARBY on the 3rd Tuesday of the month at 7.30 p.m. (except for outside visits).

**ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION**  
**£5.00**  
**UK £7.00**  
**Overseas £11.00**

**Contents:**

Whilst every effort is made to ensure accuracy of information in this edition, this cannot be guaranteed.

**NOTE FROM THE 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.

**EDITOR**

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