

BRADWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER No.19 September 2022

Up-coming events

After the summer break we resume our program of Tuesday evening talks in the Methodist Hall at 8.00 pm on the 20th September. The speaker is Frank Parker from Great Longstone and his title is 'Memories of a Lost Valley' and covers the building of the Ladybower reservoir. His presentation will include a film showing significant events in the drowning of the 'Lost Valley' (with – I hope – sound!).

It is a great pleasure to present another of Percy B Fischer's accounts of 'Rambles in the Peak' illustrated as usual by one of his drawings. In the piece he recalls his time in South Africa and another view is these days can be found on the Society Website bradwellhistoricalsociety.org.uk under *projects>notable bradwellians>percy bernhard fisher*. This reports that he enlisted in the 5th Royal Irish Lancers in 1892.

Percy Bernhard Fischer Written in 1933

ANOTHER RAMBLE IN THE PEAK

Through Hope to the Snake

Where the motorist is bound to the highway, we wayfarers have the choice of many roads to the Snake Valley from the little hamlet of Brough, and the most direct and pleasantest withal is to follow in the wake of the Roman legions who came from Buxton over Bradwell Moor to the fortress of Anavio and thence onward to Malandra (near Glossop).

From the lead works, round the bend of the road, and opposite Mr Lund's shippon, once a wayside inn – the Lord Nelson – is the stile and footpath leading up to the Roman camp, and at which point there seem to be indications that the old road curved into the camp here.

Anavio would appear to have been part military station part prison, in which British tribesmen were incarcerated between spells of work in the local mines under Roman taskmasters.

Pigs of lead unearthed in the neighbourhood were marked on one side with the letters BRIG, probably a distinguishing mark referring to the particular tribe engaged.

Let us however get on our road which I imagine – though this is mere surmise – would have emerged from the camp by a well-defined cart ford through the River Noe and out on the main road just east of Laneside Farm and thence to Hope village, with striking approach, where the road widens out into a broad market place with its old grey church and squat tower dominating the whole.

The magnificent white marble tomb of the Firth family, with its twin crosses cannot fail to catch the eye, the spotless white making a sharp contrast to the background of dark yews, and the ancient elms wherein the residents of the rookery are making a great hubbub this April morning.

Hope, in spite such innovations as automatic telephones, an up-to-date sewerage system and electrical lighting, still maintains its old world air and is, in very truth, full of relics of former days. Its inns have signs that stir old memories. The Old Hall, where the genial host, “Arthur” beams alike on high and low. The Woodroffe Arms, not so named, as one might think, from any peculiarity of construction, but after an old family of that name, a member of which, one Nathan Woodroffe, about a century ago, appears to have combined the duties of parish clerk and inn-keeper.

The “Cheshire Cheese” has an ancient flavour – not literally, of course – and a decidedly Dickensian air prevails at the annual hunt supper which still survives despite the absence of a hunt.

A few yards down the Pindale Road is Moultrassie Hall of Peveril of the Peak, sadly renovated, but still retaining a fragment of the old masonry in the shape of an ancient gateway over which is an undecipherable escutcheon, beneath which, upon the doorway is an incongruity in the shape of an enamelled notice ‘No pedlars or hawkers’.

But across the road into the Churchyard, and hard by the porch, one will find a very interesting relic of pre-Saxon times.

The sketch at the bottom of this article(*sadly now missing*) is the upright shaft of an ancient Celtic Cross, said to have been erected on the site of the present Church by St Patrick’s missionaries, who came from Ireland about the middle of the fifth century and preached Christianity across Britain and Western Europe.

Be that as it may I feel better qualified to speak of a more recent invasion of Irish - and others - which occurred about 5 years ago (c

1930), when the 6.50 a.m. “working man’s” was wont to disgorge its daily load of navvies, gangers and mechanics all *en route* for Pindale Bottom and Hope Marsh, and the village awoke from its siesta which had been unbroken since the days of the Dore and Chinley Railway construction.

And here it was that the unexpected happened. I met Paddy – or not so much “met” but “came” into violent collision with that warrior. I had known Paddy (I hesitate to give his second name for obvious reasons) as a smart “non-com” in a very famous Irish Regiment in Peshawar station, where I came to his assistance in the matter of some vernacular which he needed to apply to his ticket “babu”. We have since foregathered in places as far apart as the Standard Bar, Alderly St., Cape Town and the “Horseshoe”, Pietermaritzburg.

I feel bound to state however that my warrior has deteriorated. I do not refer to his calling, having a profound respect for the genus tramp navvy – the real ‘uns – but the moleskins were not the thing, and worse still strings for “yorks”: where straps are *de rigueur*.

Paddy had a brief, but hectic career in Hope, having contracted a bad habit of living on subs, for conversion at the very earliest opportunity into spirituous or malt liquor, and might frequently be seen very late at night armed with a pick-shaft looking for the “toimekeeper” (*timekeeper was Percy’s role at Brough Lead Works*) for a “sub”.

In fairness I must add that the aforementioned pickshaft was meant not so much for a weapon of offence as for a means of support.

Paddy has now passed out of the landscape, but his last words to me were “See ye at hay-toime, me bhoy”.

My readers will perhaps pardon this digression from the subject matter, but I should need the pen of a Pat Magill or of the great “K” to do full justice to the sayings and doings of these hard-bitten old knights of the shovel and pick.

But back to our roads again, this time the Edale Road as far as the quaint old bridge over the Noe at Townend seems the general direction but, I think, off the direct line of the Roman Road. There seems some little doubt about its actual course just here. I rather fancy it crosses a little east of Hope, by Birchfield to the farm of Fullwood Stile, where we rejoin it by taking the road with the signpost “To Glossop”, which said signpost by the way, is a snare and a delusion for unwary motorists, having no qualifying notice to warn the stranger that the road is only fit for farm carts and bad at that.

All of this does not worry us, however, so we push on up the gentle incline until reaching the summit of Hope Cross where the footpath from Nether Booth to Haglee crosses our track, and pause a while to look round at three of the of the finest views from any one point in the district.

Behind us, looking due South are the Pindale and Bradwell valleys and a clear view up Durham Edge overlooking Great Hucklow, always provided that the noxious emanations from Earle's stack are not at the moment blotting out the landscape.

To the West of Edale to Barber Booth, with Brown Knoll ... (*rest of sentence missing*)

A view of Upper Derwent is unfortunately, blocked out by but a few feet of elevation at Lockerbrook, the rocky outcrops above Howden being plainly visible.

But what grim old humourist selected the collection of place names round and about: Blackden Edge has an eerie sound, with Madwoman's Rocks on its skyline. Ahead, in the valley, is Haglee a relative or mayhap the lady herself; Elmin Pits nearby – subtle suggestions of coffins and graveyards here - and over beyond the dark recesses of Jaggars Clough is Nether Moor.

The two ragged and lonesome pines on the ridge, near Mr Bingham's barn – sometimes known (*sub rosa*) as the "Beater's Rest" – twisted and battered by the north-west gales, add to the effect, but are very useful landmarks, as the writer has cause to know on many a misty evening in late autumn when "trekking" by the "gainerst" road for home after a heavy day's grouse driving on Blackley Hey.

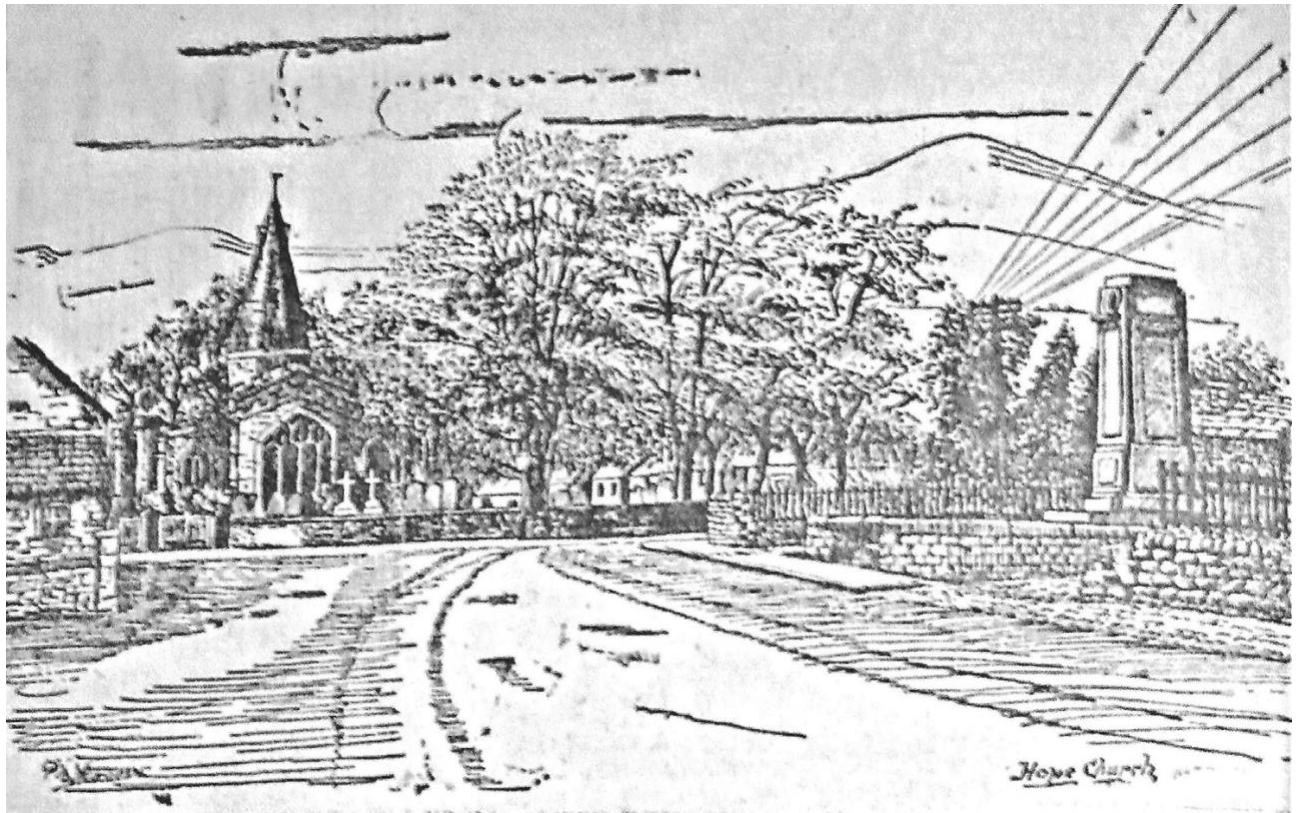
And now the two-mile long descent to Ashop Vale, past Mr Simpson's the gamekeeper's house, in whose roomy barn the beaters and loaders are wont to gather when the mists roll down from Kinder and make shooting impossible.

Across the plank bridge below the Water Board's dam, up the lane, we are on the broad highway at Alport Bridge, where boisterous little Alport rushes past down from the Bleaklow watershed.

A little below here, had the Derwent Water Board's original scheme of 1899 been carried out, would have been two great reservoirs of Haglee and Ashopton.

From here a short two-mile walk on the highway, flanked on our right by the frowning scars of Blackden Edge, Seal Edge and Fairbrook, brings us to our objective – the Snake Inn – where, just over a century ago, honest John Longden preached the Gospel, held prayer-meetings and dispensed ale to shepherds and packmen.

So now for tea or the nut-brown, accordingly as the hour or our fancy decides.



Hope Church by Percy Fischer