

# Cragg News

ISSUE 7  
SPRING 2015



Kindly supported by  
Hebden Royd Town Council

## CELEBRATING SPRING

### SPA SUNDAY: 3RD MAY

The importance of Cragg Vale Spa, reputed to be at least 300 years old, is shown in surrounding place names:- Spa Laithe Farm, Spa Terrace, Spa Wood, and Spa Bridge. In medieval times, the long, cold, dark winters with little food, caused hardship and ill health so in Spring people gathered at the spa to drink the water and cleanse themselves of winter ailments. Whether or not the water had a medicinal effect is debatable, but it was a way of celebrating the passage of winter and the beginning of spring. In the 19th century this event, called "Spaw Sunday" (northern dialect), usually occurred on the first Sunday in May and by the start of the 20th century, as well as local people and tourists, the Independent Labour Party played an important part with political orators replacing religious ones. The Second World War ended Spaw Sunday but it revived briefly in 1987 along the lines of a Well Dressing. Then the Spa fell into disrepair, its presence unknown to many in Cragg –



“  
**The importance  
of Cragg Vale  
Spa, reputed to  
be at least 300  
years old**  
”

until 2009 when restoration work created landscaping with steps for easier access. On 1st May 2010 Cragg Vale Community Association restarted Spaw Sunday as an annual event with a simple blessing followed by music, dancing, and a picnic.

### BIG SPRING CLEAN UP!

It's time for the big spring clean! This is the event organised through Hebden Royd Town Council and the dates for this year's annual big spring clean will be Saturday 21st and Sunday 22nd March 2015.

Once again help is needed. For every team of 6 people who take part, the Town Council will donate £60 towards our chosen charity or local community project.

The Community Association and Cragg 15 are joining forces to try to organise two or three teams – so we are looking for volunteers, please!

Please put the date in your diary and let the Community Association's Shirley Daniel 01422883707 shirley@jsd.me.uk or Cragg15's Lorraine Rodda 01422885516 lilrodda@sky.com know if you can help

### TOUR DE YORKSHIRE

On 3rd May another great cycle event, the Tour de Yorkshire, comes here! Starting around midday in Wakefield, riders travel south to Barnsley before heading to Holmfirth where they pick up the Grand Départ route in reverse, racing to Ripponden before arriving in Cragg Vale - which in the Tour de France was the country's longest continual climb and now becomes the longest continual descent! Riders then go through Hebden Bridge, Oxenhope, and Haworth, on to Ilkley and finish in Roundhay Park in Leeds. The race is expected to reach Calderdale around 1.30pm, so we expect to see it in Cragg Vale around 2pm. Our road will close for a short time before the race arrives and opens again after it has passed – so plenty of time for everyone to get here to watch and then join in the Spaw Sunday celebrations!

## SPRING EVENTS

### MARCH

Art exhibition throughout March: pictures by local school children on display in the Robin Hood, Hinchliffe Arms, St John's Church, and our notice boards

6th March, Broadhead Clough Volunteers needed, meet Helen Pegley 10am, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust

15th March Mothers Day

Robin Hood Inn: Special Mother's Day menu

21st – 22nd March Big Spring Clean It's time for the annual big spring clean: volunteers needed! Contact Community Association Treasurer Shirley Daniel: tel 01422 883707 or email shirley@jsd.me.uk

### APRIL

Art exhibition continues through April, pictures to be chosen for story boards on the Cragg Vale Heritage Trail

3rd April, Broadhead Clough Volunteers needed, meet Helen Pegley 10am, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust

5th April Easter Sunday

Hinchliffe Arms: Special Menu

Robin Hood pub: Special Menu

5th April Easter Monday

Hinchliffe Arms: Open for food

Robin Hood pub: Open for food

21st April Steiner School Open Day

2.30pm – 4pm, come and look around the School

25th – 26th April Singing Workshop St John's Centre 'Sing With Your Whole Voice' Workshop led by voice coach Michael Deacon-Barrow, for people with all levels of vocal ability

### MAY

Art exhibition continues in Robin Hood, Hinchliffe Arms, St John's Church, and our notice boards

1st May Broadhead Clough. 10am meet Helen Pegley Volunteers needed, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust

2nd May Cragg Fest, Robin Hood Inn, 1pm - 11pm, bands, bar, food, free entry

3rd May 'Spaw Sunday' & 'Tour de Yorkshire'

Robin Hood Inn, 2pm, meet to watch the race and performance from Ryburn Longswords, then join the procession to the Spa for the blessing, music, dancing and a picnic! Fun for all ages!

4th May Cragg Vale May Fair, Duck Race, and Artisan Market 11am – 4pm, Hinchliffe Arms car park, Steiner School, and St. John's Church, organised by Cragg Vale Junior & Infant School and Cragg15

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# OPEN DAY

**Tuesday**  
**27<sup>th</sup> April**  
**2:30 - 4pm**





## UPDATE FROM THE ARK

In 2014, the Ark Nursery chose the Forget-Me-Not Children's Hospice as their charity to support for the year. After a year of fundraising, which involved barbecues, raffles and staff taking part in a very muddy obstacle course challenge, the nursery was delighted to hand over a cheque to the hospice for £2000. This year the nursery will be supporting the Alzheimer's Society and hope to raise a similar sum.

The nursery also plans to concentrate on outdoor fun this year, with two additional members of staff studying to gain Level 3

**“the nursery was delighted to hand over a cheque to the hospice for £2000”**

Forest School qualifications. The Pre-school children use a Forest School site close to the nursery twice a week and the Tinderwood Trust come along to support the children's learning and fun! For Pancake Day, the children enjoyed making pancakes on the campfire – food always tastes better outdoors!

## NEWS FROM HINCHLIFFE

Cragg Vale Community Association welcomes Chris Turczak, the new landlord at the Hinchcliffe Arms, into the heart of Cragg Vale. Chris told CVCA that he “loves Cragg Vale, especially the people and the community spirit”. He is looking forward to getting involved in local events and has agreed to display the artwork by local children for the Heritage Trail Story Boards as a 'rolling exhibition' on the pub walls. Now owned by the brewery J.W. Lees, the 'Hinch' will be soon be undergoing extensive renovation. Chris said “The work, including improved amenities and an overall 'facelift', will probably start after Easter and will take up to four weeks but when it is finished we should have a better pub for everyone”.

## CRAGG VALE FETE AND ARTISAN MARKET

On Monday 4th May Cragg Vale School is holding their annual May Fete and duck race and CRAGG 15 are running a 'Market for Artisans'. The events will be held in the car park adjoining The Hinchcliffe Arms, St John's Church grounds, the river, and the Steiner School, starting at 11.00 am and finishing around 4 pm.

Local artisan producers are going to pitch their stalls and tempt you to their wares. Hopefully there will be purveyors of

foodstuffs, drinks, arts, crafts, clothing and adornment. A fun day out for all the family, there will be competitions for everyone and outdoor games and events for children – depending on the weather!

Please contact Joan Hobday - [craggroyd15@gmail.com](mailto:craggroyd15@gmail.com) or 07737331995 if you would like more details or if you have a product you would like to showcase and register for a pitch.

## CVCA WELCOMES NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS

At the Annual General Meeting on 28th January, Cragg Vale Community Association welcomed Jonathan Emberton and Nick Murphy onto the Committee. Sadly we bid goodbye to Margaret May, one of our stalwarts from the very earliest days and producer of our excellent calendars, and to Jan Taylor, both of whom had to step down because of the pressures of work commitments. However, they want to stay as involved as possible so a very big THANK YOU goes to both and we hope to see them again soon at one of our events.



## REMEMBERING SYLVIA

The life of Sylvia Hunt, who lived next to Cragg Vale Park, is now commemorated by a plaque on one of the seats in our Community Garden. The plaque was unveiled by her daughters in our 'Festival of Lights' celebration before Christmas. The lanterns and singing proved very popular so we hope to make the Festival a regular event.

## GOOD NEWS FOR CRAGG VALE SCHOOL

Cragg school has been successful in a local authority-supported bid to the Priority School Building Programme. There will be a round of meetings and additional surveys to be done in the coming weeks before the school will know just what can be done. Having said that, it's terrific news for the school as they have battled on with increasing problems and falling budgets for over 15 years now!

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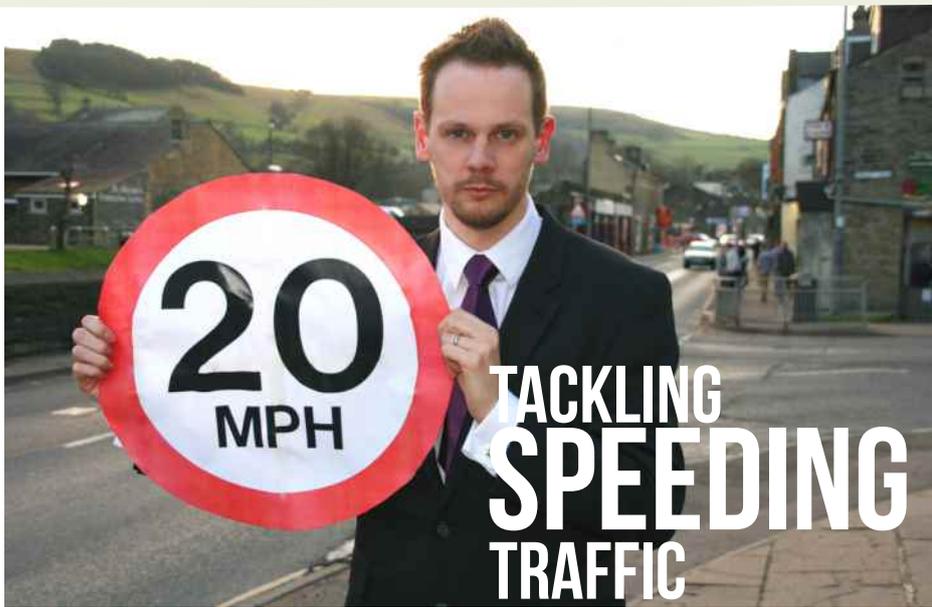


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## TACKLING SPEEDING TRAFFIC

The Community Association continues to campaign to improve road safety in Cragg Vale. CVCA Committee Member and Hebden Royd Councillor Scott Trickett was actively involved in getting the speed limit reduced from 40mph to 30 mph – but more action is needed. Scott said “Living on Cragg Road with our 4 children, the speed of traffic has been my No1 concern. It's a constant danger, especially where no pavements exist. I'm enraged that Calderdale Council's plans for a 20mph limit do NOT include Cragg Vale”. CVCA invited Calderdale Cllr Simon Young to talk to our AGM in January and he said “Speeding traffic is one of the most frequent complaints I receive and I share your concerns”. He explained that after a lot of lobbying and campaigning, Labour managed to secure agreement for the introduction of 20mph limits across all residential areas in Calderdale, but he was concerned to learn that Cragg Vale has not

been included in the scheme at all: “We know vehicle speed is the single main factor that contributes to road fatalities. A recent study found that 45% of pedestrians are killed when struck by vehicles travelling at between 30mph and 20mph, dropping massively to 5% at speeds below 20mph. Tragically between 2010 and 2012, the proportion of children killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents in Calderdale was almost twice the average for England. I believe the facts speak for themselves, there is no legitimate reason for excluding the main residential areas of Cragg Vale. But what do you think? Should we fight for Cragg to be included in the 20mph scheme?”

Let Simon know your thoughts by sending an email to [councillor.syoung@calderdale.gov.uk](mailto:councillor.syoung@calderdale.gov.uk) Cllr Simon Young, Labour Councillor for Luddendenfoot

# Cragg Vale LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Looking out on the Cragg Vale icefields as I write this, I'm always impressed that our members and visitors are so intrepid. We had a good turnout in both December and January despite the weather and I hope that everyone thought the evenings were worth the effort. December's Christmas Get Together saw us drinking mulled wine, pulling crackers, being tested by Roy's quiz and being guided through the making of our own Christmas wreaths by a very patient Marie! We finished with nibbles, more mulled wine, teas & coffees.

In January Nick Wilding joined us with two films for his 'Movie Memorabilia'. The first, a short film celebrating Hebden Bridge Mill's 700th Anniversary and the second telling us about how a lot of the town was saved from demolition back in the 1960's and how it became the place we know now. A lot of fantastic black & white footage showing how the town looked then, what was lost and what was saved. A lively discussion followed with Nick taking questions.

By the time this Newsletter is circulated we will have had our February meeting. The title is 'My Dad' to be given by our own Yvonne Broadbent.

On March 19th we have Ian Dewhirst joining us for one of his many talks. We've requested 'Yorkshire between the Wars', but we'll wait and see! Ian has been an annual speaker since the inception of the History Group and never fails to inform and entertain us.

We'll be starting at 7.30pm in the Church. After Ian's presentation there'll be tea, coffee and biscuits and a chance to catch up with friends and neighbours. Lifts can be arranged. Just give me a call. It's £3 for visitors and we like to think it's great value!

We try to ensure there's a poster in the notice board opposite the Robin Hood detailing our forthcoming meetings and if you have a Cragg Vale calendar they're on there as well.

Jane Frechette Tel 882619

## SPRING DIARY

**10th March** 'This is Withens': Shirley and Roy are giving this talk to Morley History Group. If anyone missed it and would like to go to Morley, see Shirley Daniel for more information.

**19th March** Ian Dewhirst *possibly* Yorkshire Between the Wars

**16th April** Annual Review meeting: a chance to look back over the last year, and talk about what's to come in 2015.

**21st May** Visit to the Birchcliffe Centre to look at the Pennine Horizons project and the Digital Archive – transport arrangements and final details nearer the time.

**18th June** 'Tennis in Cragg Vale' with Roy Collinge. This may bring back memories for anyone who has survived the midges around the courts.

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- \* High School Challenge Relay
- \* Mass Ascent - Running
- \* Mass Ascent - Cycling
- \* Soap Box Derby
- \* Party

Cragg 2015  
Blackstone Edge

ROAD CLOSED  
COMMUNITY HAVING FUN

See Insert in this newsletter

The Old Fire Station  
Mytholmroyd

# Thornber Well Hatched Plans

**E**dgar Thornber, born in Mytholmroyd in 1888, began work full time at the age of 13 in the local mill but the 2 ½ year strike in 1906 led to him turning his favourite hobby, of keeping poultry for showing, into a business. Starting with a few orange boxes in the back yard of the family cottage, he carefully selected birds for their laying capabilities. Only the strongest stock was used and birds with any suggestion of weakness were rejected - and the Thornber reputation for quality was established!

With help from his brother Ralph and his mother, the number of broody hens quickly increased from around a dozen to 300 and the first incubator was installed in Edgar's bedroom. In 1913 the family moved as tenants to Newhouse Farm and 23 year old Edgar installed 12 incubators in the barn, each with a capacity for 390 eggs, using the four acres of land for breeding pens.

The business, mainly conducted by mail order, expanded rapidly, with newly hatched chicks transported by fast passenger train. Gradually crossbred pullets for egg laying were introduced, followed by geese and turkeys, and then the manufacture of poultry equipment. In the early 1930's Edgar and a Lancashire duck breeder developed a new duck which fattened quickly and hatched all year round. Thornbers were soon raising a million ducks a year at Elphaborough in Mytholmroyd. By 1937 their output was 3,500,000 chicks and ducks and Edgar's only son, Cyril, joined the staff straight from school. Edgar Thornber died in 1944 having built up a business with an annual turnover of £200,000. At the age of just 23, Cyril found himself with the responsibility of running a large firm.



*Cyril Thornber*

Having inherited his father's interest in poultry breeding, Cyril travelled to the USA and met Henry Wallace, an expert in breeding hybrid chickens, combining the best characteristics to produce the perfect bird. Cyril went on to produce the '404' which laid brown eggs and became the most popular chicken ever bred in Britain, selling 250 million by 1974. At its peak, Thornbers employed 1,500 people. Sadly, foreign competition affected the viability of the business and in 1972 it was sold. Cyril managed

to keep two poultry farms, his breeding stock and the veterinary laboratory at Brier Hey where he set up his office. The breeding programme continued whilst Cyril's son, Ralph, saw the potential of renting out the unused buildings at Brier Hey, and a new era began.

In 1991 Cyril died and the family decided to end the poultry business, buying back several of their former Mytholmroyd

properties at White Lee, Orchard Business Park and Hoo Hole Mill to create business units. Once these were occupied, Ralph turned his attention to the two poultry farms at Dean Hey and Top Land. It took many years to get permission for change of use but eventually the need for diversification in farming was recognised and the process of turning former poultry houses into units to let began.

Thornbers is still a family business; supplying premises for over seventy different businesses employing 1,200 people, Ralph and his sisters are Directors of the company and their mother, Dorothy, still takes an interest in their activities. Edgar and Cyril would be proud to see how their legacy has flourished, although not in a way they might have expected!

## Broadhead Clough Update

**L**iving in Cragg Vale we are familiar with the story of the Coiners but on 1st February 2015 it came to the whole country's attention via TV's Countryfile. The BBC contacted YWT to understand how the landscape contributed both to the success of the scheme and its downfall in Bellbottom Wood, the upper part of the reserve. By looking at the local place names on the map the story is revealed.

Bellbottom Wood is directly below Bell House, so called because here a bell, (which could be heard across the medieval deer park) was used to gather animals. When the park fell into disuse Erringden Common was established, where all the local farmers grazed their animals: visiting Bell House would not arouse suspicion. Lower down,

"Spring" Wood refers to the practice of coppicing: many new shoots "spring" back from each stump. So, when James Broadbent a local charcoal burner and coppicer claimed to have witnessed Hartley clipping guineas at Bellbottom he was readily believed to be a reliable informant.

Another tell-tale name on a map is "Hollins" referring to holly trees. Being evergreen, holly was valuable winter fodder and the large amount of it in the reserve is thought to go back to the deer park days. Now the reserve is fenced, fewer animals graze inside and it can take over. It provides great cover and food for birds, but is very prickly if it's next to the path! We've been cutting it back from the sunny slope above the

## ST. JOHN'S CHURCH STOP PRESS!

The main reordering project at St John's church is beginning! Removal of wooden benches and heating pipes has started. We will be holding Sunday services in the back room until we move out of the church to use one of the rooms next door (many thanks to the Steiner School).

The main building works should start at the beginning of April and last around 5 months. The church will be transformed into a fantastic community resource available for all to use. Chairs will replace benches and the main body of church will become a multi use space suitable for acts of worship, dining, dancing, entertainment, sports etc. We will have a catering standard kitchen, new toilets (including disabled access toilet), lift and staircase to the first floor where there will be meeting rooms and an office. We envisage the building being used by many different groups from across our community. It will provide the potential for play groups, after school clubs, youth groups, lunch clubs, coffee mornings, sports clubs, activity groups etc. and will be a great venue for meetings and performances. We will keep everyone up to date with our progress and if anyone is interested in using St John's please contact Geraint on [gjwsa@btinternet.com](mailto:gjwsa@btinternet.com) or leave a message on 07443420907.

The benches/pews are being carefully removed (we have a few available for a donation of £80) and some other items (tables, drawers, old kneelers etc.) are available. Please use the contact details above if you are interested.

We've applied for a grant from BIFFA and need to raise at least £5000 more! If anyone would like to make a donation we would be most grateful (cheques need to be payable to Cragg Vale PCC). All money raised will go towards the reordering project. This is a very exciting (if a little daunting) time for the church and we really value your support.

Geraint Harris & Amanda Farthing  
Church Wardens

steps and also recycling it in a new technique of path maintenance. Holly rots slowly and laying it in the mud gives good grip which will last for a long time until the ground recovers. It does look a bit strange at first though.

Publicity has attracted new volunteers. Nine of us are making great progress, tackling neglected areas of the reserve and learning new skills. We meet at 10a.m. on the first Friday of the month, March 6th, April 3rd, May 1st and June 5th. When the weather improves why not join us and help keep this historic landscape in great condition.



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