

# ELDWICK & GILSTEAD HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

## The Aire Valley from Top to Bottom and End to End

Alan Plowright came to speak to us in February, sheepishly sliding into the Memorial Hall as a self-described "oft-comed 'un" from Baildon. However, he had the right password for the night, so we let him in. This was a good thing to do, because there was another full turnout of members and guests all eager to learn more about the place in which we live.

Alan began with the limestone hills around Malham, worked his way along the Silurian slate which prevents the waters of Malham Tarn from leaking away and eventually fetched up in our own familiar Millstone Grit. Explaining that he had walked the valley more than once, Alan was able to show us some of his own slides taken at different times of the year and we saw how the colours of the landscape change with the seasons.

Some literary history crept in when we heard that Charles Kingsley wrote "The Water Babies" after staying at Tarn House (which is now a field study centre) and Oliver Cromwell is on record as having worshipped at the church in Malham in 1655.

Moving on in time and distance from the source of the river Aire, Alan's journey diverted to the longest canal in the UK, the Leeds and Liverpool, which was started in 1770 and finished 46 years later in . . . well, you can work it out. Like many of today's civil engineering projects, it was over budget by a factor of five, the final cost being £1.2 million.

Long before the days of JCBs, this was a pick and shovel operation and an army of navvies dug long and hard to complete our local canal, while stonemasons fashioned locks like Bingley's own Five and Three-rise. At its highest point the Leeds and Liverpool rises to 487 feet above sea level near Burnley (I don't do metric, I'm afraid), which is higher than the dome of St Paul's cathedral.

In 1773 the first section of completed canal opened between Bingley and Skipton, allowing Craven limestone to be used to produce lime in Bradford and Airedale, while Bradford coal could be sold cheaply in Craven and Airedale. The supply of lime was a key reason for building the canal, but coal and other goods quickly became much more important. Between 1825 and 1850 the Leeds-Liverpool Canal was at its most financially successful. The canal company became free from debt by 1840. Much of this success was down to a lack of competition and the phenomenal growth of industry along the canal and the expansion of the towns themselves.

South of Skipton the River Aire flows into the broad flood plain of the Aire Valley and then through the towns of Keighley, Bingley, Saltaire and Shipley where the river meets Bradford Beck and then heads past Esholt, through Apperley Bridge and Leeds and



The canal near Silsden



The double bridge near East Marton

then on in to the so called "Ouse Basin" at the southern end of the Vale of York en route to the Humber estuary on the Yorkshire coast, and the North Sea.

In more recent times there was construction chaos along our part of the valley while the Bingley Relief Road was being built. Alan ended his talk by showing us his "before and after" photographs of the project. It had been an interesting and rewarding evening. Many of us who had just watched "Calendar Girls" for the second or third time agreed that it was far better than listening to "Twenty Winning Ways With Broccoli" or hearing about Colin's collection of tea towels.

Mike Hitchen

Next meeting: Tuesday 21 April, 7.30 pm - Chris Abbott makes a return visit from Knaresborough to tell us about Wild Flowers & Folklore.

**DON'T FORGET OUR SPRING FAIR** Saturday 25 April at 10.00 am. Visit our plant stalls and encourage your children and grandchildren to enter our children's competitions - all open to local children.

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## SPORTING CORNER

### LOCAL GOLFER JOINS PROFESSIONAL RANKS.

Following a very successful amateur career and with a string of major Bradford titles under his belt, Rob Hillas the former Bradford Open, Amateur and Matchplay Champion and twice Bradford T&a Golfer of the Year made the decision to turn professional.

In April 2008 the Eldwick based player entered the P.G.A Europro tour qualifying school where he gained his tour card for the 2008 season.

The Europro tour is the leading development tour for up and coming golfers striving to make a career as a professional and a step on the ladder to the main European tour.

The former Bradford District and Yorkshire county player was under no illusions it was going to be a tough challenge but has found his first year as a professional a great learning curve, travelling across the country and Europe competing at a higher level, under pressure, against some of the countries top professionals, successfully securing his tour card for the 2009 season.

The highlight of 2008 came in July when he reached the final stage qualifying for the British Open.

Rob is now looking forward to the 2009 season where he hopes to continue and carry the experience forward and feels confident that with hard work and dedication over the next few years he can progress to the main European Tour.

In order to achieve this he needs to raise some financial backing/ sponsorship towards the expense of entry fees, travel and accommodation.

The tour consists of 14-18 tournaments across the country and Europe between April and October and is televised on sky sports.

In return for any sponsorship given Rob is prepared to offer a percentage of winnings, advertisement for your business or company and possible pro-am events.

If you feel you can help in any way or would like any further information please contact Rob Hillas at [hillaspga@btinternet.com](mailto:hillaspga@btinternet.com) or mobile 07525376100

### REMINDER-TENNIS CLUB AGM

**WEDNESDAY MARCH 18  
AT 8.00 IN THE ACORN**

ENROLMENT MORNING  
SUNDAY APRIL 5 IN THE PAVILION  
11 am to 1 pm.

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## Yorkshire Countrywomen's Association

The meeting on the 10th of February was attended by 43 members.

From April 24th flowers in York Minster will be donated and arranged by members of the Y.C.A., the flowers will be in situ for two weeks.

On the 7th of May the A.G.M. will be held at Askam Bryan, any member wishing to attend contact Sylvia Slater.

Valerie Shepherd was our speaker and gave an interesting talk and slide show of her interests in domestic and holy wells. A water well is an excavation or structure created in the ground. Until recent centuries all artificial wells were pumpless dug wells of varying degrees of formality. Wells are extremely important for all societies; they provided ample supply of water for home use, irrigation and industries. Many slides showed the numerous wells in the Bradford area, Ladywell Mills. Jacobs Well and nearby Prince of Wales Park.

There are several spa towns in the U.K. that at sometime in their past history have proved to be a popular destination with many people, for their curative effects of their water. Malvern has many wells and springs and their water is said to be one of the purest. Nearby Ilkley, Boston Spa and Harrogate are famous for their spa wells. Our ancestors were much given to undertaking visits and pilgrimages to various wells and springs which were reputed to possess the power to heal, if not cure illnesses of various kinds. Many holy wells have a chapel built over the spring or nearby. Nowt is got for nowt, as we say in Yorkshire and one paid for ones renewed health by leaving an offering for the spirit of the well. The tying of rags the most common practice, the idea being that as the rag rotted the disease or illness withered. Chalice Well Holy Well, Glastonbury is a haven of peace and meditation. The water has a strong taste of iron and the strong mysticism surrounding Glastonbury make it a popular holy well.

We will now all take more interest in looking for wells and the history that surrounds them.

Our next meeting will be on April 14th when Tony Clegg will give an art demonstration.

## HOUSE SWAP IN ELDWICK

Well done everyone, I am receiving lots of enquiries and have details, so keep them coming. I have been able to contact quite a few "clients" this week, which is very encouraging. To recap, if you want to sell or swap your house in Eldwick, I will put you in touch with likely vendors, absolutely confidential, no charges, just a genuine interest to get the house market moving again. If you fancy living by the sea, I have been contacted by a lady in Anglesey who wishes to sell her 3 bedroom semi det. bungalow and move to Eldwick/Bingley to be near her family. This property is a very reasonable price. If you are interested, email me and I will put you in touch. Keep those letters and emails coming. More details next month.

Ann Oakden  
d.oakden@sky.com

# ✠ THE ELDWICK VILLAGE CHURCHES ✠

## ST. LAWRENCE'S NEWS

### MARCH

22nd 10.30 a.m. Mothering Sunday Service

29th 10.30 a.m. Morning Worship

### APRIL

5th 8.00 a.m. Holy Communion

10.30 a.m. Big Family Praise (Palm Sunday)

9th 7.30 p.m. Joint Maundy Thursday Service at Methodist Church

12th 10.30 a.m. Joint Holy Communion at St. Lawrence's (Easter Sunday)

19th 8.00 a.m. Holy Communion  
10.30 a.m. Morning Worship

**Mothering Sunday Service** This will be shorter and simpler than usual, led by Chris Low. The children will still distribute posies, but instead of a sermon there will be various activities for everybody in the church or hall. You can light a candle, meditate, write a prayer, do some bible study, try different crafts or write a rap. The theme of all the activities will be mothers and those who have mothered us.

**Card Making Group** now meets every Tuesday in the church hall or Winston Grange (10.00 a.m. - 12.00 noon). Activities now include embroidery, knitting, etc. People of all abilities are welcome to come along and enjoy a chat over coffee and crafts. More details from Chris Low on 564694.

**St. Lawrence's Church Hall** is available for hire for children's parties (one payment of £35) and community events (main hall £10 per hour; committee room £14 for half day and £27 for full day; registered charities 50% of standard hire charge). To make enquiries, contact our bookings secretary, Ann Shoebridge on 564690.

## SERVICES AT THE METHODIST CHURCH

### 15th March

9.15 am Communion Rev Ruth Parry  
10.30 am Joint Service with St Lawrence's at Methodist Church

### 22nd March

9.15 am Big Breakfast  
10.30 am Miss Diane Greenwood

### 29th March

10.30 am Mr Donald Craig

### 5th April

10.30 am Rev Ruth Parry

### 9th April

7.00 pm Passover Meal

### 12th April

07.00 am Rev Ruth Parry Communion on the moor.

10.30 am Joint Service with St Lawrence's at St Lawrence's

### 19th April

10.30 am Rev Andre Taylor

### 26th April

9.15 am Big Breakfast  
10.30 am Miss Lorna Whiteley  
6.00 pm Easter Offering Service  
Mrs Sharon Fell

### EVENTS IN MARCH

14th March 3.00 till 5.00 pm Gilstead and Eldwick Male Voice Choir

21st March Action for Children (NCH)

Spring Fayre 2.00 to 4.00 pm

28th March "Mad Hatters Party" 10.00 am till 3.30 pm. (Children's event)

### REGULAR MONTHLY EVENTS

1st Fri Friday Walk 9am

3rd Sun 9.15am Holy Communion

Hand Bell Group - Alternate Tues

### CHURCH HALL BOOKINGS

Eldwick Methodist Church Hall is available to the community for events and children's party, our newly refurbished kitchen is ideal for catering. To enquire about dates please contact the booking secretary Phil on 774526

## PLANNING

The following applications have been received by Bradford Council

**09/00515/PN**

Construction of new mono pitch building for storage of straw machinery and forage at Sheriff Farm.

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## PHILIP DAVIES MP

To contact Philip ...

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Email: [daviesp@parliament.uk](mailto:daviesp@parliament.uk)

Write to: House of Commons,  
London, SW1A 0AA

Website:

[www.philip-davies.org.uk](http://www.philip-davies.org.uk)

# AN INDUSTRIAL HAMLET.

There are plenty of long term residents in Eldwick today who will readily tell how much Eldwick has changed, in their lifetimes, but one needs to go back one hundred years to see how radically different the village was, both in character and appearance.

When discussions first took place as to why Eldwick Beck Bottom, once the core of the village, might be granted the status of a Conservation Area, it was the built up area shown on the 1852 Ordnance Survey map, which came under focus. The historic development of Eldwick Beck hamlet, primarily limited to the first half of the 19th century, was termed industrial, following the establishment of Eldwick Beck Mill in 1800.

However, long before that, there had been an earlier mill higher upstream with its row of ten cottages, and by 1841 there were almost one hundred wool combers, spinners, and handloom weavers working in 'cottage industry', despite the Eldwick Beck Mill, in homesteads and farms around Eldwick.

A century ago it was said that the population of Eldwick Beck was half what it once was as the mill had closed and workers had moved for employment in Bingley's numerous mills. Thirty homesteads had ceased to exist, all once occupied by people in the worsted trade. Every house had two, three, or some of them four hand-loom engaged in weaving the worsted goods in fashion at the time.

The worsted business was then carried out in a fairly primitive manner. The weaver used to be supplied with the warp and weft in hanks, and a certain quantity of sizing with which to size the warps. The warp was a series of yarns extended lengthways in a loom and was crossed by the weft to create the fabric. The size was boiled in a pan on the fire and the warp dipped in and afterwards spread out to dry in the open air. The 'sizing weather' as it was called, was very important in those days because if the weather was not good enough, other measures had to be taken. To dry the warps in poor weather, they had to be taken to Knapley Ing, a mile and a quarter from Eldwick off the high road to Otley, where four pence was charged to put the warps in the drying-room.

On the pieces being woven, they were taken on 'livering' (delivery) days to Baildon, Morton or Micklethwaite, to the owners of them and 'livered in'. Some weavers had the knack and skill of making a piece of cloth with less hanks than expected which was to their advantage. In those days, instead of counting the number of threads per inch in the cloth, or weighing the cloth, weavers were simply asked how much they 'had in', meaning how many hanks. They could make the yarn look as well and up to the quality as the others with the stipulated number of hanks.

So they put in less labour and had yarn left on hand to sell to 'jobbing' weavers and had to hide it before the 'yarn inspector' paid his periodical visit. In Eldwick at one time there may have been up to sixty handlooms at work, with many of the weavers doing a little farming as well, and nearly all of them having a few sheep running on the open moor.

At that time the only road from Keighley, Haworth and district to Otley, was by Morton and over the hill to Eldwick



Crag or High Eldwick as it is known today. All the millers, farmers, butter factors from around used to pass along the road and it was not unusual to see scores of all kinds of vehicles on market days standing outside 'Dick Hudson's' which was on the route. On the hill-side, opposite 'Dick's', there used to be quite a cluster of houses and Rattlebank Hall which had been the inn before the licence was transferred in 1789. Every one of these buildings has now disappeared except for a few foundations, stone being used to repair other buildings or to build field walls.

By and by came the days of factory mills with a concentration of labour adjacent, brought by the introduction of machinery and steam power, as at Eldwick in 1830. In the course of time hand weaving and combing went out of existence and Eldwick Crag hamlet went into decay. Similarly the old homesteads of Eldwick Beck became empty and neglected when the huge mill ceased working in 1881, after only eighty years, having had many owners and very fluctuating trade.

Ironically, its very location, which had been excellent whilst powered by water, became a problem with steam power and the need for coal. Local coal from Baildon was of poor quality but it was too expensive to bring better coal in from Bradford and Keighley mines. So what a surprise it has been to see uncovered, during recent excavations, a small bed of excellent coal within a stone's throw of the former industrial hamlet of Eldwick Beck Bottom.

## NEWSLETTER ON LINE

The Eldwick newsletter can now be viewed on line. If you log on to the Eldwick Memorial Club, Birches website:

[www.thebirchesclub.co.uk](http://www.thebirchesclub.co.uk)

### *C & J Bettles*

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Issue No 364 March 2009  
The Eldwick Village Society Newsletter.  
Email: Eldwicknews@aol.com



## BIRCHES NOW OPEN TO ALL

When Birches was first built 25 years ago the only way to get a licence was to be a private members club. With recent changes in licensing the club status is no longer necessary. Birches has now become a free house and is available for all to use. This is seen as a very positive move as now the whole of the village can benefit from this amenity, which with the adjoining internal doors uniquely compliments the Memorial Hall.

Birches provides a very pleasant lounge bar with hand drawn cask conditioned beers at very reasonable prices. The opening times will remain exactly the same opening every evening at 6.00p.m. and Sunday lunchtimes 12 til 3.00p.m. There is excellent live jazz on Wednesday evenings and a very popular quiz on Thursday nights.

If you wish to hire Birches and the Memorial Hall please ring Mike Harrison 561265



### GALA QUEEN SELECTION DISCO

**FRIDAY 3rd APRIL**

**7pm – 8.30pm**

**ELDWICK MEMORIAL HALL**

With Eldwick's own fantastic DJ  
For 7 to 11 year olds to choose  
the Gala Queen and attendants  
for this years event.

**ENTRY £2**

### PARKING IN BINGLEY

This is just to let you know that the on-street parking regulations in Bingley which have been in place for quite some time now, will be monitored from Monday 23rd March by Bradford Council Enforcement Officers.

Presented by the Rotary Club of Bingley Airedale

**The Choral Scholars of  
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**Baildon Methodist Church**

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