

MORLEY

LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY Newsletter

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Tonight

Our speaker was to have been Canon Roger Dedman but I'm afraid he has been taken ill and has had to cancel. A small compensation for those of you who were expecting a talk on the Post Office is my efforts on the history of the Morley Post Office overleaf. So, I'm going to recycle my talk on the changes in the Morley Landscape and I hope that this will give you suitable entertainment and food for thought.

The Last meeting

We were happy to greet Jackie Depelle when she returned to show us more of the powers of Family History research. This time, she discussed her researches into the history of her own home in Pudsey. It has been owned by members of her family since the early 19th Century and Jackie showed how she had used various resources to find out about who had lived there and how they had used it. It was an entertaining and instructive evening as we have come to expect from Jackie.

Commemorations for Soldiers of the Great War



Julie Heeley and I have been doing regular research to help the local British Legion commemorate those Morley area men who died in service in the Great War and who are, also, buried locally. Yesterday we were at the Bruntcliffe Cemetery, remembering Pte George Parkinson Arnold (shown across from a photo in the Barnsley Chronicle). It was the centenary of his death in the Military Hospital at Shrewsbury from wounds sustained on the Somme. George's family history has been difficult to unravel but

now we do have a good record of it, thanks to intrepid work by a friend in Morley Family History group and the Barnsley Archives organisation. Members of the public can attend such events and the next is on 1-March for Pte Laurence Stansfield.

The Society Trip

Robert reports that places for the society trip to the Stockport area are filling well. It will be on Sunday 11th June with visits to Bramall Hall in the morning and the Stockport air raid shelters in the afternoon. The cost should be around £23 but this will come down if more than 25 people go.

For those who can use the YouTube facility, you will be able to see video footage of both the hall and air-raid shelters. To do so, just enter 'Bramall Hall' or 'Stockport Air Raid Shelter' in the appropriate search box. They are worthwhile.

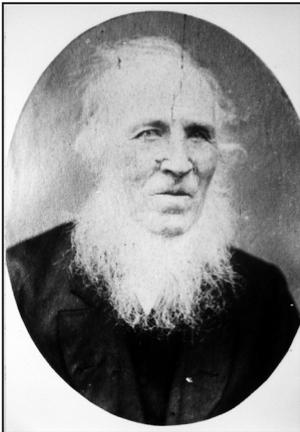


Part of the YouTube video on
Bramall Hall and its restoration

The Post Office in Morley

William Smith tells us that the post office in the times of George III was kept by a Betty Hartley in a one storey cottage on Banks Hill. One delivery and one despatch a day were ample for the business of the time. Before this, letters were collected by a 'foot postman', who sounded a horn to announce his presence to the locals. Such men were also known as 'Hornblowers'.

A John Cowburn (1769-1841), who lived in Adwalton, collected and distributed all the letters sent to and from the local villages in an area which led to Leeds. The graphic shows a copy of a receipt kept by the careful Norrisson Scatcherd of the monies he paid John for postal deliveries during the period May to September 1826. All those 3d deliveries added up to 6s 4d, quite a substantial sum which ordinary folks would not have been able to afford.



Andrew Cowburn

Around this time, John's son Andrew (1799-1888), began to take over responsibility for the post in Morley. Gradually, more people took advantage of a cheaper postal rate of 1d. The result of this in Morley was that a new post office was formed around 1830

at the corner of Church Street and what is now New Bank Street. Andrew served the community from here until October 1869 when he retired. By this time, of course, letters could be sent using the 1d black postage stamps introduced in 1840. He was so highly regarded that he was given a lavish retirement dinner at the Dartmouth Arms. Earlier, he was elected as a member of the Local Board and, with his knowledge of the streets of Morley, he insisted that they be given proper names and addresses, besides

much better paving and sewage.

Around the time of Andrew's retirement, the post office was moved until finally a building was erected on the corner of Queen Street and Princess Street (now demolished to make way for the Schofield Court building) in 1876. It is likely that this had been a part of the Albert Mills, used as a warehouse since around 1867. This remained the principal Post Office in the town until 1962 and it underwent many internal changes as technology improved the service to include such features as a telephone exchange. The photograph across was

taken by locally-based Richard Simpson in 1905 and it was used in his set of postcards of Morley views and buildings. By 1924, there were other post offices at Churwell and Bruntcliffe besides sub-post offices on High Street, Fountain Street and Victoria Road. The town centre office closed in 1962 when the present building at the Fountain Street end of Queen Street was opened. The results of this move were not without consequences as the Board of Trade noted that, in this age before supermarkets, more folks were now shopping in the area near to the new post office. Now, we are in the age of electronic communication and the need for such postal services has been enormously reduced. But for myself, I will be upset if we lose this still valuable service in Morley and I think many share my view.

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