

MORLEY

LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Newsletter

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Tonight

Once again we greet Janet Niepokojczycka, who last visited us in 2005 to talk about Pack Horse trails. This was based on her own experiences in a charity fund raising event. Janet has spent much of her life in Cumbria where she is a Blue Badge Guide. She has a particular interest in archaeology, vernacular (domestic and functional rather than public) buildings and medieval industries so I think these will feature in her illustrated talk which is titled '*If you go down in the woods today*'.

The Last meeting

Dr Rebecca Gill of Huddersfield University settled into her talk on Belgian Refugees very well after a traumatic start when equipment had to be brought in at the last minute. Around 250,000 refugees came to this country, so terrible were the conditions after the German invasion in August 1914 and it was quite a challenge to accommodate them. Huddersfield took in 500 of these folk. Many were housed in Milnsbridge at Royds Hall. A special school was set up for them there.

It was interesting to compare the way that folks in Huddersfield and Morley had reacted to the presence of these folk - initially with great enthusiasm and then some hostility because some felt they were taking the jobs of locals - and this led to a lively discussion with Rebecca. She also helped us by giving contacts for further research.

The Society Trip

Robert has had his thinking cap on and the committee thinks his plan will work really well. The aim is that we go to Stockport and visit two of the museums which the local council has set up. First there is Bramall Hall which is a timber framed 14th Century manor house. It is set in 70 acres of parkland and the whole site has been refurbished to include an on-site restaurant and visitor centre. The internal artefacts and the parkland are most impressive.



Bramall Hall and Parkland

A short distance away are the old Stockport Air Raid Shelters which were opened in 1939. They were able to hold over 6000 people during the fearsome raids in World War Two. The Shelters have been a visitor attraction since 1996 and they are a large network of underground tunnels. fitted with electric light, wooden benches, bunk beds, wardens' post, and a first aid post.

Robert will arrange for us to have guided tours and an evening meal somewhere along the route, perhaps near Holmfirth. It is expected that the trip will cost around £22 per person.

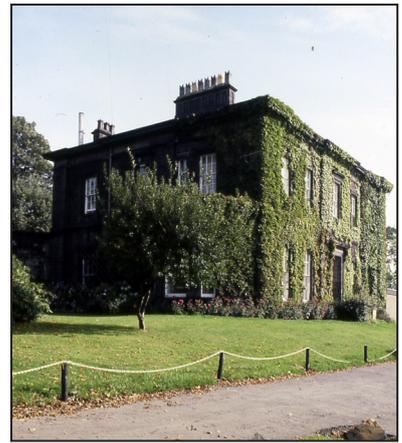
Alice Cliff Scatcherd

A group of us has been helping local writer Becky Cherringham to update our knowledge on this fascinating woman. George Atkinson described her, in his August 1975 *Morley Advertiser* article as 'Morley's first Women's Libber' - the popular expression at the time for feminists. She was an important member of the Movement for Women's Rights in the mid to late 19th Century.

She was born in 1842 in Wortley, the daughter of Joseph Cliff, a wealthy industrialist who manufactured bricks, and his wife Alice. Her parents were Liberals, had a large family, and showed their independence by adopting the Unitarian Religion, attending the Mill Hill Chapel in Central Leeds which still practises this faith. Alice was educated privately in York and she had a formidable intellect.

During the years when the Women's Suffrage movement formed Alice made alliances with such nationally known Liberals as the Bright family, Josephine Butler, with whom she successfully fought the Contagious Diseases Act, and Dr Pankhurst, the husband of Emmeline and father of Christabel. She married Oliver Scatcherd, of the Morley Scatcherd family at Mill Chapel in 1871 when she was 28 and he was 36, a bachelor and solicitor. They had no children and she certainly spent a lot of time working on her various causes, in which he played little if any active part. Likewise, she refused to wear a wedding ring which must have caused quite a fuss in Victorian England. However, she worked vigorously for the rights of women, particularly those with families, on both the national and local scenes, helping to form a nursing association in Morley.

Oliver's interests were his law firm, local affairs and sport. We do note, though, that when he was Mayor (1898-1901) she was greatly supportive, helping him with civic events. Both of them were active in promoting school sports and they were jointly responsible for introducing the Morley Mace into public life.



*Cliff House
The family home in Wortley*



*27-February-1882:
Alice Cliff Scatcherd (front right)
in the Albert Hall, Sheffield
promoting Women's Suffrage.*

We note a few contradictions in her life. Here was a woman keenly interested in fashion and yet we do not have a good portrait of her. Those that involve her such as that shown when she took part in an early suffragist meeting in Sheffield always include others whereas her husband was not so shy in this respect. And how could a woman, interested in animal rights, support a husband who had a keen interest in hunting?

I think it's worthy of note that while she certainly promoted civic affairs in Morley she showed her independence to the last by having the Unitarian minister at Mill Hill preside over her funeral at the St Mary's Congregational Church. But she was laid to rest along with her husband and other Scatcherds in the Mausoleum there in late December 1906. So, perhaps you can see that I think there is more still to be learned about Alice, probably through her personal letters. We believe she was an important pioneer among the early Women Suffragists but, nevertheless, it took further vigorous demonstration from others and a Great War before women made their first big advance by obtaining the vote in 1918.