

FRIENDS OF SWALEDALE MUSEUM

Newsletter No.2 Autumn 2006

Welcome to the second Newsletter from the Friends of the Swaledale Museum.

As we approach the first anniversary of the founding of the Friends we can look back upon a busy and very successful year. Our programme of talks on Wednesday afternoons has proved to be very popular. A wide range of topics has been covered since we began last November with Richard Good's talk on the Victorian celebration of death. Following that we had Kathy Scott's talk on "Energetic Medicine", Jeffrey Gardiner's on "Communion Tokens" and mine on "Working in the Lead Mines", all reported upon in the last Newsletter. Since then we have had Miles Johnson on the historic landscape around Reeth, Keith Sweetmore on local archives, David Kirby spoke about David Naitby of Bedale, and most recently Duncan Bythell gave a talk on party politics in Swaledale. The programme is continuing in the autumn and we already have a number of interesting topics scheduled for next year. We look forward to seeing you in the cosy surroundings of the Museum's meeting room!

As well as the programme of talks, the Friends also organised a number of events. These included a Quiz night in June, hosted by Tony Pleasant and an extremely popular Saturday afternoon concert by 'Ensemble' playing music from Bach to Bossa Nova, followed by a strawberry tea; good music and good weather combined to make this a very enjoyable afternoon for all. We also had a stall at the Grinton car- boot sale, which made over £120.

As reported in the last Newsletter we have also ventured into publishing. We now have 4 publications in our portfolio: two booklets written by Jenny Curtis - "Old Fashioned Household Hints & Tips" and "Old Fashioned Beers, Wines & Beverages"- have proved to be very popular as has my booklet on lead mining. Hot off the press is "Swu'adle - a study of Yorkshire dialect in Swaledale" by Veronica Sarries which is selling very well too.



Wartime Cookery (and the correct way to fasten your corset?) demonstrated in the Museum kitchen by Curriculum Kitchen

Forthcoming Events

- 18 October, 2pm, Keith Taylor
'Swaledale & Arkengarthdale Remembered - those who lost their lives during the First and Second World Wars', with book-signing by the author
- 1 November, 7pm, AGM**
Plus "What do you think she wore?" - Helen will give a talk on the dress and possessions of an 18th cent. Daleswoman (with demonstration!) based on local inventories & wills
- 8 November, 2pm, Lawrence Barker,
'Leadmining in Swaledale & Arkengarthdale'
- 20 December, 6pm
Friends Christmas Party
- 17 January, 2pm, Yvonne Luke,
HLMC Project Officer, YDNP, "Swaledale 'berith litle corne but noriseth many bestes': the past and the future of managing the land"
- 21 February, 2pm, Richard Good,
'100 Years of Scouting in Yorkshire'
- 21 March, 2pm, Don McLellan
'Vernacular Buildings in Swaledale & Arkengarthdale'
- 25 April, 7.30pm
Roger Pettican 'Swaledale Underground'
- 23 May, 7.30pm
Sally Reckert 'Seed to Sheep - Plants to illustrate the history of the woollen industry in the north Yorkshire Dales'

These are available at the Museum and, thanks to Chris Curry, from the Museum's mail order shop at <http://www.swaledalemuseum.org/>. The mining and Swu'adle booklets are also available at the Reeth Post Office. Profit from these booklets goes to the Friends with a small amount to the retailer.

Whilst a major objective of the Friends group is to organise activities with a social, local or historical theme, another is to generate income to support the development of the Museum. So far this year the success of our programme of activities has generated well over £1000. Most recently this has enabled us to purchase 20 collapsible chairs for our meetings and the new impressive gate to the Museum. Exceeding £1000 of income in our first year will enable us to seek charitable status for the Friends. A big advantage of becoming a charity is that we will be able to use Gift Aid to claim tax relief from the Inland Revenue on membership subscriptions, thereby potentially boosting this income by nearly 30%. In addition many more funding opportunities are open to charities, which we hope to exploit to further develop the Museum.

Finally, I must thank the members of the Committee for their hard work and support over the year: Helen & Alan Bainbridge, Jenny Curtis, Martin Curtis, Tracy Little, Veronica Sarries and Kate Trusson. The Friends is your group, so please come and give your support at the AGM on Wednesday 1st November, 7pm in the Museum, and let us know if you have any thoughts on what we do, how we do it, and future topics for talks or events which you would like to see the Friends organise.

Alan Mills, Chairman

Don't forget to buy your Christmas cards & gifts at the Museum on the Late Night Shopping Evening, 6-9pm on 8th December!



Marjorie Daniels spinning a yarn or two

News from the Curators

Thank you all once again for your continued support of the Museum.

Since the last Newsletter we have had a very successful series of craft demonstrations, a new venture for the Museum. A team of volunteers came during the May Bank Holiday week-end, and the first week-end in June to show off their skills. We had a record number of visitors, proving how much this sort of event is appreciated. Michael Kusz, our local greensmith, demonstrated how copper is worked, while John Squires made practical use of our new joiner's

workbench, explaining the uses of various tools. Kate Trusson revealed the intricacies of Swaledale quilting, partnered by Heather Ritchie making proddy rugs. The Museum kitchen where they sat was a buzz of conversation. Marjorie Daniels fascinated young and old alike with her spinning. Jane Sammells and Julie Bissicks of *Curriculum Kitchen* proved highly entertaining and educative with their hands-on Victorian and Ration Book cookery sessions. We are greatly appreciative of all the hard work and time that went into making this 'experiment' so popular.

These demonstrations coincided with the exhibition of embroideries from the Richmond and Leyburn branch of the Embroiderers' Guild. The eight panels, designed to reflect different aspects of Dales' life were fascinating in their variety and detail. We were delighted to host this show as part of our contribution to the 2006 Swaledale Festival.



The success of the 'Ensemble' concert stimulated plans for another. On 19th August Fourum came to 'Sing the Dales' in the Museum, with a strawberry tea afterwards. It was a pleasure to see so many people singing along with

their favourite group. We are most grateful to Jim Jack, Bob Hattersley, Allen Miller, Sandy Still and Rod Hall for performing for us, and bringing the Museum alive.



The Roughtons spent the last day of their holiday re-stringing our loom. A big thank you to them!

Another new venture has been the loaning out of exhibits for charity events. We were happy to support the fund raising initiative of St Cuthbert's Church, Edenhall for a three day exhibition. We included a quiz box of mystery objects to identify. In fact our 'mobile museum' has been on tour, at Marske WI, and is booked well into the future at various luncheon clubs and local meetings.

We have had more visitors than last year, which is good news. A group from 'Perspectives on Art' based in Ripon came for a morning to learn how to 'read objects', and the committee from Skipton NADFAS enjoyed a tour of the Museum and refreshments. We are delighted that the William Hulme School from Manchester returned this year with their Duke of Edinburgh Award candidates. Our participation in the Richmondshire Museums 'Animal Safari' has brought in children wanting to find out more about animals lurking in the Museum, from our dappled rocking horse to the brown articulated dachshund!

The Museum features in a major article in the widely distributed *Breakaway* paper. We have also appeared in *The Dalesman* (June 2006), in an article 'Doctor in the Dales' comparing the life of Dr Speirs, whose medical instruments are in the Museum, with our present GP Dr Bond. We were also in the October edition, where the 'Retro-Panto' will be featured, the re-staging of the 1948/9 Pantomime 'Beauty and the Beast'. Book your tickets for 28-30th December performance now!



We continue to be popular with visiting family historians, searching for their Swaledale and Arkengarthdale roots. Our new scanner means that text and images can be efficiently dispatched to our archive users. Eileen Wilson has lodged her 36 foot long family tree of the Place family with us, which has attracted a great deal of attention. Mrs Barson of Lincolnshire 'found some more of her family' in the Museum, while Roy Hodgson of Northallerton 'found the Stubbs Family Tree very helpful'. The Boyes from Scarborough thought we are 'a treasure trove for family historians'.



Photo: Museum Archive

Visitors also pose questions for us, can you help us answer them? Mr Bassett brought in a brass plaque relating to the Victorian Screw Company of Reeth Moor. It matches one in the Museum. Does anyone know anything about this local business? We are also working on a display relating to Reeth shops from the 18th to mid-20th century. If you have any photographs, news cuttings, old bills and receipts we would love to see them, to help us reconstruct just how busy and self-sufficient we were in the past.

As I am writing this we are in the second phase of refurbishing the building. Those of you who have visited the Museum might have seen just how dilapidated the Old Entrance way has become, with a leaking roof, damp walls and treacherous floor. With the aid of a 50% grant from DEFRA we began re-roofing in September. Another new development will be work on our displays. The archaeologist Tim Laurie has generously offered to help us develop panels on the prehistoric landscape of our dales, part of a wider project to take the Museum even further back in time!

I would like to thank all the members of the Friends committee for their hard work and support. Particular thanks goes to Gail Hall, our stalwart regular volunteer, now joined by Jilli Curry cataloguing the Edmund Cooper Archive and Maggie Pilgrim who mans the Museum every Tuesday afternoon.

Helen & Alan Bainbridge

Mystery Object



Photo: Scenic View

Do you know what this object is? Or what it was used for? If you do, please let Helen know as it is one of a small number of unidentified objects in the Museum!

From the Museum Collection - An Embroidered Coverlet

This double bed size piece was found in a pile of quilts and patchwork items. It was different in that it was the only item that was embroidered, being worked in wool on white cotton. The only clue as to its origin was that it probably came with two other bed covers from Gunnernside brought in to the Museum by Margaret Batty.

The centre block is a traditional Basket of Flowers design and similar designs can be found on early 19th century covers but worked in appliqué. The borders are different in style but are rather lovely with curving stems and leaves. At each join of the strip borders there is a square of embroidery, different from but blending well with the rest of the work. The background fabrics are varied and the centre one is different from all the others. Already too many questions were arising!

The first 'outing' for the piece was to the annual meeting of the Study Group of the Quilters Guild at York. I showed a photograph to various experts who all commented on the flowers pattern in the centre but no-one came close to voicing any opinion as to age or origins. The next journey was with the coverlet to Edinburgh where my son photographed every bit of it under my direction although he drew the line at cutting a hole in his sitting room ceiling so that we could get a complete photo of it. These are now on a disc at the Museum so that they can be viewed by anyone who is interested.



Helen and I then trekked over to the Bowes Museum with the piece to get the opinion of Joanna Hashagen the textile curator there. We spread it out on the floor and there was much crawling about and umming. Another expert was summoned with much the same result. Because of a purple thread used, opinion seemed to favour a date after 1860 when synthetic dyes were introduced and purple became reliable as a colour but even then Joanna raised doubts by saying she had just seen some 18th century chair covers with that colour in them. Again similarity between the centre block and early 19th century work was noted. The next step was to get a dye test done on the threads and fortunately

Helen knew someone who could carry this out. The results were eagerly awaited! However, they were inconclusive as the worker of the piece had finished off the threads too well and we had been unable to cut big enough pieces of wool to get a positive test result although it is more likely than not that the threads tested were synthetic dyes.

So the quest will continue for some answers that may give a more definite picture than all the possibles and probables obtained so far.

Kate Trusson

Swu'adle - A Study of Yorkshire Dialect in Swaledale

In my article for the first Newsletter I included a jumbled up list of words with the categories from which they came. The answers are now revealed, with solutions taken both from Margaret Batty's '*A Bonny Hubbleshoo*' and my recent interviews.

Glishy: 'too bright too early' and also 'when it comes out hot after a thunderstorm'

Choop: 'a rosehip, also 'somebody talking a load of gibberish'

Neppin: the action of horses pulling at each other's mane

Loppered: an adjective describing milk which has just gone sour

Brossen: burst, also a useful word to describe someone who has eaten too much

Thirl: a sheep hole through a wall

Duffy: a word for hay which is 'mouldy, semi-mouldy or unpalatable'

Lobbylows: flames in the fireplace

Loframs: a type of legging, 'hand-knitted with very heavy wool'



lobbylows

At one time it was fashionable to discourage the use of regional words in schools. It now seems sad to many of us that this was the attitude; it is in fact the opposite of educational. A brief examination of any regional vocabularies in any part of the country will indicate their historical antecedents. It is well known from many place names in the North of England, particularly in many parts of Yorkshire and of course Swaledale, that both the Norse and the Danes invaded and settled in the region. It is also clear that many of the words used down the centuries in this region can be directly linked to Old Norse and many others to Old English. The derivations of many words are lost but many can still be traced and I am indebted to Arnold Kellet (who published the '*Yorkshire Dictionary*') for the following selection, quoted with his permission: To teeam (pour with rain) comes from Old Norse *toema*, thirl (sheephole) from Old English *thyrel*, seeves (rushes) from Old Norse *sef*, cleg (horse fly) from Old Norse *kleggi* and blake (sallow or light coloured) from Old Norse *bleikr*.

Recently there has been an upsurge in interest throughout the country in dialect, programmes such as those by Melvin Bragg on the radio and the extensive study, 'Voices' directed by Clive Upton *et al*, from Leeds University. The latter study is concerned more with current usage amongst all age groups, in all areas, both urban and rural. Though teams of interviewers visited the North York moors they somehow managed to miss our important area. My interest recently has not been with the whole age range, at least not at the moment, but to find out to what extent Mrs Batty's collection of words and phrases would still be recalled thirty years later. The display in the museum shows pages from her booklet, written after ten years of painstaking research, without the benefit of a tape recorder. Mrs Batty gave me permission to base my study partly on her findings and this is what I have been doing in a small way over the past months. Some people suggested to me that I might be too late, but without going into the details here, I found this was not the case, for most of the words I selected and most of the group I talked to. I carried out a small-scale impressionistic study, talking to residents who have always lived in the dale. They concluded that their children and grandchildren would probably not know or use many of the words because of influences such as mass secondary schooling and television. There was a high degree of consensus among the group as to which words are known and used and which have dropped out of current use. Apart from thanking all those who so kindly gave of their time in doing this I will not give further details here.

A booklet titled '*Swu'adle*', which gives an account of the study, is now printed and on sale in the museum. The title of the booklet was arrived at following detailed discussion. 'Swaledale' has been spelt in many different ways down the centuries and in different regions. It has been written 'Swaddle' and 'Swardill' and so on. The spelling decided upon was thought to be the one most closely representing how the word is pronounced in the dale itself. In addition to the booklet, display and interactive units are also being planned. In conjunction with these at least two well known Swaledale residents have agreed to make recordings which will be made accessible for visitors and we are hoping to make more, both on dialect and on local history issues. As well as answering questions based on Mrs Batty's findings, several people have given me lists of additional words and here I would like to ask for readers' help. If you know of any words or phrases which you think are of regional use, ie Swaledale or at least Yorkshire, do please make a note of them and bring them to the museum. Language is as much our heritage as are more tangible artefacts. As is said in other contexts "Use it or lose it".

Veronica Sarries



thirl



teefit

Family History Snippets

I am a member of probably the most retrospective club in the Dales - The Upper Dales Family History Group. This amazing group of people who are all dedicated to ferreting out their long lost ancestors, also form a support & information group for like minded ferrets. We have a dedicated Yahoo e-mail chat group with contributors from all over the world, who seem to be on constant stand by to send a memorial inscription or a nugget of information on any aspect of genealogy.

When I first moved to Grinton in 1983 I had no idea I had any previous connection with the place and it wasn't until my mother was ill and confined to barracks a few years ago that she decided to look into my fathers antecedents, having exhausted her own. A phone call one morning saying - 'Guess where your father's grandmother was born - Grinton' produced a strange curiosity in me and I was hooked. I started to go to meetings at Fremington, joined the UDFHG & launched myself into the chat room, watching eagle-eyed for e-mails with gems of info. I found that a gravestone on the right as you enter the graveyard at St Andrews, which I had passed a hundred times before, was the final resting place for William Hird 1778-1884 & his wife Betty (née Cherry) my 4th great grandfather & mother.

And so the saga begins....

Jill Curry

If you are interested in putting more flesh on your knowledge of your ancestors in the Dales, you can contact the group through the website at www.bishopdale.demon.co.uk or pick up one of the information sheets in the Museum. The Museum also holds an ever expanding archive of documents, reference books and other information on local families, as well as census booklets and some family trees which have been deposited by previous visitors. The archive is currently being catalogued and details of the index will appear in a future edition of the Newsletter



NOTICE BOARD

Can you help with the 'revival' of "Beauty & the Beast" planned for this Christmas (28, 29 & 30 Dec)?
Contact Jenny Curtis on (01748) 880110 or Karen McCleod (01748) 880147 for details

As well as the regular programme of talks, it is hoped to organise trips to other Museums & places of historical interest. If you have any suggestions for places you would like to visit or subjects you would like to hear about, please pass them on to Helen Bainbridge 01748 884118

Volunteers are always needed to lend a hand in the Museum on a regular or occasional basis. If you feel that you could offer your services to staff the desk and talk to visitors, or have other talents to offer, the curators would love to hear from you!

If you have any memories or reminiscences of Swaledale & Arkengarthdale, or anything else relevant to local history which would be of interest for the Newsletter, the Committee would love to hear from you. We can't promise to use everything in full, but all contributions, however small, will be very welcome! Please contact Helen on 01748 884118

Don't forget to look at the Museum website at www.swaledalemuseum.org