

# FRIENDS OF SWALEDALE MUSEUM

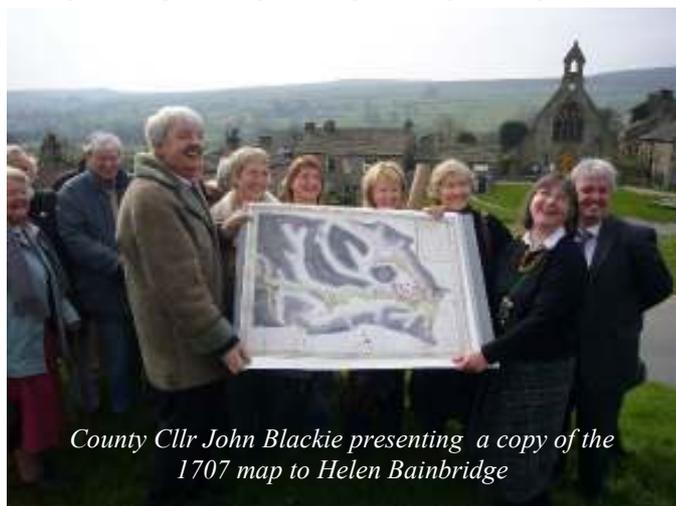
## Newsletter No.5 Summer 2008

**W**elcome to the Summer 2008 edition of the Friends' Newsletter.

Dear Friends,

As Kate Trusson sadly had to withdraw from the Chairmanship of the Friends' group at short notice, I am welcoming you all to the Summer *Newsletter*. Fortunately Alan Mills has stepped into the breach until the AGM, and as you will see from his reports, he has been very busy on the Museum's behalf. We are looking for new members to join the Committee, so please do get in touch if you would like to help. We meet every couple of months and the meetings are very convivial, always open to new ideas and talents! If you like what we are doing then come and help us develop - the Summer Season is full of activities and events, mysteries to solve and projects to plan! Thank you for becoming a Friend of the Museum, your support is essential to our survival!

*Helen Bainbridge*



*County Cllr John Blackie presenting a copy of the 1707 map to Helen Bainbridge*



*The Oldest known Map of Swaledale*

### **T**he Art of Lead

Don't forget to visit the *Art of Lead* Exhibition in the Museum during the Swaledale Festival (24th May-7th June) to see some of the practical ways in which lead was used, past and present, as well as three pieces of contemporary lead artwork by silversmith David Clarke.

### **M**ining Matters

Many visitors to the Museum are very interested in the mining heritage of Swaledale and Arkengarthdale and so we are very pleased that the Museum has been able to acquire a set of 10 display panels on lead mining and also receive a copy of the oldest known map of Swaledale (*left*), drawn up in 1707 as evidence in a mining dispute.

The panels have been professionally produced to a very high standard. Fortunately Helen was able to obtain a grant of £1500 from the Northern Mine Research Society (NMRS). In addition, we were very fortunate that the Society's Recorder, Mike Gill, and his partner Hazel Martell produced the text. Mike is a well-known expert on lead mining in this area, having authored *Swaledale – its mines and smelt mills*, whilst Hazel is not only very knowledgeable about mining but also an author of children's information books. The panels describe succinctly and clearly how lead ore came to be here, how it was mined and then smelted, what lead was used for and also what happened to the miners after the mines closed. They are a great asset to the Museum and our thanks go to the Northern Mine Research Society, Mike and Hazel.

Continuing the mining theme, the oldest known map of Swaledale has been saved for posterity by North Yorkshire County Council. The Records Office bought the map in February for £1,000, with £700 coming from grants and private donations.

The map was drawn in about 1707 to help settle a court case against the Wharton family initiated by Reginald Marriott and others in 1705, over the ownership of lead mining rights on Grinton How. Mining rights were valuable things and disputes could be quite violent; it was like the Wild West here at that time!

*(cont. page 3)*

## Steamy Swaledale Saunas

Joining the Friends of Swaledale Museum has provided me with many pleasures but the one that has to come out on top has to be the Archaeology walks with Tim Laurie. Over the past couple of years we have covered many of the best sites in Swaledale and our last walk even took us into wilds of that foreign land, Wensleydale.

Tim has discovered a great tool to help him locate new sites - Google Earth. Recently we headed off from West Burton to find a previously unrecorded hut circle site which Tim had spotted on Google and there it was, exactly where he said it would be. As usual with this sort of feature, he had his devotees form a circle on the remains to give scale, while he took a photo of us. This was clearly the highlight of Tim's day but for me, I confess I was more impressed by the remains of a settlement which he showed us a little way along the valley. There were the footings of many round houses sited close to each other, surrounded by enclosure remains, on a plateau between escarpments with a view to die for. Tim believes that although the climate would have been several degrees warmer then, the inhabitants would have followed an existence similar to the 'transhumance' still practised in parts of the Alps today (think *Heidi*), where folk would have only lived in the dale side dwellings in summer & retreated to the plains (think Catterick) for the winter.

The main feature, previously unknown to me, which Tim has revealed throughout Swaledale & Wensleydale, is that of the 'Burnt Mound'. There are hundreds of these low mounds of burnt cracked stones, which have been heated to very high temperatures. They usually occur in pairs ranging from about 4 - 15m in diameter, or form a horseshoe shape and are always near a water course or if not, you can see where there would have been one at one time. A trough to hold water is usually excavated between the mounds or within the horse shoe. There have been no remains of pots or bones found at these sites so they were not used for cooking. Tim's theory, (and this is where Tim & I differ on interpretation) is that the male elders of the



*Admiring the rock strata in Downholme Quarry*

family would have sat around in a tepee style tent discussing the issues of the day (think hunting & flint chipping) while the young nubile girls of the tribe would heat stones and then plunge them in the trough to give off steam, hence creating a sauna. They were sweat houses, the earliest dating from the Bronze Age period.

I of course firmly believe that at this time there would have been a matriarchal society and that the female elders of the tribe would have sat around discussing the issues of the day (think buckskin boots and 30 ways to cook venison) whilst the young nubile males of the tribe would have heated the stone etc..... I might add that traces of drugs have been found on these sites so these folk certainly knew how to enjoy themselves!

I describe these walks as being archaeological but they are so much more. Tim is passing on his passion for ancient woodland and his knowledge of geology as a bonus. The photo (*above*) shows Tim explaining to us about the rock strata revealed in a quarry at Downholme, a few yards further on we were measuring the girth of an ancient tree (think big tree hugging) and then within a few minutes we were looking at cup and ring marked rocks. We are very fortunate indeed to have such a generous tutor. With grateful thanks to Tim and, as 'behind every great man is a great woman' - his wife Eileen.

*Jill Curry*

## Knitting Day - Strike a Loop

About 18 of us assembled at the Museum armed with needles and wool on 9th April. June Hall from Cumbria [late of Bainbridge] took us through a brief history of knitting with side steps into different types of wool and breeds of sheep. She also told us of some of her work and discoveries in Lithuania. Some of the styles and patterns that are used there are similar to ones used in the dales. There were slides and examples to illustrate some of her points. Helen then showed a few items from the Museum collection. First, a knitted coverlet made in Arkengarthdale to a 'traditional dales pattern'. Florence Bland showed her coverlet knitted to a very similar pattern which she had acquired when visiting relatives in Canada. A pair of muffatees (wrist warmers!) were also shown which illustrated how colours can fade, the outside being red and grey but the inside was purple and red.

Lunch of soup, bread and flapjack followed, all homemade by Helen, then the afternoon session began. Some of us chose to start old patterns that June had brought with her, others used her expertise to help with problems they had with their own work. The afternoon flew by and all too soon we were drinking a final cup of tea and making plans to have a regular drop in knitting café at the Museum. The first meeting took place on May 12<sup>th</sup> - come and join us again on 2nd & 30th June, 28th July, 25th August & 22nd September at about 2pm. All in all it was a very worth while day and there are hopes that it could become an annual event.

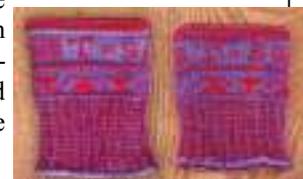
*Kate Trusson*



*Helen Weatherall, Christine Auton & Lyn Bayley trying out some patterns*



*June Hall spinning with distaff & spindle*



*Muffatees*

**(Mining Matters continued from Page 1)**

The case is described well in one of the NMRS publications<sup>1</sup>. In the run up to the case, miners dammed waterways, flooded mines, shot at someone serving an injunction and said "they care not a fig for the injunctions"! Attempts were made to bribe the foreman of the jury and when the case was settled in favour of Reginald Marriott against Lord Wharton, Marriott took out the jurors for a slap-up meal and gave each of them 20 guineas - a tidy sum in those days. So this map is an important piece of that history and our local heritage.

The map is on vellum and measures 87cm by 66.5cm (35in by 27in) with much use of full, bright colour. The surveyor is not named on the document, but court papers show that two surveyors, John Hutchinson and Leonard Brackenbury, were ordered to 'make a map of the whole estate in question' dated 1707. It was presented to a jury at a viewing day on April 22, 1708, when six or more jurors were "to be moderately entertained at the Queen's Arms in Richmond".

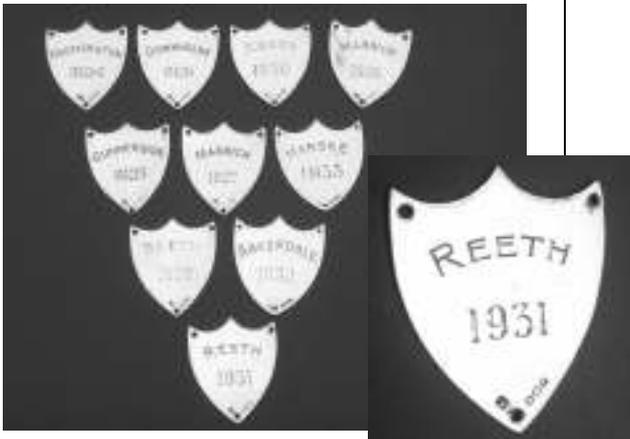
In addition to providing evidence of ownership of mineral rights the map also reveals previously unavailable detail about the size and location of settlements and the access to rights on the moor, including the right to graze stock and gather heather, which was used for thatch, and dig peat, which was used as fuel.

On Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> April an exact copy of the map was presented to the Swaledale Museum ... on the three hundredth anniversary of its first appearance before the jurors at Richmond. This is now on display and the original will be preserved for posterity in the County Records Office. We would like to extend our great thanks to Keith Sweetmore at NYCRO for making all of this happen.

*Alan Mills*

1. Barker, J.L. "Document relating to dispute over ownership of Grinton Manor" *Memoirs of the NCMRS (December 1967) pp. 26-30* and Tyson, L.O. & Spensley, I.M. "The Grinton Mines" *British Mining no.51 (1995) pp 17-20*

**Mystery Object**



Several *Mystery Objects* in fact! A little box containing 13 small silver shields was brought into the Museum in April. Ten of them are engraved, beginning with Fremington 1924 and ending with Marske 1933; Gunnerside, Downholme, Marrick, Reeth, Arkengarthdale are also 'winners', but of what? These shields were clearly removed from a plinth bearing a trophy, but both have since gone and we would like to know more about what these engraved places and dates commemorate.

Last edition's object (*below*) was a bed spring tightener - honestly! Something to appreciate when you sink into your low maintenance divan tonight!



*The bed spring tightener*

**Forthcoming Events in the Museum**

- 3 June**, Poetry Day (see page 6)
  - 16 June**, Coffee Morning, 10.30-12.30, quizzes, mysteries & refreshments, £3.
  - 18 June**, 7.30pm, 'Historic Gardens in the Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty' - Marie-Anne Hintze
  - 30 June**, 4pm, 'Pockets—the History of an Everyday Object' - Barbara Burman
  - 12 July**, Artyfacts Summer Concert, 2pm Songs, sketches & strawberries!
  - 16 July**, 7.30pm, 'The Work of English Heritage's Landscape Detectives' - Marcus Jecock
  - 13 August**, 7.30pm, 'Land Tenure & Associated Records' - Linda Turnbull
  - 17 Sept**, 7.30pm, 'Quarter Session records - All life is there' - Janet Bishop
  - 15 Oct**, 2pm, 'Chert Quarrying in Swaledale and Arkengarthdale' - Kay Jackson.
  - 29 Oct**, AGM, 2pm
  - 19 Nov**, 2pm, 'Hidden histories revealed' - Poor Law Project team
  - 17 Dec**, Friends' Xmas Party
- Don't forget to watch the local press for occasional additions to the programme.

# Message from the Curator

Although we have been closed over winter, work did not stop! We have re-organised the space to accommodate a bigger shop area, with lots of local publications, second hand books, and unusual gifts and greetings cards you won't find anywhere else. There is also a small cafe which is already proving a success. Thanks to the generosity of the Northern Mine Research Society [NMRS] we have



excellent new panels (*above*) on local Geology and Lead Mining.

The next exciting project relates to the new Prehistoric Landscape displays, for which the Friends were awarded 50% costs towards 4 panels, a showcase to hold Iron and Bronze Age finds loaned by Tim Laurie and an audio-visual presentation.

We are delighted to be closely involved with the Festival again this year, with a small exhibition on *The Art of Lead*, which will eventually become part of the permanent displays. While we have an enviable collection relating to Lead Mining we have far less on what the lead was used for. Thanks to our Museum Officer, Julie Biddlecombe (sadly moving on to Durham), we were put in touch with Barclay Roofing, and their managing director Paul Trelease lent us two skilled men for a day! The result is a handsome water tank (*below left*) in the Museum garden, and two demonstration sections of lead roofing. It is clear that the art of skilled lead work is far from dead. David Wardman a stained glass restorer from Scruton, has created two panels to explain how stained glass is made, a Ripon stonemason is adding an example of lead lettering used on tombstones and we will also have on loan three extraordinary pieces of contemporary 'Art' leadwork by the prize-winning silversmith David Clarke. If you have examples of



lead work that you think we might to include, do get in touch!

Another contribution to the Festival will be our second Poetry Day on 3<sup>rd</sup> June, when Chris Considine will present some of the poems inspired by the Museum, part of her time as Writer-in-Residence with us. The resulting book, called *Musings* will be launched on the day. Dominic Goodwin will also be back again, reading poems you have requested, and there will be our popular Open Poetry Reading. Book your tickets now, as last year we had to turn people away!

Textiles have been popular with us. On 9<sup>th</sup> April we held a Knitting Day, when June Hall entranced us all with her knowledge of wool, with a lecture, hands-on session and workshops. It was wonderful to hear the chatter as 20 ladies exchanged information and created muffettees (*wrist warmers*), lace collars and the wildest spiral socks I have ever seen. Thank you all who attended, and we hope that some of you will be back for our Knitting Cafe.

We have also been busy taking the objects out of the Museum ... to local schools. I was awarded a 'Well Done' badge from the Key Stage 1 pupils from Reeth School after a morning showing off our old-fashioned toys. The growling teddy bear, tin steam roller and articulated wooden dachshund were the most popular. Let's see if the children at Gunnerside choose the same ones!

Our next challenge is to make the Museum warmer! The Friends have applied for a B&Q grant to purchase roof insulation, and boarding for a new wooden floor. The original wooden structure was removed after the troops moved out in 1942, and the space was turned into a badminton court! We think this will benefit everyone and help us make better use of the space. We are setting up a special fund to achieve this end, donations welcome - do come to our fund raising Coffee Morning for this on 16th June!

As always I would like to thank the Friends Committee for all their hard work, and inspiring ideas which help us take the Museum forward, and thank you for becoming Friends, supporting our events and spreading the word about our Museum.

*Helen Bainbridge*

## Ever wondered

what ladies did before the invention of the handbag & how Lucy Locket could lose her pocket?  
Come and find out at the Museum  
on Monday 30 June at 4pm

Barbara Burman, costume & textile specialist, will give a talk on

'Pockets - the History of an Everyday Object'

Barbara is in Reeth to see the pair of pockets in the Museum. Please bring textile items with you if you would like Barbara to discuss them, including knitting!

*Entrance by Donation, but do let us know if you are coming so we can organise light refreshments and seats!*

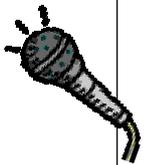


## Swaledale Voices

As you read this, the first conversations for the *Swaledale Voices* project will have been recorded. We now have several people, all with relevant experience, working on the team, which is very exciting. We also have a number of people who have kindly agreed to talk to us about their memories of life in Swaledale and Arkengarthdale. Whilst it is likely that most of the people we talk to will have a Dales background, we are also interested in the memories of people who have made their homes here, for instance through marriage or after being here as evacuees. If you have been to the talks at the museum given by residents you will know that there is a wealth of fascinating information around which we are hoping to capture. If there is anyone who would like to contribute, either by talking to us or by recording a particular friend or group of friends, do let us know, either via the museum - Tel (01748) 884118 or by email to me: [veronica886@btinternet.com](mailto:veronica886@btinternet.com)

It is intended that by December we will be able to install a 'listening box' in the museum with a selection from the recordings.

Veronica Sarries



## Mystery Solved

Those who were at Helen's talk on some of the objects in the Museum in January will no doubt remember these two portraits of Mr & Mrs Miller of Plush House, Dorset dating from the 1850s. Their provenance was unknown and any connection with Swaledale was a complete mystery. And don't we all love a mystery!



Within hours a few of us were beavering away on the internet and brainstorming via email. Plush House, not unexpectedly, is in the village of Plush near Dorchester and the Millers owned or rented property in the area for many years. They cropped up in parish registers, in 19<sup>th</sup> century copies of *The Gentleman's Magazine* when younger family members got married and in several references to sheep breeding! Could this have been the dales connection? The *Sporting Magazine* informed us



that one Michael Miller in the 1820s was the 'the first person in Dorset to hunt roe deer and kept a pack of hounds for the purpose.' We unearthed census returns, bills of sale for the estate, and, courtesy of the *Brace of Pheasants* pub in Plush, a photo (below) of Plush House itself. All within a matter of days and without travelling to Dorset! By the time we were done we could have sat an exam between us on the life, times and lineage of the Miller family in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

More observant readers will have spotted that we still hadn't solved the original puzzle – why were the portraits in Reeth? The answer to that turned out to be far simpler than we'd anticipated – the Millers were related to the Law family who founded the Museum in the 1970s! The portraits have now been returned to the family and the mystery is officially solved – but we had a lot of fun in the process of proving just how much 'research' you can do without leaving your fireside in the middle of winter!

Tracy Little



## Questions, questions.....

The Museum gets many requests for information during the course of the year - maybe you can help with some of the more unusual enquiries? Please let us know if you can.

A couple are researching the Staithes painter Ernest Higgins RIGG (d.1946/7) who painted scenes of Swaledale about 1918/19. A painting by Rigg of 'Haymaking in Low Row' was sold at Christie's several years ago. It is thought that Rigg lived in Healaugh. Does anyone know any more about his period in the Dale?

Nancy Shields from Berkshire would like to know if it is true that Ruby FERGUSON (1899 - 1966), author of the children's Pony stories written in the 1930s and 1940s really was born and educated in Reeth, North Yorkshire? A little bit of preliminary research gives her maiden name as *Ruby Constance Ashby* and suggests that her father was a Methodist minister. However, her birth was registered in Todmorden, Lancs and in the 1901 census she's at her grandfather's house in Bradford. Was there a Rev (possibly David) Ashby in Reeth in the early 20th century?

Scabba Wath bridge is between Healaugh & Low Row - does anyone know where the name comes from? We know that *wath* is a ford, but any suggestions for *scabba*?

Veronica Sarries is interested in the origin of the Scotch Pines near Low Row, reputedly planted as a sign to 18th century Jacobite sympathisers. How likely do you think this is? Does anyone have a different explanation or a 'handed down' story about Bonny Prince Charlie et al?

## **S**ummer walks programme 2008

### **Mon 23<sup>rd</sup> June - Mining in the Beldi Hill/ Swinnergill area.**

This is a rare opportunity to see a virtually intact lead mining complex - including hushes, mines, a smelt mill and a restored dressing floor. Not to be missed! Meet in the car park at Keld at 2pm

### **Mon 7<sup>th</sup> July (repeated Mon 18<sup>th</sup> Aug) - Mining in Gunnerside Gill**

Visit the extensive remains of what was once a large and important lead mining area, including Sir Francis and Bunton levels and their associated dressing floors, the Bunton and Great North Hush and the Lownathwaite mines. Meet in the car park at Gunnerside at 2pm

### **Mon 21<sup>st</sup> July (repeated Mon 1<sup>st</sup> Sept) - Mining in and around Sleil Gill**

Discover levels, hushes, dressing floors and a crushing mill in the dramatic scenery of Sleil Gill. Meet in the public car park at Langthwaite at 2pm

### **Mon 4<sup>th</sup> Aug (repeated Mon 15<sup>th</sup> Sept) - Lead mining around Langthwaite**

Explore the extensive surface remains of Arkengarthdale's industrial past including hushes, mines and the smelt mill. Meet in the public car park at Langthwaite at 2pm

### **Mon 25<sup>th</sup> Aug - Uncovering Swaledale's past**

Discover evidence of human occupation in Swaledale from the Bronze Age through to post-Roman times, spanning 4000 years or more, including roundhouses, field systems and burial cairns. Meet at the Museum, at 2pm

Each walk will be approximately 3-4 miles over moderate terrain, lasting 2½ - 3 hours. Bring a drink, and wear suitable clothing and stout footwear. There is no specific charge but donations to the Museum are welcome!

## **NOTICE BOARD**

### **Swaledale Festival**

#### **Poetry Day**

Tuesday 3 June

10.30 Coffee/Tea and Welcome

11.00 Chris Considine - will launch *Musings*, her book of poems inspired by the Museum, the results of her period as 'Writer-in-Residence'

12.30 Lunch (optional Buffet in the Museum)

1.30 Dominic Goodwin, reads poems that you have requested

2.30 Bring Your Own Poems - This years themes: 'The Art of Lead' or 'Lead & the Landscape'

3.30 End of Day

*Tickets £8 for the day, plus optional Lunch in Museum £5.*

*Pre-Booking Essential as places limited.*

*Please contact Helen Bainbridge*

*Tel: 01748 884118,*

*email: [museum@swaledale.org](mailto:museum@swaledale.org).*

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

### **ARTYFACTS SUMMER CONCERT**

12th July

Songs & Sketches with Strawberry Tea  
2pm in the Museum

TICKETS £6 - book early as tickets sell fast!

### **Bank Holiday Events**

Monday 26 May

Marjorie Daniels will be demonstrating spinning in the Museum all day and will be happy to answer your questions about spinning, dying and knitting &

Alan Mills will give his popular lecture on

'Lead Mining in Swaledale'  
at 5pm in the Museum  
£3 with refreshments

Don't forget to look at the Museum website at [www.swaledalemuseum.org](http://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](mailto:jandt@cennick.fsnet.co.uk) and we will arrange it.

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!