

A DRIVER and WEATHERHEAD family history

Silsden, West Yorkshire, England

Tracing the story of two Silsden families, through six generations of change

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Appendix 3

Social life in Silsden

Social life before the 1700s is likely to have been somewhat limited with friends meeting frequently at each other's houses, at beer houses, in the village centre, on walks to church in Kildwick and at the church itself. Also, at local attractions such as cockfights and other relatively local amusement, sport and craft events. Although no suitable record has been found from those early dates it is likely that music was played, probably for their own pleasure but perhaps entertaining friends and family.

Up until 1712, when the Chapel of Ease was consecrated and given the name of St James, Silsdeners had to walk to Kildwick to attend church on Sundays and for all baptisms, marriages and burials. After 1712 Sunday services were held in Silsden and, in 1816, St James Church was rebuilt and further improved in 1876. Only after 1845 were the walks to Kildwick rendered unnecessary as firstly baptisms, then burials and finally marriages were held in Silsden.

From the mid 1700s the size of the village was beginning to grow with the start of nail making, canal building, followed by the turnpike and the railway. Hotels, pubs and beer houses were busy and provided a place for relaxation, entertainment and gossip. Demand was increasing and while the names of the Red Lion, Robin Hood and King's Arms are prominent and have featured in the research of this family history, there were a total of six or more such establishments in Silsden providing opportunities for socialising. This awakening and increased industrialisation in Silsden strengthened the demand for other denominational chapels. These were founded by Wesleyans about 1813, Primitive Methodists about 1822, and Bethesdans in 1871. A Catholic Church did not surface until the 20th century. Now, meeting friends and associates occurred at different locations in the village.

A timeline of events in Silsden is shown at the end of this family history.

A quote from the Silsden Primitive Methodism book provides an insight of these times.

'When Primitive Methodism was introduced into the West Riding, the morals of people were, in many parts, in a sad and deplorable condition. Silsden was no exception to the rule. The place we are told was notorious for "ignorance, rudeness and crime". Undoubtedly there were both respectable individuals and families in the village. Such is one of the views of Silsden before the Primitive Methodists visited in 1821. "The influence of Primitive Methodism on the population of Silsden has been elevating and ennobling so that the brutal practices and pastimes of the past have given place to a deep religious seriousness that will vie with that known in any of the Yorkshire villages."'

The Silsden PM book, when talking about William Newton as a teenager (born 1803) in Silsden, says, 'he appears to have lived a good moral life amid all the corruptness that was around him, - for bull-baiting, cock-fighting, gambling etc were among the prevalent vices of the time.'

However, some commentators remind us that such writing was often contributed by people in authority or with wealth and so we should remember to consider the bias concerning the life of the working classes that may be embedded in the texts.

Life for children would be changing. From the 1820s the number of children attending school started to increase. With the opening of the National School in 1820 many more children were learning to read and write and in 1874 schooling became mandatory for all children between the ages of 5 and 10. Instead of children knowing children in their neighbourhood and those of their parents' friends, they now came to meet children from all over Silsden and to meet them frequently. They would take this opening of horizons with them into adulthood, so within a few years the whole community was awakened.

In the early to mid 1800s the traditional cottage industry of weaving began to move towards taking place in dedicated buildings, especially with the

introduction of powered looms. So, more formal employment created more opportunities for social mixing. At this time women outnumbered the men in the mills. In contrast the nail making business in Silsden was very much a male occupation with the numerous smithies scattered in and around the village. Much of the population was on the move to and from schools and places of work, often four times a day.

During this period, a social and civic conscience was taking hold in Silsden, with education of adults as well as children being organised. These made use of existing buildings but also required special purpose developments. So, in addition to weekday schools and Sunday Schools, meeting rooms and a public library were provided. It took until the early 1900s for these ideas to settle into a uniform national fabric of administration.

Looking at the national and international scenes, the 1800s were a period of adventure and exploration. Discovery of much of Africa and of Australasia, and the revelations of science lead to new knowledge of nature and inventions. By the 1880s the camera had come into general use and finding photographs showing Silsden sporting club events led to further research revealing leisure times spent treading the boards, at bazaars and in bands, but also in politics. As a result, this social life appendix developed covering both Victorian and Edwardian times.

Then WW1 created a new upheaval in every sphere of life. This particularly affected women who were undertaking new kinds of factory work that hitherto had been primarily, if not solely, a man's occupation. Social life was changed once more.

Music

Music was an important element in the social life during the 1800s, not only in providing a pastime at which skills constantly needed honing, but in creating an uplifting and welcoming atmosphere at churches and chapels.

By the 1820s musical concerts were held at The Red Lion, organised by landlord, William Weatherhead, O2. The Bradford Observer reports on one

special event at the Red Lion on 27th March 1843. This was held in an upstairs room at the rear of the hotel which, in 2019, is still available for a variety of events and meetings. Music was a strong interest of William, of his son Charles and of many of his descendants through the next six generations.

CONCERT AT SILSDEN.—A concert took place in the Assembly Room of the Red Lion Inn, in Silsden, near Keighley, on Monday evening, the 27th of March, given by Mr. C. F. Hoffman, the celebrated German violinist, which was respectably and numerously attended: the music was select, and gave the greatest satisfaction. The glee singers, Messrs. Briggs, Bowers, Ogden, and Greenwood, were in good tune, and sung admirably well. Mr. Greenwood sung his two bass songs, "Land of my dearest," and "The Land," exceedingly well—he has, indeed, a good bass voice, rich in the lower notes. Mr. Briggs sung "Cold was the climate," in a good style. Mr. Ogden sung "There is an Isle" with good taste and judgment; his comic song, "The opulent Maid," was humorously given. Miss Mackey sung "The Mountain Maid," "To labour away," and a part in the duett of "I love thee," in a pleasing manner, and bids fair to be a good singer. Mr. W. Hardacre, who presided at the piano forte, accompanied the glees and songs with much judgment, and has considerably improved lately; his accompaniments to Mr. C. F. Hoffman's violin solo, which were not of a very easy cast, were all sustained and steadily played in time, which is not the case generally with piano forte players. As for Mr. F. Hoffman's performance, it needs no comment; his bold and masterly style, brilliant and rapid execution, never stopping out of tune in the most difficult passages, with his beautiful intonation and poetical expression, must ever be a rich treat in this neighbourhood to all who have listened once to the melodious strains he draws from the violin.

Roy Mason tells us that in 1830 the Silsden Band was established, with brass and reed instruments. A 1905 article states that William Driver, P7, founded the Silsden Band which for many years went to Lancaster where the militia were under training. The 1841 census shows nine young Silsden men of age 15 or 20 (rounded ages in 1841 census) staying overnight at Clapham. William Driver was one of them and we suspected that he was on his way to or from the port of Lancaster. However, we later realised that four of the nine, William Driver, Henry and Thomas Bottomley and Edward Wilson were musicians and so concluded that all nine men were travelling together as members of the Silsden band.

In 1843 a Chartist pleasure trip to Bolton Abbey is reported in a Keighley newspaper. 'One very pleasing feature of the trip was the presence of the Silsden Military Band, dressed in their full uniform. These honest Fellows, who are Chartists to the man, are ready at all times to give their services to the cause, preceded the party in a waggon, and added considerably to their pleasure by playing occasionally on the road.'

In 1848 the Silsden Oddfellows celebrated their anniversary by forming a procession and proceeded to the parish church, headed by the Silsden band, under the able leadership of Mr Henry Bottomley.

In 1850 some of the band members joined the Royal Lancashire Militia and this began a long association between the regiment and the band. Silsden Brass Band members were eventually allowed to proudly wear the distinctive white regimental tunics at public performances and band contests. The band continued to wear this style of uniform until the late 1920s. At the outbreak of the Crimean War with Russia in 1854 nine members of the band enlisted for garrison service abroad with the Royal Lancashire Military Band. Henry Driver, P7, and Thomas Weatherhead, P7, were amongst those that joined up, along with Henry, Ernest and Tom Bottomley, Edward and William Wilson, Henry Longbottom and Richard Fortune.

After nearly three years the conflict was over. In 1856 the bandmen returned to Silsden and with them they brought the Regimental Bandmaster, Mr M Dowling, who took charge of a re-formed Silsden Band. The band was very successful in brass band competitions and in 1862, at the All England Brass Band Contest in Birmingham, the band came fourth. At that time the prize money was £2 for this placing. The band went on to win prizes at both national and local band competitions. In 1863 at Manchester, they won 3rd prize playing a piece written by Silsden's Mr. Ed. Newton. On the same day one of their members, Richard Brocklebank, entered and won a cornet competition, with the judge claiming that he was the best cornet player outside London.

Edward Newton was another returning soldier from the war in Crimea. He joined the militia band in 1860 and became bandmaster in 1872. Between 1860 and 1884 he attended 25 annual camps, thirteen as bandmaster. Edward Newton was also a Silsden nail maker. Newton developed into a prolific composer and arranger. Queen Victoria even accepted a copy of one of his compositions, 'For Fifty Years her Light hath Beamed'. The bandstand in the playing fields at Silsden was erected in 1935 in memory of Edward Newton.

In his book, *Gleanings from Victorian Yorkshire*, Ian Dewhirst writes that in 1872 Newton formed a new band at Silsden, chiefly of youths with a few older men as nucleus. Sometimes they would spend six nights a week practising in rooms adjoining a grocery and corn store in Briggate. As the players progressed, they graduated into the Militia.

When presented with a gold watch in 1876 at a knife and fork supper at the Red Lion Inn Newton said, "It has always been my constant wish to raise up a band of steady young men, who would try to make the band a credit to the village. I shall always try not only to teach them to be musicians, but to inculcate habits of sobriety, honesty, industry and carefulness."

James, as related in narratives 123 and 124, having retired from being station master, became a coal merchant in Silsden. Then by arrangement,



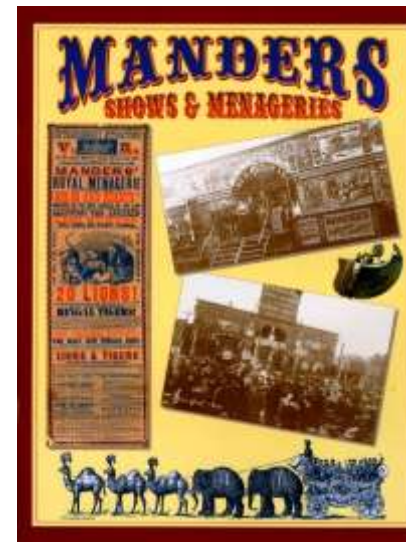
in about 1876 he and Elizabeth took over the running of the Red Lion which they did for the next six years. Probably in 1882 Herbert Henry, now age 21, was old enough to hold the licence and the following year we find newly married Herbert as landlord of the Red Lion and James in Keighley as a hotel keeper.

Another form of entertainment in Victorian times were Travelling Menageries. They also had educational value for the general public who, otherwise, would never have had an opportunity to see wild animals from overseas. Children would absent themselves from

school in order to see the visiting troupe.

The shows were built up in a particular fashion with highly decorative front displays and the 'beast wagons' placed behind in a rectangle, thus forming an enclosed area. The menageries often boasted, 'A Splendid Band in Attendance' and some of the Silsden bandsmen used their musical skills to play in the travelling menageries. These included Messrs. Wilson, Bottomley, Fortune, Driver and Longbottom. The Driver was Henry, P7. The menagerists became highly regarded by the public through their displays and educational commitments. By the time of his death in 1850, George Wombwell was so well known that his obituary was published in local papers the length and breadth of the country indicating how great was the popularity of the menageries. The name lived on. In Silsden's Elliott Street School log book, see Appendix 17, there is an entry for 1912 which reads: -

'Nov.19th The school opened at 1. o'clock yesterday afternoon instead of half past one and closed at 3.30 to give the children an opportunity of



visiting Bostock and Wombwells Travelling Menagerie. A special afternoon show was given for the children who were accompanied by their teacher.'

By 1875 a new village tradition was to be established. In this year the first village performance of Handel's Messiah was given in the Wesleyan Church. This became an annual tradition for the next 100 years. Edward Newton was conductor for five years.

Returning to the Silsden Brass Band we found the following account based on the Keighley News Report from 23/1/1875.

'In January 1875 the band was engaged to play at an unusual event. This concerned local manufacturer Mr North Summerscales who was also a member of the Local Silsden Board. Mr Summerscales had been found guilty of an assault on his estranged daughter in-law by the Skipton Magistrates and was sentenced to three months in prison at Wakefield jail. Many members of the Local Board and local manufacturers were outraged at this sentence and sent a petition to the Home Secretary in Parliament. The petition was rejected and Mr Summerscales had to serve his sentence. On his release the Silsden worthies had decided to give him a hero's welcome. Two gentlemen from the town went to Wakefield prison to accompany him back. They eventually arrived at Steeton station by train to a welcome by many leading manufacturers and Silsden Board Members as well as members of the public. The Silsden Brass Band had been engaged for the occasion and they led a procession towards Silsden with wagonettes and spectators. They reached the Red Lion where Mr Summerscales and the party of friends alighted from the wagonettes at which time the band played 'Home Sweet Home'. Mr Summerscales then proceeded to walk to his home in the village. Later Mr Summerscales was invited to a supper provided by the Local Board Members and leading manufacturers of the town where many speeches of tribute were paid to him.'

Further research revealed the following:-

North Summerscales, who was the older brother of Charles Weatherhead's wife, Esther, P6, married Mary Ann Mitchell on the 11th November 1850. Charles Weatherhead was a witness at their wedding which took place just four months before Charles and Esther were married, at which North was their witness. North and Mary Ann had ten children of whom only the eldest son William was married by 1874 so we are confident that it was William's wife, Isabella Hollingdrake, the 20 year old daughter-in-law to whom reference was made in the article above. Being estranged suggests that in 1874, at the time of the assault, or 1875, at the time of the article Isabella was no longer living with William whom she married in 1873.

Six months after the assault Isabella gave birth to Emmanuel and he was baptised on 13th May 1875, with his father named as William. Emmanuel died at 15 weeks and was buried on the 24th August 1875 thus confirming his May birth.

Then, on the 31st January 1876, just five months after Emmanuel's death, Isabella died. On the Registration of Death, she was named as being wife of William and that she died from Gastritis for 15 days and Paralysis for 12 days, in the presence of her uncle, George Hollingdrake, at the King's Arms in Silsden.

Isabella was the daughter of spinster Grace Hollingdrake of Hay Hills. William, in 1881, was living with his father.

Reflecting on this series of events it should be noted that North was a farmer not a manufacturer. Also at that time Charles Weatherhead was chairman of the Local Board and he was a grocer. He, with Esther and family, were resident in Kirkgate, probably at the shop which became number 50 in the course of time. At the Red Lion Grace Weatherhead's sister, Elizabeth Ellison, and her husband were now managing the inn. The article is revealing in how it shows the position of a young female victim of crime in relation to the Silsden worthies. The original article in the Bradford Observer 19/10/1874, under the title, Brutal assault, and commenting on the case indicates that William and Isabella had argued. William had gone

home to his parents and Isabella had gone to the house 'of the defendant and asked for her husband. He refused to come out and the defendant (*North Summerscales*), ordered her away.' At this point the stories vary.

Isabella states, 'She was standing on the door-step when the defendant struck her a violent blow on the temple with his fist; she was knocked to the ground and defendant commenced kicking her in a most brutal manner. Two serious wounds were inflicted on the back of the head, which bled very profusely. She became insensible, and did not recover her consciousness until the next morning.'

North's defence was that Isabella went to the house, 'In a state of intoxication, that all the defendant did was to push her from the doorway, when she fell down the steps and her head came in contact with the stones.'

It may be that the support for North was based upon the perceived injustice from his friends of the temperance Primitive Methodist community. However, the magistrate, at the Petty Sessions, 'expressed the view that a most brutal assault had been committed, and that a penalty would not meet the justice of the case.' Hence the three month prison sentence at Wakefield.

Moving forward another 8 years brings us to 2nd February 1884, when the *Keighley News* recorded that Mr Charles Driver and Miss Florence Weatherhead, Q5, were performing together in a musical evening following the annual supper of the Silsden Brass Band. This was four years before their marriage. Charles, 24, was a nail maker like his father, and Florence, 23, having been a scholar was now a domestic at general level and due to become a music teacher. The report reads: -

'The annual supper of the Silsden Brass Band took place on Saturday in the Primitive Methodist Sunday School. About sixty persons sat down to an excellent tea provided by Mr Lund, Miss Hudson and Mrs Lund. The whole of the members of the band with their wives or some friends were present. Letters were received from Mr G S Taylor and Mr G Jacques expressing

their regret at being unable to attend. The cloth having been removed, an interesting entertainment commenced.

The Rev T Knowles MA presided and called upon the band to play 'Beauties of Ireland' after which the Chairman gave an interesting and practical address referring to Monre's Irish Melodies, some of which were introduced into the piece so well played by the band.'

Mrs Florence Weatherhead sang 'The Better Land'. The band gave a selection which was much applauded. Mr Sugden Lund followed with a song 'The Carrier Dove' which he sang well. Amusements were then indulged in, and oranges were handed to the audience. The band followed on with a valse, 'The Silver Rhine' by Meissler which was much appreciated. Mr Charles Driver sang 'The Blacksmiths Son', Miss Weatherhead presided at the harmonium. The brass band item was under the able conductorship of Mr E Newton. The whole night was an enjoyable affair.

Notes. 1. Mrs Florence Weatherhead should have read Miss, there being no other Florence Weatherhead in Silsden. 2. Monre is most likely Thomas Moore, 1779-1852, who was known for his compositions called Irish Melodies. 3. Miss Weatherhead presiding at the harmonium is likely to have been Ann, Q1 or Fanny, Q3.

At the band's annual supper three years later, on 26th February 1887, Queen Victoria's Jubilee year, the *Keighley News* reports:-

'The members of this band had their annual supper on Saturday evening in the Primitive Methodist School-room. Each member had the privilege of asking a friend. There were also a few friends invited by the band, and consequently about a hundred persons sat down to an excellent knife and fork tea. After the cloth had been removed they repaired to the Mechanics' Institute to hold an evenings' entertainment. Mr E Newton – bandmaster presided. The younger portion of those present enjoyed themselves with dancing. The Chairman called upon Mr John Driver to give a short address, but he declined on the ground of it not being an opportune time for speech making. Yet he warmly congratulated the band on the success they had

achieved in becoming so proficient in so short a time, and also on their sober and respectable habits, which had done much to make them so much respected in the village, and he proposed the thanks of the meeting to the band, which was seconded by Mr J. J. Booth and responded to by Mr Newton. Songs were also sung and other amusements indulged in, to the great enjoyment of all present.'

Notes. 4. Mr John Driver would have been the 41-year-old preacher, P4+, son of Thomas Driver. 5. Mr J. J. Booth was John Booth, Silsden farmer, who was one of the original members of the Silsden School Board.

In 1896 Silsden's Orchestral Society was formed and for years the society brought some of Britain's leading vocalists to the twice yearly concerts. As Cathy Liddle says in a Silsden.net article on Home-Made Entertainment in Silsden, the two accomplished organisations, the Silsden Brass Band and the Silsden's Orchestra, were nationally acknowledged for many decades.



The orchestra had a close link with William Weatherhead, Q7, and with Charles Weatherhead, P6, whose grocer shop at 50 Kirkgate was used as a rehearsal space for the newly formed orchestra.

From the 1880s until the 1920s Mummers would be escorted by the Brass or Quadrille Bands. Mumming in Silsden was usually practised by women. They would dress in clothes of the opposite sex and visit streets and houses to sweep in the New Year. This 1919 photograph shows eight teenage girls on a New Year's Eve Mumming expedition.

Over the period there were Primitive Methodist Mission Bands. They were organised in a similar way to the PM Preachers' Plans. On one such plan there were four all male mission bands with about 12 men in each, including Sam, William and J Driver and one all female band, with about 20 women, including Ann Weatherhead and her sister F Weatherhead.

Enjoyment of and participation in musical activities continued through the 1900s, with a number of generation Q and R playing musical instruments and performing, as related in each narrative.

Holiday entitlement

In the 1800s workers were entitled to eight half day holidays a year plus Christmas Day and Good Friday. However, evidence from some mills suggests annual holidays ranged from 7 to 10 days in the 1830s and 1840s. In Keighley additional days were awarded for Keighley Fair and Parish Feasts and the same probably applied in Silsden.

Other musically significant events during the 1800s in Silsden included Club Day in 1860. This was organised by a number of Friendly Societies as a form of community get together in the middle of summer. Eventually this event developed into Silsden Feast. Parades of brass bands, assorted characters and drunken revelry were its main characteristics.

The following poem of 1890, written by Miles Atkinson, described the event.

August Holiday, 1890

By Miles Atkinson

As I WALKED down Silsden at Feast Time
I thowt of a verse I could put into rhyme
There were knuts on all t'seeats, plain to be seen
An' lads suckin' 'umbugs, daubed up to their e'en.

There were sheep up on t' Punch Bowl all fastened in t' pen
An' round them were t' farmers an' all t' farmer's men.
There were young men an' wimmen lookin' pleasant an' gay;
Some hed rakes on their shoulders, they'd been workin' in t'hay

Then bi t' chapel gates I met butcher Sam
For good beef an' mutton, just beat his that can.
Yer've plenty o' gravy when roasted or fried
An' you'll know truth o' that
When it you have tried.

An' just as Ah stood there, Doctor Wilson cam' by,
If you feel out of order, it's to him you apply,
He's thowt varry clever, wi' excellent skills
An you'll sooin get reief wi' his drugs an' his pills.

Then Ah met Neddy Feather wi' his waggon and ware,
He's got wursset stockin's an' oil for thi hair;
He's pins, nails an' matches an' bobbins o' thread
An' if your floor needed sweepin' you could buy a brush 'ead.

Ah went up New Road an' Ah met Mr Hart –
His soul an' his body will soon hev to part –
An' t' reason is this: it's strong brandy an' gin:
He's varry near t' grave an' he'll sooin topple in.

Away across t' street Ah spied Tillotson (James)
His farm lies to t' left as you walk o'er t' Grange
He's one o' t' best farmers Ah ivver did see
An' if you saw his farm Ah'm sure you'd agree.

Near t' Red Lion, Tom o' Fanny's Ah spied –

He wieers fifteen coits for to cover his hide.

He's a coit trimmed wi' scarlet an' one wi' sky blue
An' as to his head-piece, well, like that there's but few.

Then Ah met ahr greengrocer but ah'll not tell his name
(For haircuttin' an' shavin' he's winnin' some fame)
He gets round t'lasses in a scandalous way
Then he's fair capped when he's ordered to pay.

Well Ah turned round at last as Ah'd finished mi rooam
These lines Ah'd made up bi t' sweat o' mi brow
So Ah said to mi wife "Is ta ready for bed?
For Ah's fair jiggered."

Silsden Town Hall, formerly Mechanics' Institute

The Silsden Town Hall website describes this item of history: -

'Perhaps the village worthies who met in the snug of the Red Lion Inn in the late 1860s to discuss a proposal for an institute, could not have predicted how large the project would become and how central it would be to Silsden's development as a growing and lively town.

Not a great deal happened for several years, until local schoolmaster David Longbottom, impatient for progress and anxious to offer the chance of learning to Silsden's largely uneducated working population, arranged a series of monthly lectures at the Red Lion. These classes included botany, philosophy, local history and the art of debating. Among the teachers and most ardent supporters was Charles Weatherhead.'

The first fund raising effort for a purpose-built institute was held in 1875. In 1876 an inaugural meeting was held for a Silsden Club and Institute. On 9th September 1876 the Craven Herald reported that Lord Cavendish MP gave a speech at its inauguration in the Primitive Methodist Schoolroom. Of interest to this family history is that the speeches were followed by a performance by a Glee Party that included E Weatherhead. This was most probably Charles and Esther's daughter, Elizabeth rather than Esther. Two

years later the committee opened an account with the Yorkshire Penny Bank. A central site adjoining the churchyard in Kirkgate was bought 'for a very nominal figure' from Lord Hothfield of Skipton Castle. He owned much of Silsden at the time. He also donated £77 10s.



On a wet afternoon just before Christmas 1883, the first foundation stone of a Mechanics' Institute for Silsden was laid. 'In spite of the very inclement weather, there was a large gathering of spectators', reported the local newspapers.

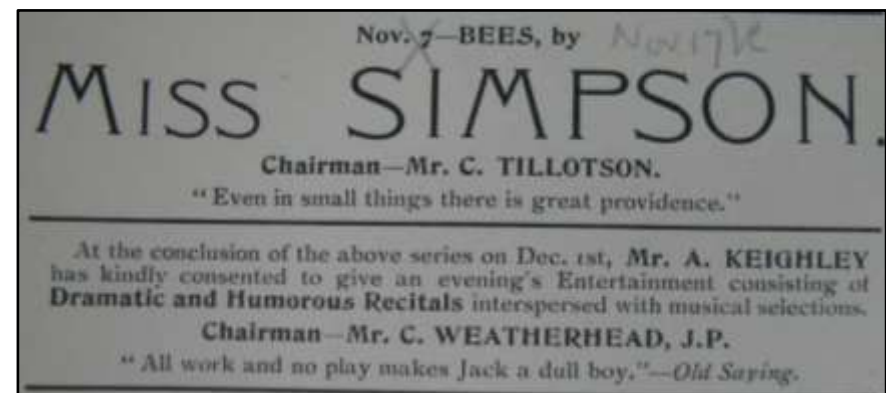
'The foundation stone was laid by Lord Hothfield and by local mill owner George Jacques, following a community procession through the streets from Aire View School. Both were presented with a commemorative silver trowel and mallet. Tea was provided afterwards along with a big public meeting to outline plans for the new facility – including a reading room, conversation room, classrooms, lecture hall, a shop and an office "all

heated by hot-water apparatus" – and to drum up further fund-raising efforts.

"Every mite contributed is a move in the right direction," declared Lord Hothfield, he was delighted to hear that "the good ladies of Silsden" were to launch sewing meetings and a bazaar. The Mechanics' Institute was not for this generation only, he said, but it was intended to go down through future generations for the cultural enrichment of the community.

The Mechanics' Institute, at a cost of £2,000 was opened 10 months later in October 1884. As shown in the sketch drawing. Its aim: to encourage villagers "to meet and employ their thoughts on high and noble subjects".

It became a thriving centre for the community. Villagers, most of whom had never been able to afford such things, were able to borrow books, (*Frank Driver, Q6, was the second of two librarians*), read national and international news, go to evening classes, take part in noisy public debates, and listen to musical concerts. It was a preparation for universal franchise and greater democracy that were to come.'



In 1896, now 68 years, Charles Weatherhead was able to combine his interest in education, music and morals by chairing the evening of entertainment to mark the conclusion to a series of natural history talks.

Sport

The 1800s proved to be a time of innovation and advance in sport. Properly organised leagues were formed for both cricket and football. It all began in 1879 when a few enterprising citizens called a meeting in The Mechanics' Institute on Monday 5th May. The gentlemen had foreseen the necessity of providing sport for the village.



Silsden Cricket Club had been formed in 1878 with Messrs G Jacques, J M Driver, Q1, and G Hastings appointed as officers of the club. The first ground was a field situated behind Airedale Shed, then after a few years they rented a field on Howden Road. After this was the move to the field called The Wyveries on Skipton Road and then in 1889 to Keighley Road. The cricket and football clubs rented adjoining fields.

Silsden Cricket Club was very successful in the early years with many trophies coming their way. They won the Craven Cricket Union six times between 1891 and 1901 and were given the trophy outright to commemorate three successive wins.

By 1908 the clubs wanted to develop to include a bowling club, but there was concern about the heavy expenditure, especially as the clubs were sub-tenants. So, Frank Driver, Q6, C H Fletcher, Q8 and W M Watson approached Skipton Castle, the landlords, to improve the tenure arrangements. A twenty-one-year lease on the ground was obtained, for £35 per annum, through the generosity of Lord Hothfield and included ground for football, tennis and bowling. A bowling green was laid at the time at a cost of about £60.

Roy Mason notes that 'Many fine cricketers have represented Silsden, among the early players being the Drivers, of whom old timers used to say Harry Driver (*Henry Q5*) was perhaps Silsden's finest ever batsman. Other names from the early days which were spoken with reverence for half a century were John Knox, Joe Shackleton and John Morris Driver (*Q1*).'

In 1920 Silsden won the Wharfedale Cup beating Yeadon; they also won the Craven Cricket Union trophy again in 1915, 1919 and 1920.

The current Silsden Cricket Club website provides the following about the Driver involvement with the club in the early 1900s. 'Lord Hothfield as a further mark of goodwill toward the club gave the club the option of buying the grounds outright on very favourable terms and the combined clubs (cricket, football and tennis) began the efforts of raising funds in July 1921 with a view to purchase the grounds when the lease expired in 1930.'

We have few photographs about women and leisure activities. However, Silsden History Group have a photograph taken in the early 1930s which includes Mary Annie Driver Q4+ seated on the front row third from the left.



Photo by J W Smith Silsden



A Silsden cricket match, Past v. Present, played last night in connection with the club's jubilee year. The Past players are in front of the picture. In the centre of the second row are four brothers, Messrs. H. R. Driver, F. Driver, J. M. Driver, and C. Driver, who have been associated with the Silsden Club since its foundation.

"Telegraph and Argus" Copyright.

The website continues, 'The efforts were most successful and in 1930 the town had a 5.5 acre site for all time. To mark this achievement Mr Frank



Driver purchased the adjoining 5 acres, which he handed over as a free gift. Mr Driver also bought the club a motor mower and on the opening of the new clubhouse gave the club a cheque to cover all costs saying that he would not have the pavilion opened in debt. It is impossible to estimate what Mr Driver did for the club for his love of cricket and welfare of his fellow persons.'

The involvement continued into the next generation as shown by the photograph taken in 1910 of Arthur, R2, photographed with the touring Silsden cricket team. He is in the back row in a white jumper.

Silsden Rugby Team was established in 1883. In 1880 we believe that Charles Driver, Q3, was playing cricket for Keighley. In 1883 the local doctor in Silsden, Dr Purcell, who lived in Wesley Place, established the first rugby team in Silsden. Charles, aged 23, was in the team alongside his younger brother, Fred Driver, Q4, and William Weatherhead, Q7, Florence's brother, so providing us with more evidence that the two families socialised together. While the original Silsden rugby team was said to have been formed in 1883 the first fixtures shown in the local press were in the 1884-85 season. They first played at Daisy Hill, playing in blue and white jerseys, before moving to the 'Wyveries' on Skipton Road. A later move was made to The Becks, Keighley Road. The team played to rugby rules. At senior level this football club was disbanded in 1900 owing to the introduction of professionalism into the district. Then in 1904 it converted to soccer.

Silsden AFC was therefore established in 1904. Its press officer in 2018, Jim Rosser, explains how the football club became established.

'Silsden AFC was formed in 1904 by Dr John Purcell, a doctor and physician, who had moved from Ireland to Silsden to join a Silsden practice. Dr Purcell sought to encourage the community to improve their health by being actively involved in sports and he started a handball club, and then a rugby club.

He then set up the Football Club, originally called Silsden Clarence Association Football Club in 1904 and the club was to play in a local league. He arranged a 21-year lease agreement with the landlords, The Skipton Castle Estate.'

Note - It is interesting how history is tweaked over time. We note that there are two versions of how this lease was negotiated. The Association Football team initially played at The Becks, but then went back to Daisy Hill for a couple of seasons before returning to The Becks in 1908.

'An application was made to the landlords in 1921 to purchase the area as a sporting and recreation facility for the people of Silsden and the surrounding area. His (*Dr J Purcell*) wish was granted and the club worked tirelessly to raise the £500 needed by the end of the then current lease. This was achieved and Silsden Playing Fields was born. In those early days, the ground was used for football, cricket, bowls and tennis.

Over the years the tennis club moved away and eventually folded. However, the other three set up clubs under their own identity and each club ran as its own separate entity although the whole sporting area is overseen by a board of trustees and held in trust for the community of Silsden.'

In 1904, the newly formed Association Football team won the first Keighley Charity Cup for Association Football. So Silsden ensured that their name was the first to be inscribed on the cup for soccer, as it had for rugby. The final tie was a famous victory, the team being three goals down twenty minutes from time, but by a great effort won four goals to three. When the victorious team returned to Silsden almost the whole population turned out to welcome them. The Brass Band headed a torchlight procession up the Keighley Road from the railway station and around the main streets of the village.

The 1925-26 season of the Silsden Council School Soccer team has become part of village folklore. Fielding an unchanged set of players throughout the season, after losing their first league game they went on to win the



following 12 league games, taking the Glusburn and Silsden area school shield as well as winning the W.A. Brigg Rose Bowl and the Boy's Realm Cup. Will Driver, Q4+, son of Frederick and Alice Driver is pictured here on the back row, third from right.

Silsden Golf Club was established in 1911 and at that time it was a golf and tennis club. A photograph shows a few of the original men who set up the club including Arthur Driver, R2, and Charles Cockshott, Q1+. Keighley had established its first nine hole golf course in 1904, quickly followed by an 18 hole course in 1909. It is likely Silsdeners were keen to establish their own course as this sport gained popularity.

The Telegraph and Argus reported on 1/6/2011 that they interviewed club captain Alan Lampkin who explained, 'The club originally started where the rugby fields were at Shooting Croft, which is now a recreation park, but I think that will have been because it was free to play on.

The first tee was actually built on a tennis court and was known as Silsden Golf and Tennis Club at one time, which was fairly common among golf clubs. It then moved up to High Brunthwaite.'

Note – Shooting Croft and Daisy Hill were both located near to the present-day recreation ground.



The Silsden Golf Club opened its wooden club house in High Brunthwaite in 1912. Three years later, the golf club closed for the duration of WW1.

The publication, Men on the Memorial, written by A. James Driver, S1+, reflects;

'In 1912 some of the founder members of Silsden's Golf Club posed for photographs in the field that Jim England, a local farmer, had agreed they could use for their new course. They were middle class lads looking for innocent entertainments in a small, close-knit northern town. They went

to church on Sundays, played cricket on Saturday afternoons in the summer, and worked during the week in their family businesses, or for one of the many branches of the textiles industry that was making their home town, Silsden in the West Riding of Yorkshire, a prosperous and comfortable place to live.

None of them had any knowledge, experience or expectation of war.'

Alan Lampkin's comments continue, 'Throughout this time, siblings Arthur and Frank Driver were the band of brothers who helped Silsden Golf Club through its infancy as the textile-mill owners took a keen interest in the club. Frank was its president for all but two years between 1911 and 1935.

Martyn Twigg, who has been a member for 25 years and chairman for the past decade, said: "The Driver brothers put a lot of money into the club in the early days. They were local mill owners and they gradually bought up the land that we now play on."

Note - The comments made here in 2011 are not totally accurate as Arthur Driver was never a mill owner, but Frank's nephew. It is most probable that Henry Ripley Driver should have been named as Frank's brother.

Theatre and stage performances

These became increasingly popular in the early 1900s. By 1920 The Church Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society had been formed. Its first production was Pirates of Penzance by Gilbert and Sullivan. Then continued with Iolanthe in 1922, and more followed.

Other amateur dramatic groups were also active in Silsden at this time, especially linked to the Methodist churches. The Primitive Methodists were performing in 1926 with the choir in oriental costume. At this time there was great interest in 'The Orient'. A pleasing juxtaposition in the St James Parish Magazine of 1924 is the announcements of the production of The Gondoliers immediately above the wedding announcement of Arthur Driver and Katharine Bedford, R2. We wonder whether due to Arthur's musical abilities and Katharine's long association with amateur dramatics

during her teacher training that this is how they met. For the family the link is even more intriguing as Arthur and Katharine's wedding photograph appears to show Arthur wearing open toed, oriental style, shoes and Katharine in an oriental motif dress.

As Cathy Liddle says in her programme notes to Right Up Our Street, her play written about Silsden life, 'With no less than four performance stages available, villagers could choose a different show many times in one year, ranging from pantomimes and musicals to serious dramas and historical sketches. All the churches had their own theatrical companies and, in addition, there were groups such as The Tar Toppers which entered their locally scripted plays in amateur dramatic contests throughout Yorkshire, often with much success.'

Other organisations, groups and events

The late 1800s and most of the 20th century saw so many new initiatives that taken together enrolled a good proportion of adults and children. Many of these groups arranged their own annual event ranging from tea parties to ballroom dances. There were other sports such as tennis and bowls, and specific meeting groups a few of which are listed below. Then there were the individual initiatives such as a farmer flooding a field in winter, up at Cringles, to provide an ice-skating rink for the village.

The late 1800s sees a growth in various clubs including

1876 – Mothers Union

1882 – Mutual Improvement Society

1884 – Silsden Mechanics' Institute

1885 – Silsden Conservative Association.

1893 - Silsden Ramblers and Silsden Liberal Club

1897 - Girls Friendly Society

1909 - Independent Labour Party forms a Silsden branch.

Over in Lancashire Elizabeth Pilling, Q6, was growing up and in later life she wrote her memoirs, see Appendix 10. She was from a 'comfortable' background which on occasions was far from comfortable. These memoirs, from the period between 1880 and about 1904, tell of her childhood, schooling, holidays at home and in Europe, very early cycling experiences, adolescence and a little of her married life. The detail recalled shows what a remarkable memory she had for names and experiences and it paints a vivid and emotional picture of the first half of her life.

With the population rising towards 5000 social life was still focused around the church, music and sport. In the early 20th Century sport and music continued to provide opportunities for Silsden residents to join in activities together.

On 24th August 1901 a Keighley News report about Gala and Sports shows how these leisure activities were closely entwined. 'The Cricket Club and Silsden Brass Band organised a very successful Gala last Saturday. Considering the inclement weather that prevailed in the early part of the day some events were put off due to the showers. The band played for the dancing and a good number of people availed themselves of the opportunity of passing an enjoyable evening.'

Earlier in this appendix we have read how Lord Hothfield, in 1883, praised the good ladies of Silsden for their planned fundraising efforts through bazaars in support of The Mechanics' Institute. This aspect of Silsden life was not new. See Appendix 15 and discover the large amounts of money raised around the 4th June 1870 at the bazaar in aid of the new Primitive Methodist chapel. The largest sum raised was not from the two refreshment rooms, Ladies and the Young Men's, but from Mrs Smith and Mrs Blakey's stall. This raised £105. We believe these to be the Weatherhead sisters Grace, P3, and Margaret, P2. They clearly knew what would interest people and sell well at such an event. Appendix 2 describes the last Primitive Methodist bazaar held in 1900. However, Silsden bazaars continued into the 20th century.

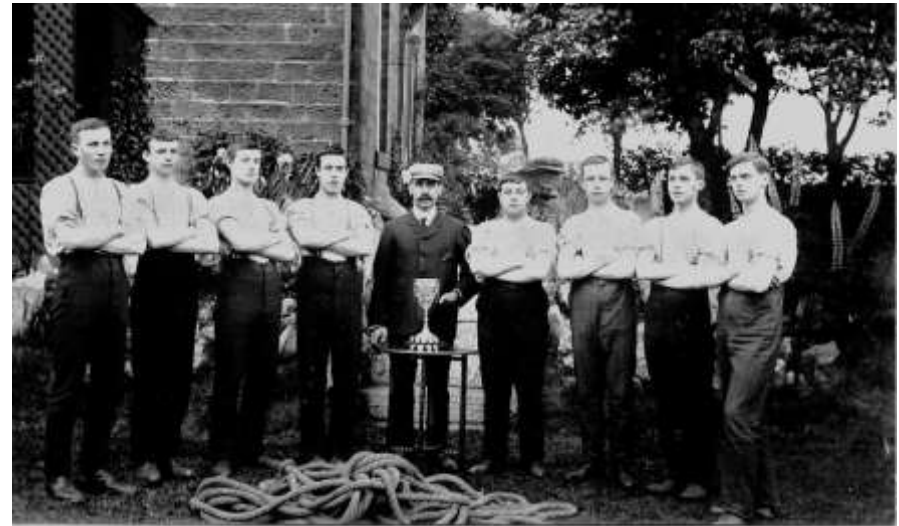
In 1910 a Grand Bazaar was held at St James Church to raise funds for the cricket, football and bowling clubs, 'To put the grounds and boundaries into satisfactory order and provide better Pavilion accommodation.' Many family names appear in the programme for this three day event in December as committee members, stall holders and entertainers. There was a children's corner run by Masters John Booth, Q4+, and Frank Driver, R6, the entertainment committee included Arthur Driver, R2. There were many stalls run by various women connected to both the Weatherhead and Driver families from generation Q and R. Similarly, the decoration committee and refreshments and tea room included many familiar names. However, perhaps unsurprisingly heading the lists were the two key organisers Mr Frank Driver (Chairman) and Mr Charles Fletcher (Hon Treasurer and Secretary) and their wives, with Margaret Fletcher (née Weatherhead, Q8) the Hon Secretary for the Ladies' Section. This programme, available in the Silsden Local History archives, is a fascinating, yet challenging read with visible support from local businesses through their adverts and the inclusion of uplifting quotes, 'A good laugh is worth a donkey load of medicine'.

Fairs, Carnivals and Galas

Kelly's 1893 trade directory tells us that Silsden regularly had fairs which were held on the first Tuesday after April 23rd and on the first Tuesday after September 16th.

Ian Dewhirst in his book, *Gleanings from Victorian Yorkshire*, comments that in Keighley down the decades the Gala has featured all the varied crazes of the hour; balloon ascents and parachute descents, walking matches, comic bands ... but in the end stands on two basic attractions; its procession and entertainments in the park. The original object of the procession was to parade the strength of the Friendly Societies. A fair may come for the event and often trade stalls are included.

Here the Silsden Tug of War team are seen at the Keighley Gala in 1906 and it looks as if they have won! Arthur Driver, R2, is standing on the far left.



In 1908 the first Silsden Charity Carnival was held and processed through the village. Funds raised supported the relief of the poor via the Helping Hands Charity.

It was not until after WW2 the Charity Carnival was renamed as the Gala. Early carnivals in Silsden included competitions for the best decorated shop.

However, instead of the delicacies and attractions of the pleasure fair, a visit to the seaside became more appealing.

Silsden Picture Palace

This opened in 1912 in Bradley Road on the site of the garage of the Silsden Motor Omnibus Company Limited, that had burned out the year before.

W Neil Cathey, a local historian, tells us, 'In 1918, the late Harold Kitchen was appointed as cinema pianist to accompany the silent movies, and it appears that the Palace was staffed by a number of legendary characters,

with an individual style of keeping order among excitable early audiences.' In 1927 the manager was John Reed.

Owned by local printer Clifford Briggs, it remained 'a popular venue, especially for community events.' During the Second World War, when audiences, watching a newsreel, spotted local painter and decorator Irwin Shackleton marching with the Durham Light Infantry, the cinema reran the reel for the benefit of his wife and family. He was to die in action in Italy in 1944.

The Picture Palace closed in 1959 with a screening of 'Further Up the Creek' ironically being replaced by a TV tube making firm before being converted into flats.

Also, in 1912 on Christmas Day around 200 children flocked to the Wesleyan Church where a free Christmas meal and entertainment was provided for those who would otherwise have no festive season. It was another measure of the continuing poverty in the village. The 200 youngsters being just the tip of the iceberg.

In 1914 Silsden got its first small recreation ground in a field at Sykes Lane, following a road tragedy involving a small boy. Two swings were provided; it also became a popular spot for the local game of knur and spell. Knur and spell is a game played in the West Riding. A ball (knur) is fired up by a levered wooden trap (spell) from a cup and hit in mid-air with a type of bat. The idea is to hit the ball the furthest.

A week after war was declared in 1914 the carnival continued and, following the end of the war, Silsden Agricultural Society was founded in 1919.

Poultry breeding, moorland shoots and getting away from the mill town

Midway through the 19th century the nail makers adopted a hobby which brought nationwide recognition to Silsden for the quality of poultry bred there. Keen competition developed as individuals took a fancy to a particular breed and began to specialise. Careful selection produced finer

birds and rivalry intensified as birds from Silsden began to win prizes at the top shows in Britain. Silver-pencilled Wyandottes, Orpingtons and Hamburgs, Cochin and Pekin bantams and Old English game were some of the breeds brought to perfection by the nail makers of Silsden.



Hugh Driver, Q7, who had been a cabinet maker, a builder, a warehouseman and quite likely a sometime nail maker in the family business, had picked up the hobby of poultry breeding and showing. He excelled in this, winning prizes at shows.

In the 1911 census Hugh was living on his own at his family home, Banklands, 78 Bolton Road in Silsden and it says that he was a warehouseman for a fancy cotton manufacturer. It is likely that Hugh may have been working for Driver Brother Mills and that poultry rearing was his hobby. However, we only find reference to Hugh winning prizes during 1909. Number 78 had adjacent garden and land that presumably he used for rearing his prize-winning birds.

Bradford Daily Telegraph 16th January 1909

The Feather Fancy at Idle

The Big Show of Poultry and Pigeons

721 competitors

Class – Wynadotte – any other variety - cock

1st Hugh Driver, Silsden. 2nd Clark brothers, Silsden.

3rd Watson, Idle.

A point of interest from John Liddle's blogsite of 2013 shows that Edward Boothman of Silsden, one of the country's foremost suppliers of pullets, had become the new chairman of the Poultry Club of Great Britain, which, founded in 1877, protects the interests of pure and traditional breeds and is guardian of the British Poultry Standards. He is the cousin of Michael Boothman, Q4+, the latter being a grandson of Frederick William Driver.

It seems that after 1920 Hugh was provided with a living at Scarghyll Farm. This farm was owned by Frank Driver and was not far from where Frank and Henry Ripley had an area of moorland kept for grouse shooting. This was at Black Pots. This was an annual event for some years and details relating to it appear in Frank's Ledger.

A few newspaper reports and photographs from family albums indicate that Frank Driver ran some successful grouse shooting trips on Rombalds Moor from Black Pots. These were social as well as sporting events. Some years later the shooting land was for sale as shown in the notice in Appendix 5.

Silsden's first Agricultural Show was staged in 1919 and in common with Keighley, Skipton, Addingham, Ilkley and Otley became a popular event. They often included poultry and pigeon, pet showing and ferret racing



events. However, they were costly and have since become more regionalised events.

One newspaper article shows that it was an enjoyable event, it reads:-

Silsden's Annual Show. September 1934

SILSDEN'S HOPES

The outlook for Silsden's annual show, which takes place on September 2nd, a week earlier than usual, is very bright. For the Committee and officials, ably led by Mr Frank Driver, J.P., the President, are determined that no stone shall remain unturned to make it a success. The classification is one that will appeal to all exhibitors, be they farmers, fanciers or gardeners, and the venue of the show, the Silsden Cricket Field, will be more convenient and suitable in every way. All that is needed is a fine day, and it is to be sincerely hoped that the sun will shine on the enterprise, for after a decision that the show should lapse for a year, a number of gentlemen keenly interested in Silsden and the agricultural show rescinded

a previous decision not to hold a show this year and determined that it should continue. They are working hard to make it a success, and an attractive programme has been drawn up. The indicators point to an excellent show.

There is of course the usual provision for cattle in 14 classes, there being two sections for open competition, and one purely local. Sheep will be shown in eight classes, and one will see animals typical of the district. In this section there will be two splendid trophies, the Horsfall Cup, presented by Sir J Donald Horsfall for the best pen of sheep shown by a local exhibitor; and the Tom Clark Memorial Cup, to be awarded to the local exhibitor gaining most points. There will be a strong section for butter, eggs and bread, and the section for poultry, both exhibition and utility, both bantams and pigeons, promises to be as attractive and interesting as in recent years. Here a large number of special prizes will be offered in addition to the ordinary prize money. There is provision, also, for rabbits and covies, (*guinea pigs*), while all the well-known and popular breeds of dogs will be seen in a canine section in which the classes are very varied. Horticulture will be displayed in 50 odd classes and gardeners in the locality can be relied upon to make a good show.

There will be thrilling mounted sports, which will provide capital entertainment, but the working sheep dog trials, which have long been a feature of the show, will not be included this year. This is due to the fact that on the same day the National Sheep Dog Trials will be taking place at Ilkley, and many of the competitors who usually take part at Silsden will be engaged there. Nevertheless, a splendid attraction has been engaged in their place, for Mr Ellis Powell, of Bardsey, one of the best-known men in the sport, will give demonstrations with one, two and three dogs.

The secretary is Mr T. Dickinson, of 35, Browfield Terrace Silsden, and the entries close on August 26th.

This appears to relate to Saturday 1st September 1934, when the National Sheep Dog Trials (Northern regional) were held at Ilkley.

There is one photograph which we refer to as 'Ladies in Hats', see Appendix 19. Even though we do not know the date of this photograph or who all the women may be, it is good to see that the women, children and dogs were out on the moor enjoying themselves too. One suggestion provided by Edward Boothman is that this could well be up at Black Pots. However, as we believe the women to be Weatherheads it is likely that they could be on land linked to the Booths.

Going up on the moors was a pleasant relaxation and we should not forget that Silsden was a mill town with tall chimneys each emitting smoke from the boilers, creating steam for the stationary steam engines powering the mills. This would have reduced in the 1920s when electric motors provided the power. Additionally heating of houses, where this could be afforded, was by burning coal or coke. When there was no wind, the atmosphere would be unpleasant and getting above the low-lying smog would have been a great pleasure.

For one family of generation R, that of Arthur and Kath, ensuring the children had some time away from the town in the mid 1900s was of importance. Kath, a school teacher before she married, would take the children up the hill to Cringles where they stayed in a bungalow. It is said that Kath always saw the best in everybody and everything, but she was strict with children. It appears that her view of the bungalow may have been different from that of the children.

Kath's niece Ann Lord née Bedford, explains that the family went to The Bungalow as Arthur was unable to take time off while he served in the Home Guard. Ann describes it as a wooden hut with one fairly large room, a smaller one with bunk beds, a kitchen with an iron stove for heating and cooking and an outdoor privy. Ann, who stayed at the bungalow with her cousins, Tom, Jane, Ben and Jerry, generation S, describes it being close to a farm.

Jerry's descriptions of the bungalow are revealing. Each holiday the family packed a hamper with implements and food and had to trudge with it

across a field and into a field behind the farmhouse, to get to the bungalow. He described this as, "A thing to be dreaded". Jerry, who of course loved the outdoors and was happy in all weathers, described how he spent many holidays feeling so cold there, and that he never forgot the pain of it all! In reality, it was only a hut.

Initially it was difficult for us to identify where the bungalow was located. Tom's 1947 album containing photographs from his army posting in India ends with a family photograph in a field by a hut with the title 'Moorcock'. We know that Moorcock Hall Farm at this time was being farmed by Albert Hill, Tom's uncle. So, we conclude that the bungalow was behind Moorcock Hall Farm, on Bank Lane, Silsden. The 1939 register shows an uninhabited bungalow at Moorcock, and a second one further along Bank Lane.

It was the range of photographs belonging to Arthur and Kath Driver, stored in an old gentlemen's outfitters box, that encouraged us to start this social life appendix. As expected, a good starting point opened additional avenues of research from which we discovered more activities, including a Mechanics' Institute, mummers, musicians, and menageries.

