



FRIENDS OF SWALEDALE MUSEUM

Newsletter No.6 Autumn 2008

Welcome to the Autumn 2008 edition of the Friends' Newsletter. We are delighted that the past few months have been busy with the Friends' Heritage Walks and Talks which are wonderful ways to spread the message about the Museum to a wider audience. Next years' lecture programme deals with a whole range of subjects from death to the local bus service, we are nothing if not eclectic, and the Heritage walks are back by popular demand. Funds raised by the Friends have been used to meet 50% of the costs of the Prehistoric Landscape displays. Keep coming to our events, bring your friends, and don't forget the AGM on 29th October, and the Christmas Party in the Museum on 17th December!



Wainwright's Coast to Coast

Alfred Wainwright is famous for his books describing walks in the Lake District & also for devising the Coast to Coast walk. Many of you will have seen the popular television series with Julia Bradbury doing some of the well-known walks in the Lake District and following on from this the BBC has commissioned the same team to produce a 6 part series covering the Coast to Coast walk. The producers contacted Helen for advice on what to see along the route through Swaledale and this led to Alan Mills being asked to join Julia Bradbury (*see photo above*) on the walk in Gunnerside Gill to explain the lead mining remains there. The series will be broadcast in Spring 2009.

Museum Concentrates on Art

A new direction for the Museum is to gather examples of art work of the Dales. The area has inspired not only poets and prose writers, but also painters, both home grown and visitors. The delightful painting shown here is by Chris Croft of Reeth, and was given to the Burton family in 1922. Brought in by some visitors it began a train of thought, what else is out there? A visitor from Durham brought in two posters for the National Savings Bank, showing Keld and Gunnerside Post Offices, one has now been framed ready to hang in the Museum. If you know of any other high quality fine art work of the Dales - let us know, it could lead to an exhibition! So far however, enquiries about the Staithes painter Ernest Henry Rigg who painted hay meadows in Low Row in the later 1910s has come to nothing ...



Detail of a painting by Chris Croft of Hill House, Reeth given to the Burtons as a farewell gift in 1922.

Curators' Report

Despite the far from sunny Summer we have had a steady flow of visitors to the Museum this season. We noticed fewer visitors from Europe, and more from Australia and Canada this year. Here are some comments from our visitors' book: Lisa Miller from North Wales thought the Museum was 'Friendly, visual, fun, dynamic, excellent!', while Judy and Ken Johnson from Durham thought that it is 'Great to have a museum like this'. The Kitchens from York said: 'We love this – thank you for keeping it so beautiful. Traditional yet up-to-date', and another couple thought that it is a 'Time capsule lots of interesting artifacts, well displayed, warm welcome, a real treat!' Susannah Funnell from California noted 'Beautifully laid out, informative, clear labeling, and a delight to visit, look and learn', while the Lucks from the Cotswolds thought that we 'have brought the Museum to life again, Thank you!'. Barbara and Stuart from Wiltshire 'enjoyed every moment of it – it is a museum that seems alive'.

Do come and see the new Swaledale Prehistoric Landscape panels that have been installed, which set off a range of impressive flint and chert tools, loaned by the Bowes Museum and the Dales Countryside Museum, all found by Tim Laurie. When Tim gives a talk on the subject on 8 July next year, we will also have the facility to show a broad range of maps, photographs and other sources via data projection, the result of a lifetimes work discovering, mapping and interpreting evidence. It is due to Tim's enthusiasm and generosity that we have been able to expand our collection to incorporate this immensely important part of our local history; 50% of this project is supported by a Heritage Award from Richmond District Council. We also owe Graham White a huge vote of thanks for his technical advice and support connected with the installation of a data projector.



Neolithic or Early Bronze Age flint arrow head from Barningham Moor
Photo: Scenic View

As a result of our highly successful Knitting Day with June Hall we have a regular Knitting café that meets once a month. See the Reeth Gazette for when we meet, and come along with your knitting to exchange tips, patterns, ideas and gossip! We are a lively lot, and welcome new recruits! Our lecture on the pair of Pockets in the Museum by Professor Barbara Burman in April brought unexpected fruits! Our handsome embroidered pair are quite unusual, by virtue of being a pair, rather than a single pocket, retaining the vivid colour of the needlework, and their early date, c.1725-50, verified by the Keeper of Textiles at the Victoria and Albert Museum who has pronounced them a 'gem!' Barbara brought the pockets to life with her tales of what was kept in them, including a pair of live ducks!

We have been busy 'spreading the word' about our Museum to local groups, including the WI at Middleton Tyas and Hawes, Barnard Castle and District Historical Society, and hosting group visits, including those from the Friends of Bowes Museum, Catterick WI, Thirsk and Wensleydale Decorative and Fine Arts Societies, the Swift Caravan Club and by taking a stall on Reeth Market on dry Fridays.

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It is difficult to highlight a few of the many new acquisitions we have made since June. Perhaps two of the more intriguing are a 'hay tester' from Norman Guy, and a tool for docking horses's tails, carved with the names 'Js Scott' and 'C Scott'. Does anyone know anything about the Scotts?

You might also like to know that we 'loan' objects out, Mrs Hovery borrowed one of our stocking boards for a 'wool project' at the Brewery Arts Centre in Kendal; our Bath Chair once again graced the stage at the Georgian Theatre in Richmond in the play 'Not About Heroes'; our yoke had two theatrical outings for schools performances at Ripon and Richmond; Barry Heap the 'town crier' borrowed our gas warning rattle as a model for a 'Peelers' portable one that he wears when taking free guided tours round Richmond.

We have also reached wider audiences via our Heritage Walks, organised and led by our sterling volunteers Neil Dyson, Alan Mills, and Roger Pettican. These have proved immensely popular and we will be repeating them again next year. So a big thank you to the team who went out in rain, wind and sun!

We rely greatly on volunteers to enhance what we deliver. Judy Abson has been cataloguing our expanding archive over the summer, making more material available to researchers; while Marjorie Daniels has been coming to spin every Friday, and has attracted her own band of 'groupies!' Marion Moverley is on stand-by for a project on Methodism, while Gillian Bobbett and Jonathan Morgan are working on Non-Conformism – all with the aim of creating new panels in the Museum. I am particularly grateful to those who come and Museum-sit for us making it possible for us to concentrate on other tasks, and even get away for a break together! So thank you Margaret Abson, Rosemary and Paul Hawksworth, Veronica Sarries and Julia Thorogood.

Thank you ALL for supporting us, especially our volunteers, and new and old members of the Friends of the Museum Committee. Without you we could not do as much as we do!

Helen Bainbridge



The rearranged ground floor

Button Project



Thanks to all of you who have been bringing in your buttons! We are developing a display based on the memories connected with them. How many of you remember your mother's button box, and the delight in sorting through it! If you have a favourite button and would like to tell us why you treasure it, along with a photograph of the garment

it decorated, or of the person who collected it, or tin it was in, do let us know. We are also trying to create a 'history of the button' display, as well as using the buttons you bring us from plastic to metal, glass to enamel to sell in our expanding haberdashery section of the Museum shop. We also turn your buttons into brooches, earrings and other jewellery, as well as loose buttons to dig into to find the perfect one for your bag, hat, coat or jumper! All funds go to raising money to insulate the building!!

Helen Bainbridge

Reeth Union Poor Law Project

Friends may recall that Dr Paul Carter of The National Archives at Kew (what some of us still call the Public Records Office!) visited the Museum last year to talk about their proposed project: 19th Century Poverty in England and Wales. This involves digitizing and cataloguing the records of 20 of the old Poor Law Unions across England & Wales including the Reeth Union which covered the whole of the Two Dales from Ellerton Abbey west. It will provide an essential resource for those undertaking local, family, social and other historical studies in the 19th century.

The National Archives sought funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund to digitize these records and make them available on-line for free. Whilst the bid was being considered the local team worked on cataloguing a set of documents relating to correspondence from magistrates and other local dignitaries in Yorkshire to the Home Office in the 1830s. It came as somewhat of a surprise to some of us to find that this was a period of considerable social unrest. For example one item was from three magistrates for Allertonshire referring to large numbers of 'Artificiers, Labourers and others' gathering in Northallerton and Brompton on Swale during canvassing for the parliamentary elections. The magistrates feared a 'Tumult Riot or Felony' during or after polling and consequently appointed a large number of special constables for three weeks to protect the inhabitants and property in Northallerton. Another item was the report of an inquest into the death of one James Benson of Farsley near Leeds who was allegedly beaten by a group of Trade Unionists for being a 'black sheep' and refusing to join the Union; he died of his injuries. These items and many others are now searchable on-line in The National Archive's catalogue (<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/catalogue/default.asp?j=1>)

Having completed this work in the early summer we were expecting to move straight on to the Poor Law records for this area but sadly the Heritage Lottery Fund did not feel able to support the project. Fortunately however the start has merely been delayed and The National Archive has been able to find other funding to support the project which will now begin in mid-October. I will report on progress in the next Newsletter. If you wish to join this project team please contact me on (01748) 884938.

Alan Mills



Mystery Object

This is just the 'business' end - the wooden handles are about 3 feet long. Yes, it's to do with farming, no it's not a patent castrator!

Last edition's objects (*right*) are believed to be the small shields from the local schools' Sports Shield. Thanks to Tom & Hannah Guy for this photograph of Gunnerside School with the entire trophy.



Jill Curry

Many Friends will already be aware of the tragic death of Jill Curry during the summer. Jill was a founder member of the Friends, part of the original committee and regular contributor of articles and pictures for the Newsletter. She was part of the Vernacular Buildings Study Group, joined the Archaeology walks with Tim Laurie, catalogued papers for the archives, fielded genealogy queries, put out chairs for the talks, made the tea and was generally the life and soul of anything she got involved with.

As well as the Museum Jill was a stalwart of many other local groups - she was a beekeeper, bell ringer, church treasurer, family historian and much more besides with a wide circle of friends well beyond the dale as well as the many who knew her through her work as a receptionist at the local surgery.

Several groups are looking at various ways to remember her including the bell ringers who have decided to make an annual event of the fund raising walk which she had organised shortly before her death to raise money for two new bells for St Andrew's church, Grinton, which will then be dedicated to her. We are still considering the most appropriate way to commemorate Jill's contribution to the Museum in the longer term but as a first step it has been agreed to make her son, Chris, an honorary life member of the Friends, not only in Jill's memory but also in acknowledgement of his own hard work in setting up and maintaining the Museum website.

Tracy Little



Jill, typically hard at work (& equally typically pulling a face at the camera!) at Grinton Car Boot Sale.

The Museum archives have been proving very popular, particularly with family historians from far and wide. Basil Kearton, one of this summer's visitors, has kindly sent us some information about his Swaledale roots & the way in which local families have made their mark around the world.

The Keartons of Yorkshire and Yonder

In 1978 when I first took an interest in my forebears back in England, I had no idea that by 2008 I would have made my seventh pilgrimage to Thwaite in beautiful Swaledale. My first visit was in 1981 with my late wife Anne and our 9 year old son James; other visits followed with Anne, with my brother John, nephew Shane and cousin Ralph. For us all it is an experience that we shall always remember for it was like returning home.

My grandfather brought his family to New Zealand in 1913, losing his second wife to TB on the voyage. Having been an accountant & surface manager for the Montreal Iron Ore Mining Company near Whitehaven he decided to join his brother in the south of New Zealand and become a farmer. We are the only Kearton family in New Zealand and sadly, during my childhood, the family back in England were never discussed. Indeed, I think that my father being the youngest of the family and only 9 when he emigrated never knew much about them anyway. I do remember very clearly that in 1936, my parents and I travelled by train to Wellington to meet an English relative, Cherry Kearton, a prolific writer and photographer of wild animals, who was there on a lecture tour. He & his equally well known brother, Richard, were both born at Thwaite. Others of note with Thwaite connections were Sir Frank Kearton from Cheshire and Professor William Johnson Kearton, of Liverpool University who like my grand father was born at Cleator Moor near Whitehaven.

My grandfather once told me that should I ever meet a Kearton, they would be a relative as we had a unique name. So when in 1978 a cousin asked me about our great grandparents, not knowing myself, I started my search for the answers. Eighteen months and a much smaller bank



Oxnop Hall near Muker

account later, I had found that my Kearton forebears had been living at Thwaite in Swaledale since the mid 1600s. With Keartons still living there on our first visit in 1981, it was a continuous occupation by family for over 350 years. However, unlike some local families, the Keartons were not so prolific and when the lead mines started to fail many of the family left to make a living elsewhere. Many went to industrial areas of the UK or USA. My ancestor Christopher left Thwaite in 1824, moving to Heggarscale where he farmed and had a butcher's business. There my great grandfather, Ralph & his siblings were born before the family moved to Market Brough in 1839, keeping a butcher's and grocer's shop in the High Street. Ralph married Alice Bainbridge from Brough Castle Farm & in 1862 the couple moved to Cleator Moor where my grandfather John and father Albert were born.

George Kearton of Oxnop Hall in Swaledale, who is said to have died at the age of 125 years in July 1764, may have been a direct ancestor but, we may never know as no written proof exists. George was a big strong man; as well as employing a large gang of lead miners, he was an experienced and skilful wrestler and bare fist fighter, well known for his successes at the annual fairs at Tan Hill. One son, Anthony, was a respected gamekeeper. Another, Thomas, was a surgeon and apothecary of Stockton and Yarm. However, while at Yarm he became known as Kirton*, as his descendants still are today. Yet another son was George Kearton jun who established an arrowroot and sugar plantation on the Island of St Vincent in 1760, which was known as "Keartons" well into the 1800's. He never married, although he did have several children by some of his slaves, and after his death in 1783, the plantation was left in his will to his nephews, the three sons of his elder brother Anthony. And that in itself is another intriguing bit of well researched Kearton history.

Basil E. Kearton, New Zealand

*NB: Opinions vary as to which spelling came first!

If you would like to get in touch with Basil about his family, we can let you have his contact details. More detailed information about the Kirton/Kearton family in the dale can be found in 'A Kirton Family History' by Jonathan Kirton.

Any suggestions?

Charles Lilley sent in this photograph & query: "Sited high in the exterior wall of a barn (not too high - those are nettles at the bottom of the picture!) at Holgate, New Forest, is a crudely carved stone artefact, constructed in two pieces, the lower bowl having a drainage hole leading into the interior of the building."



He wonders if it might have been removed from another building and simply reused in its present position.

This copy of the *Rules of the Swaledale & District Cricket League* was donated recently - the Club Secretary & Treasurer of the time was T Scratcherd of the Black Bull, Reeth - can someone date it from that please?

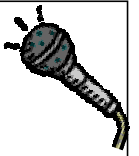


Family History

One of the next projects in the Museum is the updating of the Buxton Family Tree display. We are very fortunate that George Buxton and his family made contact again with the Museum recently and they have been helping us develop the new panels which will show how the family entered the Dales in the 17th century and left in the 19th, part of the influx and exodus of lead mining families. George Buxton has William Buxton's expenses book dated between 1889 and 1906, and would like to know what LI meal and LI corn are; what do the initials L and I stand for? Does anyone know? There is a reference to 1cwt of Lame Calf Meal, as well as other goods like Rent (or Rend?) Cake and to livestock - in 1889 for example William bought two pigs for 16d 6d each!

Swaledale Voices

The first stage of this project is now well underway, thanks to all those who have agreed to take part and to the team of interviewers. We already have lots of varied information, ranging from childhood and schooldays, to life before electricity, to all the changes there have been since the Second World War in agriculture, building and plumbing. There are riveting bits of information on entertainments, where people shopped, holidays, characters and so on. Sometimes when people have been asked whether they would like to take part they have been unnecessarily modest, thinking that perhaps they do not have anything unusual to say. I can report, from first listening to them, that they are all, without exception, completely fascinating. Until you actually hear things at first hand it is sometimes difficult to assess the enormity of how much has changed in quite a short period of time, comparatively speaking.



It is hoped to have the first part of this venture completed by Christmas, for access in the Museum from next year. Thereafter the recorder will be kept at the Museum and any other members of the community will be able to develop this project in any way they wish. There might, for example, be someone who wishes to develop work on a particular theme, or area or family, who might wish to do more recording, now that we have the facilities. The listening box that we are going to acquire will have a flexible set-up, so what is stored on it can be changed from time to time, whilst the original recordings will be stored for posterity at the museum.

If there is anybody amongst the Friends who would like to get in involved at any stage of this project do get in touch. I know that the other interviewers agree with me that once you have got over the initial worries of carrying out an interview (which is really a conversation, not a set, formal piece), then it is a most enjoyable experience because it is so interesting and everyone we have talked to has been so helpful. Therefore I conclude with a big and continuing thank you to everyone involved. If you have any more suggestions of willing participants do let us know.

Veronica Sarries

Vernacular Buildings Study Group

The Swaledale & Arkengarthdale Vernacular Buildings Study Group was formed a year or so ago with the help of the Friends Group and Don McLellan of the Yorkshire Dales National Park. During that time we have learnt a lot about the architecture of 'ordinary' buildings in the area and their development. We are currently in the process of producing reports on two of the houses which we have surveyed so far. To do this we undertake a detailed survey of the house, identifying and recording features of particular interest from large items such as roof timbers down to small features such as door hinges. We consider documentary evidence including deeds, tithe maps, census returns, land tax records etc and attempt to determine the history of the house and estimate when it was first constructed.



Group members at work on one of the oldest houses in Reeth

Recently we obtained grants from Richmondshire District Council and the Heritage Lottery Fund (Awards for All) to enable us to ensure that the historic vernacular buildings of Swaledale & Arkengarthdale are surveyed and recorded for posterity, and to raise awareness amongst both local people and visitors of this important aspect of our local heritage. We aim to produce one or more booklets identifying the key features of the development of vernacular buildings in this area. These will build upon previous publications by the Yorkshire Vernacular Buildings Study Group, for example, and complement the "Private Spaces Public Places" brochures produced by the Yorkshire Dales National Park. If you are interested in joining us then do please contact either Alan & Judith Mills (01748) 884938, Shirley Gale (01748) 884779, Paul & Rosemary Hawksworth (01748) 884766 or Alan & Julia Thorogood (01748) 886524.



House Histories

We are delighted to launch another book under the Friends of the Museum Publications series - "The History of your House in Upper Swaledale". Judging by the record number of people who booked to come to our House History Day Tim Bagenal has produced a very timely guide to a subject that many of us are interested in. He has a lifetime's experience of researching this area, and has generously made that knowledge available to all - 36 clearly laid out pages with illustrations and examples of the sources make this book essential reading, and a bargain at £4.50. (We can post it to you or a friend for an extra 80p; cheques payable to H M Bainbridge please). The book is available from the Museum and the Post Office Shop in Reeth. Buy it now while stocks last!

Forthcoming Events

29 Oct, AGM, 2pm

19 Nov, 2pm,
Vernacular Buildings Group Report,
Reeth Methodist Chapel

17 Dec, 6-10pm
Friends' Xmas Party, Swaledale Museum

14 Jan, 2pm,
Peter Denison-Edson, 'The Romans in Swaledale',
Reeth Methodist Chapel

11 Feb, 2pm,
Steve Timms, 'The Thornborough Henges',
Reeth Methodist Chapel

18 Mar, 2pm,
Dr Richard Smith,
'The Smelt Mills of Swaledale & A'dale',
Reeth Methodist Chapel

8 Apr, 7.30pm,
Stephen Walker,
'Nine Standards and the boundaries of Swaledale'
Swaledale Museum,

6 May, 7.30pm,
David McMahon,
'Set in Stone - The Story in The Dales Rocks',
Swaledale Museum,

10 June, 7.30 pm,
Helen Frisby, University of Bristol,
'Death and Dying in the Dales, c.1840-c.1914',
Swaledale Museum

8 July, 7.30pm,
Tim Laurie,
'Archaeological Landscapes in Swaledale',
Swaledale Museum

12 Aug, 7.30 pm,
Reuben Frankau, 'The Bus Up the Dale',
Swaledale Museum

16 Sept, 7.30pm,
Mike Gill,
'Lead Mining in Swaledale and Arkengarthdale',
Swaledale Museum

Don't forget to watch the local press for occasional additions or alterations to the programme & please note the change of venue during the winter months.

Volunteers are always welcome 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!

Archaeology walks

Tim Laurie has kindly put together another short programme of walks for the winter months. Four walks are proposed, all starting at 10am:

Monday 17th November. Holgate to Helwith, Telfit, Dickey Edge (Cordilleras Farm), Buzzard Scar, Waitgate Wood and return to Holgate. Meet near Holgate Farm (Parking at side of unfenced road at NZ069 041).

Monday 8th December. Scargill Moor. Prehistoric sites (Cup marked rocks and burnt mounds), roman shrines and spectacular mining remains! Meet at car park on side of road through the Stang Forest, at NZ024 082.

Monday 12th January. Holgate for Barningham High Moor. Meet near Holgate Farm (Parking at side of unfenced road at NZ069 041). Archaeologist Andrew Fleming described this to Tim as one of the best archaeological walks anywhere!

Monday in 2009 - Date To be Arranged. Holgate for Schoolmaster Pasture, Moresdale Road, Moresdale Ridge, Kexwith Moor and returning by Kexwith farm. Meet near Holgate Farm (Parking at side of unfenced road at NZ069 041). In the event of bad weather Tim will suggest an alternative low level walk.

Although there will be no charge for these walks we think it would be appropriate to make a small donation; suggested at £1 - £2 per walk. *Please always check the arrangements with the Museum (01748) 884118 before setting off.*

NOTICE BOARD

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

The Newsletter is now also available by email in a pdf format. If you would prefer to receive it this way, please send an email to jandt@cennick.fsnet.co.uk and we will arrange it.

Please note that the Upper Dales Family History Group has been developing its new website over the past year - the address is now www.upperdalesfhg.org.uk

There are links to other local groups and organisations (including the Swaledale Museum of course!), an explanation of how the email list works and how to join it and the ever expanding Rennison's List of useful history and dales related websites.

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 or museum@swaledale.org