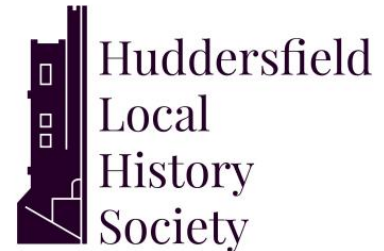


HLHS Members Newsletter

Nov/Dec 2019

huddersfieldhistory.org.uk

email@huddersfieldhistory.org.uk



We would like to hear from you! Please send any news, details of events and books, requests for information and comments that you think may be of interest to other Huddersfield Local History Society members to

huddshistorynews@gmail.com

Season's Greetings!

A warm festive welcome to members both old and new to the final newsletter of the year. As announced in the previous newsletter, I've (temporarily?) stepped into the role of its editor and would like to take the opportunity to thank Christine for all of her hard work.

The Society is keen to hear from any members who would like to be involved with producing the newsletter in the future or helping to develop our presence on social media. Please don't be shy in coming forward!

For those of you who don't know me, I've worked at the university library since 2001 and my background is in I.T. and web site development. For the last couple of years, I've been looking after the Society's web site as well as continuing to administer the [Huddersfield Exposed](#) local history site. My own interest was sparked by reading the copy of *Discovering Old Huddersfield* which Enid Minter had kindly made freely available on the Society's web site.

Dave Pattern

Membership Subs 2018

Val would like to remind those who have not yet paid their membership fees that they are now overdue. She can be contacted via email at membership@huddersfieldhistory.org

Our Next Monday Evening Talks

Our next Monday evening talk is Dave Russell's *Nights out in 1960s Yorkshire: Cabaret, Glamour and Casinos* on 25th November – usual place, usual time. The first talk of 2020 will be given by John Rumsby on 27th January on the topic *'The Boys of the Old Brigade': the early history of the Huddersfield & District Army Veterans' Association*. As always, further details can be [found on our web site](#).

HLHS Committee

Chair:

Cyril Pearce

Vice-Chair:

Brian Haigh

Secretary:

Dave Pattern

Treasurer:

Steve Challenger

Membership

Secretary:

Val Davies

Publications

Secretary:

David Griffiths

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Journal Editor:

Robert Piggott

Web Site:

Dave Pattern

Other

Committee

Members:

Stephen Caunce

Janette Martin

Maureen Mitchell

Bill Roberts

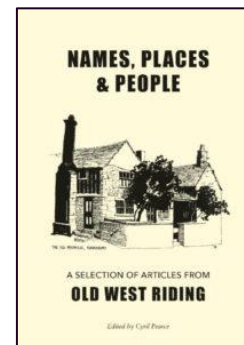
With the exception of our own web site, Huddersfield Local History Society is not responsible for the content of any web sites linked to in this newsletter.

New Publications

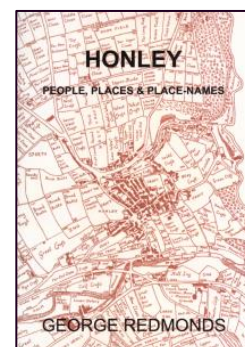
Just like buses, you wait for ages and then three new books turn up at the same time, and all will make excellent stocking fillers!

The Society's latest publication is *Names, Places & People: a selection of articles from Old West Riding* which was formally launched at our *Annual Study Day*. Priced at just £6.95 for 160 pages, copies are available at our meetings or [via our web site](#).

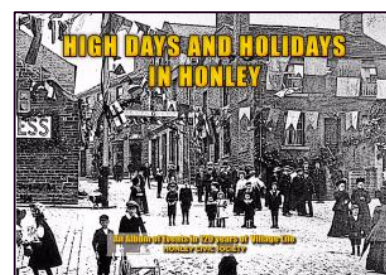
Old West Riding published 23 editions from 1981 to 1995 and was a joint venture by three local historians – Jennifer Stead, Cyril Pearce and George Redmonds. This collection of over a dozen articles is dedicated to George, who died in August 2018. The [table of contents](#) is available online. ISBN 9780992984120.



Completed prior to his untimely death, George Redmond's *Honley: People, Places and Place-names* was published posthumously a couple of weeks ago. The last in his well-regarded series of books on local toponyms and etymology, this meticulously researched work not only covers the township of Honley but also the adjoining parts of South Crosland. Priced at £4.95, copies should be available at our meetings, at both Holme Valley News and Zebra in Honley, and at Holmfirth Library. ISBN 9781916014909.



Finally, Honley Civic Society has recently published *High Days and Holidays in Honley* which features over three dozen captioned illustrations of the way villagers have celebrated across the past century and more. Priced at £5, it is available from Holme Valley News in Honley or can be ordered via the [society's own web site](#).



If money's too tight to mention, it is worth noting that Honley Civic Society has begun making their out-of-print books available to [read online for free](#).

A copy of the Society's recent press release for our latest publication is reproduced below...

A Tribute for George



Almost forty year ago three of us, George Redmonds, Jenny Stead and myself sat down to think about how best the new research and writing about the local history of the West Riding might find a better way to its growing audience. With some help from Peter Watkins of *Greenhead Books* we came up with the idea for a local history magazine called *Old West Riding*. The plan was to provide somewhere for people who were doing their own research to publish their writing and to share it with other enthusiasts. There were to be no real restrictions on what people could submit – as long as it dealt with some aspect of the history of the old West Riding. Long pieces, short pieces, photographs, provided they met basic standards such as respect for their sources and were written in a way which non-experts might understand were all acceptable. The only real limit was the number of pages we had in the magazine.

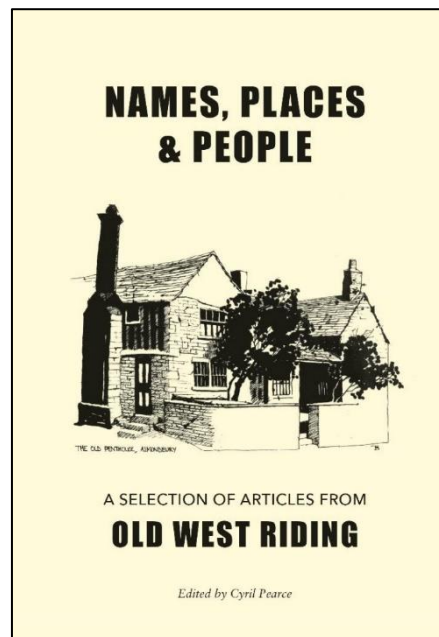
Contributions came in from students at George's WEA classes, from Local History Society members, from people who turned up at our local history talks and from the three of us. We persuaded friendly academics who supported the project to send us their stuff and we took it in turns to be Editors. Once it was under way articles appeared on the Editors' desk from all manner of places.

Looking back, almost fifty year later, the 1970s and early 1980s was the beginning of a 'golden age' for local history. Following the lead given by E. P. Thompson, the study of 'history from below' re-discovered the stories of ordinary people and places and helped rescued local history from the accusations of antiquarianism and insisted that it should be taken seriously.

For some outside the universities, as local historian Alan Brooke told us, it was the first real opportunity they had to publish their work and it gave them the confidence to carry on.

Old West Riding's first issue came out in the Spring of 1981 and for a number of years we managed two issues a year. By 1995, when we finally decided to stop publication, we had produced twenty-three of them. Many of the early issues are no longer available and there is only a dwindling number of the rest still in circulation. That and the value that many people still attach to the magazine is partly what encouraged Huddersfield Local History Society, with the agreement of George and Jenny, to decide that its 2019 publication should celebrate *Old West Riding* by publishing a selection of those articles which had a Huddersfield connection. That decision was given added importance when George passed away last year and the book acknowledges that – and much more – by being dedicated to him.

The selection, which is published with the title *Names, Places and People*, contains some pieces which have since become classics but which have not been published elsewhere – Jenny's 'Uses of Urine' and 'Ringing Adam Bells', George's pieces on names and place names and Philip Charlesworth's 'Founders at Marsden'. Others, such as the stories of Yorkshire emigrant 'pioneers' in America and John Addy's reflections on a 17th century Archbishop's anxieties about immorality in Huddersfield touch on more personal histories. There is space too for some studies of historic local houses by the late Edward Law. Also timely is Stanley Ellis's article about local dialect. In the 1950s and 1960s he was the driving force behind Dialect Studies at Leeds University and now a major Heritage Lottery-funded project is to celebrate and re-visit that work with a new appraisal of local language and how we speak.



What '*OWR*' fans might find particularly valuable is that the articles in this selection are interspersed with copies of the striking covers from its early editions with their original drawings by Tony Burke.

The book is to be launched at the Huddersfield Local History Society's 2019 Study Day on the 23rd November. That event at Brian Jackson House is to be a celebration of George Redmonds' work and will hear contributions from scholars who have worked with him, have drawn on his pioneering research and are following in his footsteps as well as an introduction to George's recently-published *Yorkshire Historical Dictionary* [[available online](#)].

Another happy coincidence is that what is one of George's last pieces of local history work is also to be published this month. *Honley: People, Places and Place-Names*, published by his good friend David Shore for only £4.95, will be available very soon.

Cyril Pearce

Events

For further details of the following events, please click on the links. Whilst every effort has been made to check the accuracy of the information included in these listings, it is up to members themselves to check that the event is happening and that any arrangements have not been changed.

Thursday 5th December 2019

Holme & Calder Assoc. (National Trust): *Bringing the past to life through historic houses: the Red House at Gomersal* – Stephen Counce. 10:30am, Old Court Room, Huddersfield Town Hall. Members £3, non-members £4. Includes refreshments from 10am. For further details, call 01422 355315.

Thursday 9th January 2020

Honley Civic Society: *Mayors, are we missing out?* – Brendan Evans. 7:30pm.

Saturday 11th January 2020

Holme & Calder Assoc. (National Trust): *The Halifax Literary & Philosophical Society* – Corinne MacDonald. 2pm at Blackley Baptist Church, Elland. Members £3, non-members £4. Refreshments after included. Further details, call 01422 355315.

Wednesday 15th January 2020

Kirklees Libraries' Lunchtime Club: *World War One Peace Pageant in Dewsbury* – Stuart Hartley. 1pm.

Monday 27th January 2020

Huddersfield Local History Soc.: *The Boys of the Old Brigade* – John Rumsby. 7:30pm.

Tuesday 28th January 2020

Huddersfield & Halifax Geog. Assoc.: *The Four Standedge Tunnels* – Trevor Ellis. 7:15pm.

HLHS Writers Workshop 2020

Perhaps you have considered submitting an article to our Society *Journal* but, while we urge all our writers to check out the notes for authors which can be found on our website, these mostly relate to form rather than to content.

We've been wondering if it would be helpful to hold a workshop which would not only offer support to potential contributors but also provide an opportunity for participants to discuss their ideas and the best ways of getting them into print.

Enough members have now expressed an interest to make this viable and we hope to run our first workshop in the Spring. If you would like to be involved, please email me at info@huddersfieldhistory.org.uk

Christine Verguson

Of Boggarts, Spiders and a Dead Man's Hole!

Hallowe'en may be behind us, but the dark autumn evenings are an opportune time to gather around the proverbial fire and tell tales of our local folklore.

Dr. Simon Young, editor of *Magical Folk: British and Irish Fairies: 500 AD to the Present* and author of several fascinating academic articles on the topic of boggarts, is seeking help from those of a certain age. If you were born between 1920 and the 1960s, he would be extremely keen to chat with you about the following questions:

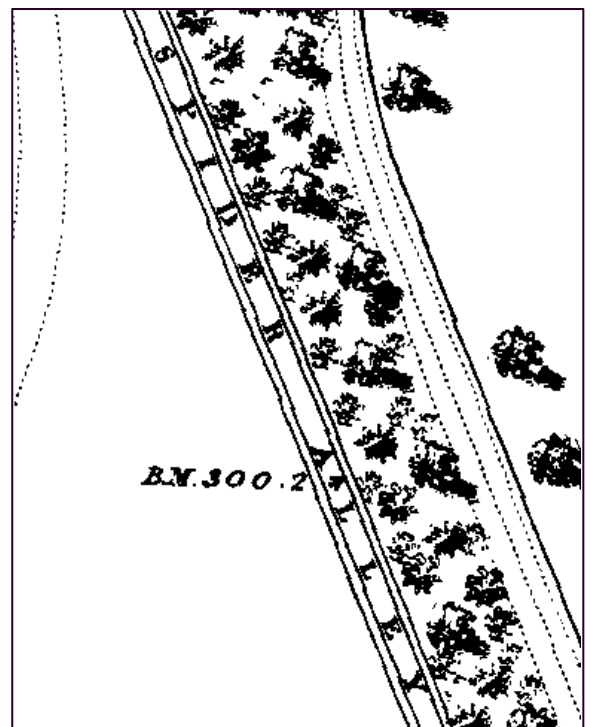
- *What does the word 'boggart' mean to you?*
- *Did your parents and grandparents use the word? Do your children or nephews and nieces?*
- *Do you know any stories about boggarts or places especially associated with boggarts?*
- *Where did you grow up and in what decade?*

Simon's email address is simonyoungfl@gmail.com or he can be contacted on Skype: [simonyoung1973](https://www.skype.com/user/simonyoung1973)

As he knew I'd been indexing local places names from historic O.S. maps, Simon asked me to let him know if I came across any unusually named locations that might be linked to folklore. As well as a handful of [boggart-y place names](#), the first O.S. maps from circa 1850 include [Mankin Holes](#) (Bradley) and [Robin Hood's Cradle](#) (Scout Wood, near Merry Dale, Slaithwaite). More curiously, on a now-disused back lane from Upperthong to Holmfirth can be found [Dead Man's Hole](#) (marked as Dead Man's Hall on the first O.S. map) – can anyone venture an explanation to this place name? If you know of any other locations linked to local folklore, please get in touch!

It was whilst pouring over old O.S. maps that I first came across '[Spider Alley](#)' – a narrow wall-lined footpath that once ran straight for about a third of a mile along the eastern side of the Thornton Lodge estate.

A search of the newspaper archives revealed that this was a place best avoided, with muggings and assaults an all too common occurrence. In October 1887, the Town Council accepted a motion 'for the closing of Spider Alley footpath, within the Lockwood district, and approving a proposed street in substitution thereof'. Within a year, Thornton Lodge Road had been laid parallel to the alley. Today, only the southern entrance to the old alley survives (see [Google Street View](#)).



What also became apparent from the newspaper archives was that 'spider alley' was a generic term typically applied to a long narrow pathway or alley with walled sides. To date, I've found [seven other named instances in our area](#), some of which still exist: Linthwaite, Milnsbridge, Birkby, Honley, Ravensknowle (Dalton), Kirkburton and Lepton. If you know of any other 'spider alley's, please drop me a line!

Frustratingly, it's clear from the newspaper articles that this was a commonly-used and well-understood term... and therefore the reader needed no explanation whatsoever! To date, I've yet to find an exact definition. However, the implication seems to be that the term acted as a warning. Once you entered the alley, your only options were to turn around or continue through to the other end. Therefore, a pair of assailants working together could block either end and trap you in the alley, perhaps like a fly caught in a spider's web? If you were taught the meaning of what a 'spider alley' was a child, please get in touch.

It's worth noting that, with one exception, I've yet to find any references to a 'spider alley' outside of the Huddersfield area – this was seemingly very much a local term. The one exception is that a Spider Alley can be found marked on a 1882 map of the U.S. city of Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. Could this be an example of a local emigrant introducing the term to a new country?

I'll end by mentioning one further local term: 'Pop Alley'. I know only of [two local examples](#) – at Hepworth and Underbank, Cartworth – and both are narrow footpaths across a steep valley which include a footbridge over water. This undated photograph is of the Pop Alley that forms part of an old footpath from Scholes to Holy Trinity Church, Hepworth.

Have you any thoughts about this term? My best guess is that since a 'pop alley' provided a short cut between locations that would otherwise involve a much longer trek by road, it was perhaps 'pop' in the sense of going somewhere quickly.

Can you think of any other interestingly named local alleys or paths?

Dave Pattern

davepattern@gmail.com



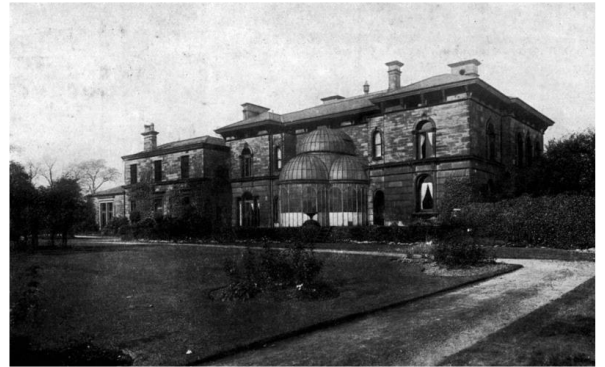
Discover Huddersfield

If your New Year's Resolution will be to shed a few pounds or to get out and do a bit more walking, the printed [Discover Huddersfield](#) trails can be found at the usual places. The [newest trails](#) explore Almondbury and Birkby.

Huddersfield & District in the Past

100 Years Ago...

During the summer and autumn of 1919, Huddersfield Town Council discussed Legh Tolson's offer of Ravensknowle Hall and grounds for use as a museum. The deed of gift was completed on 31 December 1919, to which was attached a copy of T. W. Woodhead's *Scheme for the Development of a Local Museum* ([available to read online](#)). Local photographer W. H. Sikes, whose story is told by Peter Burton in [Issue 30](#) of our *Journal*, was commissioned to take this photograph of Ravensknowle.



150 Years Ago...

The foundation stone of a dedicated hall for Slaithwaite Mechanics' Institute was laid on 1 January 1870 on the east side of Commercial Street on land acquired from Sir Joseph Radcliffe. Just over a year later, the building was altered to incorporate a day and night school. I don't have a date for when the hall/school was demolished, but a row of houses now stands on the site.

200 Years Ago...

Extract from *A Glossary of the Dialect of Almondbury & Huddersfield* (1883):

Formerly at festal seasons great games of football were played in this neighbourhood, sometimes between Honley and Meltham, and sometimes between Almondbury and Farnley. These were played in a style which would astonish the athletes of our days. The last game between this village and Farnley is said to have taken place on old Christmas Day, 1819, when the ball was turned out in Farnley fields. The Farnley men were to drive it across Thurstonland boundary, and the Almondbury men across Almondbury boundary; thus they had a course of extremely rough country of about three miles long. Many ferocious kicks were given and received on this occasion; even when the ball was scores of yards away men stood kicking each other violently, and a portion of wall upwards of a rood was thrown down in the contest in one place. The kicks were by no means child's play, as they were all administered in clogs. The Farnley people won.