

Winster Local History Group

Newsletter No. 23 May 2002

* **!!CHANGE OF DATE!!** *

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* **The guided walk round Bonsall with Peter Greaves will** *

* **now take place on Monday 24th June 2002.** *

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* **Assemble by the Fountain, Bonsall at 7.30 pm.** *

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PROGRAMME FOR 2002/2003

23 September 2002: Winster Road Show

28 October 2002: AGM and Social Evening

25 November 2002: Patrick ('Wild Flowers') Harding: Christmas Customs

24 February 2003: David Hey: Packhorse Trails

24 March 2003: Geoff Williams: Geology and the Peak District

28 April 2003: David Farrington (Cromford Mill):
The Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site Project

19 May 2003: (Provisional) Field Names around Winster

16 or 23 June 2003: Outdoor event.

Joseph Burton and the Burton Institute

As the extract from the Parish magazine records (see back page), the Burton Institute is 100 years old this year. How did a village hall come to have such a distinctive name? The answer lies in the affection in which Winster was held by

one of its most successful sons, Joseph Burton, whose life reads like a classic Victorian success story. He was born in Winster in 1832, the fifth of eight children of Anthony Burton and his wife Mary, neé Marchant, who came from Ible. His father, and several earlier generations, were blacksmiths in Winster, making tools and equipment for the lead-miners.

Joseph started his career apprenticed to Henry Taylor, a grocer and draper with premises on Town Street (today's Main Street). Evidently a bright and hard-working pupil, he was later sent to London to gain further experience. By 1858, at the age of 26, he was able to set up as a grocer in Nottingham, where he opened his first shop. He married Annie Ball, a local girl, and they eventually had seven children.

His arrival in Nottingham was very timely. The advent of the railways and the expansion of industrial activity brought increased general prosperity and an increasingly affluent middle class. This created a demand for quality provisions which Joseph, with his business acumen, was able to recognise and respond to. From one small shop in St. Ann's Road, with living accommodation above, he acquired in stages a row of shops in Smithy Row, a prime site by the Council House. The growing family moved first to a modest suburban villa which he nostalgically named Winster House, and in 1894 to a mansion on Mapperley Road, Nottingham, complete with gate lodge, carriage house and living-in servants. This seems to have been what was expected of him, rather than any great wish to live a grand life, as all attest that he was a modest and unassuming man.

Also in 1894, he bought the fourth and last of his Smithy Row premises, but expansion continued both in Nottingham and elsewhere, with branches opening in Alfreton in 1896, and eventually as far afield as Abergavenny and Leominster. In 1900 Burton's became a limited liability company with Joseph as chairman and his three sons as directors. By the time of his death in 1916, there were 40 shops, a café, a delivery fleet, a cold storage depot and two bakeries.

In his prosperous later years, Joseph became involved in charitable activities, particularly in support of Nottingham General Hospital. Now a pillar of society, in 1900 he was appointed a JP, and later became High Sheriff of Nottinghamshire. At about this time he conceived the idea of providing Winster with a public hall, as an expression of his regard for his home 'town'. Encouraged by his old Winster friend Charles Heathcote, he bought a close called Ashmore Pingle, a piece of land near the Elton crossroads, the income from which would finance free borrowing from the recently established village library, and in 1902 he purchased and refurbished a

public hall, which he gave to the village in trust, to be used as a free public reading room known as the Burton Institute.

David Jones

Oral History Group Project

The Oral History Group has completed a stage of its work by depositing some of its tape recordings and transcripts in the Derbyshire Record Office. Forty-five cassettes have been deposited, but the project is ongoing and so there will be more in the future. Edited material from these recordings formed the basis of our book *Winster: A Peak District Village Remembers*, published in 2000.

Access to the tapes is prohibited for a period of twenty years, after which they will be available for consultation by researchers in the Record Office. If anyone wants to consult the material before that time elapses, they can approach the History Group, which has a set of copies. All informants who were living at the time the book was published gave their written permission for their material to be used. Also everyone gave their permission orally when the recordings being made.

In acknowledging receipt, Margaret O'Sullivan, County Archivist, expressed her thanks and wrote that the material 'will form a very important addition to the records of Winster which we already hold'.

Geoff Lester

From the Parish Magazine 100years ago.

The Vicar, W.H.Nixon, urged everyone to congratulate themselves on the recent Parochial Gathering, which he considered 'the most succesful of all'. What had made it different was the experiment of holding a Dramatic Entertainment during the evening, which some people (probably most of all the Vicar) had considered 'somewhat doubtful'. In the event the Winster Amateur Dramatic Company presented first a drama entitled 'Is he Married?' and secondly the laughable farce 'My Wife's Relations'. In both performances the company 'outshone their previous

efforts, which is saying a great deal'. Such was the enthusiasm that a detailed synopsis was begun in the next issue and left 'to be continued'- though it never was. Another feature was a song by Mr Herbert Jackson of Manchester entitled 'How Paddy Stole the Rope', which 'was exceedingly humorous and thoroughly appreciated, as it deserved to be'.

In his address the Vicar referred to the war in South Africa, calling attention to the great advances in communications [meaning radio telegraphy, which had just been developed by Marconi], so that if anything of importance happened it was known in London the following day, whereas in China communications were so poor that millions did not know about the war with Japan. The Vicar also expressed regret that the recent census had shown that Winster's population had decreased, but hoped that the proposed railway might reverse the trend. Another important matter was the gift to the 'town' of the Public Hall by Mr Joseph Burton of Nottingham.

Supplied by Geoff Lester

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