

MORLEY

LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY Newsletter

December 2016

Founded 1965

www.morleylhs.btck.co.uk



Tonight

For our last meeting of 2016, we welcome Helen Pratt, a local lady, who will be telling us about the work done at Temple Newsam during the Great War. She will be talking about the period from 1915 to 1917 when this country house was used as a convalescent hospital for wounded soldiers. I understand she will be bringing artefacts from the estate to form an exhibition.

As is usual, the refreshments at this meeting are free. I'd like to thank Peter and Christine Waugh, on your behalf, for the excellent work they've done in providing these. Shirley Claridge has also made a valued contribution.

The Last meeting

Jane Aldrick gave us an entertaining and detailed talk about the Ingle family of Leeds and Churwell who were so influential in the town during the 20th Century. Jane is the great-granddaughter of William Law ('WL') Ingle, the founder of the leather works in Churwell and so she was able to illustrate her presentation with photos and artefacts, in particular the family history compiled by WL.

Jane is a straight-speaking lady and she was unsparing in her view of some members of her family. However, I think it is true to say that she has a great admiration for WL. She

told us of all the many contributions he made to Churwell and Morley life, including the founding of the Public Library and various contributions to Churwell Park which were finally acknowledged when he received the Freedom of the Borough. And without doubt the leather works provided important goods and much employment in the town for over 60 years. Thank you, Jane.



A memorial window for Reginald Ingle, son of WL, in Back Green Chapel, Churwell. Its fate is undecided.

The Society Trip

Robert has completed most of the plans for the annual trip on Sunday 11th June 2017. We will be going by coach to Stockport and will be visiting Bramall Hall, a timber-framed Tudor Manor house set in splendid grounds. Then in the afternoon we will move on to the Stockport Air raid shelters which have been converted into a visitor centre. Robert will be arranging an evening meal, probably in the Holmfirth area. He estimates that the cost will be around £23 per person and he is accepting bookings.

Christmas time in 1916

Before the Great War, Morley people looked forward to Christmas as a very special time when they could enjoy a short respite from work with food, drink, fun and games at social gatherings. 1916 was different. Archives from *The Morley Observer* make it clear that the overall mood was extremely sombre and, of course, this was down to the way the war had gone.

The full force of attritional warfare conducted by industrialised societies had started to hit very hard. The British army had made its first 'Big Push' at The Somme in July which had only just ended with little if any noticeable gain made but many casualties. Morley itself had lost over 80 men and the town had been able to see film of the battle in The Picture House which, though somewhat staged, brought home previously unseen views of trench warfare. Since the first day of that battle, *The Morley Observer* had begun printing Rolls of Honour for local men killed or wounded practically every week. The end of the war was, now, not in sight and Morley-born Henry Asquith had to resign his premiership. Both sides were suffering, of course, and the Germans had offered to negotiate peace in mid December. However, they were not prepared to give up occupation of Belgium or make any reparations. The Allied Governments and most of their people found these terms unacceptable. *The Morley Observer* certainly took this line.

In the town itself, there was heavy snow and freezing weather but shortage of man power meant that the council had to appeal to citizens to voluntarily clear the pavements and roads. This also showed itself in the mills and we see that children of 15 years of age were allowed to work overtime to make up for these shortages. One 14 year-old child was prosecuted for leaving employment at the Morley Cotton Mill without giving notice. He was 'let off' with costs when it was found that his father was a discharged soldier.

German submarine warfare, which was to accelerate now 'Peace talk' was refused, had caused food shortages to the extent that folks were encouraged to grow their own vegetables. We see that local mills and council workers were all receiving so-called war bonuses which were, really, wage increases to cope with prices inflated by the cost of the war.

Christmas was celebrated however with many of the traditions remaining though I can't find any reference to the Morley Santa Claus fund for gifts to disadvantaged children which had been common-place up until 1914. The Churches and Chapels gave concerts as did the clubs and there was much support for injured soldiers and their dependents. A sense of humour prevailed but, as is the nature of comedy it is now quite dated, with lots of sexist references. Try this one, though : *Why is a disreputable alehouse like two of the chief performers in an orchestra?* Because it is a base and vile inn!

The Morley Observer nudged its readers with that one. I won't but, on behalf of the Committee I would like to wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a Peaceful, Prosperous New Year.

Clive McManus

MORLEY OBSERVER—DECEMBER 8, 1916.

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If you want him to get his parcel by Xmas you should send it now

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