



The Bugle



Royton Local History Society's Newsletter

Our summer break is all too short and here we are in September starting our 2010/11 season whether we are ready for it or not. Once again our society secretary Jess Wild has been working hard to put together an interesting and varied selection of talks to take us through the next 10 months and she deserves our thanks for doing this.

We will soon be holding our Annual General Meeting and this will result in a change of committee personnel. Our Vice Chairman - John Crothers - has expressed the desire to retire from this position. John has served our society well from its earliest formation and although I have only had the pleasure of working with him for the past two years I know I shall miss his support, sagacity and guidance in the future. Having said that, I'm confident that John will still be happy to lend his support in the future even though he will no longer hold a committee post. I would like to express my thanks to John for his work for our society over the years and wish him all the very best for the future.

If you are interested in doing a bit more for your Society and would like to serve on the committee please ask a member to propose and second you and submit the nomination to Jess Wild at any time before the AGM.

During the summer break members of the RLTA 2 committee have been dealing with the finalisation of the landscaping work and design of the information board for the footprint of the Royton Hall site. (see separate report on the progress of this project below).

Also through the summer months work has been continuing on our "History of Royton" DVD. Progress has been made on two of the ten sections that are planned. The scripts have been written by Frances Stott and we are finding that the more we do, the more we want to do (if that makes sense). The thing is growing almost out of control and what started out as a 1 hour production is now almost at the hour point and there are still 8 more sections to record. It will definitely not be ready at the end of this year so the release date has been pushed back to the end of 2011.

I would like to thank society member Pat Abram for her time and patience working alongside me doing presentations to camera and voice overs. It's not easy standing in front of a camera reciting lines, especially when we have to do them in the wrong order. We have had many laughs when things have gone wrong. The outtakes would easily make a separate DVD. Pat has even done a 'Gordon Brown' but I'll say no more about that.

One last point. Don't forget that from our September meeting, refreshments will be free of charge but there will be no 'free' raffle any more.

Geoff Oliver, Chairman



Royton Lives Through the Ages 2

Those of you who have passed the the Royton Hall site during the summer will have noticed that the long awaited start on the footprint has been made. Since my last report we have received the good news that our bid for a grant from the 'Community Foundation for Greater Manchester - Grassroots grants' has been successful and we now have enough money to complete the project to our original plans.

Most of the outline of the Hall has been cut into the grass in the form of shallow paths and the wider path, leading from the street to the viewing point, has also been laid. The rest of the work is due to take place during September and October with trees being planted on the site during November. Each school involved in the archaeological digs at the Hall has been invited to send 8 children to help with the planting of these trees.

It is hoped that we can hold an official opening ceremony of the footprint later in the year.

Jess Wild, Secretary RLTA 2

Interesting Roytonians

Ann(e) Buckley 1788 - 1880

Ann(e)* Buckley holds a special place in Royton history. Born in 1788, the third daughter of Thomas Kay of Sandy Lane, a local cotton manufacturer, she lived into her nineties, preserving much local history in her retentive mind. Many of her memories were recorded by her nephew, Thomas Kay, who wrote under the pen-name 'Alpha'.

Through her grandparents she could claim a link with Royton's first historian of sorts, the antiquarian Thomas Percival of Royton Hall. She recalled :- "I've heard my mother say that, in 1745, the Manchester and Scotch rebels came to Royton, and there was great consternation among the old Radicals in consequence. It was about this time that Royton Hall was new fronted, and my 'Granny Lees' was a servant at the Hall. She was generally called 'Newton' because her husband (John Lees) had lived with a person of that name at Bank House in Crompton. He was working at the Hall as a joiner and assisted in the making of the present stairs (which are well worth seeing now). He had two children at this time, and 4 shillings per week as wages, besides living at the Hall, his wife acting as servant, and during these alterations a third child was born to him, and when he informed Mr Percival, the then owner of Royton Hall, of this addition to his family he kindly said, "Then you'll be wanting more wages, Newton" and therefore raised his wages to 4 shillings and sixpence per week."

Not only does this give us a homely picture of kindly Mr Percival but it also illustrates the cosy familiarity and the use of alternative names. The rate books and church records of the period do indeed sometimes refer to John Lees, joiner, as 'Newton'.

When Ann was six, the riot known as the Royton Races broke out round her house at the bottom of Sandy Lane (opposite the present Park Lane House). Army recruits and 'Church and King' loyalists stormed the Light Horseman Public House next door and, assisted by cavalry, broke up an outdoor meeting of pro-French Revolution 'Jacobin' reformers in the fields behind. She recalled the Jacobins fleeing though her father's house and garden to escape the mob. She later became involved in radical politics herself and in 1819 walked in her 'slippers' when the Peterloo affair was "agate". Thomas Kay also became one of the later radical political activists. Indeed, it was through Anne that the bugle of the Royton contingent at Peterloo was saved for posterity. It had been in the keeping of Tom Bluett, the ex-army bugler who sounded the assembly for the Royton reformers drilling on Tandle hills, and was part of the band of music accompanying the marchers to Manchester on that fatal day. Tom, along with other leaders of the Royton group had to go into hiding, reportedly at one point temporarily in St Paul's Church (where Ann's husband, Thomas Scholes Buckley, was a long-time churchwarden). The bugle was still in her possession in 1878.

Ann's recollections of Royton life and characters, it's self-made men, home-taught mathematicians, botanists, poets, political reformers and musicians formed the basis of Alpha's 'Notes on Old Royton', serialised in the Oldham Chronicle in 1878. They are an invaluable source of inside information which otherwise would have been lost.

The 'much respected and regretted Anne' passed away, at her house in Fleet Street (Middleton Road) on January 20, 1880.

Sources: Obituary, Oldham Chronicle 24 January, 31 January 1880; Alpha- Notes on old Royton.

Michael Higgins

*Ann(e) Buckley's gravestone has her name spelt as Ann (without the final 'e'). The newspaper obituary has her name with the 'e'. One hopes that the gravestone engraver got the right spelling but you never know! To ascertain the correct spelling we needed to check the baptismal and burial registers but unfortunately did not have time to do this before going to print.

~~~~~  
**Royton Local History Society will be celebrating Lancashire Day this year on Friday 19th November at Downey House with an evening of 'Lankie' entertainment and a potato pie supper. Tickets will be available at the October and November meetings.**

~~~~~  
Visit the R.L.H.S. websites at www.roytonlocalhistorysociety.co.uk or www.rlhs.co.uk

Royton Local History Society is a member of the 'Friends of Real Lancashire' - No. 544SF

