

Winster Local History Group

Newsletter No 14 August 1999

Party!! Party!! Party!! Party!! Party!! Party!!

Party!!

We are holding a party to mark the new History Group year. All members, prospective members, guests, etc. are very welcome, and we are hoping for a good turnout to get us off to a good start.

Place: The Old Bakehouse, Pump Lane (thanks to the hospitality of Hilary Tomlinson).

Time: Monday 6 September, starting at 7.30.

Please bring a bottle. Contributions to the food would be welcome (but don't let this deter you – the most important thing is for you to be there). Hilary's phone number is 650629.

AGM!! AGM!! AGM!! AGM!! AGM!!

AGM!!

At a suitable time during the party we will hold our AGM. We expect it to be brief and not to encroach too much upon the rest of the evening.

If you have any items for consideration please phone 650090.

Christine Renouf is unable to continue as Secretary because her work commitments often keep her away from Winster at key times. So we definitely need a volunteer for this post. The Chair and Treasurer also come up for re-election. A moderate turnover of posts is always a healthy sign, so please give the matter some thought.

Meetings before Christmas

Monday 18 October (date and starting time to be confirmed). Winster's Roadshow. Please bring your by-gones and Winster memorabilia for everyone to enjoy. Any items (pre- 1960ish) would be welcome – e.g. deeds, maps, indentures, house and garden finds, industrial tools, clothes, ornaments, pictures, heirlooms. We may also be able to help with unidentified objects! For further information phone Jean Skyrme, 650778.

We expect the Winster Roadshow to be something between an exhibition and a demonstration. If you would like somebody other than yourself to talk briefly about your item, or if you think it would be helpful if we did some research in advance, please let us know.

This could be the first of a long-running series!

Monday 22 November 7.30 (date to be confirmed). A talk by Alan Stone on Winster Guisers.

A Winster Claim to Fame in Lead-Mining History: The Seventh Newcomen Atmospheric Engine of 1716

(This article, written 1 September 1998, was kindly contributed by D Penney, by way of John Wood.)

It is not widely known that in Winster only the seventh Newcomen atmospheric engine ever to be built was erected. The year was 1716 when the proprietors of Yatestoop lead mine commissioned a Mr George Sparrow to erect an engine at the mine, with a further one to follow in July 1717.

The mine started operating in 1702 and worked a lead pipe vein situated in the Monsal Dale limestone in the area of Winster known as Painters Way. By December 1719 the mine had produced an astonishing 25,000 loads of ore at a cost of £267-3s-8d. (Four loads of ore equals one ton, so 25,000 loads equals 6,250 tons).

The pipe vein ran in a north-south direction at a depth of 200 ft below the surface. The founder shaft was situated at the top of the hill at the south end of these workings. The slope of the ground also runs in a north-south direction down to a stream where the land rises again on the north side to a height of 400 ft. Because of the geology of the area, the limestone continues to dip before rising again to form the Stanton anticline, which lies under the Namurian shale and Ashover grit on the north side of the stream.

This meant that the shafts on the south side of the valley remained at 200 ft but the shafts on the north side (with the exception of the shafts on top of the anticline) became increasingly deeper as the dip of the anticline was followed north.

By around 1715 most of the workable ore had been removed above water level and extensive pumping was being carried out by way of rag-and-chain pumps to obtain ore from below the natural water table.

The decision to install a Newcomen engine was made in May 1716. The proprietors of the mine must have been very confident that the mine was going to continue to produce large quantities of ore in the years to come.

George Sparrow was to raise the money to build and erect the engine, which meant supplying stone, wood, piping, pumps, a brass cylinder and a boiler, and also building the engine house. The shaft for the pumps was sunk by the mining company, which also had to supply 160 yds of elm wood 17 in x 20 in for the piping, and coal to fire the engine when it was built. In return Sparrow was to receive 'one seventh part of all the lead ore got by the working of the engine.' If, however, he failed to keep the engine working he was to pay £100 for every default.

The known dimensions of the engine are that the brass cylinder was 16 in diameter and 8 ft long, with a wall thickness of 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. The wooden beam was 12 ft long with oval chains at each end to which the pump rods and piston were attached. The boiler was made from iron with a lead top and was called a haystack type because of its shape. The pump rods were wood 12 in x 12 in x 10 ft long, fastened end-to-end with iron plates. The pumps were 9 in in diameter and lifted 90 ft in three stages.

The amount of water being removed by the engine was not sufficient to keep the mine dry, so a further engine was installed in July 1717, with a third arriving in 1724.

The records show that in 1777 a fourth engine was purchased with a 70 in cylinder. This engine was built on top of the hill on the north side of the stream and lifted water 90 ft to sough level with 600 ft of dry rods (a sough is a drainage level driven to unwater a mine or mines). The water for the boiler was lifted 600 ft. The engine was overburdened by the great weight of the rods and only ran for 5 years before being replaced in 1782 by engine number 5. To overcome the problem experienced with the previous engine this one was installed 400 ft underground. An excavation of 1200 cubic ft was cut

underground in the soft shale above the limestone at a cost of £300 before the engine house was built of 'good grit stone' with the lever wall 5 ft thick and side walls 3 ft thick. The boiler was 20 ft in diameter and set to one side of the engine, unlike the previous models which had the cylinder directly above the boiler. The flue of the chimney was up a shaft. All the materials were lowered down the shaft from the surface. This one engine used 47 tons of coal a week (all delivered by way of horse and cart, summer and winter).

There are no records of this 1777 engine having been removed when the mine finished working in 1784. A group of members of the Peak District Mines Historical Society, myself included, are at present working to discover the whereabouts of this missing engine.

Keele University Evening Course: 'The Ancient Roads and Trackways of the Peak District'. Tutor: Brian Rich. Venue: Miners Standard. Commences Tuesday 21 September 7.30 – 9.30. Best to enrol in advance. Tel 01782 583436 for details.

Two Friends of the History Group

Sadly the deaths occurred this month of two people who kindly contributed their memories to our Oral History archive. Hedley Boam (aged 84) of The Orchard, Horsecroft Lane, was recorded by his daughter, Carolyn Brook, in March 1997, and Tom Wigley (aged 84) of Painters Way Farm, was interviewed by John and Sue Mills in May 1997. The History Group would like to express its gratitude and extend sympathy to their families.

Here are some extracts from the transcripts of their tapes:

HB: Yes, you picked up jobs in them days, you know. First of all I used to be the Auxiliary Postman when they went on their holidays. Wilfred Boden, he were the postman. He always went to Wembley to the Cup Final. He never missed going to Wembley. Then I did his posting, you see. Then there were Bob Walters at Brightgate, he were a postman, and Mr Courtney up Woolleys Yard. Sarah Buxton, she were the proper postwoman, she were. And three Miss Browns used to run the Post Office.

TW: I used to love a couple of good horses, you know, a plough and a packet of fags and a box o'matches. I were made, because when you're ploughing a field you dunna have make a mistake, because it's there all time, isn't it, that straight furrow, and furrow turned over correctly. But that's all gone now. Dunna matter now, does it?