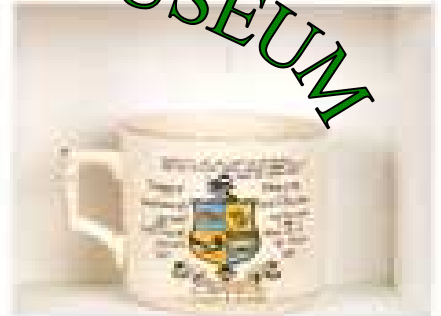


# FRIENDS OF SWALEDALE MUSEUM

Newsletter No.21  
Spring 2016



## W elcome to our Spring Newsletter.

How wonderful, summer is coming, the Museum will soon be open, and there is a truly fascinating set of talks coming up. Plus, a quiz, which this year will include questions on Arkengarthdale. Last year I felt, as a resident of Arkengarthdale at the time, that the dale had been missed out, so this year I have provided several of the quiz questions. Well, it only seemed fair!

Janet Bishop,  
Chair of the Friends of Swaledale Museum



*The Box of Delights - a dressing-up corner to inspire all ages*



*A reminder of the days when lead was thought to be the perfect material for children's toys!*

## A message from the Curator

First I would like to thank Martin for posting our monthly messages in the *Reeth and District Gazette*. While we are closed over winter our reports help keep us visible, and during the rest of the year are an essential means of advertising our presence and events.

As well as combating the weather, we have been busy helping with research enquiries. Both have certainly kept us on our toes. We were delighted to supply images from our archive to Ed Denison Archaeological Services who were commissioned to survey the local chert quarries. You can see a copy of the detailed report in our Library which

both consolidates and adds to our existing knowledge. We were asked by a novelist about the life of Methodist ministers in the Dale during the Second World War. My email to Marion Moverley bore immediate fruit and the author was delighted with the results. Our next task was to locate information connected with the illusive Richard Metcalf who was born in Hurst in 1824. We did not find very much, so if he is on your family history radar do let us know. John Place who is writing a biography of his grandfather James Place of Reeth is also using photographs from our archive (and we hope we can persuade him to give a talk on the subject to the Friends next year).

It was a pleasure and privilege to supply images for, and read advance drafts of, David Joy's *Men of Lead*. It is a vivid and captivating read. He begins: 'Lead may be seen as dull and grey but not so the saga of men who gave their all in searching for this most tantalising of riches. ... It is scarcely surprising that more books would appear to have been written on lead mining in the Yorkshire Dales than any other subject. ... [yet] there is relatively little on the miners themselves and the way they changed life in the Dales'. This book, as David emphasises is different, it is a social history. 'The first part looks at how the gradual development of mining affected those involved and the places where they lived. It shows how villages that had once viewed miners as a shifting and feckless population now saw them bring transformation in their wake. It then goes on to portray the life of the men – their homes, food, clothes, health, leisure

*The Swaledale Museum is open for the 2016 season from 1st May, 10am to 5pm daily.  
Groups are warmly welcome at other times by appointment.*

(such as it was), religion and mortality. It also attempts to correct an omission in most mining books – and that is any mention of women’. We are delighted that he has agreed to launch this wonderful book at the Swaledale Museum. I do hope you will come on 1st June to meet David and buy a copy.

So what is new to tempt you in? First our new look poster (*right*) designed with Scenic View Gallery which shows you the myriad objects, the mine of information and the light filled space that is the Museum. From the 16<sup>th</sup> May

you can see Roger Preston’s atmospheric photographs of the local lead mines in our upper gallery. Roger Preston’s lifelong love of photography was given a sharper focus when he retired from teaching and he could spend more time in developing his skills. A Photography A level led to an HND in Photography, a Master’s degree in Photographic Studies and the LRPS and ARPS distinctions of the Royal Photographic Society. Buying a holiday caravan in Swaledale gave Roger an opportunity to appreciate the unique atmosphere of the area, and his photographs are an attempt to capture the essence of the landscape. Roger’s interpretation of the Swaledale industrial landscape is an attempt to show, rather than ‘scarring’ and ‘despoiling’ the environment, the remnants of the lead mining industry exist in a form of symbiosis with the natural landscape, and indeed define it. The inevitable degradation of the buildings and their gradual assimilation into the landscape, provide a haunting, beautiful reminder of man’s ultimate failure to dominate the environment, a beauty which Roger has attempted to capture in his high contrast, sharply focussed black and white images. Roger will join with David Joy on 1<sup>st</sup> June to present his work, in a double launch.



On 30<sup>th</sup> May Friend of the Museum Jenni Balfour Simmons is holding a ‘Spin-In’, so do come and see her and her friends turning Swaledale fleece into thread. Our little shop is also bursting with new stock gathered over the winter. So there is something to suit all interests.

Thanks to all of you who have helped create our childrens’ work sheets for the Museum. We have relied on a wonderful network of expertise from Susan at the Post Office who certainly knows her Swaledale sheep to Dr Binks from the International Lead Association. We test ran them on the children of Pannal school before Easter. They were tremendously successful

with pupils, teachers and volunteers alike. Our greatest thanks however are due to the generous sponsors who came forward to cover the costs of production, meaning we can make them free. The worksheets enable us to provide more information and further research details on aspects of the collection. There are still some themes which have not been sponsored, so do please get in touch if you would like to donate £45 to cover printing.

2016 marks the 180<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the building of the Reeth Wesleyan Methodist Day School, home since 1974 to the Swaledale Museum. We would like to collate as much information as possible about the building and its use over time. Do you have any photographs, newspaper cuttings, memories or anecdotes connected with it? We



*Worksheets for school parties and younger visitors to the Museum*

we would love to hear from you. We would like to organise a special celebratory display, and need to enhance our existing collection of material which includes posters from the pantomimes performed in the hall from the later 1940s, photographs of the Army Reconnaissance Training Corp billeted in Reeth during the Second World War, and objects left under the floorboards from this time such as cigarette packets and tins of boot polish, as well as some Reeth Wesleyan Methodist chinaware. Can you add to this? Please get in touch, we need your help.

We look forward to seeing you, your friends and relatives in the Museum, helping us to make this the best season yet. We think we have one of the best lecture programmes to date, so don’t forget to sign up to secure a seat.

*Helen Bainbridge  
Curator*



*One small section of the Big Dig display showing the Roman pot*

We also have a small new display installed by the Big Dig Project, the highlight of which, for me, is a part of a Roman pot, as well as other intriguing ceramic finds excavated from local test pits. You will also be able to pick up the project’s free book that outlines the context of the finds. We have re-organised the Museum space and have a new case showing papers relating to the liquidation of the Hurst Mines in 1891.

**I** was asked if I would write a little about the time spent last summer with the Museum and the people I met and maybe a little about what I learned!

Firstly the museum is a gem of a place, maybe I am preaching to the converted here, but it is acting as a true guardian of the Dales, the way of life in the past, reaching out to the people of the present, enlivening the minds of those that make the push to actually enter through its most welcoming of doorways.....and finding myself wishing more people would walk through and value it as the resource it truly is.



*Some of Anne's fleece ready to spin...*

Mostly the people I met fell into two parties....some just wanted to enjoy a quiet moment that you can only find in a museum no matter its size, to enjoy items of the past – some items recognized, some just plain fascinating. Some of these 'museum' folk wanted to find more about their family names or to find out about the place where a relative once lived. The other group of people were also wanting to see what was happening with me, to have a chat or to talk about their own endeavours – either way it was good to be about to watch these people moving through or re-visiting as Friends of the Museum.

What I learned for myself was a greater appreciation of the women and men that used to live and work in the dale, to find an empathy - though I have no direct connection, with the realisation that I was beginning to do my work alongside them in what seem to be very similar ways. The knitting industry ran as deep through life, I believe, as the mining and farming. It was a way of living and a means with which to support your family - I've unexpectedly found a hook that begins to make a bit of sense in my own life – a tradition of knitting and wool that I am beginning to pick up on myself. I found a foundation for developing my own patterns through weave that can translate back into knit as seems to have happened so many times in the past in other places around the world. I have learned to look anew at the local Swaledale sheep and appreciate their wonderful faces, the aesthetics of watching their lambs as well as

understanding the use of their wool – which can be somewhat harsh to say the least! As in the past I am importing wool fibre more relevant to what can be achieved today, I am not quite spinning from 'bump' as they did once but the process is still the same.

From the 'Shepherds Plaid' pattern that could be recognised as a pattern in use within the Swaledale knitting of the past, I can continue forwards now and hopefully begin to develop a new series of patterns that pulls together what I see...a process I began last summer at the museum with my sketchbook and maybe, just maybe, bring something alive here once again.

Each thing does seem to have a place and a moment... without spending two years back at college re-training in Textiles, Design and Weave; without being supported by a cross-stitch company as well as Helen at the museum; without a divorce that required me to start my life again to support myself and my two children still, even though they are grown, while they try to find their own way – I wouldn't have found what I hope will be my niche in a world of colour, fibre, history and design.

I am not going to be continuing on with some 'nice little pastime', the 'little woman' at home comfortably supported and tinkering at this! My challenge now is to keep pushing forwards, not to get deterred by people sucking in their breath and commenting on the 'expense' of what I produce – without understanding the force of what lies behind....the time, the stacks of unpaid hours while you develop something - including your expertise. Learning how to contend with the fact that to sell something elsewhere you do not receive that full amount as an artist or designer/producer as there is a huge percentage placed on top that the 'gallery' or the like take before you get near it!



*...and the finished product*

I cannot work for pence as they did in the past...though those pennies undoubtedly went further than they do today. It is a feeling of picking up on that old industry once again and trying to put new life back into it...trying to make it more relevant for today. That understanding, gained whilst being at the museum, is something very precious I now realise.

My utmost thanks to Helen and the Swaledale Museum. If I may coin a phrase – 'use it, or lose it' and it is too important to be lost!

*Anne Hewitt*

### **Hailstones as big as golf balls!**



On 1<sup>st</sup> July last year Swaledale experienced some amazing freak weather – torrential downpours, 'once in a lifetime' (we hope) thunder storms and hail storms which stripped leaves from the trees, destroyed glass houses and dented the roofs of vehicles.

Two of our members, Tracey Coulson and Katie Blyth, picked these monsters (*left*) up at 10pm on the way home from Richmond when the road was suddenly whited out in front of them.



It immediately reminded us a 19th century photograph in the Museum archive of some similar massive hailstones (*right*) which must have been far more difficult to take before the days of camera phones! The caption of the original says that the hailstones fell on 8th July 1893 and that the photograph is actual size.

**T**he Swaledale Big Dig came to an end in April with an evening presentation at which the main speaker was TV archaeologist and ‘Time Team’ expert Prof Carenza Lewis who explained how the results of the two-year long community project would contribute to national archaeological research.

Alan Mills gave an overview of the finds from the 50 test pits dug in and around Reeth, Fremington and Grinton and will prepare a more detailed report for our Autumn Newsletter. Alan says: ‘In addition to digging test pits we have also run 24 free training courses in archaeology, led 11 guided archaeology walks, organised exhibitions and presentations, and run several events with local schools, involving children in geophysical surveying and test-pit digging.’

‘In total more than 500 people have taken part in one way or another. To have engaged so many people’s interests in archaeology has far exceeded our expectations. Hopefully we have inspired some young people to become the next generation of archaeologists, whether amateurs like ourselves or professionals like Carenza Lewis.’

Events concluded with a day long exhibition where the public could see some of the more than 4,000 pieces of dating evidence found during the course of the project and read about what this reveals about the social and economic history of the area since the 1100s.



*The Open Day in Reeth Memorial Hall*

**W**e always knew that Reeth was important! While viewing a collection of samplers at Witney Antiques this week I did not expect to see Reeth featured on a fine linen sampler of a map of England and Wales stitched in black thread with the county boundaries in coloured silks. My eye was of course drawn to Yorkshire. Of the 15 places of importance in the county, Reeth is boldly marked, along with Richmond, Bradford, Doncaster, ‘Guisboro’, Halifax, Hull, Leeds, Scarborough, Settle, Sheffield, Pickering, Wakefield, Whitby and York.



*The Witney sampler*

It was made by Elizabeth Squire, in York, is dated 1801, and would have been embroidered whilst she was a pupil at the Quaker School in Trinity Lane, which had opened in 1785. From the archives held by the school (now The Mount School) we know that Elizabeth came from Hereford, although most of her 21 contemporaries came from Yorkshire and Cumbria. However none of this explains the presence of Reeth on the sampler. Does anyone have any ideas? Templates for the map were commercially available; another example by Mary Peacock dated 1802 is illustrated in Carol Humphry’s *Quaker School Girl Samplers from Ackworth* (page 62). Reeth featured on the standard template so it wasn’t just that Elizabeth Squire had a connection to the place.



*A close up of the Yorkshire section of the sampler*

Witney Antiques have promised a donation to the Museum if someone buys it because of us (for £2,300!) So if you are in the Cotswolds, pop in to the shop at 100 Corn Street and ask to see it, and mention the Museum. Their annual exhibition which includes over 50 works runs from 27 June to 17 July. Details are on their website at: [witneyantiques.com](http://witneyantiques.com)

*Helen Bainbridge*

### Mystery Object

Yet again there were no suggestions for the previous Mystery Object (*below right*) the little lead figurine found on a local rubbish tip. Sadly the Big Dig didn’t unearth a whole matching set so we’re still none the wiser.



This edition’s object might be a little easier - hand made, a few inches across and most of you will probably have something similar around the house.

We couldn’t fit this photograph of Richard III as a morris dancer (!) in last year but it was too good not to use at some point. It came with greetings from former Museum volunteer Gill Savage who was delighted to have been appointed as manager at Middleham Castle in Wensleydale. She wrote: “As you can image we have been very popular for the past two years due firstly because *The White Queen* was shown on the BBC and also because of the discovery of Richard III’s remains in Leicester.”

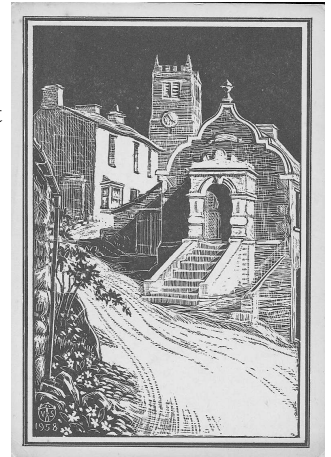


## Some Memories of the Upper Dale



*A postcard of the Farmers Arms, Muker, from one of Vera Simmons' water colours*

In the Autumn Newsletter we printed an appeal from Judith Spotswood about some paintings which her father had bought in Muker. After we had gone to print she was able to confirm that the artist's name was Vera Simmons and that '...she used to come and stay with two ladies, Miss Adlin and Miss Gardner who lived at Guildy Hall in Muker in the 40's 50's and 60's. These two ladies were responsible for starting the W.I. in Muker in 1947.' Judith also sent us scans of some lovely postcards which had been made from Vera's water colours and scraper board pictures.



*Scraperboard picture of Muker church with the Literary Institute in the foreground*

The following month we received an email from Chester Murray in Canada who not only knew about Vera Simmons but also remembered more about the



*An artist, Mrs Cooper at Rampsholme Bridge, Whitsunday 1949 - Chester didn't know this but the artist's daughter is a member of the Friends!*

inhabitants of the dale. Chester subsequently sent us a whole series of his reminiscences of his family's connections with the area, some of which follow:

'In the Autumn 2015 issue of the Friends newsletter there was a note from Judith Spotswood asking about some paintings with VS. I think these would be by Vera Simmonds. I come from Darlington and am now living in Langley City, outside Vancouver, Canada. My mother used to stay at Ellerton Abbey in the 1930's. In 1947 we rented Ivy Cottage flat in Muker for several years before buying the Pig and Whistle Cottage in Thwaite in the early 1950's. I still visit Muker and Thwaite and see old friends such as Norman Guy in Muker and Sydney Reynoldson in Thwaite.

'When we were in Muker we used to visit Guildy Hall where Miss Baumgartner lived across a little bridge opposite the Farmer's Arms. They often had sales of art by various people including Vera Simmons. I have an etching by Vera of the Literary Institute where we used to play billiards. So you can be pretty sure that the painting was by Vera Simmons as she was very good. The sales were being held in the 1940's and 1950's.

'I currently have some photo albums with photos taken in the 1930's at Ellerton Abbey, Reeth and in Arkengarthdale. I also have some books on Swaledale, and booklets on Swaledale dating from the time we spend our vacations there...Miss Baumgartner I think was Headmistress of Polam Hall School in Darlington. There was also a mention in your newsletter about someone who lived at the Bridge Inn in Grinton. My friends Ann

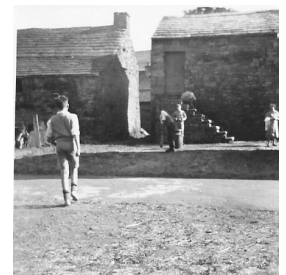
and Archie Rankin lived in Grinton in Blackburn Hall across the road from there and my prep school headmaster used a cottage by the inn. His name was Dr Lorimer-Thomas. This would have been in the late 1940's or early 1950's.'

Many thanks to Chester for sharing his memories and his family albums with us and to Judith for the copies of her postcards. Let us know if you would like to contact either of them and we'll do our best to put you in touch.

*Outside the village shop in Thwaite, now part of Kearton Guest House*



*Playing cricket in Thwaite with milk churns for wickets*



*A young German visitor, Wolf Dieter Tode from Hamburg, using a traditional back can to bring milk down from the higher pasture*

One of our speakers this year (15th June) is Will Swales who will present some of the results of his research into Harkerside farms. He also has a fascinating blog at <https://willswales1.wordpress.com/> where you can read about some of his research and also has an interest in Swaledale place names. We received this message last year but after the Autumn Newsletter had been printed.

"I'm seeking contact with anyone who might be interested in an amateur project to build a collection of upper Swaledale place-names and their origins/meanings. Many genealogists will have found, like me, that the place-names of our ancestors' homes become fascinating lines of enquiry in themselves. The aim is to share the information as it is gathered through a dedicated web site. Would any members who want to know more please contact me."

*Will Swales: will.swales@ntlworld.com*

**Friends' Programme of Talks 2016  
All to be held in the Museum at 7.30pm**

**Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> May**

Friends of the Swaledale Museum AGM at **6.45 pm** followed by the second *So You Think You Know Your Swaledale and Arkengarthdale?* Quiz - we challenge you to come!

**Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> June**

**LEAD MINING - DOUBLE LAUNCH**

Roger Preston will discuss the background to, and techniques used in, his Swaledale Museum exhibition *The Eye of the Beholder* focussing on photographs of the local lead mines AND David Joy will introduce his new book *Men of Lead, Mining in the Yorkshire Dales*. Copies of the book will be available at a special reduced rate on the night.

**Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> June**

Will Swales - *Harkerside Hill Farms 1700 to the Present*. This talk explores Will's research for his forthcoming book.

Come and learn about the fascinating stories of feuds, hardships, and triumphs among the hill farmers of Harkerside, together with an account of the radical changes in some aspects of farm life. See <https://willswales1.wordpress.com/>

**Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> June**

Shaun Richardson will introduce *Swaledale and the Cold War: Surveying the Royal Observation Corps Bunker at Grinton*. Come and tell us your story -if you remember the bunker, or were in the local ROC at the time of its construction and operation.

**Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> July**

Phil Batman - *Sink or swim: Kinship Families & the Collapse of Leadmining in Victorian Swaledale*

**Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> July**

Helen Bainbridge & Marion Moverley - *Read All About It! Swaledale and Arkengarthdale in the Newspapers* - scandals, sensations, long hidden secrets and more culled from the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century press.

**Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> August**

George Edward Brown will give an informal talk on *Remembering Haverdale Mill, Low Row*, a very special opportunity to hear this personal history of one of our landmark buildings.

**Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> September**

Sue and Les Knight, will present *A Date with Lichens* explaining how they can be used to understand historic air pollution from smelting in Swaledale and Arkengarthdale. The evening will include time to look at lichens under the microscope.

COST: £3 for Friends and £4 for Visitors

More information: 01748 884118

[museum.swaledale@btinternet.com](mailto:museum.swaledale@btinternet.com)

Please watch the local press & posters for occasional alterations to time/date &, if coming from a distance, **please check with the Museum** before setting off.

**Advance booking recommended**

Just before Christmas we received a message from David Clayton, from BBC Radio Suffolk, which we would like to share with everyone. He had recently found two tickets from the mid 60s which 'I'd forgotten I'd kept for a journey from Richmond up the dale - probably to Keld'.

He kindly sent a picture of this ticket which we show here. We asked David if he could let us know a bit more about himself, his connection with the dales and the bus service:



'I've been coming to the dale since I was a baby and that puts it back to the early fifties. We've stayed in quite a few cottages over the years, up and down the dale. Around the time of these tickets (I think) we were renting in Keld and as I was in my early teenage years, I was getting a bit old to want to go walking with parents every day so my sister and I were allowed to catch a Percival's bus to Richmond to spend the day there - probably going to the castle and exploring the shops. I'm guessing these tickets reflect that journey from stage 1 to stage 28 for 3/9d. So does anyone who drove the buses recall - was stage 28 Keld? Was 3/9d a return fare for a child. When might that have been? I'm guessing 1966/67? I've always been fascinated with buses and the fact you could sit quite close to the driver, who wasn't closed off in a separate cab, meant you could see him wrestle the bus around the narrow dales roads and over the bridges. I remember the drivers basically stopping wherever people needed to get off and stopping the bus randomly to jump out and deliver a parcel to a farm or cottage. I also recall the Percivals office on the green at Gunnerside and waiting for a bus there. It was the means by which we could attempt a longer walk by using the bus to take us to the start of a walk or pick us up at the end of one. We were holidaymakers, albeit regular ones, and it was always fascinating to hear the drivers exchange dales gossip with the regular travellers. Those Percivals buses were an early form of social media!'

Thank you David for this, we think Reuben Frankau will know the answer, and welcome more reminiscences. I wonder how many of you have other such 'ephemera' hidden away in pockets and forgotten places?

The Curator's special thanks go to Tracy Little for assembling, designing and producing our Newsletter, it looks terrific, yet again, and Graham from Scenic View Gallery in Reeth who looks after our website. These are the Museum's unsung heroes - so please take a bow, we really appreciate your time and expertise so generously given.

If you have any memories or reminiscences of Swaledale & Arkengarthdale, or anything else relevant to local history which would be of interest for the Newsletter, the Committee would love to hear from you. We can't promise to use everything in full, but all contributions, however small, will be very welcome! Please contact Helen on 07969 823232 or email: [museum.swaledale@btinternet.com](mailto:museum.swaledale@btinternet.com)

**KNITTING CAFE & CRAFT GROUP**

Not just for Knit Wits! All sorts of crafts have been turning up so bring along whatever you're into. Everyone welcome, all at 2pm on Thursdays in a number of venues around Reeth throughout the year. For details of dates & venues please contact Christine Price [ewellprice@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:ewellprice@hotmail.co.uk) or 01748-884406.