

# FRIENDS OF SWALEDALE MUSEUM



## Newsletter No.18 Autumn 2014



### W elcome to our latest Newsletter.

I would like to thank all the committee members for their help during the year, particularly Glen who we welcomed to be our treasurer when Jenny stood down after years of sterling service, Tracy who has done an amazingly brilliant job putting the newsletter together, emailing it out to the friends, and keeping the up with the memberships, and Katie who was co-opted onto the group.

Although we have had fewer talks this year, we have been able to have them in the Museum, which, although it means restricting numbers, does have the right 'feel'. Speakers have covered a fascinating range of topics from the Octagon Mill to emigration and hill forts to hay rakes! One of the most recent was on old veterinary equipment and these somewhat gruesome implements have now joined the tools of Dr Spiers' trade in the Museum collection – we're becoming a mini Wellcome Institute!

We look forward to seeing you when the Museum reopens for the new season in Spring.

*Janet Bishop,*

*Chair of the Friends of Swaledale Museum*

*Just a handful  
of the veterinary  
tools which  
have been  
donated to the  
Museum by  
Paul Roger*



**F**irst the bad news ... we have had fewer visitors this year. This seems to have been due to the Tour de France factor, which kept our usual visitors away; while, unlike walkers, the cycling fraternity were not attracted to the Museum. No doubt there is a PhD. in the subject for a budding anthropologist. Like other cultural venues such as Kiplin Hall, we are 40% down on last year's visitor figures.



*The 2014 Grand Tea Party at Hudson House - in spite of the threatening clouds we raised the magnificent sum of £300.*

*Photo: Stuart Howat*

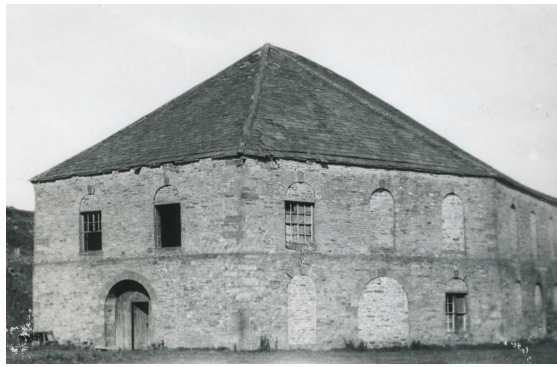
However, from the responses of visitors who did come, we seem to have really hit the spot. We have had some of our most enthusiastic comments ever. Annie and Dennis from Tyne and Wear proclaimed it 'Excellent in every respect'; while Hazel and Mel from Suffolk declared it 'The very best of museums we have visited'. Jane and Martyn from East Yorkshire commented on 'What an amazing and comprehensive illustration of local life' it presented, and Alan and Linda of Lancaster 'were very impressed by the Museum. Not only by the content but by the layout, ease of absorption and the lively and bright atmosphere. A splendid place!' George from Berkshire noted 'At last a museum that lives and gives the whole story'. Kim and Jem from London thought it 'A fabulous collection. We could be in here all week'. Sandra from Devon thought it 'the most alive local history museum I've visited', seconded by the Hoods from North Yorkshire, as 'one of the most enjoyable museums we've been into'. These comments really do make the whole venture worthwhile, and give us the courage and confidence to keep going in these difficult times.

It also counteracted the one difficult visitor we had this year who became extremely angry at the entry charge, which her friend was about to pay for them both. After taking a deep breath and explaining that we have no government or local council funding whatsoever, that we are entirely run by volunteers and that we are run solely on the money brought in by the entry charge, shop, and donations - she expressed astonishment that we were here at all!

One of the highlights has been the new People of the Dale exhibition which has drawn both locals and visitors. We got off to a glamorous start with a private view, featured in the social pages of the *Darlington and Stockton Times*, followed by coverage from Sharon Griffiths in the *Northern Echo*. On one day we had two branches of the Gill family in the Museum, looking at the 'Robert Gill The Last Blacksmith of Reeth' panel, who had not previously met. They both ended up in the house of a third descendant in Reeth. We have also had several relations of the formidable Susan Peacock and friends, family and admirers of the Rev. T C Gobat. Hannah Guy noted in the Visitors' Book: '...started at 14 to work for Thomas Armstrong and later for Dr Speirs'; and Liz Winn from York 'My father sang in the Rev Gobat's' choir in Darlington before World War I'. Maureen Coates from Vancouver declared herself to 'Now [be] a May Sinclair fan'. The newly formed May Sinclair Society based at Sheffield University held their first conference in July, and we were delighted to give them a tour round 'May's Reeth'. All were a little shocked by how accurate her portrayals of the place are in her books, and we have made lasting friends and connections with many of the academics who came from as far afield as America and Canada.

The refurbished upper gallery has also made a first class lecture and seminar space. Nearly all our Friends of the Museum talks have been well attended, and all have been absolutely excellent, from Professor Van Vugt's research on Dales emigration to Shaun Richardson's presentation of the new survey of the Octagon smelt mill, and the amazing moment we heard the author Willie Riley's voice thanks to David Copeland. The subjects have been immensely varied, but all have focused on aspects of local history. Thank you all those who gave papers, and those who supported us by attending, some of you are much appreciated regulars. It was a pleasure to have local schoolchildren in the Museum drawing and questioning fragments gathered from a local rubbish dump, part of the Big Dig project. Marjorie Daniels presented a wonderful 'story of a thread' to fascinated children of Pannal School, with our trusty team of volunteers on hand. Forty members of Barrow U3A spent a morning with us, for an entertaining and comprehensive introduction to Swaledale. If you know of other groups who might enjoy this sort of thing, let us know, or better still get in touch to organise a visit. We can cater for a surprisingly wide range of interests!

This year we have been lucky to receive some wonderful new acquisitions. Here are some of them: a post 1864 map



*Arkengarthdale's lost engineering wonder, the Octagon Mill - subject of a fascinating talk by Shaun Richardson*

of Swaledale found in a piece of furniture from Montana; an archive of research material from Rhoda Fraser gathered for her booklet on Arkengarthdale chapel; six tankards from the Punch Bowl, from a descendant of Billy Raines; copies of letters from and to Jabez Raisbeck from Adrian Croft, three bank notes from the Swaledale and Wensleydale Banking Company; a group of old photographs of Reeth and Low Row from Ralph and Pamela Alderson, and research notes made by Lucie Hinson on various

aspects of local history via Jonathan Dawson. Clara Balthesz who was with us again this year as a volunteer completed some valuable cataloguing work of the material above as well as helping with our regular volunteers, Carol (and Oliver), Janet (along with her visiting friend) and Christine at the fourth annual Museum Tea Party; a delightfully convivial event which helped raise £300 for the Museum. Thank you all who helped, baked and came. Thank you as always to the Friends of the Museum Committee for their support, and especially Tracy Little, on whom I rely so much.

Thank you all who have supported us this season by visiting, becoming a much valued Friend of the Museum, attending events or recommending others to come and see or join us. Over the winter we have as always major work to do. This year we are going to focus not on bricks and mortar building work, but on building up our visitors and supporters and our profile. So many of those who visit say 'we have been coming 40 years and we did not know there was a museum!' We need to become more visible, and we want you to help us do this. We will be thinking about new signs, new leaflets, and new ways to draw people in. If you have any thoughts and ideas do let us know. We believe that we offer something different and important to our dale, to visitor and inhabitant alike. Our regular visitors know that every year there is something new and it is well worth coming back to see.

*Helen Bainbridge, Curator*

Willie Riley (1866 - 1961) is almost unknown today but between the wars he was famous for a string of best selling novels, nearly all set in the Yorkshire dales, the best known of which is probably *Windyridge*. David Copeland's talk was the trigger for a flood of correspondence as we were emailed photographs from all over the country of houses named after the novel!





## The Swaledale Big Dig

As we approach the halfway mark of the Big Dig project we can look back at a very successful year.

The Big Dig has provided a large number of local people with the opportunity to engage with archaeology through our test pit programme. We have dug 27 test pits across Reeth, from Hilltop in the West to Arkle Cottage in the East, the rear of the Burgoyne in the North to Garden House in the South, recovering nearly 2000 pot sherds in the process as well as a wide range of other finds including mortar, glass, nails, pieces of clay tobacco pipe and a medieval barrel lock, the latter possibly 12th-14th century. We will continue the test pit programme in Reeth but the main focus for 2015 will be on Fremington and Grinton.

We have also offered a number of free courses related to the Big Dig including *Delving into Archives* with Marion Moverley, *Interpreting Aerial Photography & Lidar*, led by Robert White of the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority and more recently, *Finds Identification*, presented by our finds experts Jenny Vaughan and John Nolan of Northern Counties Archaeological Services.

The test pits tell us a lot about the development of Reeth. For example the pit in Anvil Square revealed a clear layer of rough cobbling at a depth of ca. 20cm. The dating of the pottery finds above and below this layer suggests that Anvil Square was incorporated into the cobbled market area not long after the granting of Reeth's market charter in 1694/5. Cobbled surfaces found in at least two other pits suggest that the cobbling extended much further into the Green than it does now.



*The Finds Identification Course*

The pottery finds are most interesting too. We are only part way through the analysis of them and understanding what they tell us about how Reeth developed. We have found only one piece of Roman pot, which was probably the result of manuring i.e. spreading a midden onto a field to help fertilise it. The location of the find suggests it might have come from a potential Romano-British settlement at the top of Skelgate.

Our analysis of pottery will be complete and reported on fully at the Big Dig End of Season Event, Friday 28th November, 7pm -9pm in Reeth Memorial Hall. There will also be an Open day on the Saturday, 29th

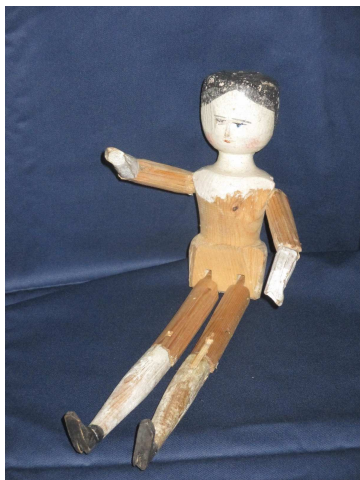
November, 10am -4pm in the Memorial Hall at which the finds will be on view together with a wide range of displays explaining what we done, what we have found and what we plan to do in 2015. Do please come along.

*Alan Mills - SWAAG*



*Will Barney Charlton be able to get out of the test pit in his garden?*

This late 19th c. wooden, possibly Dutch, 'peg' doll is one of our visitors' favourite objects. When we took the Museum over ten years ago she was in a rather sad state and about to fall victim to rampant woodworm. Fortunately we managed to save her, but she was left with rather weak limbs. We despaired when one of her legs and arms fell off recently.



Thanks to Barrie Dorman she has been restored to good health and now all her arms and legs are firmly back in place and articulated. We are immensely grateful to Barrie, for coming to the assistance of this damsel in severe distress. We are convinced her smile has returned!

John Hudson the renowned potter and his wife came to the Museum in June, and was able to tell us lots about the fine bread pancheons in our collection. He showed us how the two indentations on the bodies were where the potter lifted the bowls up, leaving an impression of the forearms in the clay, as well as identifying two of them as coming from the Littlethorpe Pottery, Ripon, characterised by the brown slip line around the top, and the greenish cast to the glaze. The other pancheon probably comes from Wetheriggs. They are all to a standard 22 inch diameter. You can see examples of John's work on his website [www.hudsonclaypotter.co.uk](http://www.hudsonclaypotter.co.uk) Thank you to Stuart Howat who was visiting for the wonderful photographs of John.



## Spencer's Almanac

I have in front of me a small booklet belonging to my grandfather, dated 1905, which claims on its cover to have "more than Double the Circulation of any Almanac Published in the District". How many Almanacs were published in the Richmond district, I wonder?

Anyway, *Spencer's Richmond Almanac* contains a Diary, Directory and Swaledale and Wensleydale Book of reference' and only costs 2d or 4d by post. For some reason W S Nowland, family grocer and Italian Warehouseman, from the Market Place, manages to find pride of place with his advert on the cover, as also, and not surprisingly, does a small advert advertising 'Funeral cards, invitation cards, stamping from Die of any colour' which are sold by Thomas Spencer, who I presume also published the Almanac.

Turning the pages of this fragile publication I find, amid fascinating adverts, a list of 42 Post Office Telephone Subscribers in the Dales. I note that Albert Morton is in charge of the Richmond Post Office, and that the engineer at Darlington Post Office should be contacted to report any 'faults on wiring etc'. The telephone exchange is open from 6.15am until 9pm on weekdays and from 8.30am until 10am on Sundays. The Directory continues with lists of private residences in Richmond, followed by lists of businesses and occupations ranging from fellmongers, hatters and laundresses to nail makers.

We have lists of parliamentary, municipal and county electors, and then similar information about each parish in Swaledale and Wensleydale; names, addresses and snippets of information about each householder.

We have details of Richmond and Reeth Unions, commissions of taxes, names of councillors; so I can tell you that T H Hailstone was 'inspector of nuisances' and lived at 1 Castle Hill, Richmond.

There are notes of the personnel of the 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Volunteer Battalion Yorkshire Regiment and on the Princess of Wales' own regiment.

Finally, after all that information, lighter reports are set out spanning the months of the year. There are articles, comments, jokes and illustrations of a most varied nature. Little gems are slipped in at the bottom of columns reporting such things as the capture of Ned Kelly's gang in Australia, or 'the Great Chicken race' invented by Sir John Astley, an event which was started by the officers of the sovereign in the barracks of Windsor.

There at the bottom of the page is a note 'To marry or not? Socrates was asked: Is it better to marry or not? He answered: Let a man do which he pleases, he will repent'. On November's page, along with the changes of the moon, we have articles on 'Shops and shopkeepers in China' and 'Wife-choosing by music'.

There are several scathing comments about the behaviour of Britons abroad and the bad effect that travel by the middle classes is having on our relations with European countries. It seems we are the worst linguists in the world (although the French run a near second) and our provincial vanity accounts for this. 'For the true born Briton the world is composed of English and foreigners. He does not hate foreigners, he does not despise them; no, but the idea that they might be compared with him is preposterous, too funny for words. The quiet way in which he takes it for granted that his superiority is acknowledged by everyone is what makes him so irritating.' So what's new? I ask.

In July we are asked 'Are College girls Marrying girls?' It seems that a Professor from a western university declared vigorously that 'the college bred girl was wholly worthless as a domestic wife.' He believed that the female graduate lessened her chances of matrimony.

So each month provides another little pearl of wisdom. We learn about the river Boyne and proverbs from Italy, about Count Tolstoy and the American hawkers on US trains. What a fund of information!

Then the Almanac gives way to blank pages divided into the days of the month, so that we can record our local weather, followed by an article on 'Signs of fair and foul weather'. This is then completed by more advertisements, an article on 'The old monks and monasteries', a notice about conveyance of lands in Hudswell, a poem on 'Feeding hens in Richmond' and then a series of pages promoting the goods offered by Robert Spencer, bookseller of Richmond, publisher of the Almanac. He sells picture post cards (many of Reeth, Swaledale and Arkengarthdale). Also Bibles, prayer books and newspapers as well as licenses for 'guns, game, gamekeepers' dogs, male servants, motor cars, carriages, armorial bearings and fishing'. He sells the usual collection of stationery, including 'crinkled tissue paper', also pianos and harmoniums, and is the only agent in Richmond for 'Goss's Heraldic Porcelain – specimens sent by post to any address'.

I won't continue the list of the many and varied goods to be found in this important store. What a time one could have in this treasure trove so vividly described in the Almanac!

*Jocelyn M Campbell*





Jo Herman visited the Museum to see the 'People of the Dales' panel about her grandfather, Arthur Shepherd, and has sent us photographs of two paintings belonging to her family by Swaledale artist, the late M Cooper.

Jocelyn Campbell, daughter of the artist, has identified one of them as the view from her parents house behind the Farmers Arms at Muker; the other is believed to be Rampsholme, farmed by previous generations of the Cooper family.



These four items (*right*) connected with the Swaledale and Wensleydale Banking Company [S&WBC] have been generously donated to the Museum by Peter Rooley. After visiting the Museum and noticing our display on the Company Mr Rooley noted that we only had a photocopy of a S&WBC cheque. The small letter dated 1845 and addressed to John Barker of Healaugh with its postmarked envelope bears the impression of the S&WBC seal in the red wax on the reverse of the envelope. The receipt is dated 1885, the proof of sight note for £10 dates from around 1866 and the Barclays Bank Ltd cheque, Richmond branch is charged to Reeth and dated 1949. We are working with Mr Rooley on a small booklet on the subject and how to 'read' these items and thank him enormously for his generosity.



These six tankards (*left*) came from the Punch Bowl in Low Row via Mr 'Billy' Raines, who gave them to a friend after he had moved to Wiltshire over 55 years ago. Their owner kindly offered them to the Museum, and we are delighted these handsome drinking vessels have returned 'home' to the dale. Many of them are marked with weights and measures stamps from the late 1800s to the early 1900s.

We wonder if any of you can help identify the original owners whose names are engraved on the tankards. One is engraved *James Yates*, another *William Gibson & Co*, a third *WJN*, the fourth *C Robinson*, and a fifth *JWR*, one is left plain. Do get in touch if you think you can help.

The annual Whitsuntide service at Arkengarthdale Methodist chapel was well attended with the usual congregation joined by guests from many other local churches; sadly however this was to be the last service in the building and marked the end of more than 250 years of Methodism in the dale.

Methodism first came to Arkengarthdale in the 1750s, led by Jacob Rowell an itinerant preacher who was asked by John Wesley to form a dales circuit with Barnard Castle at its centre. When numbers outgrew the house meetings a chapel was built on the site of the building now known as Lion House, with later offshoots in the nearby hamlets of Whaw, Seal Houses and Booze. Numbers rose after a revival in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century and to make room for them, the present chapel was erected in the 1880s at a cost of £1,631, an enormous undertaking by a congregation of poorly paid lead miners and farmers.

Over the years the building has been used by many local groups as well as for Sunday worship. Rhoda Fraser who grew up in Arkengarthdale, has organised a collection of memories and reminiscences about the chapel by those who had a special affection for it. She has very kindly donated proceeds from the sale of this to the Museum where we have copies for sale at £2 each.



*After the last service Photo: A Coustick*

#### KNITTING CAFE & CRAFT GROUP

Not just for Knit Wits! All sorts of crafts have been turning up so bring along whatever you're into. Everyone welcome, all at 2pm on Thursdays in a number of venues around Reeth throughout the year. For details of dates & venues please contact Christine Price [ewellprice@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:ewellprice@hotmail.co.uk) or 01748-884406.

## WHATEVER LIGHTS YOUR FIRE!

It is always a delight when our visitors get excited by one of our objects! Charles Dodsworth a retired chemist and amateur industrial archaeologist commented on the quality of the peat specimens (*right*) dug from a local moor in the 1970s:

“Your specimen of 'old' black peat dug locally is very similar in structure to bituminous coal, the second lowest form of coal in terms of heat evolved per kilogram on complete combustion, lignite being the lowest. Your other 'brown peat' resembles the lignite I once saw in a locomotive tender in Serbia, c.1959. A recent publication called *Coal and Coalbed Gas* details the enormous geological complexity of peat, at least 8 different forms of it being identified, and its importance as a fuel and a source of coal bed gas, ie methane. The best peat was formed adjacent to marine estuaries and different geological ages. Upland dry peat does not yield much gas. At present coalbed gas is hardly known about in the UK, but it is a big source of energy in the USA, especially in the state of Wyoming. Here the gas is 'mined'. About half of the state of Wyoming is coal-bearing on a huge scale. The black peat used in the local smelt mills and probably also in Wensleydale would have been able to yield the high temperatures to convert the lead sulphide ore into sulphur dioxide gas and molten lead. This process needed skilled control by the smelter to avoid forming lead sulphate instead of lead which is a useless slag.”



### Coming up in 2015

While the Museum is closed until the spring, we are busy organising events and displays for 2015. One of the most frequent comments by our visitors is that they love coming each year to see what is new.

We are planning a series of talks which we hope will lead to new panels - based on the idea of 'The Lost Buildings of Swaledale and Arkengarthdale', stimulated by Shaun Richardson's top class talk on the Octagon Smelt Mill this year.

We have someone on board to present information on the church in Arkletown that existed before the present Waterloo church, Eskeleth Hall and Gang Hall; we hope to have a researcher come and tell us about Ellerton Abbey. Do you know about any 'lost' buildings? Why not contact us and let us know so we can incorporate them into our series?

We are also working on a series of weekly free filmings of footage from our archive. These will be shown every Wednesday afternoon between 2pm and 3pm. The presentations will include 'Joining John Hardy Underground' thanks to the work of Terry Hayes and Tracy Little; 'Shopping in Reeth 1910-1970'; the 1927 'Holiday Album of the Lonsdale Sisters' who stayed at the Laurels in Reeth, as well as many other wonderful glimpses into the past of the area.



### Mystery Object

The little tin box (*left*) was used to hold the money for individual miners on pay day. For the next challenge, any guesses on this unpleasant looking metal object (*below*)?



### Friends of Swaledale Museum membership

Some of you may be wondering by now why there is no renewal information attached to this Newsletter. No, we haven't scrapped it – your subscriptions make a huge difference to the running of the Museum! The good news is that at the AGM in October the members present approved a change to the Constitution to move the AGM to the Spring when the Museum reopens for the new season.

This will bring the subscriptions into step with the Museum's financial year and make it easier for people who prefer to renew in person.

The renewal forms will be sent out with the Spring Newsletter which will also have details of the AGM date in May and the re-opening party as well as the programme of events and talks for 2015.

If you have any queries about this, please contact me on [tracy@swaledale.org](mailto:tracy@swaledale.org) or 01748-884759.

Tracy Little, Membership Secretary

### Queries

Roy Mason ([roy.mason07@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:roy.mason07@tiscali.co.uk)) would like to know more about a court case held in Richmond during 1876 and 1877, recorded as *Faber v Jacques* although the first name may be an error. Edward Wadham, a well respected consultant civil and mining engineer, was engaged as an expert witness in the dispute and Roy has been examining his diaries from the period. He would like to know if anyone can shed more light upon the case or offer any background information that could lead to a better understanding on why Edward Wadham got involved.

John Isles ([john.isles2@btinternet.com](mailto:john.isles2@btinternet.com)) enquired about the origin of the name of Isles Bridge as his grandfather was an engineer involved in bridge building in Yorkshire in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. We're pretty sure that the name comes from the islands in the river at the at point but maybe you know differently?