

# FRIENDS OF SWALEDALE MUSEUM



## W elcome to our latest Newsletter.

A huge thank you once again to all who have supported the Museum whether by visiting in person or by membership of the Friends. This season, in spite of the more 'normal' weather conditions, we have not bounced back to our pre-recession visitor figures. However, other museums are having the same problems. The economic squeeze is being felt by most people in the tourist industry. The good news is that lots of exciting things are planned for the Museum next year.

*Janet Bishop, Chair of the Friends of Swaledale Museum*



*Taking tea in the Museum garden is Polly Mitchell from Oxford, a new member of the Friends, sporting the pair of muffettees she knitted using Kate Trusson's pattern drawn from one of the pairs in the Museum Collection.*

**D**espite another quiet year we have been very active indeed. We are delighted that our visitors, judging from their comments in the book, seem to approve our new display strategy.

We have had even more extremely positive notes left for us than any other year previously. Here is a heart warming selection: Grace from West Sussex, 'Have come here before and LOVED it! Only museum I like - keep going'; Mr Kitchen from Ripon, 'Very impressed with the displays'; the Greens from High Wycombe, 'What a treasure! Thank you for all the excellent signage'; Sheila Bennisson 'came to see the Bothroyd clock made by my great great grandfather'; John Harper from Sydney: 'An excellent collection of things 'NOT to be forgotten'; John Hillary from Battersea London: 'Great museum - came specially for it!'; while Mike Harris from Lancashire thought it 'probably the best small local museum I have been in. Brilliant - constantly interesting and surprising'.

As well as the usual visits from pupils at Pannal and Wigginton Schools we have had the Poppleton Beavers, and developed new connections via our relationship with Grinton Youth Hostel. Dubbed 'the History Lady' Helen has hiked up to



*Louis 8 and Rose 6 enjoying the Costume Collection in the Museum while on a visit from their home in Alsace. They last visited with Mum and Grandma in 2011, lovely to see them back!*

Bunton Level, amongst other places, with pick axes, gavellocks and lengths of rope, in order for pupils to measure out meers (a standard measurement for a mining pitch) and get to grips with the life of the 19<sup>th</sup> century lead mining families. We have also been out and about giving lectures to diverse groups such as the Darlington Embroiderers' Guild and Durham and Tees Valley U3A.

A big thank you must go to those who gave talks as part of our regular monthly programme. They have been top class. Lynda Powell, Director of the Green Howards Museum, introduced us to the evolution of military dress, and thanks to our links with the Upper Dales Family History Group we were able to put the man back into the North Yorkshire Volunteer Regiment uniform we have in our collection. Geoffrey Hope brought Dr Speirs' medical bag to life so effectively that many were nearly fainting when he demonstrated how to operate a tonsillectomy guillotine...on a carrot. André Berry investigated landscape, archaeology and material culture to explain



One of a collection of watercolours of Swaledale which has just been donated to the Museum. They were painted in the 1940s & 50s by Miss Dorothy Horn Riley who lived with her sister Bunty in Reeth and were brought into the Museum by Billie Riley whose mother Sheila lived with her maiden aunts during WW2. Many local people remember seeing Dorothy striding out into the countryside with her painting equipment.

the importance of peat, and the regional evolution of the peat spade. After spending the winter digitising over 2,000 pictures in our Archive, Stephen Eastmead made a masterly selection to whet the audience's appetite to go online and find out more. As a result of his work we have acquired a major collection of slides of the locality taken between 1970-2000 by George Milburn (see more in the Newsletter). Dave Carlisle ended the official season with his inimitable panache!

For the first time we have also organised visits: to Abbeyhorn in Carnforth and the extraordinary church designed by Sarah Losh at Wreay; to York Medical Society thanks to Geoffrey Hope and Alan Scott; to the Lindisfarne Gospels exhibition in Durham and to Earby Museum of Lead Mining accompanied by Dave Carlisle. We have been very privileged to have special talks at each of these venues for which we are most grateful. Special thanks go to Geoff Ward who drove the Reeth and District Community Bus for us on each occasion.

Another new venture was the launch of our Centre for Swaledale Studies. We had three wonderful study mornings which enabled us to look in more depth, with experts, at a select group of objects intimately connected with the history of the area. Tim Laurie chose the earliest known man-made object made in the area to start the programme. We were much indebted to the Richmondshire Museum for allowing us to borrow this stone axe and other artefacts. Stephen Eastmead and Peter Denison-Edson revealed the importance of our Romano-British heritage, set in the context of recent excavations at the Hagg by the Swaledale and Arkengarthdale Archaeology Group. Our third session focused on shards of supposedly medieval glass found at Marrick Abbey. Mike Wood from Richmond who was present at the original discovery filled in some of the background. We were exceptionally fortunate that Josie Kyme led us to the Cookes and thence to David Dungworth from English Heritage - who helped reveal that the 'medieval' glass was in fact 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Ashley Tallyn who has been volunteering for us, provided a masterly context for thinking about the lives of medieval nuns in the north. Her presentation drew upon her Ph.D. thesis, which she is just completing. Thanks go to many people for contributing to these lively and stimulating sessions, as research was collated from many sources, and discussion on the day raised many important aspects. We hope to follow this top class start with more seminars in 2014. *(continued on page 3)*



*Tim Laurie launching our Centre for Swaledale Studies back on 18 May - with a seminar on the earliest known man made artefact discovered in Swaledale. With thanks to Richmond Museum for allowing us to borrow this highly important object.*



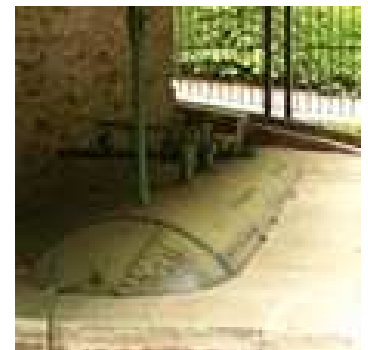
*Clara hard at work in the archives. We are most grateful to her for all her very hard work, focus and commitment.*

I am staying with my family in our holiday cottage in Low Row for the summer, as we often do. Swaledale is one of my favourite places in the world but for most of the year I live in Bristol where I am about to start my last year of school. I love classical civilization and ancient history and my fascination with these subjects has led me to want to pursue them at university. I was delighted when my love of history and Swaledale were able to combine as Helen agreed to let me volunteer in the Swaledale museum, which she runs with her husband, for a week's work experience. Helen has put me to work doing all kinds of things. I have catalogued the quilt collection for the York Quilt Museum and fixed up the memorial card and family history archives as well as arranging hundreds of new photographs. I have also done restorative work by polishing the silver, including a rather gruesome tonsillectomy device. Helen taught me about retail as we packaged and displayed lace for sale, which we then sold at our stand at the Reeth Memorial Hall

fundraising event. The week ended with a tea party at the Orchard where I dashed about with boiling water and tea cups while trying to sneak some of the many delicious looking cakes.

I thoroughly enjoyed my week at the Swaledale Museum. The amount of many and varied jobs that Helen and her husband Alan do to keep the museum running smoothly amazed me. Thank you for a great week!

*Clara Baltesz*



Alison and John Stevenson visited the Museum earlier this year and spotted a photograph of miners in front of an engine boiler. On returning home they sent us some photographs of a preserved example of the same double egg-ended boiler (*above*) on display in their local park in Bristol; the only one in its original working location in the country.

Thanks to our growing reputation as a serious research archive we have been able to help many different people, from family historians like Jennifer Oswald-Sealy visiting from Australia to Professor William Van Vugt from Calvin College, Grand Rapids who is writing his fourth book on emigration from our Dales to America. We have also benefited from some wonderful donations. One of my favourites is a letter from Mr Denys to Doctor Barker senior, writing of his esteem for the 'gentlemen of swaddle', donated by Lesley Close.

We are now working on next year's displays, the highlight of which will be our upper exhibition gallery - made possible by a grant from the Community Opportunities Fund, and the terrific support of Councillors Bob Gale and John Blackie. We are selecting 'Dales Characters' from the past to reveal the welter of extraordinary connections and achievements of Swaledale and Arkengarthdale inhabitants. Please do contact us if you would like to nominate a character for our 'People of the Dale' gallery! Better still come and visit us in 2014 to see who is there.

We are negotiating difficult times. Therefore our thanks are even greater to you our supporters and friends. Without you, small independent endeavours like the Swaledale Museum could not survive. We hugely appreciate those who attend our events, bring visitors and generously give of their time, expertise and thought. Thank you!

*Helen Bainbridge*



*View from inside the 'cave' looking towards Reeth*

**H**igh on Fremington Edge, looking down across Reeth, is the structure marked on OS maps as *Jabz' Cave*; a natural fissure in the limestone scar rather than a cave in the traditional sense. The opening has been enlarged at some stage and several terraces constructed on retaining walls giving panoramic views across the dale. The date (or even the purpose!) of the terracing work is uncertain but Marion Moverley recently found the following obituary which throws some light on the name.

*Teesdale Mercury 19 December 1894:* 'Death of a Swaledale Worthy. Mr Jabez Raisbeck died somewhat suddenly at his home in Reeth in Swaledale about 4.20 on Saturday morning, the 8<sup>th</sup> inst. He was in his 68<sup>th</sup> year. The deceased was an old printer, stationer and newsagent of over forty years standing and he was well known and very highly respected throughout the dales...Deceased was a native of

Arkengarthdale. His father, Robert Raisbeck, a devout and upright and genial old man as could be met in a day's march, was for many years manager of the mines, and was highly respected. Jabez served his apprenticeship with Mr H Atkinson of Barnard Castle and about 45 years ago commenced business in Reeth, where he remained to the end of his life...A monument, which is likely to descend unto posterity under the name of 'Jabez Cave' is situated on Fremington Edge, a large hill near Reeth. This cave (which has both parlour and kitchen) is so marvellously constructed of immense stones, that the wonder is how he got them lifted and arranged.'

Harry Speight's *Romantic Richmondshire* was published in 1897 but had obviously been prepared several years earlier. He writes of Reeth: 'There is a Printer & Stationer's Shop &c., kept by Mr. Jabez Raisbeck, who as he modestly affirms 'dabbles in rhyme' contributing occasionally to North Country Newspapers and whose buoyant muse finds wing in a rocky nest high up in the scars of Fremington known to the dalesfolk as Jabez's Cave'.

In 1973, local historian Edmund Cooper in his *History of Swaledale* writes that Jabez Raisbeck was "...reputed to have been a writer of poetry. In order to further his ambition, and whenever his business would allow, he escaped to the top of Fremington Edge. Here he found a natural cavity in the cliff. Having added a protecting wall and other additional comforts to it, he used to sit there writing his verses, far removed from the bustling life of Reeth."

Does anyone have any examples of the poetry which Jabez composed in his lofty lookout? If so, both the Museum and SWAAG would love to hear from you! We would like to include Jabez in our forthcoming exhibition.

*Tracy Little (with thanks to Richard Carter & SWAAG)*

As Helen & Alan will probably be away from the village in December (to say nothing of the recent winter weather!) the

### **Friends' 2013 Christmas Party**

will be held in Spring 2014 instead and will be a **Grand Private View** of the 'People of the Dales' Exhibition. Full details will be circulated nearer the time.

This little pair of boots was left outside the Museum early this Season. They contained a little note 'These boots are the ones that Alfie Nichols wore to school and played in. He died of diphtheria at the age of five and have been cherished by his mother until her recent death'. Can you help us find out who Alfie was?





## Notes from the Diaries of Willie Hird of CB Yard

I am descended from the numerous Arkengarthdale Hirds. My grandmother, Nellie Hird, lived at the Corn Mill in Arkengarthdale as a girl, and in the 1940s and 50s, she and her husband Tom Gill lived in Reeth and ran the Heather Café. For a while I have been researching her life and her family. After buying a holiday cottage at CB Yard in 2002, I became interested in the history of the Yard, and through this line of research I encountered another branch of the family, my grandmother's uncle, Jack Hird, who lived in the Yard from the early 1900s until his death in 1932, and whose descendants lived there until the 1970s. I had ransacked the memories of various family members about the history of the Yard, and then I got really lucky. Sybil Reed, née Hird, (Jack's grand-daughter and my second cousin once removed) came across a pile of work diaries belonging to her father, Willie Hird. Luckily for me, rather than throwing them away she passed them to the Museum. They proved to be a mine of information.

Willie Hird was born in 1900. His diaries (1927 -1940), give a detailed picture of life in Arkengarthdale at that time. For instance, they list the many varied social events on offer: football, quoits, cricket, a badminton club in Reeth (where Willie met his wife-to-be, Winnie), musical concerts, 'Nigger Concerts'<sup>1</sup>, lantern lectures, a performance of *The Mikado* in Richmond, teas and socials at the Institute, box socials<sup>2</sup>, cricket concerts, Married People's Concert Parties<sup>3</sup>, organ recitals, whist drives, local agricultural shows at Darlington, Hudswell and Reeth, sports at Whaw and Reeth, Reeth sheep sale, pie suppers, a Whaw Gun Club concert, trips to Leyburn cinema and a Beaters' Dinner at CB Inn.



*Historic postcard of the CB Yard*

There were more activities, based around the chapel: Sunday services, harvest festivals, anniversaries, Sunday School trips to places such as Barnard Castle and Leyburn, prayer meetings, choir practice, organ practice and lectures. There was also attendance at various Chapel meetings: meetings of the Trustees, the Wesley Guild, the Band of Hope, the missionary society; and besides these, there were also Institute committee meetings, teachers meetings, Cow Club meetings. Willie had such a rich social life that his diary specifically notes those occasions when he was 'not out at night'.

Willie's diaries also contain information about the development of the various buildings in the Yard. CB Yard originally serviced the lead mining industry and contained mainly industrial buildings. There was a saw mill (complete with water wheel and saw-bench), the Estate Office, a carpenter's shop, a paint shop and stores, a stable, a coal house, blacksmith's, a cart shed, a smelt mill just opposite the entrance, and a powder house (for storing gunpowder) in a field nearby. There was a house for the mine manager, a reading room and houses containing accommodation for single miners. When mining ended, the Yard was used in the running of the Arkengarthdale Estate. In September 1930 the Estate held a sale of property and several of the buildings were bought by Jack Hird and his wife, Lizzie Ann. Over time, their son Willie converted many of these buildings into homes for himself and various family members. Work on the conversions was recorded in his diaries.

The diaries also include entries of a personal nature, all reported in the same low-key style; from minor occurrences such as: 'cow stepped on toe', to more major events, such as:

8<sup>th</sup> April - Father died at 5 pm. Drove to Reeth at night to see Blenkiron. 9<sup>th</sup> - Making coffin all day. 12<sup>th</sup> - Washed car also hearse for funeral. Afternoon - Father's funeral.

29<sup>th</sup> Sept - Lovely day. Painted fireplace in kitchen. 11am married. Went to Keswick for honeymoon.

9th Jan - Winnie started poorly. Sent car money off, also a bill to Mr Gott. Went down to Reeth for coffin wood etc. Got money order cashed. Doctor here. Winnie gave birth to a lovely little baby girl.

Events of national importance, such as the start of WWII are not mentioned, although the reader can get a hint of what is happening in the world at large through personal entries, such as references in 1939 to gas masks and doing ARP duty in Reeth. In 1940 he mentions evacuees, First Aid lectures, Home Guard Drill and a cricket match with soldiers from Reeth,

I found the diaries both informative and entertaining, and I am extremely grateful to Sybil for deciding they belonged in the Museum rather than in the dustbin. So next time you're thinking of throwing away old documents, letters, diaries or whatever – think again, and donate them to the Museum instead. Someone, sometime, somewhere will find them absolutely fascinating.

*Cathy Lawday*

*Footnotes:*

<sup>1</sup>Concerts where participants blacked up their faces, as in the old TV programme 'The Black & White Minstrel Show'

<sup>2</sup>The girls arrived at a Box Social with a box containing supper for two people. Lads were chosen by number and then they each paid for and shared supper with, one of the girls.

<sup>3</sup>I'm not sure if 'married people' referred to the participants or the audience.



*Visitors to the Museum will be familiar with this photo of Hannah Buxton from Swaledale who emigrated to Wisconsin with some of her family in 1849 when she was aged around 60*

## Migration from the Dales

“I am conducting research in North Yorkshire for part of my latest project on British migration to the United States (tentatively titled, ‘English Immigration to the United States, 1800-1914: a Transatlantic Economic Analysis’). It uses a database that was compiled by my late mentor at Cambridge University, Charlotte Erickson, as well as many other sources. I am interested in studying emigrants whose experiences and strategies may have been typical and whose stories shed light on the relationship between industrialization and economic growth - the key changes of modernity - and migration from England to America.

I am very excited to see the letters and other items that are being assembled by Marion Moverley of the Upper Dales Family History Group, Helen Bainbridge of the Swaledale Museum, and others in the community. Yorkshire, and North Yorkshire in particular, was a very important source of America’s immigrants because people from these regions brought many industrial skills that helped build the American economy. The dales immigrants were crucial for America’s lead mining and smelting industries, but also for the ways they blended mining and farming in both England and America. There is still much to be learned about their story, on both sides of the Atlantic.

I am amazed by the gracious help that I am getting from the historians and others in the dales. It will allow me to make the most of my research visit and hopefully allow me time to enjoy the unique beauty, history, and culture of the Yorkshire Dales which I fell in love with about thirty years ago.”

*William Van Vugt*

William Van Vugt is Professor of History at Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan, where he teaches courses in English and American history. His books include *Britain to America: the mid-Nineteenth Century Immigrants to the United States* (1999); *Race and Reconciliation in South Africa: A Multicultural Dialogue in Comparative Perspective* (co-author and editor), 2000; *British Buckeyes: the English, Scots, and Welsh in Ohio, 1700-1900* (2006); *British Immigration to the United States, 1776-1914*, 4 volumes (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2009). He has also written numerous scholarly articles and chapters in books on migration and the economic history of the North Atlantic. We’re delighted to be able to help him with his current project.

## New Picture Resource - the Milburn Collection

We have been fortunate in a recent donation to the Museum of a large bank of about 900 slides taken between the 1971 and 2001 by Geoffrey Milburn. We hope to add these to our online archive over the winter, so do look out for them there if you have internet access. They include pictures of Richmond, the Swale area below Richmond to the Tees, Gunnerside, Muker to Keld and Arkengarthdale, covering lead mining, sheep, Methodist chapels and churches, and are fascinating for what they reveal about recent changes to our landscape and vernacular architecture. Geoff’s daughter Andrea Gordon has kindly provided us with some notes about the background to the pictures.

Geoffrey Milburn was a history lecturer at Sunderland Polytechnic. He was also a lifelong Methodist and an active Local Preacher for 40 years. His Methodist links brought him into membership of the Wesley Historical Society and at one of the meetings he met Rev & Mrs Batty from Reeth. (Many readers will know Mrs Margaret Batty as the author of a series of local history books on Swaledale and Arkengarthdale.) His love of Yorkshire, history and Methodism all intertwined in the dales and his friendship with the Battys provided him with further knowledge and understanding of the history of that area.

Through the Battys he came to stay in Swaledale with his family regularly over the next 20 years. During that time he also accepted preaching appointments in the area enabling him to get to know a number of local people and build up firm friendships in the dales.



*Delighted to see Emily in the Museum again. She volunteered for us a couple of years ago, and has returned from the Victoria and Albert Museum/Royal College of Art with a distinction for her MA. We all knew she was brilliant! Congratulations Emily.*



This photograph is part of a small group donated to the Museum by an anonymous donor who worked with Charlie Woodward and Ernest Shevels. The picture, taken in June 1977, shows Ernest Shevels' home-made barytes recovery plant at the Old Gang Mines. This wonderful Heath-Robinson contraption comprises 'a feed hopper, crusher adjacent, short log-washer, single compartment home-made jig for processing fines, coarse material and quarter inch - which goes into the Albion parcel van for separating on Davison 4-compartment jig inside'. A wonderful example of recycling!

Amy Postgate (who will be 93 in September) back in Reeth after running away at the age of 18 during the Second World War! Here she is outside the Museum with her grand daughter Rachel and great grand daughter Nadia (who plays our harmonium wonderfully).



#### Descendants of the Pedley family.

Mrs Georgina Swann (*above*) and her grandchildren George and Beth McClean returned to Half Moon House in Reeth this summer. Georgina is the great niece, and George and Beth (who was camera shy!) are the great-great-nephew and niece, of John and Tom Pedley formerly of the Half Moon Hotel and Elsie Pedley of Grinton post office. They were accompanied by David her husband.

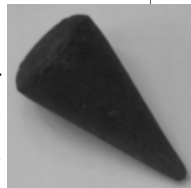
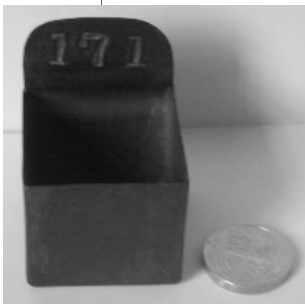
Following the deaths of John and Tom the Half Moon was sold and turned into holiday cottages one of which Georgina booked for a holiday this August. They very much enjoyed their time in the village and surrounding dales.

Georgina and her sister Carole have fond memories of coming up every year for Reeth Show with their parents, John (who was raised in the Half Moon) and Ellen Pollard, so it was also a time for revisiting old haunts. "Thank you all for the warmth shown to us. We will be back," she says.

#### Mystery Object

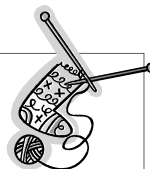
The little solid metal cone in the lead working section of the Museum is a turnpin for widening lead pipes to form connections.

Any thoughts on our new object (*left*)? It is made of tin. The £1 coin gives some idea of scale.



#### 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 winter months. For details of dates & venues please contact Christine Price 01748-884406 or email: [ewellprice@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:ewellprice@hotmail.co.uk)



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 07969 823232 or email: [museum.swaledale@btinternet.com](mailto:museum.swaledale@btinternet.com)