

BRADWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER No.21 November 2022

Up-coming events

After last month's presentation to the Society by Brian Salisbury the November talk will be given by Jill Salisbury. The venue as usual will be the Methodist Hall at 8.00 pm on the 15th of the month. Jill's title is: '17th – 19th Century Irish Slaves – Truth or Myth?' About her talk Jill writes: 'I think I can say it will be mainly about an event in history concerning slavery that I had never heard of till recently'.

At the November meeting John Monahan will be asking members if they would like to come to the annual Christmas meal at 7 pm on the 20th December in the Shoulder of Mutton. He will ask you to indicate which dishes you would like for the meal. You will be offered a choice of

1. Meat and Potato Pie, with mushy peas and gravy,
2. Cottage Pie, served with garden peas and gravy,
3. Vegetarian Option – Lynne Smith will endeavour to meet your request.

Sweet: Ginger Sponge with Custard, or

Eton Mess, or

Christmas Pudding and Brandy Sauce.

Coffee/Tea and Mint.

COST: £13.50p. per head (to be paid on the night)

If you are unable to attend the meeting but would like to come to the meal please let John Monahan know (01433 621708 or john.monahan@tiscali.co.uk) by 6th December.

In this Newsletter we reach Percy Fischer's final local piece about Rambles in the Peak that he wrote in 1933 under the pen name of Viator. In this there is as usual one of Percy's wonderful sketches, this one is of Hazelbadge Hall. The article raises several interesting questions and these are posed at the end of the piece. Please contact the editor if you know the answer to any of the questions.

Rambles in the Peak

By Viator

In the last excursion we reached as nearly as possible, the northernmost point of the Forest (of the Peak) eastern boundary, so let us now turn our faces southward from the original starting point and seek in turn the southernmost extremity.

Up the passage along the river wall and over St Ive's bridge – why St Ive's I do not quite know - unless John Somerset, who built it in 1814, had South Country associations, as his name might imply. Very considerate of him, however, to furnish visitors to his shop at Brook House with a dry approach instead of having to ford the brook.

Following up the course of the stream, the stranger may be somewhat surprised to arrive suddenly at its apparent source, which however is not strictly correct, as the stream, though no longer in sight, flows for some distance underground being partly drainage from the Moss Rake but also I imagine from certain 'swallow holes', as the small amount of drainage from the Rake in the dry months would not account for the volume of water that issues from the outfall.

At the mouth of the dale under the beetling limestone cliffs, can still be seen the remnants of an old serpentine flue the remains of an ancient smelter some 200 years old, latterly known as Fairburn's slag works.

This has been referred to by some authorities as a cupola for ore smelting, but judging from the quality and very low lead content of the black or 'run' slag of which quantities still remain, the work carried on here was the recovery of residual lead from cupola and other slags. An average sample assayed by the writer gave a metal content of only one percent.

It is also generally known that Messrs Fairburn's had an arrangement with the local authorities whereby they were permitted to take up the road material, which in those days consisted mainly of furnace slags, and remake the roads with stone, the recovered road material being remelted.

It was here about 70 years ago, that a shocking fatality occurred, when two furnacemen were overcome by fumes and suffocated, together with their two would-be rescuers, one of whom was John Edwy Darneley, a relative of the present occupier of the picturesque half-timbered house nearby.

A little higher up the dale on the left side one will notice a closed and securely padlocked door in the rock face which is the entrance to a cavern, which I believe has never been properly explored. It was discovered only a few years ago by one Thomas Burrows, who rented a 'stall' in the face for quarrying operations. Differences, however, arose as to ownership between the quarry owners, the owners of the surface land and the holder of the mining right, whose shaft was surmised to connect with the cavern, and it was decided to seal it up. Hence the padlocked door.

In this connection I should like to mention an interesting point in the records of the Forest boundaries, which here read : "From the river of Bradwell to a place called Rotherlawe and from Rotherlawe to the Great Cave of Hazelbache" Now where and what is the this "Great Cave" which was known of in the year 1274? We may rule out Bagshawe Cavern which, we are told was only discovered in 1807, and, excepting Burrow's discovery and a few small hollows which can hardly be described as caves one cannot help but think that further examination of the sealed-up cavern might furnish interesting results and might also answer the riddle of what becomes of the flood waters from round and about Hazelbadge, also the waters from the Great Hucklow slopes, which fall into the swallow near the old Barnsley house at Nether Water.

But we are more concerned with matters above ground so let us on through the rock-bound pass and take a passing glance at Hazelbadge Hall, the house through seven centuries of Strelleys, Vernons and Manners, today occupied by a fine old bearded patriarch of a name almost as well-known in these dales at that of his predecessors.

The road beyond Hazelbadge is somewhat devoid of interest, and one's best course is to turn sharply to the right just opposite the farmyard into the little pebbly road up the Green Dale – so named – as far as its junction with what is known as the old road from Bradwell.

Notice the water-worn outcroppings in the dale sides here and there: evidently another age-old watercourse, many of which can be traced hereabouts, all converging towards the dale entrance.

The footpath beyond Green Dale End, though well known locally, may not be easy to locate by strangers, therefore a little detail may help. On emerging from the dale into the old road in a dip, turn to the right, that is back towards Bradwell, ascend the somewhat steep slope and turn into the first gate on the left-hand side, where the footpath will be found crossing just below Mr Wilson's Intake Farm and entering Coplow Dale at the top of the hamlet. A few hundred yards up the lane one reaches the Castleton to Tideswell turnpike road, a very old road but unfrequented nowadays, and little used since the passing to the mining industry.

About half-a-mile ahead is Little Hucklow, comfortably tucked in a fold of the hillside and well sheltered from the north-west winds that sweep down from the bare slopes of Tideswell Moor.

Leaving the village by the turnpike road we have now reached by easy gradients the great limestone plateau of Tideswell, which stretches away east and west at a fairly uniform elevation of 1000 to 1100 feet for roughly 10 square miles.

We miss a familiar sight about here: the gaunt chimneys of Mill Dam Mine on High Rake, the last of which was felled about two years ago.

The stretch of road is well worth travelling if only for the great distances and significant outlook to the far flung skyline northward as far as High Neb on Hallam Moors on and eastward over the Vale of Derwent to Curbar and Baslow Edges. To the west the view is shortened by the sharply rising slope of Tideswell Moor to a foreground of comfortable looking tree-screened farms, at least three of which namely Berrysall, Tideslow and White Rake are in the occupation of the well-known family of Crichlow, as well as Ferguson Cross on the rising ground on the left of the road.

Forward another mile or so and we emerge rather suddenly at the Anchor Inn at Six Lane Ends, a very different scene from above we have just left, and might be aptly described as the "hub" of the plateau. Here the six converging roads, the spacing of which is as regular as spokes of a wheel, bear the traffic to and from Manchester, Sheffield, Chesterfield, Buxton and Derby, and further afield. An interesting spot this to linger a while, but apt to an embarrassing incident that befell an itinerant sketch artist who, to wield a furtive pencil unobtrusively, seeks a nearby wall.

Let us then go forward to Tideswell where just below us the grand four-spired Norman tower of the "Cathedral of the Peak" soars up amongst somewhat mediocre surroundings. The drab approach is, however, redeemed by the picturesque setting of the church flanked by the twin-gabled King's Head Inn, but should the visitor desire to see the real unspoiled corners, let him adventure by way of Church Avenue and traverse the quiet little cobbled alleyways and ancient creeper-clad cottages

coming out into Manchester Road by the Star Inn. And *en passant*, the north door of the church is always open to visitors, where Canon Fletcher's excellent booklet on Tideswell and its church may be obtained, which will give a far better description than my halting pen can ever hope to attain.

Down Manchester Road and back towards the Market Place, then a right turn up Parke Row brings us to the foot of the long incline to Summer Cross, a more attractive but longer route to Miller's Dale than the rather uninteresting journey past the Gas Works, Sewerage and other unsightly but necessary adjuncts to civilisation.

The summit of Summer Cross is about the southwest corner of the plateau and a magnificent prospect opens out across the gentle slopes of Monk's Dale Head, with tree-clad Wormhill and Hargate Hall in the middle distance and looking westward over smoke plumes of Peak Dale lime kilns, we can catch a glimpse of Black Edge and to the south west the bold top of Axe Edge on the horizon.

A short mile on is the pretty but isolated farm, Monk's Dale House, and here make a square left turn into a smooth grass road, which slopes gently down the upper banks of Monk's Dale for about a mile and a half, then making a sharp descent through a maze of farm buildings and middens into Miller's Dale village close to the church.

We are now at the most southern extremity of the Forest boundary, having followed it more or less closely "from the Great Cave to Little Hucklowe, and from Hucklowe to Tideswell, and so on to the River Wye" our journey ends today. Here are tea houses of every size and variety, an ideal "Angler's Rest" and along will come a great red bus to whirl back to cities, those who are so wishful: and myself the sunny side of the low wall by the pleasant riverside to lighten a certain haversack, which seems to have grown heavier with the miles.



Points arising and questions:

1. John Somerset is shown as holding several properties beside the Brook in the 1843 Tithe map of Bradwell, that can be viewed on the BHS website. Does anyone have an alternative idea about the naming of St Ives' bridge?
2. The tragic story of John Edwy Darnley (Seth Evans' spelling in BAM) and his friend Jonah Elliott can be found on the BHS website under projects>prominent Bradwellians> Oswald Hugh Blaskett Darneley.

3. Has anyone ever found the heavily padlocked door on the left as one leaves Bradwell along the dale?
4. What was the name of the 'bearded patriarch' of Hazelbadge?
5. How many of the views described by Percy are now obscured by subsequent developments?