

# Staveley & District History Society

## Journal Winter 2010/11

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The views expressed in articles in this Journal are those of the individual authors and not necessarily those of the Society.

*Cover photo – The late Joe Scott autographing copies of ‘A Lakeland Valley Through Time’*

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The next issue of the *Journal* (the Spring issue) will be published on the 12<sup>th</sup> April 2011. Any contributions (letters, articles, etc.) should be with the Editor no later than the meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup> March.

## The next 20 years

This could be my last editorial for the *Journal* and I would like to take this opportunity to look forward to where the Society may be heading in the future. Currently we have some 150 members, and behind us we have a legacy of over a hundred winter talks and over 50 walks or visits. This coupled with our main publications – the *Lakeland Valley Through Time* book, the *Living Past* CD and booklet, a video/DVD and some 25 *Occasional Papers* – not to mention the 20 *Journals* – will take some living up to if it is to continue.



One of the problems facing the Society in the future is simply ‘where do we go next?’ The sheer amount of information on our history already accumulated gives the impression that we are already into a situation of diminishing returns – all the easy research has already been done. Like the proverbial half empty or half full glass this all depends on how you look at things. The list of references which accompany each *Occasional Paper*, our extensive collection of old photographs and maps and sometimes even questions at the end of evening talks must surely give stimulus to further research.

We tried, a few years ago, to set up a buildings group, but sadly, from lack of a leader, this has ceased to function. Is there no-one out there interested in taking on this responsibility? There are many interesting old buildings in our area which have not been properly documented – we have the instructions on how to do it; all we need are some volunteers.

A debate which regularly takes place at our committee meetings is to how much we should involve ourselves with family history. As the recipient of many e-mails from around the world I can vouch for the fact that it is a two way process – we help family historians and they quite often give us valuable local information from their family archives. Should we, like Sedbergh who your committee visited last year, be a *Local and Family History Society*?

Robert Ridley’s *Occasional Paper* last year raised a number of questions about our archaeological knowledge. Are there any members interested in getting their hands dirty and carrying out investigations? This year we have not had an *Occasional Paper* submitted so there is still room for members to come forward with their contributions. Have you a story to tell?

On a more positive note, and despite our carrying vacancies on the committee for over two years, we now have two new members who will be formally elected at the next AGM. So, as we look forward to celebrating our 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, let’s have your suggestions as to where we go next.

*John Berry*

## How it all started

Some 20 years ago Joe Scott came to me and said “You know the people and I am an historian and this place is so interesting, let’s start a History Society.”



So here we are 20 years since the first (recorded) meeting of the Staveley and District History Society committee on 9<sup>th</sup> October 1990. The committee comprised Joe Scott Secretary, Ken Hoyle Treasurer, Colin Eliot as Vice-Chair and I was the chairman. Ordinary members were Len Hayton, June Tutin and Adrian Runswick. Sadly only Len Hayton and myself remain to tell the tale. And I must say a magnificent tale it is. From those small beginnings Joe Scott’s plans for the Society were picked up and run with resulting in the impressive list of publications found on the last page of this Journal.

Joe wanted a working Society with the committee taking on various tasks. I was in the Oral History group with Adrian Runswick, Mike Houston and Jean Critchley; I wasn’t much good – I talked too much. The idea of a book germinated and thus with much help especially from Pat Ball with the printing and design *A Lakeland Valley Through Time* was published in 1995. The list of contributors is at the front of the book which testifies to the cooperative nature of the enterprise. In fact you must all re-read the book (there are still some available). It really is a good read and it jogs memories which may be remembered for our 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Exhibition.

One of the features of the first meetings was that we had people from the various trades, farmers and businesses from the four parishes we covered. They discussed, agreed, disagreed, and regaled us with plenty of anecdotes and most informative and entertaining evenings were the result. One evening it was the farmers, another evening was businesses, with Ken Hoyle from Kentmere Ltd., Roger Brockbank from Staveley Woodturning and I think Peter Hall from the furniture workshop. Questions were prompted by Joe and orchestrated by him. It was a great way to integrate the speakers and audience and to everyone’s further knowledge and appreciation of our area. Should we have more such meetings? Just let your Committee members know.

Summer walks were instigated and proved a great success. The talks every month have been very worthwhile. Eventually we got our speakers to “speak up” and also not talk for too long! The technical expertise of our Committee is second to none and we have enjoyed a trouble free interesting and stimulating Society ever since Joe came and persuaded me to start one. The present Committee carries on the dedication for the ancient and ongoing present history of Over Staveley, Nether Staveley, Kentmere and Ings.

*Clare Brockbank*

## Sam Crossley

[Recording made by Sam Crossley at Sam's home on Brow Lane by Mike Houston on 20th January 1992.]

*Sam, you must be one of the oldest residents there is in Staveley.*

Oh no, there's some another ten years older than me in the village but I'll be the oldest resident that worked at the Staveley Woodturning Company.

*Did you start there when you first worked?*

No, first till I was 17 I worked at Paxtons making door knobs then I went to the Woodturning when I was about 17.

*And where was Paxtons?*

Paxtons was just where the Electric works are now, Staveley Electric, then there was the Garden Crafts a little higher up, but they were nearly all bobbins turned at Staveley Woodturning then, there wasn't very many tool handles made. They were all bobbins.

*And where did these go? What were they used for?*

Putting cotton on, wire reels and salmon tin opener handles and cistern pulls, all sorts of things.

*Now in the early days the conditions in the mill would have been a lot different to what they are today?*

Oh aye it was more congested inside, there were no means of getting the shavings out only carrying them out in a swill and then later on we got an old Post Office wagon and a chap used to keep popping into the mill and filling the wagon up with shavings and darting to the fire hole to get them burnt. And then we modernised a bit after that and got fans in behind every machine that took them straight into the fire hole, that was a big help then, a big help.

*So really what you shaved off your bobbins was burned and then -*

Later on it was used to heat the mill, aye we didn't waste it.

*And how was the mill itself driven?*

All driven by a gas plant, the wood was burned in a gas plant and that made gas for the gas engine, and that used to drive the mill with the help of the turbine. The turbine was quite a big help, a water turbine which is still working, there is still a shaft in, connected up to it now. It will still work as soon as you turn the water on.

*So that if you got an electricity cut or anything like that in Staveley, you could still*

*operate that mill?*

Oh aye if they're up to a dynamo connected to lights, if they are connected up, I don't know if they are.

*Now, how many people would there be employed at the mill in those days?*

Oh — must have been between 40 and 50, early on.

*And were those people mostly in Staveley?*

Oh yes, because you couldn't work outside Staveley so well because there was no transport to get you there, there was no buses, no motor cars. Some of the older hands that used to work in Windermere used to walk in a morning and walk back at night. Oh they were tough old guys were those.

*And did they walk roughly, on the same route as the road between Staveley...*

Yes that same old road, cos there wasn't any tarmacadam on the road then, it was just old rough stones wasn't it in those days.

*So this road between Staveley and Windermere was just a rough...*

Yes just a rough road that they used to dig it up with an old digger and a steam roller. I used to as kids 4 or 5 years old, stand watching it, digging all the road up, they don't bother to dig it up now, they just put tarmac on.

*Now when you said they had no buses or no transport was stuff taken by horse and cart then?*

Aye we had a horse and cart at the Woodturning, taken to the Station, everything went by rail. Most of the wood come by rail and then had to be unloaded in the station and then horse and wood wagon bring it down to the works, aye we had a grand big horse, strong horse.

*Can you remember the names of any of those people that used to work with you; then Sam were they local names?*



Oh aye, they were mostly Jacks, there was Jack Bell, Jack Fisher, Jack Whittam, Jack Dawson, Jack Johnson, Jackie Shaw all Staveley people nearly all Jacks.

*Yes and a lot of them will have descendants in the village now?*

Oh yes, aye, aye yes they're all Staveley men, but when they were younger some of these chaps used to work away, you know. Keswick bobbin mill and Stott Park and they came back to Woodturning eventually.

*You mentioned Sam that the wood used to come in on the rail; now was it all imported or did you use some local wood as well?*

Oh we got wood from roundabout, aye it used to come in on horse and wagon, aye, but then there was a lot of it, the bigger bobbins made out of coppice wood, but the smaller bobbins was all cut up out of trees and into cakes about anywhere from 2 1/2 thick and then blocked out with a tubular saw, then dried on the kiln and the wood had to be really dry otherwise, the bobbins used to dry and alter shape.

*Now what sort of wood did you work in?*

Mostly sycamore, quite a bit of birch but mostly sycamore for bobbins.

*Now some of it you say was like local, local grown as well, would some come out of Craggy or any other local woods?*

Oh aye, a lot of it, I mean this wood up here Ravenscar – the Kentmere side of Reston Scar — that was all chopped down, during the first world war, all that wood would go to Staveley Woodturning Company to be made into bobbins. The sycamore.

*Yes 'cos there's still a lot of tree stumps up there now when you go up there you can see...*

Yes aye, aye that was felled in the first world war and the wood would go to Staveley Woodturning company and quite a bit was got out of Craggy, but we had to bring a lot, maybe from North Wales or up and down by rail we had to fetch those up.

*Now who were your bosses, Sam?*

Mr. Brockbank was my boss but before that there was a chap called er Chadwicks they called the mill, but who they were I don't know, but then it got shortened to Chaddicks; Aye it was Chadwicks mill and there was a Mr. Woodward who used to live up the Crook Road, he was one of the bosses then.

*Now what about school Sam, did you enjoy school or not like it?*

Oh I can't say, it wasn't so bad, most of us had a pair of big clogs, we didn't have shoes, we didn't go to school in shoes, wi' big clogs in those days; I wasn't very bright but I got by. Aye we all had clogs in those days.

*Now when you got to the mill Sam there must have been some pretty harsh conditions, it would not be like going into the mill today.*

Oh no, no no it was all open. When it used to snow it used to snow on top of you so you put a coat on and maybe a sack over your shoulder to keep warm. Cos there was always a cold draught off the circular saws and machines, even in summer you got a cold draught off the circular saws. That's why quite a few lost their fingers trying to work with numb fingers. There was one chap, Ted Coward he went just behind his finger be after the thumb and he went right down here, cut all that off, cut three fingers off. He still came back, kept working just the same. Aye it was a bad cut was that.

*How did they cope with something like that Sam, I mean not a doctor in the village, what happened?*



Oh we used to rush them down to Kendal, aye, wrap a towel round and Mr. Brockbank would rush them down to Kendal Hospital. Aye but he kept on working until he retired, afterwards with just two fingers on one

hand. We have a chap there now with just two fingers on one hand, Ken Concannon. He was cleaning behind a machine when he put his hand in and the cutters caught him. He only has two fingers on I think.

*There wouldn't be guards on the machinery then Sam, was there?*

Well there was supposed to be, but, they didn't bother much in those days, I can't remember factory inspectors coming round early on, they came round later, you had to have your factory guards up then.

*Going, going back again Sam if we can to those days, what sort of a wage did you start up at the age of 14?*

Oh dear, when I first started it was 9 shillings a week, that was when I was up at Paxtons making door knobs and it was the same at Woodturning and when I was 20, 21 I got married I only had a pound and sixpence. I used to give the wife a pound and sixpence to Jack Bell — a man who used to run a football sweep so I'd nowt left. Didn't bother in those days, thought nowt about it.

*You had a good boss then Sam.*

Mr. Brockbank, oh he had a struggle to keep the place going, he had to do his own travelling — you know — go away and get orders himself, he had a bit of a struggle to keep it going. But it was a poor paid occupation like. We didn't get as much as the joiners er those chaps.

*And did you ever think of doing anything else?*

No. You couldn't get another job in those days, you had to tek what job you could in those days and you had a job, the council workers today its quite a good job but it was looked down on at one time wasn't it. When you were 30 or 40 years ago, sweeping the roads and suchlike but they're not so bad today.

*If you could have your time over do you think you would do it again?*

No, no I would try and get a better paid job if possible. In those days, you were lucky to get into a job.

*(to be continued in Issue 21)*

## Recent additions to the Photographic Collection

We have recently acquired a postcard showing Bewshers Fruiterer's shop on Main Street – where the Spar shop now is. This has often been referred to in Oral Histories but this is the first time that we have had a photograph. Most of our views of Main Street concentrate on the Duke William or the Post Office.



We have also received a colour slide of a train

at Staveley Station taken shortly after the line to Windermere was reduced to single



track in 1972. This clearly shows the lamp posts still standing on the disused platform.

In our collection we also have a photo taken in 1968 showing gas lamps on the platforms, so the electric lights must have had a very short life!

*John Berry*

## St John Ambulance

In the first years of the Kendal St. John, members joined from all over the county of Westmorland. There had been Bert Banks from Ambleside and Richard Lamb from Sedbergh. Travel to training nights must have been very difficult so eventually divisions were organised in these towns. Members from Staveley began to join the Kendal section, and by 1909 there were several members, but not enough to form their own division, when the expense involved in setting up somewhere to train was taken into consideration. Instead they formed a squad or detachment of the Kendal division, and were partly financed by Kendal. They trained in Staveley village school, and came to Kendal for a joint training night once a month. In the beginning the members were mainly the employees of the London and North Western Railway Co., based at Staveley, but as things got going more men joined. Dr Cockill became their first honorary surgeon until Dr Dick of Staveley was appointed.

The Membership of Staveley Detachment on 1 January 1910 was:

<i>Dr. Dick</i>	<i>Stanley Bank</i>	<i>Staveley</i>
<i>Mr. H. Anderton</i>	<i>16, Danes Terrace</i>	<i>Staveley</i>
<i>J. Braithwaite</i>	<i>Ghyll Cottage</i>	<i>Ings</i>
<i>Mr. W Faulkner</i>	<i>Cash Stores</i>	<i>Staveley</i>
<i>Mr. A. Hutchinson</i>	<i>Mill House</i>	<i>Staveley</i>
<i>Mr. H. J. Ivinson</i>	<i>Abbey Cottages</i>	<i>Staveley</i>
<i>Mr. M. Middleton</i>	<i>Main Street</i>	<i>Staveley</i>
<i>Mr. T. Milburn</i>	<i>Greenhouse</i>	<i>Staveley</i>
<i>Mr. T.L. Mason</i>	<i>Ings Cottages</i>	<i>Ings</i>
<i>Mr. S.S. Smith</i>	<i>Cash Stores</i>	<i>Staveley</i>
<i>Mr. R. Taylor</i>	<i>Brow Foot</i>	<i>Staveley</i>
<i>Mr. F.M. Threlfall</i>	<i>18 Danes Road</i>	<i>Staveley</i>

Mr. Parrington, who worked for the London and North-Western Railway as Stationmaster at Staveley joined shortly after the detachment was formed, and was soon promoted to member in charge. Mr. Middleton had a Tailor & Drapers shop on Main Street in Staveley; Mr. H. Anderton was the headmaster at Staveley Village School. Very little about the Staveley squad has been recorded. An ambulance squad call out system was organised, but they had no ambulance or headquarters. They were called out to assist the doctors when a patient needed to be moved by stretcher, and they went to the aid of patients until a doctor could be found. If a casualty needed to be moved to hospital as Kendal, then the horse ambulance would be sent for. In 1910 a squad competition between teams made up by members from Kendal and two teams from Staveley was run. A Staveley team of M. Middleton, E Middleton, S. Smith, and squad leader D. Milburn came second. In 1913 a new competition for first aid



teams was introduced. It was called the Sladen Shield after the Sladen brothers haulage Company of Windermere. It was to be competed for annually by teams from the Lakeland area, and in the first year, Staveley won it.

In July 1914, Superintendent Wright of Kendal went to have a meeting with the Staveley detachment, with a view to persuading the Staveley men to form their own division. The detachment had become a drain on Kendal's resources, but any separation was to be put on hold by the First World War. The only result of this meeting was a decision that Staveley should raise and control its own funds.

A serious accident took place at Staveley Woodturning Company on the 18 February 1915. It seems that a Mr. Robert Crawford was cutting a large log of wood on one of the sawing machines. Something went wrong, and a slab of wood flew off the machine striking the operator in the face. Mr. Sam Smith (*who worked in a shop near the factory*) and T. Milburn were sent for to render first aid until the doctor could be found. Mr. Crawford was found unconscious with serious lacerations on his face and damage to his teeth and mouth. After the doctor had seen Mr. Crawford the first aid men took him to his home.

In December 1915, Mr. William Parrington was promoted to stationmaster of the much bigger and busier station of Garstang. He had first joined the railway as a ticket collector at Lancaster Castle Station, and was soon promoted to Kirby Lonsdale as a clerk. In 1895 he was again promoted, this time to stationmaster at Staveley. He joined St. John in 1910 and became a member of the V.A.D. (Voluntary Aid Detachment) at Kendal. Besides all this, he also found time to be a Lay preacher. In 1915 when Kendal military hospital opened Mr. Parrington and the Staveley men were on hand to help unload the first batch of wounded soldiers from the hospital train at Kendal Station. Throughout the first world war the Staveley men helped with transporting the injured soldiers to and from the hospital.



First Aiders display their skills and prizes on the platform of Staveley Station

After the war in 1920, the Sladen shield competition was restarted, and as holders of the shield, Staveley had to run the competition. It was held in the village school, and won by Kendal Ambulance division. In addition, at this time a junior competition was run for the first time, Windermere Girl Guides won and Kendal Boy Scouts were second. In 1921, Staveley won the shield for the second time with a squad of Mr. T.

Blacken, Mr. S. Smith, Mr. B T Wilson and Mr. W. E. Humphreys. Also competing in the competition was a Staveley Nursing team who finished fourth. This was the first mention of any nurses at Staveley; unfortunately none of the ladies' names have been recorded.

An accident that was dealt with by the Staveley ambulance squad was reported on 14 April 1923. It was a quiet afternoon in the village; only a few people were about



Mr Parrington and his wife Agnes

doing some shopping. Mr. Wilkinson was busy selling fresh fish from his cart. While Mr. Wilkinson was away from the cart, something scared the horse, and it bolted heading towards Kendal with the cart trailing behind having one wheel on the pavement and one on the road. Unfortunately Mrs. Studholme and her son Eric were walking towards Abbey Square, and could not get out of the way in time. Mrs. Studholme was knocked to the ground and badly shaken and bruised, her son was more seriously injured with what were described as internal injuries, after he fell under the cartwheels. Mr. Middleton and the ambulance squad were quickly on the scene. The two casualties were given first aid and then carried back to their home, where Dr Goodall attended to them.

This is the last mention of the Staveley detachment we have been able to find, there does not seem to be any record of it finishing. It was probably still going in 1926, because Kendal records for that year show two Honorary Surgeons, Dr. Balzille for Kendal and Dr. Goodall for Staveley.

*(This is taken from a brochure passed to us from a house clearance – we have been unable so far to find out the name of the author – Ed.)*

## Can you help?

Mr Brian Procter, of Waberthwaite, is trying to find anyone who remembers his mother, Winnie Procter, née Bland or Burton. She worked at Shorts in 1942 and died (presumably in childbirth) at Helm Chase Maternity Hospital in 1943.

She was born in Kentmere (Overend) in 1921 and moved to Selside in about 1935.

If any of our older members do remember her, please contact the General Secretary in the first place.

## **April 22 – May 2 – 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Exhibition at the Roundhouse – a request for help**

The theme of this exhibition will be ‘200 years of change’ reflecting the many changes that have occurred in our area since 1810. We are particularly interested in hearing from any members (or friends) who have 20<sup>th</sup> century memories or photographs which they can share with us. Please contact John Berry in the first instance.

We are also proposing an exhibition of interesting historical artefacts – committee member Peter Noble is co-ordinating this part of the exhibition. Please contact Peter if you have something to exhibit.

To cover security, collect donations and deal with the sales table we need a rota of volunteers to cover all 11 days. Please contact the Chairman, Iain Johnston, if you can help, stating which day(s) and hours you can help with this.

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## **Programme for the first part of 2011**

**January 11 - John Berry – ‘Researching your Family History’** Our General Secretary gives some hints on how to start and some of the pitfalls.

**February 8 - Jane Renouf – ‘Ambleside Family History Archives - 35 Years of collecting Local History’** Jane was a founder member and is the current Chair of the Ambleside Oral History Group.

**March 8 – Pat Campbell and Dorothy Weardon – ‘The History of Windermere Town’** This is part of a ‘talk and walk’ combination; the walk is provisionally set for May 10<sup>th</sup>.

**April 12 – AGM and members evening.**

Suggestions from members are welcome – please contact the Events Secretary, Don Morris if you have something to offer.

**Rear Cover pictures –**

Views you may never see again, taken from our colour archive!

*(L to R, top to bottom)*

*Classic Cars, Windermere Road; Wilfs original café; Abbey stables before conversion; Main Street snow in 1996; Smith’s newsagents with the garage and petrol pumps; the last of the Chadwicks workshop being demolished in 2006; The Society’s committee in June 1998; part of the Carnival procession in 1970.*