



The Bugle



Royton Local History Society's Newsletter

Firstly, there's a special date for your diary - On Sunday August 5th there will be an event held in Royton Park to celebrate the Olympic Games, the 100th Anniversary of Royton Park (one year too late) and the 800th Anniversary of Royton. At the moment I'm not sure what our involvement will be but I would be grateful for your support and participation in this event.

Secondly, our society needs a new Treasurer. Beryl Lever, our current Treasurer, will be retiring from the position at the AGM in September so if you are interested in taking on the job please have a word with either me or Jess. Many thanks Beryl for your work in this role over the past few years.

Extra thanks must also go the 'Royton Lives Through the Ages' group who have now successfully completed the landscaping project of the Royton Hall Site. I single out Margaret (Pearl) Malcolmson for particular thanks as it was she who, after potential problems with the landscaping work had been spotted, managed to sort out the problems (despite many difficulties) which lead to a proper resolution of the work.

Quite often I receive email messages from people who have visited our web site. These messages sometimes ask questions about our Society, others pass on information, and some have specific questions and requests for information. In most of these cases I ask for help from Frances Stott and Michael Higgins and I would like to thank them for their time and effort in providing the answers. However one particular request had them stumped - read about it later in this edition.

As the 2011/12 season comes to an end I hope you have enjoyed the series of talks arranged by Jess, who as I write is busy putting next seasons compilation together. So I'll finish by expressing my sincere thanks to Jess for her hard work in continuing to find and secure interesting talks and speakers year after year. Also thanks to all other committee members whose contribution helps keep our Society running.

Have a great summer break. I look forward to seeing you in September.

Geoff Oliver, Chairman



The Derivation of 'Royton' - A newspaper debate of 1879

My wife's cousin has kindly given me some old Lancashire themed books once belonging to her mother's lodger. In the collection are four volumes of an incomplete set of the City News Notes and Queries dated 1879 -1884. The collection is a series of newspaper queries with respondents' answers on topics ranging through history, art, science, dialect and geography. There is much correspondence on local topics relating to the Manchester area.

Still, I was surprised to come across letters by three correspondents on the meaning of the name 'Royton' in the collection. I was even more pleased to find one of the correspondents was Thomas Seville of Elm House, Royton, the owner of Springhill Mill and well-known magistrate and town councillor (See Bugle no.20, June 2010).

A brief debate is started off in the July 5th issue of 1879, when someone writing under the pseudonym of 'A Manchester Pythagorean' asks if anyone has any ideas as to what the meaning of Royton is. He wondered whether the name came from the Anglo-Saxon 'hry' or 'hryg', a thorn, making 'thorn town'. He remarks that there is a Thornton nearby. This is confusing as the nearby township is actually written Thornham, although in my researches I have found it earlier spelt Thornton (MH). The author then quotes the historian Harland who suggested the name came from Anglo Saxon 'Ryh' , meaning hairy or rough, giving 'Rough-town' This is interesting as modern historians tend to support the Anglo Saxon 'Rige' and tun' (rye farm) as the main meaning of Royton.

He was answered by a Mr Keyworth of Liverpool, on November 29th, who suggested the name came from 'Royd-tun' a town ridded or 'royded' of trees, a clearing town. He suggested that copious amounts of trees would be needed to fuel the supposed Anglo Saxon forge excavated within the Royton boundaries earlier in the century.

This letter prompted a reply from Thomas Seville, printed in the Dec 6th issue. I quote it in full:

'If Thomas Keyworth refers to Royton near Oldham it is clear he is wrong in his guess respecting the original mode of Spelling Royton "Roydton". I have seen copies of deeds of very ancient date belonging to the Percival Family 1662 to 1765, from which it is quite evident the name Royton was given from the River Roy, a branch of the Irk, which flows through the village and in front of Royton Hall. Further, Royton was noted for its fine timber even within the recollections of its present oldest inhabitants, and I myself can well recollect large trees, beech and sycamore especially, growing in the park and hedgerows, and also nearly round the church, besides several plantations or nurseries of trees. Therefore I think it is evident your correspondent must be wrong in his conclusions. THOMAS SEVILLE, Elm House Royton.'

Of course Mr Seville would know all about the River Roy as his mill and iron foundry lay along its banks and a few years earlier he had advertised the river (or brook as it is here) as its main feature when he attempted to float the concern on the stock market. The stream did indeed provide water, via weirs, to fill a few mill lodges (reservoirs) in the town, but today its

former glory is gone, most of it now running through underground culverts away from appreciative eyes. Indeed, all that is left of the Seville mill complex (spinning mills and weaving shed, foundry, reservoirs and cottages) is the key stone of the foundry entrance with the words 'Springhill Iron Works 1837' built into the retaining wall of a short open section of the river on Brook Street.

So, if Thomas Seville is right, we are hiding the mainspring of Royton's history under a culvert.

Sources: City News Notes and Queries Vol.II pp.161, 284, 290

by Michael Higgins



Can you help?

Here is the request I received via our web site :-

To whom it may concern,

My name is Dan Monahan, I'm the Superintendent of the Green Mount Cemetery in Baltimore, Maryland. We are often asked about the unique headstone located on the grave of Samuel Buckley. We do not know anything about it. I noticed he was from Royton and so I started to do some research and found your site. I'm wondering if he could possibly be the brother of the Ann(e) Buckley you mention. He was born in 1797, eight years after your Ann(e). I was wondering if the rock had a special significance to Royton. Any information you can provide would be greatly appreciated. If you're interested I can provide you with a list of the individuals buried on the lot. Thanks so much! Dan.

As Michael Higgins had written the article about Ann Buckley (in the September 2010 edition of The Bugle) I forwarded the request to him. He immediately started to do some research and sent me the following message a few days later:-
I managed to get into Oldham to check the parish records today. Unfortunately there was no Samuel Buckley listed in the baptismal records for 1797 or any of the years round that date. Presumably he was not born in Royton. Without any other information he will be hard to find as we don't have the name of his parents. There are a couple of Buckley households in Royton at the time but no Samuels for children. There are the poor rate records and other property lists but only adults appear on them. The census complete with names does not start until 1841 when presumably the man will have already gone to the USA.

Not to be beaten Michael went on his quest once again.

I checked the Shaw parish records today with no luck, so I rechecked our Ann Buckley in the 1851 census which is the first to give place of birth. Her husband is called Thomas Scholes Buckley, aged 73, and born in Saddleworth. Unfortunately the Saddleworth baptismal records start at 1800, three years too late, so we are stumped again. There is no Samuel Buckley in Royton records until one appears in the Poor Rate for around 1820, likewise a Thomas Buckley. Samuel lives at Heyside, Thomas in Haggate Lane.

Unfortunately that is where the story ends - for now - unless you know better! If you know anything at all about this, or would like more information about Samuel's relatives buried in Green Mount Cemetery please email me at: chairman@rlhs.co.uk

Oh and the unique gravestone that has caused all this see below.

Geoff Oliver, Chairman

