

Oldham and District Branch of the Manchester and
Lancashire Family History Society

Newsletter March 2018

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Branch News

Our Last Meeting

Zeppelin Raid on Cleethorpes 1 April 1916 - a presentation given by Dorothy Bintley.

When war broke out in 1914 the 3rd Battalion of the Manchester Regiment was posted to the Humber defences and spent the entire war in Cleethorpes. Men were billeted in the gasworks offices, a cinema, empty boarding houses, restaurants and church halls. The battalion was usually about 4000 strong at any one time and it was reckoned that 32,000 men passed through the 3rd Battalion at Cleethorpes during the course of the war. They trained recruits and rehabilitated injured men for all battalions of the Manchester Regiment. A German seaborne invasion never happened but, until an effective way of stopping them was found, the area suffered several bombing raids. A total of 557 people were killed in raids over England during the war, mainly down the east coast and in London.

From the beginning of the 20th century the Germans built airships, the Zeppelin company was the most successful and as war loomed they were supported by the German government. By 1915 Zeppelins were built to a pattern, they were enormous, 158 metres long (that is one and a half times the length of the pitch at Wembley) they had a rigid aluminium framework inside which were up to twenty separate gasbags, each containing inflammable hydrogen lifting gas. The gas bags were made of cows' intestines and up to half a million of these were required for each Zeppelin. The collection of the intestines was very systematic in Germany during the war. Each butcher was required to deliver the ones from the animals he killed. Agents exercised strict control in Austria, Poland and occupied northern France, where it was forbidden to make sausages. Without supplies from their allies, Germany wouldn't have had enough and nothing was left for sausage skins.

Although they were so big, the Zeppelins were very difficult to attack, even if a rifle bullet penetrated an airbag the hydrogen was not under pressure, it was lighter than the air around, so tiny leaks did not cause a problem. It was not until 1917 when incendiary bullets were invented that the British were able to effectively put an end to Zeppelin bombing raids with several spectacular airship crashes and loss of crews, up to twenty men per airship.

On Friday March 31st 1916 a company of 80 men of the 3rd Manchester arrived in Cleethorpes, mostly new recruits, and were billeted in Cleethorpes Baptist Chapel. On their first night they were aroused at 1 a.m. by an air raid warning. A Zeppelin dropped bombs on a field, headed out to sea then returned, dropping three further bombs, one on the Council Offices, one on a row of lock-up shops and the third directly on the Baptist Chapel. Of those inside only four escaped injury and 32 men were either killed outright or died later.



Relatives, military personnel and local dignitaries attended a military funeral in Cleethorpes Cemetery on Tuesday April 4th. The massed bands of the 3rd and 4th Manchester and 3rd Lincolnshire Regiments led the procession with twenty four coffins draped in Union Jacks carried on eight lorries. Other men were taken for burial near their homes.



There are three memorials to the event, one in Cleethorpes Cemetery, a plaque inside the rebuilt Baptist Church, and a brass plaque in St Michaels' Church Ashton under Lyne. Oldhamer Thomas Stott died eight weeks after the event and his name is not on any of those memorials, although he is commemorated on the war memorial at St Margaret's Church, Hollinwood.

The Oldham men who died were:

34637 Pte Beaumont, Louis Archie
9779 Pte Bell, Samuel
30117 Pte Brierley, Thomas
34621 Pte Brown, William Henry
34619 Pte Budding, Ernest
32914 Pte Chandler, Frank
34618 Pte Clowes, Job
34625 Pte Corfield, John Henry
30401 Pte Diviney, Thomas
34620 Pte Fox, Robert
34643 Pte Stott, Thomas
34639 Pte Wild, William
27537 Pte Wood, Robert



The Memorial at Cleethorpes

The other men who died:

30358 Pte Ball, Wilfred Ernest
32238 Pte Beardsley, Joseph
2425 Pte Bodsworth, William Robert
32997 Pte Chandler, Joseph
34633 Pte Cuthbert, Harry
30241 Pte Dimelow, Frederick
32215 Pte Downs, Albert Edward
32034 Pte Francis, William
32263 Pte Hannon, Thomas
33107 Pte Harrison, Percy
32323 Lc-Cpl Haynes, Alfred
30126 Pte Hetherington, William
32278 Pte Pierce, Tom
27724 Pte Radford, Joseph (from Stalybridge)
27902 Pte Ramsden, Henry
30179 Pte Russell, James
33055 Lc-Cpl Swift, Jack

32275 Pte Tomkinson, Thomas
27591 Pte Wheeler, John

More information about the raid and the men is available at Oldham Local Studies and Archives.

Written by Dorothy Bintley

Our Next Meeting Saturday 10th March

The Battle for Kinder Scout

Speaker: Keith Warrender

A gripping account of the struggle for access to Kinder Scout and other privately owned stretches of moorland and its significance in the Ramblers' campaign for Freedom to Roam.

The meeting commence at **2.00pm** and will be in the **Lees Suite**, Oldham Civic Centre. Free to members, non-members £2.50.

Free car parking on Oldham Civic car park for 3 hours but please get a ticket.

For more information see our website.

<http://www.oldham.mlfhs.org.uk>

A Message from the Chairman

Fellow Members,

I have served as the Oldham Chairman for several years now and I feel that it is time to stand aside and let someone else pick up the reins, having said that I will stand for one more year to give my successor time to find out what the job entails.

I do not intend to leave the branch or step down from supporting the branch or withdraw from storing branch equipment. I will still set up the computer and projector for the branch meetings.

I JUST NEED A BREAK.

We do need a new Secretary for the coming year as Joan has decided to step down for personal reasons. It is obvious that we need to replace her. We NEED people to come forward for these jobs or the branch will cease to exist. If no-one comes forward Gill, my wife, the current Treasurer, could be forced to do it, meaning Chair, Secretary and Treasurer are all done in the same house, which is not felt appropriate by the main branch.

Rod Melton

Society News

Saturday 3 March 10.30am: Beginners' Talk

Michael Couper will talk about the decennial **census** from 1841 to 1911 and the increasingly detailed information which can be found in census returns over this period. Learn about where to find the census and how to search it successfully.

This meeting will be held in the Performance Space at Manchester Central Library. The talk is free to members. A fee of £3.00 will be charged to non-members but this is refundable if the individual joins the Society on the day of the talk.

Booking is required. Please [CLICK HERE](#) to book.

Wednesday 7 March 7.30pm: Bolton Branch Meeting

Stephen Counce will present his illustrated talk **"The Highlight of the Rural Year - The Hiring Fairs of North-western England, 1890-1930"**.

Meetings are held in the Montserrat Room, 1st Floor, Old Links Golf Club, Chorley Old Road, Bolton, BL1 5SU. (There is parking for 70 cars).

Guests and potential members are sure of a warm welcome. From 7.00pm tea & coffee are available in the room, and drinks are available from the bar. Unwanted genealogy magazines and CDs can be swapped/collected at the meetings. At the end of every meeting there is a Help Desk, manned by experienced researchers, available to assist you with your genealogy problems.

The meeting are free for members of the MLFHS, £3 for non-members. There is no need to book.

Local News

World War 2 Bomber

The Society's Facebook page recently had a message from an archaeologist called Sven Polkläse who works as a volunteer in Germany (North Rhine-Westphalia) in ground monument conservation (archaeology). He and his team investigate and search for plane crashes during World War 2. His team recently found the remains of a Halifax type MK VII in Erkrath, a small town south-east of Dusseldorf. Through entries in the Erkrath death register they were able to prove that the bomber is the long-lost NP689 called "Moonlight Mermaid." The Halifax is one of the most famous Halifaxes in all of the Royal Canadian Air Force. The

NP689 had flown 80 combat missions and was shot down on its 81st mission on 15th March 1945. One of the crew was **Sergeant Douglas COLQUHOUN** from Oldham. Sven is trying to trace any of his family. It is believed that his sister Annie had a daughter called Eileen Holt born in 1931. Also his brother Stewart might have had a son called Iain D Colquhoun.



If anyone knows of any living relatives please let us know.

Family of Jane Nunn

We have also had this message from Eddie Nunn:

I hope you may be able to help me tracing the family of my Aunt Jane Pilling nee NUNN.

She married a Francis Pilling in January of 1945.

She was born on 3/3/1917 in Oldham and died in June 1975.

I have sent for her death certificate to Manchester as she must have died there probably in hospital.

I contacted the Oldham Chronicle Archive regarding a possible obituary but understand it has now been transferred to the Oldham Council for incorporation in a new heritage centre and not accessible at the moment.

She left the NUNN family in the mid 1940 and I never knew her, being born in 1947.

I was born in Trafalgar St going to Coldhurst Infant and Junior school and eventually Hathershaw Tech but now live on the south coast.

Any assistance or ideas would be appreciated.

Talks by Other Groups (which are not part of our society)

Royton Local History Society

When the Queen Came

A talk by Judith Atkinson about the visit of Queen Victoria to Lancashire in 1851. At Downey House, Church Street, Royton on **Monday 12th March** at 7.30pm.

Saddleworth Historical Society

Blending Instruction with Amusement: the Huddersfield Exhibition of 1840

An illustrated presentation by David Griffiths at Saddleworth Museum at 7.30 pm on **Wednesday 14th March**. £3.00 for non-members.

Also Saddleworth Historical Society's new book, "William Pownall's Uppermill" is still available for sale at £9.95 per copy from Charles Baumann, 19 Ravenstones Drive, Diggle, Saddleworth OL3 5JU. by letter request, enclosing payment direct, or by visiting the Museum Shop in Uppermill with your payment.

Oldham Historical Research Group

Oldham Tank Week

A talk by Roger Ivens about the tank which appeared in Oldham in February 1918 to raise money for the war. At Oldham Local Studies and Archives at 7.00pm on **Wednesday 21st March**.

Moorside and District Historical Society

Buckstones Murder

An illustrated presentation by Ray Entwistle at St Thomas' Church Hall Lounge, Moorside at 7.30pm on Monday 19th March.

That's all for this month.

Written and edited by Sue Forshaw

Assisted editing by Irene Whitby